

THE TALEMPONG MUSICAL CREATIONS: EFFORT TO PRESERVE THE MINANGKABAU TRADITIONAL MUSIC

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This article aims at describing the phenomenon of talempong musical creation as one of the efforts to preserve the Minangkabau traditional musical instrument to keep surviving in the modern music hegemony in West Sumatra. The article is started by giving a clear picture of talempong music creation, its composition that is compared to other talempong musical instruments that available in West Sumatra. It also shows the preservation of Minangkabau traditional music in the format of modern performing arts. Finally, it describes the existence of this traditional music in the society.

Keywords: Minangkabau, Talempong music creation, Preservation.

Introduction

Nowadays, almost all folk musics and folk dances are replaced and put to the side by modern music, such as, pop, rock, and k-pop as new music fever. In Indonesia, especially, West Sumatra, the traditional music of Minangkabau with its folk performance, such as, *talempong*, *shalawat dulang*, *randai*, are not so interesting for the young generation anymore. The function of these traditional performances as the entertainment for the society, for example in the wedding ceremony, is being replaced by modern band or “single organ”. Of course, this phenomenon worries the traditional arts practioners and art academician. One of the ways to preserve this traditional music is creatively developing this traditional music performance.

In general, art performances in Minangkabau tradition are called the *pamainan anak nagari* (the villagers’ play). It is because the traditional art performance arises from the tradition of the people and played by the people in the village. *Pamainan anak nagari* is also known as folk art. It can be grouped into two main groups, namely (1) vocal group called as *dendang* (cormorant), and (2) a group of instrumental musicians called as *karawitan* (Kartomi, 1990). In *karawitan* there are many musical instruments that used to be popular in the past. These musical instrument plays an important role in various events in the village and clans within the village.

One of the Minangkabau folk art is is talempong. Actually, talempong has long been known in Minangkabau even from the megalitic era that is indicated by the discovery of talempong batu (stone talempong) in Nagari Talang Anau, District Lima Puluh Kota, West Sumatra (Pätzold, 2013: 271-291; Louven, 2013; Miller & Williams, 2008: 340-342). This talempong batu is still used by the society for some ritual ceremony in Nagari Talang Anau. This finding also support the argument that talempong is identical to Minangkabau culture.

Basically, talempong is known as percussion instrument likes a gong made of copper, brass, and tin (Hanefi *et al*, 2004). Talempong has various forms and the names that related to the

materials used in the manufacturing process, the name of the area of origin of musical instruments, number talempong used, position of the talempong played, and its functions (Department of Education and Culture, 1985). It can be seen from some of the names given to the Minangkabau traditional musical instruments, such as: *talempong batu* or 'stone talempong' is made of stone found in Talang Anau, District 50 Kota; *talempong batuang* or 'bamboo talempong' made of bamboo used in Nagari Sungai Talang, District 50; *talempong aguang* 'majestic/big talempong' used for a great traditional ceremonies; *talempong pacik* 'holded talempong' which is played by holding two talempong instrument in hand, and *talempong kreasi* 'new talempong musical creation' as a result of the creativity of people who play it (Ardipal, 2011).

Talempong or gong-chimes in West Sumatra is actually can be found everywhere in Sumatra as punctuating instruments, marking regular rhythmic periods (sounding, for example, every four or eight or sixteen beats) or the end of melodic segments (Smithsonian Folkways, 1996:4). Talempong can also be found in Philipines and Vietnam (ibid: 5; Pätzold, 2013: 277). In Java and Bali, this instrument is also known as *gamelan*. If the stone talempong found in Talang Anau, West Sumatra, is the oldest instrument in the history of talempong, it might be possible that stone talempong was the oldest gong-chime ensemble in South East Asia earlier than the the gamelan the end of Majapahit gloriness (Nursyirwan, 2011).

Among various type talempong musical instruments, the performance of talempong musical creation is the folk music that keep their existence in the society. Currently, this talempong performance is still widely accepted by society and still plays its important role in the traditional ceremony. Although there is hegemony of modern music performance, such as, pop music, western, rock, and the current one is 'k-pop' which squeeze the other traditional music performance, the talempong musical creation keeps well established. It is because this traditional art gets an opportunity to develop into new music creations in modern art performance (Ardipal, 2011). The new music creation of talempong is a kind of effort made by several parties to give "a new style" to the traditional arts in order to be accepted to the present generation.

Bahar (2009: 179) defines *Talempong kreasi* (talempong musical creation) as the music played with ensemble talempong by using diatonic scale system and the music composition system is necessarily processed based on the science of harmony. Talempong musical creation is a traditional art form that has undergone with a various contiguity and alignment of such way, thus its presentation as a new form of music is more dynamic, high flexibility and can adapt with any development of appreciation, perception, tastes, and desires of the community. The creation talempong have been used or is currently used for a variety of arts activities the wider community. Thus, there has been a shift in the function and use the traditional arts in the community towards the positive ways.

The phenomenon of talempong musical creation shows an indication that it brings this music become survive in the society. This creation is a kind of conservation effort to follow the natural processes that take place in the community supporting the traditional arts. This article explores about the talempong musical creation that exist among modern music performance and the comparison with classical talempong with.

Research Methodology

This research a qualitative research by conducting document analysis, interview with the practioners and lecturers, and observation. Reseach was conducted in Padang, source of data were some traditional art groups (Sanggar Seni Syofyani, Sanggar Citra Kembara, Sanggar Tuah

Saiyo, and Sanggar Sendratasik FBS UNP). Data were analyzed by using Miles and Huberman (1984) which consists of data collection, data reduction, data display, data verification and conclusion. These steps were conducted continuously in order to find valid data.

Discussion

Creating a new style of traditional music is a pretty good alternative in order to maintain the tradition of music. Creations can be defined in a variety of forms, tailored to the capabilities and limitations both by tradition and appreciation of art and the public perception of art. Currently, Talempong in the community has always been associated with or cultural ceremonies or other traditional events. Talempong music is something that is not always present in every ceremony held in the community. However, its presence in the middle of the ceremony always gives identity to the people as a sign of a celebration in the village (*Alek Nagari*).

Creative music of talempong firstly appeared in West Sumatra as the creation of Minangkabau Musician, Akhyar Adam, Yusaf Rahman, Murad St. Saidi, and Iryad Adam. They are firstly lecturers at ASKI Padang Panjang, then Yusaf Rahman moved to IKIP Padang (currently UNP), and Murad St. Saidi moved to SMKI Padang. They continuously put Creative Music of Talempong as one of the subject in their institutions (Hanefi *et al*, 2004: 68). In the beginning of 1980, the genre of music not only used in the traditional dance, but they have been used in the pop Minang song, and this performance is also followed by various modern instruments such electric guitar, keyboard, flute, etc (Bandem, 2006: 31). It shows that this traditional instrument can be accepted well in the society, and its performance follows the new modern instruments.

In the presentation, talempong music creation still consists of several supporting instruments, such as: talempong, cymbals, *gandang*, *Bansi*, *saluang*, and other musical instruments (observation at Sendratasik FBS and Sanggar Syofyani). Although, there is no an absolute rule in the instruments used is a traditional musical instrument in Minangkabau as a standard for any group. This thing that makes talempong as a creative music performance can be used by any music group although they just used a limited number of traditional instruments. This combination makes young generation can accept the talempong in performing various song from the local area (Minangkabau song), even dangdut, and western song.

Related to its composition, actually, there are no standard rules on the composition of musical instruments supporting talempong creations. The type and amount of support instruments used depends on the needs and creativity of the player who serve the event that will be enlivened by the music. Talempong is one of the musical instruments and the melody that became the pillar is an absolute necessity in the performing arts (Hanefi *et al*, 2004: 74). This is because the instrument talempong used as a melodic instrument in the performing arts as the characteristics talempong music creation.

Figure 1 shows the schematic composition musical instrument used in talempong creations. This picture shows the tones that available in the talempong musical creation. These tones have more option that almost similar with piano.

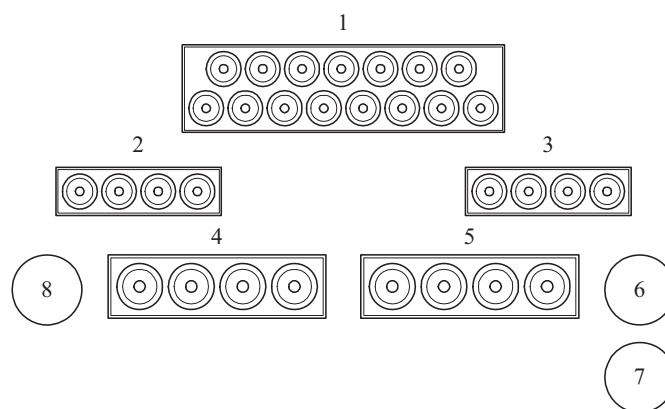


Figure 1 Composition of Creative Music of Talempong.

Note

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. Talempong melody | 5. High tone Canang |
| 2. basic tone talempong | 6. Gandang 1 (drum) |
| 3. high tone talempong | 7. Gandang 2 (drum) |
| 4. basic tone Canang (bigger talempong) | 8. Bansi |

The tone of new music creation of has used the system of diatonic scales (Bahar, 2009: 179). It is one of the differences between classical talempong which used pentatonic scales and new creative music of talempong with diatonic scales. The effects of this adjustments to the diatonic scales talempong is the broader coverage of the songs that can be sung with the instrument. In the past, the use of the pentatonic talempong in performing arts have limitations in terms of tones, song variations and types of songs, then the presentation of new talempong creations can resolve the problem. So there will be more kinds and types of songs that can be sung with the talempong as traditional musical instruments, such as: latin rhythmic songs (Rhumba, cha - cha, bossas and etc), Indonesian pop songs, dangdut songs and so on. By mixing the music and songs of different types of course will bring the feel of a more varied, better accompaniment for musicians, singers and those who listen to the music (Ardipal, 2011).

Notes contained on each musical instrument support talempong creations can be seen in Figure 2, 3 and 4 below.

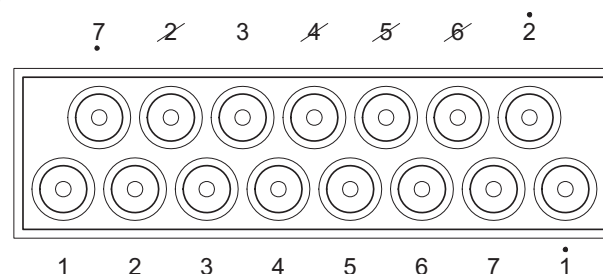


Figure 2 Notes in the Melody Talempong set.

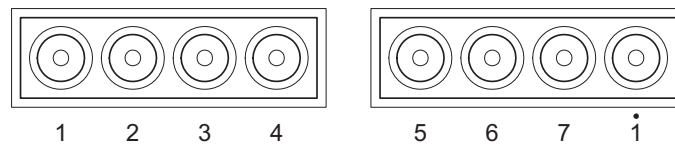


Figure 3 Notes in the Basic Tone Talempong Set and High Tone Talempong set.

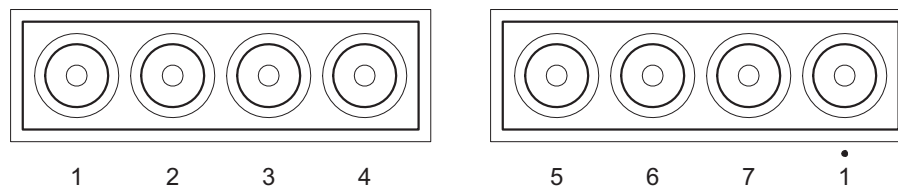


Figure 4 Note in the Basic Tone Canang Set and high Tone Canang Set.



Figure 5. Some players Play Talempong Musical Instrument.

Basic tones of talempong consist of these tones (c - d - e - f - g - a - b - c '), according to Hanefi *et al* (2004 : 71), it is also equipped with a melody talempong added with (kres and mol). Talempong music creations can be used for two different basic tones, true tones are the basic tone C and F. Since, this talempong musical creation has more tones, this talempong can be used to accompany various songs, music, and can join with other musical instruments.

If we compared with *talempong pacik* (holded talempong), the tones are really different. A set of talempong pacik in Nagari Ateh Guguk, consists of Ais4 - C5 - D5 - E5 - F5 - G5 (Backus, 1977). The complete frequency can be seen below:

First tone	: Ais4 + 3 Hz = 469, 16 Hz
Second tone	: C5 + 8 Hz = 531, 25 Hz
Third tone	: D5 + 2 Hz = 589, 33 Hz
Fourth tone	: E5 - 10 Hz = 649, 26 Hz
Fifth tone	: F5 + 5 Hz = 703, 46 Hz
Sixth tone	: G5 - 12 Hz = 771, 99 Hz



Figure 6. Some Players Play Talempong Pacik.

Of course, this condition make the talempong pacik cannot be used to accompany various songs. This kind of traditional musical instruments are mostly used in a parade, such as to accompany the married couple in a wedding ceremony. This talempong is played by interlocking system.

Moreover, whenever the composition of talempong musical creation is compared with the general Minangkabau classical talempong, such as stone talempong in Talang Anau has pentatonic scales which is considered the oldest in Minangkabau and Malay (Adam, 1970). This classical pentatonic scales consists of c-d-e-f-g (Adam, 1970). Of course, there is only a limited songs that can be accompany with this classical talempong. However, Pätzold (2013: 279) says that the instrument of talempong batu consists of six Stone ingots of varying size and mood and has not remotely the appearance a talempong Gong game. He would rather, the name must as a transferred approaching the Phenomenon can be understood, the name Gandang batu (stone Gandang; Gandang: a drum melart) was also used by some informants to describe the instrument). Louven (2013) also gives a more detail notes of the talempong batu in Talang Anau. Related to its function, *talempong batu* is only used for a very limited ceremony in Nagari Talang Anau.

The adjustment of the new musical creation of talempong was firstly done by the 4 Minangkabau musicians that give good advantages toward the presentation techniques of talempong creations. Nowadays, talempong can collaborate with other types of musical instrument and music, especially the kind of Western music. Then on the other side, this traditional music will be preserved as a folk music that can be accepted by all people.

Playing techniques of new creation of talempong depends on the songs. Technique plays a musical instrument may also be different because of their role in a show. The following discussion will focus on the playing techniques talempong creation, succession is talempong

melody, basic tone talempong, high tone talempong, basic tone cymbals, high tone cymbals, gandang and Bansi.

In terms of playing technique, according Hanefi *et al* (2004), talempong in Minangkabau can be divided into two kinds. First, talempong held (*Pacik*) and secondly, talempong which is placed on real (*rancangan*) see figure 7. Talempong *Pacik* can be played while sitting, standing, and walking (see figure 6 ways of keeping *talempong pacik* in hand). Meanwhile, talempong placed on the real can be played while sitting on a mat and the bigger size can be played while standing or sitting in a chair.



Figure 7 The *Racakan* of Talempong

The use of real models (*rancangan*) is appropriate for a show as it is affected by conditions of arena where the show takes place, whether it is performing on stage or performances are presented in the open field. When the show is on stage, the stage height should also be considered separately for real usage (*rancangan*). Low-sized stage will result in an easy show to be watched by the public, so *rancangan* both used to inflict stage system that has a high aesthetic value, similarly, for the performance of talempong creations in the open field. Conversely, if the stage is used as high, then the player should not use *racakan* of the talempong.

Talempong musical creation is placed on *racakan* that make the player plays it like a piano. They can play melody that cannot be done with other talempong, such talempong *pacik*, talempong *batu*, or talempong bamboo. Talempong musical creation which has diatonic scales make it possible to accompany and combine with other music make it survive in modern music condition.

Currently, talempong musical creations can be enjoyed simultaneously with a single organ music, a kind of music that are rampant development in West Sumatra today. The sole organ music where the music will be presented already in the program with its own programming language by using a keyboard solo instrument.

In the presentation, a single organ being the main accompaniment, which is where some of the sound of musical instruments has been in the program a unified whole, such as: drums, guitar, piano, bass guitar and strings. Some tuned instrument can also be provided from the music in the show which will take turns filling talempong melody with melody. Basic tone talempong, high tone talempong, basic tone cymbals, cymbal gandang still running high and

essentially functions as a filler rhythm, forming chords, and control the tempo. The second fusion music presented two types of music that blend into one, namely Western music and musical traditions.

In everyday life this time, the existence of talempong musical creations often performed at wedding ceremonies. Combined with single organ music presenting new music breathe but still has the feel of a thick Minangkabau music. At a welcoming ceremony and ceremony batagak panghulu, as well as on other traditional ceremonies, music has been supplanted by the practicality of modern music that is also capable of high-tech present nuanced music tradition, such as the single and the band organ. Meanwhile, classical talempong, talempong batu, is only played for a limited ceremonies with a special ritual before playing it.

Based on the above the observation and finding above, the function talempong musical creations in the society can be analyzed that it is adapted to the intention and the purpose of presentation in the community. In the previous section has argued that the creation talempong music usually presented at a ceremony welcoming guests, panghulu batagak ceremony and wedding ceremony. Talempong musical creation has its own meaning and function well by the organizers of the ceremony and the party who witnessed the ceremony, in which case the invitation, guests and other elements of society.

At talempong musical creations, signs that the sounds of this music can be captured and accepted by the public. Sounds of musical instruments that are played by talempong musical creations create ethnic music that seems more elegant compared to the use of single organ only. These presence of talempong musical creation also provides information to the public, that there has been a traditional ceremony that involves traditional Minangkabau music (Bahar, 2009: 252), for example: the wedding ceremony and reception ceremonies guests. It also signs the the host has important position in the society.

The public will respond well to enliven the visit and witnessed the ceremony, which was held by the organizers of the ceremony or just to watch the show talempong musical creations. Here it can be observed that on one side of the organizers of the ceremony has been using music as a medium of communication talempong creations with the community about the ceremony is being held, which means also that talempong creations has met the four functions of music functions Merriam (1987).

Physical reactions caused due to an action that is accepted. Action here is the musical offerings talempong creations. By presenting music talempong creations, either directly or indirectly to stimulate or provoke people or people who watch the show to react.

The reaction can be in various forms, such as the reaction of the person who presents the show, the physical part moves follow the tempo of the music to express herself emotionally to play his music. besides, the audience that many would make the music player will appear more vibrant so that maximum satisfaction can be achieved, either by a person who serves as well as by people who see the show. While the reactions of people who witnessed the presentation can be seen as part moves, dancing or swaying motion to adjust to the rhythm of the hearing whether consciously or unconsciously.

In general arts or performing arts serve as a medium of entertainment for the community. Similarly, the creation talempong music. Talempong creations are traditional Minangkabau music that has been modified both in the tuning system, forms of presentation and musical instruments are used, although its main supporters musical instrument traditions remain, such as: talempong, gandang, cymbals, Bansai and saluang.

In presenting talempong musical creations today, this musical instruments are often combined with music programmed in West Sumatra or better known as a single organ. This

single organ music using a single keyboard instrument, which has provided a variety of music that has been in the program to the needs of music in general and free. Music in a dish like this is currently more or often shown for various activities or ceremonies held keadatan society.

Talempong musical creations could present more options and a choice of music tracks , certainly in the form that has been modified. This led to more and more people are able to taste music or can be displayed with the music accompaniment. For people who enjoy the music , then there will be encouragement from him to join expression or react. Here it could be said that the people who watched the music tertunjukan been entertained by the presentation of music is presented.

Conclusion

Creatively modifying the traditional classical music by completing the tones make talempong can be accepted in wider music performance in West Sumatra. It indicates, that the creation of traditional music is a good alternative in order to maintain the traditional musical instrument to be acceptable in “modern taste” of music for new generation. This creation develops the perceptions of art appreciation within society. Talempong musical creations can be defined as a tailored to the capabilities and limitations both by tradition and appreciation of art and the public perception of art.

Talempong musical creations is a traditional art form has undergone various contiguity and alignment such that it presents a new form of music that is more dynamic. It has a high degree of flexibility and can adapt with the development of appreciation, perception, taste of people's music style. Moreover, talempong creations have been used or is currently used for a variety of community arts activities. So there has been a slight shift in the function and usefulness of the traditional arts in the community towards the positive.

In the presentation, talempong creations may consist of several instruments that are supportive, such as: talempong, cymbals, gandang, Bansi, saluang and other instruments as desired person performing creativity. But in the game talempong creations, not absolute instruments used is a traditional musical instrument Minangkabau. There are times when the creations that appear combined with other areas of musical instruments in Indonesia and Western musical instruments, such as guitar, violin , saxophone, clarinet, flute and keyboard.

Changes shades that were presented at talempong art creation on the one hand the impact the arts can be accepted by society because society in accordance with the spiritual atmosphere of the time. On the other hand, changes the feel of the presented impact the loss of some aspects that may give identity to the art itself. But the process of assimilation is at least still able to maintain traditional arts supporters in the community.

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