

Dangdut's Musical Development

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**Translated by Prasetyo Sigit from the original text titled “Perkembangan Musikal Dangdut”*

The Emergence of the Indonesian Music Industry and the Vernacular Music Recording

To discuss the development of dangdut, first, we must discuss the development of vernacular music in Indonesia. This is because dangdut is part of vernacular music. The development of vernacular music became the seed that later grew into dangdut music.

In his book *Noise Uprising*, Michael Denning defines vernacular music as music that arises, develops, and is played outside aristocratic traditions. (Denning, 2015). At its appearance, it was always labeled as ‘noise’ or ‘unwanted frequency’ by aristocratic groups. The vernacular music developed outside the aristocratic elite was heard as noise. Furthermore, Denning argued that the vernacular music revolution arose from the sounds of the daily environment of the working class in the islands colonized by colonial nations.

Vernacular music grew as a soundscape in colonial ports. Millions of migrants who arrived in colonial ports in the first two decades of the twentieth century brought the musical culture that they had with them (Denning, 2015). Vernacular music means music that grows outside an aristocratic realm. It means that the music emerges as folk music.

Southeast Asia was experimenting with music, innovating local genres locally, and making 1920 to 1930 a dynamic period of cultural change. Vernacular music gained popularity and was assimilated with popular music. This popularity prompted the start of the growth of recording companies which then perpetuated this music on gramophone and phonograph plate media (Bart Barendregt, 2017). In the midst of the economic crisis that occurred in that decade, the recording plate industry seemed unaffected and continued to expand to Southeast Asia.

Beginning in the middle of 1920s, the vernacular music of this Indonesian (past: Nusantara) colonial port began to be recorded by engineers from record companies. For example, the Gramophone Company from England, Victor Talking Machine Company from the United States, Carl Lindström A. G. from Germany, Pathé from France, Odeon and Beka from Germany, and local record company Tio Tek Hong Records. The result of these recordings was a boom, exactly similar to the boom of dot.com that occurred in the 1990s.

The boom of these recordings further popularized vernacular music: jazz from the West, and *keroncong* from the East. One of the famous *keroncong* singers at that time was Miss Riboet. In November 1926, in Batavia (now Jakarta), Max Birckhahn of the German record company, Beka, recorded Miss Riboet singing the popular *keroncong* song “Krongtjong Moeritskoe.” Later, Miss Riboet soon became the first recording star in the Dutch East Indies, two decades before the Dutch East Indies gave up its status as a colonized country and transformed into a nation called Indonesia. She was also popular abroad, from Penang to Manila.

Dangdut as a Fusion of Malay and Indian music

Apart from *keroncong* music, like the one sung by Miss Riboet, Malay and Indian music were also very popular in Indonesia by that time. Andrew Weintraub noted Malay and Indian music, which later became the forerunner of *dangdut*, for example, was from the existence of Orkes Harmonium (Harmonium Orchestra), which played a mix and match of Malay and Indian music. (Weintraub, 2010). Weintraub also pointed out that S.M. Alaydroes-led musical ensemble performed standard Malay songs, such as “Ma ‘Inang” and “Sri Mersing.”

One of the artists who introduced Indian tunes was Ebrahim Masrie with his harmonium orchestra. Meanwhile, Malay music was sung by Syech Albar’s gambus orchestra. The combination of the two evolved into *orkes melayu* (a Malay orchestra), the forerunner to the birth of *dangdut* music.

Along with the increasing popularity of vernacular music, and the opening up of cultural currents from India, the Malay Peninsula, and the Middle East, groups of *orkes melayu* adapting Indian and Malay music in their songs were increasingly emerging.

One of the most famous Malay orchestra artists was Ellya Khadam. The singer, who was nicknamed the ‘Indian doll’, was one of the first generations of *dangdut* stars. Together with Musif Bahasuan, and A. Rafiq in the 1950s, Ellya was called a *dangdut* music pioneer. As a young girl, she sang Malay and Arabic music. She was also capable of reciting verses from the Quran (or Quran recitation).

Ellya Khadam started singing Indian music when she joined the Sinar Kemala group founded by A. Kadir in Surabaya. It was at that time that Ellya began

to emerge with an Indian identity by dressing in typical Indian clothing and trying to adapt the dance, vocals, and facial expressions of Indian film stars. With the Indian identity, Ellya, along with several orchestras, then traveled to Singapore, Malaysia, and of course, around Indonesia.

According to Andrew Weintraub, Ellya Khadam was a genius composer. Her compositions include “Termenung,” “Kau Pergi Tanpa Pesan,” “Pengertian,” “Janji,” “Mengharap,” and her most famous song “Boneka dari India.” (Weintraub, 2010).

With “Boneka Dari India,” Ellya firstly introduced the foundation of dangdut music. The references to India are clearly shown in the title of the song, as well as the accompanying instruments, such as accordion, violin, capsule drum, and mandolin. In this song, Ellya narrates the story of a girl who receives an Indian doll as a birthday present from her father, who has just returned from India.

The foundation introduced by Ellya Khadam with the Malay orchestra was then continued to a higher level by a singer/songwriter. Together with his group, Soneta, there was a male singer known as Rhoma Irama, who picked up the musical characteristics of a Malay orchestra, such as those performed by Ellya Khadam. Not only that, he also mixed it with pop and rock music which was initially popular in the West.

The Influence of Rock Music on Dangdut Music

Rhoma Irama started his dangdut music career in 1969. Born in 1947, originally having the name Oma Irama, he is one of the most recognized musicians in the world of contemporary Indonesian music. In fact, he is a musician who changed Indonesian music (William H. Frederick, 1982). Early in his career, Rhoma was a singer of Orkes Melayu Purnama in 1968. Rhoma, who was still young at that time, developed his musicality and business intuition. It was the time when Rhoma became acquainted with Elvy Sukaesih, who had already found a new and interesting approach to Malay music. Rhoma’s experience in *orkes melayu*, his meeting with Elvy Sukaesih, and his desire to get a wider audience encouraged Rhoma to create a new musical style with the following specifications: it must be popular, across all classes in society, modern, and convey a certain message. Eventually, this new form of music was born; it was a mix and match of modern Western music, Malay-Deli styles, Indian, and Arabic. Thus, dangdut music was born as we know it today, even though the name *dangdut* was still unknown at that time.

The term *dangdut* appeared in the 1972-1973s. This name is associated with the lower middle class. This name was onomatopoeic from the drum rhythm, which sounds *dang* and *dut* when it is played (William H. Frederick, 1982). Together with the group he formed, Soneta, Rhoma Irama brought the music they played to a level of fame that was unimaginable before. Many were happy with this fame, but some were cons. One of them was Benny Soebardja, the

frontman of the rock group Giant Step. In the early 1970s, with a bit of pride, Benny called dangdut “dog shit music.” This sparked a long debate between Benny Soebardja and Rhoma Irama, between fans of rock and dangdut music. A music magazine operating at that time, *Aktuil*, held a panel discussion session to reconcile the public who are rock and dangdut fans (Tambayong, 2016).

Apart from the controversy that happened in that era, dangdut was increasingly recognized and liked by many people. Rhoma Irama and Soneta became a successful music group at the national level. The musical formula he concocted turned out to be acceptable to the public. The formula recipe is a mixture of Indian music, Arabic, Malay-Deli, and one special touch: rock guitar licks à la Ritchie Blackmore from the hard rock group Deep Purple. Rhoma also inserted song lyrics that were full of moral and social messages in his songs. These messages were closely related to the daily lives of the Indonesian people. Frederick stated Rhoma and Soneta formed the characteristics of dangdut music by adopting British and American hard rock formulas (William H. Frederick, 1982). The popularity of dangdut was increasingly unstoppable when Rhoma Irama and Soneta began to ‘colonize’ the film industry. The first film featuring Rhoma and Soneta as stars was *Oma Irama Penasaran* (1976) directed by A. Haris. Afterward, Oma and Soneta starred in a number of films such as *Gitar Tua Oma Irama* (1977) and *Rhoma Irama Raja Dangdut* (1977) (Frederick, 1982). These films are full of moral and religious messages by presenting the figure of Oma as a representative of the lower middle class

Dangdut has leveled up in society since then. Previously, when it was still known as *irama melayu* (Malay rhythm) or *orkes melayu* (Malay orchestra), *dangdut* was only played in the villages with audiences wearing sarongs and casual clothes. Dangdut is folk music. According to sociologist Ariel Heryanto, grassroots are morally superior, economically weak, but politically sovereign, often suffering injustice caused by the rich and powerful (Heryanto, 1999). The formula of Rhoma and Soneta’s music makes dangdut accepted by middle-up society and programmed in theater spaces. Dangdut also makes the musicians more prosperous from a commercial perspective (Ceres E. Pi-quinto, 1998). Dangdut, which was previously vernacular music developed in lower middle-class society, is now turning into established music. It has its own market segment in the Indonesian music industry. This music even became a new trend that drove the direction of the Indonesian music scene at that time (Weintraub, 2010). The growing popularity of dangdut has sparked the emergence of many musical variations of dangdut itself. Pop dangdut was performed by Elvy Sukaesih and A Rafiq, humor dangdut by OM Pancaran Sinar Petromaks, and continued to develop until new genres emerged, from regional dangdut, disco dangdut, to modern pop dangdut.

In the 1970s, in order to remain competitive in the music industry, rock and pop musicians such as Ahmad Albar and a well-known band, Koes Plus, inevitably had to compose songs with dangdut nuances in order to get a piece of the pie in the music industry. Rock and pop, which used to be hostile to dang-

dut, have finally embraced it. For example, Koes Plus created dangdut pop songs such as “Cubit-Cubitan,” “Mari Berjoget,” and “Mengapa.” Meanwhile, Ahmad Albar, who was previously known as the vocalist of the rock band God Bless, finally sang “Zakia,” a song full of elements of dangdut and Arabic music.

The Influence of Dangdut on Religious Music

Dangdut got into a new phase with religious messages inserted into it. Among them is Rhoma Irama, who inserted religious messages. After returning from the pilgrimage to Mecca, Rhoma Irama changed the moral order of his band Soneta. For example, he encouraged (or forced) members of his band to stop drinking alcohol and having free sex. Members who did not comply with this rule were immediately fired from the band. Not only changing the lyrics and music, but Rhoma also revamped his dressing style. He cut his hair shorter and wore typical Muslim clothing (referring to the Middle Eastern style). Rhoma’s efforts to change this image were increasingly visible in *Perjuangan dan Doa* film. This film was arguably the first Islamic rock musical film in the world (Frederick, 1982).

After returning from the pilgrimage to Mecca, Rhoma Irama strengthened his efforts to use music as a means of conveying, instructing, and leading his listeners. He found that music should be used as a tool to change the order of things rather than just a form of entertainment. In Rhoma’s perspective, dangdut has an important role to play in shaping society’s morality and can help fight societal problems, such as corruption in government, gambling, drug use, and free sex (Weintraub, 2010).

At this point, the songs of Rhoma Irama and Soneta inserted a lot of religious messages. For him, music is a medium of *da’wah* (an effort to invite people to be Muslims and comply with Islamic rules). On October 13th, 1973, Rhoma declared that the Soneta Group was the “voice of Muslims” with the main goal not only as a form of musical entertainment but also to function as a medium of information, education, unity, and *da’wah*. Rhoma also emphasized that *da’wah* music must meet four criteria: (1) the structure of the music must be beautiful and attractive; (2) the song lyrics must be strong, make sense, and convey good arguments to touch the hearts of the listeners; (3) the melody, lyrics, and rhythm must be harmonious; (4) the singers and composers must compose lyrics which correlate with people’s daily lives. (Rhoma Irama, ed. Andrew Weintraub, 2011). Examples of Rhoma Irama’s *da’wah* lyrics can be seen in the song “Haram” (Forbidden):

Why, e, why is drinking forbidden?
Because, e, because it destroys the mind
Why, e, why is adultery also forbidden?
Because, e, because that’s the way of the beast

Why are all the delicious things forbidden?

Why is all that fun-fun prohibited?
Ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-aa-ah
That's the devil's trap
The bait is a variety of fun

Why, e, why is gambling forbidden?
Because, e, because it damages financial
Why, e, why is stealing also forbidden?
Because, e, because it harms people

In the song "Haram," Rhoma Irama emphasizes that the behavior of drinking liquor is forbidden in religion because it can damage the mind. Rhoma also described other things which are forbidden by Islam, such as gambling, adultery, and stealing things. Other *da'wah* lyrics can also be seen in the song "Perjuangan dan Doa" (Struggle and Prayer):

Raft upstream to swim to the shore
Work first, fight first
Only then you can have fun

Bile tastes bitter, sugar tastes sweet
Work hard first, do hard things first
Only then you can be happy

Fight (fight)
Fight with all your power
But don't forget
Struggle must also be accompanied by prayer

Obstacles (obstacles)
Obstacles are definitely there
Face them all with steadfastness
Also with the greatness of soul

In this song, Rhoma Irama calls on the people or society to always be optimistic in living life, and not forget to always pray to God Almighty so that this struggle will run smoothly. Apart from these two songs, Rhoma and Soneta have many other songs with the theme of Islamic *da'wah*. Among them are "Taqlaw" (Godly), "Keramat" (Sacred), "Judi" (Gambling), and many others.

Rhoma's efforts to make dangdut music a medium of preaching were certainly not easy. The growing popularity of Rhoma Irama with his group, Soneta, and their *da'wah* songs began to disturb the government regime that was in power at that time. During the New Order period, Soeharto (the 2nd former Indonesian president)'s regime forced a separation between religion and the state. Rhoma was then banned from appearing on TVRI (the Indonesian state television service), the only television channel at that time. The record tapes were also withdrawn from circulation. Even MUI (the Indonesian Ulema Council)

protested against Rhoma, claiming that Rhoma Irama was 'selling' religious values (Weintraub, 2011).

Despite all the controversy over the ban, it was undeniable that Rhoma Irama and the Soneta Group were increasingly thriving throughout Indonesia. They are the foundation for the development of dangdut music. The impact of the growing popularity of Rhoma Irama and his *da'wah* music was the emergence of other groups which also adapted dangdut and religious formulas. This new type of music was called kasidah. One of the most well-known musical groups is a girl group from Semarang named Nasida Ria.

Nasida Ria is a modern kasidah music group formed in 1975 in Semarang, Central Java. The group was created by HM Zain, a Quran teacher. At the beginning of her career, Nasida Ria consisted of nine women who were students of HM Zain. The nine women are Mudrikah Zain, Mutoharoh, Rien Jamain, Umi Kholifah, Musyarofah, Nunung, Alfiyah, Kudriyah, and Nur Ain. At first, Nasida Ria only used rebana as an accompaniment to the songs they sang. Later, they added keyboard, bass, violin, and guitar as additional instruments. Nasida Ria's debut album, *Alabaladil Makabul* was released by Ira Puspita Records. Their songs were similar to the songs of Rhoma Irama and Soneta Group: used as a medium of *da'wah*. Nasida Ria is much inspired by qasidah, music that originally comes from the Arabian peninsula.

Qasidah is a kind of poetry-set music developed in the Arabian peninsula. There is no information about when qasidah first entered Indonesia. However, some singers claimed that the qasidah was introduced to Indonesia from Malaysia in the 1960s (Hung, 2014). Then, there were several changes in the nature of qasidah here in Indonesia. Among them is the absorption of the name qasidah, and it is changed to Indonesian to become kasidah. For most Indonesians, the meaning of qasidah lyrics in Arabic is often difficult to understand. Thus, many kasidah groups then used Indonesian as their lyrics. Nasida Ria can be considered a modern qasidah group as the group applied this formula. They used Indonesian in their lyrics to make it easier for the majority of Muslims in Indonesia to understand the lyrics. Nasida Ria also added modern and electronic instruments instead of using rebana only. Among them are keyboard, tambourine, ketipung (a smaller type of kendang), mandolin, guitar, bass, and flute. Nasida Ria's music also not only features Arabic elements such as qasidah but also mixes it with dangdut elements. This group used dangdut elements to make their music more widely known. They followed Rhoma Irama and the Soneta Group, which were commercially successful because they used dangdut as a medium of *da'wah* (Hung, 2014). This variant of dangdut mixed with kasidah of Nasida Ria is known as modern kasidah, a genre of music that emphasizes religious messages in the form of entertainment (Rasmussen, 2005).

Disco Dangdut and Funkot

In the decade of the 70's, the new genre of music appeared and was very popular. This music genre is known as electronic music. The music is technically created and played with electronic instruments and eliminates the use of conventional analog instrument orchestration like guitar, bass, or drums. This electronic music genre also has many sub-genres in it, such as techno, new wave, and house music or disco. Initially, electronic music was played in nightclubs or on dance floors. At that time, many producers and DJs experimented with blend mixing techniques, namely combining several vinyl records to produce a new sound with different tonal textures (Aryandari, 2017). In the late 1980s, in Detroit, Michigan, there were other subgenres of electronic music. This sub-genre emphasized urban life and street soundscapes, factory machines, and shopping malls as well. The hustle and bustle of the city became the idea for the development of electronic music. This subgenre is known as techno music. This type of music was developed in a city that is full of noise. Besides in Detroit, techno was also thriving in Dusseldorf, Germany's industrial capital. Ralf Hutter and Florian Schneider, classical music students who were frustrated by the practice of classical music applied at a conservatory, where they had to play at a high level of complexity, eventually switched to electronic instruments and played techno music. The two of them then created techno music (or commonly known as krautrock) in a band called Kraftwerk. This group could be classified as a pioneer in electronic music (Aryandari, 2017).

The popularity of electronic music then confirmed the emergence of disco: house music specifically created for dancing. Disco reached its peak of popularity in the late 1970s and early 1980s. At that time, Billboard magazine's ranking was dominated by music that had the word "disco" in the title. Among these were "Disco Lady" by Johnnie Taylor, "Disco Inferno" by The Trammps, and "Disco Duck" by Rick Dees & His Cast of Idiots (Bridges, 2003). The characteristic of disco music, which is more concerned with tempo than the voice of the singer, encouraged some producers such as Giorgio Moroder, Frank Farian, Pete Bellote, and Mauro Malavasi to participate in composing disco music. Giorgio Moroder was a pioneer of disco music. He had worked in several discotheques in Germany and gained fame in the 1960-1970s. Later on, Moroder and the composer Pete Bellotte met a singer Donna Summer. They then produced the record for Donna Summer, titled *Lady of the Night*. The album immediately topped the charts with hits, including "I Feel Love" and "Hot Stuff."

It did not take long for electronic music and disco from the West to enter and become very popular in Indonesia. The discotheques in cities like Jakarta started playing disco music for their visitors, along with dangdut music which reached its highest popularity in the 1990s when this dangdut music was ordained as national music by the Suharto regime (Weintraub, 2010). Soon, disco and dangdut music was mixed to be a specific genre of disco known as disco dangdut or funkot (funky *kota*) or city funky. Funkot music originated from

the habits of Jakarta DJs who played and remixed songs with various styles of house music, from disco, italo disco, to electro-funk. The combination was added with a local special touch in the form of the onomatopoeic beat *tung-tung* as a substitute for the sound of drums/ketipung, as well as the singer's distinctive voice with the dangdut idiom. This genre was called funkot because it was born in urban areas such as Glodok in Jakarta, then played around Harmoni to Mangga Besar in Jakarta (Medina, 2017).

In his research, Jeremy Wallach found that one of the musicians who became the first-generation pioneer of disco dangdut was Edy Singh. In the early 1990s, Eddy was one of the musicians who popularized the remixing technique. Edy used the original recording from analog tape and then transferred it to digital form. Edy's arrangements usually did not use rhythm instruments such as drums, tambourines, and bass. Edy then added electronic drums and samples; this arrangement transformed the rhythmic feel of the song and made the music sound like a combination of electronic disco rhythms and the organic and warm sound of dangdut (Wallach, 2005). One characteristic of disco dangdut arrangements is the inclusion of samples in the form of spoken words. The sample, for example, included the voice of James Brown saying, "clap your hands," "get funky," and so on. These spoken words have become a kind of trademark for disco dangdut music. Edy Singh's first album, released in 1993, was recorded with basic equipment, such as a turntable, sampler, and tape recorder. The album became a hit and sold approximately 380,000 copies.

The music of disco dangdut, which was popular in that era, began to get controversy when many 'original dangdut' or 'pure dangdut' fans stated that disco dangdut music was a music genre that destroyed the purity of the classic dangdut. In this case, the original dangdut or pure dangdut refers to the style of dangdut music performed by Rhoma Irama and Soneta. Many commentators considered the popularity of disco dangdut as a form of creativity has declined. From 1997 to 2000, Wallach found that disco dangdut music accounted for at least a third of the total dangdut music records sold on the market (Wallach, 2005). Apart from the case of classical dangdut fans who were outraged by the popularity of disco dangdut, it was clear that there was a competitive economic contest in the music industry.

The popularity of disco dangdut or funkot was the main factor that caused the emergence of remixing or rearranging of popular songs in the form of disco dangdut. The covers or rearrangements of disco dangdut from popular music from the 60s-70s, keroncong, and regional pop appeared to the public in the 90s. Some of the artists who performed it were Rama Aiphama and Yopie Latul.

Rama Aiphama, born September 17, 1956, gained fame with the disco dangdut music he performed, as well as his style of dress characterized by waving clothes. His musical formula was rearranging popular songs from the 1960s-1970s, keroncong, and regional pop. One of the albums was *Disco*

Reggae Keroncong, released with the mixed formula. Aiphama brought back memorable keroncong songs with electronic music rearrangements. Because of the success of the album, in the same year (1996), Rama Aiphama released the second volume of the album with the title *Keroncong Disco Reggae Vol. 2*.

Then there was Yopie Latul, who also gained success with the same disco dangdut formula. Latul re-arranged folk songs with disco dangdut music. One of the best-known was the typical Manado song titled “Poco-Poco”. In this song, Yopie Latul sang the original Manadonese lyrics (“*Balenggang pata-pata. Ngana pe goyang pica-pica. Ngana pe bodi poco-poco. Cuma ngana yang kita cinta. Cuma ngana yang kita sayang. Cuma ngana suka biking pusing*”) using disco dangdut music with a medium tempo enhanced by typical English spoken words, such as “I got the power.”

The popularity of disco dangdut, such as those performed by Rama Aiphama and Yopie Latul, then sparked the emergence of remixing or rearrangement of popular songs in the form of disco dangdut, including what was performed by Merry Andani, a singer who covered a pop song popular in the 90s, Maribeth’s “Denpasar Moon.” The disco dangdut version of “Denpasar Moon” by Merry Andani was full of disco dangdut beat nuances. Moreover, it also contains Balinese *kecak* vocals. Meanwhile, Nila Kartika re-arranged hits from Koes Plus, such as “Kolam Susu,” and the hits of pop bands, such as The Mercy’s and Panbers’, were also rearranged in the form of disco dangdut.

The popularity of dangdut and disco dangdut in the national music scene then influenced regional pop forms that were previously popular in the 1970s to 1980s, such as Minang pop, Sundanese pop, Campursari (Javanese pop), and tarling (*gitar suling*/guitar and flute).

The Influence of Dangdut on Regional Pop

Indonesia is an archipelagic country with so many tribes/ethnicities as its inhabitants. Obviously, each tribe/ethnicity has its own distinctive regional music. Apart from traditional music that has been passed down from generation to generation, pop music from the popular industry clearly has existed in certain tribes/ethnicities. Each ethnic group in Indonesia has its own regional musical idioms. This music is known as *musik daerah* (folk music), *lagu daerah* (folk songs), or *pop daerah* (folk pop), and it was produced and distributed in areas outside Jakarta, which is commonly known as the hub. In the end, these folk songs were also distributed to Jakarta by migrants who moved from their respective regions to Jakarta (Wallach, 2008).

Pop daerah (regional or local pop) is a label attached to music that uses *bahasa daerah* (regional/local languages) or has regional dialect elements. Apart from the lyrical aspect of the regional dialect, in terms of music, it often also mixes regional instruments, rhythms, and melodic contours in their compositions (Wallach, 2008). Some examples of regional pop or local pop music are Minang pop, Sundanese pop, Campursari (Javanese pop), and tarling (guitar and

flute). Dangdut has played a significant role in the development of *pop daerah* in Indonesia. The strong element of dangdut can be seen in the existence of Campursari, a genre of Javanese pop that emerged in Yogyakarta in the late 90s. Campursari mixes keroncong, dangdut, and elements of Javanese traditional music. Several pioneering artists, such as Manthous, sang it in the polite form of Javanese (known as *krama inggil*).

From Weintraub's perspective, after the collapse of the New Order regime, not only regional pop but also a specific type of music emerged known as *dangdut daerah* (local dangdut). This local dangdut is characterized by using the language of each region and marketed specifically to certain ethnic communities. This type of dangdut was developed in West Sumatra (*dangdut saluang minang*/saluang Minang dangdut), West Java (*pong-dut Sunda*/Pong-Dut Sunda), Cirebon (*tarling Cirebon*/Tarling Cirebon), East Java (*dangdut koplo*—*koplo* refers to a hallucinogenic drug sold cheaply in Indonesia), and Banjarmasin (*dangdut Banjar*/Banjar dangdut). Dangdut even had its own award nomination at the Indonesian Music Award (AMI) in 2007. Dangdut, which in 1970 was associated with Malay and Indian music, was then ordained as national music in the 1980-1990s. It developed into ethnic music and local music in the 2000s (Weintraub, 2010). The influence of dangdut on local music also triggered new forms of music, such as *dangdut partura*/pantura dangdut (by Diana Sastra), *jandhut*/jathilan (East Javanese trance dance) dangdut (by Sagita), and koplo (by Inul Daratista).

One of the well-known local dangdut music is tarling. This sub-genre of dangdut emerged in West Java, especially in Indramayu and Cirebon. The name *tarling* consists of two short syllables *tar* for guitar and *ling* for *suling*/flute. In her research, Sandra Bader explained that tarling emerged in Indramayu/Cirebon in the late 1930s during the colonial era. In 1931, a Dutch commissioner asked Mang Sakim, a gamelan (Javanese metallophone instruments) expert from the village of Kepandean in Indramayu to repair his guitar. Sugra, son of Mang Sakim, was a skilled gamelan player. He transferred the gamelan pentatonic scale to a guitar, then played it together with a flute (Bader, 2011). The music was then enhanced by vocals singing verse by verse of poetry in the local language (*Sunda*). In the development, when dangdut began to get its peak in popularity in the 1970s and 1980s, tarling was assimilated with the music, and a new sub-genre emerged, called *dangdut tarling* or tarling dangdut. One of the pioneers who played this tarling dangdut sub-genre was Udin Zean with his group Kamajaya. The popularity of Kamajaya who played tarling dangdut was later followed by other groups such as Cahaya Muda, Nada Bhayangkara, Chandra Lelana, and the Nengsih Group. Tarling dangdut quickly became well known not only in West Java, but it was also popular in Pantura (an acronym for *pantai utara* or north shore, referring to northern regions in Java island) from Banten to Banyuwangi in East Java. Later, solo keyboard (electone) performance became more popular, and it stimulated many tarling dangdut groups that emerged in Karawang, Subang, Indramayu, Cirebon, Majalengka, and Kuningan.

Just like what happened with dangdut which initially sparked controversy, tarling dangdut also had its own controversy in its development. The tarling dangdut singers from the Indramayu region were labeled as “countrified” by the elite and upper middle classes. Moreover, these Indramayu singers were also known for their reputation as vulgar singers who could be booked as commercial sex workers at low prices (Bader, 2011). As emphasized by Bader, female sexuality has always been a central topic when discussing dangdut, specifically tarling dangdut as its subgenre. Tarling dangdut performances always featured sexy singers, sensual movements, vulgar lyrics, and interactions with the audience on stage. Bader stated it is the element of female sexuality which caused tarling dangdut to be branded as tacky music and erotic entertainment (Bader, 2011).

Koplo dangdut is a different topic to concern. It is not clear yet why this dangdut subgenre is called *koplo*. However, the term *koplo* can be traced from a type of illicit drugs in the form of pills (*koplo* pills) sold at low prices. The effect can be doping when people dance, making people drunk and a little violent. These pills were usually widespread in discotheques, but over time their spread became wider to remote villages in the suburbs (Darajat, in Setyawan, 2014). It can be concluded that the koplo rhythm is dynamic and progressive, the tempo is fast, with the drums beat standing out throughout the arrangement of the song, making the listeners dance furiously, exactly similar to the conditions when they take *koplo* pills (Weintraub, 2010). This style of performance originating from East Java features many musical groups, including Trio Macan (Lamongan), Palapa (Sidoarjo), Monata (Mojokerto), Sera (Gresik), Evita (Gresik), Sanjaya (Blora), Sakatto (Probolinggo), and Putra Dewa (Tuban). Koplo’s repertoire features lyrics in Indonesian, Javanese, and a mix of the two.

Regardless of the controversy, when the “dangdut king” Rhoma Irama and his followers did not consider koplo dangdut and considered the original dangdut Rhoma Irama played ‘real one,’ koplo has got special attention and been loved by the people. Starting with the popularity of Inul Daratista in the 2000s, koplo grew rapidly, and new artists like Via Vallen and Nella Kharisma then has become immensely popular. They are well known in Indonesia and even abroad.

New Adaptation Forms in Dangdut Music

Along with globalization, cultural forms from one country can easily develop and enter other countries (Klein, 1999). Music is one of them. As a country that has opened its door to other countries’ cultures, Indonesia has many mixed cultural varieties today: foreign cultures mixed with local cultures. This mixing is also found in dangdut music for sure. Trends in musical forms from abroad have influenced the compositions or arrangements of dangdut musicians to create new musical forms, such as reggae dangdut, hip-hop dangdut, Malay rock dangdut, and metal dangdut.

Dangdut musicians use a copy-and-paste formula in arranging this new form of music. They re-copy popular pop songs, then paste them into new forms of music. The result is a mixture of dangdut and other popular music, from reggae to hip-hop, Malay rock, and metal. Jeremy Wallach stated that the trend of mixing *dangdut* music and other genres has become increasingly widespread since Inul Daratista performed this music genre in the 2000s. While doing his research, Wallach came across a dangdut group that played dangdut music mixed with ska/reggae rhythms typical of the popular pop music group at the national level, Type-X (Wallach, 2008). The popularity of reggae music, which also boomed when the group Steven and The Coconut Trees appeared in the music industry, influenced dangdut music in Indonesia, especially in the East and Central Java where koplo previously emerged as a hybrid form of music. At present, it is easy to find this kind of music that mixes between dangdut and reggae—just type “dangdut reggae” on the YouTube video channel service, and many reggae dangdut music lists will appear as a search result. Reggae dangdut arrangements usually have a typical similarity; in the first verse before the chorus, the musicians perform a rhythm in the form of a typical reggae rhythm guitar shuffle. Usually, after the first chorus, the music will change to koplo which is marked by the start of the ketipung/drum rhythm. Initially-popular dangdut songs, such as “Sayang,” “Jaran Goyang,” “Bojo Galak,” to old pop songs, such as “Anak Singkong,” were played by the musicians.

Furthermore, the most recent new form of dangdut music, which gets significant attention from many people, is hip-hop dangdut. Music journalist Titah Asmaning Winedar stated in her coverage in 2016-2017 that the popularity of hip hop dangdut has unstoppably skyrocketed. One of the groups which has triggered the popularity of hip hop dangdut is the duo group from Yogyakarta, NDX AKA (Winedar, 2017). The duo group quickly gained popularity because of their music formula, which is easily accepted by all groups in society, especially the lower middle class. The formula is the form of lyrics representing the daily life of the lower middle class; for example, the lyric of the song “Kimcil Kepolen”: “*Pancene kowe asu, nuruti ibumu, jare nek ra ninja ra oleh dicinta*” (“Indeed you are a dog [in Javanese, the word *asu* “dog” is also associated with profanity expressed when angry or upset], obey your mother, she said that if it is not Ninja [an expensive brand of motorcycle] shouldn’t be loved”). Not only about love, but the lyrical verse also voices the existence of social class segregation exists in society: between those who have a lot of money (the rich) and those who don’t (the poor). The song’s lyrics are also sung in a rap groove, which is easy for listeners to sing along; it is also performed in an electronic beat that mixes hip-hop and dangdut.

This new dangdut trend is interesting because it absorbs musical elements which were previously highly segmented, such as reggae, hip hop, and even metal music; the latter is a very segmented type of music because of its uncommon or unpopular musical forms. This rock subgenre is full of guitar distortion and blasting drum beats, usually loved by certain parts of society. Dangdut eventually embraced this subgenre and made it exist in society as metal dangdut. No one expected that popular dangdut songs like “Jaran Goy-

ang” and “Oplosan” apparently sound neat with metal guitar riffs.

Considering the history of dangdut’s musical development, starting from the early development of vernacular music in the colonial era to the existence of hip-hop dangdut and metal dangdut nowadays, it can be concluded that dangdut is flexible music. It goes with the flow now and then. Dangdut survives among the emergence of other musical trends. Dangdut even embraces other music trends or even influences and changes music trends. How dangdut changes music trends can be seen from the fact that Inul Daratista’s existence in the 2000s compelled Project Pop, one of the pop music groups, to arrange a song titled “Dangdut is The Music of My Country.” Another fact is that a ska/reggae music group, Shaggydog, collaborated with NDX AKA in the song “Ambilkan Gelas” (Take the Glass). Dangdut seems to survive and will continue to grow in the future.

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