



# Representation of Local Style in Performance of ‘Cingcangkeling’ on the International Choir Festival

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**Abstract.** This research was conducted to understand the representation of local styles in one of the Sundanese (West Java – Indonesia) folksongs, i.e. Cingcangkeling, at International Choir Festival. The aim of this study was to understand the use of local styles in the performance of Cingcangkeling performance as well as the relationship between the performance and the national identity of the choir. The method used in this study is a qualitative method with an performance ethnographic approach to that combines musical aspects and non-musical elements. Data collection techniques were carried out through preliminary studies, music analysis, and video analysis. The findings revealed that the local styles in the performance of Cingcangkeling can be seen in the musical ornaments, choreography, as well as costumes and props from Sundanese cultures. The local styles in the performance of Cingcangkeling reflects the children’s play (*kaulinan barudak*) and the *bodor* character (comedy) found in Sundanese society. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that in performing Cingcangkeling at international festivals, the choir group not only shows the uniqueness of the local styles of Sundanese (West Java) culture as a part of Indonesian cultural diversity, both musically and non-musically, but also becomes a ‘cultural ambassador’ who emphasizes their national identity in the international world.

**Keywords:** Local Style · Folksong Arrangement · International Choir Festival

## 1 Introduction

In recent years, choir festivals or competitions, both national and international, have increasingly involved folk or regional songs. It is not surprising that more and more choir groups have appeared, in the categories of children, youth, and adults, and have participated in the festival or competition. More interestingly, there are many festivals or choir competitions, both national and international, which also involve the category of folksongs from one of the cultures in the participating countries.

As a result, many choral groups are stimulated to make certain improvements in their performances, especially when singing folksongs. Their performances in festivals not only show their ability to sing arrangements of folksongs, but also perform movements or choreography and use costumes and props that support the theme of the folksongs

being sung. In other words, the appearance of a choir group in a choir festival involves not only involves musical aspects, but also non-musicals, e.g., choreography.

Creative ideas related to the musical performances include naming choir groups, performances, and choreography. A choir instructor can decide what aspects the choir group needs. Generally, many choral groups choose to include non-musical aspects of their musical performances, such as movement or choreography as well as costumes and props. Not infrequently, many choirs today are starting to collaborate with other parties to prepare for participation in international festivals, such as choreographers and costume stylists. The existence of these non-musical components is seen as being able to improve the quality of choral performances and the appreciation of the international community [1].

Not only active in domestic festivals, but there are several choir groups in Indonesia who have achievements in prestigious international festivals. At the university level, there are several student choirs (PSM). One of them is PSM Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (PSM UPI) – Bandung. One of the factors that determine the achievements of the PSM UPI Bandung at the international level is their ability to present folksongs arranged with a ‘thick’ local style.

PSM UPI Bandung has also been presented at the Rhapsodie Indonesia Choir Festival in Jakarta in 2019 and won the Champion of GrandPrix, Champion of Folklore Category, dan Promising Conductor which made the choir group as one of the participants in the 8th Bali International Choir Festival (BICF) in the same year. The uniqueness shown in their performances is the bodor character (comedy), both musically and non-musically, which makes this choir group different from others. Musically, the uniqueness in the performances of the PSM UPI Bandung is to involve local style into the folksong arrangement. Non-musically, the creative ideas were seen in the use of choreography as well as costumes and props that reflected the culture of certain people in Indonesia. These creative ideas, both musical and non-musical, reflect their own beauty and uniqueness as well as become an illustration of the richness of Indonesian cultural arts to the international community. One of the folksongs they performed at the international choir festival is Cingcangkeling.

Unfortunately, local styles in the performance of Cingcangkeling at the international choir festival was not well understood by the international community in general. Therefore, this paper will explain about local styles, both musical and non-musical, in the performance of Cingcangkeling, which are represented by PSM UPI Bandung Choir at the 8th Bali International Choir Festival (BICF) in 2019, as well as to show the relationship in between the performance of Cingcangkeling and the national identity of the choir group.

## 2 Literature Review

There are several studies that link between folksongs and the culture of a society. Pohjola has suggested that there is a renewed interest in folk music around the world, for example folk music ‘expresses the essence of a culture’; Folk music forms cultural images, or gives cultural impressions, and touches human emotions. These experiences provide an opportunity to accept differences and diversity in human life. Aswegen and Potgieter in

their research on children's choirs concluded that music or folksong in choral repertoire has important benefits, especially for bridging cultural differences. The children in the choir, the conductors and song arrangers involved, as well as the audience can be influenced in a positive way with performances of folk music from various cultural groups. Folksongs in choir performances generally use the native language of the region where the song comes from. Meerholz and Spaumer explained that the proper pronunciation of texts plays an important role when performing folksong in the original language and reflects the choir's respect for certain cultural groups. In addition to text in the original language, choir managers should also consider other non-musical components, such as choreography, in choral performances. Therefore, it is highly recommended that each choir group have some instructors who knows the culture of folksong to assist the choir group in their performance at international choral festivals [2].

There are several studies on the benefits of non-musical aspects in the performance of choir groups at international festivals. Green explained that the presence of non-musical components could improve the quality of the choir performance [1]. Some researchers even conclude that the choir is seen as having a variety of roles, including showing the diversity of a country's musical culture and affirming the country's national identity [3]. Wolfe Jr. in his research on choral performance in Kingston, Jamaica, concluded that through performances, the members of the choir demonstrated their role as cultural ambassadors for Jamaica and the entire Caribbean region. The performance of this choir group involves the use of lighting, instrumentation, stage setting, costumes, and movement [4]. Acker and Nyland in their article demonstrate the contribution of their thinking to a particular interdisciplinary genre by contextualizing and describing a famous Serbian children's choir performing at the Belgrade Orthodox Cathedral (Saborna Crkva). In this article, Acker and Nyland conclude that there is an exploration of musical culture, community, and identity. They used the Vygotskian concept of *perezhivane* to relate children's emotional experiences to adult culture and history to explain why participation in children's choirs has a significant role in cultural learning and identity formation [5].

### 3 Methods

The method used in this research is qualitative method [6]. This study uses an ethnographic approach to performances that combines text and other visual elements, such as movement, setting, costumes, and props. The performance ethnography approach is used because the creative ideas presented by a choir group in festivals at the international level are a collaboration between musical and non-musical aspects, which not only involve music, but also movement or choreography as well as costumes and props. The purpose of this study is to understand: the local styles in the performance of PSM UPI Bandung Choir in the performance of Cingcangkeling at the international choir festival as well as the relationship between these local styles and the national identity of the choir group. Because this research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, the data collection was obtained through a preliminary study, music analysis, and video analysis. Through a preliminary study, researchers obtained data about the culture from which the Cingcangkeling folksong came from. The data obtained through musical analysis includes local ornamentation and singing styles often found in traditional Sundanese

songs. Non-musical aspects, such as choreography, costumes, and props, are obtained through video analysis.

## 4 Discussions

The local styles in the performance of Cingcangkeling that performed by PSM UPI Bandung was identical to an ethnic group in Indonesia, i.e., the Sundanese peoples. Ekajati said that the moral values of Sundanese culture are Sundanese ethnic identities that are sourced from Sundanese values, beliefs, and cultural heritage which are used as references in behavior in society. Sundanese local wisdom is known as a culture that highly upholds the values of politeness [7]. Humorous characters, polite, and distinctive dialect are clearly seen in the performance of PSM UPI Choir when representing Cingcangkeling (arranged by Farhan Reza Paz) at the 8th Bali International Choir Festival 2019 in Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia, either through the singing style, choreography, as well as costumes and props (Fig. 1).

Cingcangkeling folksong is a form of kakawihan kaulinan barudak lembur (a village child's game song) from Sundanese peoples. Yulianto explained that the song Cingcangkeling is a game song intended to count before children play cat-and-mouse or touch running games [8]. Sopiiah explained that Cingcangkeling's lyrics, which are often considered meaningless and just a 'banyol' (joke), have a deep meaning. Therefore, the text of this song can only be understood by its community, i.e., the Sundanese community [9].

Music is often used as a game, but also used for other purposes. Games not only provide excitement in the form of complex mental activity, but also provide training for the future life [10]. Researchers' attention to games in children's lives is still widely carried out today. Coppole & Bredekamp argue that play is an important component in children's lives; that's how they learn about the world around them [11].

Musically, humorous character of the children playing in Cingcangkeling folksong is shown in a bodor (joke or comedy) style that makes others laugh. In Sundanese culture, bodor is like a habit in chat, both in daily and official meetings. Bodor itself seems to have been ingrained in Sundanese society so that bodor is one of the characteristics of the Sundanese people who have a humorous nature [12].



**Fig. 1.** PSM UPI Bandung Choirin the 8th Bali International Choir Festival.

#### 4.1 Local Style in the Performance of Cingcangkeling Folksong

Musically, bodor style in the performance of Cingcangkeling is carried out with variations in local styles in sound production and arrangement techniques (Fig. 5). From the sound production, local styles were found in the use of nasal voices, cempeng, and ornaments in traditional Sundanese songs, such as senggak and cengkok (Fig. 3), (Fig. 4). In the arrangement technique, it was found the use of body percussion, especially hand clapping, the use of call and response techniques, interlocking or hocketing, and onomatopoeia.

The use of nasal voice is intended to support the atmosphere of heureuy (joking) in accordance with the natural situation created in the *kaulinan barudak lembur* (village children's game) and gives a childish impression. Ornaments in traditional Sundanese songs, such as *senggak* and *cengkok*, are also found in the arrangement of this song. *Senggak* can be interpreted as irregular notes with syllable-like words "eu-a-eu-euy" and in this arrangement it is written with cross-notes, as shown in the sounds of Bas 1 and 2. Bas 2 chimed in with the sound of gulping with the words "eu-a-eu-euy" and a few screams that were as free as people playing (Fig. 2).

Arrangement technique of Cingcangkeling used call and response technique. The form of call and response can be repeated randomly and often the leader creates variations that can be understood by his group followers. Sometimes the melodies overlap to create

The image shows a musical score for Cingcangkeling. It features four vocal parts: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). There are also two bass parts, Bass 1 and Bass 2. The score includes lyrics and musical notation. A green box highlights a section of the Bass 1 and Bass 2 parts, and a blue box highlights a section of the vocal parts.

Fig. 2. Bass 1 and 2 resonate each other producing a nasalsound.

The image shows a musical score for Cingcangkeling. It features four vocal parts: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). There are also two bass parts, Bass 1 and Bass 2. The score includes lyrics and musical notation. A purple box highlights a section of the vocal parts, and a red box highlights a section of the instrumental parts.

Fig. 3. Cempeng voice and body percussion (hand-clapping).



Fig. 4. Cengkok in Sopran and Alto.



Fig. 5. PSM UPI Choir showed the local styles in voice production, such as senggak, cengkok, nasal voice, and cempreng with bodor (comedy) character.

a type of music that is multipart music. In call and response songs, the response often begins before the call or solo part is finished, resulting in two melodic lines at once [10] (Fig. 6).

There is also the application of the hocket technique, which has similarities to the interlocking technique. Hocket is a technique that provides a melody line through coordination with many people. Everyone produces one to three notes that are timed with the other performers so that the ensemble provides a melody with a full range of notes.



Fig. 6. Call and response in Sopra – Alto and Tenor – Bas.

Fig. 7. Hocket oriented docking technique in Soprano and Alto.

Hocket or interlocking is a complementary technique between two or more voices (“stop-and-go device”). This hocket or interlocking technique is often found in gamelan playing (Fig. 7).

Finally, there is the use of onomatopoeia. Al-Zubbaidi explains that onomatopoeia occurs when a word is used to imitate a certain sound. Alternatively, onomatopoeia can also be interpreted as “naming something or an action by imitating the sound associated with that sound.” [13] (Fig. 8).

The local style does not only appear in musical aspect, but also in choreography performed. In general, the movements in Sundanese dance are divided into several parts, i.e. the head, hands, body, and legs. The choreography in the performance of Cingcangkeling used some parts of Sundanese Classical Dance, Jaipong, and New Creation Dance. However, there are also pieces of movement found in Betawi (Jakarta) and Central Javanese dances.

Movements in the head, e.g., gilek (moving the head to the left and right) and galier (turning the head). Movements in the hands include nangreu, ukel, ngepeul, sembada (right and left), nyawang (right and left), lontang (left and right), and tumpang tali. Movements in the body, e.g., bahuan (right and left), gibrig (moving the shoulders up and down), torso (moving the upper chest to the right and left). Movements in the legs, e.g., adeg-adeg, sirig, gedig, sonteng (right and left), trisi, and calik ningkat (sitting position with the right leg higher).

Fig. 8. Onomatopoeia fimomdemung sound in Soprano and Alto.

In addition to the pieces of movement in Sundanese dance, the choreographer also used pieces of movement in traditional dances from other regions, such as ulokan-ulokan movement in a traditional Central Javanese dance which is usually used at the helaran (procession) event.

Based on the use of costumes and properties, it can be said that the performance of PSM UPI Bandung Choir is identical to the costumes and properties of Mojang Jajaka in the traditional arts of the Sundanese culture. The costumes used by the male members (jajaka) are beskap or closed suits in black. The uniqueness in the costumes of the male members was the use of sarongs. The addition of this sarong element seems to be identical to one of the innocents and simple, but resourceful figures who are well known by the Sundanese people, i.e., Kabayan, a legendary figure in Sundanese peoples. The use of sarongs is also synonymous with 'clothing' when worshipping in Islam. It should be noted that most Sundanese people are Muslim. In other words, although this folk song depicts children's play (kaulinan barudak), remembering the Creator through worship is an obligation that cannot be abandoned.

The costumes and properties used by the female members (mojang) are costumes a la Jaipong dancers, i.e., apok, sampur, and sinjang. Apok is the upper part of the costume worn by Jaipong dancers. Sampur is a long scarf or cloth and the main property that must be used by dancers. The sampur used by female members is in the form of a long scarf that is pinned on the shoulders that hangs down to the dancers' ankles. Sinjang is a long cloth that is used as a subordinate to complement the costumes of female members.

## 4.2 Local Styles in the Performance of Cingcangkeling and National Identity

PSM UPI Choir has shown that their performance in singing Sundanese folksong, Cingcangkeling, in International Choir Festival not only introduces local styles in music, but also involves nonmusical aspects. They not only captivated the attention of international audiences through the local style that is commonly found in traditional Sundanese music, but also their visual beauty, both in the form of choreography as well as local costumes and properties. In the performances of Cingcangkeling in international event, UPI Bandung Choir 'expresses the essence of a culture'; folk music forms cultural images, or gives cultural impressions, and touches human emotions. These experiences open opportunities to accept difference and diversity in human life. PSM UPI Choir participation has a significant role in their life, i.e., to increase mutual respect with fellow festival participants, learn the uniqueness of different cultures, increase audience appreciation with the uniqueness of diverse cultures in Indonesia.

## 5 Conclusion

Based on preliminary studies, music, and video analysis, it can be concluded that music is often a way to build and maintain group identity. Music often serves to emphasize the ethnic identity or main characteristics of a distinct ethnic group within the larger society. In the international choir festival, a choir group not only plays a role in performing the uniqueness of their group identity, but also becomes a 'cultural ambassador' who reinforces their national identity in the international world.



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