

# Aesthetic Elements in the Structure of Bagurau Saluang-Dendang Performance in Minangkabau

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## Abstract

The purpose of this research is to discover the aesthetic elements in the structure of *bagurau saluang* performance in Minangkabau. These aesthetic elements can be divided into two groups. The first group is related to musical techniques, and include: *danguang saluang* (roundness of sound); *rauik saluang/dendang* (subtleties of delivering the rhythms of the song); *pamanih* (auxiliary tones or pitches); *garinyiak* (melodic ornaments); *sayik* (sliding notes); *piciak* (soft sounds produced with power); *kalorok* (melodic feel); and *pakiak* (high, shrill sound). The second group is associated with aesthetic values, and includes: melody, rhythm, form, and texture. *Bagurau* is a form of joking, arranged in the poetic style of *pantun*, which is sung in a rhythmic manner, accompanied by the traditional Minangkabau wind instrument known as *saluang*. A qualitative method is used as the basis of the research, with the researcher acting as the instrument for data collection through participant observation, interviewing, and documentation. The results show that aesthetically, the mastery of musical technique for playing the *saluang* in the structure of *bagurau* performance can give aesthetic satisfaction to the audience.

**Keywords:** aesthetic elements, structure, *bagurau saluang*.

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## 1. Introduction

Aesthetic elements are associated with the components that characterize something in a single unit - or structure - and can provide a sense of satisfaction to the audience, in this case in the context of *bagurau saluang* (joking through the performance of a traditional Minangkabau art). *Bagurau* can appear when people are playing dominoes, drinking coffee at a street-side stall, and on other occasions where banter may arise as a form of entertainment - such as in the performance of *saluang* (a kind of wind instrument traditional to Minangkabau). Andar Indra Sastra writes that *bagurau* in the context of a *saluang-dendang* performance also serves as a medium for joking, through the rhythmic play of the vocal music, or *dendang*. Aesthetically, the *dendang* rhythms, which are accompanied by the *tukang saluang* (*saluang* musician), can become a medium for playful banter within the *saluang-dendang* performance - in a democratic atmosphere (Sastra, 2010:2).

In connection with the performance of *bagurau saluang-dendang*, Asril et al. state that *saluang-dendang*, if viewed in terms of its compositional elements, consists only of *saluang* and *dendang* (the instrumental and vocal elements). In a performance, these two musical elements come together to play the *saluang* and *dendang* melodies (Asril, et al, 2018: 33). No other instruments are used to support the accompaniment. The function of *saluang-dendang* is to provide a medium of entertainment for the Minangkabau people in West Sumatra, which they refer to as *bagurau*. Rustim, et al. (2019: 36) write that *bagurau* is the performance of the traditional art of *saluang-dendang* which involves groups of *pagurau* (jokers) who interact during the performance. The traditional performance of *bagurau saluang-dendang* in Minangkabau is an example of an art form which includes the participation and interaction of the *pagurau* in its performance.

*Bagurau* (Indonesian: *bergurau*, joking) is a form of lighthearted banter or joking, arranged in the poetic form of *pantun* and sung in a particular rhythmic manner. The *saluang* is a traditional Minangkabau wind instrument, classified as an aerophone, which is a kind of end-blown flute, played using a technique of circular breathing. *Bagurau saluang* can be understood as a medium for joking which is arranged aesthetically in the form of an art performance. The art of *dendang*, packaged aesthetically as the medium for *bagurau*, can be differentiated as having two distinct characters, namely 'old' *dendang* and 'new' *dendang*. Old *dendang* serves as an aesthetical or nostalgic adventure into the past, filled with romanticism. Usually the *bagurau* audiences for *dendang* lama are members of the older generation who enjoy remembering romantic images of the past. New *dendang*, on the other hand, represents the younger generation, most of whom are generally still preoccupied with matters of love - expressed through the poetic rhyme. Both of these groups can be categorized as *bagurau* enthusiasts.

The presentation of *dendang* in a performance of *bagurau saluang-dendang* is in strophic form, in which a particular type of melody is sung over and over again by the *pendendang* (vocalist) with different *pantun* texts. These *pantun* texts are produced spontaneously, with themes chosen to suit the atmosphere and occasion of the performance. For this reason, the thought process needed to create the *pantun* (logogeneity) is an extremely important element in the traditional performance of *saluang-dendang*, since it is responsible for building a

dynamic atmosphere surrounding the performance. It is this aspect of dynamism in the performance that has helped establish *saluang-dendang* as one of the most well-known and best liked genres of traditional music in Minangkabau.

*Saluang* enthusiasts can be grouped into two main categories, namely those who are active and those who are passive. The enthusiasts described here are those who are active, or who participate actively in the *gurau* arena. There are three ways a person may be involved in a *bagurau saluang-dendang* performance: by asking for a particular song to be sung, by conveying a message to be sung, and by asking a question to be answered by the singer through the *dendang*. People who do not participate in this kind of active involvement fall into the category of passive enthusiasts. The problems discussed in this article are: the concepts of sound and melody that are associated with playing techniques, *dendang* characters, and enthusiasts.

## 2. Method

A qualitative method is used in this research. The researcher is the main instrument, directly responsible for the collection and processing of data related to the material object in the performance of *bagurau saluang-dendang*. The primary data collection was carried out through participant observation, interviewing, and documentation. The primary data obtained through these three models of investigation formed the basis for the analysis in accordance with the focus of the research. In addition, secondary data was also needed to strengthen the argumentation, in order for the research results to achieve a level of credibility that could be accounted for scientifically.

Participant observation was the second step of the research and involved the direction observation of *saluang* performances in various places in Luhak Nan Tigo, which is the main region of Minangkabau culture. Prior to this, the writer had read a variety of literature, including articles related to *saluang-dendang*. The information and empirical knowledge gathered through direct involvement in events of *bagurau saluang-dendang* performance served as a guideline for interviewing a number of informants and artists. The data obtained from the interviews with informants were related to the concepts of sound and melody associated with the playing techniques of the *saluang* wind instrument, namely: (1) *danguang saluang* (the *saluang* drone); (2) *rauik saluang*, or *rauik dendang*, which is the subtleties of presenting the *dendang* rhythms; (3) *pamanih* ('sweetener'), which is the auxiliary notes produced spontaneously; (4) *garinyiak* (melodic ornaments); (5) *sayik* (sliding notes, produced using a 'cutting' technique); (6) *piciak* (pressure), creating the impression of soft sounds that have power, and can create a depth of feeling; (7) *kalorok*, a melody that is sourced from a blowing technique to generate the desired character of the *dendang* melody; and (8) *pakiak* (a shrill sound) (M. Halim, interview, 2019). In addition to the information about technique, the researcher was also able to obtain data related to the character of *dendang* and *dendang* enthusiasts.

Besides conducting interviews, documentation was carried out through audio-visual and visual media in order to complete the data and strengthen the argumentation that the event really did take place and was in accordance with its context. The data analysis was carried out inductively, in accordance with the nature of qualitative research, and the researcher constructed an emic way of thought in the explanation.

## 3. Discussion

### 3.1. Concepts of Sound and Melody in *Saluang* Playing Techniques

Jhon J.O.I. Ihalaw explains that a concept is a symbol that is given a particular meaning (conception) for a particular event (object) (Ihalaw, 2004: 27). Sound is a wave produced by an object that vibrates, including a musical instrument. In this case, the musical instrument studied is the *saluang* (a kind of Minangkabau wind instrument). Andar Indra Sastra, in *Art and Design Studies*, states that the *saluang* is classified as an aerophone, and more specifically is a type of end-blown flute. A *saluang* is made from a single piece of *talang* (a kind of bamboo). The nodes at the base and the upper end are cut to create an open cavity at both ends. The upper section of the instrument has four sound holes, known as *giriak*. These four holes can produce five different pitch levels and the music can therefore be categorized as pentatonic (Sastra, et al., 2018: 47). See the picture below.



**Figure 1:** *Saluang* is instrument *saluang-dendang*  
(documentation: Jonni, 2020)

The positioning of the holes is determined based on specific measurements. The upper end of the instrument is cut at a slant to create a gap for the air, or a wind hole, known as 'suai'. The *suai* is blown at an angle to produce the sound of the *saluang*. Hence, the notes are not produced by the vibration of a reed, since the *saluang* does not have a reed. The concept of sound in the performance of *bagurau saluang-dendang* can be understood as symbols that are assigned meaning related to all the playing techniques that are associated with the sound and melody.

As a music system, *saluang* is bound by a number of concepts that appear in local terms and have their own meaning for the performer. The creation of music in society cannot be separated from the concepts that are the origin of knowledge which comes from world of ideas. In order to understand music in the life of the community, we must encounter concepts that are rich in various meanings. From these meanings, discourse will arise about the paradigms of knowledge of music, both as a culture and in a cultural context.

Merriam writes that on the whole, concepts form the framework of music that is regulated in a community and the framework on which people think about what music is and what music should be (Merriam, 1964: 63). In technical musical terms, he states that every music system is based on a series of concepts that are related to music and create a music system as a life phenomenon that is found amongst other existing phenomena (Merriam, 1964: 63). *Saluang* as a music system is regulated based on the concepts of *giriak* (sound holes) and *suai* (sound source) as part of its music system.

Aesthetically, *saluang* as a music system cannot of course be separated from the concepts through which it was formed into a unit as the basis for creating a form of music. Gilles Deleuze & Fellex Guattari (2010: 18-20) state that all [musical] concepts are related to a number of problems, without which the concepts would be meaningless. Every concept has an *outcome* which involves a relationship with various concepts that are located on the same level. This *outcome* is a process of 'becoming' and 'being' a form of music. The form of music in a performance of *saluang* consists of *saluang-dendang*, both of which are related to one another and have their own musical concepts. The concepts of 'becoming' and 'being' from the production of sound in a *bagurau saluang* performance are related to all the playing techniques that are associated with sound and melody in the explanation below.

- 1). *Danguang* (the *saluang* drone) is a dense, powerful sound produced by blowing the *saluang*.
- 2). *Rauik*, or *rauik dendang* are the 'subtleties' of presenting the *dendang* rhythms with the *saluang* or the voice.
- 3). *Pamanih* are the auxiliary notes produced spontaneously to embellish a particular note in the *dendang* melody. These auxiliary notes are produced by doubling or combining rhythms of the main pitches with other higher pitches. There are two ways to add a *pamanih* note to the *saluang* melody: the basic rhythm is doubled by either the fourth or fifth pitch level. The addition of the *pamanih* notes depends on the musical feel of the *tukang saluang*, who spontaneously selects which *pamanih* notes he wishes to play.
- 4). *Garinyiak* is a kind of melodic ornament which serves to embellish the melody. *Garinyiak* is the spirit or soul of a *bagurau saluang-dendang* performance, and in the *dendang* vocal part it is referred to as *darai*. A melody that has no *garinyiak* is difficult to enjoy because the *bagurau saluang-dendang* loses its sense of communication with the audience.
- 5). *Sayik* are notes that are produced using a cutting technique. *Sayik* notes are notes that are played 'imperfectly' by the *saluang* to give the impression of a melody with the concept of Minangkabau musical character, or notes that seem to 'slide' or bend. *Dendang* Minangkabau has a melodic character similar to that of *sayik* notes. All the *saluang* pitches will be given a turn at being played in the form of a *sayik* note, depending on

- the character of the *dendang* that is being accompanied.
- 6). *Piciak* is the impression of a soft sound that has power, and creates a depth of feel.
  - 7). *Kalorok* is a melody that is produced using a particular playing technique to create the desired character of the *dendang* melody.
  - 8). *Pakiak* is a shrill pitch that is produced from the fifth pitch on the *saluang*. It is produced by blowing the fifth pitch strongly while covering the first and second sound holes in order to create a *pakiak* tone. This *pakiak* note is not the sixth pitch of the *saluang* but may also represent the seventh or eighth pitch that is needed when accompanying the *dendang* melody. Hence, all the notes of the *dendang* melody above the fifth pitch of the *saluang* are represented by *pakiak* pitches, so that the harmonic impression is still present.

All of the playing techniques described above that relate to sound and melody - 'becoming' and 'being' - will always come together in the playing of *saluang*, both in the context of accompanying *dendang* and also in its own right when playing the instrumental melodies of *dendang*.

### 3.2. Character of *Dendang* and *Dendang* Enthusiasts

Character can be defined as a set of attributes that are always admired as indications of a person's kindness, virtue, and moral maturity. Etymologically, the term character comes from the Latin language, and means temperament, disposition, spiritual traits, etiquette, personality, and morals. According to W.B. Saunders (1977: 126), character is the real and distinct properties displayed by an individual, a number of attributes that can be observed in an individual ([https://www.dosenpendidikan.co.id/karakter-diunduh\\_tgl\\_2\\_Oktober\\_2020](https://www.dosenpendidikan.co.id/karakter-diunduh_tgl_2_Oktober_2020)). The musical character of *dendang* is related to the aesthetic principles created by the *dendang* rhythms (singing) in the form of *pantun* in a *bagurau saluang-dendang* performance. In the character of *dendang*, we find temperament, disposition, spiritual traits, etiquette, personality, and morals. The character of *dendang* in a performance of *bagurau saluang-dendang* can be divided into two categories, namely the character of old *dendang* and the character of new *dendang*.

The musical character of old *dendang* is highly effective as a way of providing musical pleasure for members of the older generation and communities who have moved away from their homeland so that they can reminisce about the past; the musical character of new *dendang*, on the other hand, is suitable for the minds of the young generation, who are generally still preoccupied with romantic affairs, in the way the *pantun* is arranged. The logical impact of the musical concept of these new *dendang* has ultimately been to position the course of a *bagurau saluang-dendang* performance to become extremely dynamic, because the performance structure and style provide opportunities to be treated in accordance with the goals of those who are organizing the performance. It is these factors that make *bagurau saluang-dendang* performance extremely effective to be used as a means of fund raising for development in a rural community, namely by 'providing entertainment while building, without the need to use a ticket system.'

*Pantun* can function as a bridge to mastering the *rauik* of the *dendang* rhythms. *Rauik dendang* is the character of the song, or the accuracy with which the *tukang dendang* presents the *dendang* rhythms in accordance with its expression, so that the audience feels restless or moved when listening to *dendang* with a sad (*ratok*) character; on the contrary they will feel happy and excited when listening to *dendang* with a joyful character. Thus, the *dendang* performer holds an important role in beautifying or embellishing the rhythms according to the character of the *dendang* being performed.

There are three categories of character of *dendang* rhythms: '*dendang ratok* (sad or mournful *dendang*), *satangah tiang* (semi-mournful *dendang*), and *dendang gembira* (joyful *dendang*).' The themes of the *pantun* for *dendang ratok* and *dendang satangah ratok* are already fixed, and include *pantun perasaan* (*pantun* about fate or destiny), and themes of advice; *dendang gembira*, on the other hand, use *pantun* for young people, some even containing humorous themes. The choice of themes the *tukang dendang* makes for *pantun* texts may at times be inappropriate, due to lack of experience. For example, *pantun* for or about young people should not use *dendang ratok* or *dendang satangah ratok* but instead should use *dendang gembira*.

In order to improve the skill for creating *pantun* of a high quality, *tukang dendang* should explore all aspects of life in society, because the creativity needed for creating and developing *pantun* originates from events that take place in the community. *Tukang dendang* who never experience hardship, or fail to take notice of the real-life situations of people living in poverty may also have trouble learning *pantun*. For this reason, it is important for *tukang dendang* to explore social events taking place in the surrounding community, because the real life events taking place in people's lives provide a source of inspiration which gives rise to new expression of *pantun dendang* in a spontaneous manner when performing in front of an audience of *dendang* enthusiasts.

Sometimes *dendang* tell the story of a person's life, but in the *saluang-dendang* tradition, the *tukang dendang* is not allowed to mention the name of the person about whom the *pantun* is written. This kind of *pantun* is known in Minangkabau as *pantun ibaraik* (metaphoric *pantun*). One of the concepts of *pantun ibaraik* is for the situation of a person's life to be likened to the fate of an object or animal, such as the fate of wood, a boat, a coconut, a flower, a ship, a bird, a fish, a horse, a bee, water, oil, and so on. For example, it may be the fate of a



cart horse that is spoken of, or the situation of a boat about to capsize, and these metaphors touch the audience's feelings, while messages or criticism contained in *pantun* may serve as a moral teaching for *dendang* enthusiasts or audiences.

The symbolic dimension of *pantun*, which represents the dimension of the daily social life of the Minangkabau community, has a special character of communication when the *dendang* is performed. Alan Lomax states that singing is a special act of communication that is more organized and enters into a redundancy that is too formal. The redundancy of singing soars high, grabs attention, and invites group participation. The primary function of song (*dendang*) is to express shared feelings and to create shared activities for certain groups or communities of people. Therefore, the content of the communication must be social, not individual, normative, and specific (Lomax, 1979: 3). Fraser writes that a particular *dendang* is recognized by its melody, not its text, because the text may change for certain melodies, from one *dendang* performer to another and from one performance to another. *Dendang* melodies are strophic in form, which means the same melody is repeated while the choice of texts and number of cycles of repetition varies depending on the circumstances (Fraser, 2013: 18).

In connection with this, Sastra states that the traditional performance of *saluang-dendang* is in strophic form, where the melody is sung over and over by the *dendang* singer with different *pantun* texts. The content of the texts is created spontaneously, with the themes chosen to suit the purpose and situation of the performance. Therefore, the ability to create *pantun* is an essential skill that the *dendang* singer must possess in order to build the dynamic atmosphere in a performance (Sastra, 2018: 52). This essential skill is used to channel the feelings of the audience. Blacking (1974) believes that if music functions as a sign or symbol of various kinds of human experience, its performance can help to channel the emotions of the listener [audience] in a particular direction (Blacking, 1974: 18).

Enthusiasts of *bagurau saluang-dendang* can be divided into two categories, namely those who are active and those who are passive. Active enthusiasts are those who participate or are actively involved in the performance arena. There are three kinds of involvement in *bagurau saluang-dendang*: asking for a particular song to be performed, presenting a message to be included in a song, and asking a question to be answered by the singer through the *dendang*. People who are not actively involved in this way are categorized as passive enthusiasts. Requests for particular songs to be sung may have one of two different purposes: aesthetic (spiritual) satisfaction and sensual satisfaction.

#### *Aesthetic satisfaction*

The request for a particular song may be founded on a person's personal wishes or liking for the song, especially for the purpose of fulfilling the individual's complete desire for (aesthetic) beauty. In a broader sense, it fulfils the spiritual needs of the enthusiast, in particular related to aesthetic values. An individual in the audience makes the request for a particular song through the *janang*, who regulates the mechanism for requesting songs in every performance of *bagurau saluang-dendang*. The person making the request hands over an amount of money, in accordance with the "rules of play". The *janang* then tells the *dendang* singer to sing the song requested, for example *Singgalang Patah Tigo*. The song requested must be sung properly by the *dendang* singer (with the melody and text that are usually used for the particular song). The person making the request has a high appreciation for the song he or she has requested. If the singer does not have a good command of the song requested, the singer will receive criticism from the *dendang* enthusiast.

Thus, when a request is made for a particular song, it must be sung well and according to the aesthetic values of the song. Active enthusiasts generally have a high appreciation for the songs they request, in aspects of both melody and text. The ability to present *pantun* that touches the feelings of the listener, due to its depth of meaning, plays a part in determining the quality of the performance of the song by the *dendang* singer.

#### *Sensual Satisfaction*

In addition to requesting songs for purposes of aesthetic satisfaction, some song requests are made for the purpose of sensual satisfaction. This can be seen from the meaning of the song requested to be sung by the *dendang* singer. This kind of *dendang* text is usually vulgar or sensual. The request for this type of song usually occurs in performances of *bagurau saluang-dendang* that take place at *alek nagari* events (art festivals and village entertainment). In this context, the more important aspect is to present the content of the *pantun* with its vulgar or sensual meaning, while the melody and title of the song are not an important consideration for the person requesting the song. The singer may choose rhythms and melodic character that seem suitable for the song, as long as she manages to convey the *pantun* containing the vulgar or sensual meaning.

The request for this kind of song with a vulgar meaning by an individual (such as Sutan Palindih, age about 45 years old) may be made by saying: "o...o...ooh...Mel (the name of the *dendang* singer) please explain (sing) how the text really goes for the song *Talago di Bawah Ijuak*" (a song with a text and meaning that always has sensual connotations). The *dendang* singer will sing what the person asks for, in accordance with the request made, which in this case is sensual and vulgar. This kind of behaviour is closely related to sensual satisfaction.

The metaphors in the *pantun* that have sensual connotations are one of the areas of play in the performance of *bagurau saluang-dendang*.

### 3.3. Aesthetic Elements in Structure

The analysis of *saluang-dendang* from the point of view of its structure is an important aesthetic element of *saluang-dendang* to observe. People who love the art of *bagurau* are extremely sensitive to what takes place in *saluang-dendang*; it is a matter of structure. The power and spirit of *saluang-dendang* lies in its structure, so it needs to be studied in detail to discover where the values and spirit of *saluang-dendang* lie.

First of all, *saluang-dendang* structure can be analyzed in terms of the melody; the melodic element of a *saluang-dendang* song is played repetitively, while the accompanying *saluang* melody is played in unison, a method of singing or music played with a single voice; and heterophony, a form of musical performance in which the same melody is played but with different melodic variations, this applies to the *dendang* melody. The *saluang* melody is not only played to accompany the melody (*pantun*) of the *dendang* but is also played in the introduction (*imbauan*), the transition (*melodi raun*) and the coda (*panutuik*).

There are four kinds of melody played by the *saluang* instrument to accompany a *dendang* song: (1) the *imbauan* melody, which has a unique melodic pattern to suit the character of the *dendang* to be accompanied. The *imbauan* melody always appears at the first blow of the *saluang* or before entering the *dendang* melody in the first *pantun*; (2) the unison *saluang* melody, which depends on the *dendang* repertoire in the performance; (3) the *sampaian* melody, which serves to connect fragments of the *dendang* melody, and usually appears between two lines of the verse in *dendang* with a sad character; (4) the *raun* melody, which functions to fill out the melody between one verse of *pantun* and the next, because the *dendang* singer does not sing several verses of *pantun* continuously but rests for a moment after completing each verse of *pantun*. The length of the *raun* melody is left up to the *tukang saluang* to decide, and the *dendang* singer waits for a melodic code from the *tukang saluang* to know when to sing the next verse of *pantun*.

The second aspect analyzed is rhythm, and the rhythms of *saluang dendang* are determined by the character of the *dendang*. A *dendang* with a joyful character (*dendang gembira*) has fixed or regular rhythms (with a beat, pulse, and accentuation), and *dendang* with a *ratok* character are in a free rhythm (not fixed). To understand how a complete melody is manifested either in a fixed rhythm or free rhythm, it is necessary to analyze the separate fragments that occur in a particular rhythm. The way the rhythms of *dendang gembira* work is the same as for *dendang ratok*, the only difference being in the beat and time frame.

The different rhythms found in a *saluang-dendang* melody are: (1) the *batang* (main notes); (2) *pamanih* (auxiliary notes - 'sweeteners'); and (3) *garinyiak* (ornamental notes in the form of micro tones). The *batang* notes make up the basic melody of *saluang-dendang* before any improvisation, or any "Minangkabau" touch is given to the melody. These rhythms are usually performed by people who are just learning *saluang* melodies and *dendang* singing. The *pamanih* notes are auxiliary notes produced spontaneously to beautify the basic rhythms of the *batang* notes in a *dendang* melody. These auxiliary notes are played by doubling the rhythms of the *batang* notes with other higher notes. There are two methods that can be used to produce *pamanih* notes in a *saluang* melody: combining the basic rhythms with the fourth or fifth pitch. The selection of *pamanih* notes depends on the musical taste of the *tukang saluang* and is made spontaneously. The *tukang saluang* is free to choose which *pamanih* notes he wishes to use. The *garinyiak* notes include all the notes outside the *batang* and *pamanih* notes. The function of the *garinyiak* notes is to embellish the melody played on the *saluang*.

The notes played as *garinyiak* can be described as micro tones. These *garinyiak* tones decorate the main melody of a song and can only be produced and played by a skilled and experienced *saluang* player. *Saluang* players have mastered numerous melodies of *saluang-dendang* of all different characters, and especially melodies with a *ratok* character. Songs with a *ratok* character have a depth of expression, presented in unique Minangkabau style. This kind of song has a highly complex melody compared with the melodies of *dendang* with a joyful character, because of the large number of ornamental *garinyiak* notes used. Novice *saluang* players who have not yet mastered many of the melodies of *dendang ratok* have difficulty playing melodies with *garinyiak* notes. They only have the skill level needed to play the main *batang* melodies. A melody without *garinyiak* is not able to represent the true spirit of the audience because *saluang-dendang* without *garinyiak* loses the ability to communicate with the audience. Songs or *dendang* that are accompanied only by *saluang* melodies with a basic rhythm (or *batang* notes) will feel bland and lifeless. It is the *garinyiak* that give the soul and power to the *saluang* melody. A *bagurau saluang-dendang* performance that presents melodies with *garinyiak* notes will receive a strong response from the audience. A 'professional' *saluang* player together with a 'professional' *dendang* singer will receive numerous invitations from the community to perform. In the picture below, the *saluang* player, M. Halim Lenggang, performs together with well-known *dendang* singers Ernawati Tek E, Eka Sungai Patai, and Rina Sungayang.



**Figure 2.** A performance of *bagurau saluang-dendang* at an event for young people in the city of Padang Panjang. (Photo: Asril Muchtar)

The third aspect analyzed is ‘form’; the form of a *saluang-dendang* melody depends on the number of lines in each verse of *pantun*. Usually, *pantun* is made up of four lines of text, and the melody is frequently in the form AA or AB, which means that the melody for the first two lines (*sampiran*) is often repeated in the third and fourth lines, or alternatively the melody may change completely in the last two lines. *Pantun* that consist of six lines of text are often accompanied by a melody in the form A A’ or A B, where the first three lines are not exactly the same as the last three lines (A A’) or may change completely (A B). *Pantun* consisting of eight lines of text are usually used for *dendang ratok* and are always followed by *pantun* with six lines of text. This kind of *dendang* is in the form A B C C’. The first four lines of the *pantun* always have a different melody from the last four lines (A B), while the melody for the first three lines of the second verse differs only slightly from the last three lines of the second verse.

The fourth aspect analyzed is the ‘texture’; in general, *saluang-dendang* has a monophonic texture (with a single melodic line), it is never played in a polyphonic style, and only very rarely is *saluang-dendang* played in a responsorial manner. However, sometimes *dendang* may be accompanied by two *tukang saluang* who play together.

### 3.4. Musical Character

The performance of *dendang* accompanied by the *saluang* instrument is in strophic form, in which the same melody is played for every verse of the text sung. A single melody is performed in repetition, or as an ostinato, using different *pantun* texts. The *pantun* texts for the *dendang* include the *sampiran* and the main content, or the second part of the couplet, and may consist of 4 lines, 6 lines, 8 lines, 12 lines, or even 14 or 16 lines. The number of lines in each *pantun* is adapted to suit the melodic concept of each *dendang* type performed.

*Pantun* texts are presented spontaneously and themes are chosen to suit the context or situation of the *bagurau saluang-dendang* performance. Thus, the thought process required to produce *pantun* in a spontaneous manner (logogeneity) is vital to help build a dynamic atmosphere. This aspect of dynamism has made *saluang* one of the best known genres of traditional music in the Minangkabau community.

The main power of the music lies in the melody of the song, which is oriented to one of two musical characters - old *dendang* and new *dendang*. The character of old *dendang* is highly effective for creating an atmosphere of nostalgia for the older generation and people living away from home; the character of new *dendang* suits the spirit of the young generation, most of whom are preoccupied with romantic problems. The effect of the musical concept of new *dendang* is to make the performance of *bagurau saluang-dendang* more dynamic, because the structure and style of the performance provide opportunities to be treated according to the wishes of the young generation. This is the underlying factor that makes the performance of *bagurau saluang-dendang* highly effective for raising money for development in a village community, by ‘entertaining while building without the need for a ticket system.’

In the tradition of *bagurau saluang-dendang* performance, a group formation is always used, since the performance is given by a number of *saluang* artists and *dendang* singers. A *bagurau saluang-dendang* group consists of 1 *tukang saluang*, 2 or 3 *tukang dendang*, and 1 *janang*. *Saluang-dendang* artists do not usually belong to a particular art association, since no such organization exists. Hence, the formation of *saluang* artists changes from one *bagurau saluang-dendang* performance to another, depending on the context. This is one of the unique features of the *saluang-dendang* tradition compared with other art forms of a group nature, and it means that the management for a *saluang* performance also has its own system.

#### 4. Conclusion

The concepts of ‘becoming’ and ‘being’ from the production of sound in a *bagurau saluang* performance are related to all the playing techniques that are associated with sound and melody, which are: (1) *danguang saluang* (the *saluang* drone); (2) *rauik saluang*, or *rauik dendang*, which is the subtleties of presenting the *dendang* rhythms; (3) *pamanih* (‘sweetener’), which is the auxiliary notes produced spontaneously; (4) *garinyiak* (melodic ornaments); (5) *sayik* (sliding notes, produced using a ‘cutting’ technique); (6) *piciak* (pressure), creating the impression of soft sounds that have power, and can create a depth of feeling; (7) *kalorok*, a melody that is sourced from a blowing technique to generate the desired character of the *dendang* melody; and (8) *pakiak* (a shrill sound).

The character of *dendang* in a *bagurau saluang-dendang* performance can be divided into two categories, namely: the character of old *dendang*, which is more effective as a form of musical entertainment that provides a sense of nostalgia for the older generation and people living away from home, and the character of new *dendang*, which suits the spirit of the younger generation. Requests for particular *dendang* to be sung have two different purposes: aesthetic (spiritual) satisfaction and sensual satisfaction. The aesthetic element in a *bagurau saluang-dendang* performance plays a significant role; people who enjoy *bagurau* are highly sensitive to what takes place in *saluang-dendang*; it is a matter of structure. The power and spirit of *saluang-dendang* lies in this structure, and encompasses its melody, rhythm, form, and texture.

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