

Jaipongan Creative Music: from Local Expression to Global Phenomenon

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Abstract. This paper discusses the development of West Javanese folk performing arts, which in this case is represented by Jaipongan, namely a type of dance and music performance that developed in the early 1970s. Jaipongan's creative historical journey from the beginning to the present is not only shown from its music and dance aspects, but it is also shown from its development, existence and influence abroad. These study based on theories of history, sociology, ethnomusicology and musical creativity. By using literature review methods, interviews and while the author was one of the composers at Jugala from 1993 until now, it can be concluded that the roots of creativity in West Javanese folk performances during the New Order era until now are represented by Jaipongan.

Keyword: Jaipongan; History; Creativity; World Music

1 Introduction

In the corner of Istana Olah Raga (the Sports Palace corridor) Senayan (currently renamed "Gelora Bung Karno" stadium) in Jakarta, a capital city of Indonesia, a top of vocalist rock band Rolling Stones danced right in front of *pamirig* (traditional gamelan musicians) who were practicing *rampak kendang* on October, 29 1988. This important phenomenon is the beginning my story with JUGALA and implies a desire to ask "how does Jaipongan music align with its position as the "opening band" for Mick Jagger's show? However, the awareness of articulating this extraordinary event was actually difficult to stop my euphoria from being involved as a drum player at the Mick Jagger concert.



Fig 1. Rampak Kendang on Stage rehearsal as preparation for Mick Jagger Concert in ISTORA Senayan Jakarta, October 29, 1988, private documentation

As the progresses from event to event, Jaipongan brings massive suggestive power to a variety of real artistic and social activities. The national singing star contest, the Indonesian Film Festival (FFI), non-formal activities of government institutions, the private sector, and even profane military spaces are not spared from the socio-dynamics of Jaipongan music. Jaipongan music crosses cultural boundaries and dialogues with various performances outside its Sundanese culture, such as Wayang kulit and gamelan performances in Banyumas.



Fig 2. Military practicing as preparation as a in world peace mission in Lebanon, Private Documnet, 2014

Complexity of Jaipongan strengthens various power relations at sites of capital, politics, aesthetics and socio-music. This activity explains various meanings regarding central issues regarding cultural discourse, social stratification, gender, and the spirit of carrying out a national cultural strategy. Generally, Jaipongan music performances are played using the Salendro salancar-tuned gamelan *waditra*, which consists of two saron, peking, demung, cekik, bonang, kecrek, rebab, kendang, goong, interpreter alok, and interpreter kawih. This pirigan device model was initially present in the form of a simple device referring to the *waditra* tap tilu device.

What sets Jaipongan apart from most other non-traditional recorded regional genres is that it does not use western instruments or tuning; all rhythms, instruments and techniques of Jaipongan dancing are obtained from existing Sundanese performance genres [1], [2]. The complexity of Jaipongan is unraveled as a narrative of music, identity and culture demanding rules. In this case, a definition is needed about how previous performance genres shaped Jaipongan, why was the name Jaipongan chosen? Who plays a role in legitimizing Jaipongan?, what dynamics are Gugum Gumbira creative challenges?, and what kind of situation causes Jaipongan to influence different cultural locus?.

2 Research Methods

The development of Jaipongan is a periodization of time that contains specific events from the context of the existence of karawitan in West Java. In this respect there have been changes over the last 40 years. This paper was produced through interviews with Pangrawit, Juru sanggi, Juru kawih, musicians, dancers, producers, cultural figures, Jaipongan fans. Besides this, there is analysis of textual results carried out on a number of ancient manuscripts, theses, dissertations, reading books, newspapers.

Two methods used to study art history can be carried out through: (1) The process of studying the development of art as historically with a detailed analysis of technical aspects; (2) The process of studying the development of art with more detailed attention to the hopes and authorities of the groups of society who demand it [3].

This paper was obtained from two structural relationships, namely the activity structure observed both in writing (literature study) and orally, as well as the structure involving the writer (participatory observation). These two relationships are used because researcher participation from the early 1990s until now is still part of the JUGALA group organizational structure.

Jaipongan research is centered in the Bandung area, specifically at Padépokan JUGALA. Then, as this research progressed, it spread, not only centered in Bandung, but in Karawang, Subang, Jakarta, and even abroad.

3 Results & Discussion

3.1 Gugum Gumbira and early symptoms of Jaipongan

Gugum Gumbira is a central figure in various Jaipongan events. He is depicted as a businessman, bureaucrat, choreographer and composer. Gugum Gumbira performs aesthetic encounters of movement in a variety of partner and individual dance forms through the power of traditional gamelan music. The movement vocabulary displayed by each dance has an independent structure and pattern that develops from its "buhun" roots, namely ketuk tilu and penca silat. Gugum Gumbira's teenage years were also filled with forms of western-style artistic interactions. He really enjoys and is skilled at mastering the Cha-Cha and Twist tara styles [4]

The Jaipongan created by Gugum Gumbira is the result of creative efforts based on his understanding of the various local wisdom values of Sundanese traditions, and by trying to adapt or utilize imported western art. The result certainly has its own unique set of aesthetic values, and has even become a new identity for Sundanese society today [5]

The Jaipongan narrative is an aesthetic image of a West Javanese cultural locus that is very energetic in displaying diverse forms of folk art. Jaipongan was born in Gugum Gumbira's cult of thought and imaginative narrative which originated from reading a number of cultural challenges and political policies. He was able to build the concept of Jaipongan by conveying the meaning of "*ti jarian ka istana*" (from the small unuseful places to the palace). It was triggered by the "*ngak ngik ngok*" event in 1955 which triggered Indonesia's first President, Soekarno, to ban all forms of music that had a western smell. Rock and Roll, and all music that comes from the United States is seen as a form of cultural imperialism that is not in accordance with the personality of the Indonesian people.

Gugum Gumbira strengthens that the production and circulation of Jaipongan music is not intended to carry out anti-social artistic activities because it seems as if the industry is distancing artists from direct communication with the community. Gugum Gumbira determined the pattern of industrialization of Jaipongan music as a sense of responsibility towards the community who wishes to express Jaipongan in its various social interests, including serving the great possibility of not being able to hold live Jaipongan performances.

3.2 Jaipongan and the Global Environment

Outside the boundaries of its primordial culture, traces of Jaipongan musical activity have been widely discussed in various media reviews. A special report by British magazine f-Root contains Colin Bass's experience regarding the historical side of Jaipongan music. Even the main cover of this famous world music magazine is decorated with photos and images of the pamirig and Jaipongan kawih interpreters.

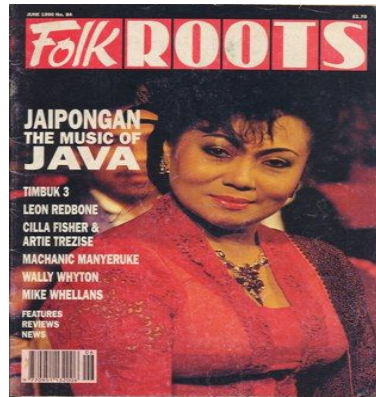


Fig 3. The prestigious world music magazine, in 1994, Documentation F-root magazine, England)

Jaipongan is another regional genre that complicates the division between musical categories. Jaipong (also called Jaipongan) is a popular music genre with catchy rhymes [6]. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Jaipong became part of a nationwide dance craze that transcended ethnic boundaries [1],[6]. Recently, Jaipongan has become the main ingredient for new diatonic-based hybrid genres, including dangdut jaipong, house jaipong, and even ska-jaipong, (a fusion of jaipong-ska. The ska-pong uses mostly Western instruments combined with Sundanese percussion [2].

Until now, the spread of Jaipongan music has never stopped, in almost every country the presence of this music is always an interesting topic of conversation. The journey undertaken by the Sambasunda music group had the greatest opportunity to spread Jaipongan music to various countries.



Fig 4. Sambasunda Performed at Festival International the Jazz De Montreal, 2015, Private Documentation

The concept of a collaborative performance between Jaipongan music and forms of electronic and digital music exploration has become a creative challenge in various countries.



Fig 5. Gamelan Jaipongan Performed by Sambasunda at Rodulstad Festival, Germany, 2003

4 Conclusion

Jaipongan locality is widely seen as music that is uniquely organized and dynamic. The characteristics of the sound then unite the complete form that represents the image of Kasundaan. Sundanese people view Jaipongan as a social unit bound by genealogical views, language, customs, symbols that are different from those of audiences outside their primordial Sundanese.

The sensation of Jaipongan music besides playing a dual role in identifying the locality of traditional music in West Java as well as deciphering the meaning of each of its stylistic contents. The texts contained in Jaipongan music outline the primordial identity which is characterized by the style of the performance. The sonic elements created by Jaipongan music give rise to the aural productivity of wewengkon (original regional territory). Gugum Gumbira never uses foreign terms to identify his aesthetic meanings, even though he often absorbs references from the Cha Cha, Twist and Rock n Roll musical styles.

Jaipongan's creativity is a reading of the social reality of West Javanese people who are identifying themselves by representing music as part of social life. Apart from that, Jaipongan music breaks down creative boundaries by involving more specific social roles and meanings, such as gender, communally standardized ethnicity.

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