



## Arrangement of The Stambul Baju Biru Song By The Tjong Young Gita Citra Alam Keroncong Community

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### Article Info

### Abstract

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The Keroncong Community of Tjong Young Gita Citra Alam represents a successful effort to preserve the cultural heritage of keroncong music through experimental arrangement innovations, without losing the traditional character of the keroncong stambul style. This study aims to identify and describe the harmonic arrangement of Stambul Baju Biru by Tjong Young Gita Citra Alam. Data collection techniques employed a qualitative methodology with a musicological approach, including non-participant observation, interviews, and document studies. The findings reveal that the arrangement of Stambul Baju Biru incorporates additional sections such as an intro, a coda, and a solo voorspél, with the harmonization expanded experientially. From these findings, it can be concluded that the harmonization of Stambul Baju Biru is dominated by variations of chromatic chords, inversions, and slash chords, which are seamlessly connected vertically and horizontally. This harmonic complexity supports the expressive range of the song and facilitates smooth chromatic transitions between its sections.

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## INTRODUCTION

Keroncong music has become a distinctive genre deeply embedded in Indonesia's musical culture. Practitioners and key figures dedicated to keroncong have actively introduced this musical form to younger generations to ensure its sustainability. Their persistent efforts aim to preserve keroncong music by consistently engaging and attracting prospective musicians in the future. These endeavors have yielded positive outcomes in recent years, as evidenced by the growing public interest fueled by keroncong's sweet and unique image. Increasingly, young people express admiration and a strong commitment to revitalizing keroncong music through various innovative approaches.

Efforts to preserve keroncong often lead to ongoing innovations, such as the innovative keroncong stage performances by the De Waunk community, vernacular keroncong musical practices by Kos Atos, oral transmission of keroncong traditions through Congrock 17's regeneration programs, as well as developments in arranging keroncong music by fusing it with other genres that resonate with contemporary audiences. Innovations also include arranging songs from different genres into keroncong styles and improvisational techniques in instrumental performance (A'yun & Rachman, 2019; Arhamni & Rachman, 2021; Nugraha et al., 2025; Rachman & Utomo, 2018; Setiawan et al., 2024; Seto & Kiswanto, 2024; Sokhiba & Rachman, 2021; Zahrotul & Rachman, 2020; Zilmi et al., 2021). A prominent keroncong figure, Sundari Soekotjo, supports and facilitates keroncong musicians to freely explore, express, and create within the genre by establishing the Indonesian Keroncong Music Foundation (Yakin), which welcomes all age groups (Yusuf & Alrianingrum, 2016).

The Tjong Young Gita Citra Alam (GCA) keroncong community in Demak Regency, Central Java, also expresses musical innovation within keroncong. Comprising young musicians active in the Demak community, GCA develops an innovative keroncong approach by enriching traditional harmonization with modern elements in their arrangements, thereby creating a unique keroncong character blended with experimental harmonies—an uncommon feature especially in the Stambul keroncong style. GCA enhances the Stambul arrangement form by adding intros and codas without compromising the authentic character of Stambul keroncong. This distinctive harmonization has attracted scholarly interest for deeper investigation.

Several studies have previously examined Stambul keroncong. For instance, Kamalia Wahyu Ika Cahyani (2017) analyzed the singing style of Stambul II in the Putra Kasih Muntilan Keroncong Orchestra, focusing on vocal technique mastery. The study revealed that novice or young singers often imitate singing styles from social media for a short time, resulting in the adoption of techniques that may be incorrect, usually causing errors in pronouncing song lyrics.

Another study by Destiana (2016) titled "Analysis of Form and Structure of the Stambul Song Baju Biru by Hardiman" explored the song's form and structure, consisting of two parts (A-B) in a 4/4 time signature with F as the key, spanning 16 measures repeated twice with different lyrics. The lyrics describe a love story ending happily.

Further research by Pambajeng et al. (2019), "Vocal Techniques and Interpretation of Stambul Keroncong Song 'Tinggal Kenangan' Composed by Budiman BJ as Performed by Subarjo HS," examined the vocal techniques for performing this challenging piece, aiming for

soft and smooth resonance without losing the Stambul keroncong character.

Despite these prior studies, there remains a gap in scholarly inquiry specifically analyzing the harmonic arrangements of Stambul keroncong. This observation strengthens the rationale for the present study's topic focus.

## METHOD

This study employs a musicological approach to analyze data collected from various sources, including videos, photographs, musical scores, audio recordings, and descriptive documents, without involving numerical data or variable relationships. The research method applied is qualitative. The research site is located at Hotel Citra Alam, Jl. Bhayangkara No. 11, Petengan Selatan, Bintoro Village, Demak District, Demak Regency, Central Java, 59511. Data collection techniques include non-participant observation, interviews, and document studies. The researcher conducted direct observations during regular rehearsal sessions to obtain data. Interviews were held with the community leader of Tjong Young Gita Citra Alam, Mr. Prilastono Nugroho, and the arrangement supervisor, Sila Widyatama. Document studies were carried out to collect data and information from previously published documentation related to photographs, videos, and score arrangements of the keroncong song "Stambul Baju Biru" by the community. The data were subsequently analyzed through data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. To ensure data validity, this study utilized data triangulation techniques.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### The Tjong Young Gita Citra Alam Community

The Tjong Young Gita Citra Alam (GCA) community is a youth keroncong group based in Demak Regency, serving as the first generation successor to the Gita Citra Alam Community, officially established in 2017. The community originated from the initiative of its chairman, Mr. Prilastono Nugroho, who recognized the diminishing presence of keroncong music. Consequently, efforts to pass on this musical heritage to younger generations were initiated, with plans for continuous regeneration. Supported by renowned national keroncong figure Waljinah, the Demak Regency Tourism Office, and regional keroncong musicians who shared the stage, this community has solidified its position as a pioneer of the keroncong music generation in the northern coastal region of Java (Prilastono Nugroho, interview, July 5, 2023).

In its role to conserve keroncong music, Tjong Young actively participates in various events, including the Charity Keroncong Against the Pandemic concert in 2020, performing the song "Keroncong Goyang" composed by Koko Thole, the Grebeg Keroncong Demak event in 2021, and the Solo Keroncong Festival in 2019 and 2021. Beyond participation, Tjong Young has also initiated collaborative events, such as the joint performance with Ki Dalang Ikhsan during the Keroncong Ngesrep Asrep concert in 2023. Additionally, the community leverages social media technology to promote their works and organize virtual keroncong music performances (Ardyanto & Rachman, 2022).

Musically, Tjong Young blends the coastal keroncong style with an adaptive musical approach while preserving the traditional keroncong structural elements. The community presents non-keroncong songs rearranged in the keroncong style in several performances. One of their iconic arrangements includes "Lir-Illir," composed by Sunan Kalijaga, performed at the Solo Keroncong Festival 2019. Nonetheless,

the community remains committed to traditional keroncong heritage by arranging classic keroncong songs, such as "Stambul Baju Biru."

The piece is in the key of F major with a time signature 4/4 throughout the arrangement. The tempo marking for Tjong Young's arrangement of Stambul Baju Biru is Allegro = 110, reflecting a fast and cheerful pace that characterizes coastal keroncong music, distinct from the typically melancholic presentation of keroncong music.

Tjong Young's arrangement of Stambul Baju Biru exhibits a harmonic structure that differs from the norm. An introduction, coda, and solo voorspél section are incorporated into the arrangement. The introduction consists of 20 measures, the coda of 8 measures, and the solo voorspél spans 17 measures. This structural expansion represents an improvisational adaptation from an original arrangement by Sila Widyatama entitled Nusantara, which was initially in the key of G major but transposed to F major in this arrangement (Sila Widyatama, personal interview, August 23, 2024).

The solo voorspél is performed between measures 21 and 36. Typically, in traditional keroncong compositions, the solo voorspél functions as an introductory passage and serves as a characteristic feature of keroncong music, borne out of the improvisational creativity and melodic exploration by filler instrumentalists, such as flute, violin, and/or guitar, confined within the I – V – I chord progression (Fikri, 2022).

A unique aspect of the solo voorspél in Tjong Young's Stambul Baju Biru arrangement lies in the trumpet performance, played improvisationally using the rubato technique. This technique involves subtle rhythmic manipulation, where the musician "steals" time

against a steady underlying pulse, altering the expression in certain parts (Prier, 2014). This contrasts with the typical practice, where these parts are usually assigned to other filler instruments.

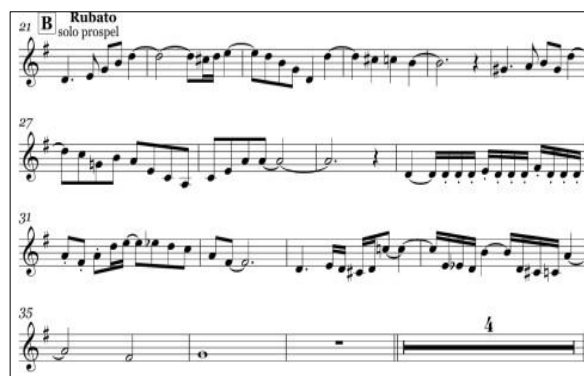


Figure 1. Solo Voorspél for trumpet

### Arrangement Harmonization of Stambul Baju Biru

Arranging is a creative activity that provides various variations, including sound organization elements such as melody, harmony, and rhythm, which result in a new musical work without abandoning the original music's distinctive characteristics (Kusumawati, 2016; Mareta, 2017).

Tjong Young Gita Citra Alam utilizes his creativity in harmonization within the arrangement of Stambul Baju Biru. Advanced chords and chromatic progressions are widely employed in his harmonic arrangement to create more complex tonal colors. This approach is based on Sila Widyatama's tendencies as an arranger to experiment with chord progressions by expanding the harmonic system.

According to Mahardika et al. (2023), musical experimentation conducted by an arranger aims to innovate music in terms of

arrangement and conceptual development. Experimental music generally involves unconventional uses of musical elements and patterns that emphasize sound exploration, resulting in music that may be unfamiliar to the listener's ear. In this study, the experimental harmonization focuses on chord progressions where the arranger utilizes advanced chords such as diminished, omit, add9, and suspended chords to broaden the harmonic scope.

To provide a more detailed explanation of the arrangement structure, the discussion is divided into three parts: (1) harmonization arrangement in the intro section; (2) harmonization arrangement in the song body; (3) harmonization arrangement in the coda section.

### Harmonization of the Intro Section in Stambul Baju Biru

Figure 2. Harmonization section intro 1-10 measurements

Based on Figure 2, the chord progression in the intro, spanning measures 1 to 10, broadly consists of the progression F – F/C – F – Eb – Eb/Bb – Eb – Bb – Bb/F – Bb – Db – Db/Ab – Db, which is repeated twice, then concludes on F major at measure 10. The progression employs F major as the primary tonic. The presence of the Eb and Db chords is a borrowing from the parallel scale of F minor, where the Eb chord functions as the VII chord and the Db chord as the VI chord of F minor. The use of parallel chords aims to create a chromatic sequence and gradually build a cheerful emotional atmosphere as the introductory and opening function of the intro section.

Figure 3. Harmonization intro 11-20 measurement

In measures 11 and 12, the cello performs a solo that plays a crucial role as a transitional element, serving as a bridge to a new theme commencing in measure 13. The cello's function in this section acts as a textural link between the preceding and subsequent segments within the introductory structure. From measures 13 to 20, a chord progression is consistently anchored in the key of F major, comprising the scale tones F – Gm – Am – Bb – C – Dm – Edim. The chord progression in this passage proceeds as follows: F – F/C – F – F/C – F – Gm – Gm/D – Am – D – D/A – Gm – C – C/G – Db – C – F. The accompaniment of the cak and cuk instruments changes here by employing a double strumming pattern to enrich the rhythmic texture and support the piece's intensity.

In measure 16, highlighted in red in the figure, a chord progression Am – D – D/A occurs, which is non-diatonic within the F major key framework. This progression suggests a brief modulation, creating a momentary sense of harmonic instability or suspension before returning to the original chord sequence. At the end of the measure, the D chord is varied in its second inversion with A as the bass (root), serving as a connecting bridge to the subsequent Gm chord, resulting in a smoother transition.

Then, in measures 17-18, marked in blue, a chromatic chord variation C – Db – C appears. The rhythmic accent at measure 20 functions as an emphatic marker signaling the introduction's conclusion and the main song's entry.

### Harmonization of the Song Section

The song section begins from measure 48 and extends to measure 153. The opening of this section features vocal recitative delivered by the character of the Sтамbul Baju Biru style, where the vocalist freely and expressively conveys the lyrics. According to Banoe (2003) in Kamus Musik (Dictionary of Music), recitative refers to singing with speech-like techniques characterized by a highly free rhythmic structure and no instrumental accompaniment. The guitar plays arpeggios within the F major scale, serving as a pitch guide for the vocalist before the vocal recitative begins.

The structure of the song section follows the pattern in line with the Sтамbul Keroncong II style, with the chord progression scheme of sections A – B repeated twice before proceeding to the coda. The double strumming pattern is introduced midway through the song and maintained until the coda. The chord progressions remain based on the Sтамbul Keroncong II harmonic conventions; however, several modifications appear as chord

progression variations and the use of slash chords to provide richer harmonic coloration in various measures within the song. These variations are primarily derived from continuous guitar arpeggios, which facilitate smoother and more varied harmonic transitions without sacrificing the keroncong stambul's structural identity.



Figure 4. A part of the harmonization 50-56 measurement

At the onset of the A tempo section, the Bb major chord is played precisely on the first beat. In this part, the chord movement follows a repetitive pattern with variations in the progression Bb – Bb(#9)/F – Bb/F, which is repeated three times. The accompaniment by the cuk and cak instruments from measure 50 to measure 53 employs a strumming technique featuring an alternating rhythmic pattern of half notes and quarter notes. This rhythmic alternation serves as a marker for the beginning of the main song and creates an illusion of tempo acceleration, despite the tempo remaining consistent. This technique effectively





strengthens the transition from the vocal recitative section into the A tempo section.

Figure 5. A part harmonization 57-62 measurement.

In measures 57 and 58, a ninth interval tone is added without including the seventh interval, resulting in the chords C(add9) and F(add9) as expressed through the guitar arpeggios. In measure 59, marked in red, a complex variation progression occurs with the chord sequence F7/Eb - F7(#11)/Eb - Adim/D# - Ab/Eb. This progression is structured with the bass note Eb as the foundation, followed by a first inversion F major chord on the cak instrument, a first inversion A diminished chord on the cuk instrument, and then a guitar arpeggio passage consisting of eighth notes F - C - B - D - C - A - G# - A. This creates a subtle chromatic bridge movement from F major, culminating in the arrival at Bb major in measure 60. Entering measures 61 to 62, a perfect cadence functions dominantly toward the tonic, with the chord progression C - C/E - F, representing a V-I progression.



Figure 6. A part harmonization 64-67 measurement.

Between measures 64 and 67, an intense harmonic exploration begins with the F major chord, transitioning toward the dominant C major chord. The chord progression includes the following sequence: F - Fmaj7 - F - F(#11) -

F/C - F(#9)/C - F - C(omit5)/F - C - C7 - C - C(add9)/G - C/G. Inserting the C(omit5)/F chord before the arrival of the C major chord in the subsequent measure creates a floating and ambiguous harmonic motion. This momentary tension resolves back to stability upon reaching the C major chord. In measure 66, the guitar takes on the role of a filler within the song, then proceeds with arpeggio playing in measure 67 to maintain the continuity and smoothness of



the chord progression.

Figure 7. A part harmonization 72-676 measurement.

The passage begins with an exploration of the movement from C major to F major, with the chord progression spanning measures 72 to 74 as follows: C - Cmaj7 - C6 - C/G - C - F - Fmaj7 - F - F(#11). The C6 chord within this progression adds a sweet character to the transition toward the chord in the following measure. From measures 75 to 76, the chord progression continues with the sequence Adim - F7/A - F - F7(omit3) - Bb. This progression is constructed with the bass instrument playing the notes A and F in a two-beat rhythm, the cello instrument performing an F chord in first inversion, the ukulele instrument playing an Adim chord in first inversion, and the guitar adding triplets with eighth notes C - Eb - A followed by C - A - Eb - A. The Adim chord in this movement creates a cloudy and floating impression as a chromatic bridge that then

moves to the F7(omit3) chord, smoothing the transition towards the Bb chord in measure 76.



Figure 8. A part harmonization 80-82 measurement.

Between measures 80 and 82, the insertion of chromatic and non-diatonic chords enriches the harmonic color and creates smooth transitions between sections. The chord progression includes F – F(add9) – Amaj7(#9 omit3)/F – Adim – F6/A – F – F7(omit3) – Bb. The Amaj7(#9 omit3)/F chord in measure 80 is formed by adding the G# note on the guitar, and functions as a transitional chord leading to the Adim chord in the following measure. Additionally, it facilitates the linear movement of the bass instrument. Although the Adim chord is non-diatonic relative to the F major progression, it is employed functionally as a connective bridge back to the tonic chord. This transition is further supported by the F7(omit3) chord, which leads to the Bb chord.



Figure 9. A part harmonization 90-96 measurement.

Similar to the explanation of the progression pattern in the previous description, the chord movement marked in red on the score at measure 91 demonstrates a chromatic harmonic transition with the chord sequence F(#11) – Adim – F/A – F(add9) – F(sus2). This sequence illustrates a smooth chromatic transition from a tonal nuance toward the subdominant chord Bb. This progression is progressively directed from tonal color toward the subdominant function. Using the Adim chord as a chromatic bridge, followed by variations of the F chord in first inversion, enriches the harmonic color and maintains the continuity of harmonic flow. Meanwhile, in measure 95, the guitar instrument performs interactively as a filler, responding to the vocal line in a call-and-response fashion.

From measure 110 to measure 125, the arrangement structure enters the interlude section of the song. In this section, the vocal melody is performed alternately and taken over by filler instruments. The melodic play sequentially shifts between the alto saxophone, trumpet, flute, and violin instruments. The harmonic pattern of the interlude is filled with variations in the progressions of F, C, and Bb



chords.





Figure 10. A part harmonization 110-125 measurement.

Based on the above illustration, the chord progression pattern exhibits harmonic movement dominated by subtle chromatic harmonization, beginning with variations of the F progression and leading toward variations of the C progression by the end of measure 125. The interlude structure is a common and essential element in the form of the keroncong stambul song. The function of the interlude not only marks the entrance of the song's climax but also serves as a signifier of the change in the accompaniment pattern's character, shifting from a single-strum (engkel) pattern to a double-strum pattern.



Figure 11. A part harmonization 126-130 measurement.

The harmonic movement in measures 126 and 127 creates chromatic progressions both vertically and horizontally, with the chord sequence as follows: F - F(#11) - F - Amaj7(#9 omit3)/F - F/C - Fmaj7/C - F/C. In this progression, F major remains the fundamental tonic, while the harmony is expanded and

complexly developed, expressing a chordal interconnectedness. From measures 128 to 129, the chromatic chord movement continues in the sequence F-F (add9) - Amaj7(#9 omit3)/F - Adim - F6/A - F-F7 (omit3), generating a tension that resolves into the Bb chord in measure 130. This section also marks a rhythmic transition in the accompaniment technique, shifting from a single-strum (engkel) to a double-strum pattern, indicating the song's progression toward the coda.



Figure 12. A part harmonization 149-153 measurement

The score excerpt above illustrates the song's final part leading into the coda with a double-strum accompaniment pattern. In measure 149, the guitar instrument pauses for four beats, a transitional break in this song section. The measure highlighted in red in the image shows a repetitive chord progression: G(omit5)/C - C6(omit3) - C, repeated twice from measures 150 to 153. This repetitive progression demonstrates a horizontally sustained chromatic tension, producing a temporary unresolved suspense. This suspension prepares the resolution into the coda section's tonic chord (I).

The addition of the coda section, comprising eight measures, is a segment derived from the introduction, featuring the same chord progression as found in measures 13 to 20.

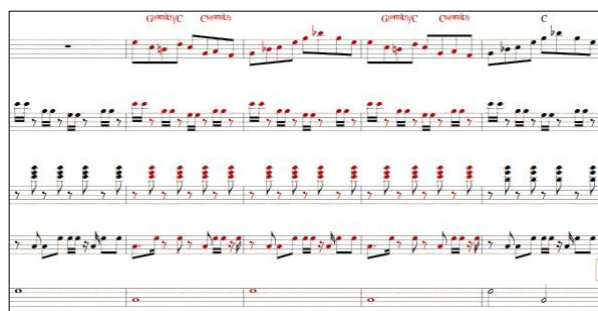


Figure 13. A part of the Coda harmonization 154-161 measurement.

As seen in the above illustration, the section marked in red shows the chord progression Am - D - D/A, which is identical to the chord progression in measure 16. Meanwhile, the section marked in blue displays a chromatic chord progression C - Db - C, similar to measures 17 to 18. This progression concludes with an accented F major chord in the final measure. The repetition of the coda section, taken from a segment of the introduction, aims to provide a sense of familiarity, thereby reinforcing the structural and thematic coherence between the opening and closing arrangements of the song.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the arrangement of Stambul Baju Biru by Tjong Young Gita Citra Alam is set in the key of F major with a 4/4 time signature and a tempo of 110 beats per minute (Allegro). The arrangement's structure consists of an introduction of 20 measures, a solo voorspél section of 17 measures, a main song section of 120 measures, and a coda section of 8 measures. The song's harmonization is predominantly characterized by chromatic chord movements, inversions, and various slash chord variations that experimentally extend the musical harmonic system, while still preserving the traditional essence of the keroncong stambul

style. Overall, the harmonic progression moves chromatically and continuously in both vertical and horizontal dimensions, supporting the diverse expressive emotions of Stambul Baju Biru, along with smooth harmonic transitions between the song sections.

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