

# **“BE YOURSELF”**

## **(The Creation of a Music Composition)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

An artistic workmanship is a creative process of the artist in creating artwork. The artwork created is entitled “Be Yourself,” which is related to the establishment of self-characters of the writer who grew up in Sundanese culture. However, the life journey has brought the writer to be *urang sumando* (people related by marriage) in Minangkabau. Being in these two different cultural positions, Sunda and Minang, the writer have cross-cultural experiences. Having these cultural differences do not automatically make the writer soluble in integration in two different conceptions of cultures. In this paper, the writer offers the concepts of these cross-cultural experiences that are able to offer something different which can contribute to the development of art creation. The discussion in this article is the artistic forms as media for the exploration, materials for creation, and forms of performance.

Keywords: artistic, workmanship, music, cross-culture, Sunda, Minang

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Artistic work has high values of art and beauty, as a result of the creativity of the artist to express his ideas that emerge in the various artwork forms. Through artistic touches, the artwork becomes clear. It means that the desire within the concept of creation is supported by the artistic power of a work that has strength and character. Artistic element is a unity that cannot be separated in the process of creating an artwork. Without any artistic touch, an artwork does not have beauty and values in appreciators’ point of view. Through artistic touches, a concept of creation can be portrayed, and it can be implemented in the form of: (1) lighting, (2) stage artistic work, (3) costumes, (4) expression media, and (5) other needs related to the process of creating artwork, as the implementation the concept created.

The creative process of “Be Yourself” in this musical composition offers a concept based on cross-cultural experiences. “Be Yourself” is a part of the expression while the writer was wandering in the different cultures. Furthermore, the self-journey to be yourself is a form of expression that is expressed through sounds. The sounds come from both existing instruments and the new creation of instruments.

The musical composition based on the concept of cross-culture produced a form of music characterized by the process when the two cultures are between two ideologies. “Be Yourself” is the incarnation of a culture that cannot be disappeared, even though the writer customarily has declared himself into *urang sumando* (people related by marriage) in Minangkabau based on a matrilineal system. Ideologically, the two cannot be reconcilable especially from cul-

tural aspects, with regard to lineage. By the self-existence of Sundanese cultural background, the writer is being a "laboratory" hybrid or artistic research in creating this composition.

The cross-cultural experiences become an idea in the process of creating musical composition. The most fundamental reason for selecting the idea is based on various aspects, includes: (1) empirical experiences, (2) observations, and (3) skills mastered. Cross-culture in the creation of musical works is not only the process of combining two or more types of music, but also the outcomes expected from the cross culture process or hybridization which trying to offer into a "new" form of music. The new form can be observed in some aspects such as: (1) working techniques, (2) instruments explorations, (3) the repertoires or artwork materials and (4) the form of performance.

Those aspects above contributed to the results of cross-cultural approach using in the artwork in the form of thoughts, insights, and impact on the implementation of the artwork. The real manifestation applied in this creation process is the richness of elements from two different characteristics that form the aspects mentioned above. Text and context of Sundanese and Minangkabau cultures become important elements in the process of adaptation or adjustment of various musical characters to create cross-cultural music to the target expected.

Observations on cross-cultural issues do not only refer to self-experience. In the creative process, comparisons are made from people who have the same cross-cultural experience, out of the Minangkabau culture context. It means that during the observation, the writer tried to understand and discuss with people experiencing this cross-cultural process, such as people with cultural backgrounds of Java and Bali who stay long enough in the Minangkabau re-

gion, with the purpose to determine the extent of the cross-cultural process experienced by these people. From the results of these discussions, it can be understood that the concept of adaptation could contribute to self-adjustment in different cultural environments. A good communication element could give another offer in the form of establishing a sense of openness, solidarity, and freedom in interpreting creativity. This means flexibility towards different cultures can grow "sense" of creativity and can be used to interact with each other.

Cross-culture in the writer's perception is a process of interaction in different cultures. This can be interpreted as the intersection of two cultures, each of which has the characteristics and differences. However, in the process of this cross-cultural experience, it has flexibility and an open mind to interact in two cultural conceptions. Dieter Mack in the *Diversity and Cross-Cultural of Art-Summit dialog* provides an understanding of what cross-cultural is, as follows:

The term cross-culture mainly refers to a certain background, artists who have two or more cultural backgrounds but refers to artwork based on those backgrounds. The term also includes sensitivity in combining natural elements or a variety of music languages, even if the artist does not have a background in two or many cultures (Mack, 1998/1999: 28).

As a person who experienced the process of cross-culture between Sundanese and Minangkabau cultures, in which their problems and uniqueness are unavoidable. The problem certainly refers more to how the process of adaptation or adjustment can provide meaningful insights to address the issues arisen in the community. The occurrence of cross-culture started with the agreement and transparency in understanding the two different cultures. In accordance with the Minangkabau proverb that says: *dima bumi dipijak di sinan langik dijunjuang* (where the earth is stepped, there the sky is

adored), which means wherever we are, we should be able to adapt to the society and its environment.

The choice taken was the writer's own desire by leaving his hometown (Majalaya, West Java) to directly experience cross-cultural process in new place. However, in the process of *hidup merantau* (the term for men who wanders in Minangkabau), whereas in Sundanese it uses the term *ngumbara* (wandering), likely, is an interesting challenge for pursuing life.

*Ngumbara* principally has the same goal with *merantau*, which is to live the life better, and hope to get what we want in life. Referring to the expression of the elders or *sesepuh* (in Sundanese) which are plainly well in delivering a speech through jokes, phrase or proverb *tong ngotok ngowo wae di imah atuh* which means don't be stay at home all the time.

The phrase implies a meaningful message related to life journey. It can be used as motivation for building a life in the other region which is certainly not easy. Basically, the proverbs are an expression of an anxiety of the parents to their children, so that they are able to interpret them in their life. In the other words, do not be lazy, uncreative and unproductive in a variety of activities. Therefore, someone needs to endure and continue to find alternatives which are more beneficial for life survival.

Such reality can be found in various areas of cities or provinces. For example, the Sundanese (from Kuningan, Garut, and Tasikmalaya regencies) who try to go out from their houses hoping to have better life in new places. Their activities are mostly selling, as what Padang people do with their Padang restaurant, while the Sundanese (from Kuningan) are more famous for their *burjo* store. The Garut people are famous for selling *wajit*, cakes and bread, *lapis legit* and their unique crackers. People from Tasikmalaya are famous for selling embroi-

dery, plait mats, and other crafts. Those micro-entrepreneurs are proof of people who experience *ngumbara* or live the life on overseas independently. Mochtar Naim (1984) explains *merantau* as follows:

*Merantau* is also a process of Minangkabau people interact with other communities. These activities make new adventure and geographic experience, leaving their hometown to try their luck outside. Unlike the process of transmigration, which is programmed and financed by the government, the Minangkabau people migrated by their own will and abilities. They see this process as an exploration process, migration process, to build a better life (Naim, 1984: 511).

The writer's choice to stay in the Minangkabau region was an option that has been considered carefully. It means that the consequence of these efforts could not be separated from their objectives, which is to get a better life, and trying to apply knowledge that is useful for community. Experience of living in two cultures influence the creativity that can be implemented in a artwork, and the process of cross-culture is interpreted as to be (yourself). Furthermore, for a musical composition work, the writer gives the title "Be Yourself," which has a meaning of adaptation process with a society with different cultures. It is interpreted as the result of cross-culture of musical concepts and observations creating the idea for a new musical composition.

## METHOD

In the process of creating this work, there are several methods used, include exploration method and discussion as explaining below.

### Artistic Forms as Exploration Media

Expression of someone's imagination in any performance can be interpreted through gestures, musical aspect arranged in the melody, and rhythm pattern as a form of expression and appreciation to the art itself. A musical composition of "Be Yourself" is

the process of various musical characters from adaptations or adjustments arranged in the forms of a melody, rhythm patterns, tempo, and dynamics.

From the process of exploration, the writer finds some possibilities that can be developed in the form of creative process, such as combining two techniques such as *gumekan*, *kemprangan* and *carukan* techniques which are commonly used in the *gamelan* music performance. Techniques of playing *talempong sialang* use the technique *malata* (creeping). Those techniques can be adapted or adjusted from each character to produce different forms of work. The results of exploration aims to find the “new” form through the ways mentioned above such as adaptation or adjustment of characters from each musical “sense” by working on getting the other techniques with characters, mainly from rhythm patterns and sound colors. The sound colors resulted can be a voice character, beating, as well as vibration or stringed.

Artistic form as an exploration media becomes part of musical creation process adapting various possible forms, which can be worked on and developed. In its application, the artistic element is related to the working concept and elements of its character. Related to the working process, the understanding of characteristics of two musical elements needs to be adjusted in order to find the concept of each musical element. The formation process of the two characteristics produced “new” possibilities in terms of: (1) the musical adaptation, (2) the artistic values, and (3) exploration. A Musical adaptation refers to how the adjustment itself can generate a meeting point by considering the “sense” of each musical element adapted. The artistic values based on working needs so that the manifestations can be observed in the form of (1) types of performance, (2) costumes, (3) lighting, (4) stage, (5) players or musicians and materi-

als. Exploration is to find out possibilities that can be developed in various aspects related to the process of creating the artwork. It can be constructed in the exploration process by considering working elements such as working materials, workers, working tools, working devices, working determiners, and working consideration (Waridi in Supanggah, 2007: vii).

The exploration process can be developed through any media as long as the selection of the material as a source material has linked with the working concept. Exploration is not merely developing the existing ones, but also by considering other possibilities that can be developed in the process. Development of creativity in the form of instrument enrichment becomes the exploration selection of artistic values in realizing creative ideas.

For example, the instrument adaptation process of *talempong kreasi* which consists of melody and chord *talempong* trying to bring the instrument adaptation into different forms in terms of both forms and materials to be used. The reason to make such instruments is in order to find forms and colors of sounds which are different from the original one. For working techniques of these instruments, there are many possibilities that can be dealt with to adjust the character of sounds and techniques of the performance when it collaborates with other instruments.

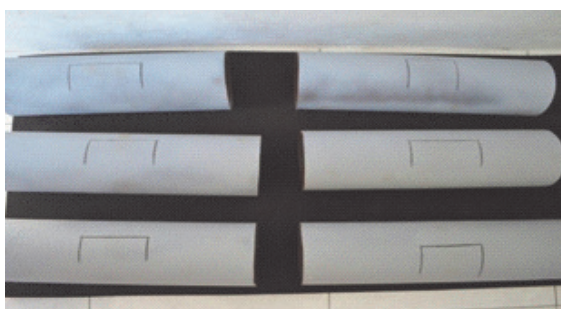


Picture 1: *Talempong* from an Iron Pipe  
Photo by: Asep Saepul Haris



The instrument shown above is the result of an exploration as part of the musical concept of *talempong kreasi*. It has been developed with a long shape like a xylophone. The reasons of this changed shape of *talempong* is certainly because of the exploration achievements process itself wanted to get possibilities in terms of: (1) effectiveness in the play, (2) the use of pitch could be developed as needed, (3) the sound color has its own characteristics and (4) the playing technique has a freedom in its work. The musicality elements built from the sound of *talempong besi*, either in the form of melody or rhythm patterns, can contribute to the work when it collaborates with other instruments.

At the same time, another observation was inspired by the *bonang* sound of the *gamelan degung* and *canang* (big *talempong*) to process the possibilities explored from the hard character sounds. To implement the idea, the writer selected materials from large-sized steel pipe, by considering the thickness of the pipe. The character of the sound produced from a big pipe was able to build a different musical taste from its original inspiration, which is the sound of *canang* and *bonang*. When the exploration process was done by using a large pipe as the media, it generated interesting musical elements for collaborating with other instruments. The possibilities of work could be developed in the form of musical elements, include: (1) melody, (2) interlocking, and (3) the rhythm patterns.



Picture 2: The Iron Cymbal  
Photo by: Asep Saepul Haris

The sound of *selentem* (Javanese *gamelan*) with a soft character and a medium frequency become the next inspiration to be realized in the creation of instruments. The material used to realize the idea was three-kilogram LPG tube. The reason for choosing the material was because it could produce soft sounds and has unique characteristics. Besides, the creation process has the "freedom" to explore both shape and tuning used.



Picture 3: The Heng Gas  
Photo by: Asep Saepul Haris

The working media used was adapted from other possibilities of percussion types, wind and strings instruments, and vocals. The working media are tools (physical) used by musicians, including vocalists, as media for conveying the ideas, musical elements, expressing self and feelings or messages musically to the audiences (or it could be without audiences) or to anyone, including the creator himself or his own environment (Supanggah, 2007: 189). Another possibility can be processed to provide high creativity is by trying to explore the work enrichment further on the various aspects. The instrument media in realizing a working concept became an important benchmark; it means the instrument needs are fulfilled based on the results of exploration and trying to look for other forms that can contribute.

The stance used in the creation process is trying to make something in term of "newness." The newness here can be obtained in the various forms of materials. It means that the stance was trying to find and change what has ever seen before,

and it became a creative action when producing different forms. The possibility of the ideas presented above can contribute to find forms of the "new." Methods used in its implementation, the exploration is a very important part to be developed.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Working Materials

The working materials as a source of two kinds of musical forms that explored are arranged in the form of melodic plays and rhythm patterns are based a working concept. It means that when the concept implemented, the creator selects and determines what materials will be used. The working materials are also called material works, the working event and the working field (Supanggah, 2007: 6). Materials could be developed according to the needs of work itself, either material or development of the traditional arts. Habits during the process of selecting and determining the working materials based on the concept will be implemented. This means the materials are determined when the working object has an obvious target.

The traditional art materials as the enrichment of working in musical forms, are compiled based on working approach used. The approach means a concept in realizing the work. The approach here can develop the traditional art or re-interpretation of tradition meaning intention for creating can be developed and traditional arts could be as inspiration only. Selecting and using the materials or the repertoires must certainly be adapted to the needs of work; it is necessary to consider the musical elements to be worked. Overall applications expected are certainly the suitability of the concept and they are very important related to the selected text and context. Text and context are more to the issue of working applications adjusted to the needs of the concept itself.

The materials used for traditional arts are interesting to be explored and deve-

loped in order to find innovations. Innovations offered are in forms of musical working materials, processing melody and rhythm patterns by adapting the characters of each element of the materials used. The materials used in the artworks "Be Yourself" determined the character of each material or repertoire following the idea of its contents. The strengths of each material are collaborated to adapt musical materials to adjust the sense of a musical form. The sense means aesthetic achievement of the two musical elements adapted.

Furthermore, musical exploration can be developed through the new created instrument. The exploration of materials in this instrument started with the process to develop a different character through the exploration of timbre which is developed into a melodic form, and exploration techniques in playing the instrument to diverse sound colors. The diversity of working materials explored enriches forms of musical melody and rhythm patterns.

In order to implement musical elements in a complete form, the writer tries to find a balance possibility of two musical types in working materials processed. The balance here is in its musical compositions by considering the integrity and characteristics of the material itself. The process of exploration in selecting, adapting, and then trying to adapt the musical elements to become a performance considers the form of working material or repertoire. Materials that have already selected become the next parts to search their possibilities to be developed. It means that the material process from its initial search until its selecting process can be continued to be a material exploration to obtain musical forms as expected.

### Forms of Performances

Forms of performance are expression media in forms of creativity of their creators. In its process, the performance can

be implemented following the ideas and concepts of the creator. From observations of its development, performing art forms have "freedom" in selecting and determining the forms of performance itself as well as the place used. Freedom here does not mean acting without considering the concept; it is an attempt to provide flexibility to be creative with expected outcomes. As a case for the final project examinations at the Post-Graduate Program at ISI Surakarta, students were given opportunities to conduct their performances outside or in the community in accordance with the concept of artwork. This is to be done by students to interpret the performances following the needs and concepts to be achieved.

The concept of outdoor performances is certainly not easy. There are several steps that must be considered, include: (1) defining the concept of the performance, (2) selecting the location which is suitable with the concept of performance, (3) the range of transportation, and (4) publication. Those steps might be used in order to find the meaning of an outdoor performance or a community show.

Forms of musical composition "Be Yourself" divided into different forms of performance. For example, the form of an orchestra in the performance; the orchestra did not refer to the symphonic music orchestra as in the West. The show did not necessarily to be "colossal" in the number of players and instruments used. The orchestra here more emphasis in in the form of a performance itself with the various elements used. As Bandem stated,

Orchestra is the art of using variety of instruments in the instrumental composition related to: (1) the completeness of the instruments, (2) the concept of the sonority composition effect. Orchestra involves detailed knowledge on the playing technics of each instrument, the tone distance, tone quality, hardness, and other limitations (Bandem, 1993: 66).

The form of an orchestra is expected to show two different characteristics in a unity of the performance. The balanced elements of the performance become exploration materials as well as ideas to be applied. The working strength in the form of orchestra performances was shown by presenting types of instruments, each of which has a musical character. The reason for using the form of performances by the term "orchestra" is to implement the concept of work related to the needs, and to consider the characters built from each instrument used.

Apart from that, another form offered is to try to manifest "theatrical musical" performance. The theatrical musical is more on "the player's expression." The expression here is an expression of an artist's feelings through some creative acts raised by interpretation, inspiration, plays, and pleasure in doing the show. To objectify the performance form by using the concept of "theatrical music," each player or a musician is assigned a role which is suitable for the instrument being played. It is intended to make other musicians easier in the process of the performance when there is dialogue in the musical forms, such as producing vocal sounds, gestures, and other sounds responded back by a tool or instrument that has been determined.



Rehearsal part I: "Maraso-rasoi"  
Photo by: Asep Saiful Haris, 2017



Rehearsal part II: "Adu Manis"  
Photo by: Asep Saiful Haris, 2017





Rehearsal part III: "Basitungkin"  
Photo by: Asep Saiful Haris, 2017



The performance part II: "Adu Manis"  
Photo by: Asep Saiful Haris, 2017



The performance part I: "Maraso-rasoi"  
Photo by: Asep Saiful Haris, 2017



The performance part III: "Basitungkin"  
Photo by: Asep Saiful Haris, 2017

Through the elaboration of the idea on further work from the two concepts of performance, the writer tried to apply something related to the idea of the contents, as well as working material with its manifestations into the work form which is divided into four parts, including:

1. The working form to be implemented in the first part of the show matched with ideas of the content to describe the feelings, such as a sense of giddy, restless, indecisive, hesitant, uncertain, vague, and relativity. In its application, the writer tried to explore the movements of martial arts, each of which gave the rhythm of plays through fractures movement patterns which is responded by sounds of dishes as well as within each particular accent punctuated with percussion. The sound processing of martial arts movements was using tools, such as *gongseng*, *genta* and small cans, which were played together with the sound of dishes. The initial structure we want to present was trying to respond a space in the theater by these steps: each of the players enters the stage, coming from the opposite direction; each corner of the room tried to be explored in accordance with the needs of work.

The freedom to move and to process the sound optimally in each part became the emphasis and then tried to interact with other melodic instruments. After reaching points in a certain determined space for the *silat* players, all the supporters enter the next spaces to join the other players. The selection of melodic instrument is certainly on how to work on a musical presented in each part which is able to build a musical form in short and long melodic as well as the rhythm pattern. Musical materials that worked with the sound of an acoustic guitar, harp, *kecapi Payakumbuh* and *kecapi kawih Sunda* of each melodic character were collaborated with the sounds of plates. The plates' sounds already have certain tones matched with the character, worked out in the form of a melody that could be developed either in the form of the melodic braid or rhythm pattern. The achievement of work conceptually was to form spaces in the theater and how musical elements built to mutually interact with one to another, by various sound forms and characters presented. The space exploration expected was able to objectify the working idea on sustainable basis needs of musical structure.



2. The second part of the performance describes feelings, include: curiosity, funny, shy, happy and sad. To show a presentation process of the work, the writer tried to conduct a "theatrical music" in which each player expresses him/herself while playing the instruments based on the needs of the show. The reason of the "theatrical music" concept is to present the work in a different form. Both concepts are intended to give a "sense" that is balanced in its performance. The working materials became exploration in each part to be developed in any form, both melody and rhythm patterns. This work is focused on the vocals and also smoother and softer sounds than brass and strings. Vocals are presented to respond each part of the melody, and the next vocal sounds show the different space and tempo.

Meanwhile, the musical structure of brass and strings instruments is not always played together in terms of melodic and rhythm patterns. In other words, each of them has its own rhythm patterns to make an impression. The form of performance played in this part is how the concept of "theatrical music" capable in processing the acoustic stage. The character of performance is expected to provide another alternative in an achievement work of "theatrical music." The materials are precisely selected in order to support the continuity and the strength of each concept. The interaction among the players is important to be considered in specific spaces which can give surprise element in the performance. In its show, the players are free to express their characters according to the instruments being played. The freedom to work on does not mean that there is no musical structures are arranged but they have more freedom to interpret all forms of performance. Besides, the form on this work, it is also important to see how the interaction of the performers that can mutually respond

to each other without having to be focused in one point, meaning that "theatrical musical" work gives the freedom of expression that can support the wholeness of music worked on.

3. In the third part of performance, description of feelings includes: confidence, optimism, tolerance, and happiness. Forms of an orchestra created are made in accordance with the needs of performance. The "theatrical music" is played to emphasize the colors and characters of the performance. The melodic and rhythmic patterns are the main elements to be played. The melodic and rhythmic patterns are played in the interlocking technique, in addition to applying the dynamic and tempo parts. The short and long melodic patterns are applied to show the tie of musical structure. Both choir and individual plays are presented as a musical element emphasizing certain parts of performance. The creator emphasizes the character of each instrument (*talempong*, *gamelan degung*, *indang*, Sundanese *kendang*, tambourine and wood boxes). In this part, the focus is more on the rhythmic and melodic patterns of the percussion, which are developed in accordance with the needs of performance. Description of feelings and musical achievement tried to realize the idea of content and feelings expected. The feelings described are confidence, tolerance, and sense of happiness. In exploration process, the writer attempts to find an interesting possibility to be presented in various aspects of performance. The process of each part is played to find "new" forms which can be processed from traditional materials as a source to re-working, following musical characteristics and needs to be achieved. In its performance, the musicians have already in their positions to play the instruments.

4. In the fourth part of performance, the feelings to be described include: spirit, excitement, creativity, innovation, and try-

Table of work  
The Realization of Cross-Cultural Concept in the Music Creation "Be Yourself"

Part	Names of part	Situations	Instruments	Number of player	Duration
I	"Maraso-raso"	Nervous, worried, anxious, doubt, uncertain, blurred, relative impression.	Plates, glasses, vocal, <i>dendang</i> , <i>sampelong</i> , <i>lempeng gas</i> , <i>gosrek</i> , Sundanese flute.	23 people	15 minutes
II	"Adu Manis"	Curious, happy, and romantic.	<i>Gambuh</i> flute, Sundanese flute, Javanese flute, iron pipe, <i>kucapi Payakumbuh</i> , <i>kacapi Sunda</i> , <i>dendang</i> , violin, accordion, <i>mandolin</i> , cello, electric bass, <i>hasapi</i> , Javanese zither, <i>saluang</i> , <i>udu</i> , <i>bansi</i> , <i>rabab Pasisia</i> , and triangle.	28 people	30 minutes
III	"Basitungkin"	Sure, optimist, tolerance, and happiness.	<i>gandang Sialang</i> , <i>talempong Sialang</i> , <i>gamelan Sunda</i> , <i>kendang Sunda</i> , vocal, and <i>bansi</i> .	23 people	30 minutes

ing to find the "new" form of performance. In this part, the explored instruments, including *talempong pipa besi*, *canang pipa besi*, gas tube, and drum barrel, are played. The instruments, which are collaborated with some conventional instruments, were designed by the creator. In fact, the innovative musical character has been generated. Some selected instruments such as cello, violin, accordion, *sampelong*, and Sundanese flute, are also played as needed. The elaborated rhythm patterns are played through the *talempong pipa besi* and gas tube. The short and long melodic and rhythmic patterns are played to show the interaction among the players.

## CONCLUSION

The two different musical concepts of cross-culture are clearly materialized through the musical composition "Be Yourself." To implement the main concept of the creation, the musical characters of each instrument must be understood well. The music elements built must accommodate the "sense" in which it expresses the unity of musical characters.

In addition, the instruments are played as an important element in exploring the possibilities of musical form developed. This has been done to develop the ideas of different musical materials. The advantages of the instrument exploration can be seen from their various possible forms to achieve more intention.

The cross-cultural concept can be seen through the processing of the various elements of artistic music. It means that the ability to make the concept is supported by important aspects in the process of preparing the artwork. The important aspects include: (1) the concept of performance, (2) media and tools, (3) materials, and (4) the form of performance. In addition, another ability that can support the main concept of the creation is the individual skills of the musicians, both from *Sunda* and Minangkabau.

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