



Traditional Music in Pop's Grip: The Congdut Evolution and Regional Music Transformation by Jujuk Eksa

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Abstract

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This research examines the evolution of Indonesian traditional music in response to the influence of globalization and technological advancements, with a focus on the emergence of the *Congdut* genre as a result of the hybridization between dangdut and *keroncong*, initiated by Jujuk Eksa. Through a descriptive qualitative approach, incorporating observation, interviews, and documentation techniques at JX Studio, Demak, this study analyzes the creative process, musical structure, and artistic philosophy behind the creation of *Congdut*. The survey results show that *Congdut* is not just a mixture of two genres, but a form of third space that combines the rhythmic energy of dangdut with the harmonious complexity of *keroncong*, thereby creating a dynamic and relevant new cultural identity. *Congdut* acts as a revitalization strategy to overcome the stagnation of *keroncong* music while cleaning the image of dangdut from social stigma. Its socio-cultural implications reflect the ability of traditional music to adapt and survive in the modern era through a creative dialogue between tradition and modernity. The sustainability of *Congdut* depends on its adoption by the younger generation, integration into digital platforms, and the potential for integration into music education.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade, traditional Indonesian music, particularly *dangdut* and *keroncong*, has undergone significant transformations due to the influence of globalization and technological advancements. The *dangdut* subgenre, such as *congdut*, gives rise to a unique style of appearance, where the combined elements of *dangdut* and *keroncong* are the main characteristics. *Dangdut* incorporates elements of Malay, Arabic, and even rock, demonstrating the genre's ability to adapt and survive amid growing cultural pressures (Hutomo Ardi & Wafa, 2024; Mahardhika, 2023).

Keroncong, a traditional Indonesian music genre originating from a blend of Portuguese and local music, faces significant challenges to its relevance and musicality, marked by a decline in song production since the 1980s that has led to a loss of repertoire (Supiarza, 2021). These challenges are primarily attributed to the stagnation of its rhythmic development since the 1950s (Sanjaya, 2021) and the perception among younger generations that it is an antiquated form of music (Yasrika & Milyartini, 2020), rendering it less competitive against popular genres (Supiarza & Sarbeni, 2021). Artists continue to innovate and adapt, although they are often squeezed by the norms produced by the larger music market, including *dangdut*. This shows that although *keroncong* is squeezed by current trends, there is great hope that this music can be maintained and updated without losing its essence.

The coexistence between *dangdut* and *keroncong* in the context of contemporary music is not only concerned with technique and style, but also with relation to larger social and cultural issues. The term "sway" in *dangdut* performances is often given sexual connotations, which reflect patriarchal culture in the lyrics of the song. (Maulana, 2020). This leads to a

negative perception of *dangdut* music as a low-class art form. Musicians like Via Vallen are trying to reform the way *dangdut* is perceived and accepted in society (Yusuf, 2020). These two genres of music exhibit an interesting dualism amid social dynamics and the development of modern music technology, necessitating adaptation and innovation to remain relevant.

Furthermore, digitalization has created new channels for traditional music to reach a wider audience. Raditya (2024) discusses the concept of liveness in *dangdut* performances during the pandemic, where technology and social media are used to share performances virtually. In this way, despite the limitations of physical interaction, musical traditions can continue to thrive and evolve. Satria (2024) shows that the rearrangement of *keroncong* can function as an expression of freedom that bridges tradition and modernity.

To understand the significance of *Dangdut*, readers need to recognize the two pillars of Indonesian popular music that are its foundation: *Dangdut* and *Keroncong*. *Dangdut*, often considered contemporary Indonesian folk music, is characterized by adaptive tabla rhythms and propulsive drum beats, creating a highly dance-oriented energy. Sonically and socially, *Dangdut* voices themes of love, life struggles, and light social criticism. (Kusumaningsih et al., 2024; Setiawan, 2021). On the opposite side of the spectrum, *Keroncong* holds the status of a more established and "polite" genre. This music is characterized by flowing harmonies, interlocking patterns between stringed instruments such as the cello and the ukulele, and vocal melodies that often evoke a sense of nostalgia and patriotism. Thus, *Dangdut* represents the popular energy and pulse of the masses, while *Keroncong* symbolizes artistic heritage and cultural authority. The dialogue between these two poles is the arena for symbiotic intervention carried out by Jujuk Eksa through *Congdut*.

One of the essential aspects of *dangdut* study is the interaction between performance and listeners. Research on listeners' aesthetic behavior towards *dangdut koplo* performances explains how listeners respond to performances characterized by a fast drum rhythm and dynamic tempo. (Wiharyanti, 2020). This suggests that *dangdut* is a form of entertainment and community expression deeply rooted in its social context. Live *dangdut* performances during the Covid-19 pandemic also revealed a new dynamic where the audience felt 'liveness' even when watching virtually, reaffirming the importance of emotional connection in the music (Raditya, 2024).

The development of *dangdut* as an adaptive genre has been widely studied (Mahardhika, 2023; Weintraub, 2010). More broadly, international ethnomusicologists, such as Andrew Weintraub (2010), have analyzed *dangdut* as an arena of social and political contestation in Indonesia. However, research focusing on the fusion of *dangdut* with other established Indonesian music genres, such as *keroncong*, is still limited, and this is where the novelty of this research lies.

Moving away from *dangdut*, *keroncong* also experienced challenges in terms of revitalization. Research shows that, although *keroncong* has rich potential for rhythm development, its static rhythmic patterns have made it less desirable. (Sanjaya, 2021). On the other hand, there have also been attempts to adapt *keroncong* music with new elements to attract young listeners, such as the one done by Congrock 17, which introduced an arrangement technique that expresses musical freedom and innovation while still retaining the essential elements of *keroncong* (Satria et al., 2024). This shows that innovation is key to maintaining the relevance of traditional genres.

Furthermore, research on cultural adaptation in *keroncong* music demonstrates how artists' creativity plays a crucial role in preserving traditional music amidst the dynamics of modernization (Suryati et al., 2025). Resilience of musicians in maintaining *keroncong* reflects not only their emotional attachment to tradition but also their ability to adapt to changing social and cultural contexts. This is particularly important in Indonesia's diverse context, where cultural preservation often clashes with the pressures of globalization.

Studies of the intersection of music genres in Indonesia show that hybridity has become a crucial cultural strategy for revitalization. The study of the genre of Congrock (a combination of *keroncong* and rock) analyzes this phenomenon as a form of complex cultural negotiation that creates a "third space" amid global cultural hegemony (Sunarto et al., 2020). While fusion with rock shows a response to international trends, a more culturally intimate crossover occurs when *keroncong* dialogues with domestic popular genres such as *dangdut*. For example, the phenomenon of "*Keroncong Ambyaran*" has successfully overcome the outdated image of *keroncong* by combining it with fresh *dangdut* arrangements and heartbreak-themed lyrics (*ambyar*) to attract young listeners (Khoiruddin & Rachman, 2025). The impact of this musical innovation does not stop at the artistic product alone, but extends to form a new social phenomenon. Research by Tulas'un (2023) confirms that the *Campursari Keroncong Dangdut* genre, especially the one popularized by Didi Kempot, has proven to be able to "create a culture of listeners". This success is evident in real terms through the emergence of a solid cross-generational fan community, such as *Kempoters* and *Sobat Ambyar*. This research series, ranging from the analysis of Congrock hybridity to the revitalization strategy of *Keroncong Ambyaran* and the social impact in the form of *Congdut*

listeners' culture, provides a strong foundation for this research. All of them point to a trend, but leave an essential gap about the role of the architect behind the scenes who formulates the sound and strategy of the musical, in this case, Jujuk Eksa.

Overall, this literature review describes the evolution of *dangdut*, *keroncong*, and *congdat* music as a narrative of resilience and dynamic cultural adaptation. Various studies confirm that the vitality of these traditional genres depends on preserving their original form and their ability to innovate through musical hybridity, as seen in the phenomenon of Congrock and *Keroncong Ambyaran*. This innovation successfully created a third space that bridges tradition with contemporary tastes, thereby giving rise to a cross-generational listening culture and reshaping the meaning and relevance of traditional music in Indonesia's ever-evolving socio-cultural landscape. Thus, this study confirms that the future of conventional musical heritage lies in a creative and sustainable dialogue between the roots of tradition and current expressions.

In the context of research on *dangdut* and *keroncong* music, several research gaps exist that require further attention to understand the evolution of these genres and their impact on society. First, although *dangdut* has become a popular music genre in Indonesia, many studies still find that understanding its characteristics and appearance changes, especially in the context of performance and aesthetics, remains limited. For example, a survey by Wiharyanti (2020) demonstrates how the aesthetic response to *dangdut koplo* performances is strongly influenced by rhythmic patterns and fast tempos; however, it does not examine how these elements may change in the context of globalization and the modernization of popular music. Raditya (Raditya, 2024) emphasizes the importance of 'liveness' in *dangdut* concerts,

influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic situation, without detailing the adaptation of these elements to foreign cultural influences, such as K-pop, as seen in artists like Via Vallen (Adji, 2020). Further research is needed to explore the dynamics and influences of this conglomerate genre in response to social and cultural change.

The urgency of this research is also reflected in efforts to maintain the authenticity and revitalization of *keroncong* music, which is threatened by the dominance of modern pop music genres. Research conducted by Suryati (Suryati et al., 2025) highlights the importance of artistic creativity in preserving *keroncong* music. It creates opportunities to delve deeper into how new techniques and practices can change how the younger generation receives this music. Sanjaya (2021) notes that the *keroncong* rhythm pattern has stagnated in development for decades, signaling the need for more profound discovery and innovation. In addition, a study by Ulya (2021) on the representation of masculinity in *dangdut* lyrics initiates a discussion on how gender influences the evolution of music, an aspect that warrants further research to understand its impact in the broader social context. Thus, a comprehensive investigation of the transformation of the *dangdut* and *keroncong* genres, coupled with the challenges of modernization, is urgent and essential for further exploration in music and culture.

This research identifies a significant gap in the study of music arts in Indonesia, particularly in examining how traditional music genres, such as *Keroncong* and *Dangdut*, are influenced by more modern pop genres. The gap in this research lies in the need to examine more deeply how this transformation not only creates a new genre but also serves as a form of complex cultural adaptation, where the formation of new identities through the interaction of these genres can provide new insights for the understanding

of music in the Indonesian social context (Wrahatnala, 2021). Further research is needed to explore how the *Congdut* genre in this context can serve as a form of intercultural dialogue, illustrating the continuous evolution of traditional music in the modern era.

Research on *Congdut* and Jujuk Eksa is urgently needed, considering the dynamics of *dangdut* and *keroncong* music development in Indonesia, which is currently facing significant challenges due to the influence of pop culture. This research will examine how Jujuk Eksa leverages pop culture to transform traditional music, while addressing the challenges of preserving regional musical identity amid a global music invasion. This phenomenon can be framed as a strategy of globalization, in which local cultural agents, in this case, Jujuk Eksa, accept global culture but selectively adopt and adapt it to revitalize local traditions, thereby remaining competitive and relevant. This is particularly significant, considering that *dangdut* and *keroncong* music serve as an entertainment medium and a means of cultural and social identification, reflecting the values of society. (Satria et al., 2024). Ovide. Furthermore, the findings of this study can contribute to the mapping of Indonesian musical characteristics and present recommendations for more effective cultural preservation.

The state of the art of this study is that the latest studies on the revitalization of traditional Indonesian music, especially *dangdut* and *keroncong*, have revealed many phenomena of genre hybridization (such as Congrock and *Keroncong* Ambyaran) as an effective cultural strategy. However, the existing literature remains focused on analyzing musical output and performer figures, thereby ignoring the key role of cultural architects, i.e., arranger-producers, as intellectual agents who formulate the sonic strategies and cultural negotiations behind the creation of hybrid genres.

The novelty of this research lies in its effort to fill the academic gap by making the figure of Jujuk Eksa and the genre of *Congdut* the central object of analysis, thereby revealing the architectural process, artistic philosophy, and creative agency behind the creation of the musical "third space". Thus, this study not only documents the results of hybridization but also offers a new theoretical perspective on cultural agency in the evolution of Indonesian traditional music, which has not received adequate analysis so far.

The main objective of this study is to explore and analyze how Jujuk Eksa interprets and transforms the congruent elements of *dangdut* and *keroncong* music, as well as their socio-cultural implications. This research focuses on several vital questions: How did Jujuk Eksa reinterpret the genre? What are the listeners' responses to these innovations, and in what context do they operate? This research is expected to make a meaningful contribution to the discussion on the sustainability of traditional music in the rapidly changing music industry.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method that is presented descriptively. The research was conducted in a studio owned by Jujuk Eksa, JX Studio, Pucanggading, Demak Regency. The object of this research is the music of the *Congdut* genre. Data collection techniques use observation, interviews, and documentation (Conway, 2020). Observations were made on the general arrangement concept of *congdut* music by Jujuk Eksa. The interview was conducted with Jujuk Eksa as a *congdut* arranger, covering the history of the *congdut* journey, the idea of arrangement and philosophy, and the community's response. Documentation is carried out in the studio, utilizing the display of the DAW (Digital Audio Workstation) as Jujuk

Ekسا's working media for making concert arrangements.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section delineates the findings derived from observational studies, in-depth interviews, and documentary analysis. It offers a comprehensive examination of the implications of these findings. The discussion is structured to first provide a musical deconstruction of the Congdut genre, anchored in the artistic output and creative methodology of Jujuk Eksa. Subsequently, it positions this genre within the historical trajectory of Indonesian popular music. The analysis culminates in an exploration of the socio-cultural ramifications and potential future developments of the genre.

1. Profile of Jujuk Eksa and Congdut

Jujuk Eksa, a traditional musician from Central Java, is an arranger who has gained national recognition through songs such as *Kusumaning Ati*, *Anoman Obong*, and *TKW*. Some of his works are known in genres such as *keroncong*, *dangdut*, and *congdut*. Jujuk Eksa began his music career as a *session player* in Jakarta in 1981, followed by his role as an arranger in 1989. As a musician who wanted to advance the arts in Central Java, in 1992, Jujuk Eksa focused on his career in Semarang and, in 1993, began to create a composition entitled *Kusumaning Ati*, which at the same time became the beginning of the creation of *the congdut* school, but was not accepted by the community. Jujuk Eksa has arranged hundreds of songs for various artists, including 12 of Didi Kempot's albums.



Figure 1. Jujuk Eksa's music album

2. Anatomy of Congdut Arrangement

Based on observations of the concept of arrangement by Jujuk Eksa, it was revealed that Congdut is not just a mixture or paste of two genres, but a visionary and deliberate structural integration. This process extends beyond mere fusion; it manifests what theorist Homi K. Bhabha calls hybridity (Fay & Haydon, 2017), a process in which the meeting of two cultures forces both to adapt and change, giving rise to an entirely new entity. This fusion occurs at the fundamental level of musical elements (rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic), creating a new and cohesive sound entity.

The rhythmic framework of Congdut is firmly built on the structure of dangdut music. The main pulse of this genre is driven by the propulsive rhythmic pattern of the drum, a characteristic that is the identity of the dangdut movers. According to Jujuk Eksa, the *kendang* and flute are two fundamental elements that must be the basis of a dangdut composition. By laying the rhythmic foundation of this dangdut, Congdut offers a rhythm that traditional *keroncong* lacks. This approach directly answers the challenge of "rhythmic stagnation" in *keroncong* music since the 1950s.

On top of this sturdy, dangdut rhythmic framework, Jujuk Eksa builds a melodic and harmonious structure rich in the *keroncong* idiom. Observations show the typical interlocking patterns of *ukulele* and *cak*

instruments, more complex chord progressions, and melodic contours on instruments such as violins or flutes reminiscent of the keroncong style. The flute, which Jujuk Eksa considers the core element of keroncong, serves as an ideal sound bridge. In his conduct creation, Jujuk Eksa chose the flute (not the bamboo flute) to maintain the identity of keroncong, considering that bamboo flutes will provide a thicker sound color with dangdut nuances.

3. The Artistic Philosophy Behind Hybridity

An interview with Jujuk Eksa, a composer, arranger, and creator of Congdut, revealed the artistic philosophy underlying this hybridization process. From being just a technical experiment, Jujuk Eksa, in creating the congdut genre, has a basis for thinking about how to maintain the existence of Javanese songs so that young people can accept them. According to him, young people are less interested in Javanese songs and keroncong because they make them sleepy and unpleasant. On the other hand, dangdut is a genre of music that inspires listeners to dance and sway. As a musician experienced in the keroncong and dangdut genres, Jujuk Eksa tried to combine the two genres, which he later named "Congdut," accompanied by Javanese poetry as a regional identity. Jujuk Eksa argues that the dangdut genre will allow the keroncong and Javanese songs to continue, incorporating elements of dangdut into them.

This hybridization process is not just a technical experiment, but a deliberate intellectual and artistic act, grounded in a profound philosophy about music, markets, and culture. Armed with his extensive experience as a composer, arranger, and producer of various genres, Jujuk Eksa views the creation of Congdut as a relevant musical dialogue, which he holds full artistic authority to consciously balance between the preservation of the character of the keroncong

melody and the innovation of dangdut rhythms that have widespread appeal. Thus, Jujuk Eksa plays the role of a musician and a "cultural negotiator," who actively bridges aesthetic and generational gaps through his musical arrangements.

4. The Role of Technology as a Medium of Creativity

The documentation conducted at JX Studio, especially on the display of the Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) used by Jujuk Eksa, confirms that technology plays a crucial role as a support and the primary working medium in realizing Congdut's vision. DAWs in this context function more than just as recording tools; they are compositional environments in which complex hybridization processes can be executed with high precision and accuracy. At JX Studio, he oversees an entire independent music production process, from songwriting and composition to arrangement, recording, mixing, and mastering (for albums). After starting his career in Jakarta, JX Studio became the center of his efforts to advance regional arts, especially in Central Java. Many works have been created here, including those by local artists not yet nationally recognized.

Thus, the technical process carried out by Jujuk Eksa in the studio is a concrete manifestation of his cultural strategy. The technical choices—which instruments to highlight, how the harmony of the two different genres is blended, how modern and traditional textures are given space—are not just technical decisions, but deliberate acts of cultural mediation. The "sound signature" he generated through the DAW is a testament to the success of cultural negotiations, where technology has enabled the birth of complex and convincing hybrid genres.

Table 1. Comparative Matrix of Keroncong, Dangdut, and Congdut Musical Characteristics.

Musical Characteristics	Keroncong	Dangdut	Congdut (Jujuk Eksa)
Rhythm	Interlocking patterns on cak, cuk, and cello.	Dance oriented drum and kendang pattern.	Drum and kendang rhythm enriched with cak and cuk in interlocking style.
Main instruments	Cak, cello, acoustic/electric bass, guitar, violin, and flute.	Drum, kendang, electric bass, electric guitar, keyboard, and flute.	Drum, kendang, electric bass, cak, cuk, guitar, keyboard, flute, violin.
Harmony Progression	Chords I, IV, V, II following original keroncong progression.	Complex progression on blending major, minor, & modes.	II-V-I progression as in jazz and pop.
Melodic Structure	Vocal flows with keroncong cengkok, instrumental melody uses ornamentation.	Vocal with Malay-dangdut cengkok, instrumental melody in free rhythm.	Blends melodic idioms from keroncong and dangdut
Lyrical Theme	Nostalgia, love, nature, patriotism.	Love, daily life, light social criticism.	Pop-style themes in Javanese about love, life, joy, and heartache

After dissecting the internal structure of Congdut, this section of discussion will place the genre in the broader Indonesian popular

music landscape. This analysis aims to understand the significance of Congdut not as an isolated phenomenon, but as part of a cultural dialogue and artistic response to the dynamics that occur in established genres in Indonesia.

1. Congdut as a novelty

The emergence and formulation of Congdut by Jujuk Eksa can be interpreted as a symbiotic cultural intervention, where this genre directly offers solutions to the problems faced by the two parent genres. This process is not just a mix, but a reciprocal exchange in which each genre "cures" the weaknesses of the other.

Conversely, *Congdut* effectively overcame the revitalization crisis that *keroncong* music experienced. As identified in the introduction, *keroncong* faces relevance challenges because the younger generation often considers it obsolete. By incorporating an energetic and dance-centric *dangdut* rhythm, *Congdut* provides the "progressive rhythmic pattern" that *keroncong* needs to reconnect with popular tastes. The success of this approach is confirmed by similar phenomena, such as "*Keroncong Ambyaran*" in Khoiruddin's research (2025), which has proven successful in capturing the attention of young people. This kind of innovation succeeds because it consciously combines fresh arrangements with lyrical themes relevant to young people, such as heartbreak or ambiguity, thus creating a closer emotional connection with the listener. Therefore, the *keroncong* musical tradition became more easily accepted by the younger generation, who were open to musical experimentation.

On the other hand, *keroncong* provides an "antidote" to the image problems that are often attached to *dangdut* music. Although

very popular, dangdut is usually associated with low-end art and is given negative sexual connotations, especially related to the "swaying" in its performance. By adopting the complexity of harmony, the richness of melody, and the artistic image of keroncong, which tends to be considered more "authoritative" or "fair", Congdut offers an alternative evolutionary path for dangdut. This fusion enables dangdut to be presented in a more artistic and culturally insightful manner, an effort that aligns with other musicians, such as Via Vallen, who have sought to reform how people view dangdut. In this symbiosis, keroncong lent its cultural dignity to help 'cleanse' dangdut from some of the social stigma attached to it. This process of symbiosis is a concrete example of what Homi K. Bhabha calls 'cultural hybridity', in which the meeting of two cultural entities does not result in the dominance of one party, but instead gives birth to a 'third space' that interrogates and renegotiates the meaning of the two parent cultures.

2. Cultural dialogue

Congdut is not an anomaly in Indonesian music history. The genre is part of an ongoing tradition of cultural dialogue and musical hybridization. The relevance of Congdut is effectively illuminated by comparing it to the modern campursari phenomenon popularized by Didi Kempot, particularly since Jujuk Eksa served as the arranger for iconic tracks like 'Stasiun Balapan'. While Kempot's massive success and the 'Sobat Ambyar' community demonstrated the cultural potential of fusing Javanese tradition with pop sensibilities through digital media and emotional lyrics (Puspita Uci Maharani & Ibnu Sodik, 2025), Congdut distinguishes itself by prioritizing musical structure over performer persona. Unlike Kempot's popularity which relied heavily on his image as the 'Godfather of Broken Heart' (Qorib et al., 2021), Congdut

offers a flexible sonic template that allows various artists to adopt this hybrid genre, proving that Jujuk Eksa's arrangement formula is the fundamental architect behind this broad cultural acceptance

Meanwhile, Congdut, formulated by a music producer/arranger such as Jujuk Eksa, appears to be a hybridization focusing more on musical structure. Congdut offers a sound framework, a genre template that is more flexible and has the potential to be adopted and interpreted by various other artists. Its history, which can be traced back at least to the early 1990s, as in the Jujuk Eksa album "Mega Hit Congdut Campursari 12 Karya Besar Jujuk Eksa" (1990), shows that Congdut has existed as an established genre concept. This claim proves not just to be the musical style of one artist, but rather the foundation that many of the next generation of musicians have brought to life – for example, Bayu Onyonk (Arranger Denny Caknan), Hendra Kumbara, and Ndarboy Genk. The adoption and adaptation by various top artists proves that Congdut functions as a dynamic genre template and can evolve beyond one creator, forming a genre in modern dangdut and campursari music.

3. Socio-cultural implications and future of Congdut

The presence of hybrid genres, such as Congdut, fundamentally challenges and redefines the concept of "regional music" in the era of globalization. The genre blurs the rigid dichotomy between traditional and modern, local and global, and authentic and commercial. Congdut demonstrates that cultural identity is not static and pure, but somewhat fluid, dynamic, and adaptable through negotiation and synthesis. It is a testament to a resilient cultural survival strategy, in which traditions are not preserved by being frozen in museums but instead revived through dialogue with the times. This aligns with the argument in the

introduction that this kind of transformation will ultimately give rise to a complex "new identity" relevant to the contemporary Indonesian social context.

In this context, Jujuk Eksa's role extends beyond that of a music arranger. He can be seen as one of the critical "architects of genre" in the post-New Order era. His long and influential career, which included fundamental works in modern *Congdut* and *campursari*, made him a leading agent of cultural evolution in Indonesian popular music. When associated with the theory of the Field of Cultural Production initiated by Pierre Bourdieu (Webb et al., 2020), Jujuk Eksa operates as an agent possessing significant cultural capital (cross-genre musicality) and technical capital (mastery of recording studios). He created a habitus through this capital, redefining the 'rules of the game' in the Javanese popular music field and emerging *Congdut* as a new legitimate sub-genre. He exemplifies how the figure of the producer-arrangement, with his mastery of musicality and technology, can actively shape the direction and sound of an era's music.

The future survival of the *Congdut* genre will ultimately depend on the appreciation and acceptance of its listeners. For Jujuk Eksa, the journey to achieve this acceptance is not easy. In 1993, he created a song at the *Congdut* School entitled "Kusumaning Ati", but the work was initially not accepted by the public. He was accused of damaging the authenticity of the *keroncong* and *dangdut* genres, so many parties rejected his innovations. According to him, *keroncong* purists dislike their music being mixed with *dangdut* elements, and conversely, *dangdut* fans also dislike their music being combined with *keroncong*. Despite facing these challenges, Jujuk Eksa continued to try without giving up, until finally, in 1996, *Congdut* slowly began to gain a place in the hearts of the community, which coincided with

the start of Jujuk Eksa's career period when collaborating with Nurhana and Senthot.

Empirical evidence of *Congdut*'s success can be traced from Jujuk Eksa's productivity data; he acted as arranger for 12 Didi Kempot albums, 12 Nurhana albums, 3 Boy Suro albums, 2 Basuki Srimulat albums, 1 Mamiek Prakoso album, and 2 Sentot albums. Considering that each album in that period generally contained 10 to 12 songs, this figure indicates a significant volume of works arranged by Jujuk Eksa.

Furthermore, the future sustainability of *Congdut* relies on its strategic integration into digital platforms. The genre's inherent dance-oriented nature makes it highly compatible with visual-based social media trends, such as TikTok, serving as an effective vehicle to maintain its relevance among the younger generation.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that the *Congdut* formulated by Jujuk Eksa is not just a mixture of *dangdut* and *keroncong*, but a visionary and structured musical hybridity, which was born from a deliberate process of cultural negotiation. As a "third space" in Bhabha's theory, *Congdut* functions symbiotically: overcoming the rhythmic stagnation of *keroncong* with *dangdut* energy while injecting harmonious complexity and artistic imagery of *keroncong* into *dangdut*. The success of this genre as a template adopted by many of the next generation of artists, supported by the role of studio technology and Jujuk Eksa's cultural strategy as the architect of the genre, proves that *Congdut* is a dynamic, relevant, and resilient new form of cultural identity in responding to the challenges of regional music preservation in Indonesia. Its future will be

determined by the genre's ability to evolve through a new generation of musicians, digital platform adaptations, and its integration into music education.

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