

Kenthongan Banyumas: A Study of Organology Development

Ibnu Amar Muchsin^{1,*} Syahrul Syah Sinaga¹ Endang Kusri¹ Danang Ardyanto¹

¹ Drama, Dance, and Music Education, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia

*Corresponding author. Email: amarflute@mail.unnes.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Kenthongan Banyumas Art is a musical ensemble with the basic material of instruments made of bamboo which has been well developed in the Banyumas area and outside the Banyumas area. These basic materials are mostly found in the mountainous area along the Serayu river overgrown with bamboo plants. Kenthongan Banyumas uses a diatonic barrel with a natural basic tone. The basic tone is very limited to bring a repertoire of popular songs and traditional Banyumasan songs. This article aims to provide information about the development of Kenthongan Banyumas art organology. The method used in this research is qualitative. Literature study, observation, in-depth interviews with informants making musical instruments of Kenthongan Banyumas, and documentation are techniques used by researchers in collecting research data. The examination of the research data validity is carried out using credibility criteria through the extension of observations, the persistence of observations, and the triangulation. Furthermore, it is analyzed by reducing the data through analysis and then the reducing results interactively to draw research conclusions. This research resulted in the development of Kenthongan Banyumas Art from the organology side of Angklung and Kenthongan instruments using diatonic scales so that they can accompany the repertoire of popular songs. In addition, making Angklung and Kenthongan instruments with Slendro barrels to accompany the repertoire of Banyumasan traditional songs.

Keywords: *Kenthongan, Organology, Development, Banyumas.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Art is one of the most strategic elements of culture. The main source of assets is human intuition and imagination poured into the medium of sound, appearance, and motion [1]. Grow and develop in a community tradition, becoming a traditional art. Its sustainability continues from one generation to another until an identity is realized for the community.

Banyumas as an area that has a strategic position between two different cultural areas (Sunda and Java). The two cultures mutually tug, create various kinds of traditional arts and a strong identity for Banyumas. Banyumas art has strong characteristics from two aspects of cultural elements, namely language and living equipment.

The Banyumas area is located on the slopes of Mount Slamet, and it is passed by the Serayu River. The Serayu River is a river culminating on the slopes of Mount Prah in the Dieng Wonosobo region and flows

Southwest through Banjarnegara, Purbalingga, Banyumas, and Cilacap bordered on the Southside of the South Serayu Mountain hills [2].

The geographical condition of Banyumas which is a plain and mountainous area cannot be separated from the bamboo plant (Bambuseae) which is a type of tropical bamboo plant. These plants grow a lot around rivers and mountains. Bamboo is a multifunctional plant, starting from a living utensil material, food ingredients, and traditional instrument material [3]. Attached to identity in the traditional arts of Banyumas, the tools are made of bamboo such as *Bongkel*, *Buncis*, *Krumpyung*, *Calung*, and *Kenthongan*.

Kenthongan Banyumas art is an art that comes from a development of *Kenthongan* tools which originally functioned as a means of communication into an art. *Kenthongan* Art has various terms, namely *Kentongan*, *Thek-thek*, and *Themling*. The existence of *Kenthongan* music in Banyumas cannot be separated from the

changing trend of local community who live in an era of cultural transition.

The journey of *Kenthongan* Art has gone through ups and downs since 1997. This art has existed. The peak of this art development was in 2004, where that year almost all neighborhoods in Banyumas Regency had a *Kenthongan* Art group [4]. The *Kenthongan* Festival is regularly held every August. However, in 2020 this festival was canceled due to the Covid-19 world pandemic.

The spread of *Kenthongan* Banyumas Arts is not only in the Banyumas Ex-Residency Area but also outside the region. *Kenthongan* Banyumas Art activities outside Banyumas have a function developing in the art origin, namely an economic function. Where the *Kenthongan* artists who are outside Banyumas use the art to meet economic needs [4]. *Kenthongan* Banyumas Art is very open to develop according to the demands of the artist's needs. The development of popular music that is not limited to various musical genres, has brought this art to adapt by developing the organology of its instruments.

The development of organology certainly brings positive changes, opening and expanding the repertoire of songs that will be performed by this art. Starting from this phenomenon, it raises questions for researchers that as a product of local wisdom from the Banyumas people, *Kenthongan* Art can penetrate space, survive, and develop. This research will discuss the development of *Kenthongan* Banyumas Art from the organology side. In this article, the researchers focus on developing the musical aspect of the two instruments, Angklung and *Kenthongan*.

2. METHODS

The method used in this research is qualitative. Literature study, observation, in-depth interviews with informants, and documentation are techniques used by researchers in collecting research data. Examination of the validity of research data is carried out using credibility criteria, through the extension of observations, the persistence of observations, and the triangulation. Furthermore, it is analyzed by reducing data through domain, taxonomy, componential analysis, and themes. Then, the reducing results are presented in a classification table or diagram, which is interactive to be arranged for research conclusions.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Kenthongan Banyumas Art as a form of populist art lived by the Banyumas people has certainly experienced changes and developments from the beginning of its emergence to this day. It is undeniable that the development of this art is directly related to the problem

of creativity and the factors encouraging creativity to eventually lead to change. The changes certainly solve to bring the art to be more developed and adaptive to popular culture that is currently developing.

Significant changes occur when *Kenthongan* become originally a communication tool developing into a musical instrument and folk art. The shape of the *Kenthongan* is originally a developed slit drum into a non-slit drum adapted from the Gambang blade shape on Calung Banyumas [5].

Next, when *Kenthongan* has become a folk art growing rapidly, in the end it undergoes the phases of developments and changes through three stages: 1) in 2002, 2) in 2005 and 3) in 2013. All forms of development until now still exist and develop in the Ex-Residency Banyumas area (Banjarnegara, Banyumas, Purbalingga, and Cilacap).

The traditional art of Calung Banyumasan is the pioneer of the development of *Kenthongan* Banyumas Art and it has also experienced significant changes and developments. The changes occur in terms of organology from the form aspect of the instrument material, namely the shape of the plan, which was originally bamboo turned into wood, the bamboo gong which originally used bamboo replaced by the Suwukan gong made of iron, and the musical aspect which was originally only slendro barrel then developed into pelog barrel [6].

Kenthongan Banyumas is a traditional folk art in the form of ensemble serving. *Kenthongan* Banyumas musical instruments consist of *Kenthong*, Angklung, Bamboo Flute, *Ketrak* (*Tripok*), *Ketipung*, *Gentong Bass*, and Tamborin [4]. Each instrument has a different role. Flute and Angklung are melodic instruments. *Kenthong* ('*Kenthongan*') is a harmony instrument. *Ketrak* (*Tripok*), *Ketipung*, *Bass Gentong*, and tambourines are percussion instruments.

Viewed from the form aspect of instrument materials, Angklung and *Kenthongan* are made from bamboo. Wulung bamboo is the best type for making these instruments. Before the *Kenthongan* instrument is made, the bamboo has been cut down is dried for a minimum of six months. However, for the maximum results, drying can take up to a year. The drying process is carried out naturally, not drying in the hot sun. However, the cut bamboo is stored in a place like a hut or a cowshed and placed not in direct contact with the ground (given a buffer). This process is also a test of the durability and readiness of bamboo because the broken and damaged bamboo will not be used.

Next, the instrument organology development of Angklung and *Kenthongan* in *Kenthongan* Banyumas Art in the scale musical aspect. The scales are a collection of notes in one octave (eight tones) consisting of several intervals and forming pieces of music [7].

The scales are generally divided into two, diatonic and pentatonic scales. The pentatonic scales have a wider distribution area than the diatonic scales [8].

Both diatonic and pentatonic scales are very possible to be applied to the development of *Kenthongan* Banyumas Art. The two scales are used in performing the repertoire of popular songs (diatonic scales) and the repertoire of traditional Banyumasan songs (pentatonic scales).

3.1. The Development of Angklung and *Kenthongan* Instrument Organology from the musical aspect of chromatic scales

First, the development of the scales used on both Angklung and *Kenthongan* melodic instruments was the natural diatonic scale C. It consists of C-D-E-F-G-A-B-C notes. These notes will only arrange a C major scale and a C minor scale. It makes limitation to play the repertoire of popular songs and accompanies singers to perform songs that are not optimal because they are too low or too high. Therefore, the song selection is very limited. It must be correct and based on the natural scale ambitus.

The chromatic scale consists of 12 notes, both natural and chromatic notes [9]. Chromatic consists of three kinds. They are sharp, flat, and natural. All the chromatic notes can form the possibility of new scale arrangements both sharp and flat. By using a chromatic scale, it has wide possibilities to play a repertoire of songs with various scales. It can maximize the singer in bringing the songs based on the ambitus and character of his voice.

Angklung with a chromatic scale has a total of 37 tones (one note for one Angklung) or 3 octaves of chromatic scales starting from the tone C3 to C6. It contains the tones of C-Cis-D-Dis-E-F-G-Gis-A-Ais-BC. All these notes can form an original major or minor scale. Angklung with chromatic scales can perform various popular music genres such as dangdut, pop, keroncong, campursari, etc. To make it easier for players to play the tones.

To make it easier for players to play Angklung with the chromatic scales, the technique of giving black and white colors can be used. The black and white Angklung are visual codes to identify pitch as a piano analogy [10]. Angklung with white color is the main note, while the black color is the chromatic tone.



Figure 1 Angklung instrument with chromatic scale.

The *Kenthongan* instrument with chromatic scale has 14 pieces or one octave starting from the tone C4 to Cis5. *Kenthongan* with chromatic scales has fewer notes due to the position in the ensemble of this instrument. These have functioned as a harmony or chord instrument. Chord consisting of 3 notes is sounded simultaneously [9].

The *Kenthongan* instrument with a chromatic scale contains the notes C-Cis-D-Dis-EF-Fis-G-Gis-A-Ais-B-C-Cis. These notes can play various kinds of major, minor, diminished, or augmented chords. The limited number of segments does not prevent playing various chords with the alternative inversion chords or the third note and the fifth note as the root.



Figure 2 Kenthongan instrument with chromatic scale.

3.2. The Development of Angklung and *Kenthongan* Instrument Organology from the Musical Aspect of the Slendro Pentatonic Scale

Slendro pentatonic scale is the scale used in Calung Banyumasan. The characteristics of the Banyumas Slendro Barrel have different characteristics from other slendro barrels such as the Surakarta Slendro, Banyuwangi Slendro, Sunda Salendro, etc [11]. Although on the journey Calung Banyumas experiences a development not only slendro, the emergence of pelog barrels such as in Javanese Karawitan provided an open space to bring a repertoire of musical songs in pelog barrels.

The characteristics of Slendro in the Calung Banyumasan Art is seen in most of the repertoire of Banyumasan gendhing songs such as Ricik-ricik Banyumasan, Eling-eling, Bendrong Kulon, Dawet Ayu, Siji Lima, Gunung Sari etc. These songs seem to be a mandatory repertoire in the appearance of Calung Banyumasan performances.

Calung Banyumasan can represent Banyumasan culture [11] and the slendro barrel is the characteristic of Calung Banyumasan. This concept sparks researchers to develop organology in Kenthongan Banyumas art, especially on melodic and harmonic instruments needed.

This development is as an effort to restore the taste of Banyumas culture and open the possibility so that in Kenthongan Banyumas performances, it can bring a repertoire of Banyumasan songs with appropriate barrels. In addition, it does not force songs with slendro chords to be performed with a diatonic scale. This case can eliminate the essence of the distinctive taste of Banyumasan Culture. The arrangement of tones on the slendro scale is starting from notes 1 (ji), 2 (ro), 3 (lu), 5 (ma), 6 (nem). On the Angklung instrument with a slendro scale, the number of notes is 18 starting from the 1st to the top 3rd tone. While on the Kenthongan instrument, there are 10 notes.



Figure 3 Angklung instrument with slendro scale.



Figure 4 Kenthongan instrument with slendro scale.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The development of *Kenthongan* Banyumas Art organology through musical aspects of chromatic and

slendro scales. The chromatic scales provide a wide space for *Kenthongan* art to work on a repertoire of popular songs developing in the community. The slendro barrel provides an opportunity to return to the local wisdom of Banyumas and keeps the tradition to run and develop in the Banyumas community. Through the development of two different scales from the Western and Eastern traditions, it is proven that the two traditions can continue to run together in a *Kenthongan* Banyumas Art.

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