TRISUTJI KAMAL’S MUSIC IN FOUR PERIODS

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ABSTRACT

This article maps the works of Indonesian female music composer and pianist, Trisutji Kamal, whose career spanned 7 decades. The composer who died in March 2021, was celebrated for the Islamic element of her works. Using the whole oeuvre of her music, personal interviews and historical research, this article argues that the religious element comprises only one period out of the four periods identified in her long career. The article contends that Kamal’s musical style was shaped by European music but tuned into Javanese nuances in its harmony, timbre and dynamic, creating a sense of embellished dissonance. We conclude that this style was brought about by Kamal’s effort in integrating the East and the West, musically as well as culturally. The article fills in the gap in research on Asian composers.

KEYWORDS: Trisutji Kamal, Indonesian female composer, periodization, music development

INTRODUCTION

Trisutji Kamal, an Indonesian female composer whose works have crossed various ages, from the 1950s to the 21st century, died in March 2021. In various obituaries written to commemorate her, the Islamic aspects of Trisutji’s musical compositions were seen to be a prominent nuance (Republika, 21 March 2021, Komunitas Salihara 2021). Living through different periods in Indonesian History, from the colonial era to the post-Reformation era, Trisutji Kamal produced an ouvre with a wide variety of religious musical aspects. Her compositions combine elements of traditional and Western music, and are colored by cross-cultural, and inter-religious dimensions. This article aims to show the diversity in the development of Trisutji’s music through the different periods of her works.

A number of studies have been conducted to see how Asian composers create and develop their music by combining Western and Asian elements (Kim, 2009, Kays, 2000, Berg, 2012). These studies discuss Geon Yong Lee, a Korean composer, Chinary Ung a Cambodian composer and Chou Wen Chung, a Chinese composer. Research on Trisutji Kamal was conducted by Tobing (2017), but was limited to the influence of her music on the well-being of the elderly. Raden (1995) and Rasmussen & Harnish (2011) in their discussion of Islamic music mention Trisutji. The Islamic nuance of Trisutji’s music, especially those presented during the Istiqlal Festival in the 1990s, was discussed by Notosudirdjo (2011). Trisutji's contribution to the Indonesian musical repertoire in the education music was discussed by Simanjuntak, Simatupang and Ganap (2019).

This article fills a gap in the knowledge about Trisutji’s music by providing a thorough
coverage of her work and the context in which the work was created. The birth of a work cannot be separated from the daily experiences of its creator. An individual's experience can shape the achievement of creativity in a work of art as an exploration of the development of their body and soul (Haworth and Calton, 2015). Trisutji Kamal's work was colored by the process of creation in different situations and time periods. This process produced various compositions, each with their own unique characteristics. All her works are distinctly marked by particular themes, patterns and characteristics that underlie the periodization of Trisutji's musical compositions.

This article maps out four periods that are milestones in the development of Trisutji Kamal's music. Each period is marked by works that show different nuances. The discussion of these four periods is based on data collected from all of Trisutji's works, which were composed from 1951-2002 and are distinguished by their distinctive musical themes and prominent musical patterns. The discussion is contextualized by the life experiences and phases in Trisutji's musical career. In addition, periodization is also contextualized by historical events and the cultural-political climate of its time. This section is based on an interview with Trisutji Kamal and a literature review.

Period I (1951-1957): The Blend of Javanese Pentatonic and Western Diatonic in Romantic Shades

The first period (1951-1957) which comprised Trisutji's teenage years became the starting point of her career as a musician. Coming from an aristocratic Javanese family from the Solo Palace, but born in Jakarta and raised in Binjai, North Sumatera, her mother (the granddaughter of Sultan Pakubuwono X) spoke to her in Javanese, taught her Javanese dance, gamelan music, and Javanese norms. At the same time, she learned classical music from a European piano teacher. She was also homeschooled and learned Indonesian and Western languages (Dutch and English).

The beginning of her musical career began with compositions among others, the Youngers Years Selected Compositions for solo piano (Trisutji, 2002). The musical works she created for this collection expressed a musical language that was purely rooted in Javanese culture which was typical of her music. The dissonance that resulted from the clash of Western and Eastern cultures was seen in Trisutji's five works composed during this period: Fantasy Dance (1951), Gending (1952), Nocturne (1952), Adieux (1954), and Sungai (1952).

The first period is an important period in Trisutji Kamal's creative process. It is important to keep in mind that the period of Indonesian cultural context in the 1950s which was related to the history of the nation after independence. The interaction of Western culture and Indonesian culture in the post-independence period had dynamics that were certainly different from those in the colonial era. In the 1950s, Indonesian culture was imbued with an anti-Western spirit. The search for national identity was the dominant spirit in Indonesian culture (Yuliantri, 2012: 448; Moro, 2004: 199).

Apart from the anti-Western and the revolutionary spirit of the 1950s, there was some ambivalence in the practices associated with the process of regenerating Indonesian culture. For example, Western diatonic music remained influential in songs arranged and created
during the Old Order (Yuliatri, 2012: 439). Young people were sent to Europe to attend cultural festivals, and this also inspired several Old Order figures to formulate the art of music.

The issues of Indonesian culture in the 1950s became even more complex when conditions in the cultural realm outside Jakarta are taken into consideration. As previously mentioned, Trisutji Kamal spent her childhood in Binjai, North Sumatra. The dynamics of culture in Binjai were of course very different from those of Jakarta. Data on culture in Binjai in the 1950s are rather difficult to find, but research by Plomp (2012) notes the cultural context of Medan during that decade. Given the location of Medan which is only a few kilometers from Binjai, it can be assumed that Binjai in the 1950s resonated the Medan culture of that period. The culture in Medan during the colonial era was closer to the Malay cultural identity, and far from the development of Indonesia's national identity (Plomp, 2012: 392). Thus, when Indonesia declared its independence in 1945, Medan had to "deal with images of different nationalities and identities" (Plomp, 2012). In the 1950s, the culture that was developing in Medan was popular culture, and few people participated in the "modern" national culture. In the midst of the development of popular culture, Hollywood films also entered the cultural consumption of the city people (Plomp, 2012: 373, 376), especially in the second half of the 1950s.

To what extent the currents of Indonesian culture in the 1950s influenced Trisutji Kamal is not easy to measure. Her introduction to the piano began in 1943 when she was 7 years old. In the 1950s, Trisutji Kamal continued her studies abroad. Apart from this, it can be concluded that in this first period, Trisutji Kamal was living in a cultural realm separate from the mainstream Indonesian culture. While the city of Medan in North Sumatra became fertile ground for popular culture and Jakarta became the center of the search for a modern Indonesian national identity, Trisutji Kamal was immersed in the realm of classical music: an element of European culture accessible only to colonial era aristocrats. It was not an element taken into account by those searching for their Indonesian identity after colonialism or those delving into the cultural context of North Sumatra at that time. Trisutji Kamal's study abroad also separated her from the historical and cultural dynamics that were occurring in Indonesia in the 1950s. Nevertheless, she continued the tradition of musicians from the pre-independence era of the national movement that occupied the space between the "west" and Indonesia (Java in particular).

In addition, when Indonesia in the 1950s was developing its regional music (Yuliantri, 2012: 427-428), Trisutji Kamal in Europe created Loro Jonggrang, an opera which was first staged in Rome in 1957. The opera, which is based on a Javanese legend, was born from the intersection between elements of Javanese and European culture.

The Influence of Javanese and European Culture on Trisutji Kamal’s Creative Development

The influence of local culture was already apparent in Trisutji’s early works. Fantasy Dance was written when Trisutji was living in Binjai, North Sumatra. This is a composition with ¾ time signature, using two series of pentatonic notes namely d-e-g-a-b and b-c-e - f#-a-b which are merged into new combinations of notes. The pentatonic series was developed
through modulations in the G major and E major scales, complemented by rhythmic accentuation and the use of dynamic signs in volume and tempo variations at different speeds. Through this technique, *Fantasy Dance* became an attractive dance music as a result of the pentatonic collaboration with western harmonies supported by rhythm accentuation variations. Trisutji Kamal’s other youthful works were influenced by several European composers such as prominent figures from the French Impressionist school of music such as Debussy (1862-1918) and Ravel (1875-1937) and Chopin (1810-1849). This influence can be identified in two of her compositions, namely *Nocturne* (1952) and *The Departure /Adieux*” (1954). *Nocturne* is a composition for a piano solo based on a romantic atmosphere with a soft and melancholic character. Created in Binjai in 1952, this work was specially dedicated to her father, R.M. Djulham Soerya Widjojo MD and mother B.R.A. Nedima Koosmarqyah who had educated her and instilled and fostered Javanese cultural values in her. *Nocturne* is a composition created by using five scales. Nocturne is a musical fusion inspired by traditional Javanese nuances under the influence of the Western romantic style of Chopin, a romantic composer who also composed a famous work entitled *Nocturne*.

Another composition that was inspired by the French composers Debussy and Ravel is *Kepergian (The Departure)/Adieux*, which was created in Jakarta in 1954. Debussy and Ravel are figures from the Impressionism school who are both well known for their breakthrough in creating color through the use of harmonies that are different from those of previous periods. These involved playing chord progressions in parallel grooves/movements without going through resolutions/movements in conformity to pre-existing rules (Machlis, 1979, pp. 92-93). *Kepergian/Adieux* is a composition filled with harmony playing in stacks of chords played by the left hand in the form of a triad (a chord arrangement consisting of three notes with intervals terts) and the right hand playing a chord progression consisting of four notes.

The stacks of notes in a dense harmonic progression were developed by Trisutji in playing a right-handed melody with a pentatonic pattern/five-tone system which was developed into an eight-tone diatonic system. The dialogue between the left and right hand creates a lyrical and flowing melody line wrapped in harmonious sound colors expressing contrasting characters that are both soft and melancholic. This style is different from Impressionism music which uses chord progressions that act as melody and harmony together in parallel movements. The composition shows Trisutji's ability to process sounds based on traditional material, namely pentatonic tones from different sets of tones in major and minor in collaboration with the use of Western harmonic chords which have a wide range of notes and registers.

The collection of *Youngers Years Selected Compositions* for piano solo was created as an expression of Trisutji Kamal's teenage soul which became a symbol of the roots of her creative power as a musician and composer. One of the significant works in this collection is *Sungai (River)*, a composition created in Binjai in 1952. According to Trisutji (2002), *Sungai* is the most important composition of her youth because it contains the expression her teenager's soul. This work was inspired by the water splashing in the flowing and vibrating streams of rivers and flowing at different levels, from mountains flowing through hills and valleys to estuaries in the sea. *Sungai* is an overflow of expression of life's turbulence and movement in contrasting rhythms, tempos and dynamics.
Sungai as an overflow of emotions from the soul in various characters and atmospheres is presented through contrasts in the intensity of sound, expressions of anger, sadness, singing, joy, and enthusiasm. Everything appears and disappears and sometimes is united like in the last part of this work, Song of the Sea. Sungai can be seen to be a symbol of the emotional outburst of adolescence which flows from a soul in turmoil and with passionate explosions. Everything is united in the strength of character that comes from the intersection and friction between the roots of Western culture and tradition that characterizes Trisutji's compositions. The period 1951-1957 was the starting point for Trisutji as a teenager to determine her position as a musician and composer. This period became the foundation for Trisutji's understanding of Javanese culture (through gamelan music) and Western culture (through the theory of music and piano lessons). These two cultural roots based on different systems became the foundation for Trisutji in creating her initial compositions. These early compositions showed her boldness in combining the two cultures through intersecting clashes interspersed with complementary togetherness.

Period II (1960-1970): Trisutji’s Music and the Eruption in Bali

Trisutji’s Javanese cultural roots that are the foundation of her music provide a firm basis for enriching her musical insight with the diversity of Indonesian music. She believed that cultural diversity played a very important role for her. The cultural influences that really inspired her, apart from strong Javanese influences, were the Malay and Balinese cultures. She received the Javanese element from the Javanese culture that was preserved in her family environment. At that time, the Malay culture was the dominant culture in North Sumatra. It was even more dominant than the developing national culture "from Jakarta" (Plomp, 2012). Balinese culture, on the other hand, was that part of the Indonesian culture beyond her childhood environment, that first caught her attention during a natural disaster. The eruption of Mount Agung in Bali in 1963 touched the very heart and feelings of Trisutji, who, at the time, was in Rome, Italy. She explained this in an interview:

“This incident really moved my heart and soul even though I had never been to Bali, and my knowledge of Balinese culture was still limited. At that time, the world of information was still very limited. This limited information did not dampen my enthusiasm, empathy and compassion for others, so I created this work as an overflow of my concerns and sadness.” (Trisutji, interview, 19 April 2016).

The quote above shows that the natural disaster in Bali aroused in her a great discomfort, as seen from the words “concern” and “sadness” that emerged after getting information about the eruption of Mount Agung in Bali. Interestingly, the discomfort arose from empathy. Trisutji experienced this discomfort without being there together with the Balinese who were experiencing the disaster. The Mount Agung disaster provided a new image for Trisutji Kamal, an Indonesian who was abroad at the time.

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1 “The language of my music is a very natural outpouring of the heart of the archipelago which is integrated into my soul” (Trisutji, interview 19 April 2016)
This concern about the natural disaster that claimed the lives of approximately 2000 people and destroyed the homes of a large numbers of people stirred her soul. This experience became a source of inspiration for the creation of *Gunung Agung*, a work of art that combined elements of music and dance. The music and dance were inspired by the natural beauty and unique culture and customs of the Balinese. *Gunung Agung* was produced in collaboration with Farida Utoyo, a well-known dance and ballet artist who was in Moscow at the time. Starting from the same concern for Bali, the two artists established communication between Italy and Russia (Soviet Union at that time) to go through the creative process together to produce the music and dance compositions for *Gunung Agung Meletus*.

Human life which is closely related to the conditions of the surrounding environment provides a strong foundation to understand those situations. The beauty of Indonesia’s nature, culture, traditions, the condition the people were in, the love, peace, tragedy, sadness, hope, loyalty, and happiness, all inspired Trisutji to learn more about Balinese culture and its customs upon her return to Indonesia in 1967. A deeper understanding of Bali would help her compose *Gunung Agung* which she had started in Rome in 1963. This work focused on human life related to aspects of love, loyalty, sadness, hope, and spirit that underlies human life amidst the tragedy.

This work was created in three acts, namely the first act *Cinta Agung* (The Great Love), the second act *Tragedi Agung* (The Great Tragedy) and the third act *Harapan Agung* (The Great Hope). This work was also inspired by the concept of wayang (shadow puppets) which can be seen in separate episodes, such as *Petilan*, which could stand alone as a separate composition. The uniqueness in the process of creating this work began with the composition of the second act, *Tragedi Agung*, which is the core of the story of the eruption of Gunung Agung. The manuscript and music of this act were written by Trisutji herself. This act became the foundation for the creation of the first and third acts. Some of the aspects that underlie the composition of *Gunung Agung* include: the story written by Trisutji, the music that complements the three acts and the scenes, the choreography, the performers from various backgrounds and the use of multi-media.

This work tells the story of the existence of humans who are born, grow and develop in the twists and turns of romantic love interspersed with friction, problems and disaster. Trisutji (2008) explained that the story was written in three acts in accordance with the cycle of human life. The first act begins with a pair of lovers who try to fulfill their dreams by running away and carrying out an eloping ceremony as is the custom in Bali. This ceremony is carried out so that the girl will get the status of a legally married wife after previously experiencing rejection. This act is inspired by the beauty of nature with green terraced rice fields that flourish around the lives of young people who are enjoying life with each other. The chorus of Kecak dancers, flutes and orchestra are combined with the voices of the pesinden or traditional singers, expressing the theme of happiness in a relaxed and peaceful atmosphere. There is an alternating mix of sadness and anxiety that blend like the expressions of young lovers. This passionate expression of love is shown in the metal wind instruments and the harp playing the glissando in dynamic loud/forte volumes with varied timbres to present contrasting characters.
According to Trisutji (2008), this story was developed in the second act, namely Tragedi Agung. This act begins in a romantic atmosphere imbued with the beautiful rays of the full moon as the newly married couple fall asleep cradled in a dream. Suddenly, the overflow of love in the Dance of Love turns into a nightmare. The nightmare was preceded by the sound of electric guitars and harps playing glissando and gongs accompanied by the sound of an orchestra and cello. This was followed by the sound of Balinese gamelan in dialogue with a violin which harmoniously shows the sweetness of true love. This romantic atmosphere changed drastically into a frightening situation with the entrance of the Dewa Agung (the Great Diety) who spewed lava and fire from the bowels of Gunung Agung, destroying the natural surroundings and human life. This terrible disaster is presented through gamelan music, timpani and an orchestra. The scene of the eruption is followed by a heartbreaking scene of the wife who is desperately searching for her husband. This change of atmosphere is marked by the playing of a rebab accompanying the Dalang's narration of the incident. Traditional Balinese songs of mourning and Balinese gamelan sounds usher in the Ngaben (Balinese cremation) ceremony as a symbol of eternal life in the next world. The dialogue between tradition and the west in the dance and music creates a contrasting atmosphere that characterizes the style and expression of the second Act, Tragedi Agung.

Hope has always been a part of the human soul and life. Harapan Agung is the closing theme of the third act. Trisutji (2008) explained that this act is filled with ritual processions, namely the ceremony of cremation which is symbolized by the flame, the meeting of the wife with the spirit of her husband and the pregnancy of the wife who will give birth to her child. This story describes the cycle of life, from birth to death and the seeds of new life. The nuances of life, joy, sadness, love, loyalty, sorrow, laughter appear one after another. From the Eastern culture perspective, the composition of Gunung Agung involves traditional musical instruments such as the saron and Balinese drums. However, at the same time, this work involves Western musical instruments such as the flute and cello, which produce sounds that are not indigenous to Balinese or Indonesian culture. In its development, the performance of Gunung Agung in Indonesia in 2002 involved the electric guitar and various rock nuances. The use of musical instruments in the composition shows that Eastern and Western cultures persist side-by-side in Trisutji Kamal's creative process.

Gunung Agung Meletus is a composition that went through a long process as part of the development of her understanding of Balinese culture. Her introduction to Bali is the first part of Trisutji's cultural journey to embrace the archipelago, which covered other parts of Indonesia. The roots of Western/classical culture in addition to her knowledge of music and its theory became her means of expressing traditional culture. These two elements complemented each other and produced a unique blend of timbre in Gunung Agung. Through this work Trisutji demonstrated her ability to study other cultures ranging from musical instruments to customs and establish communication with artists of various ages, genres and backgrounds such as modern dance choreographers, traditional dance and music artists, pop and rock musicians.
Period III (1971-1996): The Religious Phase

As a pianist and composer, Trisutji had a long experience in art and music. She had spent a good part of her life engaged in cross-cultural dialogues and understanding religious tolerance which became a source of her musical inspiration. In the development of her music, there was a period when spirituality and religion strongly influenced the creation of her music. This religious aspect did not appear out of nowhere, but was in fact, something that had been embedded in her ever since her childhood. Trisutji recalled, "My introduction to the religion began while as a little girl living in Binjai I was exposed daily to the calls to prayer echoing from the nearby mosque and the voices of children reciting from the surau and the Quranic school near my house." (Trisutji, interview, 21 February 2017). This religious life combined with a tight relationship with daily human life was discussed by Weis (2006). The calls to prayer at dawn called the community to pray before they went about their daily activities in their homes, the market or at the office.

Trisutji’s second marriage in 1975 to Ahmad Badawi Kamal, a devout Islam, strengthened her religious leanings. She went to Mecca for the hajj pilgrimage a number of times. Later she felt the urge to focus on religion. In order to explore her Islamic beliefs, Trisutji decided to stop all her musical activities during 1990. She did this to gain a thorough understanding of and an opportunity to study the Quran and the Islamic religion completely. "This made me more mature in body, soul and mind in dealing with my personal religious life." (Trisutji Kamal, interview, 21 February 2017).

This period induced Trisutji to acquire a better understanding about Islam and the ability to read the Quran using the correct chants and pronunciation with the ultimate aim of refining her compositions with religious nuances that were obtained from a good understanding of the verses of the Quran.

Trisutji Kamal's decision to withdraw from music to study Islam in this period is worth reflecting on. At that point, it appeared that the elements of music and those of religion were contradictory in Trisutji Kamal's views. If there had been no contradictions, she could have explored her religious beliefs without having to stop making music. The fact that she temporarily stopped all her musical activities implied that she viewed musical elements to be in conflict with religious elements. As formulated by Festinger (1957), to deal with cognitive dissonance, one will adjust the level of significance ("adjusting attractiveness") of one element to another. In this case, Trisutji Kamal clearly focused her thoughts on the religious element and reduced the significance of the musical element.

The religious period in Trisutji Kamal's creative development could be explained from the perspective of Indonesia's national political and cultural climate at that time. Prior to the 1990s, the relationship between the state and religion (Islam) was somewhat antagonistic. Saidi (n.d.) in the article "Relationship between Religion and the State: A Policy Reconstruction" published in the book Policy Studies in the New Order Period noted that after the fall of Soekarno, the hopes of the Islamic group to gain power in the Suharto era vanished when the New Order government "restricted all activities which were considered to disturb national stability", and the right group was considered as one of them (nd.: 300). The suspicion of the Islamic groups towards Pancasila was finally quelled (although not thoroughly) by the voice
of NU, represented by several figures, especially KH. Ahmad Siddiq who argued that Pancasila would not replace or surpass religion because “as an ideology, Pancasila was made by humans” (Feillard in Sidiq, n.d.). Other NU figures such as Kyai As’ad and KH. Abdurrahman Wahid also played a major role in changing the face of NU and Islam before the state, and thus, for the first time in Indonesian history, the state was able to “make peace” with Islam in the political realm.

The peace finally created a period which Saidi (n.d.) called the “honeymoon era”. Although problematic, in this period Suharto (1) in 1990 founded ICMI (Indonesian Islamic Intellectual Association) with B.J. Habibie as the chairman (n.d.: 311), and issued policies which was supportive of political Islam and stronger Islamic culture in public realms. In other words, Islam became a friend of the state as McVey said in Saidi, namely, since the 1990s "Islam began to become an 'insider' in the center of power in Indonesia".

Considering the political climate and cultural policies of the New Order which were antagonistic to Islam before the 1990s (until the two “buried the hatchet” in that decade), it is understandable that religiosity became an important element in Trisutji's life. As in the previous periods, she was shaped by a sociocultural climate that gave rise to new cognitions. Discourse on Islam was very thick in the Indonesian political and cultural climate the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Prior to the 1990s (post-1966), Islam became important because of its antagonistic relationship with the New Order version of Pancasila. In the 1990s, Islam became important because of its good relations with the Suharto government. The dynamics of Islam in Indonesia were parallel to the time Trisutji began an in-depth study of her religion.

It should also be noted that religious life was an integral part of Trisutji’s childhood as mentioned in the interview in the previous sub-section. Javanese culture that was preserved in her home during her childhood also brought her to Islam. Thus, the Islamic element had been part of her life ever since her childhood; however, it became more significant in the 1990s. In addition to her memories of the calls to prayer and the activities of children reciting the Quran at the Quranic School and in the Langgar (a small neighborhood mosque) near her house, Trisutji Kamal's childhood was filled with a rich variety of sounds such as the splashing of river water, the sound of birds chirping in the rice fields, the sound of a shepherd playing his flute while herding buffalo in the field. Those sounds continued to resonate in Trisutji's life, and in this period all the memories of these sounds eventually became the basis for her to create compositions with religious themes. Although Trisutji had experienced some inner tension or “dissonance” between her religious callings and music, she once again turned this restlessness into an impetus to compose. Several compositions were born in this period, including Ballada untuk Piano Solo (A Ballad for Piano Solo) and Suita Idhul Fitri which consists of three parts, namely Ramadan, Takbir Night and Eid.

Although the religious aspect was very strong in this period, the manner in which Trisutji Kamal composed this suite was still influenced by the developmental phase in the early period of her development as a musician. This is clearly seen when the third part of the Idhul Fitri suite is observed from a musical perspective. This composition begins with an introduction in the form of a Cadenza. Cadenza is a melody or harmony that is created for certain parts of a composition, namely the beginning, middle, end or in certain parts of a phrase. In the Cadenza section, musicians are given the opportunity to add some variety or modify, to
improvise the existing material. Cadenza, which started the Idhul Fitri Suite, was presented through basic material with a series of 4 notes in the form of chords that were played Arpeggio 9 played sequentially and one after the other.

This section is embellished with decorations in the form of trillers that give a vibrating effect in contrasting dynamics. Starting from a slightly loud/mezzoforte volume, the sound changes to soft/piano and then increases the volume becoming louder/forte, played at a slow/riten tempo, thus creating an initial atmosphere of joy at the celebration of Eid al-Fitr which is presented in various characters. The part of the song following the Cadenza is played at the Allegro Festoso Deciso tempo/happy atmosphere in the party. This interval play is worked out in rhythmic patterns and accents on different beats, causing syncopation echoing the beat of the drums proclaiming the joy and jubilation of Eid al-Fitr. The melody that appears in a line of tones resulting from a combination of pentatonic and diatonic tones creates a lyrical character as an expression of a prayer of happiness for achieving victory on the holy day of Eid al-Fitr. The dialogue of rhythmic motifs in syncopated beats and dynamic volume and tempo played by the left hand combined with expressive lyrical melodies for the right hand creates the strength of different characters in a mutually supportive balance. The joyful atmosphere is accompanied by the expression of gratitude in the solemnity of prayer as a result of the journey to understand religious aspects in a multicultural life underlying her career journey.

The Islamic elements of her music became one of the highly cited elements of her music (Rasmussen, 2005, Raden in Harnish, 2011). It is to be noted, however, that Trisutji’s Islam opened her up to tolerance and flexibility towards other religions. Trisutji said that she was by nature a religious person and respected other religions. She describes her family’s religiosity as one that was open and far from being fanatical. Since childhood she enjoyed reading about other faiths which was allowed by her parents. This experience developed in her a sense of tolerance for other beliefs (Trisutji, interview 27 September 2018). Openness in understanding other cultures and religions was a means in the work process that was not bound to limited sources. This was manifested in one of her compositions entitled the Birth of the Prophet Isa (Jesus), according to the Quran, which was staged in Rome in 2000. This work was based on her desire to understand the meaning of the birth of Prophet Isa contained in the Quran, considering that events relating to the birth of the Prophet Isa are also part of the Bible. The events around the birth of the Prophet Isa are generally more often commemorated by Christians in Christmas celebration services at churches, Christian community gatherings at offices, or institutions that hold Christmas celebrations. This narrative is also often made into a Christmas music concert program to welcome the big day. Trisutji worked on this religiously nuanced composition in a simple way. She got her inspiration from both Western and Eastern cultures through the use of musical structures (performances of concerts), second instruments (the piano as a representation of Western musical instruments, as well as traditional musical instruments. This work was performed by several Indonesian musicians namely, Trisutji (piano), I Ketut Budiyasa (Balinese percussion), Fitri Mulyani (vocals), Qoriah who recited the holy Qur’an, narrated by an Indonesian theater artist, Azuzan, and supported by Italian artists/actors who translated the verses of the Quran into Italian. This collaboration gave meaning to a form of belief that was able to create a sense of mutual respect for differences.
As a Muslim, Trisutji had heard the story of the birth of the Prophet Isa through the chanting of holy verses and the language of music narrated in a multicultural space.

The strong Javanese culture that was interwoven in Trisutji's life was always balanced by her strong religious believes. As a Muslim, she was able to create relationships that were built on her openness in responding to ethnic and religious diversity. Although she received most of her general education in private Christian schools such as Methodist schools and music education in Europe, this experience did not reduce her understanding of the Islamic religion she believed in. Trisutji's personal flexibility and spirit opened her up to mingle in multicultural and religious contexts which enabled her to produce musical works with a strong Islamic character and its traditions in the nuances of Western harmony, united in the unique characteristics of this period.

From the perspective of cultural studies, the importance of the religious element in Trisutji's life during this period (1971-1996) was the result of the prevailing political climate at that time. Elements of Islam had become so important at that time, so that when faced with the choice between Islam and music, Trisutji chose to study her religion. Nevertheless, in the end, she turned the tension between music and religion into a source of inspiration for her work, and thus, the elements of music and religion could coexist in her musical compositions.

**Period IV (1990-2002): Cultivating Regional Music**

The eruption of Mount Agung was the first moment in which Trisutji Kamal was confronted with another Indonesian ethnic group, namely the Balinese. Nevertheless, the Balinese were not the only ethnic group in Indonesia that influenced her creative development. In fact, Bali was the beginning of Trisutji Kamal's creative journey to observe and understand other Indonesian ethnic groups.

From 1990 - 2002, Trisutji Kamal published a number of compositions based on folk songs. This interest in Indonesian folk songs was not actually a new phase, but a part of her lifelong passion. In her childhood in Binjai, she was exposed to a multicultural life. Besides watching Indian dances and Chinese opera in night bazaars, she also enjoyed Malay and Batak music and dances. When she moved to Jakarta in the mid-fifties (before going to Rome) she was immersed in the Indonesian cultural revival atmosphere of Soekarno’s anti-West campaign. About the role of the local culture in her music, Trisutji said: "The language of my music is a very natural outpouring of the heart of the archipelago which is integrated into my soul" (Trisutji, interview 19 April 2016).

In the 2000s, she started to collect her Indonesian folk song pieces and retouched them again. Trisutji related that at that time there were no interesting arrangements of folk songs to play on the piano. Therefore she wanted to transform it into an elaboration of piano playing techniques to present the beauty of folk songs. At this point it would be beneficial to highlight Trisutji Kamal’s perspective on folk songs:

“The folk song has a beautiful and simple melody. Through this aspect, I had the desire to recompose folk songs through the use of harmony, dynamics, tempo and timbre that would give them a new face accompanied by piano playing techniques so that they could become part
of the piano musical repertoire with standards that were high enough to be performed as concerts and to become material that met the requirements of music educational.” (Trisutji, interview 29 February 2016).

As an example, she had taken the folk song Soleram and formed it into a new song called Fantasy. She worked on the Indonesian folk song Sarinande and put in themes and variations. She used piano playing techniques that were quite difficult and posed a challenge for pianists to display their skills. (Trisutji, interview 27 September 2018).

The statement above also reveals Trisutji Kamal’s view that there is a binary opposition between folk songs and the piano. The folk song is described as being “beautiful and simple”. However, the “simplicity of folk songs” made Trisutji Kamal feel the need to work on them in a “piano repertoire of a higher standard”. In this statement, it is seen that the "repertoire" occupied a higher position than the folk songs, and thus, the folk songs need to be "elevated". If this statement is observed from the cognitive dissonance theory, it can be seen that there was a dissonance inside Trisutji Kamal that was generated by her understanding of folk songs and her understanding of the piano and classical music. Based on these two elements, the folk song needed to be arranged so that it could meet “higher standards”. The binary view between regional culture and “high culture” (piano repertoire) in this case created cognitive dissonance, and the repertoire elements had a higher degree.

During this period, Trisutji’s composed Indonesian Folk Melodies volume I in the form of an arrangement of 26 Indonesian folk songs. Indonesian Folk Melodies is one of Trisutji’s compositions that she had labored on over a long period of time and process. This work stemmed from her interest in the melodies of the folk songs that reflect the beauty of their respective regions. She felt the need to give these folk songs a new face so that they would be better known by the community and would be able to complement the musical repertoire and balance other existing songs such as the pop songs.

Indonesian Folk Melodies were once again greatly influenced by the paradoxical tension between the concepts of Western and Eastern culture. Elements of Western music were again used to cultivate regional music (Indonesian/Eastern culture). The process of cultivating by giving a new face to the folk song was done, among others, by using harmony in the use of major and minor chords, and modulation (the development of several scales). Harmony cultivation techniques were also supported by the use of dynamic and tempo aspects so that folk songs that seemed simple would appear in dynamics with contrasting characters and expressions wrapped in rhythmic accents that invigorate the atmosphere. New arrangements emerged as a result of cultivation through the enrichment of harmony, timbre, rhythm. The dynamics and tempo created a technical style of piano playing that demanded higher abilities/skills so that the new arrangements could be played in expressions with different styles and at different skill levels.

The song Jali-Jali, one of the most popular Betawi folk songs, is often used as material for folk song competitions/ festivals, vocal groups, and choirs and thus the song has appeared in various styles. Trisutji Kamal rewrote the song Jali-Jali in an arrangement for a piano solo written in musical notation complete with time signatures, dynamics with various characters and atmospheres, tempos at various speeds and the use of decorative tones to embellish the
strings of tones to put more accent in the song. Trisutji’s use of the triad chord which is played repeatedly is further developed by adding a-b and g-a notes in a secondary distance. This creates a percussive timbre with different pressures as a part that accompanies the main melody so that a dialogue occurs between the left hand that acts as a percussive rhythmic element and the right hand that provides a playful and lyrical twist to the pentatonic melody. Jali-Jali was born as a new expression in sound nuances with a harmonic timbre adopted from Western classical music but remained within the dynamics and character of Betawi music. Distinctiveness as a playful and cheerful expression in the lyrical tones turn into witty tones with contrasting character strengths.

Madegdeg is one of the Tapanuli folk songs from North Sumatera which is very popular among the Batak people and even among people in other regions. In this work the simple melody appears in sound harmony with contrasting register and dynamic expressions through a dialogue between the left and right hand playing techniques that complement each other. Trisutji’s arrangement, Madegdeg, appears as a piano solo composition that can be used as part of the repertoire for music education materials and also performed publicly in a concert. This new composition has changed the sound structure into an expression that shows the role of local material as a feature of regional music, thus, gaining equal standing with other popular songs to be played in Indonesia as well as abroad. This has led to the existence of local music that is not limited to entertainment music but is able to be used as educational music and concert repertoire.

Indonesian folk songs have a uniqueness that expresses the distinct qualities and atmosphere of each region. The richness of Indonesian culture is reflected in the abundant folk songs found in each region, many of which are not yet known outside the respective regions. Indonesian Folk Melodies for solo piano is Trisutji’s effort to introduce Indonesian folk songs that are already known but do not have musical notations and piano playing techniques with indications and instructions. The indications include the use of pedals, dynamics and tempo in each song written in various tonalities. This guide serves as a reference and basis for players in understanding and interpreting folk songs with specific regional characteristics. This will help music students and music enthusiasts understand how to perform those songs while at the same time adding insight into the introduction of the regional culture of the archipelago. The Nusantara songs with their simple melodies and local nuances have been able to cross boundaries reaching the world through Trisutji’s arrangement of Indonesian Folk Melodies for piano solo. This fourth period shows how Trisutji was able to process the dissonant tension between Western and Eastern cultures to produce unique folk song arrangements.

CONCLUSION: The Twist of Creativity in Trisutji Kamal's Music

Four distinct periods have been identified in Trisutji Kamal’s creative development. In the first period, Trisutji Kamal got her first exposure to Eastern and Western cultures. In the second period, the natural disaster in Bali broadened her horizons and the complexity of her imagination about Indonesia. In the third period, it can be seen how religious nuances colored Trisutji Kamal’s music. In the fourth and final period, Trisutji recomposed folk music bringing out the distinctive nuances of Indonesian folk songs which could then become part of the world’s musical repertoire.
In these four periods, there is a dissonance or tension at musical and cultural level which arises from the intersection between Eastern and Western cultures, or the struggle between religious and musical vocations, which in fact became the arena for her creativity. By allowing those cross-cultural clashes to be present in her music, the sound of those dissonant nuances makes her music unique. This can be symbolically interpreted as a musical strategy to utilize this tension in her creativity. When the composer was exploring the various aspects of regional culture, the Western musical approach was always present in the works she produced. While Islamic religiosity is prominent in Trisutji’s works, at the same time we can also find strong nuances of other religions in her works. An introduction to the complexity and work of Trisutji Kamal would not be complete if only one phase in the development of her music is observed. The religious nuances that colored her work in the 1990s did not cover all her compositions, but became part of Trisutji’s struggles to elevate the distinctive sounds of the archipelago to the world music level.

This article complements the discussion on the work of Asian musicians who have elevate Asian nuances in modern musical compositions as outlined by Berg (2012), Kim (2009) and Kays (2000). Wider research space is still open to develop knowledge about the contributions of Indonesian composers at the world level, especially female musicians.

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