



ALENA MURANG

ALENA

~ Reviews ~

"Musically, the subtle post-rock guitars on top of the sape', weaving around tight bass rhythms, paints an audio picture befitting a song about the continuity and connectivity between the ancestors and the stars.."

-- Zim Ahmadi (*Taiwan Asean Music Action, Asia*)

"It's a tricky path to follow, to be both local and global, and talented musicians like Murang have to decide whether to try and make the local traditions popular or tie them up with proven pop and rock formulas. Here it's a mixture of both."

-- Simon Broughton (*Songlines, UK*)

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~ Reviews ~

"Unlike her typically tranquil and downtempo sound that draws on musical traditions from the Kelabit and Kenyah indigenous groups, 'Warrior Spirit' carries upbeat rhythms and rock guitar."

-- A. Azim Idris (NME, Asia)

"'Warrior Spirit' is an expression of sophisticated ingenuity of a culture that has continued to exist and thrive even in this generation. So, it is indeed true grace in all its form and has splendidly encapsulated all its mysticism in just one visual feast."

-- Monica Tong (Music Press Asia - Singapore)

"Sky Songs mixes traditional themes and instruments with folk, blues and rock touches, Murang's sweet and supple voice shifting deftly between soft ballads and driving beats"

-- Alan Tigay (World Listening Post - International)

MURANG

ABOUT ALENA MURANG

Alena Murang is a Borneo-born Dayak-European living in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), who sings in the endangered language of Kelabit and Kenyah. Dayak are the native people of Borneo. She is one of the first women to play the sape'. Deeply influenced by the lives for her ancestors, coupled with influences of rock and folk, her shows are a journey of past and present, along the mighty Baram river that runs from the coast to the highlands of Borneo, through the world's oldest rainforest. Alena is also a dancer, sape' teacher and visual artist.

Alena Murang is a singer-song writer, the first professional female sape' player. The sape' is a stringed lute instrument from Borneo. She receives songs, music and stories from her Kelabit and Kenyah elders, and presents them in contemporary ways; also writing original songs. Alena was part of the revival movement of the sape', 20 years ago, in the first batch of students from sape' master & living heritage Mathew Ngau Jau. Now, she travels to festivals across the world sharing the music of her people.

Her first EP, *Flight* (2016), presents interpretations of traditional Kelabit and Kenyah songs. For Alena it was important to do this as there were just a handful of good quality digital recordings of these lesser known songs.

In 2021, Alena Murang has released her latest album *Sky Songs*, inspired by the stories of her ancestors that lived in the skies and on Earth, the album is a journey of song through the cosmos; a song for the warriors that watch the mist rise on the morning of battle; a song of watching the clouds to tell of a good time to migrate; a song with lamentations of thunder and the moon.

ACHIEVEMENTS

2017

UNESCO Youth Representative
ASEAN'S Next Generation Leader,
Channel News Asia

2018

Tatler Magazine 30 under 30
Prestige Magazine 40 under 40
Miri City's Mayor Award (Tourism)

2020

Best Styling Award - Buenos Aires
Music Video Film Festival

2021

Special Recognition Award from
Sarawak State Government
Global Music Awards - Best Music
Video (Silver Medal Awards)

2021

International Music Video Award -
Best Asia & Pacific Music Video
Honorable Mention for Best Costume
Los Angeles Film Awards -
Special Jury Award

2021

Rome International Movie Awards -
Best Music Video
New York International Film Awards -
Best Music Video &
Best Ethnographic Film



PAST PERFORMANCES

2017

Rainforest World
Music Festival, Malaysia
Sejong Festival &
Seoul Music Week, South Korea
OzAsia Festival, Australia

2019

Colors of Ostrava, Czech Public*
Rudolstadt Festival, Germany*
Spriti by Alena Murang, Malaysia
Sarawak International Festival of
Music and Arts, Malaysia

2021

Rainforest World Music
Virtual Festival, Malaysia
LUCfest, Taiwan
Te Aratini Festival at Dubai Expo,
United Arab Emirates

2018

South by South(SXSW), USA*
UN Panel by PeaceBoar, Iceland*
Førde Traditional and
World Music Festival, Norway*
Etnosur Festival, Spain*
World Music Festival@Taiwan, Taiwan

2020

Taichung Lantern Festival, Taiwan
Tribal Gathering Festival, Panama

**As part of the Small Island Big Song production*

2022

Min'yo Concert, Malaysia
Rainforest World Music Festival
Riuh! Festival Sabah, Malaysia
Lun Bawang Festival, Malaysia
World Music Festival@Taiwan, Taiwan
Pasiwali Festival, Taiwan



Traditional Instrument from Borneo - Sape'

Sape' is a traditional instrument of the indigenous community in Sarawak, Malaysia. The instrument exists over 200 years and is sometimes call "the lute of Borneo". Sape' is carved into the shape of a canoe from a single bole of wood, and painted with pattern and pictures from the local myth, which makes sape' itself also a fine piece of artwork. Sape' was used as the solo instrument during the ritual of healing. Traditionally, Sarawak dance such as Rejang Beuh is accompanied with Sape' music.

The Sape' is played by plucking the string with thumb. Only one string is used to playe the melody whilst other strings are played as accompaniment to enrich the music. Influenced by globalization, Sape' has gained more attention among musicians worldwide. The technique of playing is elevated thus the music is richer. The unique rainforest timbre of Sape' is also used in modern or popular music nowadays.



~ 2016 Flight ~



PLAY

1. PEMUNG JAE'
2. MIDANG MIDANG
3. LILING
4. RE LEKUAH
5. LAN E TUYUANG

Released in August 2016, the EP, titled “Flight”, is a representation of three Kenyah folksongs and two Kelabit songs. Producer, Josh Maran (of PepperJam Productions), is Alena’s cousin, and is also part Kelabit. Together they share their interpretation of the songs.

~ 2021 Sky Songs ~

"The album is called Sky Songs because it is a representation of our ancestors and how sacred our lives on Earth are." - Alena Murang

1. GITU'AN
2. WE
WATCHED THE
CLOUDS
3. MAYAY
4. WARRIOR
SPIRIT



5. THUNDER &
THE MOON
6. PUT BURUI
7. SUNHAT
SONG
8. MENO'

PLAY

Inspired by the stories of her ancestors that lived in the skies and on Earth, the album is a journey of song through the cosmos; a song for the warriors that watch the mist rise on the morning of battle; a song of watching the clouds to tell of a good time to migrate; a song with lamentations of thunder and the moon.

In this album Sky Songs, there are 2 instrumentals, 1 song in Kenyah language, 4 in Kelabit language, and for the first time, a song in English. Kenyah and Kelabit are two out of many endangered languages in Malaysia.



ALENA MURANG'S MUSIC VIDEO



Click images to watch the newest MV

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