

# Creation of Intercultural Performing Arts for Virtual Stage of Bandung Isola Performing Arts Festival

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## ABSTRACT

Previous research in 2017 has been created annual festival namely Bandung Isola Performing Arts Festival (BIPAF) at UPI which presented collaborative dance choreographies such as “Touching Unknown People” (2017-2018), Korean Contemporary Mask Dance (2018). The dancers and choreographers came from Indonesia and South Korea. Nevertheless, the movements and music still referred to a modern dance and traditional Korean idioms, while the movements rooted from Indonesian dances were not presented. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to explore intercultural concept to create contemporary performing arts and to increase intercultural understanding within two countries in Asia. The research method uses a participatory action research. The researchers involve actively in the process of study about the previous research and dances which were created for collaboration and we examine the festivals that use the virtual stages. Then, the researchers formulate intercultural concept to create contemporary performing arts for the virtual stage in BIPAF. Data were collected by interview, participatory observation, study of document, focus group discussion, and reflection. Data were analyzed using triangulation technic. Findings of this research confirm that increasing intercultural understanding can be achieved by creating performing arts in collaborative work within dancers, choreographers, and music composer. The result of collaborative works is a form of reality and virtual livestreaming performance A-Forest, containing movements and music idiom rooted from West Java and teleholografis dancers from South Korea and Japan.

**Keywords:** *Intercultural understanding, Collaborative, Performing arts, Virtual stage, Arts education.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In this context, dance stylists in virtual dance performances must be aware that dance performances on conventional stages and virtual stages are very different, many of the presenters do not realize that virtual stages have their own aesthetic. The camera eye has its own aesthetic that is able to lengthen and shorten and even fold aspects of space and time according to the will of the maker. Many of the presenters use standard editing and only use the camera lens from the cellphone. But whatever happens, dance in virtual media will always be present, whether in a pandemic atmosphere or in the future with all the challenges and technological advances and virtual dance presenters have made a significant contribution to dance creativity and dance development today [1].

The current state of the Covid-19 pandemic has greatly affected the form of performances in the world,

including in Indonesia [2]. Offline techniques into online learning (online-based learning) are a new trend and alternative performances used by almost all over the world [3]. The Covid-19 pandemic situation has greatly affected all systems [4]. Responding to the challenges of this pandemic situation by taking advantage of the convenience of technology (Hussin, 2018). Technology is used as a medium for interaction [6-8].

In this Covid-19 pandemic situation, of course all activities must comply with health protocols or without physical contact. At this time the use of technology in dance learning is felt to be very important [9]. Dance stylists must have the technological ability to create collaborations with other nations in several countries. Government policy to meet somewhere and collaborate is very difficult. To answer that challenge, so that artists can still work and collaborate, namely by means of virtual intercultural collaboration.

Related to intercultural collaboration, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI) on October 20-21 has held the flagship festival of UPI at the 5th Bandung Isola International Performing Art (BIPAF) festival. The work "A-Forest" is the theme of this collaboration, which features choreographers and directors Martinus Miroto, Park Na Hoon and Ayo Sunaryo. The dancers are 10 dance students, Park Na Hoon from South Korea and Ikko Suzuki from Japan and music arranger from Indonesia, Iwan Gunawan.

The show is performed on a real stage and a virtual stage. In virtual dance performances, the show must present real players and face the audience at the same time and place [9]. The Covid-19 disruption has an impact on the melting of the dance paradigm that is displayed in virtual space with a simulated body medium. The concept of motion is presented with the concept of contemporary dance which was developed from the culture of each country.

The purpose of this article is to discuss the concept of intercultural choreography of Martinus Miroto's virtual teleholographic staging concept with dancers from Indonesia, South Korea and Japan. The issues being investigated include: 1) How is the concept of intercultural choreography? 2) How is the process of creating a choreography using virtual teleholographic? and 3) What are the results of intercultural choreography from three countries, namely Indonesia, South Korea and Japan?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The development and growth of the performing arts, especially dance, seems to have made the essentialist assumptions about choreography no longer adequate. Various cross-disciplinary approaches as a necessity for the artistic reach of performing arts are an attempt to raise the new social complexities of today's society, as well as to bring about the expansion of choreographic meanings based on today's artistic practices. Statements about choreography no longer start from the sentence "choreography is...", but "what is choreography". This is to reach and open the possibility of understanding based on the existing choreographic expansion practices. The issue of expanding the meaning of choreography is also influenced by the development of digital phenomena and social media which again question what is body, motion, and so on, especially during this pandemic which has also changed the formation of performances on online platforms. Of course, the "new" platform also changes views and conversations about the body, "liveness", and so on [10]. The term choreography was neologized by the French dance teacher, Raoul Auger Feuillet, through the publication of dance notation in the 1700s. This Feuillet dance notation complements the notation that has been done by dance teacher Pierre Beauchamps who was commissioned by Louis XIV to

create a means of creating dance art on paper. This Beauchamps notation is a kind of tabulated note to represent dance and ballet steps so that the steps can be learned "without the need for instructions". Apparently, Feuillet's notation is not based on the variety of dances in the world, but rather based on dance on stage. Feuillet's observations about dancing or dance movements consist of Position, Steps, Sinkings, Risings, Springings, which are measured from the vertical position of the body. While Slidings and Turnings are marked horizontally forward through space. Through notation, the motion of a body is thus removed from its locale and thrown into a pure geometric space. Choreography has actually become a phenomenon of people's daily lives, or even our daily activities in processing movement with space and social relations with each other. Choreography can even be very every day.

According to Lewin's theory, every change has its pros and cons. He offers a Force Field Analysis theory which is divided into two forces: the driving force group and the status quo holding group (Restraining Force) [11]. The final step of Lewin's theory, namely freezing, is a process of standardizing the changes that have been made in order to create a "new norm". If the group driving change is stronger then freezing can be achieved. However, if the holding group is stronger, it will eventually return to the old norm. After the pandemic, you may face two choices: 1) If the Restraining force is stronger, Virtual dance creation is rejected because it is not a dance genre, for that the choreography returns to the old status quo (by following the new normal prokes regulations), 2) If the Driving Force is stronger, both press each other based on their respective arguments [12].

Walter Benjamin's theory of value seems to have lost its significance in this era of technological replication and the era of the 4th industrial revolution marked by convergence, connection, decentralization, artificial intelligence, and the internet. When artificial intelligence, a product of the 4th industrial era, emerged as a way to replace creators in the performing arts community, issues related to copyright arose, validating the logic that we should not abandon realism [13]. This, then had an impact on the virtual dance created due to the covid-19 pandemic. Virtual dance will be supported by holographic technology (holographic) which will be more sophisticated in displaying a simulation medium similar to reality [14].

During this pandemic, it is difficult to meet each other. Therefore, artificial intelligence and virtual reality influence the creation of choreography, including intercultural choreography which produces a sociocultural body that moves in a way that is often subversive. Their movement went beyond the nation-

state and resulted in global intercultural relations that we are only beginning to understand [15].

The concept of choreography in this intercultural choreography is presented with the concept of contemporary dance developed from the culture of each country. The term "contemporary" dance also connotes a temporal designation—dance that "goes with time." Alignment "contemporary" into style. Contemporary definition. This in turn risks excluding artists whose work does not match what we have determined to be contemporary [16]. Contemporary choreographers have abandoned the relentless struggle to create new movements and have instead entered a dialogue with the past. While "avant-garde" in Western stage dance was once considered the embodiment of the "new" and believed to be distinct from the dance forms thought to be characterized by tradition, this demarcation is now being challenged by historians and dance artists alike, being seen as a process that "embodies, staging, re-staging," and constantly modifying its objects while creating new models and media [17].

### **3. RESEARCH METHODS**

The research method uses a participatory action research. The researchers involve actively in the process of study about the previous research and dances which were created for collaboration and we examine the festivals that use the virtual stages. Then, the researchers formulate intercultural concept to create contemporary performing arts for the virtual stage in BIPAF. Data were collected by interview, participatory observation, study of document, focus group discussion, and reflection. Data were analyzed using triangulation technic.

### **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The title of the creation of intercultural performing arts is A-Forest. This theme was discussed by the researchers on zoom meeting June 2021. The researchers asked Martinus Miroto from Jogjakarta and Nahoon Park from South Korea to collaborate virtually and create a choreography using a teleholographic concept. This concept is unique because the dancers from different places present at the same time (real time) using technological media.

The concept of A-Forest performance is a staging concept that has been carried out by Martinus Miroto in 2014. In this performance, the concept is directed at intercultural choreography, namely looking for choreographic possibilities that will be produced by coreographers from Indonesia, South Korea and Japan. This concept is a hybrid concept, which brings together the dancers on one stage virtually and in real terms.

The steps taken in the intercultural implementation of this choreography are to bring together the choreographers and music arrangers who will be involved in the performance through a zoom meeting connection. This step was taken as the initial activity to determine the theme, the synopsis as a basis for making collaborative works. The theme chosen is "A-Forest" which describes the illegal logging of forests in the world and the importance of oxygen for the survival of mankind in the world. A-Forest is an intercultural dance performance of choreography collaboration (Teleholographic Dance Collaboration) between Indonesian and South Korean and Japanese choreographers which is research on intercultural choreography during the covid-19 pandemic which will make research material about the assimilation of three different cultures.

In this step, the theme of creating a new work of choreography based on intercultural collaboration is discussed. The concept of this work is a cross between the real world and the virtual world which produces a hybrid space or a third space where there is telepresence collaboration between artists in different countries, or different places but at the same time. Dramatic structures can be lonely, bored at home, bored with the situation. Or vice versa, the spirit to live, the spirit to make new things, the spirit to learn to survive and others. The reason is because during the pandemic we don't meet people in other countries due to covid-19, health, government policies, such as lockdown and transportation policies. Virtual collaboration is very possible and this theme is very expandable.

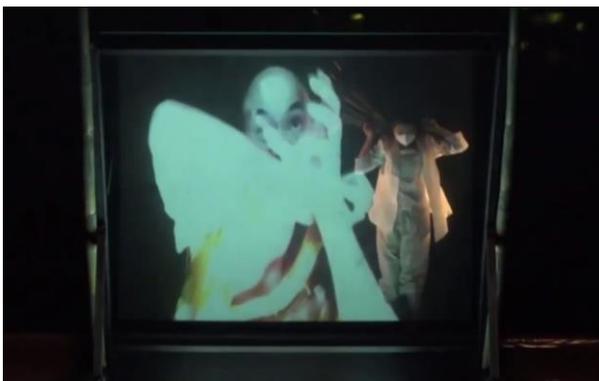
What kind of choreography should be explored? The types of movement idioms that must be explored are movements that are characteristic of two cultures, Indonesian culture represented by Javanese or Sundanese dance choreography in Indonesia, Korean dance choreography and Japanese dance choreography with the concept of contemporary dance movements, because the BIPAF festival is a contemporary dance festival. Although the movements are contemporary dances, the characteristics of each culture will be clearly visible. How many dancers are from Indonesia, Japan and Korea? This project does not use many dancers. Only one dancer from Korea, one dancer from Japan or ten dancers from Indonesia, because this virtual dance is glued to the frame in the virtual proscenium. What materials should be prepared or purchased? The materials that must be prepared are a box-shaped holo iron frame, tempered glass, screen and projector.

The second step is to determine the schedule of the collaboration process. This step is an exploration and improvisation activity based on an agreed theme, each choreographer proceeds in their respective countries. That is, each choreographer makes his own

choreography, during joint practice in the fourth step the choreography will be put together by a director.

The third step is to practice combining real dancers and virtual dancers combined with musical accompaniment created by Iwan Gunawan on a stage that has been prepared according to the initial concept. Slowly real dancers and virtual dancers adjust to the dance music, while communication with virtual dancers can only be done with an internet connection through the zoom meet application. The exercises are carried out for several days until all sectors can be integrated.

The fourth step is staging. On the day of the performance, many live and virtual audiences were amazed. The stage is transformed in such a way that the dancers in three different places can meet in the medium of motion. The "A-Forest" performance did apply a video call telepresence system and pepper's ghost holographic technique to present dancers who were far from each other. Two dancers in this virtual world meet and interact with three real dancers in the form of three-dimensional images (Figure 1,2,3). In today's era by using increasingly advanced cyberspace technology, the fact that technological progress must respond to technology itself. Experiments using a telepresence system for the purposes of expression in the world of dance. Like other dances that have a storyline in every scene of its motion. Miroto is also the director with the choreographers trying to learn how to truly experience life between the real and virtual worlds. In virtual worlds, such as Facebook or Skype, Zoom meetings, what usually arises is a feeling of being far but close, a feeling of being there but not being present, being present but not being, a feeling that is real but virtual.



**Figure 1** Japanese dancer teleholographic dancer with real dancer.



**Figure 2** Korean dancer teleholographic dancer with real dancer.



**Figure 3** Japanese dancer teleholographic dancer with six real dancers.

The fifth step is evaluation. In this step, all choreographers, directors, composers and producers evaluate the results of the performance, correcting the shortcomings of their respective assignments to be improved in future performances.

At this "A-Forest" show many of the choreographies produced by real dancers are contemporary choreography based on local culture. The ten dancers are Indonesians developed their choreography using bamboo props that are used as clothing and hand properties. These dancers have developed a lot of traditional dances, namely Sundanese dance with a contemporary dance approach. Korean dancers explore more ballet movements which were developed from traditional South Korean dances with virtual visual forms with full body size, the movements used tend to be fast tempo with standing, looking up and bending positions, while the Japanese dancer explored more static motion with a slow tempo and occasionally with a fast tempo to contrast with the Korean virtual dancer. The Japanese dancer is shot in a medium size and close-up.

On display choreography on the teleholographic stage (Figure 1,2,3). It can be seen that there is a mix or intercultural choreography from three countries, namely Indonesia, Japan and South Korea. All of which fall on the same concept, namely "A-Forest" which describes

illegal logging and the need for oxygen for human life on this earth and breeding, against nature.

The process of creating dance worked from the process of exploration, improvisation and composition [18]. According to D'oubler that the basic principles of the form of a dance work which include unity, harmony, balance, sequence, repetition, transition, climax, variation, and contrast, are very clearly visible in the work "A- Forest", so that it can be called a complete dance work, so that the basic concept of intercultural choreography has been well realized.

The process of creating this virtual work is a creative thinking process for all involved in the creation process, both conceptual and artistic. Creative thinking is a lateral and divergent right brain function. One of the functions of the right brain is the ability to create new things.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This research confirms that increasing intercultural understanding can be achieved by creating performing arts in collaborative work within dancers, choreographers, and music composer. The result of collaborative works is a form of reality and virtual livestreaming performance A-Forest, containing movements and music idiom rooted from West Java and teleholografis dancers from South Korea and Japan. The teleholographic technique was presented by the dancers from South Korea and Japan who performed in one stage at the same time with the dancers in BIPAF on October 19-20, 2021. Using digital technology and temper glasses shows teleholographic dancers shows more human than digital recording techniques. It is because there is a room for negotiation and communication between real dancers and teleholographic dancers. This approach allows the audience to witness virtual dancers in one place and time. This work gave birth to intercultural choreography that was created from a collaborative process of choreography rooted in Indonesian, South Korean and Japanese cultures.

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