

WESTERN MUSIC IN INDONESIA: A PRELIMINARY HISTORICAL OBSERVATION

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Artikel ini menguraikan observasi pendahuluan mengenai masuknya dan perkembangan musik barat yang diamati dari sisi sejarah yang menyusuri jalur perdagangan, penyebaran agama Kristen, dan kebijakan pendidikan yang dimulai sejak Pemerintahan Belanda.

The existence of Western music in Indonesia nowadays is being accepted by the general audience, through the classical, popular, experimental music, and formal education curriculum. This situation shows that the western music has a place in the development of general music realm in Indonesia.

The initial entry of western diatonic music occurred with the arrival of western people to Nusantara (later Indonesia), especially for trades and politics. The year 1511 was the starting point of western influence in Indonesia. It was marked by the coming of a Portuguese ship led by Alfonso d'Albuquerque to the Moluccas Islands, to establish trade with the local leaders. The expansion of trade continued and Ternate became the first representative as well as colony of the Portuguese people in 1522. This arrival was followed by other Western traders as the Dutch in 1596, the Spanish in 1606, and the British in 1619. Besides Moluccas Island other such as Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Celebes, and other small island had obviously been visited (Vlekke 1943:412, Stapel 1930:25 and Ricklefs 1981: 21-28).

Western music was first played among the colonists. When they spread over to other areas their music became the vogue of the day. The Western colonists began to adopt a bourgeois lifestyle that led to the acquisition of slaves who were also entertainers. At the same time when a commercial approach to the Sultans and Kings was launched, which in turn became a political strategy to annex the region, the Western music was finally handed down to the native people.

In the year 1574 there were concerts of chamber music performed by the Portuguese community for the Sultans in Ternate and Tidore (Furnivall 1939:16-17). These concerts were then followed by other Westerners as a part of "diplomatic friendliness." Smith (1968:117) wrote that "when Sir Francis Drake visited the Indies in 1580, he had his ship's musicians entertain a local king (see also Sorrel 1989). In the Journal entitled Priangan: De Preangerlandschappen onder het Nederlandsch Bestuur tot 1811, Dr. F. de Haan wrote that a Dutch official by the name of Cornelis de Bevere in 1689 already took three native slaves as musicians who were assigned to play the instruments such as contrabass, violin, and harp.

The early development of Western music in Java had been under the administration of the Verenigde Oost Indische Compagnie, the Dutch in Indonesia, since the 17th century, Raden (1989:10) wrote:

The Dutch Indies company in 1657 had made a plan to build theatres to establish arts organizations to allow for the stage activities and music performances. In the statute of the project as mentioned by Van den Berg in his book of *Het Tooneel te Batavia in Vroegeretijd*, there was mention that their music to be vocal or instrumental music repertoires. In the same book, the author mentioned that a German, Von Wurmb wrote a letter to his family in Europe telling that music activities in Batavia (now Jakarta) were almost the same as those in Europe in 1794. The music they played was the same by the music student in Prague.

J.B.J. van Doren, a Belgian historian, wrote in his report of *Fragmenten uit de Reizen in den Indian Archipel*, that in 1854 there were several rich Dutch landlords possessing private ensemble used both as military music and party entertainment. Augustijn Michels of Cibinong,

West Java, for instance, had a special orchestra that played the Western classical music with musicians from different region of Indonesia, such as Makassar, Betawi, Nusa Tenggara, Semarang, Seram, and Surakarta, They played instruments such as clarinet, flute, trumpet, trombone, violin, cello, contrabass, and percussion.

Subsequently, Western music turned so popular that there was a music society not only among the Western communities who were permanent residents in the cities controlled by the Dutch administration, but also among the people who worked for the governments and the students in the colonial schools (Furnivall 1939: 415-426). It expanded to small towns and even remote villages in the plantation areas controlled by the Dutch administration (see Kartomi 1988, Abdurachman 1978, Sinar 1969, and Anderson 1826). For instance Balige, a small town along Lake Toba in North Sumatra, had already performed a regular small concert in the houses of the Dutch and in the hospital own by German missionaries, playing Western classical music which included Johann Sebastian Bach's trio for flute, violin, and piano in 1920s (Velde 1987: 74-75).

The contact of Western music and culture with the Indonesian community brought about the effects of the emergence of a new perspective on traditional music. For instance, tonality, aesthetic, perception, instrumentation, and lyrics had some influence on the folk music (see Manuel 1988: 205-220, Frederick 1982: 105, Wolbers 1985, and Yampolsky 1989: 13). Most of the songs which were popular during the colonial era utilized diatonic scales. Some even contained "strange" lyrics which were a combination of several Western languages such as Dutch, Portuguese, Spanish, German, English and local dialect. For example some Dutch in Ole, ole, Bandoeng:

Ole, ole Bandoeng
Mooie meisjes je vind hun alleen daar
Manise
Ole, ole Bandoeng
Maar jou hartje moet niet djadi bingoeng

Het is zu fijn in kota Bandoeng
Het is daar friesjes de wind
Komt van de goenoeng
Veel jongelui en nonan wonen daar
Kota Bandoeng is goed voor pas getrouwd paar

Another example in *Waarom Huil je toch Nona Manis*:

Waarom huil je toch nona manis
Saja ingat terlaloe padamoe
Droog je trantjes maar nona manis
Shall I come back again to you

Dari djaoe datang sinjo manis
Soeara kekasihhoe nyang merdoe
Waaroom huil je toch nona manis
Sekarang I come back to you again

Beside that, the influence of Western music also came with the missionaries. Historically, the first wave of the Christian missions occurred in Barus, a small trade town in North Sumatra, in the 7th century. Historians assume that during that time several monks of a Nestorian Christian (Coptic) had established a colony in Barus as a part of their continuing efforts to spread the religion to Central and South Asia (Frend 1982: 212, Bettenson 1963: 89, Parrinder 1971: 431, and Sidjabat 1982). There is very limited information available on the existence of the first church. The sources are provided by Abu Al-Armini, an Egypt historian, and pastor Odoric de Porta Naome who discovered the church during his journey to Sumatra, Borneo and Java in 1323 – 1324 (see Cholid 1989: 30).

The Catholic spreading was marked by the construction of a church along the western coast of Sumatra in 1921 which was erected by Johannes de Monte Corvino, a Fransiscan friar.

The history continued as some of Northern Moluccas people were baptized in 1534 by Genzalo Veloso. Later, a Jesuit pastor, St. Fransiscus Xaverius arrived from Spain and began his mission in Ambon, Ternate, and Halmahera in 1546. Through the assistance of the Portuguese administration in Malaka and Goa, the mission in 1641 was extended widely to Flores, North Celebes, South Borneo, and Java (Furnivall 1939: 39 – 50).

In the 1761 the Dutch began to monopolize the spice trade, and banned the Catholic mission so that the Portuguese would leave Indonesia. However, later, the Dutch administration revived the Christian missionary to strengthen influence and support from the local Christian followers (Vlekke 1943: 88). The strategy to achieve the goal, Jacobus Nellisen, a pastor from the Netherlands, and Mgr. J.J. Groof, a pastor from Suriname were sent to the area. Several Javanese were sent to Netherlands to study theology as part of an exchange program by the Calvin Church in Rotterdam in 1797.

The other ethnic groups visited by the missionaries were Batak people who inhabit the surrounding area of Lake Toba, North Sumatra. They are only ethnic groups that accepted Christianity at an early stage in Sumatra Island although they had been isolated from other societies for hundreds of years (Loeb 1972: 15 and Sangti 1977: 16-19). The first American and British missionaries arrived in the area in 1824 and were followed by the French and Dutch missionaries. However, only those sent by the Rheinische Mission Gessellschaft and led by Ingmar Ludwig Nommensen were succesful in spreading the religion (see Cunningham 1958).

During the early introduction of Christianity in the Batak land, the missionaries had made regulations that were aimed at uprooting the traditional values associated with animism. Among these were the prohibition of traditional music which could not be played without legal permission because they were considered to be related to the ancient rituals (see Pedersen 1975 and Schreiner 1978). The same thing occurred in several towns in Java like Sidoardjo, where the missionaries from Austria forbade the local people to listen to gamelan music, to sing Javanese tembang and to watch the wayang show (see Guillott 1986).

As a result of the prohibition, the Batak people, and some other ethnics group in Indonesia who controlled by missionaries, lost much of their tradition (Brunner 1961). Subsequently, the development of Western music in those area progressed rapidly. J.F. Snelleman (1899: 634 and see also Sylado 1983: 32) wrote, "Batak people learnt how to sing two or more voices from the missionaries." That's why the ability of playing musical instruments in diatonic, such as orgel, brass music, guitar, and Western vocal techniques were obviously influential among the people who accepted the Christianity.

The other sources of Western music influence at an early stage in Indonesia was the role of education institution. Not only for primary or other general or standard school where Western music were thought by what we called Seni Suara (singing in diatonic scale), but later specific educational institutions established by the Dutch in several main cities in Indonesia between 1910s and 1940s. For instance, there were seminarium (also at INS in Kayu Tanam, West Sumatra) that offered some specific skillful training, including music. Many student who took majors in music were very active in composing music and performing either in Western community or in the general public. Some of the former graduates of those institutions became the teacher of the Sekolah Musik Indonesia (later Akademi Musik Indonesia) which was the first formal music educational institution in Indonesia established in Yogyakarta in 1950. During the early years of the operation, the school was backed up by the foreigner teachers from Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Hungary, Russia and the USA. The system of teaching followed the model of a conservatory in Europe (Hardjana 1983: 52)

In recent time, the existence and position of Western music in the modern Indonesia is very colorful and fulfill almost in every aspect of life. The development of Western music in Indonesia seems have a place not only on a formal or informal educational institution, but also as a national programme through the interdepartmental activities and private enterprise.

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