

# Building Performing Arts Community through Bandung Isola Performing Arts Festival (BIPAF) in Indonesia

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**Abstract**—Performing arts is one of creative industry subsectors in Indonesia. To develop value added of performing arts creative products and entrepreneurship, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI) collaborates with local government of Bandung city has established Bandung Isola Performing Arts Festival (BIPAF). The festival uses the concept of performing arts market. The purpose of this article is to discuss a festival model which promotes performing arts community to share knowledge and ideas, creative products, and network with stakeholders. Applying a qualitative approach, the research used a project-based research method. The procedure of this research began with diagnosing the problems, making a plan to conduct the festival in Bandung, conducting the festival, and evaluation. Data were collected by observation, interview, documentary study, focus-group discussion, and personal reflection. The research resulted in a model of a festival as performing arts market using a site-specific stage with Villa Isola in Bandung as the background, rendering the festival as a means to build performing arts community who concerns with achieving value added socially, culturally, and economically. This festival has a strategic value to community that can develop the creative industry in Indonesia

**Keywords**—*Villa Isola; festival; performing arts market; creative industry; community*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Festival is a cultural event that has functions, meanings, and impacts on society [1]. No one country has no festival, this is because the festival has social, cultural, religious, and economic purposes, for example, Pasadena in Los Angeles, Rio de Geneva in Brazil, Londonderry in United Kingdom, and Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland. Indonesia has many festivals, organized both by communities of villages and by the district, provincial, or central government.

IPAM is a festival in Indonesia that has a direct relationship with the creative economic context [2]. IPAM has its own unique concepts compared to other festivals in Indonesia, in which the organizers as facilitators seek to bring together creative performing arts performers with potential buyers, festival directors and venue presenters, curators and promoters from various countries. IPAM is geared towards promotion of

works and their creators to be appreciated by a wider society, including foreign parties. Currently, IPAM is no longer held, although such a festival model is very important for the development of the creative industry of performing arts subsector in Indonesia.

This situation is in contrast to that of South Korea, which has consistently held Performing Arts Market in Seoul (PAMS) since 2005 until today. PAMS events are attended by many countries. PAMS has two types of performing arts, namely South Korea's own performing arts and international collaborative works. Actually, IPAM 2013 and PAMS 2015 share two similar targets, namely domestic festivals and overseas tours. However, their main target is to promote the work of local creators to festival directors, promoters, and curators abroad. Both PAMS and IPAM targeted the export of performing arts, and in the case of South Korea, the government even facilitates its artists to tour abroad if their work has piqued the interest of overseas parties.

The purpose of this article is to discuss the concept of a festival model in Bandung City which serves as performing arts market, and build a performing arts community. The problems under investigation include: 1) How do we strengthen the place identity of Isola as the location of the performing arts market? 2) What are the innovative performing artworks presented in BIPAF?; and 3) How do we build a performing arts community through BIPAF?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review discusses the concepts of festival, place identity, and communal performing arts. Sal Murgianto [3] defined festival as a celebration of a particular religion or a non-religious celebration, an annual celebration to honor a person or give an offering to a person, a cultural event, a market, merriment, joy, happiness, and a party (p.241). The definition is socio-cultural in nature, so when repeated a festival can develop into rituals or rites. Murgianto citing Fallasi, mentioned the ten activities that render a festival a ritual or rite, which among others include: rites of valorization, rites of purification, rites of conspicuous display, rites of conspicuous consumption, ritual dramas, rites of exchange,

rites of competition, rites of devalorization [3]. The rituals are characterized by the types of performances and their purpose.

The festival as suggested by Titus Levi combines three ideas simultaneously, namely celebration, identity, and community [4]. The festival is a celebration, but it also contains efforts of building a community and networking, interacting with each other, exchanging experiences, and learning from each other. In the concept of Levi, identity is defined as the individual identity of the artist who also offers his/her work as well as doing networking. Levi exemplifies this case through several festivals in Los Angeles, USA, which have social and cultural functions.

Meanwhile, Getz categorized festivals into three viewpoints of festivities that have functions, meanings, and impacts in the social and cultural contexts, tourist festivals, and festival management [1]. Tourist festival and festival management are two fairly recently discussed terms compared to studies on festivals that have functions, meaning, and impact on the community. Furthermore, Getz studied the festival based on the theme, experience, and meaning raised. Some of the themes closely related to BIPAF are community, culture, place identity, and attachment. In this category, Getz argued that festivals are linked to culture and place, giving each other identity and serving to strengthen the bond among members of a community. In relation to tourist festivals, place and cultural events are regarded as means to attract people to visit. This is in line with Eli Avraham's view on "hosting events as a tool for restoring the destination image". Avraham argued that one strategy to build an image of or to market a tourist destination is to create an event. There are seven types of events that have been studied and suggested to be able to promote a place, namely: "(1) mega sports events; (2) sports events; (3) cultural events; (4) events that brand a destination contrary to the stereotype; (5) events with opinion leaders and celebrities; (6) conferences and conventions; (7) events that convert negative characteristics into positive" [5]. These activities can quite successfully build the image of a place, changing the image from negative to positive. The media also play an indirect role in the promotion, because they disseminate these activities to the public.

Levi's concept is in line with Getz's view of the themes of community festivals, culture, place identity, and attachment [1, 4]. An example of the most successful festival in building a place image, a performing arts community, and other cultural events of performing arts and arts in general is the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, UK, held in an old city with its majestic heritage buildings. The festival was reported to be attended by more than 500,000 people in a month. The performing artworks staged at the festival come from all over the world. Most of the spectators are festival organizers and venue presenters who will buy the works of performing arts. Having their performing arts staged at the festival usually helps increase the purchase of one's performing arts, and the city has become a performing arts destination in England. The event is held in several venues and with a ticket paid for a full month in August. The festival has an economic impact on the artists and the communities. Another festival that is equally great is the Adelaide Fringe Festival. Jo Caust and Hilary Glow argued that Adelaide's annual festival is more inclined towards cultural

functions, although in the context of creative industry, the festival cultivates entrepreneurial spirit that leads to economic development [6].

In the context of community building, Ardipal discussed the roles of art participants [7]. Art participants are those involved in art activities, such as art figures, artists, musicians, as well as music listeners. Ardipal argued that these people support and serve as support or infrastructure for art. He cited the development of creative Talempong in West Sumatra. Talempong can flourish because it has solid art participants. Quoting the National Endowment for the Art (NEA), Ardipal described the foundations of art building/infrastructure to be consisting of: art scene, art organizations, art schools, financial support volunteers, union and association networks, and public policy. This art infrastructure is a group of people as a community in a certain place.

Masunah and Milyartini have written about the process of developing a business community of performing arts through art incubation [8]. The works produced are featured in a festival. In this context, the festival is also part of the dissemination of artworks to be distributed and appreciated by the public. Dissemination is very important in building a performing arts ecosystem. As an illustration, a creation will not be able to develop and survive if it is not disseminated to the community that can give it the appreciation it deserves. Therefore, Bandung Isola Performing Arts Festival (BIPAF) aims to facilitate performing arts artists, creators, performers, and creative workers to perform their works, resulting in collaboration and connections with the stakeholders, both nationally and internationally. In this era of creative economy, Mari Elka Pangestu expected creative performers, including those of performing arts, to develop creative economy in the basis of "local in value, contemporary in spirit" [9].

### III. RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a qualitative paradigm, with project-based research method [10]. The main characteristic of this research is applied research. The researchers applied the concepts and ideas of the festival as a forum for the promotion of performing arts in Bandung. The researchers initiated the activity by diagnosing the potentials and problems in performing arts promotion among artists in Bandung City, in particular. The researchers then designed a festival model that uses a site-specific stage—Villa Isola—as the stage and background, followed by organizing the festival and conducting evaluation.

Research subjects consisted of creative performers of performing arts, performing arts observers, and researchers themselves. Performers of performing arts include choreographers or creators of the eight performing artworks performed at the festival. Two of them are the works of South Korean choreographers, and the rest are those of Bandung and Subang choreographers. The performing arts observers include one of the directors of Indonesia Dance Festival (IDF), Nungki Kusumastuti; Director of Solo International Performing Arts (SIPA) and Director of Indonesia International Mask Festival (IIMF), Irawati Kusumorasri; and Director of "Seni Sini Sana",

Rama Thaharani. In the context of BIPAF, the researchers were directly involved in the activities.

Data collection was conducted through the techniques of participant observation, interview, documentary study, focus group discussion, and reflection. Observations were made during the show on October 21, 2017. Observations were also carried out to the researchers' experience in 2016, the videotapes, and photo documentations. Meetings held during the preparation for BIPAF with the committee and creators/performers were also taken into account. The data were then analyzed inductively in order to build patterns, categories, and themes based on data and facts found, and finally interpretation was made.

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

##### A. *Performing Arts Market as a Festival*

Bandung Isola Performing Arts Festival (BIPAF) references the concept of performing arts market adopted from the 2013 Indonesia Performing Arts Market (IPAM), held by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, and Performing Arts Market in Seoul (PAMS) 2015. Based on the ten rituals that make up a festival as described by Murgianto, BIPAF is included under the category of "rites of exchange" which leads to marketing [3]. Performing arts market is as "an event that presents and promotes innovative, curated performing art products to be distributed and facilitates collaboration and exchange of ideas among professional artists and performers in performing arts" [2]. IPAM presents domestic works only, while PAMS presents domestic, collaborative, and international works. BIPAF 2017 involved Indonesian performing arts, collaborative works (Indonesia-Korea), and overseas works of South Korean choreographer, Na Hoon Park. One of the hallmarks of the performing arts market concept is to invite buyers, including festival directors and promoters, and facilitate a dialogue between performers and the buyers. It is expected that a network and cooperation will be formed after BIPAF, in which the buyers will offer performers to perform on their stage or other stages based on their recommendation.

The steps taken in the implementation of BIPAF are oriented towards the goal of applying the idea of Levi, namely celebration, identity, and community. The concept of performing arts market in BIPAF entails an identity and community building. The identity in BIPAF is marked by the venue of the event, namely Villa Isola, with the idea of site-specific stage, at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia in Bandung. Community building is done through various activities in BIPAF. More importantly, the innovative performing arts at BIPAF are produced through a series of activities: selection and curation, incubation, promotion, showcasing and pitching, discussion, and evaluation. The first step in determining the work is the selection and curation of the work by experts appointed by the BIPAF committee. After the selection, the committee organized incubation activities to improve the quality of work that was still under creative process or adjustment to the specific stage of BIPAF. In this art incubation process, the team of experts determined the form of presentation, either showcasing or pitching. Then the selected

works were promoted through various media to also invite stakeholders or buyers. In October 2017, the showcasing and pitching were performed, followed by discussion. The final step is an evaluation with the BIPAF committee with the intention of understanding the shortcomings and advantages of the activities already undertaken and preparing for BIPAF in the following year.

##### B. *The Forms of Performing Arts in BIPAF*

Implementing a festival requires a management concept, ranging from planning, implementation, monitoring, to evaluation. Planning is carried out in the preparatory phase as described above, especially in designing festival models and selecting performing arts. With the selection of Villa Isola, as the site-specific stage of BIPAF 2017, four works that had explored the stage were selected to be presented at the BIPAF event. Other works staged at the BIPAF event were: 1) Ayo Sunaryo's Collaborative Work with the Korean Choreographer, Na Hoon Park; 2) "The Three Water" (Na Hoon Park); 4) CH3; 5) "Nyai Wiranggana" by Asep Kusmana. The selection of the works was based on the readiness of the choreographers to explore the outdoor stage behind Villa Isola Building. A total of eight performing artworks were promoted at BIPAF.

Another important aspect is the formation of a creative team that handles the stage, talents, and audience. A stage manager is required for managing the stage, especially for showcasing. The stage manager is going to organize the show, the flow of the audiences coming in and out of the stage, the lighting arrangement, and the sound system. A talent is a performer, who will be directed by each group but will coordinate with the stage manager. Showcasing was held on 21 October 2017, from 20.00 to 23.00 at Taman Bareti UPI, with the performance of "Touching Unknown People," "Three Airs," "CH 3," and "Nyai Wiranggana". Four other works were presented in the form of pitching, namely "Belekok Gugat", "Sinom", "Hanoman Duta", and "Kidung Perkasa" on October 22, 2017.

- Touching Unknown People is a collaborative work between a South Korean choreographer, Park Na Hoon, and Ayo Sunaryo, from Indonesia. The creation of this work began with a workshop on the choreography techniques attended by 30 students of UPI Arts Education Department, with Na Hoon Park as the instructor. Then, 10 dancers were selected for this collaborative work, and they began practicing from 12-19 October, 2017 in Bandung. This dance used a hammock as its property. The dancers are Gaung Rizki Gustiaji, Risman Bin Busman, Ismail Muladi, Akbar Nurzaman, Romario Patogian, Supriyadi, Satria Adhiyasa, Novian Musthofa, Arbi Nuralamsyah, and Ulfa Yulia
- Three Airs is the work of Park Na Hoon from South Korea. This work depicts three strange creatures containing air, which sometimes look eccentric, stupid, and strange. The work is performed by three dancers, namely Park Sang Joon, Moon Hyung Su, and Kim Sang Gak and supported by Ji Hoon Yum as the music operator, An Yun Mi as the lighting designer, and An

Young Mi as the stage assistant. This work was performed at Solo International Performing Arts (SIPA) in 2016.

- “Cepot Hamot Hamong Hamemangkat” (CH 3) by Citra Nuranteni Putri. This work describes the figure of Cepot, one of the Panakawan figures in Pewayangan (Wayang Golek) representing the lay people. He has the nature of being open (hamot), able to filter out new elements (hamong), and able to convert a value into a new one (hamemangkat). He serves as an entertainer and an advocate of social criticism. This work was created for the final examination of the creator as a graduate student at Institut Seni Budaya Indonesia (ISBI) Bandung. This work was supported by 24 dancers and music players.
- Nyai Wiranggana by Asep Kusmana from LIKA 04 Community Subang. This work depicts a female character in the story, Nyai Wiranggana, who is under the pressure of a patriarchal culture and industrialization in Subang. A combination of real life and the story of female laborers of the colonial period is portrayed in the story of female dancers, called ronggeng. This work is supported by 30 people including dancers, music players, and creative players, and the production was led by Amanda Inge Putri.
- Belekok Gugat by Irwan Fitriawan. This dance is inspired of the Belekok (*Ardeola Speciosa*), which is threatened from extinction due to the destruction of its habitat and ecosystem. The bird lives and flourishes in Kampung Rancabuaya, Bandung City. The population of Belekok is difficult to increase, because there are no more rice fields around the village for the bird to forage. The birds have to fly away from their nests to find food, which makes them reluctant to return to their nests. In addition, the residents and the habitat of haur hejo bamboo (*Bambusa Tuldoidea*) in Rancabuaya are always overshadowed by the rapid development of elite housing and Bandung Teknopolis area that has removed the rice fields and clumps of bamboo as the habitat of Belekok. The dance “Belekok Gugat” depicts insecurity, anxiety, and anger embodied in the expression of the birds’ movements in the water, trying to raise human awareness of the importance to maintain the harmony between nature and its creatures.
- Sinom Barataning Rasa by Wildan Kurnia. Sinom which means a space for celebration depicts the paradox of life. The paradox is symbolized in the characters of Panji, Panimdo-Rumiang, and Tumenggung-Klana. The paradox is also analogous to the pairs of binary opposition of content-emptiness, desire-essence, right-left, and day-night. It is capable of representing fragments of impression, such as the search in life and delinquency that is inherited to Pamindo and Rumiang, and power and passion that is inherited to Tumenggung and Klana. Panji is the climax of human search. He becomes a wise “guardian” who does not side with either evil or good because it is the nature of paradox in life. “Sinom” is based on the interpretation of the

Cirebon mask that explores the paradoxical forms of movements, characters, and atmosphere. The music that accompanies the work “Sinom” is a gamelan that is very unique to Cirebon. The work is produced by Shocking Rajah Performing Arts, directed by Wildan Kurnia, choreographed by Galih Mahara, and the music is arranged by Yosep Yogikarya Wildan Kurnia.

- Kidung Perkasa by Devi Supriatna. This work is inspired of the history of Pajajaran and Majapahit Kingdoms, recounting the disappointment, anxiety, and the revenge of Diyah Pitaloka, the daughter of the King of Pajajaran against injustice. This piece was submitted for the final examination of a master's degree at ISBI Bandung, and then re-performed at BIPAF 2016 at the outdoor stage of UPI Amphitheater.
- Hanoman Duta by Tatang Taryana and Iwan Gunawan. This work originates from some Ramayana stories. It tells about Hanoman, the White Monkey, who becomes Rama's messenger to meet Shinta, his wife, who was abducted by Prabu Ravana from Alengka. This work was first produced by the Technical Implementation Unit for Cultural Affairs, Kabumi UPI, and the Faculty of Arts and Design Education, UPI, for cultural visit to Mumbai, India, in September 2017.

The site-specific stage of Villa Isola with its typical architectural style in the form of elegant elliptical lines and whitewashed walls stands firmly and magnificently, and the space surrounding it is full of green plants that spreads extensively, not affecting the artistic forms of movements. However, the atmosphere of the site-specific stage leaves a different impression on all the works compared to the interior of the building. Through BIPAF, Villa Isola has given birth to an unrealistic environment, a very abstract atmosphere at night. Referring to the argument of Andrew David that “place identity is the main mechanism in constructing tourists with their environment”, then it is through this festival that the atmosphere of a place forms a different environment.

### *C. Building a Performing Arts Community*

In an attempt to build a performing arts community, in addition to the works, Ardipal stated there are also “art participants” [7]. In the context of BIPAF, the art community is built by all art participants involved in and supporting BIPAF, including creators, performers, committee members, creative workers, spectators, and observers or buyers. Overall, a total of 500 public audiences were targeted. It turned out that the number of BIPAF spectators reached around 1,000, exceeding the target. The presence of observers is very important to BIPAF, as they are expected to respond to performing artists for the development of artistic quality and market networking. The observers attended the showcasing and pitching which was followed by a discussion. During the discussion, there was interaction and dialogue between the creative people and observers, as well as evaluation of the performed works and BIPAF organization.

Nungki Kusumastuti is a lecturer at the Dance Department of Jakarta Arts Institute (IKJ), a dancer, and an actor. She is a representative of the Indonesian Dance Festival (IDF). Before

submitting her evaluation, Nungki Kusumastuti explained the context of IDF. Kusumastuti also commented on the collaborative work of Na Hoon Park and Ayo Sunaryo. She argued that “Touching Unknown People” lacked uniformity among the dancers. The dancers did not really explore the hammock as the dance property. Kusumastuti was more interested in the “Three Airs” dancers, who were all Koreans. Kusumastuti praised the three water dancers for their physical maturity, although they appeared to struggle with the slippery stage.

Rama Thaharani is the Director of *Seni Sini Sana* in Jakarta, promoter of Indonesian Performing Arts, and producer of IPAM 2013. She explained in advance about the activities of a festival director in general. She said, “Usually festival directors look for works according to their artistic framework and theme and the relevance of a work to the festival itself and to the audiences, so it is not simply an act of selecting any work to be performed. Festival directors will personally attend the event to select the appropriate works. Hence, every work actually has its own market; however, the festival can publish specific works. Special comments from Thaharani are concerned with the trend of international collaboration. International collaboration is the activity of mutually trying to break through the boundaries of each culture, in which case we tend to defend our ideas in the name of cultural preservation.

Irawati Kusumorasri is a lecturer at Mangkunegaran Art Academy (ASGA) in Solo, Director of Candrakirana Foundation, and Director of Solo International Performing Arts (SIPA) since 2009. SIPA has been held on an outdoor stage for nine times. Kusumorasri said that “there are three kinds of works in SIPA: those which belong to the criteria of beginners, collaborative, and international.”

The responses of the stakeholders, especially festival directors of IDF, SIPA and IIMF, indicate that the works staged at BIPAF can continue to be performed on other stages with audiences of different backgrounds. The exploration of the works could not create a different image of the space for audiences of other areas. Through a series of activities of BIPAF, a community of performing arts has been built, interaction has taken place, and networking between creative workers and stakeholders has been created. It is expected that the creative workers can follow this up.

## V. CONCLUSION

Bandung Isola Performing Arts Festival (BIPAF) is a model of festival that uses the concept of performing arts

market or rites of exchange. This model is one of the strategies in developing creative economy in the sub-sector of performing arts. The stages of BIPAF activities start from the selection of works, incubation, promotion, presentation (showcasing and pitching), discussion, and evaluation. The type of performing arts presented at BIPAF is an innovative dance and dance theater based on Indonesian traditional dances or collaborative work within two countries. The stage of BIPAF, Villa Isola Park, and its activities gradually inspire the artists to work and build a performing arts community that shares the same vision to increase added value. By bringing up two places in BIPAF such as Bandung and Isola, this festival can be a means to build a new image of Bandung as a tourism destination. It should be noted that international collaborative works are important for BIPAF to gain an international reputation. Stakeholders advise creative actors to improve the quality of their works in accordance with the aesthetic principles in order to develop market networking and access the world performing arts market.

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