



PRESERVING KERONCONG ORCHESTRA GROUP: A STUDY OF OK. WASESO IN BUMIJAWA TEGAL

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Abstract

The regeneration of players, singers, and keroncong orchestra groups is happening in various regions in Indonesia until now. This condition indicates the process of inheritance of keroncong music between generations continue. This also happened in Bumijawa, Tegal Regency, which has the O.K Waseso. The problem discussed in this paper is how to preserve keroncong music carried out by O.K Waseso in Bumijawa, Tegal Regency. The research was conducted with qualitative methods. Data was collected using observation, interviews, and documentation. The data validity techniques were carried out by triangulation, and interactive model analysis. The results showed that the conservation efforts carried out by O.K Waseso for keroncong music were depicted through three activities, namely the protection, development, and utilization of keroncong music.

INTRODUCTIONS

The term keroncong can be interpreted in several ways. First, keroncong can be interpreted as a musical instrument such as a small stringed guitar. Second, keroncong is defined as a music genre. Third, keroncong is interpreted as the formation of a musical group of seven musical instrument players. Fourth, keroncong is interpreted as a form of musical composition (Zandra & Rustopo, 2020; Sugiyanto and Aji, 2019). The discussion of keroncong in this paper refers to the third meaning as a musical group formation.

The forerunner of keroncong in Indonesia has existed since Majapahit established relations with the Portuguese who were in Malacca around 1512. Surabaya was a gateway by the Portuguese to enter Majapahit territory. The interaction of Portuguese with Surabaya's people was believed to be the beginning of keroncong in Java in the early 16th century (Zandra and Rustopo, 2020). Furthermore, the Portuguese continued their expansion to Ambon and Ternate and stopped in Borneo (Kalimantan) and Celebes (Sulawesi) for the spice trade mission, especially cloves. One of the tools that the Portuguese brought on the trade mission was the Fado, a Portuguese music genre. Thus, people in the archipelago were familiar with it. This music genre became the forerunner of keroncong music (Zandra and Rustopo, 2020).

Fado is a popular Portuguese music used to accompany dances. This music uses a small guitar called Cavaquinho which later in Indonesia evolved into Ukulele (Rachman & Utomo, 2018). During the revolution, keroncong music had a golden age and was very popular among young people. At this time, many songs were played in the keroncong style. Keroncong has even gone globally with the emergence of keroncong figures such as Gesang with his work entitled Bengawan Solo. Singer Waljinah, the very famous Sundari Sukoco and many others are proof that keroncong music was once victorious. Moreover, with the emergence of the 2003 Heritage Preservation Charter, it is clear that keroncong is one of the heirlooms that must be preserved.

In its development, keroncong music has experienced a period of decline. This condition occurred in Surakarta in the 1990s. Factors causing the decline include: 1) The inclusion of other types of music such as pop, dangdut, rock, and jazz; 2) Recording company Lokananta doesn't record much keroncong. 3) Many

keroncong bands disbanded in the 1990s, 4) Keroncong band members often changed; 5) Decreased creativity of musicians in creating new songs (Sari, 2015). Another thing that causes keroncong's decline is the lack of public interest in keroncong music (Rachman & Utomo, 2018) and the lack of alignment of the media in promoting keroncong music such as radio, television, newspapers, and so on (Rachman, 2013). In addition, high school age children have very low attention to keroncong music (Primasari, Mering, and Sanulita, 2016.) This indicates that young people's interest in keroncong music is very low.

Meanwhile, starting in the 1990s, many keroncong groups were formed in various regions, for example in Yogyakarta there was the Keroncong Sinten Remen Group, Pasar Keroncong Kota Gede, Yogyakarta Muda Keroncong, and Keroncong Moeda Symphony (Artanto, 2021). In Semarang there is a Cong Rock group, in Demak there is a Tjong Young Gita Citra Alam group in Demak, in Bandung there is a Midaleudami and Jempol Jenthik group, Klatung, in Solo there is OK Swastika in Solo, all of which indicate that the regeneration of players and singers is still ongoing until now. The growth of keroncong groups in various regions is very helpful in efforts to maintain the existence of keroncong music as the identity of the Indonesian nation. Efforts that have been made include innovating original keroncong music as done by Kelly Puspito (Rachman, 2013); (Rachman, Lestari, 2012), vocal arrangement by O.K. Congrock 17 in Semarang (Fauziah & Rachman, 2020), and ska keroncong music innovation in Bandung (A'yun & Rachman, 2019).

In addition to the groups mentioned above, the O.K Waseso Keroncong Orchestra Group in Bumijawa Tegal also contributes to the preservation of keroncong in Indonesia. OK Waseso was formed in 2006 and is located in Bandarsari village, Bumijawa sub-district, Tegal. Waseso as the group's name is an abbreviation of "Wahana Seniman Deso", which serves as an art platform for Waseso personnel who come from the village. A strong love for keroncong music is the background for this band's personnel to choose keroncong music as the type of music they play. One of OK Waseso's missions in carrying out their activities of playing keroncong music is so that keroncong music is swallowed up by the times. Therefore, in an effort to preserve keroncong music in its area, O.K Waseso collaborates with the Tourism and Culture Office to hold various performances and keroncong music festivals. The activities were held at the village, sub-district, district, provincial, and national levels by the group. His persistence in

preserving keroncong music in his area is an interesting matter to be discussed further in this paper.

Research on the dynamics and practice of keroncong music in Indonesia has been carried out by various researchers. Darini (2012) conducted a study entitled *Keroncong: Past and Present*, explaining the historical aspects of keroncong which inherited a multiracial situation because of the mixed cultural elements of Northern Europe, Africa, and Java. All of this was possible because the Portuguese were the first Europeans to come to the archipelago in the 16th century. In other words, keroncong is hybrid music, the result of various cultural components that are fused through a long historical process with all its uniqueness.

Rachman & Utomo (2018) conducted a study entitled *Sing Important Keroncong: An Innovation of Keroncong Music Performance in Semarang*. This study focuses on "Sing Important Keroncong" as a musical performance of Keroncong which was held by the Keroncong community "De Waunk" at the RRI Semarang auditorium. This live performance of keroncong music innovates in terms of the stage, broadcasting system and form of performance so that keroncong music can be enjoyed by all ages.

The introduction of keroncong in the realm of formal education was also investigated by (Harjono & Rachman, 2018) at SMP Negeri 1 Karangmoncol. Keroncong music is taught as an extracurricular by applying the 4P concept in the creation of creativity, (1) The person, namely the teacher creates Keroncong music extracurricular. (2) The process consists of 3 stages of learning, the learning planning stage, the learning implementation stage, and. (3) The press is encouragement from the teacher, and (4) the product consists of the use of pop songs as learning material, chord writing, the use of peer tutoring methods in learning, and the use of codes in the learning process.

Another study was about Keroncong Resistance in Disruption Era (Ramadhani & Rachman, 2019) This research shows that the Keroncong Gita Puspita Orchestra implements a resistance attitude to keroncong music through semi-open resistance, namely by maintaining something that already exists by adapting phenomena in disruption era. The authenticity of the keroncong music is still highlighted from the musical structure and instrumentation of the instruments displayed by the Gita Puspita

Keroncong Orchestra so that the aspects in the form of changes are only as supporting matters.

In addition, (Rachman, Utomo, & Asriyani, 2019) conducted a study entitled *Creation of Keroncong Songs Based on Local Wisdom in Semarang City*. This study describes the process of creating a Keroncong song based on local wisdom in the city of Semarang. Based on the study results, the process in the creation of the Keroncong song entitled *Kr. Pesona Semarang* through several stages, namely Content Idea, exploration, improvisation, evaluation, composition. Through these stages, the researcher succeeded in making an original Keroncong song composition by taking into account the local wisdom of the city of Semarang, namely by combining the pentatonic slendro, pelog, and western scale systems.

The concept was adopted from preservation of Sedyawati (2008), which includes protection, development, and utilization. Cultural protection is all efforts to prevent and overcome symptoms that can cause damage, loss or destruction for the benefit and integrity of the system of ideas, systems of behavior and or cultural objects due to human actions or natural processes. Through coaching or financial assistance can make protection efforts for art to compete with others. Cultural development is an effort to expand and deepen the embodiment of culture and improve quality by utilizing various sources and potentials. Development efforts include process that result in quality improvement and expansion of repertoire. The creation of innovation in art by developing the artistic elements contained in it without losing the roots of its authenticity. This can improve the quality of the art itself. Utilization of culture is an effort to use the embodiment of culture to benefit education, religion, economy, science and tourism. Related to the use of culture, it's necessary to have a law that protects the wealth of Indonesian culture, primarily associated with "traditional knowledge" and traditional cultural expressions or folklore traditions (Traditional Cultural Expression / Expression of Folklore), both of which will become laws to assist The existing Copyright Law so that there are no more cases of Indonesian cultural wealth that people with a copyright can own.

METHODS

The method used in this research is qualitative. This research was conducted at Basecamp O.K Waseso, which is located at Jl. Raya Bumijawa No. 141 RT 03 RW 01,

Bandarsari Village, Bumijawa District, Tegal Regency. Data collection techniques used are observation, interviews, and document studies. The goal of this research is focused on the efforts to preserve keroncong music carried out by the O.K. Waseso group in Bumijawa, Tegal. Respondents in this study were the chairman and members of O.K. Waseso. In this study, the authors conducted direct observations to obtain data on the preservation of keroncong music by O.K. Waseso. In-depth interviews were conducted to obtain data that could not be obtained through observation. The documents used as data include photos during practice, photos of O.K. Waseso's performances at various keroncong performances, photos of interviews with informants and respondents and pictures related to conservation efforts carried out by O.K. Waseso. The validity of the data is done by triangulation of sources, methods, and theories. Data analysis was carried out with an interactive model by adopting Miles and Huberman.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

O.K. Waseso is one of the keroncong music groups in Tegal. The philosophy of naming O.K. Waseso is an abbreviation of "Wahana Seniman Deso" as a place for art for the personnel and the hope that this keroncong music group can be widely known by keroncong music lovers and be able to preserve keroncong music. O.K. Waseso was initially called the Keroncong Giri Asmoro orchestra. The name O.K. Giri Asmoro was changed to the Keroncong Waseso orchestra in 2016. Waseso was formed from the idea of Mas Fandi Satria and Mas Jabang Seno Aji. Both previously joined a rock band called Sayur Band. However, they got bored and wanted to learn a new type of music. Then decided to play keroncong.

Initially, keroncong was not very popular in the Bumijawa sub-district; the presence of O.K. Waseso was a fresh air for its lovers, especially the older generation who mostly still listen to and appreciate keroncong. Departing from a group consisting of young people, O.K. Waseso also wants to introduce keroncong to the younger generation. O.K. Waseso often makes appearances at various tourist attractions and weddings where the majority of the listeners are the younger generation.

Over time this group experienced ups and downs at that time. The listeners of keroncong around the Tegal were decreased, which eventually resulted in the reduction of

O.K. Waseso's performances. Finally, O.K. Waseso took the initiative to bring pop and dangdut songs with keroncong arrangements. This effort was successful, listeners began to listen keroncong again, and Waseso returned their existence. However, internal problems also occurred in the group. Due to various activities and many personnel left, O.K. Waseso has hiatus from 2012-2016. Finally, in mid-2016, O.K. Waseso returned with the remaining personnel and regenerated the group with new personnel. O.K. Waseso also bring additional players. They continue their existence and contribute to preserving keroncong music.

Keroncong Preservation by O.K. Waseso

O.K. Waseso is one of the keroncong groups that still pays attention to and cares about the existence of keroncong. The efforts in preserving keroncong is its routine exercises that are scheduled once a week. The activities are carried out using the standard keroncong instrument, such as contra bass, cello, guitar, cuk, cak, violin, flute, and vocals. According to Edi Sedyawati (2008) in his book "Indonesian in Culture: Cultural Dialogue: National and Ethnic Roles of the Culture Industry and Mass Media Cultural Heritage and Dynamic Preservation", it is explained that a culture can be sustainable if there is always its existence, it is necessary to make efforts in preserving this culture. These preservation efforts consist of protection, development, and utilization. In maintaining the art of keroncong music, Waseso made these three efforts.

Protection

Culture protection are all preventing efforts and countermeasures to symptom caused damage, loss, or extinct for benefit and integrity of idea system, behaviour system, and or culture object effected by human error or natural process. Protection can be applied through guidance or financial help for an art so that it can compete with other arts.

The way of OK Waseso protects culture in 2008 was participating to Keroncong Musik Festival "Regency Cup" conducted by the government of Brebes Regency. On that event, OK Waseso attracted attention from the government of Tegal Regency. The government then provided financial support to buy new a set of keroncong music instrument. This support kept OK Waseso to play and to preserve keroncong, especially in Tegal Regency.

The way of the government of Tegal Regency protects to OK Waseso was through organisation guidance. The guidance is in the form of approaching to personnel in order to family relationship in group keep harmonise. Protection in this term is held in order Waseso to keep productive to work, so that the keroncong music preserved. The form of protection is registering the song to the Ministry of Law and Human Rights to obtain the Intellectual Property Right (HKI) certificate. A work must gain the legal protection, and a copyright should be claimed and protected the moral as well as economy (Hasibuan, 2014).

Development

Development consists of processing results quality assurance and/or repertoire expansion (Sedyawati, 2008: 166). Cultural development is an expansion effort in excavating cultural manifestation and a quality enhancement by using many sources and potentials. Innovation creation of art expands the art element included without removing the originality. This can enhance the quality of art itself.

Development aims not only in order to keroncong to be alive, but also be guidance from many aspects of facilities and infrastructures to enhance the grade and quality. The awareness of artist, society, and government to participate and play a role to expand the keroncong music is proven. The supports enhance the quality of the music performance. Hence, the application of cultural expansion of keroncong needs to preserve endlessly.

The development applied by a group of artists in Tegal Regency by making Tegal Art Festival (Mengapak Jazz) event in October 2019 at Cacaban dam. OK Waseso participated and performed in the event. This festival performed many arts including dance, visual art, and music to give artists a space to create and express their talents. Creating and expressing is human needed to state, communicate, and understand people and themselves, nature, divinity, and universally the work (Rohidi dan Salam, 2015).

OK Waseso develops keroncong in the term of arrangement the song material and music instrument. Waseso appears as a keroncong music group that showed a modern arrangement. The song brought by OK Waseso is not only original keroncong song, but also pop song arranged on keroncong rhythm. To support the arrangement expanded, it adds a keyboard

and drum in OK Waseso music performance. The form of Pop song performance accompanied by keroncong music is categorized as an extra song (Harmunah, 2011).

Utilization

Cultural utilization is a usage effort of cultural manifestation on education, religion, economy, science, and tourism. OK Waseso leads economy and tourism value by given an opportunity to perform in many tourism events held by the government of Tegal Regency. In 2019, OK Waseso had an opportunity to perform in the festival. The event entitled Cempaka Suro Fest annually conducted in Suro (month in Javanese calendar) at Cempaka village, Bumijaya, Tegal Regency as tourism promotion. The event is performing various art performances.

Utilization of economic, OK Waseso is often asked to perform on wedding party. The performance on wedding party is commonly commercial event, so the deal price between two parties is fixed. Through such event, they earn additional income.

Socialisation

Socialisation is a process brought the individual to be a member who benefits to his organisation, an acts based on organisation standards, practices the tradition of organisation, and adapts him to the social situation gathered, in order to be accepted kindly by his organisation (Hansen, 1979). From the definition above, it can be inferred clearly that the meaning of socialisation contains of value elements, behaviour pattern, and skills, knowledge and attitudes necessity for individual to function as a member of society supporting a culture (Subiyantoro, 2009).

Context of music art value socialisation can be equally to culture which as culture material will be socialised, contained many values such as knowledge, skill, and attitude value. Waseso also socialises keroncong through preservation event by documenting many performances carefully.

O.K Waseso performs in many festivals and cultural events held in around Bumijaya, Tegal Regency. The performances documented/recorded in the form of visual audio. O.K Waseso shares the performance documentation on social media in which it can

be accessed on Instagram account @waseso_musik and YouTube account "WASESO OFFICIAL".

Instagram Account of O.K Waseso

O.K Waseso documented their performance not only through visual and audio media, but also through social media. It is showed by an Instagram account managed by its members. The account namely https://www.instagram.com/waseso_musik/

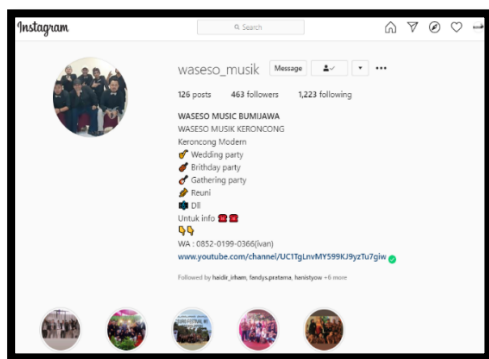


Figure 1. Instagram account of OK Waseso (Source: Saputra, 2020)

In its account, O.K Waseso uploads some contents of their performance in many events. The contents documenting photos and videos neatly. The instagram profile also list profile and manager telephone number. It is a promotion strategy once OK Waseso was invited to perform (figure 1). Documentation of many events is also a preservation form of keroncong music. O.K Waseso spreads widely and shares it in the form photos and videos that can be accessed widely by many people. The strategy is to spread through social media Facebook, Whatsapp Group, and Instagram by sharing the photo or video link uploaded. This is for preserving and keeping the existence of keroncong.

Youtube of O.K Waseso

Youtube is a sharing sites that many used for sharing videos. Youtube is also used for sharing music videos. O.K Waseso created a youtube account aimed to share and spread many performance as well as the events' documentation. Youtube account of OK Waseso can be accessed on page <https://youtube.com/channel/UC1TgLnMY599KJ9yzTu7giw>.

Youtube has various advantages, one of them is in its limited duration. It is appropriate to O.K Waseso to have many music contents. They uploaded many performances from many events. Through Youtube, they can spread the work to be accessed and appreciated widely by keroncong lover as a keroncong preservation.

CONCLUSION

The preservation of Keroncong Music by O.K Waseso in Bumijawa, Tegal Regency, is an effort to preserve cultural heritage, both physically and non-physically. O.K Waseso's efforts to preserve keroncong include three events: protection, development, and utilization. Protection efforts are carried out by registering his works with the Ministry of Law and Human Rights to obtain a certificate of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). Development efforts are carried out by making new arrangements adapted to the times without leaving the characteristics of keroncong. Utilization efforts are carried out by involving themselves in various events held at the regional and national levels. In terms of maintaining keroncong, routine training continues to be carried out on a scheduled basis once a week while still using the standard keroncong instrument. O.K Waseso socialized keroncong by neatly documenting his appearance in an audio-visual form shared through social media, such as Instagram and Youtube. These steps are taken so that the wider community can recognize and listen to, and appreciate keroncong in order to be preserved and sustainable.

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