



The Aesthetic Expression for the *Nanyin* Music by the *Lam Kwan Boen Hian Tong* Community

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Abstract

Nanyin is a piece of Chinese traditional music. The music is preserved as anaesthetics ethnic expression of the Chinese community in Semarang. This research aims to analyze the aesthetic expression of nanyin by the Lam Kwan Boen Hiang Tong in Semarang. The research employs the method of descriptive qualitative with aesthetics approach. The data were collected from observation, interview, and documentation. The research was validated from triangulation. The analysis was through data reduction, presentation, and conclusion. The used theory is the theory of aesthetics. The research founds that (1) nanyin has the unique tone of music in the instrument and vocal tone; (2) the music uses simple melody with pentatonic bar; (3) the pitch is higher in each filler of dizi instrument part; (4) nanyin is performed in a dynamic tone; (5) most instrument plays some lyrical song; and (6) the performer wears cheongsam or dang zhuang during the performance.

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INTRODUCTION

Nanyin is the art of the Chinese community in Semarang. The art develops in Semarang from through generations of Chinese trading community. Wang explains that the ancestor of the Chinese community in Indonesia came from Guangdong, Hokkien, and Hainan, which stay in Indonesia and married with the local community (Christian, 2017, p. 12).

In line with Wang, Onghokham mentions that the Chinese community in Indonesia has existed since the colonial era, especially in Java. Both Chinese and Dutch came to Indonesia for business matter (Susanto, 2017). Hence, the Chinese community develops its culture in Indonesia, including in Semarang.

In the celebration of Chinese New Year 2570, *Lam Kwan* traditional art community participated in entertaining Semarang citizen. They performed Chinese, Indonesian, and Javanese songs. The community sang the song in Indonesian and Javanese since the city is a multicultural city where the society mainly knows the meaning of the song. Watson in Arif (2014) also says that the multicultural society also has developed culture.

Rohidi says that aesthetic expression is a human need which is integrative to their daily life (2000). The fulfilment of the need is an unbearable part of the arts. Arts are integrated to unite people's guidance in life. Art has a role which integrates the configuration of life guidance (Kusumastuti, 2009). Therefore, culture exists, develop, and standardized itself to the social tradition of the society. The culture becomes the possession of the society as the guidance or the framework of them in acting or to fulfil their needs (Suparlan in Triyanto, 2008).

Some relevant researches to this research are as follows. First, Kusumastuti (2009) shows that art is used by shore community to make themselves close to God and to express themselves aesthetically. Second, Perdana (2017) discusses *Rampak Kenthong's*, which has the uniqueness of the song.

This research aims to analyze the aesthetic expression on the *Lam Kwan Boen Hian*

Tong in Semarang, which expectedly affect the artists' community to innovate and follow the development of the period. This idea is similar to Jazuli in Triyatno (2015) that the development of the modernization causes the marginalization of traditional culture.

METHODS

This research uses qualitative research with aesthetics approach. The object of the research reviews *nanyin* of *Lam Kwan Boen Hian Tong*. The research focuses on the Chinese community area in Semarang. The research focuses on the are considering (1) *Lam Kwan* is under the social community of Rasa Dharma (*Boen Hian Tong*) which is located in the corner of the Chinese community in Semarang; (2) *Lam Kwan* establishes a routinely performed Chinese traditional music workshop in Rasa Dharma Hall; (3) *Lam Kwan* participates in the 2570 Chinese New Year celebration. This research obtains two data, which are primary and secondary. The primary data came directly from the research, which is the aesthetic expression of *nanyin*. The secondary data of the research is the literature review from archives, recordings, pictures, and books through different sources.

The data collection was through observation, interview, and documentation. The observation is done in detail to the expression of *Lam Kwan* community performance during the celebration of 2570 Chinese New Year in Semawis. The interview was conducted to Voni as the coordinator of *Lam Kwan* community, Hadi, as the *nanyin* artist, and some audiences of the celebration. The next step is the documentation of videos and pictures of *Lam Kwan's nanyin* performance. The research used triangulation to validate the data. The analysis was through the sequence of reduction, presentation, and conclusion.

RESUKTS AND DISCUSSION

This research includes *nanyin* performance of *Lam Kwan Boen Hian Tong* and the delivery of the song.

Nanyin

There is two *nanyin* community in Semarang, which are *Lam Kwan* and *Yangqin*. *Lam Kwan* means music from the south (interview with Voni, 7 Oktober 2018). The music of *nanguan* (*Lâm-koán*; in Hokkien) is protected by music God, Tian Dou Yuan Shuai. *Nanyin* is classical music of China from Fujian and very popular in Taiwan, especially in the West Coast of Lukang and South East Asia (Setiawan, 1990, p. 267).



Figure 1. Dewa Tian Du Yuan Shuai

Due to the natural disaster, topographical feature, and political problems, South Fujianese emigrated to South East Asia. The recording from the 17th and 19th century shows the natural disaster and infertile soil problems. There was also an acute hunger problem in Minnan. Gazette *Jinjiang* and Chinese history show that the community emigrated sporadically to Southeast Asia since the 6th century. According to the anthropological research, the emigrants moved to the north and then to South East Asia. They created a transnational *nanyin* network which connected them to their original area, *Jinjiang* (Lim, 2014, p. 111). Yeh mentions that *nanyin* is known in China in different names, like *nanguan*, *xian guan*, *nan yue*, and *nan qu*. In Taiwan, Hongkong, and South East Asia (including the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia), the music is called *nanyin*. Some people believe that *nanyin* means south pipe (Yeh, 1988, p. 31).

The music is performed instrumentally or vocally. The performance of the music by *Lam Kwan* community is divided into two *erhu* player, two *yangqin* player, one *zhong hu* player,

one *dizi* player, one *da ruan*, one keyboardist, and one singer. Hence, the community is included as an ensemble music performer in medium size with ten musicians.

Larasati in Sinaga (2016) says that traditional music is a piece of music which develops in specific areas through generations. The music adapts local tradition. Generally, the music has the characteristics of (1) oral learning process, supported by the oral learning tradition of Indonesian, instead of partiture as in Western music. The older generation taught the composition to the younger generation; (2) have no notation, as in Java and Bali. The notation is not printed in a partiture. Nature creates a problem if people do not preserve the music without written partiture; (3) the music is a form of local community's expression. The music is used mainly as an informal music; (4) the use of traditional music ranges from the easiest to the most difficult one; (5) besides the lyrics which is using the local language, traditional language is also using the melody and rhythm which is unique. In Java, the song will have the melody based on the tone of *pelog* to *slendro*; (6) generally, the music is performed along with traditional music instrument; and (7) traditional music is the inherited culture of a particular community which must be performed under the name of God. The performance must also include the use of traditional costume and custom.

Based on the characteristics above, *nanyin* has similarities to the characteristics. *Nanyin* is taught orally using partiture, which is inherited for many generations. The use of partiture is to ease the people in using Chinese traditional music instrument so that people can learn it quickly. The inheritance of *nanyin* process is also minimizing the extinction of an art. The artists taught games technique and things related to *nanyin* orally without guidance.

The artists were mostly a member of the Chinese community. Some artists can only play one instrument of *nanyin*. The music is performed in the Chinese New Year Celebration and Chinese marriage with the characteristics of

cheongsam or *dang zhuang* worn by the performers.

The songs refer to the mandarin song in a pentatonic bar, which is *do, re mi, sol, la* with the base tone of C=C D E G A. Most of the song is easy to listen and memorable for people. The performers are not only performing Chinese song but also Indonesian and Javanese.

Liliweri says that language influences the perception and shapes the mind. The use of language is through oral communication and verbal communication (Verulitasari, 2016, p. 145). The expression of language is symbolic, conceptual, and emotional (Setjoatmodjo in Perdana, 2017).

The Instrument of Nanyin by Lam Kwan Boen Hian Tong

According to Cheng, a Chinese musical instrument is divided into four varieties, which are blown, strung, and percussion. The instruments were made of gold, stone, soil, wood, silk, bamboo, etc. (Melisawaty, 2013). The following information explains the music instruments played by *Lam Kwan Boen Hian Tong*.

Erhu is a stringed instrument with two strings like *rebab*. The player plays the instrument on his lap and sits on the chair while swinging the bow like a violin. The sound came from the skin of a python. *Erhu* does not have fingerboard where the players play using the edge of their fingers without touching the neck of the instruments.

The strings of the player are set on the tone D4 for the inside and outside strings. The range of tone for *erhu* is two and a half octave. Playing *erhu* is not easy since there are many obstacles for playing it, including the difficulties of swinging the bow.

Stock mentions that *erhu* has 79 cm height, hexagonal body with 10 cm to the rear part and 13 to the back part. The manufacturer always experiments with the size, form, and material of the instrument as if it is made of bamboo (Stock, 1993, p. 85).



Figure 2. Erhu

Zhong hu is similar to *erhu*, which has two strings. However, *zhong hu* is lower than *the erhu*. The difference is in the lower tube of the wood. The tube or soundbox of *Zhonghu* is bigger than *erhu*, that is longer than *erhu*. *Zhonghu* always plays the melody or ^{first and second} sound to *erhu*, as both plays like the violin.



Figure 3. Difference between Erhu and ZhongHu

Dizi is like a flute. The instrument has a pentatonic sound. The player of *dizi* has a similarity of one tone to another. *Dizi* is expressive and able to express long and high melody. *Dizi* has six lobes of a finger with specific spaces. The flute has an extra for the finger, which produces a low and vibrating sound. The instrument is mostly known to play high tones with filler and trills.



Figure 4. Dizi

Yangqin is an instrument with 144 strings on a table with three buffers. *Yangqin* is a piece

of percussion music which bat is made of bamboo with a sharp edge. The edge is covered with rubber to produce a clear sound.

There are two ways to play *yangqin*, which are *fanzhu* and *glissando*. *Fanzhu* uses the rubber part of the bat to produce a clear sound. Meanwhile, *glissando* uses the hard part of the bat as well as moving the bamboo to the beginning of the end of the string. There are four to five bridges to *yangqin*, which are *bass*, right, tenor, left, and chromatic. *Yangqin* needs the agility of the hand and accuracy of sights to hit the string.



Figure 5. Yangqin Beater



Figure 6. Yangqin

Da ruan is a stringed instrument. The instrument is in the category of bass. The music is played using a *plectrum* which is similar to the *pick* of the guitar using one set (2-5 units) of the acrylic nail to the finger with rubbing ribbon. The *pick* produces a clear and loud sound.



Figure 7. Da Ruan

The keyboard is not a Chinese category for the instruments. *Lam Kwan* added the instrument for the rhythm of the song and the setting of tempo. *Keyboard* has the feature of song style, which can give innovation to the music.



Figure 8. Keyboad

Setyaningtyas explains that the preservation of the tradition should involve individual, society, and the government even nation (Setyaningtyas, 2016, p. 128). Each process of communication needs media to deliver messages. From each media, the use of the song is essential for the performance, which is documented through video clip and lyrics (Claranita & Loisa, 2019, p. 612).

The changed arrangement from *Lam Kwan* is a form of Chinese community's creativity. Jamil says that human generally needs to express their creativity, which causes human as a creature of culture. Creativity affects culture to become dynamic, changing, and growing. Performing art is one of the creative activities (Jamil, Anwar, & Kholiq, 2011, p. 47).

CONCLUSION

Nanyin is one of much Chinese music of the Chinese community in Semarang. There is some community in Semarang which preserve the traditions. The thing has collaborated with a modern instrument, keyboard, or music band. The music came from China, which gives the identity of the Chinese community.

From the analysis, there are some points of conclusion (1) *nanyin* has the uniqueness of tone colour as in the instrument and vocal tone; (2) the music uses a simple melody; (3) the pitch is higher in each filler of *dizi* instrument part; (4) *nanyin* is performed in a dynamic tone; (5) most instrument plays some lyrical song; and (6) the performer wears *cheongsam* or *dang zhuang* during the performance.

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