

The Music in Pencak Silat Tournaments is gone. De-Vitalization of a Performance Culture ?

by Uwe U. Paetzold, Germany

The *Pencak Silat* is a movement art grown from many indigenous ethnic cultures of Southeast Asia. Further migrant, national, and transnational cultures and topologies do contribute to its development. In its core aspect, the *Pencak Silat* has to be perceived as an art of self defense. But besides of this, nowadays it serves as a globally acting medium for a multitude of further aspects. Music accompaniment, i.e. by the *Kendang Pencak* ensemble, has been a substantial part of public *Pencak Silat* performances since long, both in traditional and in modern settings.

Following a prolonged era of discussion in the rows of leading *Pencak Silat* organizations (IPSI and PERSILAT) until at least 1996, the presence of music accompaniment in *Pencak Silat* tournaments needs critical revision latest since the year 2000. Since then, any music support has been abolished from the performance practice during official international and national tournaments of the choreographed artistic form category (*Pertandingan Seni Pencak Silat*).

This of course makes a big change: Instead of profiting from the lively tournaments culture, the older choreographed artistic form *Pencak Silat* competitions with music accompaniment have now been replaced by the concept of '*silat tradisi*', that is to be showcased in an open style, non-competitive festival. Therefore, the competitive appeal is gone, and what remains is a nice decoration to the 'real' tournaments.

The *Pencak Silat* in general, and the tournaments in particular, have had impact on local dance and music performance practices in Southeast Asia (i.e. on *Randai* Dance Theatre). It would be said too much, that these local traditions rely on these competitions. But a certain reflexivity and interrelation cannot be overseen. Looking forward, it is therefore possible the actual development will have further impact on local performance cultures. It is imagineable this development may cause a reduction or loss in regards to both music and movement performance practices on the local level as well.

Media presented:

1993 ABANICO PRODUCTIONS & HILTRUD THERESIA CORDES:

Pencak Silat Weltmeisterschaft 1992, Teil 2. [Sample from the video documentation of the 6th *Pencak Silat* World Championship, 13. – 18. December 1992, Jakarta, Indonesia].

2003 PÄTZOLD, UWE UMBERTO:

Sample from a video documentation of the European *Pencak Silat* Championship, 30. November 2003, Hamburg, Germany. Source: Pätzold Media Archive.

Web links of relevance:

NO DATE IPSI / PERSILAT:

<http://www.persilat.net/>. The web site of the Indonesian and International *Pencak Silat* organizations.

SINCE 2000 PÄTZOLD, UWE UMBERTO:

http://www.ethnomedia.de/projects/index.htm#s03_001. Further video materials i.e. on traditional performance contexts of *Pencak Silat* and their music accompaniments are available from the authors' research project web site.

Glossary:

<i>Pencak Silat</i>	Indigenous Indonesian and Southeast Asian movement art based on self defence.
<i>Pencak Silat Olah Raga</i>	Sport aspect of <i>Pencak Silat</i> .
<i>Pencak Silat Seni (Budaya)</i>	Choreographed artistic form aspect of <i>Pencak Silat</i> .
<i>Pencak Silat Bela Diri</i>	Self defence aspect of <i>Pencak Silat</i> . Not used during competitions.
<i>Pencak Silat Mental Spiritual</i>	Aspect of <i>Pencak Silat</i> for training inner power. Not used during competitions.
<i>Pertandingan Seni Pencak Silat</i>	Competitions of the choreographed artistic form variant of <i>Pencak Silat</i> .
<i>silat tradisi</i>	'Traditional (<i>Pencak</i>) <i>Silat</i> '
<i>IPSI</i>	Indonesian <i>Pencak Silat</i> Union (<i>Ikatan Pencak Silat Indonesia</i>).
<i>PERSILAT</i>	International <i>Pencak Silat</i> Federation (<i>Persekutan Pencak Silat Antarabangsa</i>).
<i>Kendang Pencak</i>	Music ensemble type, used during traditional <i>Pencak Silat</i> performances in West Java.
<i>Randai</i>	Dance theatre genre from West Sumatra.
<i>Ketuk Tilu</i>	Dance and music genre from West Java.
<i>Jaipongan</i>	Dance and music genre from West Java, closely related to the preceding <i>Ketuk Tilu</i> genre.
<i>Wiralaga</i>	Sport category of the 1996 reglement by IPSI / PERSILAT.
<i>Wiragana</i>	Single actor category of the 1996 reglement by IPSI / PERSILAT.
<i>Wirasanggha</i>	Couple actors category of the 1996 reglement by IPSI / PERSILAT.
<i>Wiraloka</i>	Group actors category of the 1996 reglement by IPSI / PERSILAT.
<i>Tanding</i>	Sport category since the 2000 reglement by IPSI / PERSILAT.
<i>Tunggal</i>	Single actor category of the 2000 reglement by IPSI / PERSILAT.
<i>Ganda</i>	Couple actors category of the 2000 reglement by IPSI / PERSILAT.
<i>Regu</i>	Group actors category of the 2000 reglement by IPSI / PERSILAT.