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## NUSANTARA ETHNIC ENSEMBLE TOWARDS PIONEERING NATIONAL MUSIC DEVELOPMENT

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### ABSTRACT

The varieties of Nusantara culture become so attractive among art observers around the world, one of the derivative products is known as Nusantara Ethnic. The occurrence of these Nusantara ethnic community, which later become Nusantara (nationality) when dealing with teaching materials, are very interesting for in-depth study. Gangsadewa as one of Nusantara ethnic music developers has completely done many innovation and experiments in the repertoire of the results of intense exploration. Looking at this movement is no longer about the use of multi-ethnic instruments, but it is considered as the spirit of nationalism and concern for the existence of ethnic Nusantara which becomes the focus of this movement contextually. There are several aspects of this Nusantara ethnic ensemble, namely ethnological, socio-anthropological, and musicological aspects. Gangsadewa has done them simultaneously. The collected data is classified based on its accompaniment, innovation of the instrument (music tool), philosophical values, aesthetic understandings, which involve the professional musician directly and analyzed descriptively. The research used descriptive method to analyze the data. This observation began with stages of preparation, observation, and development in the form of paper creation. The result shows the expectation in providing the inputs for the development of strength-based cultural arts of the local genius on an ongoing basis.

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### INTRODUCTION

Nusantara, within its cultures varieties, has created many derivations of its product both tangible and intangible. One of the products, in the art context, is known as tradition. From the perspective of etymology, tradition is a legacy from one generation to another in the environment of a certain ethnic/community. As time goes by, tradition must keep up and adapt to the globalization issue (contemporary). This issue is normal among our social life because human always develop to maintain their existence. Moreover, the diversity from Sabang to Merauke is

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our precious legacy to be one of world heritage. Thus, our next move is to create a movement and development to protect them by organizing seminar, workshop, or any advance researches to introduce the beauty of our Nusantara music legacy.

Generally, Nusantara music is every kind of music found along Nusantara boundaries. The rich of rhythm, rhyme, and harmony create a significant taste for Nusantara legacy. This unique form of Nusantara music is so attractive that musician and art observers around the world come to do some experiment with them. The originality of the resulting process of its tradition become an independent identity for each ethnic in Indonesia. We can take examples from percussion instruments such as gong, some ethnic like Jawa, Sunda, and Bali possess the instrument. But, the philosophy, function, and its technique are different among those ethics. The ability of traditional musician become the inspiration for the local and international musician to compose and blend with their original song. There are many creations of collaboration among Nusantara music with western culture that creates inspiring work for others. In 1960, Tony Scott began his work in accordance with Jack Lesmana did some arrangement to Bali's traditional song. Moreover, Eberhard Schuner, in 1970, in collaboration with I Gedhe Kompiang Raka (Bali's musician) created a song named Bali Agung.

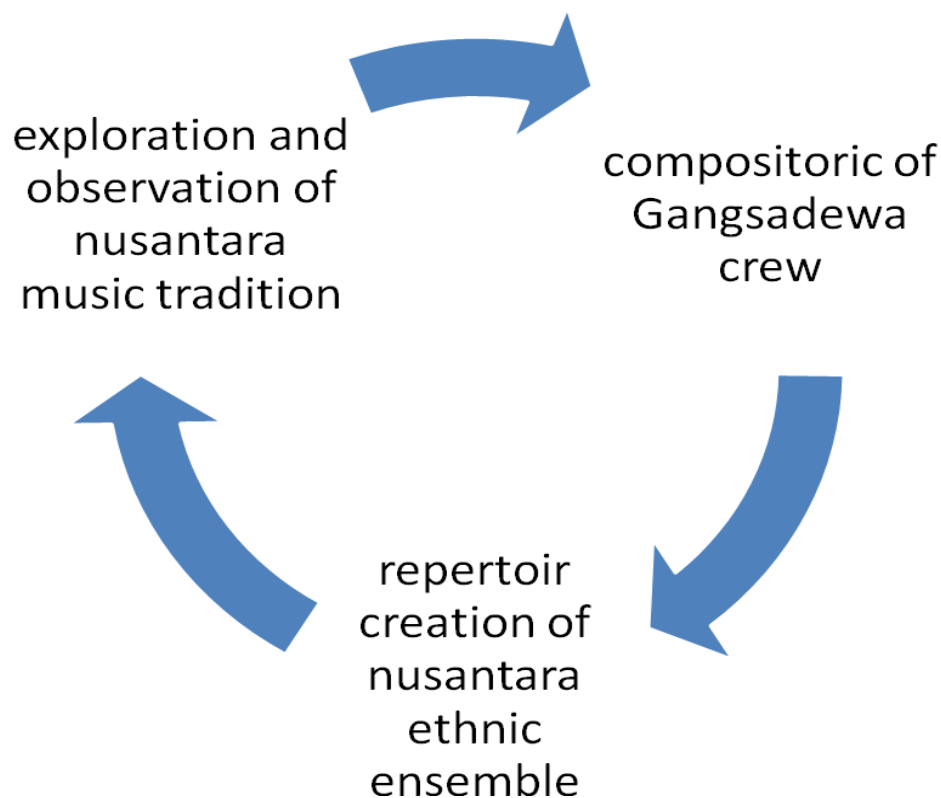
From the example above, we can assume that Bali's traditional song has a potential chance to be international creation as a genuine piece or collaboration with an international musician. The world music trend opens many chances for Indonesian composers to compete and show their creation to the world by using Nusantara as their base music composition. They possess free exploration to use the composition from every ethnic of Nusantara, with the creativity of the young compositionist, there will be much new music composition and it will also introduce the corresponding ethnic to the world. The response from music observers gives much advice for the composer. Thus, their collaboration makes the availability for their creation to be presented in an international event. Gangsadewa, as one of the contemporary ethnic music community, is very competent in introducing and promoting the varieties of Nusantara sounds. The consistency of their works through Nusantara ethnic music becomes their identity as many curators from Australia and Japan chose their music to be presented in the international event.

Yogyakarta as one of the art center for cross-ethnic becomes the major art inspiration for the entertainers who want to learn about Indonesia. All art communities of Indonesia gather in Yogyakarta as the melting point, the summit states that there must be an ensemble of Indonesian art which is founded, one of which is Gangsadewa. It provides a legal institution to cover the sounds of Nusantara ranging from the instruments to the development of Nusantara pioneering development. This institution has started since 2002 by contemplating with a professional musician from multi-discipline. As a community, Gangsadewa has its vision to compete in world music and conserve the traditional music within international taste.

## **DISCUSSION**

From the background of the study, this research would try to reveal the direct and indirect impact of innovation accompaniment for Nusantara ethnic among local and interlocal society. As the base of the theoretical framework, it assumes the statements of the art observers who most of them state that the development of culture is in line with human existence. According to Jenks, Adiluhung culture is the reflection of the order of society which possesses a philosophical point of view and value which in accordance with the feeling, logic, or the sensibility of cosmic tendency. As the culture is in line with human existence, it makes several changes with the function and value of culture among communities. The principality of functionalism analysis is "integrity" and "inter-relation", thus culture and society are known as two identical items. This understanding motivates Gangsadewa to create a scheme of cross-ethnic music composition as an application or expression of the aesthetic within genuine identity. It is started by gathering Nusantara sound aspects from the music and composer around Indonesia. The realization of Gangsadewa becomes the framework of Nusantara base music composition.

In the format of performance, Gangsadewa performance as a presentation of the results of observation of creativity, wholeness, and originality of repertoire can be the main focus and expected as the philosophical message of archipelago music which can be appreciated by the audience directly. For example, when Gangsadewa performed their work with the tag line "Jogja Sounds of Archipelago", the theme was the result of sediment from the diversity of cultural elements of the archipelago and the city of Yogyakarta, it could be likened to the estuary and became an important component in the context of privilege. The phenomenon was aimed by Gangsadewa trigger creative ideas, in the packaging of musical performances cross ethnic archipelago, with the issue of non-primordial, hence the mosaic sounds in the repertoire of music became a unity of harmonic concepts of performances. Performances from several regions such as Kalimantan, Aceh, Bali, Lampung, Madura, Java sublimed with the wind orchestra or western percussion ensemble. The event showed the power of archipelago music as a show of art which could be a center of interest. Schematically, the chart of the transfer process of Gangsadewa knowledge is as follows:



Looking at the process chart, it is observed that the concept of the ethnic ensemble is continuous and simultaneous between elements will provide strength as a support for the birth of the repertoire of ensemble ethnic archipelago. Ethnic music is a representation of the dynamics of life and can continue to evolve over time. Its presence is not stagnant in a vacuum but is directly proportional to the movement of time. The ethnic diversity of the archipelago is a reflection of the long history of civilization in the archipelago. With a variety of social contexts ethnic music has a role and function not only works of art but also has aspects, spiritual, economic and ecological. (Simatupang 1995).

#### **Playing: An Approach to the Work of Gangsadewa Music**

What is often lacking in the realm of music creation is "playing" behavior. In playing, it turns out that it has positive aspects, namely as a particular method to transfer elements of

collective awareness to a more autonomous concept of art. The understanding of playing here is very different in general terms. This method certainly leads to the truth of doubtful knowledge. For that we will see the stages of the method as follows:

- a) Starting from a methodical doubt that nothing is accepted as something that is right. Consequently, we must avoid being in a hurry in prejudice. The decisions only accept something that is presented to reason. This concept is so clear and firm that it is impossible to doubt.
- b) All the material and problems examined are divided into as many parts as possible, when necessary for an adequate solution.
- c) The mind system is carried out by starting from understanding the object from the simplest and easiest. Then gradually, step by step, to a more complex understanding. In other words, from a simple and absolute understanding of a complex and relative understanding.

Finally, it comes to a review of problems that are universal, so that certainty is found. Thus, there is no doubt about working (Bakker, 1984: 74-78).

### **Spirit of Tradition: Source of Creation**

In a view outside tradition, a creative process is very personal. Therefore, in making work, new methods are born and said to be permanent or certain. Just as in the creative understanding of western musical works which always maintains micro relations in personal consciousness builds its imaginative musical construction.

Thus, the musical form often occurs during performances through a process of interaction between musicians. Qualitative essence as a work of art usually cannot be learned from its musical notation. Thus, what happens is a misunderstanding of the academic environment in works that are not equipped with scores. Even though qualitative complexity is a social expression that is no less important in academic discussion.

Cultural transformation always happens in the process, even stagnation may arise in a certain period. But, the spirit of traditional culture will never be killed. He grew up in a continuous cultural process in the form of convention, transformation, conflict, innovation, even anarchy and so on (Suka Harjana, 2003).

Tradition as a process and the results of cultural inheritance are not interpreted as objects that must be caressed, but a process of acceptance, rejection, and change in accordance with current conditions. From here humans can be separated from tradition while departing from it to reconstruct the past for the present. Thus, tradition is primarily about patterns of change as an attempt to form new forms of development which are natural instincts towards optimal self-expansion that comes from a creative imagination.

In Indonesia, the role of ethnic music culture can be considered as a very important thing in various kinds. Especially the whole ethnic music culture always represents one aspect of National identity. In general, the music of ethnic culture is considered to be a standard and rather a static tradition, even though in its development it has evolved, it is not felt due to the nature of its behavior as well. In the development of Indonesian composers, this dynamic can actually erase the stigma that traditional music culture is no longer something static. It can be seen from the work of Indonesian composers who have ethnic cultural backgrounds.

Composers who use traditional or ethnic music idioms have backgrounds of a certain ethnicity. At the level of renewal, they are still very concerned about certain norms, sometimes norm problems become a serious problem in the context of cultural accountability. The influence of other cultures in the process of working on it does not interfere, so here personal creativity is very prominent. Most models like this are very typical of developing in Indonesia. The aesthetics of group play in the process of creation that gives freedom to each player is very typical for Indonesian culture.

Their creative process is through various experiments that resemble an experimental process. However, when this kind of work is presented or staged, it has come out of the

experimental phase and has become a definite work. If we compare it with experimental elements by John Cage, sometimes it also exists, for example when it is only in the form of basic material and outlines that have been determined beforehand, while the process of testing is through spontaneous interpretations. In general, composers who have a certain traditional or ethnic background, in the process of their work, are based on direct practice. In this regards, familiarity with musicians including the suitability of the background and group homogeneity becomes very important.

For people who have backgrounds outside of this culture, this kind of work is considered to be poor because the quality of players is not discussed. In fact, in the process of the birth of the work, the quality of the player determines the quality of the work. In other words, the social element, the cooperation process, the unity between the creator and the interpreter are far more attention. For example, the author introduces an Indonesian composer, Dr. Rahayu Supanggah.

Rahayu Supanggah is not only known as a music teacher and composer, but he is also an ethnomusicologist who is a *karawitan* theorist and cultural observer. Coming from a family of artists (*dalang*), since his childhood, his musical experience was guaranteed. While being a student at the Indonesian Academy of Karawitan ASKI (now the Indonesian Art Institute) in Surakarta, Supanggah mostly only played gamelan rather than worked on it. But in the late 60s and early 70s, he began experimenting. On one occasion quoted by Suka Harjana, he said: There is a tendency on traditional music to avoid changes in rhythm, contrast volumes, and sharp sound quality

The statement is also often implied in the expressions of the *pengrawit* when they mention several terms, such as *alus*, *penak*, *ora nyeklek* (not broken), *rampak*, *nyamleng*, *mat*, *laras*, and so on for things that are considered good. They also often say that in almost all gendings there are propagations or transitions that cause slowness — until young people call it as an art that causes drowsiness. Although the contained hope is to add the repertoire of traditions, life, and try to express the taste, it can create a refreshing of a new feeling.

Rahayu Supanggah is a composer who is rooted in tradition, but this tradition is not considered as something static. Tradition, for Supanggah, is only the starting point for an evolutionary development which is the main demand of a contemporary composer.

The above matter has more or less influenced the concepts or attitudes and ideas used by this Gangsadewa group, with a combination of tradition and non-tradition concepts

## CONCLUSIONS

According to Gadamer, the artwork is a precursor of values and norms of succession between tradition and innovation from the past to the present. Through "rammemorazione", the "presence of the past" is helping the present. The ratio cannot achieve total emancipation from what happened (in the past) without losing a certain share of it. In other words, in history it always happens that some are left behind and some are awakened, some are caught. Only in aesthetic hermeneutics can there be a fusion of "overgrowth" and subsequent applying in the "present". Similarly, the emergence of new tradition works as a response to the development of civilization would have logical consequences for current and future cultural products but still, carry the local element of genius as the identity of the archipelago. Performing arts, especially music today become an asset of intellectual property with the opportunity to go international therefore we should have appeared with the identity of *ke-Nusantara-an* as a representation of idealism and personality of Indonesian art people in the scene of world music.

Research development on the world of modern art cannot be separated from previous history and very contextual with today. Creative practice is a revolutionary form and very interesting to observe more deeply. Art and humanistic become the object center of interest that is in synergy and closely related to the work resulting from a creative process. The relationship of creative practice by artists to the world of research is very close, especially in the context of innovation and the existence of an object or subject of research to observe and criticize the contemporary works based on the idea of tradition or habitus for artists or practitioners. The

interconnectedness of knowledge with the practice of art determines the direction of cultural forms in general (Smith and Dean 2009).

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