

MUSICAL AMBIVALENCE IN THE PERFORMANCE OF *SALUANG ORGEN* IN WEST SUMATRA

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Abstract

This article aims to discuss the musical ambivalence in the performance of *saluangorgen* in West Sumatra. *Saluangorgen* is a musical genre that is formed from the ‘cross-breeding’ of *saluangdendang* and keyboard (electone). *Saluangdendang* is a genre of traditional Minangkabau music which is made up of *saluang* (a wind instrument) and *dendang* (traditional vocal music), performed using a Minangkabau pentatonic scale. In the Minangkabau community of West Sumatra, especially amongst musicians, the keyboard is commonly referred to as the *orgen* (organ) and its music as “*orgentunggal*” (solo organ). The *orgen* is commonly used to accompany a variety of songs in the domain of popular music. The hybridization of these two musical genres has produced a music characterized by ambivalence. A qualitative method is used for this research because the descriptive-analytical principle is an important method in the discussion. The research results show that the tension that exists between the two musical genres creates a unique characteristic and dynamic in each performance, even though there is still a clash in the unification of the two genres. This not only influences the musical aspects but also affects the structure and form of the performance and even the audience. The development of this music has penetrated the domain of popularity of *saluangdendang* in the main cultural region of Minangkabau.

Keywords: *Saluangdendang*, *saluangorgen*, hybridization, musical, and ambivalence

1. Introduction

At the present time in the Minangkabau community of West Sumatra, there are three genres of musical performance which are based on *saluangdendang*. These three genres are *saluangdendang*, *saluangdangdut*, and *saluangorgen*. *Saluangdendang* is the first genre and is the ‘mother’ of *saluangdangdut* and *saluangorgen*. The other two genres have developed out of *saluangdendang* which has been combined with elements of Western music, pop music, and other instruments from outside the *saluangdendang* tradition.

In terms of quantity, these two new musical genres offer an additional choice of entertainment for the community and broaden the vocabulary of *saluangdendang* performance in West Sumatra. However, they also alter the musical form and structure, and the configuration of *saluangdendang* performance, and also the audience. In its performance, *saluangdangdut* is oriented towards the combination of *saluangdendang* with elements of *dangdut* music, in particular music accompanied by the drum (*gendang*) which plays the rhythmic pattern “*dangdut*” (onomatopoeia). In the case of the musical aspects of *saluangorgen*, the inclusion of the *orgen* (keyboard or electone) in *saluangdendang* has given rise to a new musical genre of *saluangdendang*. The combination of *orgen* and *saluangdendang*, if viewed in terms of the musical concept of each, is something that in essence is difficult to accomplish. *Saluangdendang* has its own music system which uses the pentatonic scale of Minangkabau music. This pentatonic scale has intervals that are different from those of diatonic music. The movement of the vocal melody or *dendang* in *saluangdendang* will always be in this pentatonic domain. The *orgen*, meanwhile, is a factory-made instrument that has been perfectly programmed using a diatonic scale complete with various choices of musical rhythms or beats that have already been standardized. The keyboard is an ‘intelligent’ choice of instrument for playing music amongst musicians in West Sumatra because it is able to serve a variety of musical genres without the addition of other instruments. This music is known as “*orgentunggal*” (solo organ). Using only a single instrument (*tunggal*), a person can play music that sounds like a combo band. Despite being a factory-made instrument, the *orgen* becomes active when used as a medium for music-making. The hybridization of *saluangdendang* and *orgen* creates a clash in terms of the basic musical aspects of the two, namely the notes used and the musical concepts of the two genres, as well as the songs (*dendang*) performed in *saluangdendang*.

The hybridization of pop and *dangdut* songs played by the keyboard together with *saluangdendang* has become a phenomenon in its performance, and its musical aspects are interesting to be explored in more depth in order to

discover the form of musical ambivalence in the hybridization of *saluangdandang* and keyboard in *saluangorgen*.

2. Research Method

A qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical principle was used in this research. The data was through thorough observation in the field by watching *saluangorgen* performances in a number of different places with different performers (singers). In order to carry out a more in-depth exploration of the musical aspects, such as the combination of *saluang* and *orgen*, the level of tolerance and pitch differences between the *saluang* and *orgen*, and the ways in which the singers determine the basic tones for singing on the two instruments – *saluang* and *orgen* – in-depth interviews were held with a *saluang* player and singer. In addition, audio-visual recordings were very important to be used as primary data for analyzing the musical ambivalence.

3. Literature Review

A number of studies about Minangkabau performing arts in West Sumatra, specifically from the perspective of a hybrid in music and dance, have been carried out by Fraser (2013, 2015) and Nor (2015). Fraser writes about the music of *talempong kreasi*, a genre of *talempong* music consisting of a combination of traditional Minangkabau *talempong* (non-diatonic: pentatonic and hexatonic) instruments and elements of Western music (diatonic), in which the pitches of the *talempong* are tuned diatonically and used as a melody instrument, to play various traditional Minang songs, arranged with accompaniment by several other *talempong* instruments and other instruments such as *sarunai* (single-reed pipe) and *bansi* (small end-blow flute) in a harmonic manner. The orchestration of this music uses Western musical principles. This music is used widely by the Minangkabau community as a medium for entertainment at wedding parties and other events, especially amongst the urban community. The existence of this music has become a ‘new identity’ in Minang music which is ambiguous but presents opportunities for the entertainment business. Fraser also mentions that the emergence of this music is the result of an interpretation by Minangkabau artists and cultural observers of the concept of “restoring self-worth”, proposed by the governor of West Sumatra (Harun Zain), which promotes a return to tradition in order to strengthen the identity of Minangkabau after being defeated in the rebellion of the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia (PRRI) against the Government of the Republic of Indonesia (Kahin, 2008). Fraser views this musical hybridity as something ambiguous but he does not discuss the subject specifically from the aspect of its ambivalence.

Nor, meanwhile, focuses particularly on dance in his discussion of hybrid Minangkabau performing arts, discussing the choreography that results from a combination of *silek* (silat) and various other traditional Minangkabau arts with Malay and Western elements. He writes about a number of choreographers, such as Hoerijah Adam, Syofyani Yusaf, and Gusmiati Suid, who in their careers have each used unique ways to carry out a hybridization of traditional Minang art and other cultures, such as elements of Malay music and movement, or Western music in the musical accompaniment.

Sastra, et al (2017) discusses postcolonial aesthetics in the music of *talempongreasi* and *talemponggoyang* in West Sumatra. He highlights the element of postcoloniality in this music because the *talempong* pitches are tuned diatonically, thus making it easy to form an orchestration using principles of Western music. The hybridity that has occurred in *talempongreasi* and *talemponggoyang* has produced a musical aesthetic somewhere between Western harmony and traditional Minangkabau music. Traditional Minangkabau songs are played a great deal in these two musical genres.

Yelli (2010), Oktavia (2012, 2017), and Syari'ah (2016) write about the performance of *saluangorgen* in a number of places in West Sumatra in various different contexts. These three writers focus more on the discussion of the performance of *saluangorgen*, its elements of composition, and the structure of its performance. In general, the material and model of performance do not vary in spite of the different contexts. The exception is Oktavia (2017), who more specifically discusses the intervention of *orgentunggal* singers in performances of *saluangorgen* in the city of Payakumbuh. According to Oktavia, the singers dress glamorously, like pop singers, using various accessories, but they have a poor knowledge of the repertoire of traditional *saluangdandang* songs and the ethics of a traditional *saluangdandang* performance. These three writers do not mention the ambivalence and hybridity of *saluangorgen*.

One work which discusses the performance of *saluangorgen* in quite some depth is an article by Rustim (2010). He refers to the performance of this music as *bagurausaluangorgen*. Rustim focuses his discussion on the interaction between the singers and the audience. One unique characteristic in the performance of various genres of *saluangdandang* is the interaction between the audience and the singers in the form of song requests that are dedicated to another member or members of the audience, or sometimes involves flattering or flirting with the singer. The texts are presented in the form of metaphoric verse (*pantun*). According to Rustim, *bagurau*

(performance) in a broader context not only refers to the music but also to the social behaviour and actions that are used in the performance to express ideas and experiences, as well as socio-cultural values, all of which are important. A traditional performance of *bagurausaluangdendang* is a place where social contact can take place, through expression, interaction, and integration between members of the Minangkabau community. In a performance of *bagurausaluangdendang*, there is a process of transformation of information, experience, and new values in the socio-cultural life of the community, which is needed for developing the knowledge, aesthetics, and ethics of social interaction (Rustim 2010: 262-263). Rustim does not mention ambivalence in his article.

4. Results and Discussion

The section on results and discussion begins with an explanation of the main elements that make up *saluangorgen*, namely *saluangdendang*, *orgentunggal*, and their performance, and is followed by a discussion about the hybridization of the two.

4.1. *SaluangDendang*

Saluangdendang, if viewed in terms of its compositional elements, consists only of *saluang* and *dendang* (instrumental and vocal elements). In performance, these two musical elements play the melody together through the *saluang* and *dendang*. No other instruments are used to support the accompaniment. *Saluangdendang* has carried out its function as a medium of entertainment for the Minangkabau community in West Sumatra over a long period of time. The main audience, or fan base, for this music is found in the main cultural region of Minangkabau, known as *Luhak Nan Tigo* (three areas), namely *Luhak Tanah Data*, *Luhak Agam*, and *Luhak Limo Puluhan Koto*. This region covers a wide area, including the district of Tanah Datar, most of the district of Agam, the district of Lima Puluhan Kota, Padangpanjang, Bukittinggi, Payakumbuh, Sawahlunto, and a number of other towns in the surrounding area. The power of this music lies in its lyrics, which are presented spontaneously by the singer in the form of metaphors to provoke audience interaction, and also in the variety of melodic character in the different songs.

One very substantial aspect that is also one of the main features of *saluangdendang* is the melodic movement of the songs which are played in the pentatonic scale of Minangkabau music. The pitches in the pentatonic scale are separated by intervals different from those commonly found in the diatonic scale. For example, if the basic pitch of the *saluang* is considered equivalent to pitch C in the diatonic scale, C D E F G A B c, the *saluang* intervals will be approximately: C, D-, E-, F-, G-. The intervals of a full step and half a step between the notes of the *saluang* are smaller than diatonic intervals but are nevertheless somewhat similar. Using the pentatonic scale, *saluangdendang* creates its own songs that are played within the pitch range of this scale. Although there are a few other songs from outside this tradition that have been adapted to be used in this genre, they are still played using the pentatonic scale.

The *saluang* is the instrument used in *saluangdendang* and has become a medium that is able to serve the musical system of *saluangdendang*. The *saluang* has only four finger holes, the function of which is to differentiate between the existing pitches. With these four holes, the *saluang* can produce five main pitches. In practice, the *saluang* can also produce a number of semitones and microtones that are commonly used to play melodic ornamentations known as *garinyiak*.

One of the unique features in the music system of *saluangdendang* is that the songs are not always played and sung using the same tonic note. *Saluangdendang* has its own concept of determining the tonic note, known as *pakok*. *Pakok* means determining the initial pitch that is to be used as the basic pitch for the musician (*saluang* player) and the singer to perform a particular song (*dendang*), and this is done by closing or opening a particular hole on the *saluang* to indicate the basic pitch or tonic of the song. The types of *pakok* are *pakokpanuah* (*pakokampek*), *pakoktigo*, *pakok duo*, *pakokciek*, and *lapeh*. *Pakokpanuah*, also known as *pakokampek*, means closing all the holes of the *saluang*. When the instrument is blown it will produce pitch one; this is the pitch to be used as the tonic. *Pakoktigo* means closing the three upper holes of the *saluang* and leaving the lowest hole uncovered to produce pitch two as the tonic. *Pakok duo* means covering the top two holes of the *saluang* to produce pitch three as the tonic. *Pakokciek* means covering only the topmost hole of the *saluang* to produce pitch four as the tonic. *Lapeh* means not covering any of the *saluang* holes at all which produces pitch five as the tonic. Each of the *pakok* and *lapeh* used as the tonic pitch for a *dendang* has its own repertoire of *dendang*.

The difference in the tonic pitches of the *pakok* and *lapeh* described above indirectly form and categorize the character of the *dendang* and the area in which the *dendang* exist. As stated by HalimLenggang, a *saluangdendang* artist, the *dendang* that are played based on the tonic of the *pakok* and *lapeh* can also be grouped based on the tendency of character, area of popularity, and origin. For example, *dendang* that are sung in *pakoktigo* tend to have a melancholic or sad character, such as the type *dendangratok* (lamentation). This type of

dendang generally originates from Nagari Singgalang (a village on the outskirts of the city of Padangpanjang) and several other areas in the district of Agam.

If based according to character, there are three categories of *dendang*, namely joyful or happy *dendang*; *dendangsatangahtiang*; and *dendangratok*. Joyful *dendang* are especially those that are performed for the purpose of raising money (“*hoyak*”). *Dendangsatangahtiang* are those with melodic and rhythmic characteristics that fall somewhere between happy and sad, while *dendangratok* (lamentations) are those with a melancholic or sad character. The latter are often also categorized as *dendangkalasik* (classical).

The number of players in a *saluangdendang* performance is usually between 3 and 5, including: one *saluang* player, 3-4 singers, and one *janang* (who controls the performance). The *saluang* player is always male. His level of professionalism is determined by how well he plays the *saluang* and his command of the hundreds of existing *dendang* melodies. The role of the *saluang* is to accompany the singers by following and playing the *dendang* melody.

In general, the singers are all women although on rare occasions men may also sing. As Sawir Sutan Mudo (a senior male singer, aged 68, who is no longer active) explains, “it is very difficult to find young men who are interested in learning *dendang* seriously” (Sawir Sutan Mudo, interview, 15 August 2015 in Bukittinggi, West Sumatra). It is not an easy job to perform as a *dendang* singer. In addition to memorizing tens or even hundreds of *dendang*, a singer must be able to distinguish between the similar melodies of different *dendang*, be skilled in creating metaphoric verse or *pantun* (quatrain) spontaneously and with variation. Creating *pantun* spontaneously requires a high level of skill and is an indicator of the singer’s ability to compose a text or lyrics quickly and also appropriate to the target audience. Spontaneous *pantun* is always needed, especially at the time of a performance (*bagurau*). Inspiration for the opening lyrics and the main lyrics of the *pantun* generally comes from the atmosphere of the performance and from the audience. It is much better if the opening lyrics of each *pantun* are not the same to ensure a livelier performance and prevent the audience from becoming bored. Junior singers usually learn to memorize songs and put together lyrics spontaneously while they are performing (learning by doing). When it is the turn of another singer to perform, especially a more senior singer, the junior singer will pay careful attention to the text and melody of the *dendang*.

4.2. *Bagurau* and *BagurauOyak* as Performance Concepts

A performance of *saluangdendang* is often referred to as *bagurau*. Amongst circles of artists and connoisseurs of *saluangdendang*, *bagurau* is understood to mean a *saluangdendang* performance. A full performance of *saluangdendang* lasts an entire night (from about 9 pm to 4 am) without any interludes or other kind of performance.

For the past decade, in addition to the term *bagurau*, another term has also appeared in circles of *saluangdendang* performers and connoisseurs: *bagurauoyak*. *Bagurauoyak* tends to be used with reference to a *saluangdendang* performance that includes *orgen*. A recent study by Rina Oktavia and Desy Syari’ah in the districts of Lima Puluh Kota and Tanah Datar states that *bagurauoyak* is a performance involving a number of related elements such as: *tukangoyak*, singers, *tukangsaluang* (*saluang* player), *orgen* player, and committee. The *tukangoyak* is the person who controls and directs a performance of *bagurauoyak* (Rina Oktavia, 2012: 17; 2017: 26; Desy Syari’ah, 2016: 31). Meanwhile, Rustim refers to the same musical genre as *bagurauasaluangorgen*, and explains that the elements involved in a performance are the *tukangsaluang*, *anakdendang* (singers), *janang* (*tukangoyak*), *tukangorgen* (keyboard player), and *pagurau* (audience) (Rustim, 2010: 135).

Tukangoyak is in fact a new term that is used in reference to the person whose role is to control the *saluangdendang* performance. The role of the *tukangoyak*, as the manager, director, and person responsible for bringing the performance to life, is the main indicator of a *bagurauoyak* performance. His jokes and provocation through direct speech and metaphors directed towards the audience, and his comments on the content of every *pantun* presented by the singers, bring the atmosphere to life and this is equated to clamour or hustle and bustle (*oyak*), hence his title of *tukangoyak*. Formerly, the *tukangoyak* was known as the *janang*, and this role has always been present in a traditional *saluangdendang* performance, whether in a *bagurau* performance or a *bagurauoyak* performance. Prior to the appearance of *saluangorgen*, *asaluangdendang* performance would always include a *janang* or *tukangoyak* as one of the elements of *bagurau*. Halim Lenggang explains that every *bagurau* performance always has a *janang* to control, direct, and bring to life the performance. *Bagurau* is identical to a performance of *saluangkalasik* or *saluangdendangkalasik*, which is a performance presenting *dendang* material originating from traditional *saluangdendang* and not mixed with pop music or *dangdut*. The word *kalasik* (classical, traditional) is intended to point to a *saluangdendang* performance regulated by conventional procedures. The role of the *janang* is the same in a performance of *saluangorgen* but is never

referred to with the word *oyak* in *bagurau*, although the *tukangoyak* is sometimes called the *janang* (Halim Lenggang, interview, 2 November 2016, in Padangpanjang, West Sumatra).

Bagurau adopts a special meaning in the context of the performance of *saluangdendang*, where its meaning is actually a *saluangdendang* performance. This understanding is more specific and differs from the general understanding of *bagurau*, which is the same as *bersendagurau* (to joke or jest). The definition of a *saluang* performance by several scholars with an interest in *saluang* is generally the same. For example, Sastra offers the following definition: “*Bagurau* tends to be understood by the supporting community as the activity of a *saluang* performance. An activity by a group of people who wish to enjoy themselves, to provide entertainment together for other people in the form of a performance of traditional music [*saluang*]. In this performance, people with the same hobby come together, and all the members present have an equal status, namely as *bagurau* members” (Sastra, 1999: 156; see also Desmawardi, 2001: 77-80).

Meanwhile, Gitrif Yunus offers the understanding that a *saluang* performance is always associated with *bagurau* because its implementation always involves an audience. The players and the audience members are equally active in their involvement in the performance, they mingle together at the performance venue (Desmawardi, 2001: 80). According to Rustim, “*Bagurau* is a form of performance of traditional Minangkabau art which is performed as general entertainment in public places and attended by groups of *pagurau* (audience) from the same village (*nagari*) or groups of *pagurau* from other *nagari*. The sustainability of traditional performances of *bagurausaluangdendang* is entirely supported by groups of *pagurau* who safeguard the cultural values of the *bagurausaluangdendang* tradition in Minangkabau (Rustim 2010: xviii).

When the writer visited *saluangdendang* artists (*saluang* players and singers) with the intention of inviting them to an all-night performance of *saluangdendang*, they referred to the activity as *bagurau*. For example, they would ask, “For what occasion is the *bagurau* being held?” “*Dimabagurau*” (where is the *bagurau*), “*josiabagurau*” (who is the singer in the *bagurau*), and so on.

In principle, the opinion and name given to a *saluangdendang* performance, a *saluangorgen* performance, or as *aluangdangdut* performance, does not really alter its meaning or purpose. More broadly speaking, the audience of a *saluangdendang* performance can understand the meaning of *bagurau* and *bagurauoyak*, both of which refer to a performance of *saluangdendang* and its various genres.

4.3. *Orgen Tunggal*

Since the 1980s, a new genre of musical performance for entertainment has developed in West Sumatra, known as *orgentunggal*. *Orgentunggal* is a musical performance which uses an electric keyboard equipped with various music programs, including the sounds of different instruments and different beats or rhythms. Using this type of keyboard, several other instruments that are usually used in a combo band can be accumulated in this one instrument. A sound system is used to amplify the sound so that the performance can be enjoyed on a wider scale such as in an open field. With only a single keyboard player and 3 or 4 singers plus a sound system, an *orgentunggal* can give a performance.

Since its first appearance in the 1980s and up to the present time, *orgentunggal* has transformed to become one of the most popular choices of musical entertainment amongst communities in West Sumatra. Its presence has begun to dominate other forms of musical entertainment even in the more remote corners of West Sumatra. In the daily Posmetro Padang newspaper (7 March 2010), Asril writes:

“The people of West Sumatra have various experiences of enjoying a variety of different types of music, such as combo band, to fulfil their artistic desires, whether for personal needs or for festivities such as weddings and various other events. However, *orgentunggal* has gradually managed to take over the position of these various combo bands to the point where they no longer exist and have been forced to disband. As a result, many musicians and singers from these former groups have established their own *orgentunggal* groups because the prospects are more promising, they require only a small number of personnel, the management is less complicated, they use less equipment, are less troublesome, and the cost is affordable for most people holding a celebration.”

4.4. Hybridization of *SaluangDendang* and *Orgen Tunggal*

According to Hassan, hybridization is the process of creating or replicating mutant forms (of living creatures) through ‘cross-breeding’, which results in a mixed entity that is no longer complete although it still retains part of the identity of the two elements that have been joined together (Piliang, 2011: 242-243). Robert Young states that a hybrid is the result of cross-breeding between two different species. This cross-breeding produces a third species. The term hybridization originally developed out of the idea of transplantation or cross-pollination

between different species in the field of botany. During the 19th century and the end of the 20th century, hybridity was no longer limited to the domain of botany but also became a subject of conversation in the field of culture (Young, 1995: 5-6). Hybridization in *saluangdendang* first occurred in elements of *dangdut* music which gave rise to *saluangdangdut* and subsequently *orgentunggal*, which gave rise to *saluangorgen*. During the time when *saluangdendang* was the sole medium of interactive entertainment in the community, there was no other option for people to enjoy a music performance that built a dialogue with the singers. Obstacles to *saluangdendang* appeared in the 1980s when traditional musicians in Pariaman carried out experiments with *saluangdendang* by including elements of the traditional Pariaman music *indang* and *katumbak* in *saluangdendang*. This included imitating the rhythms and beat of the *katumbak* drum which were similar to the rhythmic patterns of the drum in *dangdut* music (a genre of Indonesian pop music). The next influential attempt at hybridization was to include a drum which played the rhythmic pattern “*dangdut*” (onomatopoeia of the sound of *tabla* rhythms) in the performance of *saluangdendang*. The inclusion of these *dangdut* rhythms changed this “new” music into *saluangdangdut*.

Saluangdangdut is the performance of *saluangdendang* with the addition of a number of other musical instruments such as a set of two drums (*gendangdua*) or a *tifa* and *giriang-giriang* (tambourine), or even a *gandang* or *tambua* from a *gandangtasa* ensemble. The function of the *gendang* or drum is to provide rhythmic patterns in the style of *dangdut*, while the *giriang-giriang* is used to strengthen the rhythms. The songs performed are generally happy songs, including *dangdut* songs.

Although it is only the rhythmic patterns of *dangdut* that are imitated in the rhythms of the two drums added to the *saluangdendang* ensemble, musicians and connoisseurs of this music have given it the name *saluangdangdut*. It would seem to have been a hasty decision to assign the name *saluangdangdut* to this new musical genre. As Astil writes in the daily Posmetro Padang newspaper:

“One thing that is quite amusing to us is the transplantation of *saluangdendang* into a kitsch form that is given the name *saluangdangdut*. Its performance still includes a number of singers and a *saluang* player, but a drum and *gandang duo* are also added to the music. The function of the *gandang duo* is to imitate the rhythms of the *tabla*: ‘*ndang-dut*’. It would seem that the practitioners of this music are of the opinion that by including these *dangdut* rhythms, *saluangdendang* is deserving of the name *saluangdangdut*, whereas in fact the musical elements of *dangdut* are not only the ‘*ndang-dut*’ rhythm alone. *Dangdut* has its own structure and musical concept. This type of transplantation can be described as *latah* (irrational imitative behaviour), experimental, and new on a level of ‘negotiation’ of concept and format” (Asril, 2010).

In the 2000s, the dominance of *orgentunggal* reached a saturation point as a medium of musical entertainment. As a result, a number of other new musical genres appeared, such as *talempongoyang*, a musical genre using the *talempong* instrument – a traditional Minangkabau instrument – tuned diatonically and combined with several other universal musical instruments (keyboard, drum set, bass guitar, and so on). This musical ensemble has the ability to play various kinds of songs from different musical genres. In addition, this era also witnessed the reappearance of a number of combo bands that had previously died out due to the popularity of *orgentunggal*. One important event that occurred during the middle of the 2000s was the emergence of the traditional music *saluangdendang* combined with keyboard (*orgentunggal*). The presence of this music gained wide appreciation from the public as a medium for entertainment. According to Rustim, the inclusion of the *orgen* in the performance of *saluangdendang* was first initiated by Jon Sutan Mudo in August 2007 in Bukittinggi, and subsequently developed rapidly at the end of 2008 (Rustim 2010: 124). The form of this new genre was the combination of *saluangdendang* and *orgen* (keyboard), and became referred to as *saluangorgen*. In this music, the *saluang* still functions as the melody instrument and accompanies the singing, while the *orgen* is used to set the tempo and to provide rhythms and chords. The songs performed are generally happy songs and songs from other musical genres such as pop and especially *dangdut*. Performances of *saluangorgen* are not held on a stage that has been nicely arranged such as for a performance by a combo band, but instead use a smaller and simpler stage where the singers and *saluang* player sit, while the *orgen* player sits on a chair behind them. See figure 1.



Figure 1. The singers, *saluang* player, and *tukangoyak* (*janang*) sit at the front while the *orgen* player sits behind during a performance (Photo: Asril 2010).

The transplantation of the keyboard to *saluangdandang* is oriented towards “popular” taste but is extremely simple. The songs or *dendang* sung are traditional songs with new arrangements and “new” songs based on traditional *dendang*. This type of transplantation seems to be rather premature and fails to consider seriously the aesthetical and artistic aspects of the music as a whole. Even the creative work of arranging the songs is not done properly. The principle is simply “as long as it can be played”, to meet the public taste for entertainment. The work methods of the artists carrying out this transplantation display irrational behaviour (*‘latah’*), producing music with a very poor taste. The result of their work can be described in both artistic and aesthetical terms as kitsch.

Nevertheless, the performance of *saluangorgen* is currently enjoyed by a wide audience. Rina Oktavia states that since they more often than not present *dangdut* songs, performances of *bagurauoyak* (*saluangorgen*) are enjoyed by most of the audience (*rang pagurau*). In line with this, many young singers have not mastered the repertoire of classical *dendang*, such as *dandangratok*, and for this reason *dangdut* and other pop songs with a fast tempo are often performed (Oktavia, 2012: 18).

The performance structure of *saluangorgen* has not undergone any significant changes from that of *saluangdandang*. The first song performed still begins with *dendang* Singgalang, followed by songs with a happy theme which immediately create a joyful, lively atmosphere, reinforced by the *orgen* that is amplified at a high level through speakers. This is different from a performance of *saluangdandang* in which the lively or joyful atmosphere is built up in stages and without such loud amplification because the singers’ voices and the sound of the *saluang* do not use a very large or complete sound system. The performance of *saluangorgen* with a musical character that is joyful and played at a loud volume also affects the audience watching the performance. Some members of the audience, especially young people, react to the music by entering the arena and dancing, something that would never be done during a performance of *saluangdandang*. Figure 2 below shows the audience responding to the song performed.



Figure 2. Members of the audience dance while the performance takes place because the songs performed have a joyful tempo, especially when *dangdut* songs are sung (Photo: Asril 2010).

Other members of the audience, in particular those who are used to watching performances of *saluangdendang*, are not influenced by any particular kind of beat. They remain politely seated, as is common behaviour during a *saluangdendang* performance. They are referred to as a civilized audience according to the tradition of *saluangdendang* performance. See figure 3 below.



Figure 3. Members of the audience (*rang pagurai*) relax as they watch a performance of *saluangorgen* in Padangpanjang (Photo: Asril 2010).

4.5. Musical Ambivalence

According to Homi K. Bhabha, cultural hybridity or a mixed culture results in a cultural identity that always occupies an area of contradiction and ambivalence, or a “third space”. Ambivalence emphasizes a relationship that is somewhere between admiring and rejecting, hegemony and resistance (Bhabha, 1994). The subject is in a third space because there is a mutual pull between two forces (ambi-valent), between the first party and the second or the newcomer and the recipient. The hybridization of *saluangdendang* and *orgentunggal* has produced a new musical ‘genre’ known as *saluangorgen*. Its compositional elements are *saluangdendang* along with all the aspects included in its musical concept, such as scale, songs or *dendang*, style of performance, and musical ‘orchestration’ with a linear melody, while the elements of *orgentunggal* include a musical concept which uses diatonic pitches and a system of orchestration similar to a combo band (a keyboard complete with various music programs). In its performance, *saluangorgen* always includes a *saluang* and an *orgen* as the main instruments, and performs songs that can be usually played by these two musical ensembles, although the singers are dominated more by the influence of *saluangdendang*.

The combination of the two musical genres – *saluangdendang* and *orgentunggal* has resulted in a musical ambivalence as described by Bhabha. There are three musical situations that may occur as a result of this hybridization: the dominance of *saluangdendang*, a balanced fusion, and the dominance of *orgentunggal*. The dominance of *saluangdendang* is clearly visible when the songs performed are from the repertoire of *dendangratok* (sad songs). The characteristics of *dendangratok* are a slow tempo, melancholic mood, free meter, no definite tempo, and no fixed rule about when the singer begins after the introduction (*imbauan*) and when she sings again after a musical interlude. The singer is guided by the melody of the *saluang* which extends the length of the final note (for more than a whole note) as a sign for the singer to begin at the end of every interlude. The *orgen*, meanwhile, has difficulty following the singer and the *saluang* melody unless it plays only a drone pitch (long notes) without beat or rhythm, and in some cases an *orgen* is not used because it is considered to interfere with the performance.

A balanced fusion between *saluangdendang* and *orgentunggal* occurs when the songs performed come from the traditional *saluangdendang* repertoire known as *satangahtiang*. These songs have a medium tempo and a fixed beat and tempo so they can be accompanied by the *orgen* using a beat or rhythm that is included in the program of the keyboard. On the contrary, songs that are usually performed by *orgentunggal*, such as Minang pop songs with a medium tempo, can also be accompanied by the *saluang*. Hence, songs from the *saluangdendang* repertoire and the *orgentunggal* repertoire can be performed together. In this case there is clearly a balanced fusion between the two compositional elements of *saluang* and *orgen*, although in truth there is still a tug for dominance between the two elements.

The dominance of *orgentunggal* is clearly felt when the songs performed are Minang pop songs, Indonesian pop songs from various genres, and especially *dangdut* songs. In this instance, the music feels like a performance of

orgentunggal, and the role and sound of the *saluang* is repressed or weakened so that it is virtually imperceptible. The problem is that the pitches of the *saluang* are unable to match or compete with the diatonic pitches, even if the *saluang* player blows harder. This is not the only problem, since the majority of *saluang* players in *saluangdendang* ensembles all over Minangkabau are not sensitive to diatonic pitches, with a few exceptions. As Halim Lenggang stated: “There are only about three *saluang* players who have a sensitivity to diatonic pitches, namely those who are used to playing with a combo band or *orgentunggal*, or have recorded music for Minang pop songs, and this includes myself.” (Halim Lenggang, interview, 20 August 2017 in Padangpanjang).

The musical ambivalence that occurs in *saluangorgen* is one of numerous cases that can be found in the various cultures of Indonesia. Budiawan (2010) writes that ambivalence is closely related to the concept of hybridity, imitation, ‘intermediate space’, parody, and hegemony-resistance, because there is an endeavour to imitate and admire a foreign culture that is considered to be better than one’s own culture.

5. Conclusion

The three situations of musical hybridization in *saluangorgen*, namely the dominance of *saluangdendang*, a balanced fusion, and the dominance of *orgentunggal* indicate a case of ambivalence in this music. When a performance is dominated by *saluangdendang* to the extent that it only performs *saluangdendang* without the use of *orgen*, it cannot really be referred to as *saluangorgen* since it is missing one of the compositional elements – the *orgen*. On the contrary, when a performance is dominated by the *orgen* to the extent that it does not include the *saluang* as the main melody instrument, its reference as *saluangorgen* is also flawed because it is missing the *saluang* which is one of the compositional elements of *saluangorgen*. However, on the whole these two musical situations are still in the domain of a *saluangorgen* performance. This is part of a contradictive situation in a space of ambivalence. The principle of ambivalence in a balanced musical fusion is found between the two compositional elements of *saluangorgen*, and becomes a third space that exists between *saluangdendang* and *orgentunggal*.

The ambivalence in *saluangorgen* is dilemmatic. A tradition that has become a strong ‘self’ identity is forced to include an element of foreign culture (Western music, through the keyboard and Indonesian pop music such as *dangdut*) to make it feel more Western or more remarkable, but it still only belongs to the owners of the tradition, with the result that its identity is obscure. Efforts to reject or counterbalance the dominance of Western music and Indonesian pop music, especially *dangdut*, by continuing to perform *saluangdendang*, have been dragged into the domain of interfusion, which indirectly results in a recognition and admiration for the dominance of Western music and Indonesian pop music (*dangdut*).

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