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## The Dynamics of *Keroncong* Music in Indonesia, 1940's – 2000's

**ABSTRACT:** *"Keroncong" music, as a treasure of Indonesian national music, has been experiencing a long phase since the arrival of the Moorish as Portuguese slaves to Indonesia in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In the long period, the "keroncong" music then, as other kinds of traditional music, has to face industry music, especially Western music. The power of financial capital, the superiority of technology, and the sophistication of marketing ground down traditional music. This paper tries to analyze the "keroncong" music in Indonesia that can still be maintained or popularized through various ways and by making a proper media of promotion such as through television and radio so that society are familiar to "keroncong" music. Therefore, "keroncong" artists should make innovations or changes that can attract people's interest to "keroncong" music. They should create song lyrics that reflect the life of society or take themes that is in accordance to their period. Although there are many new "keroncong" compositions, but the new "keroncong" songs are rarely published in media. The emergence of "campursari" in the 1990s, pioneered by Manthous, brought a power of interest and became a magnet for fans and activists of "keroncong" and traditional music so that they appreciate the music and many groups of "campursari" music which is rooted from "keroncong" grew. The same effort was done by Didi Kempot and Koko Thole who has given new colour to "keroncong" music. They made efforts to spread "keroncong" music to a wide range of society and also develop the music itself.*

**KEY WORDS:** *"Keroncong" music, time of revolution, Indonesian society, "campursari" music, and innovations in traditional music.*

### INTRODUCTION

*Keroncong* (popular Indonesian music originating from Portuguese songs, kind of guitar or ukulele) music, as a treasure of Indonesian national music, has been experiencing a long phase since the arrival of the Moorish as Portuguese slaves to Indonesia in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In the long period, the *keroncong* music then, as other kinds of traditional music, has to face industry music, especially Western music. The power of financial capital, the superiority of technology, and the sophistication of marketing ground down traditional music. The critical questions, related to this article, are: (1) How is the position of *keroncong* music in facing the problems?; and (2) How can *keroncong* artists solve the problems?

### KERONCONG MUSIC IN THE TIME AND POST-INDONESIA'S INDEPENDENCE

In the period of Indonesia's revolution (1945-1950), the *keroncong* music showed its more existence. In that time, Indonesia's freedom fighters dominated some radio stations. They took advantages of the radio stations to deliver their struggle's messages. They took advantages of *keroncong* songs as a tool. Many struggle's songs were written in *keroncong* rhythm and broadcasted by radio stations which were ruled by the freedom fighters. Since then, the *keroncong* music was not seen as a musical aspiration from a lower class of society, but it had been a national aspiration. Songs written in that period was well known as a revolution's *keroncong* (*keroncong revolusi/kemerdekaan*) related to

freedom and independence. One of the well known songs was *Keroncong Merdeka* or Freedom *Keroncong* (Lockard, 2004:56).

*Keroncong* artists in the era of Indonesia's revolution were productive in composing songs voicing Indonesia's struggle in order to excite the spirit for struggle and to entertain warriors in many struggle's fronts. Songs voicing struggle composed by Ismail Marzuki, Kusbini, Maladi, Samsidi, Mardjo Kahar, etc. were very close to warriors, refugees, young people, women, or old people who came back from the battle field. *Keroncong* songs voicing struggle that were well known in the era of Indonesia's revolution in 1945-1950, among others are: *Sepasang Mata Bola* or Pair Eyes (1946); *Melati di Tapal Batas* or Jasmine in the Border Area (1947); *Bandung Selatan di Waktu Malam* or Southern Bandung in the Night (1948); and *Selamat Datang Pahlawan Muda* or Welcome the Young Hero (1949), all were composed by Ismail Marzuki (Dirjen Kebudayaan, 1978; and Alkatiri & Kamal, 2013). In the era of Indonesia's revolutionary (1945-1950), *keroncong* songs held a new role as a "revolutionary's *keroncong*". One of the *keroncong* songs is *Keroncong Merdeka* (Freedom *Keroncong*) whose lyric reflected nationalism in general.<sup>1</sup>

According to J.A. Dunga and L. Manik (1952), during the revolution, many love songs related to the struggle of freedom fighters emerged. Almost all the songs are about saying goodbye between a girl and her beloved one who struggled for Indonesia independence and she felt that his journey was forever. Ismail Marzuki was written some songs such as *Gugur Bunga* (*Flower Fall*), *Selendang Sutura* (*Silk Shawl*), *Melati di Tapal Batas* (*Jasmine in the Border Area*), *Bandung Selatan di Waktu Malam* (*Southern Bandung in the Night*), and many more (Alfian, 2013).

Entering the period of post revolution in 1950s, people in Indonesia, in many regions, had started listening to broadcasts from foreign radios such as BBC (British Broad

Casting) Radio of London, ABC (Australia Broad Casting) Radio of Melbourne, VOA (Voice of America) Radio of Washington, Radio of Moscow, and Radio of Peking-China. Since then, Indonesians had started listening to music through radio's music from Jakarta, Melbourne, London, Washington, Moskow, or China. The period of 1950s showed the emergence of pop music that used Western terminology (Boydon, 1986). Broadcasting radios in Indonesia in that period were limited to government's radios which in general broadcasted national music, along with radio stations belonged to the Indonesia's air force which were listened to because of their Western songs from phonograph records that were private collections of its airmen.

#### EFFORTS TO MODERNIZE THE *KERONCONG* MUSIC

During the end of 1950s and the beginning of 1960s, Brigadier-General Rudi Pirngardie, an independence war veterans who was used to be called as "*keroncong* general", tried to makes new creation of *keroncong* music by combining the *keroncong* (popular Indonesian music originating from Portuguese songs, kind of guitar or ukulele) with Western music beats. The *keroncong* music was well known as "beat *keroncong*". The efforts done by Brigadier-General Rudi Pirngardie were fully supported by the President Soekarno. President Soekarno wanted to a kind of national music which can be enjoyed by international listeners.

The efforts done by the Brigadier-General Rudi Pirngardie showed that various kinds of music could be adapted to enrich *keroncong* music, although they failed to perpetuate the *keroncong* music as the image of national music. Many Jakartan elites developed more the musical taste which was in line with what had been done by Brigadier-General Rudi Pirngardie. They did not only adapt Western music to develop the *keroncong*, but they really adapted Western music, namely Hawaiian music.

The competition of radio's stars held by the *Djawatan* Radio (a radio department) every years in Jakarta since 1950 resulted *keroncong*

<sup>1</sup>See, for example, Harmunah (1978); Kusbini (1981); Amir Pasaribu (1986); and an article entitled "Keroncong" in *Ensiklopedia Indonesia*, Jilid 3 (Han-Kol). Jakarta: Ichtiar Baru-Van Hoeve, 1982.

music in every regions in Indonesia also developed. *Keroncong* artist made efforts to improve the quality of their technical music. Their singers were also made efforts to perfect their voice with proper techniques. To develop the quality of broadcasting, every regions in Indonesia held competitions for every program which was broadcasted by the Radio of the Republic of Indonesia or RRI (*Radio Republik Indonesia*).

For example, the RRI II of Yogyakarta held competitions for *keroncong* group since 1960. The objective of the competitions was to find a best group which could support its broadcast for a year. In that time, the competition was followed by 39 *keroncong* groups and then there were 18 groups which were elected to perform during 1960. Before the completion, there were a competition to compose *keroncong* songs. The song elected then became a compulsory song in the elimination or final round.

The enrichment of *keroncong* music as stated before was pioneered by Brigadier-General Rudi Pirngardie in the 1950s. He made efforts to "Westernize" *keroncong* music. However, the enrichment of the music found its success after Andjarani from Surakarta found what was called as *langgam Jawa* (Javanese style in music). The emergence of *langgam Jawa* was originated from Javanese *gending* (musical composition for Javanese gamelan) that was accompanied by *keroncong* musical instruments. This can be seen from the song entitled *Kembang Kacang* (peanut flower) as for example.

*Langgam Jawa* is a musical genre originated from a pure *keroncong* with a Javanese rhythm. The Javanese rhythm that was specialized for *pelog* (seven-tone gamelan orchestra scale in Java) was then developed into *slendro* (five-tone tuning system of Javanese gamelan orchestra).<sup>2</sup> Recording of *langgam Jawa* songs in 1966 were pioneered by the *keroncong* group called *Tjempaka Putih* (white frangipani) under the management of Slameto. The recording of *langgam Jawa* was a

beginning for the development of *langgam Jawa*, namely there was an addition to a percussion instrument of cello, technique of interlocking, and *cuk* (okulele).

The existence of *langgam Jawa* brought a big impact to musicians, singers, and the development of *keroncong* music (Sukanti, 2002:52). Andjarani, with the *keroncong* group of *Bintang Nusantara* (archipelago star), tried to break the *keroncong* pattern by changing a musical instrument of flute and violin and fill them out with string interlude and synthesizer, even changing the way to perform. This caused a pro and contra, especially between old and young generation. Old generation was still fanatic and conservative and did not want that the *keroncong* was "ruined", while young generation wanted an innovation in the *keroncong* music world.

In 1955, *langgam Jawa* songs became popular; and in 1959, the competition of a song entitled *Kembang Kacang* (peanut flower) was held. The competition then put the *keroncong* singer Waldjinah as a queen of *Kembang Kacang*. Waldjinah began to be popular and in the competition of radio's star for *keroncong* singers in 1965, Waldjinah became a national best singer. In the beginning of the 1960s, a new phenomenon, namely *Langgam Jawa* rhythm became popular, emerged. It was noted that some composers of *Langgam Jawa* are Andjarani with her song entitled *Yen ing Tawang ana Lintang* (there is star in the sky), S. Darmanto with his song entitled *Lara Branta* (pain and sorrow), and Ismanto with his song entitled *Wuyung* (sadness).

Since the end of the 1960s was the gold periods of *Langgam Jawa* songs recording. The song entitled *Yen ing Tawang ana Lintang* (there is star in the sky) composed by Andjarani was among recording albums that were sold out. The increase number of recording albums of *Langgam Jawa* songs was due to a public opinion that *Langgam Jawa* was a new kind of music so that it attract people's attention. Another factor was because *Langgam Jawa* songs were written in the Javanese language so that they were

<sup>2</sup>Andjarani is productive figure of *Langgam Jawa*. Until 1995, Andjarani has composed 2,245 songs. See, for further information, A.H. Soeharto *et al.* (1996:54).

convention and easy for the majority of Javanese society (Sukanti, 2002:51).

*Keroncong* music in the decade further strengthened the image of Solo in *keroncong* music. Some songs composed by musicians from Solo such as Gesang made people liked *keroncong* music which was special with a new nuance, namely a dominant of cello's that was plucked like a *kendang* (small drum covered with leather at each end). The increase number of *keroncong* music and *langgam Jawa* (Javanese style in music) after the independence was actually not separated from an alternative entertainment in the society. At that time, alternative entertainments were limited to traditional forms such as *wayang kulit* (shadow play with leather puppets), *wayang orang* (Javanese stage with *wayang* themes), and *ketoprak* (Javanese drama depicting historical or pseudo-historical events). The spread of Western music was very limited in big cities and elites.

*Keroncong* music, which is basically referred to Western musical instruments and carried diatonic rhythm, was at that time considered as a symbol of modernism. This made the music got appreciation from the community, especially urban communities. The great public interest to *keroncong* music attracted recording's industries to the music.

Many recording producers took advantages of the popularity of *keroncong* music and they got a profit from the music and *langgam Jawa* (Javanese style in music). The music also increased the popularity of some *keroncong* artists such as Gesang, Waldjinh, Andjarani, Ismanto, and S. Dharmanto in a national level. Some *keroncong* groups such as *Bintang Surakarta* (Surakarta's star), *ROS* (rose), *Marko*, *Bunga Mawar* (rose flower) or *Cempaka Putih* (white frangipani), sometimes, covered albums of *keroncong* music.

A song entitled *Walang Kekek* (grasshopper) was recorded in the El-Shinta Studio, Jakarta in 1968. The song became a hit song and interested lots of people. The song made Waldjinh well known and was recorded for a third times. Besides, the song also revived the El-shinta Studio which began

bankrupt (Sukanti, 2002:30). At that time, *keroncong* music interested Indonesian society. This could be seen from the selling of its recording albums and its musical performances as well. Waldjinh and her *keroncong* group, *Bintang Surakarta*, for example, got a contract to perform in the night club of LCC Surabaya, East Java, for three years, from 1971 till 1974 (Sukanti, 2002:31).

The fast development of information technology gave an impact to *keroncong* music. The opportunity to perform the *keroncong* music in front of the community decreased. A number of alternative entertainment in cultural industry such as music and film from the West. Traditional art, including *keroncong*, was pushed by modern music. People's interest to *keroncong* music decreased. The music rarely performed in national media of entertainment such as televisions. Recording industries turned into more commercialized music.

The decrease of *keroncong* music can be seen from the decrease of *keroncong* recording albums. For example, in the 1970s, Waldjinh produced 44 recording albums, and in the 1980s, she produced 88 albums. In the 1990s, there were only 38 albums and then in the 2000s, there were 6 albums only (Sukanti, 2002:61).

Although people who interested in *keroncong* music decreased more and more, the music does not extinct. In *kampongs* such as in the city of Surakarta, Central Java, we still can find *keroncong* groups as a *klangkanan* or a music group which is managed seriously and as a means of artistic aspiration or as a source of family's income. Although demands to record their music and songs are decreasing, they still have a spirit to perform in front of their community. They participated in *keroncong* festivals or radio's program.

In the national level, the central government started to hold again *keroncong* festivals as an art development arena. In 1978, for example, the Directorate of Art Development held national *keroncong* music festival for the first time. This event was held in order to build, develop, and preserve

*keroncong* music; and to find and guide new *keroncong* music artists. Besides, the festival held was aimed to evaluate *keroncong* music in Indonesia.

The criteria of the best *keroncong* artist based on achievement or performance and quality are song's performance, personal technique, harmony and balance, arrangement, and presentation (Wijayadi & Sahid, 2000). The criteria of a new best *keroncong* song describing its quality are originality, colour and soul of *keroncong*, melody, lyric, and theme such as love to the country or patriotic and love to the *Pancasila* (five basic principles of the Republic of Indonesia).

There were still many *keroncong* groups which performed in every festival from 1990s till 2000s held in Solo, Central Java, Indonesia. Moreover, there were still many *keroncong* groups whose members consist of old and young people as well performed in turn in *Taman Budaya* (cultural park) in Solo, Central Java.

*Keroncong* programs still have a place in RRI (*Radio Republik Indonesia* or Radio of the Republic of Indonesia). One of the programs is *Pojok Pamor* (dignity corner) which was pioneered by the PAMOR (*Paguyuban Monitor Radio* or Radio Monitor Association) located in RRI Solo, in a corner of 51<sup>st</sup> Abdul Rahman Satoh street, Surakarta, Central Java. The program was officially established in 15<sup>th</sup> October 2000. The program is still running up to now and *keroncong* communities in Solo are looking forward for the program.

The *Pojok Pamor* is broadcasted in the first week and third week in every month during 2.5 hours from 08.30 – 23.00 pm. *Keroncong* communities in Solo can gather together here. Not only *keroncong* activists, but other groups and those who are interested to the music as well are responsible for the program. They can discuss any problem with each others and made the program as a place to discuss problems related to *keroncong*.

In the first week of a month, the program shows *lagu asli* (original song) of *keroncong* and *langgam Jawa* (Javanese style in music)

songs and in the third week, it shows pop songs accompanied by *keroncong* music. In every program, there were various *keroncong* groups performed in turn. In 2009, there were 26 *keroncong* groups at least.

The *keroncong* groups have the orientation not only to the preservation, but also to the development of the music. They try not only to maintain the existence of the *keroncong* quantitatively, but also to develop the music qualitatively. They sometimes play the *keroncong* music which is accompanied by new musical instruments and new arrangements. Creation of new songs is relatively limited, but efforts to arrange new songs are more prominent.

#### **CAMPURSARI: AN EFFORT TO REVITALIZE THE KERONCONG MUSIC**

A music called *campursari* is originated from a *keroncong asli* (original *keroncong*) or *langgam* (style in music). The music still play *keroncong* (popular Indonesian music originating from Portuguese songs, kind of guitar or ukulele) basic techniques. Its development led then to a *karawitan* (*gamelan* music and singing accompanied by a *gamelan*) music and to *keroncong* as well. The *campursari* is processed so that become a kind of music that is considered as a modern Javanese music. Its lyrics tend to adopt traditional Javanese *gending* (musical composition for *gamelan*) because some of *campursari* artists try to compose songs in accordance with their time's condition.

The *campursari* emerged for the first time within musicians of RRI (*Radio Republik Indonesia* or Radio of the Republic of Indonesia) and TNI (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia* or National Army of Indonesia). The two institutes were very conducive as a place to emerge the *campursari*. Beside having *karawitan* groups, they also have *keroncong* groups. While performing *langgam Jawa* songs with *pelog* (seven-tone *gamelan* orchestra scale in Java) pitch, *gamelan* instruments such as *kendang* (small drum covered with leather at each end), *gender* (metallophone), and *siter* (zither) are used.

The *Keluarga Radio Orkes Keroncong Semarang* (the Radio Family of Semarang's *Keroncong* Orchestra) conducted by S. Darmanto played the *campursari* through RRI of Semarang.<sup>3</sup> The instruments of *campursari* music with the Semarang ensemble consisted of a set of *gamelan* without *rebab* (two-stringed musical instrument) and *suling* (flute), and were replaced by violin.

The term of *campursari* was well known in the beginning of the 1970s through the RRI's station of Surabaya, East Java, which introduced a new program that was performing songs accompanied by a music consisting of a mixture of pentatonic and diatonic rhythm. *Campursari* is an art form in Java which is a blend of modern and ethnic music. The music was originated from the Javanese tradition and then was combined with various musical instruments, traditional and modern, conventional and electric instruments as well (Kayam, 1981).

The artists blend two different elements of music that is ethnic musical instrument of *gamelan* and modern musical instruments such as electric guitar, bass, drum, and keyboard. Therefore, it can be said that *campursari* is a hybrid music, a hybridization of Western and traditional music.

A figure who popularized *campursari* for the first time is Ki Nartosabdho. He is a *dalang* (puppeteer) of *wayang kulit* (shadow puppets). Unlike other *wayang kulit*, in *wayang kulit* performances conducted by Ki Nartosabdho, he also played *campursari*. Ki Nartosabdho is a reformer in the puppetry in the 1980s. He combined modern music and *gamelan* music so that produced a harmony with Javanese traditional nuance. What was done by Ki Nartosabdho got a good reaction from wide communities. However, there were many who criticized him because he was considered to break *pakem* (certain rules of tradition). In the circle of puppeteers, there

<sup>3</sup>Interview with Rahayu Supanggah, a Lecturer at the STSI (*Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia* or College of Indonesian Art) Surakarta, in Solo, Central Java, on April 10, 2012. See and available also in <http://www.lestari.info/2012/01/sejarah-dan-perjalanan-musik-campursari.html> [accessed in Depok, West Java: 15 April 2012].

were many who were against the existence of *campursari* music within a *wayang* performance.<sup>4</sup>

It is stated that in Solo, Central Java, in the 1960s there was a *keroncong* group which popularized *campursari*, namely Musik Karno Kadaen, Sragen. They used *gamelan* instruments, but they did not accompany Javanese *gendings* (musical composition for *gamelan*).<sup>5</sup>

*Campursari*, which was closer to *keroncong*, was conducted by Anto Sugiyarto, well known with the name of Manthous with his brothers. The group was a pioneer in the beginning of 1993. Manthous was born in the village of Playen, Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta. When he was at 16 years old, he moved to Jakarta to sing songs at streets called *ngamen*. He had experienced in music world and joined the *Keroncong Bintang* Jakarta (*Star Keroncong* of Jakarta). In 1993, Manthous established a *campursari* music group called *Maju Lancar* (smooth forward).

Manthous brought a great innovation to the old *campursari* music. He tried to combine Javanese classical and traditional musical instruments such as *kendang* (small drum covered with leather at each end), *gong* (gung), and *gender* (metallophone) with *keroncong* musical instruments such as *ukulele*, *cak* and *cuk*, *seruling* (flute), *bass betot* (snatch bass), and other *keroncong* instruments.<sup>6</sup> Manthous also tried to replace *bass betot* and classic guitar with electric guitar, bass, and keyboard. He also replaced *seruling* and *ukulele*. The existence of keyboard made *campursari* musicality to more

<sup>4</sup>See article entitled "Riwayat Musik Campursari: Tradisi dan Inovasi" available in <http://www.keroncong.web.id/article.php?c=campursari&page=1> [accessed in Depok, Indonesia: 5 April 2012]. See also news on "Opinion of a *Karawitan* Observer, 1 *Wayan Sadra*" available in <http://www.lestari.info/2012/01/sejarah-dan-perjalanan-musik-campursari.html> [accessed in Depok, Indonesia: 5 April 2012].

<sup>5</sup>See news on "Opinion of a *Karawitan* Observer, 1 *Wayan Sadra*" available in <http://www.lestari.info/2012/01/sejarah-dan-perjalanan-musik-campursari.html> [accessed in Depok, Indonesia: 5 April 2012].

<sup>6</sup>See article entitled "Riwayat Musik Campursari: Tradisi dan Inovasi" available in <http://www.keroncong.web.id/article.php?c=campursari&page=1> [accessed in Depok, Indonesia: 5 April 2012].

lively. Besides, Manthous also put a set of drum into the music.

Actually, there is not a standard for *campursari* musical instruments, as was stated by Denis Sugiyanto:

People can interpret *campursari* ensemble by themselves. An *organ tunggal* (one organ) group which play pentatonic songs and Javanese songs can be called *campursari*, just as the use of keyboard and *kendang*. Sometimes, a *keroncong* ensemble which is added by *kendang* or a set of combo band which is added by *keroncong* instruments and *gamelan* is also called *campursari*. A complete *campursari* ensemble can consist of *keroncong* and *gamelan* ensemble, comboband, and *orkes melayu/dangdut*. To make it efficient, each kind of music is represented by its musician with his special instrument in his music. For example, a *keroncong* ensemble is represented by *ukulele*, *cello*, and *cak*; *gamelan* ensemble is represented by *ricikan balungan* (*demung* and 2 *saron barongs*, all are in *pelog* pitch); combo band with its set of drum, and it is added with *kendang ketipung* (*table*) to play *Melayu/dangdut* songs. The number of instruments can also depend on ability of the group and/or demands.<sup>7</sup>

The success achieved by Manthous in developing *campursari* was not separated from his first recording album, namely *Campursari Gunung Kidul (CSGK)* album. Manthous has experienced in the world of music in Indonesia. His compositions are great in number and popular. For example, a song entitled *Kangen* (miss someone) was popular when it was sung by Evi Tamala and *Gethuk* (kind of sweet steamed loaf of pounded cassava) sung by Nur Afni Oktavia. Manthous was also successful in putting some singers or *pesinden* (traditional singers) into orbit, for example Anik Sunyahni, Minul, Lilis Diana, and Yati Pesek with the songs of *Nyidam Sari* (craveness), *Tahu Opo Tempe* (tofu or tempeh), *Rondho Kempling* (coquettish widow), *Loro Bronto* (sadness), etc.<sup>8</sup> The

<sup>7</sup>Denis Sugiyanto, "Campursari: Riwayatmu Kini" available in <http://danisgamelansolo.wordpress.com> [accessed in Depok, Indonesia: 12 August 2012]. Denis Sugiyanto is also an observer of *karawitan*.

<sup>8</sup>See article entitled "Riwayat Musik Campursari: Tradisi dan Inovasi" available in <http://www.keroncong.web.id/article.php?c=campursari&page=1> [accessed in Depok, Indonesia: 5 April 2012].

*campursari* music created by Manthous are generally about daily life, cheerful, and humorous.

The popularity of *campursari* music in the 1990s, with Manthous as a locomotive, becomes a historical milestone of the Javanese music and songs revival. Around the 1990s, *campursari* entered to *kampongs* in Yogyakarta. Even, other kinds of art were also influenced by *campursari*. Various kinds of art added *campursari* term in their names, such as *ketoprak campursari*, *jatilan campursari*, *angguk campursari*, *lengger campursari*, etc.

Manthous has produced more than 20 albums. His cassettes were copied to be more than 300,000 pieces per album. Moreover, there were compact discs and video compact discs which were copied to be 50,000 pieces per album. All of his albums were very much in demand. Four albums, namely *Nyidam Sari* (craveness), *Mbah Dukun* (shaman), *Ini Rindu* (this miss), and *CSGK (Campur Sari Gunung Kidul) 2000* have been recorded into VCD.

*Campursari* has ever disappeared or were not registered since 1965, and then re-emerged in the 1990s. Until the end of the 1970s, *campursari* was not registered in the statistics of art's genre in every sub-district in Yogyakarta. The statistics was compiled by the Office of Department of National Education, Yogyakarta in 1980. In the 1990s, almost every village in Yogyakarta and Solo had, at least, one *campursari* group. Even, in the sub-district Kartasura, Sukoharjo, there are now more than 50 *campursari* groups.<sup>9</sup>

In the 2000s, another form of *campursari* emerged. This *campursari* is a blend of *campursari gamelan* and *keroncong*, and also a blend of *keroncong* and *dangdut* (Malay orchestra) from Didi Kempot.<sup>10</sup> Didi Kempot was successful in producing a recording album

<sup>9</sup>Interview with Rahayu Supanggah, a Lecturer at the STSI (Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia or College of Indonesian Art) Surakarta, in Solo, Central Java, on April 10, 2012. See and available also in <http://www.lestari.info/2012/01/sejarah-dan-perjalanan-musik-campursari.html> [accessed in Depok, West Java: 15 April 2012].

<sup>10</sup>See article entitled "Riwayat Musik Campursari: Tradisi dan Inovasi" available in <http://www.keroncong.web.id/article.php?c=campursari&page=1> [accessed in Depok, Indonesia: 5 April 2012].

entitled *We Cent Yu*. Even, the Javanese community in Suriname was fond of the song. Then, almost every year Didi Kempot held performances in Suriname. He spent about 4 months for every show there. Didi Kempot, then, successfully made recording albums in Suriname. Up to now, he has launched 16 albums recorded in Suriname.

In “*Sarasehan Keroncong 2008*”, a meeting to discuss about *keroncong*, held by the *Tjroeng Buletin* and Sundari Soekotjo in Solo, Central Java, early of August 2008, Didi Kempot commented that he did not agree to the statement that *keroncong* nowadays do not develop anymore. Today, *keroncong* still develops although the development does not echoed enough. Therefore, various efforts to develop the music and make the music exist should be done and it should not be eroded. For example, in cooperation with recording studios, festivals or competitions to compose new *keroncong* songs should be held. The new *keroncong* songs could be in different beat but with strong *keroncong* nuance (cited in Anggraini, 2012).

In the beginning of its emergence, the *campursari* music was very debatable. Some argued that if people let the *campursari* music develop, they ruin the *pakem* (rules) of *keroncong* music. Some others stated that if people just hold tightly to the *pakem* of *keroncong*, then, music will be far from young people.

It seems that *campursari* fulfill people’s requests. Creations from various musical art performances which combined *langgam Jawa* (Javanese style in music) and *keroncong* are the answer for the request. *Campursari* still maintained its elements of ensemble, instruments, and musical techniques as well. At the beginning, the *campursari* artists were still loyal to use acoustic set of music and did not use electronic musical instruments. *Ngimpi* (dream), a song composed by Ki Nartosabdho which is used to play with *gamelan* ensemble, is played with *keroncong* music ensemble. On the other hand, *Bengawan Solo* (Solo river) and *Dinda Bestari* (bright young female) which are strong with diatonic

rhythm are often heard in *wayang kulit* (shadow puppets) performances in the session of *limbuan* or *goro-goro* (performance of shadow puppets in the mid night).

The creations led the artists to have a consideration to bring the two genres into one new ensemble. This was because people who watched the performance often requested a song which could not be fulfilled by the group which performed in the event. For example, a *keroncong* group could not play *gendhing* (musical composition for Javanese *gamelan*) that was usually played by *karawitan/gamelan* or vice versa, a *karawitan* (*gamelan* music and singing accompanied by a *gamelan*) group could not play a *keroncong* song or other diatonic songs (Sugiyanto, 2012).

The power of *campursari* is a free expression which can not be gained from traditional art performance such as *wayang kulit* or *klenengan* (concert of *gamelan* music). The free expression includes how to perform songs that are passive in a *wayang kulit* or *klenengan* performance. Meanwhile, in a *campursari* performance its singer can perform a song while standing and dancing. *Campursari* music is actually an image of power to maintain consistently or show its existence.

One reason why people are interested in *campursari* is because of its economic benefit. It can be proved that there is development of *campursari* in the region of East Java because so many people made use of the *gamelan* (orchestra) art entertainment and *dangdut* (Malay orchestra) to entertain their guests in their children’s marriage. This kind of music is acknowledged to be so close to East Javanese society’s ear because the music can be blended into *keroncong*, *langgam*, pop, western, and *dangdut* songs.

In Yogyakarta and Central Java, *campursari* is a very popular entertainment in many occasions. This can be seen from the schedules of OCSTG (*Orkes Campur Sari Tombo Gelo* or *Campursari Orchestra of Anti-Disappointed*) which was established in August 1999. The *campursari* group performed for 15 times at a

minimum in a month. Its tariff was IDR 600,000 to IDR 700,000 (seven hundred thousand Rupiah Indonesia) per performance.<sup>11</sup>

Economic benefit of *campursari* can be seen from an increasing number of *wayang's* singers (*pesindens*) who quitted from *wayang's* world and become *campursari* singers. There were some reasons why they changed their profession. Firstly, a *campursari* singer did not have to follow *wayang* (shadow puppets) performance or *klenengan* (concert of *gamelan* music) all night long, but she just worked for one or two hours and she can move from one place to another in a day. Secondly, she can get much more money than before when she was a *sinden* (singer). Thirdly, there is a freedom in her style in stage or her fashion style also. Although some of *campursari* singers wore *kebaya* (women's blouse the front of which is pinned together, usually worn with a sarong), but some others wore free style fashion like artists in the capital city of Jakarta.

One of reasons why many *campursari* singers were *sindens* before was a fact that they must have a high pitch when they sing accompanied by *gamelan* instruments in *campursari* music. *Gamelan* instruments can not be stemmed, while Western musical instruments can adjust to the singer.<sup>12</sup> This innovation not only can attract people's interest and give benefits to the artists, but also as an effort of the music not to be unpopular compared to new comers in the music industry.<sup>13</sup>

Although *campursari* is a blend of pentatonic and diatonic elements, *campursari* is not *langgam* (Javanese style in music),

<sup>11</sup>Yati Pesek, a comedian from Yogyakarta, is also a conductor of OCSTG (*Orkes Campur Sari Tombo Gelo* or *Campursari* Orchestra of Anti-Disappointed) in Yogyakarta. See, for further information, also in <http://www.lestari.info/2012/01/sejarah-dan-perjalanan-musik-campursari.html> [accessed in Depok, Indonesia: 15 April 2012].

<sup>12</sup>See "Statement of Waldjinah" available in <http://www.lestari.info/2012/01/sejarah-dan-perjalanan-musik-campursari.html> [accessed in Depok, Indonesia: 15 April 2012].

<sup>13</sup>See article entitled "Riwayat Musik Campursari: Tradisi dan Inovasi" available in <http://www.keroncong.web.id/article.php?c=campursari&page=1> [accessed in Depok, Indonesia: 5 April 2012].

*keroncong* (popular Indonesian music originating from Portuguese songs, kind of guitar or ukulele), *karawitan* (*gamelan* music and singing accompanied by a *gamelan*), *dangdut* (Malay orchestra),<sup>14</sup> nor pop music. *Campursari* music is *campursari* and it is a phenomenon that is proceeding in line with the development of people's way of thinking from agricultural to industrial culture.

*Campursari* is music which can carry an entity and is accepted by wide range of society without eliminate identity of the society who own their music. According to Manthous, *campursari* music was found throughout a long journey and phases to develop a new kind of music. This is not instant. A blend of pentatonic and diatonic elements in the *campursari* music does not just a simple blend. *Campursari* musicians must have creativity to find songs that can be blended. The making and performance of *campursari* that is not serious and break a noble value can make the *campursari* music fall down. In its development, it has been already grown and developed more and more with various innovation (cited in Wijayadi & Sahid, 2005).

Beside *campursari*, the development of music related to *keroncong* is a phenomenon of the emergence of *Congyang* with its figure is Koko Thole. Koko Thole is a *keroncong* artist who lives in Depok, West Java, Indonesia. He has many ideas to develop *keroncong* and he always tries to articulate his ideas through *keroncong* rhythm. The challenge of modern era led further Koko Thole to make *keroncong* closer to the public from all levels of society in Indonesia. The term *Congyang* is derived from "*Keroncong Goyang Pesona Jiwa*" (*keroncong* shakes the enchantment soul) that already performed in a *keroncong* program at the TVRI (Television of the Republic of Indonesia).

Koko Thole just wanted to introduce *keroncong* to young generation. He also wanted to show that *keroncong* does not belong to old generation only. *Keroncong* is not slow and can cause someone sleepy, but it can be used to *goyang* (dance). *Congyang* is

<sup>14</sup>About the "*dangdut* music", see for further information, Jeffry Alkatiri & Mathar Moehammad Kamal (2013). Available also at: [www.tawarikh-journal.com](http://www.tawarikh-journal.com)

created to young generation in an effort to introduce the music to them.

Koko Thole proved that *keroncong goyang* can attract people's attention to dance energetically. Looking at people's response, the *Keroncong Goyang Pesona Jiwa*, a group conducted by Koko Thole, then made an album entitled *All New Keroncong Indonesia* together with Toto Salmon, Tuty Maryati, Oky Octaviani, Ervina, Novita Indri, Kelana Hermawan; and *All New Keroncong II* together with Sundari Soekotjo and Waryoto 177. The albums got good response from society.

Just as new innovators in *keroncong*, Koko Thole stated that *keroncong* must be willing to have a modernization. If not so, it will be left behind by its community. *Keroncong* is a lofty art work whose development will be slow if it does not flexible. Koko Thole wanted that young generations in Indonesia are still interested in *keroncong* and Indonesia's traditional musical instruments.

Beside *keroncong* activists from its music circle, efforts to spread and preserve *keroncong* music came from its fans. Some *keroncong* fans, for example, established the YPKT (*Yayasan Pecinta Keroncong Tjroeng* or the Foundation of *Keroncong Tjroeng* Lover). The foundation is founded from *millis keroncong@yahoo.com*, established at 11 June 2005. It then began active to arrange meetings and did not only discussed many things about *keroncong* via internet. The *millis* became well known because the *Kompas* daily in Jakarta wrote about its communities with their various activities (cited in Alfian, 2006; and Bulletin of *Tjroeng*, October 2008).

Members of the *millis* come from various background such as employee, teacher, entrepreneur, musician, singer, and university student. They come from many regions in Indonesia such as JABODETABEK (Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi); Bandung in West Java; Temanggung, Solo, Semarang, and Yogyakarta in Central Java; Surabaya in East Java; Lampung in Southern Sumatera; and even Johor in Malaysia and USA (United States of America). Then, some figures had an initiative to provide an umbrella for all activities of its members under a foundation,

namely YPKT (*Yayasan Pecinta Keroncong Tjroeng* or the Foundation of *Keroncong Tjroeng* Lover). The foundation was declared when the members had a meeting called "*Keroncong SaMlocote*" in a restaurant in Bogor, West Java, at 30 May 2009. Its activities are supported fully by its boards and members (Bulletin of *Tjroeng*, June 2012).

Beside discussions about *keroncong* via internet, the *keroncong* fans made a tabloid of *keroncong* named Bulletin of *Tjroeng*. The tabloid is a means to spread *keroncong* music to society and as a means of communication of *keroncong* activists. *Keroncong* fans can get the tabloid free, including its softcopy. The tabloid is delivered to not only many regions in Indonesia, but also Malaysia and America (Bulletin of *Tjroeng*, October 2008 – June 2012). The Bulletin of *Tjroeng* was established due to a discussion of members of the *Keroncong* Cyber (KC) Community via internet. They committed to do relevant efforts to the development and progress of *keroncong* in Indonesia.

## CONCLUSION

*Keroncong* (popular Indonesian music originating from Portuguese songs, kind of guitar or ukulele) music can still be maintained or popularized through various ways and by making a proper media of promotion such as through television and radio so that society are familiar to *keroncong* music. The problem facing the *keroncong* music in Indonesia is because the music artists maintained very tightly the purity of the music so that it can not enter a music industry. Therefore, most people often consider that *keroncong* is identical to certain songs only. The society needs a refreshment and new things, new creation of *keroncong* songs and music.

Therefore, *keroncong* artists should make innovations or changes that can attract people's interest to *keroncong* music. For example, they create song lyrics that reflect the life of society or take themes that is in accordance to their period. Although there are many new *keroncong* compositions, but the new *keroncong* songs are rarely published in

media. The emergence of *campursari* in the 1990s, pioneered by Manthous, brought a power of interest and became a magnet for fans and activists of *keroncong* and traditional music so that they appreciate the music and many groups of *campursari* music which is rooted from *keroncong* grew. The same effort was done by Didi Kempot and Koko Thole who has given new colour to *keroncong* music. They made efforts to spread *keroncong* music to a wide range of society and also develop the music itself.

The emergence of *campursari* and *congyang* (*keroncong goyang* or dance *keroncong*) led to a controversy within artists, because the music is considered to degrade a tradition contained in *keroncong*. Although there were pro and con to the purity of the music genre, all are agree and understand that *campursari* has revitalized the *keroncong* music.

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(Source: [www.google.com](http://www.google.com), 17/8/2013)

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