

Spectacle of Music: Critical Essay on the Evolution of Music in North Sumatra

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ABSTRACT

Music, as part of culture, is often seen as something that only plays a complementary role in life. In fact, if explored in depth, there are many things stored in the music, which are worthy of in-depth study. Music has deposits that describe the natural state of mind, environment, culture and existence of the owner of the music. In general, the essence of music is a sound engineering event. If it is related to sound, then it is enjoyed by hearing. However, in the archipelago in general, and Sumatra in particular, music has become something that is enjoyed by "watching". This is the impact of an evolution from a situation that we have slowly, but have come quite far from, experienced. This article will try to explain the evolution experienced by music from the perspective of art as an object and subject. For example, take the case of music in North Sumatra in general.

KEYWORDS

*Music
Spectacle
Evolution
North Sumatera*

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INTRODUCTION

The position of music as part of culture cannot be separated from the process of change from time to time as a result of the demands of environmental conditions, needs, and in order to adapt to survive —works of art and artists. Regardless of the good and bad of this process, music still has a position that is considered important —even though it is still treated as a complement to this day— in human civilization in North Sumatra. This means that in every development and change over time, music is still included in the list of elements of culture in North Sumatra.

Music is a category of art, not just something that can only be enjoyed. Because, ... there are many phenomenon that arise from just one piece of music (Ben Pasaribu, 2004). This means that by studying music, we can find various kinds of events that are worthy of being used as material for study from various points of view. Music is possible as an element that can reveal phenomenon, events and the existence of a group and/or society using certain methods.

Departing from the understanding above, the author tries to see the evolution of music in North Sumatra, from when it was originally believed to be a media/ ritual means, until finally it became a spectacle for the community. Is this progress, or is it part of the efforts of artists and musical art to survive over time? This article attempts to use a point of view that places art as a subject and at the same time as an object, with cultural benchmarks in North Sumatra.

RESEARCH METHODS

In this article, we use the qualitative research method proposed by Norman K. Denzin & Yvona S. Lincoln, opinionated that "Qualitative research is an activity that places the observer in the world, consisting of a series of interpretive material practices that make the world visible. This practice turns the world into a series of representations including field notes, interviews, conversations, photos, recordings and memos about oneself...", meaning there is a series of activities in the field where the people of North Sumatra live their lives dynamically. The activities carried out were in the form of collecting data to compose writing with the first step being that the researcher carried out observations to find various types of performance data from time to time among community groups in North Sumatra. Through the views offered, implementation in the field is possible using a participant observer approach. The author was directly present and interacted directly with the various conditions and events observed. So that the search and collection of data becomes more effective, accurate and authentic according to the facts found in the field.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the past, the use of the word "Music" did not exist in the local language vocabulary in North Sumatra. Usually referred to by terms that refer to customary cultural activities carried out, or taken from the mention of the name of the instrument and the treatment of a particular musical instrument. However, in this incident it was very clear that the activity of presenting sounds was such that at certain times it was called music, including the use of the genderang, gondang, gendang, gonrang, senandung, ende, nde. All of these terms refer to the meaning of sound processing activities in such a way that is in accordance with the understanding of the respective culture in which these terms live and develop. Nowadays, this artistic event is called local ethnic traditional music in North Sumatra.

Local traditional music in North Sumatra does not stand alone absolutely. However, there are always other elements that are part of a whole that cannot be separated from the music itself. For example genderang, gondang and gendang there is usually always a dance of —tatak, tor-tor, landek. Then, in the arts that are songs, they are often compared with literary works. However, over time and circumstances, at certain times, the musical repertoire was presented in a single, absolute, independent manner. This means that it is no longer part of cultural events, customs or traditions. The music here is certainly part of the performance, which takes local traditional idioms.

Looking at the various activities, developments in the situation and understanding of music in North Sumatra, two things cannot be separated, namely: "sound" and "culture". Although in the past most of the music in North Sumatra was dominated by local traditions. However, there are always attempts to represent the music with the perception of each era of the artist and/ or presenter of the work. This means that there is always an effort to re-engineer it with basic materials that already exist, and present it like new. Perhaps this event was the background to the emergence of new repertoires in the musical repertoire of North Sumatra.

Looking at the explanation above, we can offer a definition of music that seeks to be able to cover all space, time and circumstances that are not subjective. Namely, music is a series of sound engineering events that are born from cultural perceptions. This view may be applied to Indonesian music in general considering that one of the characteristics of Indonesian music is music that can hardly be separated from culture as a benchmark.

a. Music for rituals

Referring to the 2008 KBBI page 1311, it is explained that ritual is something related to rites, and it is explained that rites are religious ceremonies. In the North Sumatra region, there has long been a "religion of the ancestors". So rituals here are activities related to a belief in a community group. In this case, North Sumatra has a religious concept of animism and dynamism in general. Certain community groups in North Sumatra believe that ancestors, certain objects and nature play a role in determining their lives. So, various kinds of activities are carried out within the framework of certain goals —worship, asking for blessings, asking for safety and so on— which are designed in such a way that the goal is achieved. This activity is called a ritual.

Ritual activities in North Sumatra are usually presented in symbolic form, namely in the form of musical presentations accompanied by movement patterns and mantras with the aim of conveying certain intentions to those who are believed to be something that can grant/grant the request in question.

b. Music for listen to

Understanding here refers to activities that focus on the sense of hearing, the ear. There are no visual elements that serve as clues to the object being heard. So, the audio element/sounds are the only clues and objects found in this activity. These audio objects form images in the listener's imagination freely, according to each individual's perception. This means that there are no restrictions or "compulsions" in responding to audio objects for each listener, they respond according to each individual's understanding.

The music that is heard does not have a strengthening orientation towards one perception, but rather allows each listener to capture the image in the music itself. This will usually be related to the culture and experiences of each individual which form perceptions of something. In essence, this musical image will be seen in the listener's imagination, not something visual to visible.

c. Music to watch (spectacle)

Referring to the 2008 KBBI page 1725, the word "watch" is the activity of seeing a performance (live and moving visuals). So, the meaning of "watched" here is a series of activities that focus on the senses of sight and hearing in a balanced way. The activity here is aimed at viewing something that is intentionally performed as a performance object that is oriented towards audio-visual imaging, usually with performances using stage media as support. So, there is an impression of "forced" focus of attention, centralization. The impact of this event usually leads to a change in perception that the audio will not feel complete if you don't see the source of the presentation directly. This means that the audio here is fully integrated with the visuals, inseparable from achieving artistic goals. There is imagery that supports each other between audio and visual. In North Sumatra, this can usually be seen in artistic performances that use stage media and all supporting elements in the performance. Seeing this, acting arts —opera, theater and drama— and music are easy things to integrate. Thus, there will be a perception of "musical accompaniment" in the performance of works of art.

It should be emphasized that the music to be watched here is imagery that begins with the audio element. Even though there is a balanced treatment between audio and visual,

audio is the initial image that forms a viewing object which will be equipped with visual images to strengthen the image of the object. This means that for musical arts performances, the audio element is the main source that will be displayed, and then the visual element is used as a complement and amplifier in the musical performance. This is the reason this article uses the word "audio" before "visual", not vice versa. Meanwhile, musical accompaniment is perceived as a "complementary and reinforcing" object in an initial image object that will be displayed. This means that apart from the musical element that forms the initial image of the performance, music is used as a complement and reinforcing.

2. Music Presentation in Social Life

Music found in society in North Sumatra is presented in various forms that touch directly on life, both daily activities and activities in certain time periods and situations. This musical presentation seems to be able to describe the form of human response to music, which directly and indirectly directs music into a certain classification, and of course with all its supporting elements. Namely, as follows:

a. Music for rituals

When humans try to build a communication system that connects —ancestors or people who have died— and those who are considered to be their "gods", usually by creating certain kinds of symbols, which are then translated through activities in such a way as to certain ritual activities. These include dancing with certain movement patterns to show respect for certain people in traditional activities, compiling a special musical repertoire for the purpose of conveying prayers, compiling a certain musical repertoire to start a traditional activity. All these ritual activities make it very clear that music is an important part of them. Music here becomes something sacred, because it becomes a medium for communicating something that is considered great, holy, high. However, it must be noted that sacredness here is seen and measured based on the standards of the culture that uses the music.

b. Music for listen to

Apart from music for rituals, in culture in North Sumatra there is also music that is made with the aim of simply being enjoyed by listening, both individually and in groups and in the masses. Music here takes the form of stories and legends, expressions of feelings, and is a medium for playing around. For example, cido-cido kalikik, odong-odong, tangis milangi in the Pakpak community; katoneng-katoneng, tangis-tangis, didong doah for the Karo community; andung-andung among the Toba community; urdo-urdo, mandilo tondui, tangis in the Simalungun community, senandung in the Malay community; and others. This art emphasizes how the sense of hearing works.

Over time, the concept of recording sound in a recording studio began to be discovered, and then the recordings spread widely in society —starting in the form of vinyl records. Next, the development of radio began to operate for mass /public consumption, the cassette tape appeared, and the Compact Disc appeared —experiencing a fairly short period of success. Of all these media, the emphasis on musical treatment is on treatment entirely "to be heard". There is a spirit that seems to train and reserve the ears and imagination space of music listeners. This means that certain music can create a certain atmosphere and condition in the listener's thoughts and emotions. A kind of time tunnel and emotional warehouse.

However, this is where the beginnings of a division of understanding and perception of music in general in North Sumatra began to emerge. Thus emerged a style of music that was both "traditional and commercial."

Regardless of existing perceptions, what needs to be noted is that the music here is experiencing a heyday aesthetically and is performed like the essence of music itself. "If music is a series of sounds. So, enjoy it by being heard." The journey of music, which began to be divided into 2 styles of perception, was treated evenly, and could still be considered quite accurate until towards the end of the 20th century.

c. Music to watch (spectacle)

After walking in a comfortable situation for a long time, turmoil finally began to emerge when the process of "natural selection" began to work and influence humans and their culture. In Indonesia, "tradition" is always associated with an absolute and fixed standard (Dieter Mack, 1995). This means that there is a kind of obligation that cannot be violated in the world of tradition. This ultimately further thickens the gap between the perception of "traditional" music and "commercial" music which has begun to develop rapidly along with developments in society in North Sumatra. As a result, at one time, the term "performing arts" to accommodate the existence of any art whose performance refers to physical and sound displays, emphasizing audio and visual elements, was "accepted" by artists and the public in North Sumatra. Until finally musical arts entered the realm of performing arts, almost without any barriers. Because, many traditional arts idioms are used as basic material for working on performing arts, and are oriented towards the commercial industry.

As time progressed, the performing arts began to dominate the development of arts in North Sumatra. This is supported because many of the dishes shown are able to accommodate the need for entertainment "thirst" among urban communities. So, new challenges emerge in traditional arts that require placing them in a position where they feel they must be respected. Meanwhile, as a result of the use of traditional idioms in commercial performing arts, traditions increasingly become entangled in the assessment of being "outdated", ultimately becoming less popular. Meanwhile, on the other hand, traditional artists depend on art for their living. So, if there is less interest, then income will decrease, maybe even non-existent. This phenomenon forces many traditional artists, willingly or unwillingly, to enter the realm of commercial performing arts for the purpose of survival. This still continues almost everywhere in North Sumatra. Moreover, Medan City is the provincial capital. The existence of the city of Medan as the capital of North Sumatra plays an important role in the development of this perception because, consciously and/or unconsciously, the capital area has become a mecca for the people of North Sumatra in general in performing arts and treating art —music.

Performing arts are designed to emphasize audio and visual elements. It is designed in such a way that it seems as if the music will not be considered good if there are no visuals and are visible to the eye. So, music is to be watched, not just listened to to understand the message conveyed, or the purpose of the work. This has led to the development stage of the use of stage media and its supporting elements, which often have no connection at all, being nothing more than "hypnotic tools" to make it look grand.

3. Factors Supporting the Rate of Musical Evolution

The process of musical evolution in North Sumatra did not happen quickly and "just like that", it did not fall from the sky. This evolutionary process has undergone a significant journey and over a fairly long period of time. Some of the most prominent factors in supporting the evolution of music in North Sumatra are internal factors and external factors of the music itself.

a. Internal factors

- Artist.

The existence of artists who depend on artistic activities requires artists to enter and participate in the existing system. It is still rare to find artists who are "idealistic" in their art. This will of course have a significant impact on the development of the "musical" arts being worked on. That's fine, it's each individual's choice.

- Public

People in cultures have different needs, especially survival issues. This makes attention to music itself not the main focus in life. In the minds of ordinary people, music is only for complement, entertainment, there is already someone responsible for it. So, let the music take its course. In short, the existence of music is not really cared about, it is not a primary need. This means, "music adapts to humans, not vice versa."

b. External factors

- Media technology

One thing that plays a big role in the evolution of music in North Sumatra is media technology. Starting from recording technology which produces vinyl records, cassette tapes, CDs, VCDs. So that the distribution of existing music becomes wider and the distribution process is easier. Even television media can broadcast performing arts to the wider community.

- Economy and business

Economics and business are combined, because they are things that are mutually related to each other. Then, both deal with "financial materials and capital issues". One of the goals of artistic artists is to meet economic demands. Then, in the world of performance, capital becomes a very important support. If a show is able to provide profits, then there is a big chance of continuing to survive in the world of shows. However, it must be remembered that the "music" art that is promoted and worked on must be able to adapt to the needs of the audience. This is often regardless of the cultural dimensions of the idiom taken because its orientation only satisfies the audience. So, this process opens up opportunities for changes in style, perception and public appreciation of music, leading to changes in the music itself.

- Outside culture comes in

When entering the era of information technology and globalization, one thing that is very noticeable is the influence of foreign culture into local culture. This also happens in various places outside North Sumatra. On the one side, there must be profits to be made. For example, recording technology, the use of radio transmitters, and economic management systems that can be used to organize the art of "music" are increasingly opening up opportunities to enter the realm of performance. On the other side, external cultural influences actually change people's behavior, perception and appreciation of

music. Until, finally, humans changed and were followed by music that adapted to human needs.

For example, traditional music in North Sumatra is presented in a Broadway style, which emphasizes luxury, elegance, beautiful women dressed in sexy clothes, and so on. Equating tuning systems between instruments from different cultures, sometimes gives the impression of an "unintelligent" coercion. Thus forcing the universalization of music in all places. This is of course a form of change that the author calls complex evolution in music.

CONCLUSION

Based on the somewhat lengthy explanation above, music in North Sumatra is experiencing dynamics in the form of significant evolution, and it cannot be avoided. Because evolution itself is part of an effort to survive —music and artists. Along the way, it turns out that music adapts to humans, not the other way around. From this event, music in North Sumatra experienced an evolution in terms of treatment, appreciation, perception, namely: "from ritual music, changed to music to be heard, until finally now it is music to be watched."

Ritual music emphasizes magical elements, measures of sacredness, obligations that cannot be violated, and is influenced by ideology. The connoisseur is something that can be oriented towards appreciation of an object, placing the art of "music" as an object. Meanwhile, in ritual music in North Sumatra, it does not always require appreciation because it is an obligation that must be borne throughout life, there is no orientation to the placement of objects and subjects because ritual music can act as an object and at the same time as a subject. This means that ritual music can act as something that is glorified, as well as glorifying something that is worshiped and worshipped. Ritual music in North Sumatra cannot be "equalized", or used as a "function" of performing arts. However, it is an art form whose meaning must be separated.

Music to be heard, emphasizes the response of audio elements that create an emotional impression. Music to watch emphasizes the response of audio and visual elements, which are designed in such a way that they even seem excessive to the point that there is often no relevance between the work and its supporters. The art here is shown using stage media, there is an impression of wanting to stand out singularly, and is oriented towards "satisfying the audience".

... performing Arts If the audience is invisible forces, such as gods or ancestral spirits, then performing arts functions as a ritual (R. M. Soedarsono, 2002). The author does not agree with this statement if it refers to the explanation in the written study that was presented previously. In North Sumatra culture, ritual music does not have an orientation towards performance. However, it is an obligation that must be followed because it is part of the traditions of our ancestors and at the same time as an identity and self-identity in the wider community. This means that ritual music shows who and what the identity of the performer and maker is. Ritual music also has an orientation to show respect for something, a person and/or a group when there are traditional activities and belief/ religious ceremonies. So, it is not for show, but is part of a symbolic representation of conveying respectful treatment. It's up to how the other party responds, what is certain is that the "attitude" has been placed according to the position required by the position. This means that even if there is no response to this ritual music treatment from any party, it will not reduce its essence. The performing arts "music" of North Sumatra is the music that is watched (spectacle).

Regardless of good or bad, even if the performance is a "musical" art that takes idioms from ritual music, it will definitely experience changes in function, perception, appreciation and essence.

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