

Historical Aspects of Ketut Sumerjana's "Yogyakarta Nyaman" (from Entertainment to Pre-Therapy Media)

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ABSTRACT

In many music composition, history is often forgotten even though every music must be preceded by its historical events behind. Regarding such a problem, one form of music projects that is quite interesting for the author is "Yogyakarta Nyaman" (2011) created by musician and academician Ketut Sumerjana. It is a MIDI composition which then function as pre-therapy media. Based on that, the focus of this research is the historical aspects or background of "Yogyakarta Nyaman" both in the process of its creation and its functional shifting from profane thing (entertainment) to pre-therapy. This study uses a narrative qualitative method with data collection techniques in the form of interviews with primary informants. The results of the study show that the history or the background of the creation process of "Yogyakarta Nyaman" is as a description of the interpretation of the socio-cultural changes in Yogyakarta during the 1990s to 2000s, while the presence of subsonic and ultrasonic frequency components which became the background of the music has its own functional transformation to pre-therapy media.

Keywords: "Yogyakarta Nyaman", music, history, background, ultrasonic, therapy.

ABSTRAK

Dalam komposisi musik, sejarah seringkali terlupakan padahal setiap musik pasti didahului dengan peristiwa sejarah yang melatarbelakanginya. Terkait hal tersebut, salah satu musik yang cukup menarik perhatian bagi penulis adalah "Yogyakarta Nyaman" (2011) yang merupakan salah satu musik karya musisi sekaligus akademisi Ketut Sumerjana. Ini merupakan sebuah komposisi MIDI yang kemudian fungsinya sebagai media pra-terapi. Berdasarkan hal tersebut, maka fokus penelitian ini adalah mengenai aspek sejarah atau latar belakang musik "Yogyakarta Nyaman" baik dalam proses penciptaannya dan pergeseran fungsinya dari profan (hiburan) menuju pra-terapi. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif naratif dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa wawancara terhadap narasumber primer. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa musik "Yogyakarta Nyaman" secara aspek sejarah atau latar belakang proses penciptaannya merupakan deskripsi interpretasi mengenai perubahan sosio-kultur Yogyakarta tahun 1990-an menuju 2000-an sedangkan komponen frekuensi subsonik dan ultrasonik yang menjadi latar belakang karya ini mengalami transformasi fungsi menjadi media pra-terapi.

Kata kunci: "Yogyakarta Nyaman", musik, sejarah, latar belakang, ultrasonik, terapi.

PRELIMINARY

Music is not inadvertently present because the background that underlies the existence of the process of creating it has been carefully constructed either realized or not by its creator (composer). We often hear the statement that it is not uncommon for the art community to create music always with the words "spontaneous, sudden". When explored further, there is a unique fact that actually a music creator has already had a conceptual flow of thought but in expressing in a *scientific* way it is not a kind of habit.

The background or historical aspects of a music composition is quite important because it is one of the foundations in understanding the music existence in the midst of human life both as individual and social beings. Nattiez (1990) stated that in understanding the meaning, value, and function of a music composition, we must describe level of historical-anthropological science, in which the background of the creation process or functional transformation becomes a focus of study. Nattiez's description provides a space for exploring a music composition entitled "Yogyakarta Nyaman" at the level of historical aspects. The music was composed by Ketut Sumerjana, a contemporary musician as well as lecturer in the Music Department, Institut Seni Indonesia (ISI) Denpasar.

"Yogyakarta Nyaman" is a MIDI (Music Instrument Digital Interface) composition. Its creation process took place in 2011 which had a unique character because in the process itself, sampling techniques are used which then constructed as a music composition. There was nothing special in it but lately had become a special attraction due to the experience of its functional shifting in society from entertainment (profane) functions to pre-therapy media. Merton (in Kaplan and Manners, 2002) gives a postulate about the shift in music that is unique, that everything is functionally related to everything else and that all elements of culture carry out a function. None of the other elements is capable to carry out the same function. According to Merton, in clarifying the concept of function, there is a division between manifest (visible) function and latent (hidden) one.

The shift of function experienced in “Yogyakarta Nyaman” (meaning: “Comfortable Yogyakarta”) is a sign that there is an exchange of functions that work in community activities. In relation to this, Oohashi, *et al* (2000) conducted a research on the sound of *gambang* (a traditional music) Kuta, Bali, where the results were the modulated sampling sounds can have an impact on the interpretation of deaf people. The deaf people are able to feel the presence of these sounds. The reason behind the success of this study is the sound in the ultrasonic region in the reproduction. Based on the description above, the focus of the study in this paper is the aspects of history in Sumerjana’s “Yogyakarta Nyaman”. This study has the aim of knowing the cultural background in the process of creating the music composition and the functional changes experienced.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Nattiez (1990) in his *Music and Discourse: Toward Semiology of Music* provides an explanation that semiology of music is an understanding of the musical function working in society, so that to understand it, we need three scientific levels. They are (1) physics (analyzing musical musical intrinsic elements), (2) history-anthropology (the cultural background that underlies the function of music works in society), and (3) psychology (the process of perception and cognition in interpreting the functions of music by individuals in the society). Nattiez's description in musical terms can be divided into two. They are intrinsic elements in physics and extrinsic ones, namely the history of anthropology and psychology. That’s why in searching the background functions of music working in community activities, the level of history-anthropology is studied.

Merriam (1964: 209-210) provides an explanation that the use value and function of music is one of the important factors in ethnomusicology, especially in studying human behavior. Speaking about the use of music will directly lead to the role of music in the social life of society, the environment, or the related activities. Use value or function depends on the effectiveness of the existing environmental

situation. Brown (in Merriam, 1964: 211) states that the function of certain social uses is a contribution that makes social life totally work well without generating conflict when experiencing a shift in the system of society.

Merton (in Ritzer and Smart, 2011) writes that the concept of function includes manifest and latent functions. The manifest (objective) function is an objective consequence that contributes to the adjustment or adaptation of the system that the system participant wants and realizes. While the latent function is a matter of culture that is not desired or realized by citizens. The two concepts are able to exchange roles in understanding the shift of objects in community activities.

METHODS

This study uses a narrative-qualitative method with data collection techniques in the form of interviews with primary informants (Creswell, 2011). The interviews are, of course, mostly done with the composer of “Yogyakarta Nyaman” Ketut Sumerjana in 2015. The interview with him was done many times in his college where he works (Institut Seni Indonesia Denpasar) in Jalan Nusa Indah, Denpasar, Bali.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to Sumerjana (interview, 2015), ideas of “Yogyakarta Nyaman” started from desire to manifest feeling in a form music composition in 2011. At that time he was going to start studying in master program (strata 2) in the Department of Music Creation (Penciptaan Musik) at the Postgraduate Program (Program Pascasarjana), Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta. One day he was driving bicycle in the region of Prawirotaman, Yogyakarta, and viewing the morning at a market. Suddenly the situation awoke his old memories about Jogja (another name of Yogyakarta) which was very comfortable when experiencing education in the Graduate Program (strata 1) at Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta in 1990s. Sumerjana said that the process of his creation is not through the process of thinking

from conceptualizing or making complex form of music. He only selected melodic motives and the right harmony. In other words, the process of the creation took place in a spontaneous and flowing manner.

“Yogyakarta Nyaman” is a very interesting music composition to study as it indicates that based on the analysis results of vibration spectrum there is a frequency in the ultrasonic region, above 20 KHz. Sumerjana then conducted a *trial error* to search for musical potential by applying the music as pre-therapy media in the community activities.

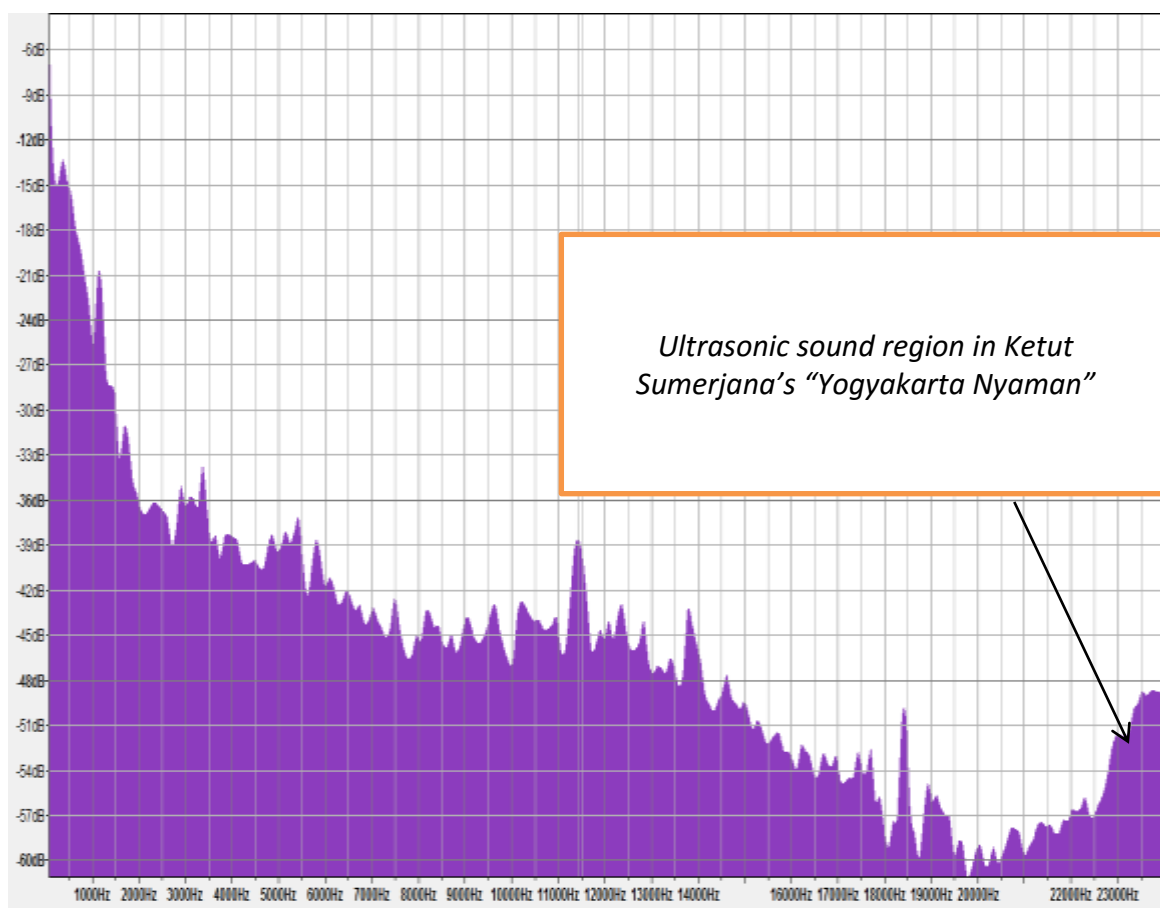


Figure 1
The spectrum analysis of “Yogyakarta Nyaman”.

“Yogyakarta Nyaman” is not intentionally based on an intention to produce ultrasonic wave, but rather on instinct (feeling) to compose only. The process of its creation is also very simple, that is using audio software device to produce MIDI sound, then choosing type of sound to become musical instrument digitally, and pouring musical ideas in a spontaneous manner, where it is not a must for the composer to integrate various instruments. All instruments used are MIDI, and Indian zither, *ultra drum beat*, *bass*, and combination between Solo and Jogja saron which construct melody and rhythm (Figure 2).

According to Nattiez, in understanding music, one important aspect is the level of history-anthropology, namely the cultural background that underlies a process of music creation. The creator's exposure indicates that the historical aspects or cultural background of the music creation of “Yogyakarta Nyaman” is a past memory toward a very beautiful location or area called Prawirotaman in the 1990s which was so different from the condition in 2011. The area condition due to factors of being in different time causes creative ideas to create a musical composition intended as a medium of entertainment. It's all about changes or shifts in the socio-economic culture of the Prawirotaman community which is obviously seen.





Figure 2

Process of music creation of “Yogyakarta Nyaman” from ideas (historical aspects) when the composer was a strata 1 student to conceptualizing and practicing it into a music composition (Documentation: Sumerjana, 1990).

The entertainment function of music refers to the thought of Merriam (1964). In this case, the position of “Yogyakarta Nyaman” can be placed to meet the psychological needs of the creator about a fact of change, development of a region and even rapid development of the region, not in accordance with interpretation resulting in contradictions or conflicts within the creator. The choice of sampling sound such as the sound of ethnic instruments including electronic devices to make MIDI type is a reason to create a message in the form of a mimetic description of the condition of the region in the 1990s. This fact reinforces that there is a historical foundation or background in the process of creating “Yogyakarta Nyaman” even

though its presence has not been realized. The historical aspect when the music has function of entertainment is a memory of a comfort that has now undergone changes due to socio-economic factors.

“Yogyakarta Nyaman” as an entertainment has a manifest function that is indeed desirable, because its presence is intentionally intended to fulfill the emotional atmosphere of the creator as a form of reflection or form of protest, inner conflict at the individual level. Simple flow of thinking, the creators' habits and musical abilities become basic capital in positioning the music composition as a cultural product that supports the expediency of the community's horizontal system, where capital is an intrinsic element as a form of response to socio-cultural changes in society. This factor also eventually became one of the determinants of functional changes in “Yogyakarta Nyaman” in the midst of community activities, coupled with musical abilities themselves.

“Yogyakarta Nyaman” became a discourse in internal group in 2012. The vibration analysis at certain points showed the potential of the ultrasonic frequency region. This event actually starts with the desire to see the sound component visually with a *Sound Forge 6.0* program but it shows precisely the potential for frequency in the ultrasonic region as shown in Figure 1. The basic foundation is used to position the music's function as pre-therapy media.

Trial error testing in describing the function of music as pre-therapy media was carried out in 2014 where Sumerjana and friends did observation toward several respondents. The results show that “Yogyakarta Nyaman” is able to provide stimuli to respondents towards better conditions. In 2014, “Yogyakarta Nyaman” experienced a shift from entertainment functions to pre-therapy media ones.

The functional change is a complementary form of the manifest function and latent function that exists in the music. In the beginning of the creation, entertainment is a manifest function while the potential of a therapy is a latent function. When the musical function becomes a pre-therapy media, the manifest function is an aspect of therapy which is contributing to broader social activities while its position as an

entertainment media is only a latent function, where the music works for itself. Nevertheless, the function as an entertainment cannot be separated from its original value which is now as a secondary function.

The cultural background or historical-anthropological aspects when there is a change in function from entertainment to pre-therapy media is the presence of sound components, namely frequency in the ultrasonic region, where in the world of medicine, such a frequency is an alternative source of treatment or image of medical equipment. According to Merriam (1964), in ethnomusicology, a musical function is said to work optimally if it contributes to social activities without conflict. This is in accordance with the condition of “Yogyakarta Nyaman” which is widely accepted by people who want to get alternatives in treatment therapy.

Another reason that supports “Yogyakarta Nyaman” functioning as a pre-therapy media is the simple concept of thinking that music is an energy that can provide stimuli in the form of perceptions when it is heard and felt. The threshold of success of sensations and perceptions cannot be separated from the influence of elements of the cultural history of the surrounding community as extrinsic elements and the ability of the component of the music itself as an intrinsic ones.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study show historical aspects of “Yogyakarta Nyaman” or the background of its creation process as an interpretation of socio-cultural memories of an area in Yogyakarta in the 1990s where there were differences in socio-economic conditions of the local community in the 2000s. The ultrasonic frequency component at its vibrations becomes the foundation for the transformation of its functions into pre-therapy media. As a pre-therapy media, its existence is well accepted by the surrounding community.

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