
Art (Music) Education in Indonesia: A Great Potential but a Dilemmatic Situation

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ABSTRAK

Sejak didirikannya sistem pendidikan, pendidikan seni di Indonesia, khususnya musik, menghadapi beberapa halangan dilematis. Kenyataan ini semakin fatal mengingat bahwa potensi seni di Indonesia luar biasa, baik dilihat dari segi kevariatifan (etnis serta individual) maupun dilihat dari sudut mutunya yang tinggi. Dilema lama ini berkaitan dengan beberapa faktor historis, di antaranya (a) peran para misionaris Belanda serta pemerintah penjajah Belanda sendiri dalam rangka perkembangan pendidikan, (b) kekeliruan terhadap makna lagu-lagu wajib, (c) kesalahpahaman tentang globalisasi dan kepentingan internasional dalam bidang seni, (d) alienasi masyarakat Indonesia sendiri dengan mengimpor gramatik musik Barat yang bahkan di situ marjinal; (e) kecenderungan menghafal istilah teoretis saja, dan (f) ketiadaan metodologi mengajar yang sesuai dengan pengembangan kompetensi seni, khusus musik, dalam arti murni. Walaupun demikian, mulai beberapa tahun akhir ini dua proyek PSN (swasta) dan P4ST (UPI Bandung) dengan bantuan dari *Ford Foundation* sedang berusaha memperbaiki situasinya. Semoga kekayaan seni di Indonesia tetap menjadi aset bangsa Indonesia sendiri yang dikagumi di seluruh dunia.

Kata kunci: pendidikan musik, musik Barat, musik tradisi Indonesia, P4ST

For most insiders it is no big news that nowadays art education, especially music education, seems to be degraded almost in all educational systems over the world. Priorities in most countries range from technology via sciences, economics to languages. Art education is often not even mentioned. Numerous evaluation studies about educational quality present us charts and rankings, yet art education has never been regarded as something important and therefore has also not yet been evaluated. As a matter of fact, times have not always been like that, and at least in Europe, art education, especially music was regarded as a highly charged subject for the humanistic, moral and ethical development of a child.

The impact of those negative tendencies mentioned in the beginning is quite obvious. Especially music so-to-speak has been transferred to the mass media and their implicit functionalism. There, music is not anymore regarded as an aesthetical art form, but rather as a passive entertaining wall paper. It was the well-known writer and philosopher Jurek Becker who once wrote in

the German magazine DER SPIEGEL (1995 edition No. 2: 160):

Listening to pop music the whole day, as it is done by a lot of people, or to operettas as it is executed by my neighbour is an attitude similar to neglecting fantasy. But as a matter of fact, fantasy seems to be a central prerequisite to organize and get along with one's life.

The ongoing output of music also implies a certain lack of responsibility: It seems if the listener should be calmed down, similar to the treatment of mentally sick people in a closed hospital for psychiatry. It is like keeping people in the state of a thought-less mind or an atmosphere of complete dumbness.

Everywhere people seem to understand less but always to feel more – it is the method of the speech-less people in order to face the threatenings of everyday life. What I want to say is, that the continuous disappearance of words in our radio and TV programs is also responsible for increasing right-wing radicalism and brutal behaviour. And it has no balancing function when a moderator sometimes expresses his/her concern, stating that an anti-foreigner attitude is "mega-out". The main problem is less the lack of help in life orientation. The main problem is that the

ability to find one's own orientation is rapidly decreasing.

Although at first sight this statement has nothing to do with art education, it actually has a lot. Becker's strong demand that it is of utmost importance to find one's own orientation (self-responsibility), may be achieved mainly through art education. Art – seen from the producers as well as from the appreciators – has always had a balancing function in any society. Today in a mechanized and alienated world, the need of such balancing seems to be of increased importance compared with 100 years ago or even earlier. It is not anymore a local problem, but already a global one. Consequently, each country has to look into its own portfolio to find solutions how these challenges may be managed and conquered in future.

The following essay refers especially to the Indonesian situation, and the focus will be mainly on music education, although the overall situation of art education will be touched as well. It is a quite sharp and critical text which is not meant to demonstrate a neo-colonialistic attitude. In opposite, exactly because I recognize and admire the great potential in arts that this country has, I feel obliged to make my points as sharp as possible. Only a clear position may contribute substantially.

Compared with the educational situation in dance and fine arts (theatre is no separate subject and normally included in language), music education in Indonesia faces the biggest dilemma since its existence. What is meant with the term dilemma is based on two aspects:

1. Because of its cultural diversity, Indonesia is probably the musically richest country in the world. Nevertheless, this amazing variety and potential has long been neglected completely in the educational system.
2. Besides the first issue, the second problem in Indonesia is less the content (Western or Indonesian or whatever), that is defined by a curriculum. The main problem is the mostly misunderstood teaching and learning methodology, although ironically traditional methods of learning and teaching in the village communities before the school age would represent the ideal methodological steps that only have to be adapted and transferred into the actual educational system.

On the History of Art Education in the Indonesian Educational System

The roots of the Indonesian educational system go back until the 19th century when the Dutch tried to establish something between conservative and progressive forces. Additionally missionary schools took also part in primary education and had a strong impact on arts. In many areas local art forms (read: connected with local religious customs) had been forbidden (Purba, 1994).

If for example we look at the curriculum at the so-called "Kweekschool" for local teachers education in 1880 (Hutasoit, 1954), it is obvious that the focus was on basic abilities in language and sciences. Astonishingly there was no "Religion" and also nothing sounding political. Music education was merely represented by "Singing" with one hour per week in all classes (compared with, for example seven hours for bahasa Melayu or mathematics per week). It is not clear which songs had been sung, but it can be assumed that it was mainly Western folk songs and perhaps a few adapted local songs.

In regard of art education, an important opponent to the Dutch system appeared in the early 20th century. Ki Hajar Dewantara (1889 – 1959), an early critic of the Dutch colonial government, had thoroughly studied the educational principles of Rudolf Steiner and Montessori. He even favoured thoughts of Indian writer Rabindranath Tagore. Based on these principles he founded the "Institut Pendidikan Nasional Taman Siswa" in Yogyakarta on July 3, 1922 (Tsuchiya, 1987: 55ff). Dewantara's principles were based completely on Indonesian (Javanese) culture, and this also holds for the arts. Although Dewantara's concept was in complete opposition to the Dutch system, the colonial government took less care of their opponent in the beginning of his activities. They probably thought it to be a mere locally unique development with no further widespread impact. But there were more critical comments by for example the "Budi Utomo" movement that was fighting for independence but wanted to introduce Western values at the same time:

The high regard in which Soewardi [Dewantara's name at that time was still Raden Mas Soewardi Soerjaningrat, remark by the author] held the traditional Javanese educational system, contrasted sharply with the views of the Indonesian nationalist movement, typified by Budi Utomo which

looked solely to Western culture and Western education as a means to reach its goal of rising the living standards of the people. Having experienced personally the Western educational system, Soewardi was the first to attempt to find a model in traditional education (Tsuchiya, 1987: 63).

During the following years the “Taman Siswa” movement became quite popular until even the Dutch had their problems with it. In the early 1930s an agreement was signed between Dewantara and the colonial government that enabled “Taman Siswa” to continue its concept.

Until today “Taman Siswa” still exists in form of a foundation, but with little influence and impact. In an interview on September 2, 2002, the Jakarta-based musicologist Suka Hardjana explained that the decline of the “Taman Siswa” movement had mostly to do with Suharto’s politics of “orde baru”, where such a democratic educational concept had no place, although it was based on Javanese principles.

Seen from art education, it was a pity that Dewantara’s concept was not taken as a basis for a national education policy. During the establishment of the Indonesian educational system after the independence in 1945, politicians favoured again the colonial models instead of modified traditional local ones. Furthermore the “Taman Siswa” movement was regarded as being too Java-oriented, thus potentially intimidating the high diversity of other local cultures. At least, the whole, soon developing dilemma in art education – especially music – would perhaps not have happened if Dewantara’s principles would have received unlimited priority.

The Start of Music Education and the Creation of the Dilemmas

Besides the development of the whole educational system as I shortly described above, especially music education cannot be seen separated from the whole cultural discussion and the activities of the independence movement. There was even a time during the 1940s/50s when under the title *polemik kebudayaan* (cultural polemics) a fierce debate of pro-Western style and pro-traditional local style aficionados was going on. One interesting – though typical Indonesian – result can be experienced, when Indonesia was about to open its first schools for academic music education in the early 1950s. As the people involved in that *polemik kebudayaan* did not come to terms, the government founded ASKI Solo for gamelan or karawitan studies and

AMI Yogyakarta for Western music education. The whole dilemma of orientation itself has not at all been solved with that “binary” decision.

Suka Hardjana writes:

As a result of the expanding activities of Western culture during the colonial period, also the Indonesian attempts of modernization favoured so-called globally valuable standards and principles of European music culture and later also the ones, represented by America. In this connection the term “so-called globally valuable standards” has to be stressed, because: what actually came to Indonesia since the beginning has been in no way the real European music culture, but only a small superficial excerpt of it. In Europe itself, that excerpt is generally regarded as a neglectable by-product of the whole complex music culture (there is in fact a basic difference to the highlights of Indian literature like Ramayana and Mahabharata that influenced Indonesia, triggering a lot of highly charged cultural developments in literature, theatre, dance, fine arts and even music, at least in some areas of our country).

Based on these facts, one can state that the development of modern music in Indonesia has almost never been free from the influence of the Western development. (...) Except some popular musical forms that step by step came into the foreground like *Keroncong* and *Dangdut*, the modern music development in Indonesia can only be called a continuous process of alienation. (Hardjana, 1996: 1ff, translation by the author).

Please note that this statement was written by an Indonesian citizen and not by a Westerner. Although Hardjana’s critic does not hold for every region of Indonesia – Bali for example has always stayed straight forward with its own development, and there was never a certain “forced” influence of Western music – the basic problem is obvious. It is a fundamental cultural conflict, closely connected with the whole Indonesian development in the 20th century. And this had also an equally fundamental impact on music education. For a more thorough understanding, we have to go deeper into some facts.

During the independence movement in the 1920s, some Indonesians that had been educated at Dutch Christian (missionary) schools reacted to the uprising national enthusiasm. These were people like Cornel Simanjuntak, Rudolf Wage Supratman, Ismail Marzuki, just to name the most famous ones. They started to compose a large body of simple songs that referred to that enthusiasm (patriotic songs etc.). Seen from the language and the content, the topic of these song’s texts has always been Indonesian, while the musical language was

exclusively Western. And in the Western realm that musical language mainly referred to the commercial folk music idiom (in Germany called "Schlager"). In other words, musically, nothing was "national" Indonesian (or better: from the soon coming Indonesian nation). It was and still is a completely alienated situation, when those young nationalistic enthusiasts composed music for their nationalistic expressions and feelings, but using exactly the musical language of the colonial nation that they were fighting against. Even such agitatoric – if not even dangerous – statements like the one from Sofianto, telling that only the mere existence of the national anthem in Western music language is already proof enough of an already finalized acculturation process (Sofianto, 1998), cannot remove or change the reality of alienation.

Such songs, the so-called *lagu wajib* (= obligatory songs) have been obligatory in music education already in Indonesian grammar schools. As a matter of fact, starting with the curriculum from 1994 these songs are not anymore mentioned specifically, but in practice, these songs are still central elements of music education in public schools, but perhaps more because of their implicit political content.

During a national seminar in April 1995, Suka Hardjana once suggested to transfer this singing practice to the subject *Kewarganegaraan* (citizenship knowledge), as it has more to do with that context instead with music education.

A further problem was already addressed by Dewantara in 1919 when he returned from his Dutch exile. I would like to quote Sumarsam (1995: 116f) who states:

In the meantime, the question of identity of Indonesian culture became very complex, an identity that had to involve the role of regional cultures throughout the archipelago. Responding to this complexity, Dewantara proposed to define Indonesian national culture as "the peaks or high points and the essences of all invaluable cultures in the archipelago, either the old ones or the new creations – those that have national spirit". This expression of national culture was even included in the Undang-Undang Dasar 1945.

Further explanations by Dewantara prove that he – in concordance with the Javanese elite – favoured Javanese gamelan as an art form being on an equal level compared with European art music. No wonder that critical comments by young nationalists and representatives of other Indonesian ethnics followed almost immediately.

Some even argued that the keroncong music could perhaps represent the whole nation. In spite of some local preferences, all larger ethnic groups from Indonesia would take part in the keroncong music development.

How far such a statement is based on facts seems to be doubtful. At least all current research on keroncong by Kornhauser (1978), Heins (1981), Harmunah (1994) and Yampolsky (1992) did not prove anything of it. Furthermore, in the case of keroncong nobody would dare to speak of an artistic creative art form. It is an extremely standardized popular music, still today with much nostalgic feeling in it, especially for the pioneering generation of the Indonesian nation. Yet, such a qualitative consideration was less important during that politically-orientated discussion on national culture.

There was at least still a third factor which was the increasing contact with Western popular music via the radio (and later the TV). The first highlighting consequence of this influence may be seen in the very popular radio series *Bintang Radio* in the 1950s, when a lot of, locally coloured, imitations of Western popular music had been created. By that, Indonesia had begun to create its own pop-culture (Hardjana, 1996: 18f).

Based on this historical background the situation, or better the ideology of the Indonesian educational policy in public schools since the 1950s (and at least until 1994) may be summarized as in the following chart. Please note that all points have been stated by Indonesians themselves to justify the alienation in public school's music education:

1. The national Indonesian music education in public schools has to be based on Western music theory. The huge diversity of the respective Indonesian ethnic music cultures does not allow that one of them will be declared as the "national music". This would create serious ethnic tensions. Consequently, something has to be "imported".
2. Referring to Indonesia's urgent intention to become a modern industrial society, similar to the Western development, it seems also to be necessary to adapt Western music culture as an element of such a modern type of nation, in order to become competitive on an international level.
3. An international comparison proves that only Western (European) music was able to

distribute itself in almost all countries of the world. Therefore it has to be regarded as an international standard.

4. The younger Indonesian history, especially since the beginnings of the independence movement, has been signified by a selection of nationalistic and patriotic songs, using a Western music idiom. This has to be seen as a thorough justification that Western music language becomes the main content in music education on a national level.

These are the four main arguments that the author has read in numerous Indonesian publications and was even told accordingly by government officials and music teachers from grammar schools up to universities (except those teachers and artists that worked at the local art academies, where only Indonesian ethnic music traditions are taught!). Let me now go further and discuss critically these arguments.

First I would like to state that, when those people, who argued like points 1 – 4 above, had been confronted with Suka Hardjana's criticism of a hybrid alienated development in Indonesia, nobody would accept or even understand his arguments. Apparently over all those years, the "devil's circle" in educational politics has already caused a type of music teacher who from his/her birth has already been alienated with his/her own cultural realm. Only a few are coming from more remote areas (villages) with strong traditional local roots in arts. The only exception has been the few *karawitan* teachers at the education universities (ex-IKIP). But their role was almost neglectable, because their function was merely to assure the support for the dance departments (these study programs astonishingly were always based only on traditional Indonesian dance forms!).

It was only the art education program Sendratasik at IKIP Bandung (today UPI) that started to give the teachers for traditional Indonesian music a higher status and importance, when in 1994 the S 1 curriculum was completely renewed, putting Indonesian music cultures more into the centre of its educational goals. At least this was a start in a good direction, but the obstacles have been quite obvious as well (see further below).

Second, I would like to point out roughly how the situation for an Indonesian music teacher at public schools looks like, at least until the late

1990s (but still today as well, significant changes apparently need time!).

1. Only very few teachers at public schools have received a thorough artistic education at all, and this is even the case with some of their academic music teachers as well. Most music students only started to deal with music from the moment they joined that study program. There is no need to explain in more detail the limitation or even impossibility of a responsible artistic education in four years study.
2. Most teachers only know popular music, Western as well as Indonesian genres. And this is also their single interest. During a national seminar with academic music teachers from all IKIPs throughout Indonesia in 1992, the Indonesian teachers always started to sing primitive and melancholic love songs during our breaks which they accompanied at the piano with simple triads. Their main practical education at IKIP (mostly piano, guitar and vocals) was based on simplified arrangements and simple etudes. Beethoven's famous "Song of Joy" they all can sing, but nobody has ever heard the whole 9th symphony, lasting more than an hour, where this song plays an important structural role in the last movement. How far the mythos of a pop-star plays an additional role, is difficult to say, but it has some importance, at least for certain teachers. Basically mass-acceptance (quantitative) is ironically regarded as positive qualitative (!) criteria.
3. A sensitivity for the differences between simple, standardized and business orientated entertainment music and real art music exists only with a few of those teachers. A consciousness concerning historical, cultural immanent dimensions hardly exists at all.

Remarks on Point 1: Western Music Theory because of Ethnic Diversity

This first argument implies various political dimensions. Although Dewantara has formulated it for the first time, and in spite of the fact that his ideas – in this case the statement that the national music culture is created by the peaks of the local music cultures – had been transferred and included

into the Undang-undang Dasar 1945, there has not been any relevance of that for the educational sector. Similarly, the national principle of unity in diversity (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*) does not reveal any understanding amongst Indonesian politicians that a national “mono-music-culture” is of no importance or even contradictive with that national principle. Probably it is just the ongoing conditioning process that impedes further creative thoughts, but that cannot be discussed here.

A further problem is that national music education is generally connected with a single, precisely defined category or musical style. No one in the educational hierarchy seems to have a certain idea that music education – especially in grammar schools – has to deal with the development of musicality “an sich”. Still in 2002, when during the process of curriculum reform everyone was talking about the new stylish term “competence”, most responsible art educationalists spoke about the transfer of measurable data and facts instead about developing real musical competence (music parameters) in music listening.

Remarks on Point 2: Search for a Modern, Industrialized Nation Similar to Western Culture

This argument strongly proves the potential oddness of misunderstood internationality. If such an argument may have a certain relevance in connection with economics and sciences, it is completely opposite in arts. Art is, and always will be, the living and most personal expression of a human being or an ethnic group in its respective, smoothly grown cultural context. This reality may only change when an art product (whether secular or ritually bound is of less importance here) is regarded as a mere tradeware similar to a car. And here we come to the important point: It is exactly this commercialisation of a music product that became the single reason and starting point of an actually fictitious internationality. Western music is not so widespread because of its so-called superior quality, but because most of it has degenerated becoming a mere trading product. This has happened in the West since the middle of the 20th century in close connection with the development of mass media and related communication tools (radio, TV, records etc.).

Remarks on Point 3 and 4: International Distribution of Western Music and National Patriotic Songs

The third point is, so-to-speak, the consequence from the second one and the fourth point seems to be a logical consequence of the Indonesian argumentation of the first point and therefore needs no further explanation here.

Finally a last aspect has to be mentioned. It is based as well on an orientation towards Western cultural development but has a different background that has not yet been mentioned yet. The following quote was published in the daily newspaper KOMPAS on December 6, 1992 and was written by the Indonesian musicologist FX Suhardjo Parto:

The music culture of Indonesia that is distributed over the whole archipelago, is the so-called traditional music, with a comparably low rate of productivity and hardly any ideas; improvisation is the important and common part of that music, all together causing a quite amateur-like impression (...), all is similar to an ethnic mosaic that has its roots in shamanism (...). It is of urgent evidence to develop a new consciousness [in Indonesia], where the ethnic-traditional music is reserved exclusively for touristic purposes, while the study and practice of classical western music should support and enhance our nation in the global competition.

As a response to the article, where this quote is coming from, ironically the author of this essay as a representative of Western culture wrote an encompassing and sharply critical answer, propagating exactly the opposite. Fortunately the reply was published by KOMPAS two weeks later at the same place.

The hidden background of FX Suhardjo Parto's opinion becomes already clear after his use of the term “shamanism”, which is apparently a religious aspect. The following remarks on the “artistic poorness” of Indonesian music culture culminates with the quite blasphemous demand that local music forms should be reserved for tourists only, while classical Western music should become the one-and-only focus of Indonesia's music education. This weird statement somewhat hides FX Suhardjo Parto's real mission, which is a religious one. Both, the unacceptable mission as well as his embarrassing demand cannot be denied strongly enough. Such tendencies are not uncommon with Indonesians with a similar religious background. Astonishingly there has never been a

contrary argument, especially from the Islamic side, probably because no one has really understood the hidden religious mission.

Music Education at Public Schools Since 1984

In this article I only focus on problems of music education in public schools. The first two decades after independence can be put aside because music education existed almost exclusively of the singing of those patriotic songs (see above). Only in the "Taman Siswa" schools traditional gamelan was taught.

The 1984 curriculum was the first with a broader approach and had music education with two SKS in SD, SMP and also SMA (SMU). But only in SMP and SMA music was taught by a special music teacher, while in SD music, dance, handicraft, and fine arts were in the responsibility of the class teacher (today it is still like that; note: sports in SD had a special teacher!).

So far about these things in theory. Unfortunately reality tells us a different story because only a few schools have been provided with a music teacher. In many schools "music" is taught for example by the teacher of mathematics because he likes to sing, or there is no music education at all. Once more, music education existed mainly in the singing of those patriotic songs or even worse in a theoretical drill of learning Western music theory terminology without any acoustical relation to real music. It is significant that even during the last 10 years when the research team from UPI Bandung (P4ST = Pusat Penelitian dan Perkembangan Pendidikan Seni Tradisional = Centre of Research and Development for Education in Traditional Arts; see below) made its regular workshops in collaboration with governmental institutions (Dinas Pendidikan), most participants were from fine arts and not from music. Although the team provided various written demands in advance that it only accepts music teachers, the government people did not understand it at all, why we insisted on that.

In spite of all these shortcomings, and in spite of the mostly distorted Western content of the curriculum, the government at least tried to improve the situation. This was mainly due to the fact the minister for culture and education, Fuad Hassan, who was a music enthusiast and played viola.

The situation changed in 1993 with the new minister Wardiman Djodjonegoro. He had studied in Germany and was a specialist for technology. In

his curriculum reform, art education was reduced back to two SKS (2 x 45 minutes) a week, but for all art forms together. And in SMU, art education was cancelled completely in the second and third class.

This disappointing decision was due to the minister's favouring of science according to his own interests and the overall political climate in the early 1990s. Technology, high tech, industry, economics etc. had been the glooming terms. In such an atmosphere art education had almost no place. People even forgot that art education would be actually the one and only place in school education where creative thinking and acting has a place, something that could hardly be learned in the other subjects but would be urgently needed later when taking up a certain profession.

Nevertheless it must be admitted that, even if there would have been art education in a more encompassing way, this would not yet become automatically the playground for developing creativity and self-responsible competence. Here I would like to make an insert on overall problems of educational problems in Indonesia's education policy.

During a field study in 1990 in Germany that was conducted by W. Karcher and A. Etienne at the Technical University (TU) in Berlin with the title "Indonesian Students at German Universities – Active Studies in a Field of Tension Between Two Cultures – a First Survey" it became clearly obvious that values (that are extremely important in Germany education) like creativity, self-responsibility, critical thinking etc. are causing the main problems for Indonesian students in Germany. The study revealed the following main points:

1. The ability of criticising someone can hardly develop, because criticising a person of higher rank (the teacher) is almost impossible for an Indonesian. And if it happens, then it is almost inevitable that the student will receive a worse evaluation – completely independent from his/her actual ability and presentation.
2. Even asking a teacher a question is uncommon, because it might be possible that the teacher does not know the answer. To acknowledge not to be able to answer would be a disaster in Indonesia and would undermine the social hierarchy. This goes closely together with the lack of causal thinking in the Western sense. Finally and

as a consequence “learning” in Indonesia is similar to memorizing statements and definitions that aren’t questioned critically at all. Here is a mutual dependency between a social problem and also the wrong belief what knowledge/competence actually means.

3. Collective consciousness (that might be extremely helpful in certain social and non-academic circumstances) impedes individual and self-responsible behaviour or engagement. For example, a student in Indonesia that is trying hard to receive the highest ratings and evaluations is a potential “victim”, because in the eyes of his/her colleagues he/she is considered “a-social”. Such a person might even be seen as a problematic challenge for the teacher. The typical Indonesian priority of the collective in an educational situation then causes a decrease in quality and standard because always the weakest becomes the threshold point for all the others.
4. Finally the idea of “scientific-ness” is a real problem. In Indonesia people conduct an incredible amount of so-called scientific research. But it is more important to fulfill the formal rules (including the size of letters, colour of the cover etc.) rather than having a relevant content. Furthermore, personal comments, evaluations, interpretations are considered subjective and therefore not scientific, except if one’s own opinion is presented via the quote of someone else. Then it is “scientific”!

It is self-evident that these problems are not significant for all educational institutions, but it is a major tendency that significantly makes life difficult for Indonesian students, for example in Germany. But it is also important to talk openly about these points in connection with Indonesian educational universities, because they own the key to change the situation. They educate all the school teachers.

Now let us come back to the situation of music education. As I have already mentioned, the 1984 curriculum was almost exclusively based on Western music theory or what was supposed to be that. The main topic on SD level was the learning of the patriotic songs. These songs use Western tonal music language. But an Indonesian child (at least outside the urban areas) grows up with a completely different local music that is

modal, usually pentatonic and with a fundamentally different intervallic concept of “micro-intervallic tolerance”, while Western music is based on a completely fixed system. Even Indonesians that grew up almost exclusively with Western music still show an astonishing difficulty in correct intervallic singing. Whether there is actually some “quasi-genetic” conditioning, cannot be discussed here. Yet, my main point is that both systems are almost incompatible with each other at least for a beginner. In other words again, if the teacher on an academic level still has problems to understand the basic difference of the two systems, how can one achieve competence-based educational results already on the SD level?

This was just a short example of the problems of the practical side. Numerous other ones could be added easily. When it comes to knowledge, things get even worse, because Indonesian children had to memorize scale names, Western musical terms, basic harmonic functions etc. But it happened only theoretically and without any auditive correlated listening example.

Musical competence can only be achieved via music itself. Music theory is not the first, but perhaps the final result of previous practical and audiated musical experiences. Only then a musical term or systematic makes sense, and only then we may speak of creating musical competence. Just mechanically repeating memorized data in a test that for example slendro is a scale with five pitches with similar intervallic distances is useless, if someone has never audiated slendro scales before. Besides, this popular definition is wrong anyway because slendro has different intervals!

“To audiate” or “audiation” are the two related terms, suggested by Edwin E. Gordon (Gordon 1985), who had caused a breakthrough in music learning principles. To audiate means to develop mental representations of auditive phenomena. In our example it means that only a thorough exposure to slendro melodies and vocal practice with such scales will finally create mental representations of it. Only then musical competence has been developed. And only then – if necessary at all – the process of theoretical definitions may take place.

The same problem can be found in music history where students are tortured with useless data about things they do not know nor understand. It is completely unimportant to know how many symphonies have been written by Ludwig van Beethoven. It would be much more better to have



Picture 1: Melody Composition

heard most of them various times. An attached problem is a completely different understanding of history because of a still important tradition of oral transmission. This point cannot be further explained in this context.

A last factor is the fiction of creativity. Although the curriculum is asking for creative activities, reality proves to be exactly the opposite. Even on an academic level, creativity was regarded as “composing”, based on given and extremely limited models (in this context the situation has improved significantly since the early 1990s, at least at a few universities). The example of a melody composition is a good example (Picture 1).

The formalisation seen in this example is obvious. It is a strict AABA form without any melodic uniqueness but following exactly the rules (we should ask who made these rules? They have never been fixed like that in the West where they are supposed to come from!). More fatal is the strange long note at the end of each short phrase. This is totally uncommon in Western music, except perhaps at the very end of a whole piece. Here the reason might be similar to those already mentioned mixing-up processes between two different cultural/musical understandings. In almost all Indonesian traditional music, the metric system is endweighted with the thesis on 2, 4, 6, 8, etc., while most of Western tonal music departs from a front-weighted concept 1, 3, 5, 7 etc. Seen from an Indonesian point of view, the fourth bar then is the one with the a stress on it (the “gong” bar!). But in Western music this would be seen as a complete interruption of the melodic flow. Similar examples could be presented almost without an end. Once again, my point is that, for an improvement in music education in Indonesia, one has to realize:

1. The basic alienation with the focus on a non-familiar music tradition and language – in this case Western music language.

2. The uselessness of theoretical learning (both Indonesian as well as Western topics) in music education.
3. The fatal and often totally mistaken mixing of two different musical concepts.
4. Creativity has something to do with finding something new (at least for oneself) instead of mechanically fulfilling some questionable “rules”.

If these aspects are not changed completely, then the dilemma of Indonesian music education will continue into its next fatal round.

As a matter of fact, traditional learning methods in the villages are much more nearer to modern educational concepts and in a way one can still learn a lot from traditional methods. Traditionally a child grew up organically into its respective local realm. Via experience, trial and error, example and imitation, these children learned all which was necessary for their every day needs (materialistic, social, religious but also artistic ones). Therefore the village culture constructed the efficient and functional framework for such processes. They have never been separated from every day life and were even mixed with myths from the ancestors and other locally relevant stories and images. It is often amazing what a high degree of knowledge such people have; and it would be a fatal error to downgrade village people compared with urban people, a tendency which is quite common in Indonesian educational politics. Such knowledge is always applicable and extendable, because it has been developed via smoothly grown mental representations. It is the real way of learning and I want to call it “contextual learning”.

As a matter of fact, the learning type in public schools is exactly the opposite, it is “non-contextual learning”. A child normally does not yet know why he/she learns something and how it may be used later. Let me give a music example:

Most Indonesians pupils learn the national Anthem “Indonesia Raya” already in the first class of SD with the age of about seven, if not even before in the Kindergarten. The aim, to learn the national anthem is understandable and may be accepted. But it has nothing to do with music education. It should also be noted that such a learning for a six or seven year-old child, perhaps living in a remote village, is completely non-contextual, because

1. in this age a cognitive understanding of national consciousness is completely impossible
2. the child will not yet understand the content of the text of the anthem (it is only memorized abstractly)
3. the melody can not yet be realized by a child in this age because the pitch range is too big, not to speak about the impossibility of a clean intonation of that Western diatonic melody.

These three elements are not specific for Indonesians. The problems would appear everywhere. But these problems are less addressed in Indonesia and therefore have to be stressed here.

Non-contextual learning is a significant feature for almost all subjects in public schools all over the world on all levels. Only sports and religion may be seen differently because of their very nature. School education is considered to transfer knowledge and abilities, but most of them are not for immediate use or application. The main target is to prepare young people for further specialisation and their following professions, becoming self-responsible citizens based on common ethic and moral principles.

As we have discussed above, traditional – or better contextual – learning is obviously the best way to learn, because it creates full mental representations, is directly connected with its application and creates continuously a consciousness for humanistic values.

In today’s reality, such learning processes are not possible anymore and therefore school education has been developed. Consequently, the most important aim of teaching methodology must be to develop strategies where in a non-contextual educational context a contextual image is created. Contextual learning in a non-contextual context is the key of modern didactics and teaching methodology. An Indonesian child in Jakarta will probably never be able to play Balinese gamelan, although Balinese gamelan is one of the highest

ranking artistic expression of its culture. A good teaching methodology then has to develop a “quasi-contextual” strategy, where the basic musical principles can be experienced practically without (!) using Balinese instruments. If these basics have been internalized or audiated (read: have become mental representations), then the appreciation of the real music is based on a simulated contextual understanding, although the child will never be a Balinese. And only then, a theoretical “polishing” makes any sense and never the other way around. Two more points may be stressed here:

1. A modern teaching and learning methodology should always try to focus on practical experiences. If something cannot be experienced practically as a whole, one has to develop simplified examples and models that lead in the right direction. And if this is not or less possible either, then at least a thorough music appreciation (listening) must take place. Anything that is only available in form of theoretical data should be avoided completely.
2. Learning and teaching in schools (*strategi belajar mengajar*) should always be signified by a critical and communicative discourse. The teacher is a partner of the pupils and students and vice versa. Only in an ongoing discourse a teacher may really experience how far the learning process has created mental representations.

In order to fulfil all those demands, there are no encompassing recipes, because a lot of things may only be decided spontaneously during the actual situation in the classroom.

New Visions for Indonesian Music Education in Public Schools

As already mentioned above, starting in 1993 the new, although limited, curriculum included Indonesian traditional music for the first time on the SMU level. Even in the SD local aspects could (should) be integrated. The new curriculum was not yet a real breakthrough, but a first step in another direction, at least concerning the content. All methodological problems were still “at large”, because they could not be addressed in a curriculum. And here is another Indonesian dilemma: Problems in education are actually discussed quite often, even in public, but generally in the wrong direction. Mostly people blame the curriculum as the main factor for failures, and consequently a new curriculum is made or adjustments are added.

But the responsible people for education are not aware that a curriculum has only to do with the content and not with didactics and teaching methodology. But it is the latter where most problems exist today. The failure of the 1993 curriculum in art education was not due to the new content – except the fact that most teachers had no knowledge at all in Indonesian musics, as well as there where no reasonable textbooks at all. It failed because of the lack of a good teaching methodology. And the same thing will happen with the new curriculum from 2002/2004 if people do not start to discuss the real obstacles of the educational system.

Positive tendencies may be seen in two developments since about 10 respectively 15 years. 15 years ago, IKIP Bandung had started to develop a new concept of music education for the S 1 program. The new curriculum was based more on Indonesian music and Western music contents were at least modified to fit into the new concept. By that, graduates from Sendratasik, IKIP Bandung were temporarily the only teachers nationwide that had been able to realize the 1993 curriculum for public schools because the other IKIP still refused to put traditional Indonesian musics on their agenda. The reasons of the refusal are multi-fold. Beside the “natural” unwillingness to change common habits, most music departments were led by Batak people with Christian belief. The few that were not, had been clearly under the control of the leading ones, except the music department at Sendratasik, IKIP Bandung.

Nevertheless most school teachers had no idea how to teach about traditional Indonesian music. Fortunately the American Ford Foundation (Mrs. Jennifer Lindsay and later Mr. Philip Yampolsky as responsible program officers) stepped in at this moment with finally four projects, of which especially two were supposed to solve the problem and give the government a reasonable stimulus.

UPI Bandung (former IKIP) started with the first project named *Pusat Penelitian dan Perkembangan Pendidikan Seni Tradisional* (P4ST) that could be translated as “Centre of Research and Development for Education in Traditional Arts”, led in the beginning by Juju Masunah and the author. The second project called *Pendidikan Seni Nusantara* (PSN) which reads “Indonesian Art Education” was not connected with an institution but was directly under the control of the Ford Foundation itself (Philip Yampolsky) together with Indonesian ethnomusicologist Endo Suanda and

some of his colleagues. Today PSN is a quasi autonomous organisation, continuing its work with Ford Foundation’s support but without their direct participation.

PSN’s concept is completely focused on a so-called multi-cultural education, giving pupils in schools a thorough overview about the diversity and variety of Indonesian arts. By that this concept enhances a multi-cultural consciousness and competence which is of great importance in Indonesia. This concept is less interested in developing specific competences in music, dance or other art forms. The focus is more on cultural competence. PSN’s textbooks therefore give more overviews on special topics. For example the textbook “Gong” presents a lot of different types of this instrument with acoustic examples and short descriptions about the function and different forms all over the country. It does not enhance a specific musical competence.

P4ST’s concept is much more focused on developing real music or dance competence, also at the same time suggesting completely new teaching methods. By that P4ST uses an exemplary approach, believing that an indepth exemplary approach enables a multi-cultural consciousness as well. Over the years, seven exemplary teaching packages have been developed. Such a package exists of a scientific textbook, a methodology book, CD’s and VCD’s or DVD’s (postcards if video equipment is not available) but only on one single topic as for example: “Angklung in West Java”, “Topeng Cirebon”, “Talempong Minangkabau”, “Gondang Batak”, “Balinese Gamelan”, “Dance in Bali” and “The Rebana Music from Lombok”. All packages are based on thorough ethnomusicological studies and documentation, while the methodology book is designed multi-fold in order to be used on various educational levels from SD up to an academic level.

Beside the self-evident focus on practice as a basis to develop real cultural and parametrical competence, the teaching methodology always takes care of the child’s own realm. To start directly with the topic is mostly boring for pupils. Therefore their attention and interest has to be captured first. This is done by a creative approach that uses hidden devices from the actual topic in question but does not yet reveal it.

During all further steps any theoretical considerations are always appearing at the end of a certain teaching period (3 – 6 meetings). Theory

is then a kind of summary of previously achieved practical and audiative experience.

It is strongly hoped that the pioneering work of these two projects will become a continuous developing model for the future of Indonesian art education. Both concepts are not opposing each other. They rather “interlock” with each other in order to improve the dilemmas of art education in Indonesia, in a country where art is one of its most powerful and amazing cultural heritage that may contribute so much to the rest of the world as well.

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