

Hybrid Performance as the Behavior of Singing Folk Songs Chorally in Indonesia Choir Competition in 2019

Pertunjukan Hibrid sebagai Perilaku Bernyanyi Lagu Rakyat dalam Lomba Paduan Suara Indonesia Tahun 2019

Rachel Mediana Untung¹,

¹Program Studi Pengkajian Seni Pertunjukan dan Seni Rupa, Sekolah Pascasarjana UGM;
Program Studi Seni Musik, Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana Salatiga;

Wisma Nugraha^{*2},

²Fakultas Ilmu Budaya Universitas Gadjah Mada,

Victor Ganap³

³Program Studi Pengkajian Seni Pertunjukan dan Seni Rupa, Sekolah Pascasarjana UGM

*Corresponding author: wismanugraha@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT The artistic contestation between choral culture and folk song is an important concern in the study of musicology. This study focuses on singing behavior in singing hybrid vocal music. Choir singing behavior has standard vocal techniques and, on the other hand, the context of understanding folk songs includes ethnic natural singing expressions without being overshadowed by good vocal techniques. The study aims to reconstruct the practice of artistic requirements in Indonesian folksong choir competitions. The artistic contestation between choir culture and folk songs culture leads to a good hybrid performance in the Folklore category. This research method takes material from singing events through observations and studies of audio-visual documentation that are observed repeatedly. This study uses a performance centered approach study that concentrates on the choir's performance. Descriptive-analytic analysis is used as a consequence of the material of the event's that relies on careful descriptions. The results indicate, firstly the choirs which sang folk song repertoire are a hybrid performance characteristic. Second, the relationship between artistic requirement and the reality of performances on stage occurs in a multidimensional manner. There was an adjustment to standardization in the perspective of the coral setting. Third, an understanding of the performance practice as multidimensional and hybrid with artistic requirements shows that a small portion is given to other dimensions

ABSTRAK Kontestasi artistik antara kultur paduan suara dan lagu rakyat menjadi perhatian penting dalam studi musikologi. Penelitian ini memfokuskan pada perilaku bernyanyi dalam karya musik vokal hibrid. Perilaku bernyanyi dalam paduan suara memiliki teknik vokal yang baku, sebaliknya konteks pemahaman lagu rakyat menyertakan ekspresi bernyanyi secara alamiah dari suatu etnis tanpa dibayangi teknik olah vokal yang baik. Studi ini merekonstruksi praktik ketentuan artistik dalam lomba paduan suara yang menyanyikan repertoar lagu rakyat Indonesia. Dalam kategori Lagu Rakyat terjadi kontestasi artistik antara kultur paduan suara dan lagu rakyat yang menghasilkan pertunjukan hibrid yang baik. Metode penelitian ini mengambil materi dari peristiwa menyanyi melalui observasi dan studi dokumentasi audio visual yang dicermati secara berulang. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kajian pertunjukan yang berkonsentrasi pada peristiwa pertunjukan (*performance centered approach*) paduan suara. Analisis deskriptif-analitik digunakan sebagai konsekuensi atas materi peristiwa pertunjukan yang bersandar pada deskripsi secermat-cermatnya. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan, pertama karakteristik paduan suara yang menyanyikan repertoar lagu rakyat bersifat hibrid. Kedua, relasi antara ketentuan artistik dan realita pertunjukan di atas panggung terjadi secara multidimensi tetapi tetap ada standarisasi dalam konsep *choral setting*. Ketiga, pemahaman atas praktik berkarakter multidimensi

(kinesthetic & visual). The findings can be used to reformulate artistic requirements entailing a bigger cultural aspect of folk songs.

KEYWORDS *Hibrid; Kategori folklor; Kompetisi paduan suara; Lagu rakyat Indonesia; dan Multidimensi.*

INTRODUCTION

There has been an ongoing debate on the artistic requirement practice in folk song competitions. Most people consider authenticity as the main element of a performance, while some others believe that although artistic requirements need to be obeyed, there is a chance for a performance to be not as authentic as the singing behavior of the folk song's owner. Sunda, West Java, folk song vocal solo competition emphasizes authentic singing behavior (Williams, 2003). The competition to sing Hindu literature texts preserves the recitative characteristics (Creese, 2014). Good vocal techniques complying with choir rules, not authentic singing style, dominates folklore choir competitions (Omega et al., 2019). As has been pointed out by Zoltan Szalay (2018), adjustment is needed because folk song singing techniques are different from choir singing techniques. The study aims to find artistic adjustment when Indonesia folk songs become the source of repertoire in choir competitions.

Singing behavior is related with musicology. In practice, musicology studies about all aspects of music include folk songs. So far, folk songs have been the source of inspiration for choral performances because human life cannot be separated from meeting different people from different

dan hibrid beserta dengan ketentuan artistik lomba menunjukkan bahwa aspek penilaian terhadap tampilan secara kinestetik dan visual hanya mendapat porsi kecil. Hasil studi bisa digunakan untuk merumuskan ketentuan artistik yang mempertimbangkan aspek kultur lagu rakyat yang lebih intens.

KATA KUNCI *UChoir competition; Folklore category; Hybrid; Indonesian folk songs; and Multidimension.*

cultural backgrounds (Palmer, 1999). Artistic adjustment in terms of arrangement and the actors taking part in a folk song choir performance is conducted (Artanto, 2016; Williams, 2003). Matthew Bumbach (2017) and Amy Kotsonis (2014) have adapted Appalachian folk music tradition in America as a choral work and performance. The study of Bumbach and Kotsonis has revealed the adjustment of Appalachian folk music performance in a choir format in the aspects of timbre, accompaniment instrument, beat, rhythmic pattern, and social function. All the studies conducted by the scholars above tend to elevate the chorus' sonorous ability to be nearly authentic but have not investigated on-stage comprehensive singing behavior that complies with the artistic requirements of the competition organizer. Therefore, there is a chance for scholars to investigate the relationship between choir performances presenting folk song repertoires and artistic adjustments.

This study aims to complete the shortcoming of the previous studies in terms of the relationship between artistic requirements of the folklore category and the folklore performances in the choir competitions in Indonesia. In relation to that, this study answers three questions: (a) what characterizes the performance of participants singing Indonesian folk songs

in choir competitions? (b) how does the formulation of artistic requirements of choir competitions relate to the performance characteristics of the participants singing Indonesian folk songs? (c) how does the practice of artistic requirements of choir competitions relate to the on-stage performance of the participants singing Indonesian folk songs?

This study of the artistic requirement practice of folk song choir competition is based on an argument that artistic requirement is formulated by considering: (1) choral singing rules, (2) natural way of singing in folk songs, and (3) hybrid performance as the final product. On one hand, there is artistic culture emphasizing good choral sound quality, on the other hand, there is a natural and free folk song artistic culture. This hybrid performance reveals that contestation leads to artistic adjustment formulation (Sulistyo, Panji Satrio Binangun, 2020)

For choirs or vocal groups to perform well, they need to meet several requirements, namely choral sound, choral phonation, venue acoustics, choir formation, choir spacing, and compatibility placement (Daugherty, 2001; Ekholm, 2000; Howard et al., 2013) Those requirements narrow down to the understanding of homogenous or blending and balanced choral sound. According to Timothy Day (2000) (Day, 2000), the singing characteristics of a choir lies in the purity of tone, accuracy in intonation, precision on ensemble, and an absence of rhetoric.

A choir performance is an opportunity to present good choral sound and interesting visual performance. A group of people singing in a choir does not present in an

empty room, but in a place where others can see, on a stage. Ioan Oarcea (2016) has noted that in his last 30-year career as a conductor, he has 108 times performed choir on various stage performances such as concerts, competitions, and festivals around the world. Oarcea's experience shows that choir performances always involve others who watch with their senses. The audience do not only use their aural but also visual and tangible senses to respond to choral performances. In contrast, many sources pointing out that blending and balanced sonority dominates a choir's quality (Daugherty, 2001; Day, 2000; Ekholm, 2000; Peterson, 2018). It shows that the practice of choral performances does not only involve homogenous sonority but also interesting performances.

Lately, choir becomes more fluid and is inspired by ethnic music, one of which is folk songs (Strimple, 2002). Generically, both from the historical and artistic perspectives, choir is different from folk song. Folk songs develop among agrarian, even non-literal societies (Titon, 1992) (Titon, 1992) and are sung naturally (Carlson, 1996; Fiol, 2011; MacLachlan, 2014; Pegg, 2002). The way they are sung, naturally, reflects the authentic local culture tradition of the folk song's owners. So far, folk songs have been studied by ethnomusicologists or musicologists exploring a distinctive sound style or ornamentation according to the ethnicity of folk song owners (Paksa, 1992). The authenticity of Indonesian folk songs, in particular, involve various distinctive ethnical musical elements and ornamentation (Firmansyah, 2019; Lapian, Alrik and Mulyana, 2017; Mistortoify, Zulkarnain., Timbul Haryono, Lono L. Simatupang, 2011;

Tindaon & GR Lono Lastoro Simatupang, Victor Ganap, 2018). The natural peculiarity of folk songs is contrary to the choir singing techniques entailing the requirements of singing properly and correctly. Artistically, it shows that the culture of choirs is different from folk songs' culture. Although they are different, folk songs are a source of inspiration for composers and arrangers to compose and arrange folk songs into choral compositions (Untung, 2020). In no doubt, there is an artistic contestation between the culture of choirs and folk songs so that it becomes a work of musical hybridity.

The encounter of choir and folk song's artistic culture constructs an effort to develop a rich performance. It is not easy to develop a culture that can be well accepted by choir or folk song practitioners (Bumbach, 2017; Nagy-Sándor & Berkers, 2018; Palmer, 1999; Smolik, 2009). The study of ethnic music and folk songs basically always becomes valuable music documentation for ethnomusicologists (Aravinda, 2000; Danielson, 2007; Feld & Brenneis, 2004; Henry, 2000; Kaartinen, 2013; Rice, 2003). Nevertheless, a folk song is not a rigid artifact because it inspires musicologists (Freeman, 2012; Graebe, 2011; Kotsonis, 2014). When Indonesian folk songs inspire musicologists and are performed in a form of a choir, they will be manifested in an attractive performance that is musically rich (Artanto, 2016; Omega et al., 2019).

In a choir competition, the artistic requirements are more dominated by auditory dimension (sonorous) than visual and kinesthetic dimensions (Bintarto T., 2015; Sihombing, 2003). This is reflected in the three components of competition rules. The first is repertoire regulations requiring

participants to sing Indonesian folk songs arranged for choirs. Next is performance rules governing the use of musical instrument accompaniment, custom, and choreography. Performance rules underlie ethical and aesthetic aspects in on-stage performances. The last is assessment rules involving musical elements as the indicators of a good choir performance. There are four elements of competition assessment, intonation, vocal technique, fidelity to the score, and the overall artistic performance. Actually, musical performances that cannot be separated from the presence of the audience require sound, kinesthetic and visual dimensions (Nattiez, 1990; Titon, 1992). The overall artistic requirements are the result of the organizer's formulation represented by the artistic team.

The relationship between folk song performances and choir artistic requirements was explained through qualitative research using primary and secondary data. This research employed a performance-centered approach. Singing events were the source of the whole analysis. Therefore, three performances, *Cikala Le Pong Pong* performed in Rhapsodie Indonesia Choir Festival Jakarta (RICF_14-15 April 2019), *Janger* performed in The 7th Satya Dharma Gita Choir Festival Semarang (SDGCF_27-31 Agustus 2019), and *Ma Rencong Rencong* performed in The 3rd Choral Orchestra Folklore Festival Yogyakarta (COFF_17-20 Desember 2019) were analyzed. Conceptually, the researcher was placed as a receiver (*esthetic*) in watching art materials (*neutral*) (Nattiez, 1990). The primary data consisted of performances, characteristics of folk song performance in a choir format recording, and artistic practices

of various agents in competitions (Small, 1998). The secondary data included folk song scores arranged for choirs and artistic rules developed by the choir competition organizers written in the competition manual. The researcher did not conduct a detailed structural analysis but performed presentation analysis from the sonorous, kinesthetic, and visual perspectives through repeated observations and audio-visual recordings.

This research involved various organizational agents in a choir competition system, namely arranger, choir instructor, artistic director of the choir competition, and judge. The four agents' positions and experience in choir competitions were identified and assessed through interview and audio-visual documentation study. First, the secondary data, artistic rules, were gathered through the rule mapping of three choir competitions. Second, the primary data in the form performance process were obtained through direct observation of the competitions and repeated observation of audio-visual recordings. Third, this study also involved interviews with arrangers, choir instructors, artistic directors, and judges involved in choir competitions.

The data analysis process involved three analysis stages and two data analysis techniques. The three analysis stages included: (a) data reduction as a more systematic, especially thematic, structuring process; (b) data display as an effort to present research findings in tabular forms; and (c) data verification as a data interference stage based on to the trend of the data obtained. The data processed through the three stages

were analyzed using the descriptive method and content analysis. The stages of analysis and analysis techniques used allowed the conclusion formulation of the relationship between folk song performances and artistic requirements of choir competitions.

DISCUSSION

The practice influenced the results of Indonesian folk song choir competition participants' performances. To achieve the goal, the analysis of three performances of *Cikala Le Pong Pong (CKLPP)*, *Janger (JANG)*, and *Ma Rencong Rencong (MRR)* were presented. The aspects analyzed included auditory (sonorous), kinesthetic, and visual elements. Auditory elements were observed from musicological perspectives including texture, melodies, ornamentation, dynamic, rhythmic, and accompaniment. Kinesthetic elements were observed by analyzing singer and conductor formations and singers' body movements. The visual elements were analyzed by observing costumes, footwear, cosmetics, and stage properties.

The Character Manifestation of Choirs Singing Indonesian Folk Songs (3 performances)

The three performances exhibited texture varieties but were dominated by homophonic and interlocking variations among vocal parts. Some parts employed pure canon (*Janger*, *MRR*). All intonations of the performers was clear. The lyrics were in local languages and preserved the original folk song melodies. Some of the lyrics, both with and without meaning, were sung interlocking by soprano, alto, tenor, and bass (*CKPP*, *JANG*, and *MRR*). Timbre in local

style in some part in each performances (CKLPP, JANG, and MRR). Various ornamentations decorated the sound of the whole choral sound. Some notes were accentuated so they were stronger than the other notes (MRR). Dynamic contrast, such as from *p* (*piano*) to *f* (*forte*) (JANG), or *f* (*forte*) (CKLPP), was present. Crescendo dynamic contrast was followed by decrescendo between sentences in the songs (CKLPP, JANG, and MRR). All performances use breathing in diaphragmatic technique and optimal open mouth while singing.

Table 1. Three Performances Characteristics

Dimensions	Performance Character on Stage	CKLPP*	JANG**	MRR***
Sonorous	Homophonic texture dominance and interlocking	✓	✓	✓
	Original folk song melody	✓	✓	✓
	Lyric in local languages	✓	✓	✓
	Main melody by soprano and alto	✓	✓	✓
	Clean intonation	✓	✓	✓
	Timbre in local style in some parts	✓	✓	✓
	Ornamentation			
	- Acciacatura	✓	-	✓
	- Glissando	✓	-	-
	Simultaneous and contrast dynamics	✓	✓	✓
	Breathing in diaphragmatic technique	✓	✓	✓
	Phrasing and good accuracy for each note	✓	✓	✓
	Optimal mouth opening when singing	✓	✓	✓
	Rhythmic character produced by human voices (onomatopeia)	✓	✓	✓
	Body percussions			
	- Foot stomp	✓	✓	✓
- Hand clap	✓	-	✓	
- Finger snap	✓	-	-	
Shout at the end of the pieces	✓	✓	✓	
Accompaniments by traditional instrument	-	-	✓	
A cappella	✓	✓	-	
Kinesthetic	Singing postures			
	- Standing	✓	✓	✓
	- Sitting cross legged	-	✓	-
	- Lowering the body	-	✓	-
	- Resting on knee	-	✓	-
	Body movements			
	- Left and right	✓	✓	✓
	- Back and forth	✓	✓	-
- Slanted left and right	-	✓	-	
- Circular	-	✓	-	

Dimensions	Performance Character on Stage	CKLPP*	JANG**	MRR***
	Hand movements			
	- Clap	√	√	√
	- Swung	√	-	-
	- Bent toward the body	√	-	√
	- Stretched up above the body	√	√	√
	Foot movements			
	- Tiptoeing	-	-	√
	- Shifting	-	-	√
	- Jogging like	-	√	-
	Finger movements			
	- Snap	-	√	-
	- Circular	-	√	-
	- Pressing the palms	-	√	-
	Head and eyes movement			
	- Head shaking	-	√	-
	- Glancing and glaring eyes	-	√	-
	Freeze movement			
		-	√	√
	Dramatization of certain scenes			
		√	√	-
	Choir formations			
- Gender-based formation	-	-	√	
- Mixed gender-based formation	√	√	-	
- Changeable formations	√	√	-	
- Not changeable formation	-	-	√	
- Standing close together in a row	√	-	√	
- Space between singers in row	-	√	-	
Visual	Dresscode			
	- Ethnic eclectic costumes	√	√	√
	- Ethnic accessories	√	√	√
	- Barefoot	√	√	√
	- Stage make up	√	√	-
	- Casual make up	-	-	√
	- Stage properties	√	-	√

*CKLPP: Cikala Le Pong Pong** JANG: Janger ***MRR: Ma Rencong Rencong

(Source: Rachel Mediana Untung, 2021)

The three performances indicated the role of body percussion such as foot stomp (CKLPP, JANG, and MRR), hand clap (CKLPP and MRR), and finger snap (CKLPP). Rhythmic character produced by human voices (onomatopoeia) in all performance (CKLPP, JANG and MRR). At the end of the performance was quick shouting followed by silence (CKLPP_”pong”, JANG-“Janger”, and

MRR_”ma rencong rencong”). Only MRR was accompaniment by traditional instrument, other (CKLPP and MRR) sung in a cappella.

Standing dominated the singing posture, but some other postures such as sitting cross-legged (JANG), resting on knees (JANG), and lowering the body by bending the knees (JANG) were observed. Foot movements involved tiptoeing (MRR), shifting (MRR), and

jogging like (JANG). The hands were swung (CKLPP), bent towards the body (CKLPP and MRR), and stretched up above the body (CKLPP, JANG, and MRR). Finger movements involved snapping, circular movements using all fingers (JANG), pressing the palms together (JANG). Head shaking and glancing and glaring eyes were also present (JANG). The dramatization of certain scenes was reflected by the presence of a soloist or duet standing apart from the choir (CKLPP and JANG). In addition, some body movements can be interpreted as representations of certain movements, such as worshipping (JANG). Besides body movement domination, some parts involved no movement like freezing (JANG and MRR). All individual movements performed in rows demonstrated various kinesthetic dimensions.

Besides singers' individual movements, singers' standing or sitting formations are parts of kinesthetic dimensions. In choir rows, the choir singers developed separated (MRR) or mixed gender formation (CKLPP and JANG). During the performances, a choir formation did not change (MRR), but the others changed (CKLPP and JANG). The three performances above placed the conductor at the center front of the stage, opposite the singers' rows, and the instrumentalists (MRR) were parallel to the conductor. Those performances indicated that artistic practices with individual kinesthetic dimension and formation changes offered attractive and expressive performances.

All choristers in the three performances wore ethnic eclectic costumes. Some costume accessories were similar to the authentic ethnic dress tradition (CKLPP, JANG, and MRR). The accessories used included gold

ornaments on women's heads (JANG), female and male belts (JANG and MRR), shawls for women (MRR), and traditional cloth headband for men (CKLPP, JANG and MRR). All choir singers were barefoot. The female singers' put on stage makeup (CKLPP and JANG) and casual makeup (MRR). In addition to the properties on the singers' bodies, visually, there were also stage properties, namely traditional Batak woven fabrics (CKLPP) and Bugis drum (MRR).

The three performances aurally pointed out the characteristics of good choral sound and the strength of interlocking onomatopoeia among vocal parts. The main melody of the Indonesian folk song arrangement remained recognized, and rhythmic variation processing and body percussion (foot stomp, hand clap, dan finger snap) were evidenced. CKLPP and JANG communicated the role of a stronger kinesthetic dimension than MRR. JANG performance inserted dramatization scenes, in a form of Balinese dances when the singers were singing. Besides, dramatization occurred in solo or duet parts by singing outside the choir rows, at the center of the stage (CKLPP). From a visual perspective, *Janger* approached the visual character and movement of authentic Balinese traditional dance in terms of costume, accessories, and makeup. The data of the three performances proved that the performance of the participants singing Indonesian folk songs in the choir competition was characterized by multidimensionality, namely sonorous, kinesthetic, dan visual.

Formulation of Artistic Requirements for Choir Competition that are Related to Performance Characteristics of Indonesian Folk Song

In competition, Indonesian folk song choral performances are under the folklore category. Each competition may name this category differently, some refer to it as Folk song (SDGCF) or Folklore (RICF and COFF).

*“Folk songs are always exotic”,
said Yosafat Rennu Leppong
(10 March 2019 in Malang)*

*“Folklore category combines choir and
ethnic music”, said Hadrianus Anang
Brotoseno
(10 March 2019 in Malang)*

*“The definition of folk song should
be asked to the ethnomusicologist.
Me, as a choir practitioner, Folklore
category explored lot’s of traditional
sounds imitate authentic as possible
by human voices”, said Budi Susanto
Yohanes
(27 Agustus 2019 in Semarang)*

*“We don’t know exactly the authenticity
of the folk songs in folklore category”,
said Avip Priyatna
(14 April 2019 in Jakarta)*

*“In folklore category, (choir singers)
have to achieve the right intonation
for getting an ethnic colour”, said
Agustinus Bambang Jusana
(1 September 2019 in Semarang)*

By choir instructors, the agents, the existence of folk songs in folklore category was understood as ethnical music or regional music exploration or referred to as parts of folklore tradition. The source of folk song

musical arrangement originating from ethnic music possessed peculiarity called exotic elements (Yosafat R.L and H.A. Brotoseno). For agents, exotic elements brought diversity and novelty that prevented boredom. Ethnic musical inspiration or traditional sound presented in a form of a chorus required agents to prioritize auditory dimension in proper vocal techniques, intonation accuracy (A.B. Jusana). The important point is human voices can produce sound similar to ethnic vocal colors. (B.S. Yohanes and A.B. Jusana). Nevertheless, there was disagreement among agents over how authentic folk songs could be arranged for choirs (B.S. Yohanes and A. Priyatna). When the understanding of folk song musical existence has not achieved a consensus, it raises doubts about the form of the performance.

*“In the performance, it should show
homogeneity of the ethnic music”,
said A.B. Jusana
(1 September 2019 in Semarang)*

*“The artistic presentation of choral
performances in folklore category
cannot be separated from vocal
techniques, no improvise, and obey
the score”, said B.S. Yohanes. (27
Agustus 2019 in Semarang)*

*“This is a singing competition,
not a dance competition”, said T.
Kandisaputra
(28 Oktober 2019 in Jakarta)*

*“Choir competition need a good choral
sound. Sound is importance, not
movements. In theater performance,*

*we need movements ”, said Budi Utomo P.
(15 November 2019 in Semarang)*

*“When folk song become choral setting, the rules must be choral. The singing must match the score”, said Indra Listyanto
(15 November 2019 in Semarang)*

Agents’ understanding suggested that the basis of choir competition rules was singing behavior. The human voice was the main benchmark in the performance, not non-voice dimensions (A.B. Jusana, B.S. Yohanes, T. Kandisaputra, Budi Utomo P.). Singing behavior in a choir was not singing individually, but collectively, that was singing behavior in a group or known as choral setting (I. Listyanto). The formation of the choir produced good choral sound and homogeneity (A.B.Jusana). The overall choral sound was always related to the score (B.S. Yohanes and I. Listyanto). Singing in a choir could not be separated from proper vocal techniques, and there was no room for improvisation as a part of natural vocal techniques (B.S. Yohanes and I. Listyanto). Agents ignored the presence of dancing movement or dramatization as in theatrical performance or dance competition (T. Kandisaputra and Budi Utomo P.).

Even though the marking system is based on choral culture prioritizing sound assessment, in practice, on-stage performance is multidimensional. This multidimensionality is not assessed, or if it is, it weighs only a little.

“For me, a choir is in stark contrast to folk music is contrary. Based on variety of folk music in Indonesia, we can’t assess the folk music itself, but we assess how it can be sung, in tune or not”, said T. Kandisaputra (28 Oktober in Jakarta)

*“In my experience, there is a difficulty in assessing folklore category, so the marking system should consider the idiomatic of authenticity and attractive performance”, said Agastya Rama L.
(19 Juli 2019 in Salatiga)*

“I once insist on giving a higher mark for attractive performance as a part of expression, but ekspresion are reflected in the overall artistic performance element and the scoring model doesn’t accomodate assesment for attractive performances”, said Tiku Rari (21 September 2019 in Rantepao)

*“There is a dilemma in judging from the jury’s point of view. To avoid dilemma, a jury meeting is held before the judging time. They decide what kind of folk song presentation in their mind for the certain mark”, said Annas Dwi Satriyo
(9 Maret 2019 in Malang)*

*“It’s hard for judging folk songs presentation, indeed. There are variations in artistic way, so judging in musical indicator become the solution”, said Joko Lemazh Supriyanto
(21 Februari 2020 in Yogyakarta)*

There are various views on the jury's expectations of choral performances singing folk songs. The data above show the tension between artistic elements in folk songs and choir setting (T. Kandisaputra, A. Rama L., and T. Rari). Generically, Indonesian folk song performance is diverse and has unique characters in terms of sonorous, kinesthetic, and visual dimensions. Choral sound prioritizes the auditory dimension, so the artistic element of folk songs sung chorally uses musicological assessment elements (J. L. Supriyanto). Nevertheless, there is a compromise, meeting to decide on the performance form (A.D. Satriyo). A meeting mechanism is needed as an artistic negotiation medium to find common ground among judges because it may cause friction among them.

Artistic Requirement Reality is Multi-dimensionally Manifested

On-stage choir performances of the competition participants is the result of an adjustment to and compliance with the competition rules. The three performances investigated were held by three different organizers, so the competition's rules were different.

Repertoire Regulations

Principally, repertoire regulations required participants to sing Indonesian folk songs arranged for choirs. The three performances investigated indicated that the folk songs sung were Indonesian folk songs. The folk song titles chosen by the participants of the three performances were from ethnic groups in Indonesia, namely Batak (*Cikala Le Pong Pong*), Bali (*Janger*), and Bugis (*Ma Rencong Rencong*).

Performance Requirements

Folklore artistic requirements in choir competition guidebook provided recommended regulations, not mandatory. The performance regulation data of the three organizers provided rules for accompaniment, costume, and choreography. The regulations did not use "mandatory" words but used the word "are allowed" (RICF and COFF), and "are permitted" (SDGCF). Accompaniment was allowed as long as it used wireless traditional musical instrument (acoustic), or a cappella. For the costume, the choir singers were allowed to wear the traditional outfit of the region where the folk song originated. The singers' movement in a form of choreography was also allowed by the organizers.

The data of *Cikala Le Pong Pong*, *Ma Rencong Rencong*, and *Janger* performance suggested dominant kinesthetic characters throughout the song. Body movement or choreography including individual or group movements and group formation change, which was generally not needed or avoided in a choir, indicated optimum movements. The data proved that the auditory dimension was dominated by homophonic textures based on choir rules, rhythmic character produced by human voice and body percussion, vocal techniques maintaining proper intonation, and vocal colors similar to ethnic voice. *Cikala Le Pong*

Pong and *Janger* were a cappella, while *Ma Rencong Rencong* used traditional musical instrument (Bugis drum). The kinesthetic dimension was reflected in the singers' individual movements, formation change, and the presence of dramatization. The visual dimension can be seen from the presence of stage properties, costumes,

accessories, and makeup that were similar to the authentic characteristics of the ethnic group possessing the folk songs. All singers in the three performances wore ethnic eclectic costumes or costumes that were similar to the traditional outfit of the ethnic group possessing the folk songs. Those performances practiced the importance of visualization in singing folk songs on stage.

Assessment Rules

Assessment rules are the main factors determining the competition participants' achievement. Assessment model, as artistic requirements, is determined by the organizers. The followings are the assessment components of the three choir competitions and the judges' practices.

Assessment rules in the table above show that artistic requirements emphasize auditory dimension (sonorous) as the main element (intonation, sound quality, vocal, ensemble, and fidelity to the score) in an Indonesian folk song performance. Even though the auditory dimension is prioritized, a small portion is given to other dimensions (overall artistic elements, stage presence, pace of show, combination of vocal & visual). In practice, judges prioritize vocal techniques and good choral sound. Some characters of ethnic sound are expected to remain homogenous. Ethnic sound is a part of ethnic authenticity, but authenticity is disputed by judges because they do not have musical knowledge of the ethnic diversity in Indonesia.

The study was conducted due to the doubts that choir competition artistic requirements did not accommodate expression dimension as like the non-sonorous dimensions,

that represent ethnic musical character and culture. This study answered three questions. First, the answer to the question of the character of choir competition singing Indonesian folk songs was multidimensional. The harmonious choral sound was heard, vocal colors similar to ethnic voice were heard. In addition, various movements, ethnic dress, and accessories could be seen throughout the performance. The answer to the second question was obtained by relating the performance formulation to the agents' formulation indicating some issues regarding various interpretations of the competition category's name and folk song genre form. Another issue was that performance characteristics must highlight sonorous singing behavior, not dancing behavior. In addition, the agents doubted the need for authenticity. The answer to the third question is that judges assessed the performance by giving fundamental weight to the sonorous dimension. The non-sonorous dimension obtained little weight or was even ignored. The study findings answered the initial doubt. Artistic requirements of the folklore category in choir competitions, in fact, did not evenly accommodate multi-dimensional performance. It reflected artistic adjustment weighing auditory dimension higher than other dimensions.

The basis of this study is singing behavior observed from a performance perspective. In essence, singing behavior in a choir is a choral setting or a performance that is based on choir rules (Daugherty, 2001). Singing is the main factor of good and healthy singing behavior. The three-performance data suggested that the participants demonstrated good singing behavior.

Vocal production is the fundamental technique of singing behavior, thus, the body is the main instrument (Bumbach, 2017; Daugherty, 2001). In a performance, the body does not produce sound through the mouth but also dominant kinesthetic characters throughout the song. In practice, the dimensions outside human's voice are still needed because naturally, body movement is a rhythmic (Dogantan-Dack, 2006; Hibbard, 2013; Michell, 2001; Smolik, 2009; Van Nieukeerken and Pond, 2016). Body percussion, such as stomping, clapping and snapping, dominated the rhythmic movements in the three performances. Singers' standing or sitting positions also influence choral sound (Bonshor, 2017; Ekholm, 2000). The data pointed out that the three performances involved not only standing still in a row position but also formation changes in some parts.

Some studies have suggested that the presence of excessive kinesthetic dimension in a choir can affect vocal production, so the presence of choreography needs to be minimized (Daugherty, 2001; Powell, 2010)(Daugherty, 2001; Powell, 2010). On the contrary, this study has indicated constant changes in group formation and choreography. Almost all singers sang while performing choreography throughout the song.

On the other hand, folk songs are natural expressions of an ethnic that are not overshadowed by good and proper vocal techniques (Ott, 2015). Folk songs can be sung freely, full of variations and improvisations, but are not based on melodic notes and lyrics. In the three performances, all participants complied with the choir rules, especially

fidelity to the score so neither spontaneity nor improvisation took place.

The presence of ethnic instruments in the observed performances, like Bugis drum traditional percussion, supported the authenticity of the ethnic origins. Other studies have also pointed out that traditional musical instrument accompaniment is needed (Bumbach, 2017; Creese, 2014; Douglas, 2003; MacLachlan, 2014; Williams, 2003). The artistic cultures of choirs dan folk songs cohere in a combination so that they bring out chorally singing behavior.

When the behavior of singing folk songs chorally becomes a category in choir competitions, negotiation or artistic power relation takes place. The basic of choir competitions is singing techniques that conform to choir rules, so participants must demonstrate good singing behavior and other supporting elements (the dimensions outside sonorous dimension). Artistic requirements, as an artistic authority, provides a basis for the artistic decision of competition participants to present hybrid performance. Standardization formulated by competition organizers sets the standard of choral setting rules but offers leeway for choreography to present ethnic artistic expression. The study of hybrid singing competitions has indicated the ongoing discussion on standardization and authentication (Creese, 2014; Douglas, 2003; Qian, 2020; Szalay, 2018; Williams, 2003).

CONCLUSION

This study found that there was a hybrid performance in the behavior of singing folk songs chorally in choir competitions. The singing behavior showed artistic adjustment

rising two cultures, choir culture and folk song culture. The combination of the two cultures with adjustment to competition artistic requirements offered multidimensional performances. In a choir setting, artistic adjustment occurred in three aspects, authenticity, multidimensional, and standardization in choir setting. The three aspects were the key to the performance considering the choral setting in Indonesian folk songs.

Analysis of hybrid artistic adjustment made it possible to find two important things. First, the multidimensional Indonesian folk song conveyed that performance authenticity involved sonorous, kinesthetic, and visual dimensions. Second, the research offered a new perspective in viewing that artistic requirements in relation to the practices could not be separated from multidimensionality as the root of Indonesian folk songs. The practice revealed that artistic authority did not give an opportunity to show the true authenticity of Indonesian folk songs.

The research is limited to the analysis of three aurally, visually dan tangibly constructed choir performances singing Indonesian folk songs. Analysis of the research findings from the performance approach did not explain in a more detailed scale such as structural composition analysis (merely sonorous dimension). Similarly, informants' views as the basis for inferring artistic meaning did not involve learning aspects. Based on the limitations, further research needs to be carried out by paying attention to the aspects of repertoire studies and Indonesian folk song learning for a more varied choir. In this way, artistic requirements

in the folklore category can be reformulated to contribute to the sustainability of choir competitions in Indonesia.

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