

THE EXISTENCE OF KARO MUSIC CULTURE AS RITUAL ACTIVITIES, SOCIAL ENTERTAINMENT, AND CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS TO SUPPORT TOURISM

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Abstract

Karo, an ethnic group residing in North Sumatra, Indonesia, has its own cultural system so that its culture can be distinguished from the cultures of various ethnic groups that live side by side. Among the elements of culture that are significantly different, such as language, beliefs, traditional clothing, building houses, and arts. In this article, the aspect that is the subject of discussion, is musical culture. In fact, the musical culture of the Karo people has several roles, such as a supporter of various ritual activities, social entertainment and celebrations, and a supporter of tourism.

INTRODUCTION

In fact, the origin of the musical culture in the Karo people cannot be determined with certainty. The musical culture of the Karo people in general is similar to the musical culture of other ethnic groups. Musical culture has vocals, instrumental solos, ensembles, and a combination of vocals and ensembles. Although how the process of the occurrence of the Karo musical culture cannot be traced with certainty, there are still legends that can be known that the existence of musical culture is related to various animals. For example, one *sarune* instrument represents earthworms, three drums represent the burning of the weeds, and two gongs represent beetles and amok birds. In the legend, it is believed that when a human dies, all the animals give instructions to the human spirit in order to get the right path and not be mistaken in the realm of death.

Musical compositions in the Karo musical culture are colotomy, in the sense that the musical parts are limited or determined by two gongs. Two gongs, one of which is large is called a *gung* and the other is small is called *penganak*. In one duration of the sound of the *gung*, there are twice the duration of the sound of the *penganak*. In Karo musical culture, the role of the melody carrier is the *sarune*. In addition to the two gongs and one *sarune*, there are three drums that can be divided into two parts. The two parts of the drum are the *singanaki* drum which consists of two drums called the *gendang anak* and the much smaller *gerantung* and one *gendang singindungi*.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Seeger (1979) music is a special form of communication. Its very nonspeech features make it a privileged vehicle for transmitting values and ethos that are more easily “musicked” than put into speech. These are communicated not only through the sounds, but in the movements of the performers, and the time, place, and conditions under which they are performed”. Feld (1988) that for the Kaluli people who live in Papua New Guinea, there is no music, only sounds arranged in a common category of greater or lesser degree in nature, animals, and humans. He further explained that this style of sound, according to the Kaluli people's thought, was formerly *dulugu ganalan*. There is also a metaphor that draws together the dimensions of interlock, overlap, and alternation which are so important in Kaluli sound making style. This is *dulugu ganalan*, “lift-up-over sound.” Parts, and sounds, whether few or many, must constantly “lift up over” one another; one cannot speak of sounds “leading” or “following” or “starting” or “finishing.” Nettl (1983) if “music in cultural context” is standard musicology, the study of music in culture may be carried on with the conventional method of history and ethnography. Alan Merriam has argued that ethnomusicology is the study of “music in culture” and later suggested that this definition did not go far enough, that it is the study of music as culture (1977a:202, 204). This is quite different, at least in flavor and emphasis, from the concept of ethnomusicology as the study of music, “not only in terms of itself but also in relation to its cultural context” (Hood, in Apple 1969:296). The differences among these three levels of relationship are blurred, hard to separate with a sharp line.”

Studying music in a cultural context is the standard of musicology. With that, the study of music in the context of culture can be carried out using the conventional methods of history and ethnography. This study focuses more on aspects of music that are directly related to the user community, such as the history of music, music offerings, music creation, and the experience of music. The study of music in culture means that the strategist seeks to obtain a universal view of culture as an organic entity related to music. Meanwhile, the study of music as culture means that the strategist is trying to understand music in a general way to be able to describe the structure of culture.

METHODOLOGY

Lexy J Moleong (1989) quantitative research produces descriptive data in the form of spoken or written words and observes the behavior of people. Besides that, research in ethnomusicology which in-depth studies musical culture is known to have field techniques and field methods. Technique means collecting detailed data in the field from day to day. Meanwhile, field methods have a wider scope, including theoretical foundations that serve as references for field research techniques and also various problem-solving to create a framework for field research. Merriam (1964) ...technique,

then, refers to a day-by-day solution of the gathering of data, while method includes these techniques as well as the much wider variety of problems involved in creating the framework for field research. Nettl (1964) stated that the usual work procedures in ethnomusicology research can be divided into two types of work, namely fieldwork and desk work. Fieldwork is the work of collecting data directly from the required data source. The data obtained are primary data. Laboratory work is work to process data so that it becomes articles

Nettl (1964) assumed that ethnomusicological fieldwork studying musical culture was to bring about a number of recorded and written results from research. However, what is important in fieldwork is to understand and know from the person conducting the research regarding the musical culture being studied as the object of research. Mantle Hood (1960) ethnomusicological research has developed. That's why he created 'bi-musicality', which means that anyone who conducts research must study music culture so that he becomes a musician who is proficient in the music culture being studied. Based on the view of 'bi-musicality' above, doing research on music means having to be proficient in playing or singing the music culture being studied. The goal is not to become a performer or singer but to understand the musical or singing culture which is the object of the study in depth.

S. Nasution (1982) every research (qualitative and quantitative) must be planned. This requires a research design. Research design is a plan on how to collect and analyze data so that it can be done economically and in accordance with the objectives of the research. In the research design, among others, the following must be considered: (a) the target population, (b) the sampling method, (c) the size of the sampling, (d) the procedure for collecting data, (e) ways to analyze the data, (f) whether or not to use statistics, (g) how to determine the formula and so on.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF KARO MUSICAL CULTURE

In general, Karo musical culture that is produced from vocals is called *ende-ende* or singing or songs, singing is called *rende*. But there are some that resemble this song but have a more special name. This shows that in Karo tradition, the names for *ende-enden* and *rende* will change due to changes in the context of the presentation. Therefore, the song must be divided based on the context of its presentation. In the context of the ritual ceremony that is served or *ermangmang* is *mangmang*, which is a shaman's song to ask permission and summon various supernatural powers. In addition, the presentation of *tabas* is called *ertabas*, which means the singing of a shaman to make medicinal ingredients that have supernatural powers. In the wedding ceremony, the sister of the bride and groom will perform *erdidong doah*, which is an aunt's love song. The song is called *didong doah* which is a metaphor for the lullaby song. In relation to traditional Karo musical instruments, there is solo instrument, and

there are musical instruments that must be an ensemble. The solo instrument is the *surdam*, which is classified as a side end-blown flute, with 4, 5, and 6 tone holes, and serves for personal entertainment (Figure1)

Figure 1. *Surdam*, with 6 tone holes (photographed by Kristoper)



There are three Karo traditional musical instruments that can be solo instruments and can also be ensembles. The three musical instruments, namely: 1) *balobat*, including an end-blown nose flute with six tones, act as melody carriers (Figure 2); 2) *kulcapi* including longneck two-string lute, acting as melody carrier (Figure 3); and 3) *ketteng-ketteng* including two idiochord tube zither, acting as carriers of constant and varied rhythms (Figure 3).

**Figure 2: *Balobat* with 6 tone holes
(<https://id.pinterest.com/pin/1068479080315715590/>)**



Figure 3: *Kulcapi*, with 6 tone holes (photographed by Kristoper)



The musical instrument that must be part of the ensemble is a *sarune* including a double reed conical aerophone (Figure 4), three drums including a single head conical drum, and two gongs. Three drums divided by two, *gendang singindung* and two *gendang singanaki* which are played using a stick. (Figures 5 and 6. *Sarune* is the carrier of the melody in the ensemble, while the drum is the carrier of variation and constant rhythms. While two gongs to make colotomies. Two gongs have different sizes, the biggest one is called the *gung* (Figure 7) and the smaller one is called the *penganak*, which is also played using a rubber-coated stick.

Figure 4: *Sarune*, with 6 tone holes (photographed by Kristoper)



Figure 5: *Gendang singindungi* (photographed by Kristoper)



Figure 6: *Gendang singanaki* (photographed by Kristoper)



Figure 7: *Gung* (photographed by Kristoper)



Composition in the Karo music tradition is called *cak-cak*, which consists of three types. The three *cak-caks* are *patam-patam cak-cak*, *odak-odak cak-cak* and *simelungen rayat cak-cak*. *Cak-cak patam-patam* in one gong cycle there are four beats. On the *cak-cak odak-odak* in one gong cycle there are eight beats, while in the *cak-cak simelungen rayat* there are sixteen beats in one gong cycle.

Karo musical culture since 1991 has developed with the type of western musical instrument organ or keyboard which was adopted as part of the traditional Karo music culture. The period of adoption of the western organ musical instrument so that it has been considered established as a part of Karo traditional music is about three years. This ensemble or *gendang* is called the *gendang kibot*. But previously, the ensembles found in Karo musical culture were the *gendang sarune*, the *gendang kulcapi*, and the *gendang mangkok*. *Gendang sarune*, the composition of the musical instrument consists of one *sarune*, three drums, and two gongs. The *gendang kulacapi* consists of one *kulcapi*, two *ketteng-ketteng* and two gongs. The *gendang mangkok*, the

composition of the musical instrument consists of one *balobat*, one *ketteng-ketteng* and one bowl. In this case, the use of a bowl as a musical instrument is only incidental.

1. MUSICAL CULTURE AS SUPPORT FOR RITUAL ACTIVITIES

There are three contexts for presenting Karo's musical culture in the sense that the musical cultural acts as a supporter of ritual activities. The three ritual contexts are 1) in the context of customs, 2) in the ceremony of beliefs, and 3) in the context of the combination of customs and beliefs.

1. 1 In the context of customs

Karo musical culture in the context of customs, which means that musical culture is used to serve the needs of traditional customs, there are four types. The four types of Karo musical culture that serve the needs of these customs consist of a) marriage ceremonies, b) ceremonies for entering a new house, c) funeral ceremonies, and d) ceremonies for lifting bones.

a) Marriage ceremony

In the wedding ceremony, there are three roles of Karo music culture, namely: 1) accompanying the reception, 2) accompanying the bride and groom to dance and sing, and 3) accompanying the families of the two brides to dance together while delivering speech acts with each of their relatives.

In accompanying the welcome there are four times, namely: 1) welcoming the groom's family with his *senina* (relatives of the same role or equal position), 2) welcoming *kalimbubu* (relatives of the wife giving) from the groom, 3) welcoming the bride's family with her *senina*, and 4) welcoming *kalimbubu* from the bride family

Furthermore, accompanying the bride and groom dancing while singing alternately, each of which is two songs in succession without stopping.

Finally, musical culture accompanies each family of the bride and groom dancing while delivering speech acts with each family, which is grouped into three parts. Therefore, this show took place seven times, as follows:

1. Accompanying the dance while acting said the groom's family with his *senina*
2. Accompanying the dance while acting said the groom's family with his *kalimbubu*
3. Accompanying the dance while acting said the bride's family with her *senina*
4. Accompanying the dance while acting said the bride's family with her family's *kalimbubu*
5. Accompanying the dance while acting, the family of the bridegroom and the bride with the village government and their friends

6. Accompanying the dance while acting, the bride's family with their *anak beru* (all families receiving the wife)
7. Accompanying the dance while acting said the groom's family with their *anak beru*

b) The ceremony of entering a new house

In the ceremony of entering a new house, there are six times the musical culture is played to accompany the dance while giving speech acts, as follows:

1. Accompanying the dance while acting said the family who entered the new house with their *senina*
2. Accompanying the dance while acting said the family who entered the new house with the *kalimbubu* of his grandfather and father
3. Accompanying the dance while acting is the speech of the family who enters the new house with their own *kalimbubu* (the family giving the wife)
4. Accompanying the dance while acting said the family who entered the new house with their child's *kalimbubu* (the family that gave the daughter-in-law)
5. Accompanying the dance while acting said the family who entered the new house with the village government and their friends
6. Accompanying the dance while acting said the family who entered the new house with their new child

c) Funeral ceremony

In the funeral ceremony, there are nine times the musical culture is played to accompany the dance while giving speech acts as a word of consolation to the family of the disaster expert, as follows:

1. Accompanying the dance while speech act the family of the disaster expert with his *senina*
2. Accompanying the dance while speech act the family of disaster experts with the village government
3. Accompanying the dance while speech act the family of a disaster expert with his grandfather's *kalimbubu*
4. Accompanying the dance while speech act the family of a disaster expert with his father's *kalimbubu*
5. Accompanying the dance while speech act of the family a disaster expert with their own *kalimbubu* (the family giving the wife)

6. Accompanying the dance while acting said the family of the disaster expert with his *puang kalimbubu* (*kalimbubu* from *kalimbubu*)
7. Accompanying the dance while acting, said the family of disaster experts with the *kalimbubu* of their children and grandchildren
8. Accompanying the dance while acting, said the family of the disaster expert with his friends
9. Accompanying the dance while acting said the family of a disaster expert with their *anak beru*

d) The ceremony of lifting the bones

In the ceremony of lifting the bones, there are seven times the musical culture is played to accompany the dance while giving speech acts to the family with intent, as follows:

1. Accompanying the dance while speech acts the family intends with their *senina*
2. Accompanying the dance while speech acts the family intends with the village government
3. Accompanying the dance while speech acts the family intends with the *kalimbubu* of their grandfather and father
4. Accompanying the dance while speech acts of the family intend with their own *kalimbubu* (the family giving the wife)
5. Accompanying the dance while speech act of the family intends with his *puang kalimbubu* (*kalimbubu* from *kalimbubu*)
6. Accompanying the dance while speech act, the family intends with the their *kalimbubu* of their children and grandchildren
7. Accompanying the dance while speech acts, the family intends with their *anak beru*

1. 2 In the ceremony of beliefs

Karo musical culture in the context of belief, which means that there are three types of musical culture used to serve the needs of belief. The three types of Karo musical culture that serve the ritual needs are a) a cleansing ceremony of a village from the disturbance of evil spirits, b) a self-purification ceremony, and c) a salvation ceremony.

a) The ceremony of cleansing a village from the disturbance of evil spirits (*ngarkari*)

The ritual of cleansing a village from the disturbance of evil spirits is often called a *ngarkari*. Generally, this ceremony is held when many villagers have an unnatural

illness. In this ceremony, musical culture is playing to accompany all the shamans to dance while reciting mantras to cleanse the village of all unwholesome disturbances.

b) Self-purification ceremony (*erpangir ku lau*)

The self-purification ceremony may be a way of traditional medicine in the Karo people. In this ceremony, musical culture is played to accompany the shaman to dance so that all the *jinujung*, namely the guiding spirit of a shaman, can enter the shaman's body in turn. The number of presentations of musical culture depends on the habits of the shaman.

c) Salvation ceremony (*ngari-ngari*)

Surviving a danger or recovering from the most dangerous disease nevertheless gives a very happy feeling to someone who experiences it. This kind of incident often causes the experienced person to perform a salvation ceremony. In Karo culture, this kind of ceremony is called *ngari-ngari*. In this case, the person who is on pilgrimage will invite relatives who in the custom there are three groups, namely *senina*, *kalimbubu*, and *anak beru*. But it's also fun to add to your companions. Generally, the presentation of musical culture in this context is divided into two parts, namely the traditional section and the entertainment section.

In the traditional section, the presentation of Karo musical culture accompanies people who wish to dance while delivering speech acts with their *khinsip* three times. It is as below:

1. Accompanying the dance while speech act, the family intends with their *senina*
2. Accompanying the dance while speech act the family intends with their *kalimbubu*
3. Accompanying the dance while speech act, the family intends with their *anak beru*

While in the entertainment section, generally families who wish to give to all their friends or family who dance and sing. This can take place so that the guests feel satisfied

1. 3 In the context of the combination of customs and beliefs

There is a ceremony which is a combination of customs and beliefs. It is said so because its activities are related to beliefs and then supported by the implementation of customs. The ceremony is called *nengget* or surprising. In Karo belief, the surprise is believed to change a person's condition, may be healthy or sick.

Generally, this surprising ceremony is carried out for a family who, although they have been married for years, do not have children. Seeing the reality, usually, relatives such as parents both husband and wife try to carry out this ceremony. This ceremony is kept secret from the families of the victims.

Usually, the one who plays an active role is the husband's sister. It is usually held in the afternoon after the targeted family returns home from their work. However, the family was very surprised because suddenly many relatives came and were accompanied by musical culture and some brought food.

After the bustle subsided, the dance event started from the target family. Then proceed to *kalimbubu* and ends at *anak beru*. After all dancing, it ends with dinner together.

2. MUSICAL CULTURE AS SOCIAL ENTERTAINMENT

Guro-guro aron comes from the word 'guro-guro' which means to play and the word 'aron' which means together. This term is used by the Karo people to name a cultural performance of music and dance performed by an adult community in a village. In the past, before 1995, this performance was performed by young people called *anak perana* and young women called *singuda-nguda*. But since 1995 all adult village communities have been active. Husbands dance with their wives, while youths dance with young women who are made fresh alternately.

Apart from being used as socio-cultural entertainment, Karo musicals are often also used to enliven certain celebrations. Celebrations that are often an important concern for the Karo people, such as the inauguration or birthday of a community group, or the celebration of a family's birthday. In addition, it is also often used to welcome state officials who come to Karo Regency.

3. MUSICAL CULTURE AS TOURISM SUPPORT

Utilizing Karo's musical culture as a cultural attraction in the context of tourism promotion began in 1967. At that time every Sunday, there was *adu perkolong-kolong*, that is the performance of two singers of the Karo tradition, a man and woman). The show starts around 10 pm to 12 pm and in the afternoon from 2 pm to 4 pm. However, this kind of promotion did not last long as the male singer died in an accident.

Furthermore, Karo's musical culture as a cultural attraction that also acts as tourism promotion accidentally occurred from 1973 to 1977. At that time there was a Karo traditional musician who raised an ensemble of traditional music that was considered new. In terms of the ensemble which is considered new, it was already played in 1958 by the parents of the musicians themselves. The new ensemble is very encouraging to the Karo people who are Hindu Dharma. This has a great influence on the duration of the Karo music culture performances. Inadvertently this attracted many people from various regions to visit *lau debok-debok* which was the center of Karo musical culture activities at that time, about 12.6 km from Berastagi.

Music culture as a supporter of tourism has been serious since around the 1980s when there was a fruit and flower market in Berastagi that was held every year. This event is

carried out by the Karo government to increase cultural attractions for various purposes, especially tourism. This cultural attraction presents many types and methods of preparing food, materials, and methods of traditional medicine, types of clothing, and how to use and produce various agricultural equipment. At night, which is considered the peak of cultural attractions, dance and music performances are presented which are called drum presentations.

Even more so since 2014 with the existence of "sanggar seni" in Karo Regency. *Sanggar seni* resembling an art studio is a place or facility used by a community or group of people to conduct a place to learn arts such as music, dance, theater, crafts, and others. There are already several art studios in Karo district and in Medan that prioritize the study of Karo traditional arts, such as 'sanggar seni gong leto' in Kabanjahe, 'enggara siembelin', in Rumah Kabajahe 'dokan art festival' in Medan, 'barusjahe art culture', in Barusjahe, and 'sanggar budaya rumah rungu' in Medan.

All of these art studios have a specific agenda, such as a schedule for practicing art materials to be explored, developed, and studied for performances. Likewise they have carefully prepared the equipment, clothes and all the necessary art accessories.

In one website it is written that the local government of Karo pays great attention to the development of musical culture to support tourism. In the website is written that the Head of the Tourism Office, represented by the Secretary of Tourism Epa Angela br Sembiring, attended a meeting between the studio management and at the same time met face-to-face with the management of the art studio in the land of Karo. This was done to strengthen the bond and at the same time to get to know the fellow management of the studio. The meeting was held at the Taman *mejuah juah* Berastagi art building on Friday 7/2/2020) Secretary of tourism Eva Angela said how important it was to collect data on all studios in 17 sub-districts in Karo district with the aim of advancing the existing tourism arts. As a means of preservation, Therefore, the head of the tourism office through the Head of Culture Erma said, "It is hoped that the tourism office and all studio management who are already in the tourism office will create a forum for the studio and make the studio a legal entity, in order to advance the studio in the future and also the studio that is being fostered. They are engaged in any field, said Erma. Meetings of art studios in 17 sub-districts We invite all of them and not all of them can attend. However, we hope that in the future there will be more progress and more studios in the land of Karo because so far there has never been a meeting like this. With this activity k we develop good tourism, especially in the field of art and we often give opinions and we synchronize programs from the tourism office and we put them in funding and studios and some and some can be accommodated in abides and I think for the development of arts and culture we hope at this meeting so that it can be synchronized to promote art and culture studios. If the assistance from the Ministry of studios we have to have a legal entity and this studio is engaged in what fields are

dances and traditional tools, we hope that the existence of this art studio can increase tourism in Karo Regency.

CONCLUSION

In Karo society, musical culture is very important in supporting their survival. Despite the fact that it has been influenced by music outside of Karo culture, especially the inclusion of organ or keyboard instruments, it does not mean that Karo tradition music as an identity just disappeared. However, the sound of the music produced by western musical instruments is adjusted to the sounds found in the Karo musical culture. This can be fulfilled because of the richness of sound contained in the sound bank of an organ or keyboard instrument. The inclusion of a western keyboard instrument adds to one of the traditional Karo musical ensembles called the gendang kibot. The gendang kibot has also become part of the Karo musical culture. Thus the gendang kibot and other gendang as a musical ensemble have functioned to serve various ritual activities, social entertainment, and celebrations, and as a supporter of tourism.

Acknowledgment

This article is one of the partial outputs under the 2022 scientific research TALENTA grant under the title "Pengelolaan Seni Pertunjukan Untuk Menunjang Kepariwisata Sumatera Utara: Sumber Kajian Pertunjukan Kultural Dalam Sanggar Seni Pada Masyarakat Toba dan Karo"

Or "Management of Performing Arts to Support North Sumatra Tourism: Sources of Study of Cultural Performances in the *Sanggar Seni* in the Toba and Karo Society"

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