

# A Study of Aesthetic Experience in Music: A Shift in Consciousness from Empirical to Immanent

Ovan Bagus Jatmika

Indonesian Institute of the Arts Yogyakarta

E-mail: ovanjatmika@gmail.com

## ABSTRACT

This study discusses the presence of immanent consciousness through music. The issue discussed is how this immanent reality is present in the practice of playing music. Thus, the locus of this research is a study of the aesthetic experience of musicians when playing music. This is because, so far, when informants talk about the topic of music performance, the object of study tends to focus on practical matters such as the effectiveness of playing techniques, repertoire selection strategies, music analysis, and performance management. In Indonesia, music studies that discuss immanent experiences tend to emphasize non-sensory experiences: immanence as a type of transcendent experience that is divine, cosmic, or metaphysical. Conversely, the role of music in relation to the emergence of immanent experiences has not been widely discussed. Using Deleuze's concept of the virtual, this study elaborates on various immanent experiences in the context of traditional musicians. Research data was collected through interviews with two traditional musicians: Iwan Gunawan (drummer) and Maspon (saluang player). The data was then categorized into three types of experiences: empirical experiences, threshold experiences, and various sensations felt. Findings indicate that musical practice facilitates a shift in consciousness, moving from empirical perception toward immanent awareness. This shift enables musicians to encounter new forms of reality beyond standardized performance norms—emerging as pre-predicative modes of understanding.

**Keywords:** music, immanence, virtual, Deleuze

## INTRODUCTION

The world of traditional music performance involves many aspects: musicians, *instruments/luthiers*, musical works/composers, audiences, critics, patrons, and performance management. These elements influence the technical quality of a performance. However, technical excellence is not the ultimate goal of performance, as what is ultimately pursued is an aesthetic experience—one that enables the audience to encounter realities rarely found in ordinary daily life (Brattico et al., 2017). For example,

a musical performance allows the audience to experience a sense of “being carried away” by the music to the point of reaching a sublime state (McBride, 2014). In such sublime experiences, the listener's consciousness appears to depart from empirical reality, responding to the music in ways that evoke new realities—sometimes no longer directly connected to the sound itself..

In many studies of the philosophy of art, the presence of sublime experiences is categorized as a form of experience that transcends the empirical level, but has not

yet reached the stage of representational consciousness (*idea*) (Hulse, 2008). Looking back, the history of philosophical development shows a dichotomy in the way of understanding reality, represented by ideological and empirical groups (Vrahimis, 2022). The ideological group seeks to understand reality through concepts (representations): a glass, for example, can be understood as a 'drinking vessel'. Understanding a glass as a 'drinking vessel' is a way of understanding reality through concepts; in this case, the concept of 'function'. As a form of representation of reality, this concept is general in nature. This means that 'drinking vessel' does not only refer to a glass, but also a bottle, straw, or can. Empiricists criticise this view, arguing that understanding a glass solely through conceptual representation ignores its concrete reality, which remains distinct from objects such as bottles or straws. Empiricism, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of involving various perceptions felt by the senses to understand reality. However, empiricism fails to explain various non-sensory empirical experiences. For example, one may lose track of time while deeply absorbed in playing or listening to music.

Beyond the ideological-empirical dichotomy, Deleuze elaborates on a different type of consciousness, namely immanent consciousness (Deleuze, 2001). Immanent consciousness emerges when empirical experience contracts such that the distinction between subject and object dissolves. Immanence still requires empirical experience as an initial trigger, yet the resulting consciousness transcends empirical reality.

Deleuze terms this condition 'transcendental empiricism' (Adkins, 2018; Heaney, 2018; Rolli, 2016). Conversely, if the informant does not have empirical experience, what is experienced is not immanence, but illusion. If, as Hulse proposes, sublimation is understood as a state that transcends empirical experience without yet becoming representational, then it may be regarded as a form of immanent experience.

Music performances are imbued with various immanent experiences (De Assis, 2017; Martinson, 2014; Pattie, 2016). In fact, people's enthusiasm for continuing to perform music is driven by the desire to experience the sense of immanence that they have felt before (Borgo, 2014; Shepherd, 2017): there is a kind of longing for the 'peak' experience that they want to relive through music. Western scholarship has widely demonstrated the role of empirical musical parameters in shaping immanent experiences (Bidima & Wiedorn, 2016; Lawrence, 2021; Macarthur et al., 2016; Moisala et al., 2017; Szepanski, 2017). However, studies in Indonesia—particularly regarding traditional music—have rarely examined the relationship between musical parameters and the emergence of immanent experiences. When people talk about tradition, the reviews that tend to be discussed are the structural aspects of the music (Saptono, et al., 2024) or attempts to explain musical reality through non-musical expressions such as visual depictions (Parung, et al., 2025). Immanence, in many music studies in Indonesia, tends to be positioned as a type of transcendent (not transcendental) experience, that is, a kind of divine experience that is beyond the

reach of human empirical experience. Based on this definition, immanence is ultimately understood as a reality related to religiosity (Tinambunan, 2022), cosmology (Usman, et al., 2024), or metaphysics (Permono, 2021). This interpretation of immanence as transcendent rather than transcendental has influenced the development of Indonesian music studies, particularly in traditional contexts. As a result, empirical musical parameters are often excluded when explaining immanent experiences, and traditional art is viewed as something accessible only through feeling—perceived but not articulated.

Based on this phenomenon, this study aims to explain the process of the emergence of immanent experiences from the empirical experiences of traditional musicians when playing music. This case study investigates the experiences of two traditional musicians: Iwan Gunawan, representing Sundanese traditional music, and Maspon, representing saluang performance practices. More specifically, the questions asked are: how is this change in consciousness from empirical to immanent explained? What musical parameters enable informants to experience a change in consciousness from empirical to immanent? Answering these questions is expected to offer new perspectives on traditional music performance—not merely as a passive object, but as an active reality capable of influencing the consciousness of those who experience it. Furthermore, this study does not attempt to reduce musical ‘feeling’ into fixed language, but rather demonstrates that unspoken experiences of musical appreciation can be interpreted through their relationship to the

material qualities of sound perceived by the ear.

## METHOD

Since this study examines shifts in consciousness within musical appreciation, it adopts a qualitative phenomenological approach, which aims to reveal experiential realities that informants may not yet fully recognise and bring them into conscious awareness (Eberle, 2014; Qutoshi, 2018). Research data was collected through semi-structured interviews (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021; Magaldi & Berler, 2020) with two traditional musicians, namely Iwan Gunawan (Sunda music kendang player) and Maspon (saluang player). Interviews were chosen because they allowed informants to recount their experiences as they felt them. This is different from observation, because with observation, the phenomena captured are various things that are highlighted based on the researcher’s perspective and have the potential to reduce the experiences of the informants. Informants were selected based on several criteria. First, they possessed extensive experience and in-depth knowledge of musical practice. Second, they had mastery over a wide musical repertoire. Third, they demonstrated the ability to articulate their musical experiences clearly and systematically. Finally, they must have an interest in the topic being researched. The interviews used open-ended questions, allowing informants to recount their experiences freely without restriction. Conversations were kept fluid—closer to discussion than a standard question-and-

answer format. Even though the conversation flowed naturally, the focus of the conversation was kept within the scope of the research by directing the conversation towards the points of data that were to be explored.

The interview data obtained was then transcribed verbatim to present comprehensive text data that did not reduce the pauses, emphasis, or even emotions expressed by the informants (Loubere, 2017). The verbatim data were then coded in two stages (Stuckey, 2015). First, keywords that were considered relevant were identified and then classified into several terms or important points. Once the terms that were considered important had been obtained, the coding stage continued to the next phase by establishing relationships between the terms in order to find more general propositions.

The two stages of coding the interview data resulted in three categories of experiences from musical practice. First, various stories that reveal the reality of music as experienced empirically by musicians. Second, various stories that reveal liminal experiences (between something empirical and non-empirical). Third, various stories about the sensations felt by informants after entering/passing through liminal experiences.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### RESULTS

The results of the interview data analysis show that in the appreciation of music, informants have the potential to encounter various complex experiences. The complexity of the experiences encountered when playing music allows informants to simultaneously

become aware of many realities. For example, when playing music, informants become aware of various sound perceptions such as beat, dynamics (amplitude), timbre, texture, articulation (sound expression), and pitch (frequency). Beyond sound perception, musicians can also perceive various kinesthetic stimuli such as the feel of their fingers touching the instrument or the vibration of their lips at the end of a wind instrument. The performance environment (stage atmosphere) also shapes the musicians' perceptual experience. Musicians can accept these various perceptual stimuli without disrupting their music playing as long as they are perceived intuitively, not analytically. Conversely, when these various stimuli are analyzed, they interfere with each other and make music practice confusing. In this case, the practice process can be seen as an effort to settle analytical awareness into an intuitive bodily experience. When intuition guides musical performance, experiential complexity becomes an asset that enables musicians to reach the next stage: the threshold experience. At this point, musicians encounter two interacting modes of consciousness. The presence of these two tendencies of consciousness allows musicians to move from one space of consciousness to a new space of consciousness and experience new sensations. The following is a review:

### **Chronological Awareness as a Form of Empirical Experience**

The first experience story shared by the informant was about various things that were perceived empirically when playing music. In this type of experience, the informant

perceives music as sounds that occur chronologically in a sequence of moments, with one moment of sound followed by the next. Iwan Gunawan recounts his experience of playing the Sundanese drum (which is semi-improvisational in nature) as an experience similar to the informant chatting (conversing). He explains:

“Of course, when playing music intuitively like that, nothing is planned... it just flows naturally... similar to how we chat.” (Interview with Iwan, March 4, 2024)

In this statement, Iwan indirectly shows that his consciousness is dominated by personal consciousness. He is fully aware that he is having a musical conversation with his playing partner (as another person interacting with him) through the medium of the instrument he is playing. Iwan is aware that he is ‘different’ from other informants in his role as a musician. There is an awareness that Iwan is a subject (actor) interacting with other subjects, each with their own tasks and roles. These tasks must be carried out well in order for the musical conversation to take place.

Technically, this musical conversation takes place in the form of *call and response*. This means that when there are sound stimuli from a playing partner, Iwan will respond by producing certain sounds as feedback, which will then be responded to by other musicians. His sensitivity in responding to sound stimuli from his playing partner is vital because the musician’s keen response to these sounds will enliven the musical conversation taking place on stage. At this point, intuition becomes

essential. The more intuitive the response, the more natural and fluid the musical dialogue becomes. In his statement, Iwan explicitly said:

“We call and respond to each other... react to each other... sometimes we can follow what he wants, or sometimes we are a little eccentric and offer other topics... and many things” (Interview with Iwan, March 4, 2024)

Iwan’s first statement reflects his personal awareness of his role among other musicians. His second statement reinforces this by showing that chronological musical practice enables him to recognise himself as a subject interacting with other subjects, collectively bringing music to life and treating it as an object of expression.

In line with what Iwan said, Maspon revealed that his experience playing the *saluang* happened naturally. It should be noted that the *saluang* is a wind instrument from Padang, which is usually played along with mournful songs. In this type of music, the rhythm is not as dominant as in dance music, but rather flows in the form of a melody with long notes. In his experience, Maspon described that the *saluang*’s melodic line changes character when combined with more percussive instruments—especially Western ones, which emphasize strong rhythmic accents. In his statement, Maspon said:

“We don’t count how much it costs; we just go with the flow. Then, when it’s combined with other instruments, even Western ones, something new emerges for me.” (Interview with Maspon, March 6, 2024)



This statement again illustrates Maspon's personal awareness when perceiving music chronologically. He recognizes that he plays a melodically oriented instrument, different from rhythm-based instruments, and this awareness distinguishes his role from other musicians within the ensemble. The presence of this kind of personal awareness makes musicians aware of their respective tasks and roles in the music production process, enabling them to intensify certain types of tasks and roles within a musical ensemble. In Iwan's case, his role as a *kendang* player leads him to emphasize rhythm, expressed through precise pauses and accents ("when there are many punctual sounds"). In contrast, Maspon intensifies the musical atmosphere or mood, which he views as the main measure of his performance ("the measure, for me, is the mood").

### **Threshold Experience: Encountering Two Tendencies of Consciousness**

The intensification of musical tasks made the informants aware of new aspects that were not present in the first phase of their experience, when music was still perceived chronologically. For example, when Iwan Gunawan intensified the punctual moments between bursts of sound, he felt the presence of micro-rhythms. He said:

"It's like feeling micro-rhythms, feeling the pulse of tempo, and so on. It's really abstract, it's in your feelings and thoughts" (Interview with Iwan, March 4, 2024)

Through this statement, it can be said that Iwan, when faced with a specific moment, realized two things simultaneously in his consciousness. First, his awareness was directed toward the chronological sequence of musical events—particularly the silence between sounds. At the same time, he sensed micro-rhythms that were not audible, but perceptible through inner feeling and cognition. In other words, the consciousness in Iwan's head is divided or split into two tendencies. On the one hand, his consciousness was focused or directed at the materiality of the musical sounds he was perceiving, while on the other hand, there was another (non-empirical) reality that shot out and appeared in Iwan's consciousness.

The non-empirical reality that emerged in Iwan's consciousness did not happen suddenly, but had a starting point. He recounted his experience of listening to minimalist music. As repetitive music (although not truly repetitive, but rather featuring very subtle motif development), minimalist music sounds very mechanical: the brain seems to be invited to identify moments of repetitive sounds in detail and specifically. However, when the brain focuses on recognizing these repetitive moments of sound, the opposite occurs. It is not the details of the motif that remain in the informant's consciousness, but rather the general nuances of the sound of the music that remain and enter his consciousness. In Iwan's words, what initially sounded mechanical eventually led him to experience transcendence.

“There is music such as minimalist music, for example, which is very mechanical, repetitive, but if we listen more closely, we become transcendent, like ritual music that eventually no longer feels... ee...mechanical” (Interview with Iwan, March 4, 2024).

The presence of micro-rhythms that appear simultaneously with punctuation or silent pauses places Iwan’s consciousness in a liminal state. Unlike his initial state of full personal awareness—where he clearly understood his duties and role within the performance—this liminal experience gradually distances him from that personal consciousness. That is, Iwan does not immediately abandon his initial role and duties in an ensemble, but rather his consciousness begins to straddle two realities.

Unlike Iwan, who is aware of the presence of micro-rhythms, Maspon feels the presence of past memories when he intensifies his mood in his *saluang* playing. He recalls childhood scenes from his hometown—playing in the river, wandering through forests and rice fields, and imagining his family. All of these childhood memories seem to contract in his current consciousness when he plays the *saluang*. In his statement, he says:

“There is a kind of longing... a feeling of nostalgia, perhaps, a feeling of missing home... imagining family members, playing in the river, on the edge of the forest, in the rice fields when I was little, well, that feeling comes back” (Interview with Maspon, March 6, 2024).

Similar to Iwan, the emergence of childhood memories during Maspon’s

*saluang* performance indicates that he, too, experiences two simultaneous tendencies of consciousness. On one hand, he remains focused on his musical task—producing melodies on the *saluang*. On the other hand, a parallel reality surfaces, extending beyond his initial awareness. This puts him between two realities of consciousness. Maspon and Iwan enter the threshold of consciousness.

### **The Presence of Various Sensations and the Loss of Personal Consciousness**

The threshold experiences of both informants emboldened them to move beyond their initial awareness, allowing them to experience a new reality that was different from before. This threshold reality seems to be a gateway for musicians to explore new experiences. If the first experience—perceiving music chronologically—is empirical and purely sensory, the third experience remains empirical but is no longer solely sensory. The first story about this type of experience was shared by Iwan Gunawan. He said:

“Even though there are many syncopations, it turns out that when using a slower tempo, even slower than our heartbeat, the tension is higher” (Interview with Iwan, March 4, 2024).

This statement reveals that sound stimuli (in this case, syncopated tempo), which are actually responded to by the ear as an auditory phenomenon, have an impact on kinesthetic sensations (providing tension that affects the body). In this case, Iwan is experiencing a type of empirical experience through musical sound stimuli that are no longer bound or limited to

the response of the sense of hearing, but are instead responded to by the sense of touch as a kinesthetic experience. In other words, Iwan is experiencing kinesthetic sensations through auditory stimuli: as a form of empirical experience that is not purely sensory (sound should be heard, not felt).

In addition to the presence of kinesthetic experience, Iwan also encountered the reality of *chaos*. He said that he realized the presence of an unpredictable reality. Everything was unexpected, and this sensation arose, especially after he encountered micro-rhythm awareness. He felt as if micro-rhythm showed him that beyond the various tasks and roles of a musician that he was fully aware of and tried to control in his drumming, there was a reality that he could not fully control that continued to color his playing patterns. Eventually, these unpredictable things became the spice of his playing. He said:

“What I mean is... there are moments that become magical. The magic comes from the mistakes made by the improvisers... becoming... a kind of unique spice. Well, those changes are what ultimately make it unpredictable.” (Interview with Iwan, March 4, 2024)

This chaotic sensation enabled Iwan to perceive a rhythm that transcended conventional measurable patterns. This chaotic sensation broadened and deepened his consciousness. He experienced a shift in awareness related to the reality of tempo in music. Through his experience, he finally understood the meaning of *klenengan* rhythm in Sundanese music. Even at the time of the

interview, Iwan still found it difficult to analyze *klenengan* tempo. However, intuitively, Iwan was able to bring it into his playing. He understood the meaning of *klenengan* tempo through the chaotic sensations in his improvisational practice. The experience of encountering the reality of *chaos* in Iwan's consciousness, through the gateway of the presence of micro-rhythm reality, allowed him to intuitively place the drumming patterns in relation to the musical tempo: knowing when to play strictly, when to be flexible.

“... you know *klenengan*, right? In Sundanese it's called *kliningan*. The tempo is like a gentle breeze. We can't use a *strict* tempo, you know... The feeling is different... like when we're in a boat on calm waters, you know... there are fluctuations, but very slight ones. That's the feeling of that tempo too, sometimes... you have to read it correctly. It's abstract, and even today I find it difficult to analyze. But there are many musical events like that. When do we need *strictness*, when do we need, well... *more or less*.” (Interview with Iwan, March 4, 2024)

Similar to Iwan, Maspon also felt a type of empirical experience that was not purely sensory. He experienced sensations in the form of physical responses. When various childhood memories colored his *saluang* playing, Maspon felt physical sensations, namely tears welling up in his eyes. In his story, he said:

“Well, that kind of atmosphere now, everything is mixed together, longing for my hometown, longing for the caress of an old informant, well, sometimes while playing the *saluang*, yes, while crying” (Interview with Maspon, March 6, 2024).



Indeed, in Maspon's experience, this bodily response is mainly caused by a longing for various things he encountered in the past. He longed to relive the pleasant moments associated with those memories. However, referring back to the second type of threshold experience, these past memories surfaced because he intensified his emotional engagement while playing the saluang. If this mood had not been actualized in the form of the Saluang performance, this bodily response in the form of tears would not have occurred. It is in this case that music takes on the role of a medium that causes Maspon to experience a shift in consciousness: from the consciousness of perceiving sound empirically, to the consciousness of nostalgia for childhood experiences.

In addition to experiencing kinesthetic sensations, Maspon also experienced a sense of lost time. At the peak of his experience playing the saluang, Maspon often did not realize that he had spent the whole night playing the saluang: "sometimes until morning" (Maspon). This experience of losing track of time shows that when entering the threshold reality, Maspon's initial personal consciousness (he is aware that he is playing the saluang with a certain technique and producing certain sounds) is left behind and he moves into a new reality that is no longer bound by the various concepts he is aware of at the personal consciousness level. In other words, Maspon was experiencing an impersonal reality. He was not only an informant playing music, but he was being played by the music he was playing.

## DISCUSSION

The three types of consciousness described by the informants show that their consciousness when playing music has many layers. The first layer of consciousness is a type of personal consciousness that is experienced empirically. The second layer of consciousness is a threshold experience that encourages the informants to move beyond empirical experience, and the third layer of consciousness is an encounter with various sensations experienced in the form of transcending sensory responses. In order to answer the two research questions—how these changes in consciousness are explained and what musical parameters can shift the informants' consciousness—the author must first describe the nature of these three types of consciousness. For this purpose, consciousness will be examined from Deleuze's perspective through the concept of the virtual.

### Two Types of Time Consciousness

When informants perceive music empirically, the strongest sensation is chronological awareness. Informants identify past, present, and future moments in sequential linearity. Here, temporal moments are perceived as distinct chronological segments. When informants identify time in this kind of chronological consciousness, they are indirectly aware of the spatial presence of time: there is *an* event *space* between past, present, and future moments. This chronological awareness of time can be experienced through an analytical thought process. Music, as a chronologically present art of sound, will directly confront informants

with this type of chronological awareness of time: informants will naturally analyze the sounds 'do', 're', and 'mi' in a linear sequence ('do' precedes 're', 're' appears after 'do' and before 'mi', while 'mi' follows the sounds 're' and 'do'). The means of analyzing the sequence of sound moments in music spatially is through perception. Perceptually, the sense of hearing will identify various things that appear and can be captured by the ear, so that the informant can say that 'a certain sound precedes another sound, and will be followed by the next sound'. In other words, through perception, the informant analyzes objects captured by the sense of hearing.

At the same time, chronological awareness also allows informants to experience other types of awareness. When informants listen to a moment of sound, perceptual awareness will identify the qualities of the sound present: what color the sound is, how it is articulated, how loud it is, how long it lasts, and so on. This information is recorded and collected in memory. When the first sound is followed by another, the informant's consciousness focuses on perceiving the second sound, including its qualities. Simultaneously, the informant compares it with the previous sound—assessing whether it is similar, repetitive, different, or a development of the first. The way the informant compares the second sound with the first sound (which is no longer actually present) is by remembering the qualities of the first sound that are stored in memory. In other words, when the informant identifies the second sound, their consciousness is not only focused on the perception of the second sound, but also involves the memory of the first sound

that is already in their head. In this condition, it can be said that the informant is faced with two tendencies of consciousness: on the one hand, their consciousness is focused on what is being perceived, and on the other hand, their consciousness moves backwards to trace various memories stored in their memory. In other words, the memories previously collected in consciousness (through our identification of the first sound) begin to contract to influence the informant's perception of the sound that is currently present (the second sound). The contraction of memory that influences the way the informant perceives objects ultimately produces dynamics within consciousness. This dynamic of tension between perception and memory is what Bergson refers to as temporal consciousness (Hulse, 2008). Bergson describes it as *durée* (duration): there is a reality that persists in our consciousness, in the form of perception-memory tension, beyond our perception of musical objects that move chronologically.

The contraction of past memories—derived from previously heard sounds—shapes current perception of the sounds being perceived and simultaneously allows informants to anticipate what will come next. This allows informants to imagine or fantasize about scenarios that will occur. This is where the informant's consciousness begins to encounter various fields of potential that will be actualized in the next moment. The presence of various fantasies in the informant's consciousness manifests as virtual reality. The informant's encounter with virtual reality in their consciousness allows them to realize and interpret the actuality of objects in their own

unique perspectives. This means that the same musical object can be interpreted differently by each informant depending on the potential virtuality that arises in their consciousness. In this sense, it can be said that music can be a medium that allows informants to develop their consciousness, as long as they encounter virtual reality. Otherwise, informants will only be trapped in the perceptual consciousness of the music they hear. Informants will not be aware of anything other than the sequence of sounds captured by their ears.

### **From Empirical to Immanent**

If Bergson explains the virtual as temporal consciousness that allows informants to move beyond perceptual consciousness, Deleuze positions the virtual as a form of immanent experience: that is, a type of experience that is still empirical (requiring our perception of objects), but transcends sensory matters (creating tension between perception and memory) (Deleuze, 2001). Immanence is present when this tension between perception and memory is dominated by memory. In this case, our perception (empirical experience) of objects is not lost, but rather our consciousness is captivated and preoccupied with the various simultaneities of memory contractions in our heads (ultimately, we no longer only hear sounds through our ears, but through anything, according to the image of thought that is formed).

Iwan, when he says that playing the Sundanese drum is similar to 'chatting' (call and response), indirectly shows how he perceives the sound of the drum in the performance: that is, the sound response

he plays must 'connect' with his playing partner. Otherwise, the musical conversation will not be established. In other words, what Iwan plays must be coherent with what other musicians play. As a Sunda drum percussionist, rhythmic motifs are the primary means through which he maintains coherence in performance. This is because drums cannot play melodies or chords. In this case, Iwan's perceptual awareness of music is intensified to focus on playing rhythmic motifs: he even explicitly mentions the term "micro-rhythm." Rhythmic motifs become musical elements that Iwan perceives empirically to be presented and actualized in his playing. Indeed, during musical performance, a wide range of elements may be perceived—tone color, dynamics, rhythm, melody, harmony, texture, articulation, expression, and bodily gestures. However, in Iwan's case, awareness of rhythm is vital. This does not mean that Iwan ignores other musical parameters, but rather that he strives to intensify his perceptual awareness of rhythmic elements.

Focusing on rhythmic elements allows Iwan to identify existing rhythm patterns in detail. This ultimately enables Iwan to recall various moments of rhythmic sound in his memory. His mind is filled with memories of existing rhythm patterns, which ultimately become an important asset for him to play with his perceptual awareness of music. This is evident in his story when he perceives the pauses between bursts of sound. Just like in a conversation, moments of silence occur between exchanges. When these moments of silence occur, the various memories of rhythmic motifs collected in his memory

begin to contract and influence the way Iwan perceives these moments of silence. In his consciousness, Iwan does not perceive silence as a moment without sound, but rather he hears many micro-rhythms in his head. At this point, when virtual sounds echo within his mind, Iwan enters a threshold state. His consciousness is divided between two tendencies. On one side, he perceives silence empirically as it appears in performance; on the other, his consciousness is pulled toward contracting rhythmic motifs that echo internally.

The presence of micro rhythms also became a new space of consciousness, a new realm that Iwan became aware of, and made him brave enough to enter it. When Iwan entered this new realm, he began to leave his old consciousness behind and experience immanence. All forms of experience he had in this realm of immanence transcended all sensory responses. Iwan no longer listened to rhythmic patterns auditorily, but rather experienced them in the form of chaotic sensations. The experience became wholly unpredictable. The chaos Iwan experienced did not mean that the music he played was messy. On an empirical level, his drumming was fine and he was able to play rhythms coherently with his ensemble. Chaos was present in Iwan's consciousness as a sensory experience of his encounter with memories that contracted and intervened in the way he perceived the actual sounds of the music. The sensation of chaos was present as a new form of consciousness that transcended empirical consciousness. Iwan does not deliberately create chaotic music, but rather the music

he plays returns to him in the form of chaos. Music no longer exists in Iwan's consciousness as a passive object, but rather as something active that seems to interact with him. This is where the boundary between subject (Iwan) and object (music) dissolves. Personal consciousness changes into impersonal consciousness.

When Iwan describes his sensory experiences through rhythm (intramusical elements), Maspon describes his musical sensations through the way he perceives moments (extramusical elements). In his experience, he recounts that his mood greatly determines the melody he plays on the *saluang*. This statement is understandable because, as explained in the experience data, the *saluang* is a type of wind instrument played to accompany mournful songs. In this type of lament, the accent of the rhythm becomes less important and, conversely, the flow of the melody becomes very dominant. If the player's mood is right, the melody played will sound more natural (in terms of the "feel" of the lament). Maspon's awareness of the importance of mood in producing a mournful sound makes him focus on intensifying his awareness of his inner mood when playing. He tries to connect his inner experience with his playing of the *saluang*. In other words, on an empirical level, Maspon always tries to experience his music as a form of expression of his inner mood: he does not just produce sounds from a particular instrument using a particular technique, but tries to connect them with his mental state.

His focus on engaging his mood in the performance allowed Maspon to encounter

various childhood memories. Memories from his past seemed to surface through the sound of the saluang, flowing into his consciousness in tandem with the melody he played. The presence of these various memories from the past allowed Maspon to experience two tendencies of consciousness at once. Simultaneously, he is aware of two things happening at once. On one side, he remains conscious of his saluang-playing technique; on the other, images of childhood memories stream through his awareness. He stands between two spaces of consciousness: perceptual consciousness of the sound of the saluang, and memorial consciousness of childhood experiences. The presence of past memories did not necessarily eliminate and replace musical consciousness, but rather these memories accompanied the musical event. These various memories arose due to the stimuli of the sound of the saluang. Without the sound stimuli, these memories could not have emerged. Even with the presence of various past memories, Maspon could not be sure what moments from the past would emerge. Everything appears outside of Maspon's intention. His only deliberate act is to attune his emotional state to the expression of lamentation and translate it into his playing. The act of blowing the saluang then appears to stimulate the emergence of various past memories. Maspon does not deliberately remember a specific moment from his past experiences, but rather the moment just appears on its own.

The threshold reality experienced by Maspon culminated in his inability to hold back his tears. He experienced a kinesthetic

sensation in the form of a physical response: the falling of tears. It was here that Maspon experienced a shift in consciousness from the empirical to the immanent. Music, which is actually experienced by the sense of hearing, had an impact on and was responded to by the kinesthetic senses. Maspon's consciousness seemed to be hijacked, shifting from the consciousness of playing the saluang with a certain expression and atmosphere to a feeling of longing for his hometown. In this case, the peak of Maspon's experience of immanence was an experience of nostalgia. The sound of music evokes longing. His preoccupation with longing ultimately caused him to experience a sensation of losing track of time. He is no longer aware of how long he has been playing the saluang. The longing that seemed to appear in a flash has actually consumed several hours of playing time. Awareness of time as an indication of personal consciousness was lost and replaced by impersonal consciousness. Maspon played transcendently.

### **Intensification of Awareness as the Gateway to Immanence**

The shift from empirical consciousness, perceiving drum rhythms, toward immanent consciousness represented by a sensation of chaos arose from the intensification of Iwan's focus during performance. The intensification of awareness of the perceived object allows the informant to identify the object, in this case, rhythm, not only at the molar (compound) level, but also at the molecular level (Campbell, 2013, p. 31). When the informant realizes the reality of the object at the molecular level, the informant will experience an encounter with



a wealth of information about the object he perceives. This is where the informant will have a lot of memory input to be collected in his memory. The richer the character or nature of the object that is realized and stored in memory, the richer the possibility that these various memories will contract and influence the informant's perception of the object. This is why, when entering the threshold region, Iwan included the term *micro* in his statement about rhythm. Even though he could not really explain it analytically, Iwan intuitively witnessed the rhythmic events of the sounds he played at a fairly detailed level of identification. He may be aware of the articulation, dynamics, patterns, intensity, and even certain expressions of the rhythm he hears (molecular awareness of rhythmic phenomena). In other words, he does not only hear rhythm as a combination of tone values with repeating patterns (molar awareness of rhythm). The various realities of rhythm at this molecular level are only possible if the informant intensifies their awareness when perceiving a particular object. As long as the informant only perceives objects casually, their perceptual awareness of the objects they encounter will almost certainly be limited to common sense understanding. If this kind of common understanding is embedded in memory and contracts to influence perception, its effect on the way we perceive objects will also only result in common sense meanings. In such conditions, it is usually difficult for informants to move from empirical to immanent experience: informants will tend to be stuck only in the reality of objects that they can experience empirically.

A similar case also occurs in what Maspon said. By intensifying his awareness of certain inner states when playing the *saluang*, Maspon not only identifies the timbre of the *saluang*'s sound, but can also identify specific elements in the *saluang*'s melody in relation to the inner state he is trying to achieve. For example, in the melody of the *saluang*, Maspon might identify the trill sound, two notes played alternately in rapid succession, forming an up-and-down sound movement, not only as a sound produced by the *saluang* when played with a certain technique, but also associates it with certain emotional states that are in harmony with the inner experience he is trying to achieve, such as a feeling of vibration, turmoil, and so on. This will ultimately be stored in his memory as a sound with certain emotional characteristics that at certain moments can contract and interrupt Maspon's perception of the sound of the *saluang*. This means that by always associating the sound of the *saluang* with certain inner conditions, Maspon will identify particular aspects of the sound of the *saluang* at the molecular level (in the sense that certain sounds are not only identified as musical sounds, but also have certain characteristics according to his interpretation). This would be different if Maspon did not involve his inner feelings in his playing. His perception of the sound of the *saluang* would only stop at the awareness of the sound produced by the *saluang* musical instrument with a certain tone. In this case, the informant would only identify the sound of the *saluang* at the molar level (compound).

Both experiences described by the informants above show that intensifying

awareness of the musical object being perceived allows informants to see particular elements of an object. This particularity is important because it allows informants to realize the different properties of the same object. Only through awareness of these particular sonic details can perceptual richness enter memory and subsequently shape future encounters with the object. This differentiation of meaning, arising from the awareness of sonic particularity, forms the gateway through which empirical consciousness may shift into immanent experience. This means that in experiencing the same object, each informant is able to see the reality of the imagination with different sensations.

### Music and Consciousness Development

The differences in the informants' experiences, from empirical experiences to sensory experiences, show that when informants appreciate the music being played, they can experience a shift in consciousness. That consciousness can shift, become dynamic, and ultimately develop. In what Iwan recounts, his encounter with the sensation of chaos ultimately made him aware of the phenomenon of tempo klenengan (a type of accent that is not entirely in sync with the beat). Analytically, he cannot really talk about it in detail, but intuitively, he can play it in the performance. It is as if that kind of rhythm exists in his body: he is aware of the drumming pattern outside the *metric* measure that can be presented intuitively in the performance. What Iwan experienced indirectly shows that his awareness of the phenomenon of rhythm is developing. There is something new that

he realizes after experiencing the sensation of chaos that echoes in the form of micro rhythms in his head. The shift in consciousness that Iwan experiences is about the back-and-forth movement between virtual and actual reality that swings like a pendulum. As described above, Iwan begins the experience by playing music in reality. In his intensification of the actual sounds being played, he experienced a threshold experience in the form of the presence of micro-rhythms. This threshold experience ultimately became a gateway for him to experience the sensation of chaos. The presence of this sensation appeared in Iwan's consciousness as virtual reality. This is where Iwan experiences various potentials of consciousness that are ready to be actualized in his concrete experience of playing music. After Iwan experiences virtual reality, his consciousness begins to swing back to actual reality. However, when he returns to this actual reality, Iwan has brought with him a new consciousness that is completely different from his old consciousness. At this point, he realizes how to present the tempo klenengan, not analytically, but intuitively.

### CONCLUSION

In addressing the first research question, this study concludes that immanence in music can only be understood in relation to empirical experience. The reason is that immanence is the effect of memory contraction that interrupts perception. In order for informants to have memories, they must have experiences. This is where empirical experience becomes important as a crucial foundation for informants to be able

to experience immanence in music. However, empirical experience alone is not enough. In empirical experience, the informant must be able to find the particularity of the object being perceived. The informant must be able to find the uniqueness of the object in their perceptual consciousness at the molecular level. This is only possible if the informant intensifies their focus of consciousness when perceiving musical objects. In other words, the music we are perceiving must be truly internalized.

Without deep appreciation, music will only be present in our ears as a sequence of sounds, nothing more. Answering the second question, the musical parameters that enable informants to experience immanence can be anything. In Iwan's case, the entry point is an intramusical element (rhythm), while in Maspon's case, the entry point is an extra-musical element (inner state). In this case, it should be explained that appreciation is not the same as 'musicological analysis'. Each informant is free to appreciate music in their own way. Even informants who do not have a musical background can appreciate music in their own way. What matters is that informants identify particular elements of the musical object capable of leaving a deep impression—something that stings their consciousness during perception. It is this sting that has the potential to kidnap the informant's consciousness and crystallize it in a particular moment (Deleuze, 2019, p. 69) from the sequence of moments of sound in music. The broader an informant's musical knowledge, the greater their potential to recognize unique musical qualities, and thus the more possible entry points for immanent experience.

However, it is important to remember that the encounter with a striking moment in musical sound does not occur analytically, but intuitively (Deleuze, 2004, p. 22). Therefore, if various forms of knowledge are to be utilized as a means of discovering musical intensity, that knowledge must be internalized, not merely in cognitive awareness, but in the body. Such embodied knowledge enables both informants to encounter musical intensity within immanent consciousness.

The encounter with an immanent experience and the various sensations that accompany it ultimately leads the informant to realize a completely new reality, one that cannot (and perhaps cannot be) categorized into musicological or artistic categories. Iwan, with his awareness of *kleneng*, and Maspon, with his kinesthetic responsiveness, demonstrate that such experience arises outside conventional performance categories, such as the culture of "not playing wrong," stage formalities, or technical mastery. Instead, what they experience is a pre-reflective type of experience, one that may occur frequently but is not widely noticed and becomes a shared reflection that is then standardized in the concept of performance. In the author's personal interpretation, music allows them to encounter the essence of life, not just normative things. This is one of the phenomena of the depth of the informants' experience with music that still needs to be explored further.

\*\*\*

## REFERENCES

- Adeoye-Olatunde, O. A., & Olenik, N. L. (2021). Research and scholarly methods: Semi-structured interviews. *Journal of the American College of Clinical Pharmacy*, 4(10), 1358–1367.
- Adkins, B. (2018). To have done with the transcendental: Deleuze, immanence, intensity. *JSP: Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 32(3), 533–543.
- Bidima, J.-G., & Wiedorn, M. (2016). Intensity, music, and heterogenesis in Deleuze. In *Sounding the Virtual: Gilles Deleuze and the Theory and Philosophy of Music* (pp. 145–158). Routledge.
- Borgo, D. (2014). *What the music wants*. Soundweaving: Writings on Improvisation, 33–52.
- Brattico, P., Brattico, E., & Vuust, P. (2017). *Global sensory qualities and aesthetic experience in music*. *Frontiers in Neuroscience*, 11, 159.
- De Assis, P. (2017). Gilbert Simondon's 'Transduction' as Radical Immanence in Performance. *Performance Philosophy*, 3(3), 695–717.
- Deleuze, G. (2001b). *Pure immanence: Essays on a life*. Intro. John Reichman. Trans. Anne Boyman/Zone Books.
- Deleuze, G. (2019). *Cinema II: The time-image*. In *Philosophers on Film from Bergson to Badiou: A Critical Reader* (pp. 177–199). Columbia University Press.
- Eberle, T. S. (2014). *Phenomenology as a research method*. The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis, 184–202.
- Feschanka, S. (2021). Repertoire as a motivational tool for adult piano students. *International Journal for Cross-Disciplinary Subjects in Education (IJCDSE)*, 12(3), 4558–4564.
- Flórez Restrepo, J. A. (2015). Durée and temporality: A defense of Bergson's conception of time. *Discusiones Filosóficas*, 16(27), 49–61.
- Heaney, C. (2018). Pursuing Joy with Deleuze: Transcendental empiricism and affirmative naturalism as worldly practice. *Deleuze and Guattari Studies*, 12(3), 374–401.
- Hulse, B. (2008). On Bergson's concept of the virtual. *Gamut: Online Journal of the Music Theory Society of the Mid-Atlantic*, 1(1), 2.
- Kramer, L. (2021). Musical meaning: Toward a critical history. Univ of California Press.
- Loubere, N. (2017). Questioning transcription: The case for the systematic and reflexive interviewing and reporting (SRIR) method. 18(2), 22.
- Lytle, G. F., & Orgel, S. (2014). *Patronage in the Renaissance* (Vol. 658). Princeton University Press.
- Macarthur, S., Lochhead, J., & Shaw, J. (2016). *Music's Immanent Future: The Deleuzian Turn in Music Studies*. Routledge.
- Magaldi, D., & Berler, M. (2020). Semi-structured interviews. *Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences*, 4825–4830.
- Martinson, M. (2014). What is Adorno doing? Immanent critique as philosophical performance. In *Adorno and Performance* (pp. 171–189). Springer.

- McBride, R. (2014). Towards a sublime state of consciousness. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 21(11–12), 19–40.
- McCormick, L. (2015). Music as social performance. In *Myth, Meaning and Performance* (pp. 121–144). Routledge.
- Moisala, P., Leppänen, T., Tiainen, M., & Väättäinen, H. (2017). Introduction: Musical encounters with Deleuze and Guattari. *Musical Encounters with Deleuze and Guattari*, 1–29.
- Mulyawan, E. Y., & Wafa, M. U. (2018). Performing Arts Management in the Senggol Tromol Orchestra Group. *Journal of Music Arts*, 7(2), 82–91.
- Parung, C., Saidi, A. I., Sunarya, Y. Y., & Sihombing, R. M. (2025). Visualization of Pitch in Slendro and Diatonic Scales. *Pangung*, 35(2), 303–319.
- Pattie, D. (2016). The Events: Immanence and the Audience. *Journal of Contemporary Drama in English*, 4(1), 49–60.
- Permono, A. (2021). *Sangkan Paraning Dumadi Sumbu Filosofi Yogyakarta: Dalam Lensa Fenomenologi-Hermeneutika. Nun: Jurnal Studi Alquran Dan Tafsir Di Nusantara*, 7(1), 163–208.
- Qutoshi, S. B. (2018). Phenomenology: A philosophy and method of inquiry. *Journal of Education and Educational Development*, 5(1), 215–222.
- Rolli, M. (2016). Gilles Deleuze's Transcendental Empiricism: From Tradition to Difference. Edinburgh University Press.
- Saptono, S., Santosa, H., & Sutirtha, I. W. (2024). The Structure of Puspanjali Dance Accompaniment Music. *Pangung*, 34(1), 58–69.
- Shepherd, J. (2017). The 'Meaning' of Music. In *Whose Music?* (pp. 53–68). Routledge.
- Smith, D. W. (2012). *Essays on Deleuze*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Stuckey, H. L. (2015). The second step in data analysis: Coding qualitative research data. *Journal of Social Health and Diabetes*, 3(01), 007–010.
- Szepanski, A. (2017). Immanent Non-Musicology: Deleuze | Guattari vs. Laruelle. *Sonic Thinking: A Media Philosophical Approach*, 243.
- Tahiroğlu, K., Vasquez, J. C., & Kildal, J. (2017). Facilitating the musician's engagement with new musical interfaces: Counteractions in music performance. *Computer Music Journal*, 41(2), 69–82.
- Thomas, N. (2022). The Role of Emotion in Musicians' Musical Interpretation to Improve Aesthetic Performance (Case Study: Comparison Between Cellists and Guitarists). *Virtuoso: Journal of Music Studies and Creation*, 5(1), 1–10.
- Tinambunan, E. R. (2022). Gondang Batak Toba: Religious meaning and its implications for religion and customs. *SMART Journal (Society, Religion, and Tradition Studies)*, 8(2), 261–273.
- Usman, Y., Any, A., & Nnode, H. (2024). Unraveling Cosmological Relations in the Blatan Balik Culture of the Ipir, Nuha, and Hebing Tanarawa-Maumere Tribes in the Light of Cultural Philosophy. *Atmosfer: Journal of Education, Language, Literature, Arts, Culture, and Social Humanities*, 2(2),



193–213.

Vrahimis, A. (2022). *Bergsonism and the history of analytic philosophy*. Springer.