

## **Musical Genres in Music of Karawitan**

Crosswords Between Tradition and New Music

### **Géneros en la música del karawitan**

Confluencias entre la tradición y la nueva música

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This research ontologically elaborates on categories of artistic on musical composition of karawitan music, characterized by particular styles. This writing is intended to describe musical forms in everyday life in Javanese music culture. This elaboration was done by identifying and taking apart the components of any term and musical concept as a manifestation of the cultural statements. The outcome of this explanation is a new conception and perception of artistic categories related to the medium and musical construction. In new creations of karawitan music, one can distinguish a new karawitan with classic/traditional nuances, another with popular nuances, with reinterpretation, and with an experimental or explorative nature. This writing seeks to characterize a generic idea generalized from particular instances of karawitan music.

Este artículo pretende llevar a cabo una categorización de los modos de composición de la música karawitan, siendo nuestra intención principal describir las formas musicales en la vida diaria de la cultura de Java. La identificación y análisis de los componentes de cada uno de los términos y conceptos musicales, entendidos como manifestación cultural, ha sido uno de nuestros principales objetivos. La investigación ha resultado en una nueva concepción y percepción de las categorías artísticas relacionadas con el medio y la construcción musical. De hecho, en las nuevas creaciones de la música karawitan se puede distinguir: un nuevo género con características clásico-tradicionales, otro de entronque popular, de reinterpretación, además de una tendencia a la exploración musical. Este escrito pretende alcanzar una idea genérica a partir de las particularidades de la música karawitan.



**Keywords:** Musical genre, aesthetic category, characteristic classification, musical treatment, karawitan.

**Palabras clave:** género musical, categoría estética, clasificación, tratamiento musical, karawitan.



Both the concept and form of the term “karawitan” are cultural realities that have grown in the area of Javanese culture. The layman’s perspective of karawitan is understood to be music of gamelan, even by Javanese people or Indonesian people outside Java.<sup>1</sup> However, not all musical constructions of karawitan are always articulated through gamelan instruments. In reality, there is a process of simple attribution in the thoughts, beliefs, and meanings that grow in the minds of ordinary people, so that they understand karawitan as gamelan music. This understanding arises because ordinary people are only able to see the reality of music from the empirical, and not from the conceptual point of view. Truthfully, the karawitan is a term that refers to the Javanese music from the conceptual side.

The word “gamelan” is a term used to indicate a group of instruments typically from Java and/or Bali, featuring a variety of them such as metallophones, xylophones, drums and gongs as well as bamboo flutes, bowed or rubbed and plucked strings in a particular assembly to express karawitan music. Musicality of karawitan does not have to be revealed through the gamelan instruments. So, the understanding of karawitan as music of gamelan is not entirely accepted, because Javanese karawitan is in fact often exposed as a form of music that does not use gamelan instruments. The musicality of karawitan without the medium of gamelan has characters, concepts and ways of expression which are synonymous with karawitan articulated by using gamelan medium.

During its development, as stated by Supanggah,<sup>2</sup> the term karawitan was used to refer to a variety of various musical genres that have the nature, character, concept, way of work, and/or rules that are similar to the music of karawitan. This understanding grows through the consideration of increasing urbanization as an important phenomenon since the 1970s in Indonesia, especially in Java. This happens because urbanization has intense effects, not only on the ecology of a region and on its economy, but also on the conditions of cultural arts in some communities.

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<sup>1</sup> SUPANGGAH, R. *Bothekan Karawitan I*. Surakarta. 2002, p. 5; <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gamelan>.

<sup>2</sup> SUPANGGAH, R. *Surakarta*. 2002, p. 5



Urbanization is essentially the increase over time in the population of cities in relation to the region's rural population. The most striking immediate transformation accompanying urbanization is the rapid change in the prevailing character of local livelihoods, through agriculture or more traditional local services and small-scale industry. It gives way to modern industry and urban and related commerce, with the city drawing on the resources of an ever-widening area for its own sustenance and goods to be traded or processed into manufactured goods. These factors all have significant impact on the life of karawitan music.

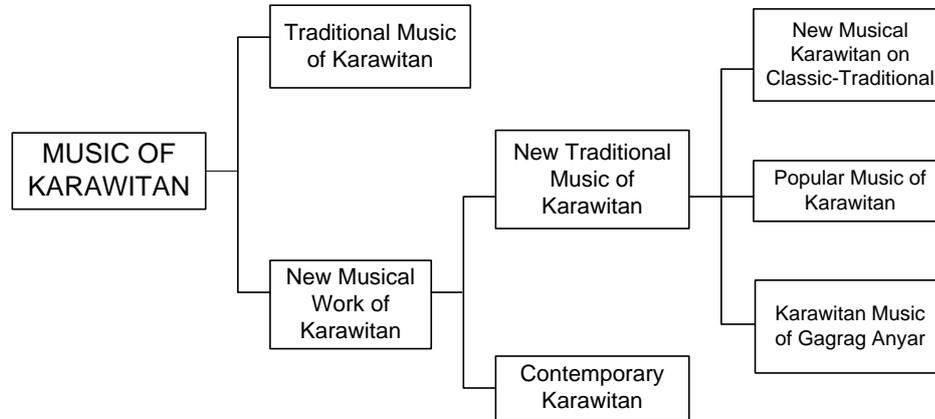
The music of karawitan in the context of urbanization is understood to be music with musical construction and typicality, manner and genuine form of cultural expression of the ethnic music in Indonesia. Therefore karawitan embodies the meaning of descriptive terms with very broad domains. I try to formulate the ranges of possible musical entities by classifying them into (1) culture areas, (2) personal characters, (3) character of groups, and (4) a musical genre.

Classification based on a culture area points towards the musical style that is determined by the music dialectics with talent, character, and aesthetic tendencies that grow and develop in a particular area. It produces terms such as musical styles of Sunda, Minangkabau, Bali, Banyumas, Yogyakarta, Surakarta, Jawa Timur, Madura, Cirebon, Semarang, Sragen, and so on. The sorting of musical style based on personal character refers to the types of karawitan that are determined by a strong musical substance that seem in an individual artist. It thereby generates the musical style of Nartosabda, Tjakrawasita, Martopangrawit, Rasito, Mang Koko, Gede Manik, and so on. Categorisation based on the character of the group points to musicality that is determined by the strong tendency of aesthetic that exist in a particular musical community. In this category we can find musical styles of RRI Surakarta, RRI Ngayogyakarta, Pura Pakualaman, Pura Mangkunegaran, the Palace of Surakarta, Surakarta ASKI musical styles, and so on.

Karawitan music also can be sorted based on musical genre. It refers to types of music that are determined by musical ideas, that relate to medium, vocabulary,



musical treatment, and inclination of its message. Basically, this categorization can be mapped as follows.



## A. The Traditional Music of Karawitan

The meaning of the term “traditional” is essentially something related to the manner, method, or typical style as a legacy of culture still alive in the present day. It cannot be separated from the mindset, behaviors, actions and attitudes to life as a cultural habit. In the community of karawitan, especially in Java, the meaning of “traditional” is often understood as “classic”, so the term “traditional karawitan music” is normally understood as classical karawitan music. These two terms (traditional and classic) are often used with very wide and overlapping connotations and denotations.<sup>3</sup>

The meaning of “classic”, which is also meant as traditional, here is understood as related to the principles or standards that are followed, appreciated, and respected continuously and inherited from generation to generation in specific artistic fields. The principle or the standard in the karawitan music is embodied in the arrangement and work of a musical system with specific characteristics that are transmitted by means of oral tradition, the creator of which is often anonymous.

The body of karawitan traditional music is musical composition (structure and treatment) which refers to the standard conventional structure and treatment.

<sup>3</sup> SUNARTO, B. *Sholawat Campurngaji: Musikalitas, Pertunjukan, dan Maknanya*, 2006, p. 126.



*Gendhing* as the composition of traditional karawitan constitutes anonymous creation in a cultural music legacy. The other nature of the *gêndhing* is close and stuck to musicians or *pengrawit*.

The traditional music of *karawitan* is marked by existing repertoire, the growth of many *gêndhing* that in the society of karawitan can be classified into (1) *gêndhing ageng* and (2) *gêndhing alit*. *Gêndhing ageng* is understood as the conventional music composition, which needs deep and adequate provisions and comprehensions. This *gendhing* is relatively complicated, and comprises no less than four sections. Each section has a different form and structure. *Gêndhing alit* is also conventional work, but requires neither deep nor adequate provisions and comprehensions. It is relatively simple, easy to imitate and easy to learn. It is possible that a single *gêndhing* comprises only one part of the form.

### 1. *Medium*

Traditional karawitan music as an expressive tool is performed using the media of voice or conventional gamelan. Here, I used the term “conventional gamelan” because lately there have been many new types of gamelan with a shape, structure, and musical function different from conventional gamelan. The conventional gamelan is a type of gamelan included in a group instrument whose empirical form is a musical cultural heritage. It is not a result of new engineering.

The involvement of the human voice in the karawitan is not a must. Vocal parts in karawitan differ from vocal parts in other traditions. Musical tradition specially demands placing the voice as the “main” entity, incomplete without its presence. If in a composition there is a part that is usually presented by vocal voice, and there is no figure capable of performing the vocal part, that part should be played by other instruments. The human voice in karawitan shares its position with other sound entities disclosed by the treatment through gamelan instruments.



## 2. Various Kinds of Gamelan

The conventional instruments of gamelan music are ensembles that exist in the island of Java, Madura, Bali, Kalimantan (Borneo) and Lombok in various kinds of sizes, shapes of ensembles, and pragmatic contexts. In Java two musical cultures have developed, namely (1) Javanese music culture scattered throughout Central Java and East Java, and (2) Sundanese musical culture scattered throughout West Java.

Gamelan is sometimes referred to by the use of the term “gong”. “Gong” is considered synonymous with gamelan in Bali and Lombok today, as was the case in Java from the eighteenth century up to mid-nineteenth century. Conventional gamelan instruments are formed and arranged in ensembles in a systemic manner, through the inheritance of a long history. The following are examples of some conventional gamelan, from Java, Sunda, Madura, Borneo and Bali.



Picture 1: Conventional Javanese Gamelan Ensemble Named *Gamelan Ageng*.



Picture 2: Conventional *Sundanese* (the West Java) Gamelan Ensemble Named *Gamelan Degung*. Collection of the University College London, United Kingdom.



Picture 3: Conventional Maduranese Gamelan Ensemble Named *Gamelan Klenangan*.



Picture 4: Gamelan from Borneo Named *Gamelan Banjar Rakyat*. Collection of the Lambungmangkurat Museum.



Picture 5: Conventional Balinese Gamelan Named *Gamelan Gong Kebyar*.

Haryono describes that gamelan appears in some inscriptions, literary texts, and temple reliefs from the eighth to the tenth century.<sup>4</sup> Johannes-Ferdinandus has also described traces of the history of gamelan that are scattered in various inscriptions, ancient literary texts, and temple reliefs on IX-XV century.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, there is no historian who has described the process of the formation of the gamelan ensemble, so that it becomes complete as found in the present day. Soetrisno has also

<sup>4</sup> HARYONO, T. *Logam dan Peradaban Manusia*. Yogyakarta, 2001, pp. 7-114; *Seni Pertunjukan dan Seni Rupa dalam Perspektif Arkeologi Seni*. Surakarta, 2008, pp. 138-169.

<sup>5</sup> JOHANNES-FERDINANDUS, P. E. *Alat Musik Jawa Kuno. Kajian Bentuk dan Fungsi Ansamble Abad IX-XV Masehi*. Yogyakarta, 2001.



discussed what has been presented by Haryono and Johannes-Ferdinandus.<sup>6</sup> All of them confirm that the formation of gamelan ensemble occurs gradually so as to achieve the peak of perfection. That is more real since the reign of Pakubuwono X (1893-1939) in Surakarta. It appears in various artifacts of gamelan made in that time. The accomplishment in various contexts and for various purposes is developed further by contemporary artists in the post-independence era. The faultless nature of gamelan is essentially a container of the concepts of karawitan.

Javanese karawitan has several types of ensembles. Those are groups of supporting musicians and instruments are joined into one unified system to obtain a full complement of harmonizing expression, including the following ensembles: (1) *gamelan ageng*, (2) *gamelan gadhon*, (3) *gamelan cokekan*, (4) *gamelan kodhok ngorèk*, (5) *gamelan monggang*, (6) *gamelan corabalen*, and (7) *gamelan sêkatèn*. Supanggah has described the form and function of these set of ensembles, with the exception of *gamelan cokekan* and *gamelan gadhon*.<sup>7</sup>

### 3. Musical Construction

The most essential specification of karawitan lies in its musical construction. The construction of karawitan is determined by the following elements: (1) tones, (2) scales or tuning systems, (3) musical time management, (4) a harmonic system, (5) vocabulary, and (6) relations between vocabulary and management other elements management.

The term “tone” is commonly used to describe a sound that has definite pitch and vibration. In music, the term “pitch” refers to the position of a single sound in the complete range of sound. Sounds are higher or lower in pitch according to the frequency of vibration of the sound waves producing them. One of the characters of a tone is that of controlled pitch. To achieve a typical character of sound, the degree of highness or lowness of pitch in karawitan is not based on mathematical calculations with accurate frequency. The tone vibration tends to take qualitative senses into

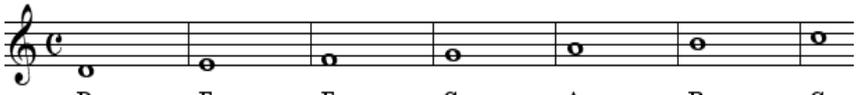
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<sup>6</sup> SOETRISNO. *Sejarah Karawitan*. Surakarta, 1976.

<sup>7</sup> SUPANGGAH, R. *Bothekan Karawitan I*. Jakarta, 2002, pp. 32-37.



consideration. The scale or tuning systems used are *slendro* and *pelog*. More detail can be seen regarding tones in this estimate arrangement below, which demonstrates that they are not as too precise as diatonic scales.

	
	D      E      F      G      A      B      C
	↓      ↓      ↓      ↓      ↓      ↓      ↓
Diatonic	6      7      1      2      3      4      5
Referred to as	La      si      do      re      mi      fa      sol
	↓      ↓      ↓      ↓      ↓      ↓      ↓
Pelog	1      2      3      4      5      6      7
Referred to as	Ji      ro      lu      pat      mo      nem      pi
	↓           ↓      ↓           ↓      ↓
Slendro	1           2      3           5      6
Referred to as	Ji           ro      lu           mo      nem

Basically, the tuning varies so widely from island to island, village to village, and even *gamelan* to *gamelan*. It is difficult to characterize it in terms of intervals. One rough approximation expresses the seven pitches of Central Javanese *pelog* as being a subset of 9-tone equal temperament. It is a system of tuning in which every pair of adjacent notes has an identical frequency ratio. As pitch is perceived roughly as the logarithm of frequency, this means that the perceived “distance” from every note to its nearest neighbor is the same for every note in the system.

As happens in *pelog*, the *slendro* scale often varies widely. The amount of difference also show a discrepancy from region to region. For example, *slendro* in Central Java changes much less from *gamelan* to *gamelan* than it does in Bali, where ensembles from the same village may be tuned very differently. The five pitches of the Javanese version are roughly equally spaced within the octave. As the determination of tone that does not give priority to accuracy of each frequency, it influences the nature in each instrument. The shared typicality of the instrument causes naturally unique and distinctive vibrations that are called *embat*.

Musical time management is determined by the conception of *gatra* that constantly extend to be concepts of *irama*. In karawitan music *irama* is the relative



width of the *gatra* which has certain hierarchical stages. *Gatra* is the basic concept of musical composition in karawitan music. A form of *gatra* is a set of four pulses, beats or taps in a unit, as the smallest element of musical composition. Each pulse, beat or tap has its own position, function and role within the hierarchy of *irama*.<sup>8</sup> The connotation of *gatra* has conceptual similarities with the concept of “bars” in Western music. It contains regularly and repeated pulses, beats or taps with constant pressurized and non-pressurized accents.<sup>9</sup> However, it must be recognized that the denoted meaning of *gatra* and bar are essentially different concepts.

The harmonic system in karawitan does not recognize the combination of tones that are sounded simultaneously, which is formulated rigidly through calculating frequency as chords. Karawitan does not give priority to the system of chords. Its concentration or emphasis is on its artistic attention to the melodic system.

Vocabulary that is produced and used is a logical consequence of the use of the medium and constituent elements of musical construction. Its form is that of distinctive musical idioms or artistic style. The distinct concepts of artistic styles or musical idioms are not found in application in other music, such as the concepts of *pathet*, *garap*, *balungan*, *cengkok*, *wiled*, *luk*, *gregel*, *seleh* and *sekarang*. The management of the relationship between the vocabulary and musical elements used has become a regular convention of musical form. It is manifested into structures that distinguish each composition.

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<sup>8</sup> SUPANGGAH, R. “*Gatra*: Inti dari Konsep *Gendhing* Tradisi Jawa” in *Wiled* I/1 (1994), pp. 13-26; *Bothekan Karawitan II: Garap*. Surakarta, 2007, p. 63-106; *Bothekan Karawitan II: Garap*. Surakarta, 2009, p. 77-129.

<sup>9</sup> WIDODO, T. S. *Belajar Menyanyi dengan Not Balok 1*. Yogyakarta, 1997, p. 21.



## **B. New Musical Work of Karawitan**

### *1. New Traditional Music of Karawitan*

Essentially, new creations of karawitan music are not diametrically opposed to the classical/traditional karawitan music. The only thing that characterizes the difference between classical/traditional and new creations of karawitan music is simply when and who created a work. Most people understand karawitan to be the old works of classical/traditional karawitan music, which were born more than one or two centuries ago. The composers who created the musical genre of classical or traditional karawitan are often anonymous. The new conceptions of karawitan music are those that are appearing during the contemporary period, whose composers are known. Since the origin of a work is clear, its form can be used to understand the music and be related to its quality, integrity, aesthetic tendencies, patterns of thought, and orientation of values, as they have been shared expressed by the composer. Meanwhile, a form of classical/traditional karawitan music is the relationship marker of aesthetic tendencies, patterns of thought and cultural orientation of values that is held by the followers or devotees.

The new karawitan is a new musical composition with its own form, structure and treatment. It may be a kind of reconstruction, reinterpretation, modification and/or deconstruction of the existing forms, structure, and musical treatment. Yet, it is likely that the new creation is a new musical composition without any reference to the traditional/classic. It rather follows the tendency of some new aesthetics that the composer leads. Hence, new karawitan is not something generated from the tradition whose time of composition and composer cannot be tracked down. In new karawitan music the time of composition and composer can be obviously identified. New forms of karawitan are characterized by their rich repertoires and their creative nature containing an aesthetic nuanced with (1) classic/traditional, (2) popular, and (3) reinterpretation.



*a. New Composition with their Classic/Traditional Nuance*

A manifestation of a traditional/classic nuance in new karawitan can be seen from its musical composition characteristics or the *gêndhing* that form its repertoire. An inherent property of it is the improvised interpretation made by its *pêngrawit* (instrument players) to the arrangement of *balungan gêndhing* (musical skeleton of the composition in karawitan music) with their ability to use *céngkok* (melodic patterns), the song pattern or the melodic arrangement and some variety of musical treatment vocabularies.<sup>10</sup> Basically *balungan gêndhing* is an abstraction of the song depth in karawitan, which is felt by the *pêngrawit*.<sup>11</sup> Thus, *balungan gêndhing* essentially can be perceived as an abstract melodic arrangement—a raw material idea which has not been completely musical.<sup>12</sup> The relation between the improvised interpretation and the *balungan gêndhing* is fully known to the composer's, thus this knowledge leads him/her to create compositions only by describing its *balungan gêndhing*. The composers decide to make such a creation because they believe the *pêngrawit* can understand their pieces' essential elements, and serve as a guide when taking artistic action through their musical expression.

Below I describe an example of a new *gêndhing* with traditional/classic nuance that was created by *pêngrawit* that is very well known in Central Java. That is *Lelagon "Ngimpi"*, which is still uses the form, structure, vocabulary, and musical treatment of conventional *gêndhing*, or conventional music composition.

**"Ngimpi", Ketawang, laras Pelog, pathet Nem.**

***Buka Celuk*** (begins with a single vocal)

. . . . .  $\overline{.1}$   $\dot{2}$   $\overline{.7}$   $\dot{1}$  .  $\overline{.2}$   $\overline{16}$  5  $\overline{.4}$   $\overline{43}$   $\overline{.4}$  5  
Sri-pat sri-pit lèmbèhané mrak kê – simper

<sup>10</sup> SUNARTO, B. *Op. cit.*, p. 120.

<sup>11</sup> SUMARSAM. *Hayatan Gamelan: Kedalaman Lagu, Teori & Perspektif*. Surakarta, 2002, p. 41.

<sup>12</sup> SUNARTO, B. *Op. cit.*, 2006, p. 120.



**Balungan Gêndhing:**

[ : . . 2 1 6 5 3 5 . . 5 1 6 5 3 (2)  
 . . 2 1 6 5 3 5 . . 5 1 2 1 2 (1)  
 . . 1̇ 6 5 6 5 3 . . 1 5 1 5 2 (1)  
 . . 2 1 6 5 3 5 . . 5 1 2 5 2 (1) :] Swk./Stop

**Vocal Notation:**

|| . . . . || . 1̇ 2̇ . 7̇ i || . . 2̇ 1̇ 6̇ 5 || . 4̇ 4̇ 3̇ . 4̇ 5 ||  
*Sri-pat sri-pit lèmbèhané mrak kê – simpir*  
 || . . . . || . 4̇ 5̇ 5̇ 6̇ 1̇ || . 3̇ 2̇ . 1̇ 5̇ 5 || . 2̇ 2̇ 1̇ 3̇ 2 ||  
*Gandhês luwês wi-ra - ga - né ang-lam-lam-i*  
 || . . . . || . 1̇ 2̇ . 7̇ i || . . 2̇ 1̇ 6̇ 5 || . 4̇ 4̇ 3̇ . 4̇ 5 ||  
*Sè-dhêt singsêt bêsus anga - di bu - sã - nã*  
 || . . . . || . 4̇ 5̇ . 6̇ 1̇ || . 3̇ 2̇ . 1̇ 5̇ 5 || . 3̇ 2̇ . 1̇ . 7̇ 1̇ ||  
*Dasar a-yu mak-sih kê-nyã tan ku - ci - wã*  
 || . . . . || 6̇ 6̇ 1̇ 7̇ 6 || . 1̇ 7̇ . 6̇ 6 || . 6̇ 6̇ . 4̇ 3̇ 3 ||  
*Tak ca- kêt-i a-duh mèsêm sèpêt madu*  
 || . . . . || i̇ i̇ . 6̇ 5 || . 1̇ 1̇ 1̇ 5̇ 5 || . 3̇ 2̇ . 1̇ . 7̇ 1̇ ||  
*O-ra srãntã tak gandhèng ma-lah gu - mu-yu*  
 || . . . . || . 1̇ 2̇ . 7̇ i || . . 2̇ 1̇ 6̇ 5 || . 4̇ 4̇ 3̇ . 4̇ 5 ||  
*Ka-ton bungah kênyã kang pin - dhã hap - sa - ri*  
 || . . . . || . 4̇ 5̇ . 6̇ 1̇ || . 3̇ 2̇ . 1̇ 5̇ 5 || . 3̇ 2̇ . 1̇ . 7̇ 1̇ || wk./Stop  
*Ku-ci-wa-né ka bèh ma - u amung ngimpi*

Their artistic action, as shown in the above notation, is executed by interpreting the *balungan gêndhing*, i.e. by identifying the melodic contour or *sèlèh* (heavy or strong accent that usually exist in final melodic pattern) of *balungan gêndhing*, then implementing the *céngkoks*, or song patterns or the melodic arrangement produced by the combination of melodic arrangement and the musical treatment vocabularies. Unfortunately, in this very short paper the *céngkoks* cannot be described here.



### *b. New Composition with their Popular Nuance*

New karawitan has some popular colors, embedded by the repertoires containing the musical characters, which have been wide-spread and known by society—a mass culture.<sup>13</sup> Among such kinds are the new karawitan with its sub-repertoire types of (1) *langgam*, (2) *ndangdut*, and (3) popular song. The first type is the repertoire containing forms and elements of music like the *langgam* in keroncong music. The keroncong songs generally have four types of forms, i.e. (1) the pure *keroncong*, (2) the *langgam*, (3) the song of *stambul*, and (4) other songs with structures distinct from the three. The second has some forms and elements of the *ndangdut* music. The last type with its popular color always has some musical construction which (1) applies a diatonic mode (2) borrows the western musical system in its musical treatment, (3) has a homophonic melodic accumulation.

In realizing and implementing the diatonic mode of the Western musical system, and homophonic melodic accumulation, it is presented by instruments commonly used in Western music such as: (1) a drum kit, drum set, or trap set (2) an electronic keyboard, (3) a guitar, and (4) a bass guitar. A drum set is a collection of drums and other percussion instruments set up to be played by a single player that consists of (a) a snare drum, mounted on a specialized stand, placed between the player's knees and played with drum sticks (which may include rutes or brushes); (b) a bass drum, played by a pedal operated by the right foot; (c) A hi-hat stand and cymbals, operated by the left foot and played with the sticks, particularly but not only the right hand stick; (d) one or more tom-tom drums, played with the sticks; and (e) one or more suspended cymbals, played with the sticks, particularly but not only the right hand stick. An electronic keyboard is digital keyboard instrument that has major typical components. They are cover (1) a musical keyboard, (2) an interface software, (3) a rhythm & chord generator, (4) a sound generator, and (5) an amplifier and speaker.

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<sup>13</sup> SUNARTO, B. "Kehidupan Karawitan di Tengah Kebudayaan Massa". Paper. Discussed on Student Seminar of ASKI Surakarta. Surakarta, 1987, pp. 18-22; Mack, D. *Apresiasi Musik Populer*. Yogyakarta, 1995, p. 33.



This means that this instrument with the plastic white and black piano-style keys which the player presses is connected to the switches, triggering an electronic note or another sound. Most keyboards use a keyboard matrix circuit to reduce the amount of wiring. This instrument has a program, embedded in a computer chip, which handles user interaction with control keys and menus, which allows the user to select tones (e.g., piano, organ, flute, drum kit), effects (reverb, echo, telephones or sustain), and other features (e.g., transposition, an electronic drum machine). It also has a software program which produces rhythms and chords by the means of MIDI electronic commands. Furthermore, it has an electronic sound module typically contained within an integrated circuit or chip, which is capable of accepting MIDI commands and producing sounds. This instrument also has a low-powered audio amplifier and a small speaker that amplify the sounds so that the listener can hear them perfectly.



Picture 9: Drum set used to accompany gamelan ensemble <http://sukolaras.wordpress.com/tag/mp3-campursari/>



Picture 10: Guitar, guitar bass, and double piano keyboard used to accompany gamelan ensemble.

The characteristic of new karawitan music with nuance of popular touch is related to the spread of popular music with their publication via the mass electronic media, cassettes, CDs, or commercial VCDs. Furthermore, the new karawitan composition is undertaken for a commercial reason, oriented to the entertainment purposes. The tendency gives rise to lyrics that are written following basic emotion with the application of simple melodic phrases rather than on something mature and artistically treated. Here is one of the more popular songs in the pop music of Java, which is then processed into karawitan, i.e. song of “Cinta Tak Terpisahkan” created by Dikin.

**“Cinta Tak Terpisahkan”  
By Dikin**

Duh de - nok gan - dhul - a - ne a - ti  
Duh Kang-mas jan - ne a - ku tres-na  
De - nok a - ku cin - ta be - ner-an

te - ga - ne nyu - la - ya - ni Jan - ji - mu se - hi - dup  
li - lak - na a - ku lu - nga A - ti ra ku - at nan -  
pas - ti kan ku buk - ti - kan Ba - pak i - bu - ku a -



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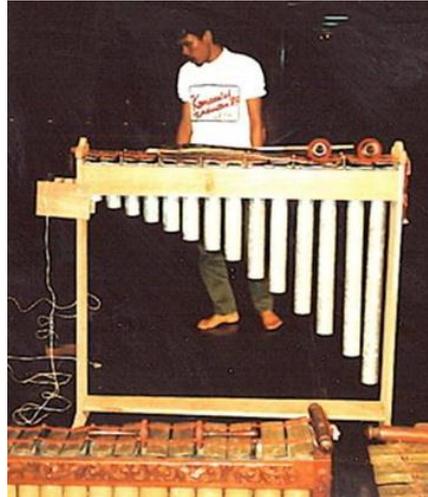
### c. *New Composition with its Reinterpretation (Karawitan Gagrag Anyar)*

This type of new karawitan refers to pieces created by utilizing the musical expression form of traditional/classic pieces as their base. Their repertoire is relatively the same as those of classical/traditional karawitan. The salient difference is their musical treatment and expression. Their creation not only relies on the improvised interpretation by the *pêngrawit*. The development of the creativity is taken by *pengrawit* through several ways, including (1) the crossed musical style, (2) the processing of tempo, rhythms and dynamics, and (3) the addition and the reduction of the various musical treatment types.

This new karawitan is not completely new, despite its new forms of expression. In fact, these pieces are new creations made by modifying old repertoires by using new treatment variations which are accepted in the classic/traditional style music of expression. Hence, the new karawitan a color reinterpretation is karawitan that resulted from the artistic tolerance of creativity and the violations of the musical treatment from their cultural convention, undertaken by the composers to the classical/traditional works.

## 2. *Contemporary Karawitan*

The nature of this type of karawitan is experimental or explorative. The dominant character of this genre is no longer classical, interpretative, and traditional, but it is strongly an avant-garde. One aspect of avant-garde in art is that the educated intellectuals applying new concepts and/or some experimental efforts develop it. The picture below is an example of musical instruments for avant-garde karawitan music, created by Aloysius Suwardi. This is a picture of the modified *gender barung* instrument which is processed using the machine which can cause vibrations so that the sound produced is different from conventional gender. Its consequence, how to practice and work on this musical expression is also different from conventional karawitan music.



Picture 11: Gendér instrument with vibraphone character or *Gendér Jangkung*.

The contemporary music of karawitan, related to their concept development, is manifested in two of the three natures of the existential, which are:

- 1) The founding concept and/or idea and musical character of the karawitan is primarily on the existential concept more than the performance of the art work as its expressed form.
- 2) The founding concept and/or idea and musical character for its musicality puts so much priority on the musical existence as its form of expression that its artistic orientation is emphasized on the value of the artwork.
- 3) Two points above relies on the typical and personal experience of each individual composer.

Existentially, each piece in contemporary karawitan always has either the first characteristic or the second in a mutually exclusive way. The third is always found in every contemporary work. This means that the concept, idea and the experience of each individual is a very critical element, which determines the medium and the musical construction of the contemporary karawitan empirically present.

The notion of “experimental” or “contemporary” refers neither to the recent development of the karawitan music, nor does it indicate the growth or the rejuvenating movement in it. It does not simply imply the personal styles beyond the classical/traditional mainstream in its relation to the emerging intercultural issues. I try to comprehend the contemporary karawitan is:



- 1) Karawitan whose existence is supported by the concepts representing the thought of composer when designing his/her musical character which influence of intellectualism, inspiration and subtle impressive internalization.
- 2) Karawitan demonstrating artistic vocabularies as musical “expression language”, with its progressive nature since the composer intentionally escapes the “expression language” bonded to the cultural tradition and rules.
- 3) Karawitan whose musical formats are designed by applying the avant-garde or experimental techniques with their unlimited existence. It offers something far from the consideration of the marketing purposes, to make the works easy to sell.

Based on the elaboration above, it is clear that the contemporary karawitan is the one having a developed achievement; it has gone beyond the traditional convention. This genre poses an artistic model that is never touched in the mind of classical/traditional vocabularies. The reason is that it has a creative spirit manifested by an open-form system of composition toward any orientation, tendency, and artistic value; it is freely open.

## Conclusion

Karawitan has two great musical genres, i.e., the classical/traditional and the new creation. The genre of classic/traditional karawitan is always the foundation for the development of any type of karawitan. Another genre is the product of the developing endeavors, consisting of four main types, i.e. new karawitan colored by 1) the classic/traditional, (2) the popular, (3) the reinterpreted and (4) the experimental.

New musical work of karawitan is essentially an effort that was done by the karawitan community to find musical comfortability. This hard work is done using reason, insight, and interpretation as a means to articulate new musical type. It shows the formulation of new musical works was done using two references. Firstly, it is done based on orderly, purposeful, and progressive thinking toward inevitability. Secondly, it is approached based on a priori, that is speculative. The new composition is made by considering the tradition as a manifestation of the spirit of the times while building empathy on the works of the old culture. The new composition in avant garde nature is



made as a movement of ideas for enlightenment, to find a poetic meaning that is not framed by cultural boundaries.

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