

The Role of HAMKRI in Preserving Keroncong Music in Semarang

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ABSTRACT

This study intends to discuss the role of HAMKRI in preserving keroncong music, especially in the city of Semarang so that keroncong music still exists and is in demand by the public, especially the younger generation. This study used a qualitative method. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis was carried out interactively with the following stages: (1) data collection; (2) data reduction; (3) data presentation; (4) conclusion. The results showed that the role of HAMKRI in preserving Keroncong music in Semarang was divided into three aspects, namely aspects of protection, utilization, and development. The protection aspect is by socializing Keroncong music to the public widely through keroncong music seminars, live broadcasts on radio, and keroncong music competitions. The utilization aspect is by organizing keroncong music performances which can be enjoyed and appreciated by the public for free. The development aspect is by arranging keroncong songs, adding several musical instruments other than the main instrument of Keroncong music.

Keywords: Role, Hamkri, Preserving, Keroncong music.

1. INTRODUCTION

Keroncong music is one type of Indonesian culture that lives, grows, and develops in Indonesia. Keroncong music is a fusion of various kinds of music that tries to combine several types of musical instruments in a new version. Keroncong music is categorized as traditional classical music [1] and is original Indonesian music [2–4]. Keroncong music has seven main instruments, namely Bass, Cello, Cak, Cuk, Guitar, Violin, and Flute although in its development it is very possible to collaborate with other musical instruments such as Keyboard, Drum, Saxophone, and others. Keroncong music has a very distinctive accompaniment pattern that shows a relationship between one musical instrument to another [5–9].

Keroncong music has experienced a golden era, namely in the 90s which was marked by many keroncong composers such as Gesang, Kelly Puspito, Budiman BJ, and also the number of stage events and keroncong music or singing competitions which were mostly organized by media such as television and radio. However, lately, keroncong music has started to decline because there is very little public interest in keroncong music. This is due to several things, including the lack of alignment with social media such as television, radio,

or print media that broadcast keroncong music. In addition, keroncong music composers have also begun to decrease which causes the keroncong song repertoire to be very small [6,10,11]. The era of globalization also makes keroncong music increasingly excluded from society because the era of globalization causes foreign cultures to enter Indonesia very easily and affects the behavior of Indonesian people so that many people, especially teenagers, are increasingly unfamiliar with their own culture. Teenagers have no experience in playing their own traditional music and are more interested in foreign cultures [12–15].

If this phenomenon is left alone without any real action to maintain its existence, then keroncong music will gradually disappear from people's memories. To restore, protect, and preserve traditional cultural customs, efforts need to be made that can be focused through educational channels, both formal and informal, or also through performing arts performances so that people can better understand their culture or local genius [16].

In Semarang, keroncong music can be said to be developing quite well. This cannot be separated from the role of artists, musicians, activists, and keroncong music observers who are members of the keroncong

communities in Semarang. The keroncong communities in Semarang include the Indonesian Keroncong Musician Artist Association or HAMKRI, the *Waroeng Keroncong* community, and the *De Whaunk* community. These communities were established to maintain and preserve keroncong music, especially in the city of Semarang. The keroncong communities in Semarang under the coordination of HAMKRI Semarang need to have a harmonic vision and mission, namely, to work together to preserve and develop keroncong music. HAMKRI Semarang has program activities that quite enliven the repertoire of keroncong music in Semarang, starting from small to large events such as keroncong music performances in several strategic places in Semarang, keroncong workshops, keroncong music competitions, and others. Based on this phenomenon, this article will discuss the role of HAMKRI in preserving keroncong music in Semarang.

2. METHODS

The research was conducted using a qualitative method. The research site was in Semarang. The data collection technique was carried out with the strategy of observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis was carried out interactively with the following stages: (1) data collection; (2) data reduction; (3) data presentation; (4) conclusion/ verification.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

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Sedyawati states that conservation efforts can be carried out in three aspects, including (1) Protection, (2) Utilization, (3) Development [17–19]. In this section, we will discuss the role of HAMKRI in preserving keroncong music in Semarang in terms of these three aspects.

3.1. Protection

Protection is a step taken to maintain a culture so that its existence is not lost but remains in society, so it can be enjoyed throughout the ages. The protection efforts carried out by HAMKRI Semarang are shown through the official ratification of the HAMKRI organization, namely the ratification of the Decree of the Minister of Justice dated September 16, 1976, number: YA5/430/11 [20]. This legal shelter protects HAMKRI Semarang so that organizations can continue to work to protect keroncong music with government support, namely the Semarang City Culture and Tourism Office (DISBUDPAR) which acts as a funding supporter to carry out every HAMKRI work program.

HAMKRI Semarang seeks to protect keroncong music, including by conducting a series of socialization

of keroncong music to the public through a live broadcast of keroncong music at RRI Semarang entitled *Bunga Rampai*. Through broadcasting live keroncong music, it is hoped that keroncong music will be better known to the wider community and can attract people's interest to learn keroncong music. *Bunga Rampai* is broadcast regularly every Sunday from 2:00 - 3:00 p.m by presenting one of the Keroncong Orchestras in Semarang presenting keroncong songs. The Keroncong Orchestra that performs at the *Bunga Rampai* event is usually arranged in turns, considering several Keroncong Orchestras registered with HAMKRI. In this activity, the public can also request songs via interactive telephone, ranging from original keroncong songs to innovative keroncong songs. In line with the opinion of several researchers that traditional music can compete in the era of modernity, it is driven by the dominance of radio broadcasts, film soundtracks, as well as television shows [21–24].



Figure 1 The event of *Bunga Rampai* is broadcast live on RRI Semarang.

Protection efforts in the form of socialization carried out by HAMKRI in addition to live broadcasts on RRI, are organizing a Keroncong Orchestra Competition at the Central Java level. The Keroncong Orchestra Competition at the Central Java level is held once a year with the public category of participants. The socialization in the form of the Keroncong Orchestra Competition can stimulate the community to be able to socialize with each other and gain deeper knowledge from the experience of participating in the Keroncong Orchestra Competition or just watching the competition. By holding the competition, the community, in this case the participants, will tend to want to present the best keroncong music composition so that participants will prepare and study seriously. This made the participants more serious about understanding keroncong music, not only in terms of material but also in terms of the theory they captured well. Thus, the Keroncong Orchestra Competition is one of the important factors in empowering the community to learn and appreciate keroncong music. This is in line with Suharto's opinion that as an effort to preserve traditional music, community empowerment which is part of socio-cultural life is an important factor [25].



Figure 2 Keroncong orchestra competition by HAMKRI Semarang.

The next protection effort in the form of socialization carried out by HAMKRI is the socialization of keroncong music to students. The form of socialization, in this case, is holding “Keroncong Goes to School”, namely by bringing keroncong music musicians to educate and invite schools in Semarang to provide opportunities for students who are interested in keroncong music by holding keroncong music extracurricular activities. Because by holding keroncong music extracurricular activities in schools, the process of enculturation of keroncong music will be well maintained. As a testament to the success of the program, keroncong music extracurricular activities have been implemented in two schools, namely SMP N 12 Semarang and SMK 1 Muhammadiyah Semarang. This is in line with the opinion of several researchers that education is one of the important factors in efforts to preserve traditional arts so that they remain sustainable [25–28].



Figure 3 Keroncong music extracurricular activities at SMP N 12 Semarang.

3.2. Utilization

The utilization effort carried out by HAMKRI Semarang is by organizing keroncong music performances which are regularly held every Wednesday night from 8.00 – 11.00 p.m in collaboration with keroncong music communities such as the *Waroeng Keroncong* community and the *De Whaunk* community. The purpose of holding live keroncong music performances is as an effort to increase the appeal of keroncong music to the public so that keroncong music is still liked and becomes an asset

and cultural tourist attraction in Semarang. This keroncong music performance was held in several places in Semarang city, namely on the first Wednesday at *Taman Indonesia Kaya*, the second and fourth Wednesdays at the RRI Semarang auditorium, and the third Wednesday at the Ki Narto Sabdo building, *Taman Budaya Raden Saleh (TBRS)* Semarang. HAMKRI takes advantage of the live performance of keroncong music to maintain the existence of the Keroncong Orchestra in Semarang and provide opportunities to always be creative so that keroncong music is increasingly popular with the wider community. Regarding the many Keroncong Orchestras that exist in Semarang, HAMKRI provides the opportunity for each Keroncong Orchestra to appear in this staging event in turn. In addition, HAMKRI also utilizes several strategic and representative buildings that are easily accessible by the public in organizing this keroncong music performance.



Figure 4 Keroncong music performance at *Taman Indonesia Kaya* Semarang.

In its development, the activities of staging keroncong music are not only followed by senior keroncong musicians, but gradually the younger generation also participates in performances both as singers and musicians. This shows that routine performance activities are increasingly attracting the attention of the public, especially the younger generation, to appreciate, express, and be creative with keroncong music. Through the performance of keroncong music, the younger generation can gain experience so that they are encouraged to continue learning keroncong music to be able to present the best keroncong music that can be enjoyed by the audience. In line with the statement of several researchers, that traditional music will continue to be sustainable by cultivating the next generation through staging activities, competitions, exercises, workshops, and so on [27–29].



Figure 5 The appearance of the younger generation at a keroncong music performance.

In addition, the enthusiasm of the audience was extraordinary. This was marked by the large number of audiences who came to watch the keroncong music performance ranging from the elderly to small children, both family members of each person who performed, as well as other Keroncong Orchestra leaders. Some audiences participated in capturing the moment by documenting it using a camera.



Figure 6 The enthusiasm of the audience at the keroncong music performance at RRI Semarang.

3.3. Development

As an effort to preserve keroncong music in Semarang, HAMKRI carried out several developments, but still did not forget the spirit of keroncong music itself, namely maintaining the seven main keroncong instruments and presenting *keroncong asli* songs, *keroncong langgam*, and *stambul*, although popular songs were also performed in every performance. The seven main instruments referred are cak, cuk, cello, bass, guitar, flute, and violin.

The development efforts carried out include adding other instruments such as keyboards, saxophones, trumpets, stringed cellos, drum sets, *kendang jaipong*, and others according to arrangement needs. The addition of other instruments besides this main instrument, makes keroncong music more dynamic and interesting because it can be used to perform popular songs with certain arrangements while maintaining the keroncong rhythm in it.



Figure 7 The addition of instruments besides the main instrument of keroncong music.

The next development effort is to innovate keroncong music through an arrangement that is collaborated with other types of music such as dangdut music which later emerged the terms *congdut* (*keroncong dangdut*) and *congyang* (*keroncong goyang*), collaborated with rock music which later emerged the term *congrock* (*keroncong rock*), collaborated with jazz music then emerged the term *congjazz* (*keroncong jazz*), and collaborated with orchestral music which later emerged the term *congkestra* (*keroncong orchestra*).



Figure 8 The performance of keroncong orchestra at RRI Semarang.

Development in this way is increasingly attracting public interest, especially connoisseurs and fans of these other types of music, to participate in appreciating, expressing, and being creative in keroncong music. This is a manifestation of the development of keroncong music combined with modern music so that the younger generation is increasingly interested in learning keroncong music and getting to know keroncong music through other musical genres combined with keroncong music. This is in line with the statement of several researchers that the development of traditional music is one way to maintain the sustainability of traditional music itself [30–35].

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research, it can be concluded that the role of HAMKRI in preserving Keroncong music in Semarang is divided into three aspects, namely aspects of protection, utilization, and development. The form of preservation from the protection aspect is by socializing

Keroncong music to the wider community through Keroncong music seminars, live broadcasts on radio, and Keroncong music competitions. The form of preservation from the aspect of utilization is by organizing Keroncong music performances that can be enjoyed and appreciated by the public for free. The form of preservation from the development aspect is by arranging keroncong songs, adding several musical instruments besides the main instrument of Keroncong music. The preservation efforts of these three aspects have proven to increase the existence and enthusiasm of the community, especially the younger generation as well as the emergence of several keroncong music innovations such as keroncong orchestra, keroncong dangdut, keroncong rock, and keroncong jazz. With the increasing interest and performances of keroncong music, the keroncong music repertoire in Semarang is increasingly lively so that it remains sustainable.

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