

THE PROCESS OF WAKIJA WARSAPANGRAWIT MUSICIANSHIP (A Tracer To Provide A Model For Young Musicians)

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Abstrak

Artikel ini merupakan pelacakan proses kesenimanan Wakija Warsapangrawit. Untuk mengekspos musiknya yang luar biasa, ia menggunakan pendekatan sosial, psikologis dan historis. Pelacakan dimulai dari bidang sosial, yaitu latar belakang keluarga, lingkungan, dan kegiatan karawitan, sebagai bagian dari kehidupan sosial, unsur-unsur ini memiliki peran penting dalam membangun kepribadiannya, termasuk di dalamnya keahlian bermusiknya. Pendekatan psikologis memberi dukungan sehubungan dengan motivasi dirinya untuk mewujudkan cita-citanya menjadi pemain kendang. Pendekatan historis digunakan untuk memberikan gambaran singkat tentang aktivitas karawitan selama masa kanak-kanaknya yang dianggap memiliki hubungan dengan peningkatan kemampuan musiknya.

Kata kunci: musisi, sosial, motivasi, aktivitas karawitan

Abstract

This article traces the process through which Wakija Warsapangrawit developed as a musician, using social, psychological and historical approaches to reveal his excellent musicianship. The article begins with the social factors – family background, surrounding environment, and karawitan activities – that constituted his social life and played an important role in forming his personality and musicianship. Next, a psychological approach supports the connection between his self-motivation and ambitions to become a kendhang player. Lastly, a historical approach is used to give a brief description of the karawitan activities during his childhood where he is thought to have honed his musical skills.

Keywords: musicianship, social, motivation, *karawitan* activities.

Preface

The story of the career of Wakija Warsapangrawit¹ as a gamelan musician and foremost as a *kendhang*² player is essentially personal, social, and historical. Wakija Warsapangrawit as an individual has self motivation, he is part of a community, from the family, as the smallest unit, to the larger social milieu in which he lives. He has a historical background as well, as David Thomson says 'Men to great extent do make their own history' (1974:58). His musicianship constitutes as achievement he had reached. Therefore in order to provide an explanation the life story of Wakija Warsapangrawit, this research involves several lit-

eratures that have connection with the topic. These include psychology, sociology, and history.

It is evident that the life story of Wakija Warsapangrawit is multi-dimensional. Therefore, in order to expose his life story several approaches are needed, including a psychological, sociological, and historical approach. In this context, the social and historical aspects are interpreted as a unitary process, while psychological aspect is thought to be a separate fact. The analysis of these aspects begins with an observation of the family background as the smallest community, then continues with an explanation of the social and historical back-

ground. As has been mentioned above, the scope of this problem is broad. Therefore, in order to provide a sharp analysis, the discussion of this problem needs to be limited. This discussion includes a description of how Wakija Warsapangrawit began to learn *gamelan* music and develop his ability; the way he developed his ability must be examined in order to determine both its weaknesses and strengths; and the features of his drumming. These three variables have something to do with the social situation, especially in terms of the social aspect of *gamelan* music. In accordance with this, the discussion mainly exposes the *gamelan* music activities that Wakija Warsapangrawit has been involved in.

Wakija Warsapangrawit grew up in a neighborhood of *gamelan* musicians where there were many related performing arts activities. His father was an excellent guitarist and *kroncong*³ musician, and also sometimes played *gamelan* just for fun. When he was child, there were a lot of *gamelan* activities, e.g. practices and performances in his *kampung*⁴. It seems that initially he began to become an accomplished *gamelan* musician through his appreciation and active participation in these activities. By considering these facts, this means he had a strong internal motivation to learn *gamelan* music both seriously and energetically. This phenomenon is in line with the concept of educational psychology developed by C.G. Jung. This cites that a child's behavior is more or less identical to the behavior of his or her parents or people in the neighborhood where he or she lives. Since the collective unconscious domain of the child exists, some elements in the collective unconscious are fostered and nurtured by the child's parents and/or neighborhood.⁵ In other words, the parents and neighborhood have an important role in shaping a child's personality. This concept has been applied in order to expose the external influences in Wakija Warsapangrawit's learning of *gamelan* music. Of course, it must also be remembered that co-existing with these external influences are Wakija Warsapangrawit's personal motivations for playing this music, which cannot be

underestimated. In this case I have tried to apply the intersection theory introduced by Amabile, which states that creative success is an intersection between a child's domain skills, the skill to think and work creatively, and intrinsic motivation, or internal motivation (Utami Munandar, 2002:110).

According to the theory of convergence that was introduced by W. Stern, personality is formed by outside influences and inside gifts (Agus Sujanto, 1993: 211). It is also stated by H.C. Warpen, as quoted by Kartini Kartono, in the work *Teori Kepribadian*, that:

Personality is the entire mental organization of a human being at any stage of his development. It embraces every phrase of human character, intellect, temperament, skill, morality, and every attitude that has been built up in the course of one's life (1980:11).

In this context, I have utilized Stern and H.C. Warpen's theories to expose the development of Wakija's personality and broadened it to include the competence of his musical development, since personality in terms of human intellect is believed to have a possible influence on musical developments.

In the realm of *gamelan* music, particularly in Solo, the name Wakija Warsapangrawit is very well known as a *pengendhang*⁶. This statement is supported by the opinion of ethnomusicologist, Benjamin Brinner:

In this section, however, the *kendhang* was played by Wakidja, a widely recorded and emulated drummer who is also a fine *rebab* player. His knowledge of the piece clearly extends beyond the minimum necessary for his role, ... notably Tuginem, Wakidja, and Wahyapangrawit - are famous enough to serve as exemplars of it through recordings, broadcasts and live performance (Brinner, 1995 : 15-16).

His *ciblon*⁷ drumming style has greatly influenced many of the younger and even the older drummers in and around Solo. This phenomenon is due in no small part to the extremely active role he has had in the record-

ing industry - to date playing kendhang on more than one hundred commercial cassettes. In 1955, he joined the dance company *Dharma Budhaya*; furthermore he became well-known for his *wayangan* drumming as a result of regular performances with several famous *dhalang* such as Ki Warsina, Ki Gito Brayut, Ki Kasno, and Ki Anom Suroto. In the 1980s, he was in charge of a gamelan group known as *Kridha Irama*. Although in the past he has also played with several dancers and for performances of *kethoprak*⁸, nowadays his work is largely focused in *klenengan* circles. These facts prove that his musicianship, particularly his drumming, is of an extremely high standard.

Through looking at the process of how his *kendhangan* has developed to such a high level of excellence without the benefit of a formal education, we can also draw some interesting conclusions on the strengths and weaknesses of musical education programs. We should not be surprised to find that most aspiring gamelan musicians are not given any lessons directly, and they have to find their own instruction while on the job or while performing in a *tarub*. In other words, these *tarub*⁹ experiences have fostered his musical maturity.

By the time he was in his third year at school, Wakija had begun to play *kendhang* to accompany several dances in the *kampung*¹⁰. These dances were directed by the late Mulyono, who was also a director of the *Paguyuban Masyarakat Surakarta (PMS)*¹¹ arts company. During this time he was also learning to play *gamelan* at school from the late Martosudirjo. As a child he had no particular desire to be a *gamelan* musician. What he felt at that time was a compulsion to be a *kendhang* player. For economic reasons, Wakija Warsapangrawit had to leave school for two years between 1951-1953.

As well as dance, there were often *klenengan*¹² events in his *kampung* when he was growing up. These events gave him the opportunity to listen and observe how other people played the *kendhang*. Sometimes he sat down under the stage to enjoy the *klenengan*. When the *klenengan* was finished, he tried to play the *kendhang* patterns that he had just heard:

In fact in *Jagalan* there were very often *klenengan* [performances]... for every celebration there was a *klenengan* [performance]... I liked it very much ... sometimes I sat down under the stage ... when the *klenengan* was finished then [I] played [*gamelan*] myself, but I only liked playing a *kendhang*.¹³

In this way Wakija Warsapangrawit taught himself the basic *kendhang* patterns for the *lancaran*¹⁴ which accompanies *kiprahan*¹⁵ :

I myself was astonished ... the drum players at that time were Pak Turahya, Pak Panuju, I listened, observed the drumming ... if I listened twice, sometimes once, I was able to imitate it. As a result of that, when I was working at RRI I played almost the same as Pak Panuju's drumming.¹⁶

Musical Experiences

By the time he was fifteen years old, he was already playing drum for *wireng*¹⁷ dance performances in several towns. He was also interested in dancing, so much so that he stopped playing *kendhang* for a while to concentrate on his dancing. He knew several *wireng* dances, such as female and male *Tayungan*, *Handoko Bugis*, and *Anila Prahastho*. Another dance style that he learnt was refined dance, such as *Gambir anom* and *Rantaya*. However he mostly performed *Handoko - Bugis* and *Anila - Prahastho*, since he was able to do the acrobatic movements used in these dances. He performed frequently as a dancer but eventually he tired of being cast as the same character:

After about a year of being cast as a *Bugis* [*Handoko-Bugis* dance] and as a Monkey [*Anila-Prahastho* dance], I got bored of it, ... the body is short, in addition the face is not handsome enough ... it would not be possible to become a role [dancer] ... [Eventually, I] returned to play *kendhang* again.¹⁸

After he began playing *kendhang* again, he joined the arts company, *Dharma Budaya*.

This arts company, whose members were mostly Chinese, specialized in the performance of *wayang orang*¹⁹. With this group, Wakija Warsapangrawit performed in East Java and Bali. To increase his skill on the *kendhang*, he also often attended *kethoprak*²⁰ performances in Karangasem, Solo. Here, through a combination of observation and informal participation he learnt to play *kendhang gambyong kethoprak* :

Sometimes I watched *kethoprak* performances at Karangasem, [with a] kind of *gambyong* dance that used many *gongan*²¹ while waiting for the audience. So the drummer used many *sekarang* or patterns throughout the dance ... I liked to imitate Pak Parji's style. His drumming was very good for the kind of *kemiden* [such as *kethoprak*] style, and the very long *gambyong* dance.²²

The *gambyong* dance depicts young girls whose faces are heavily made up. On other occasions, *Gambyong* is performed by one or more dancers at events such as wedding parties or to welcome guests. It is the opening or prologue of a *kethoprak* drama or performance of *wayang wong* theatre, and is usually danced for a long time, while the audience gathers for the performance. There are, therefore, many dance patterns and the drummer must know many *sekarang* in order to accompany the dance.²³ Also at this time (1957) Wakija Warsapangrawit spent two months playing for *wayang orang* performances at *Sriwedari*²⁴ in Solo. For a short time he also gained valuable experience playing with the army *gamelan* group in Salatiga :

In order to get more experience, I went to Salatiga to join with the army *gamelan* group ... yes [it was] the URIL group... [I was] there for only three months, but [even then] I did not settle well because the temperature was very cold.²⁵

Wakija Warsapangrawit is largely self-taught, learning by listening to many different drummers and imitating the patterns he heard. In teaching himself, he eventually developed his own style. He began playing in *wayang kulit*²⁶ performances with Warsina's group in 1960. Warsina is the one of the oldest puppe-

teers in Surakarta. He is known as *dalang kethèk* [monkey], a specialist in the operation of the *kethèk* character.

After a year, in 1964 Wakija Warsapangrawit left this group to join the *gamelan* at the radio station in Solo (*Radio Republik Indonesia, RRI*). He was employed on a contract basis, renewable every two years. Initially, Wakija Warsapangrawit played *saron*, or *saron peking*, or sometimes *gong* with the group. However he now had the opportunity to listen closely to the playing of Panuju, the *kendhang* player with the RRI group. This was important for the development of Wakija Warsapangrawit's drumming :

At that time I could not control my drumming, [I did not know] whether it was too loud or what. [I] began being able to control it [the drumming] while working at RRI ... [I did this by] listening to Panuju's playing ... indeed I truly liked Panuju's drumming very much ... [it was] clear, ... the sound up close was unclear, but on the radio and also on cassette recordings, it was excellent.²⁷

As well as Panuju and Parji, Wakija Warsapangrawit also admired the drumming of the late Sumardi²⁸ who was a specialist *klenengan* drummer and Rono Sarman who was a specialist *wireng* drummer.

While working at RRI he also played *kendhang* for several young puppeteers. In his third year at RRI he was recruited as a drummer by one such young puppeteer, Ki Anom Suroto. Over time, Ki Anom Suroto became more and more famous. As a consequence, Wakija Warsapangrawit became much busier. On the one hand as the drummer of a famous puppeteer, he was the backbone of the group, while on the other hand the radio station also demanded his loyalty. This situation made it impossible for him to sustain his job at the radio station. One night Wakija Warsapangrawit was required to play for a *wayang kulit* performance with Ki Anom Suroto, and at the same time an important live concert performance at RRI. Wakija Warsapangrawit had already received two warnings from RRI, since he had

been absent several times. He knew the risk involved, but under pressure from Ki Anom Suroto and also Anom Suroto's family, he decided to play in the *wayang kulit* performance. His contract with RRI was terminated the following day. After that Wakija Warsapangrawit devoted his time to Ki Anom Suroto and several other puppeteers who asked him occasionally whenever he was not playing for Ki Anom Suroto. In addition, he was asked to play *kendhang* for numerous dance performances, *kethoprak* performances, and sometimes *klenengan*. After eleven years Wakija decided to leave Ki Anom Suroto's group. For a year after this he did not work at all. The young puppeteers were reluctant to employ him because they presumed that after his association with Ki Anom Suroto he would be too expensive. During this period he did not play for *klenengan* either :

[I did] nothing for a year ... but no-one dared to ask [me to perform] ... neither did the low puppeteers, [They] did not dare to ask ... I was finished ... even for *klenengan* performances. There were nothing left in the house [that could be sold], I was absolutely distressed.²⁹

Sometime during this period, Wakija Warsapangrawit sought the advice of his former 'teacher' Warsina whom he held in high esteem³⁰. According to Wakija Warsapangrawit this meeting resulted in a change in his fortune:

I had been advised before by Pak Warsina when I was playing *wayang kulit* [with him] ... 'if you want to get a happy life, go out at midnight, then after midnight on Thursday take a shower, and then pray to the God, hoping for enlightenment'.³¹

After this Pak Wakija Warsapangrawit continued to work at RRI until his retirement in 1995.

While he has never held a permanent position as a musician at the *Kraton Kasunanan* of Surakarta or the *Mangkunegaran*, he has often performed, especially at the *Kraton Kasunanan* at broadcast events and other special occasions. In 1986 he traveled to Europe to play *kendhang* with the *Kraton Kasunanan gamelan* in a program of traditional dances. In 1988 he was hon-

ored by the *Kraton Kasunanan* with the name RL. Warsapangrawit. On one occasion he was invited to become a permanent member of the *Mangkunegaran gamelan* group, but he did not accept the offer. He chose, rather, to devote his time to teaching his foreign students, most of whom come from Japan.

This biographical study intends to trace the entire life story of Wakija Warsapangrawit, beginning from his childhood through to adulthood, which means involving a social and historical approach. As the subject of the study is a human being, the involvement of a psychological approach is not avoided. This approach focuses in particular on aspects of internal motivation. It also involves a social approach, as Wakija Warsapangrawit is a part of a community, and the use of a historical approach is considered important so that the scope of the study covers both past events and more recent activities. In this context, This means that from genealogical standpoint he has inherited his musical talent from his father. As there is a common belief that talent is heredity, in this context he acquired his skill easily. This fact coincides with the economical difficulties of his family, which meant that his formal education did not run smoothly. He left school for two years, from 1951-1953, which meant he had a wider chance to devote his time to achieving his goal - to become a *kendhang* player. The social and historical aspects are interpreted as a unitary process, while the psychological side is considered to be a separate aspect. Allan Nevins states:

A good biography must also present a complete, accurate, and unbiased account of the deeds and experiences of its subject as can be executed; provided, of course, that the completeness does not extend to impertinent and tiresome detail (1962:357).³²

Learning Period

The analysis begins with the family background as the smallest community, then continues with an explanation of his cultural and sociological background. Psychologists have

found that the attitudes and values of parents are closely related to a child's creativity. The combination of field research and laboratory research in creativity, together with a number of psychological theories, shows how parents' attitudes directly influence a child's creativity. (S.C. Utami Munandar, 1989: 103) Wakija Warsapangrawit grew up in a family of artists, as his father was a *kroncong* musician and also played karawitan occasionally. This situation on the one hand was a disadvantage in terms of his formal education, while on the other hand it was an advantage in terms of developing his musicianship.

By considering the statement above, it might be assumed that Wakija Warsapangrawit's opportunity to become a musician was supported by several variables, as follows: Firstly, he received an inside gift from his parents, as his father was a *kroncong* musician and an amateur gamelan musician. Secondly, his parents supported him by allowing him the widest chance to develop his good talent in karawitan. Thirdly, there were a lot of karawitan activities in his *kampung*. This means that his process of self-actualization ran smoothly, and the talent he inherited was properly developed.

The strength of Wakija Warsapangrawit's talent in karawitan is also supported by the fact that he was able to play drum to accompany dance when he was about ten years old. He learnt drumming patterns very quickly. If he listened twice, sometimes once, he was able to imitate the patterns. He was impressed by Panuju's drumming style, therefore he was able to imitate Panuju's style when he worked at the radio station (RRI). This is consistent with the idea that talent as a disposition is hereditary, which is stated by W. Stern as follows:

Personality is formed by outside influences and inside gifts. The talent as disposition is heredity, it constitutes acquisition that is brought since one come into being. It needs to be woken up, exercised, and developed. Whenever it gets an appropriate touch from outer, it will arise a strong curious to learn, furthermore, is established a tends in science,

art, and another truth (Agus Sujanto, 1993: 211).³³

Wahyapangrawit, who knew him since the 1950s, states that he was surprised by how the young boy -Wakija Warsapangrawit- played drum in a *klenengan* performance. In connection with this, it is appropriate to quote from Benjamin Brinner in *Knowing Music, Making Music: Javanese gamelan and the theory of musical competence and interaction* as below.

An early start on the acquisition of musical competence is both common and advantageous, although there are some good musicians who have managed to overcome the disadvantage of starting late. Sutton has described a case in which the son of a leading musician and teacher showed no overt interest in gamelan until his mid-teens, at which point he acquired a high degree of well-rounded competence with astonishing rapidly (1991b), indicating that extensive exposure offers an important passive basis on which active competence can be rapidly built (1995;134).

From a social point of view, it can be said that his neighbourhood, in *kampung Jagalan* held many *karawitan* activities while he was growing up. These events gave him the opportunity to listen to and observe how people played *kendhang*. Sometimes he sat down under the stage to enjoy the *klenengan*. He says as below:

Sometimes I sat down under the stage ... I liked it very much, I listened to the *klenengan*. At the other places I observed some *kendhang* players, when the *klenengan* was finished then [I] played [drum] myself. Formerly [I] only tried without patterns, then later on [I] could play [properly].³⁴

It can be said that in order to become an aspiring gamelan musician, he had to be self-motivated, and be able to rely on his powers of observation. Furthermore, he also needed to rely on his own ears to learn the musical details of performance practice. During this time he was also learning to play *gamelan* at school from the late Martosudirjo. Here a Jap-

anese jogging exercise (*taiso*) was accompanied by gamelan. As a child he had no particular desire to be a *gamelan* musician. What he felt at that time was a compulsion to be a *kendang* player.

By regularly attending performances, Wakija Warsapangrawit ear becomes sensitive to the sound and tuning of the gamelan. He will master several simple piece that are played repeatedly. He learnt to play through three ways: (a) watching, (b) listening, and (c) imitating. In accordance with this, Wayne A. Wickelgren states as below:

Repeated presentation of a single stimulus may produce a *habituation*, which in a reduction in the probability of a reaction to the stimulus. Repeated presentation of other kinds of stimuli may excite the organism and so increase the amplitude or the probability of a reaction to a subsequent occurrence of the same stimulus or to wide range other stimuli. This process is called *sensitization*. Habituation and sensitization are example of single contingency learning in that they depend or are contingent upon the occurrence of single events (1977:24).

This also includes the existence of the *Dharma Budhaya* dance company and, *Perkumpulan Masyarakat Suarakarta* (PMS)³⁵ dance company. The members of these art companies were usually all Chinese, and Wakija Warsapangrawit took part as a member in both places, one of which (the *Perkumpulan Masyarakat Suarakarta* dance company) still exists today. Since the late nineteenth century some Chinese Indonesians have not only devoted their time to develop their expertise as businessman, they also love Javanese gamelan music and dance. Kunst mentions that the best gamelans were in the possession of wealthy Chinese music lovers (Sumarsam, 1992:169). As evidence, the head of the local Chinese community, called *Babah Ting*, owned a good gamelan which later on was delivered to His majesty Paku Buwana IX, namely *Kyai Kaduk Manis* (a *slendro gamelan*), and *Manis Rengga* (a *pelog gamelan*). Other evidence includes the birth of the com-

mercial troupe of wayang wong and its musicians, which is a case in point.

Period of Developing Maturity and Competence

In 1956 when he joined the *Dharma Budhaya* dance company, he was cast as the *kendhang* player. Again, here he also had a great chance to develop his competence in playing *kendhang*. With this dance company, he performed in several towns in East Java and Bali. Only one year later, he tried to become a musician for *wayang orang* performances at *Sriwedari* for several months. Here Wakija Warsapangrawit had a bad experience that he would not forget for the rest of his life, as he says:

On the second day when I started working at *Sriwedari*, Harjo Kutuk [the senior *rebab* and *kendhang* player] deliberately 'tested' him by playing an introduction to *gendhing Bontit*, [*pelog nem*]. I did not know the piece, but had heard it before, I knew the way it is played, but the *Dah, dung*³⁶ of this piece was not right. Even though I broke out in a cold sweat, I managed to pass this 'test' by ending the piece properly. At that time I was ashamed.³⁷

At that time when there were few or no public sources for knowledge about *gamelan* music, and access to musical information was very difficult. This period was coloured by an odd habit of most of musicians, which they called 'testing' among themselves. For instance, a *rebab* player could 'test' a drummer's expertise by playing an introduction to a certain strange piece, such as *Jongmeru Bahgong*.³⁸ If the drummer played a normal drum pattern, he failed the 'test', which showed his limitations. On another occasion, a drummer might 'test' a female singer's (*pesinden*) expertise by playing an unusual pause (*mandeg*) in a certain piece, in which situation she should be able to respond by continuing the piece, otherwise she would fail the 'test'. It is true that sometimes in an informal *klenengan* situation, someone tries to 'cause a rift' between the musicians. For instance, the *bonang* player performs the introduction to the piece *Tedaksaking*³⁹ but

plays it one key lower than usual. If the other instruments who join in on the gong play the proper note, it will be too high. Another example is that the *kendhang* player who is not harmony with the male singers would play *irama rangkep*⁴⁰ in the singing section. This habit on the one hand gives a stimulus to musicians to learn more and more musical details, but on the other hand it may result in a bad performance.

During his spare time in the same year, Wakija also attended *kethoprak* performances in *Karangasem* to widen his experience of *kendhangan gambyong kethoprak*. When he was twenty years old, he began playing *kendhang* for *wayang kulit* performances with Warsina's group for several years. In this period, he develops another kind of *kendhangan*, eg. for *wayangan* style.⁴¹ In 1964 he worked as a musician at the Radio Station (RRI) of Surakarta on a contract basis. With this group, he did not play *kendhang*, but he played *saron*, or mostly he played *gong*. Therefore, he had more chance to observe the *kendhangan* of the late Panuju⁴². Concerning this matter Benjamin Brinner in *Knowing Music, Making Music: Javanese gamelan and the theory of musical competence and interaction* states that:

The proper placement of the colotomic kenong, kethuk, kempul, or gong strokes can be deduced from the form of a piece and passive knowledge of the corresponding cyclical drum patterns. The musician then has time to absorb the melody from other musicians because the colotomic parts move slowly in most pieces (1995:137).

During this time he also performed as the drummer for several young puppeteers. One of these young puppeteer, Ki Anom Suroto⁴³ recruited him as a permanent member, and also cast him as drummer. Initially, Ki Anom Suroto performed *wayang kulit* in the day time, since as a young puppeteer he did not get the orders that his father did. Later on, Ki Anom Suroto got his own jobs, mostly in the rural areas around Klaten, Sukoharjo, Boyolali, and Wonogiri, later travelling further a field to Ngawi and Madiun (East Java). In addition

to doing many *wayang kulit* performances with this puppeteer, he also made recordings for about five stories, each of which is made up of eight cassettes. During the time with Ki Anom Suroto, he was sometimes also asked to perform for *klenengan*, dance performances, or even *wayang kulit* performances with another puppeteer. Finally, he worked as a musician at the radio station (RRI) where he was later cast as *kendhang* player with this group.

The explanation above shows that Wakija Warsapangrawit began being interested in playing *kendhang* since his childhood. It can be presumed that he had a great curiosity regarding playing *kendhang*. The curiosity he had was supported by a good talent, which meant that he could learn relatively quickly, as he asserts below:

I myself was astonished ... I never studied with [anybody]... just listened [I] could play. [The] *kendang* players at that time were Pak Turahya, Pak Panuju. I listened, observed the drumming ... if I listened to for twice, sometimes once, I was able to imitate it. As a result of that, when I was [working] at the Radio Station [RRI] I played almost the same as Pak Panuju's drumming.⁴⁴

He observed live performances, played *kendhang* for different kinds of performing arts in order to increase and mature his musicianship, particularly his drumming. He also tried to expand his repertoire of pieces, and experiment with new ways to interpret pieces. Clearly, Wakija Warsapangrawit has adventured for a relatively long time in Javanese performing arts activities, e.g. *wireng dance*, *gambyong kethoprak*, *wayang kulit*, *wayang orang*, and *klenengan*. Apart from this, he has also made some cassette recordings for *wayang kulit* performances and *klenengan*. These experiences are facts which prove to us how Wakija Warsapangrawit has matured as musician and as a human being. It is not wrong to assert that Wakija Warsapangrawit has developed most of his musicianship on the job.

To expose the superiority of Wakija Warsapangrawit's drumming, is to speak

from aesthetic point of view. The aesthetics of drumming in Javanese gamelan music can be examined through three aspects, namely *laya*, *kebukan*, and *wiledan*. This section will examine the superiority of Wakija's drumming through these aspects. Furthermore, the excellent drumming is also supported by his ability in interpreting the character of a piece performed. The following is a detailed analysis of the drumming.

A good command of *laya* is an important aspect of drumming, as in a performance there are different kinds of *laya* for each section of a piece. For example the *laya* of the *merong* section is different from that of the *inggah*; the *merong* section should be slightly slower. In the researcher's observation, Wakija Warsapangrawit has an excellent command of *laya*. He keeps a consistent tempo, and whenever he plays transition from one section to another, in which usually most of the instruments change gear, it feels smooth.⁴⁵ He has the skill to apply the proper tempo to the character of a piece.

The quality of his *kebukan* is consistent. He is able to produce sounds of the 'same' quality through the piece. The volume of each sound is in balance. In addition, the articulation of the sounds is clear (*wijang*). Therefore his quality of the *kebukan* is said to be *pulen*⁴⁶ by his peers, which literally means good taste. In connection with this matter, Darsono expresses that Wakija's *kebukan* is *tèmbel*, which means clear and full power.

It is true that Wakija Warsapangrawit is rich of variations in *wiledan kendhangan*. It is accepted as he has broad experience in the Javanese performing arts. He began from playing *kendhang* for dance, *kethoprak*, *wayang orang*, *wayang kulit*, and *klenengan* performances. His *wiledan kendhangan* is also supported by his ability to connect each part of *sekarang* to another, which makes them feel '*pliket*', it means blended.

The other musicians who perform with him generally feel comfortable which therefore raises their spirit to maximize the nuance of the piece performed. It has also been supported by

his active observation of several previous good drummers such as Martosudirja, Sumardi, Rono Sarman, Parji, Panuju Atmosunarto, and Turahyo. Another important capability he has is sensitivity in interpreting the character of pieces performed, such as calm, cheerful, humorous, energetic, sad etc. Finally, It is proper to say that he has an ability in commanding and organizing pieces to make them vividly and perfectly performed.

Conclusion

In order to expose Wakija Warsapangrawit as a whole, this article has involved social, historical, and psychological approaches. According to the collected data, one knows that his social milieu, namely his family, neighborhood, and karawitan community activities have indirectly encouraged him to develop his excellent talent in playing Javanese *kendhang*. For economic reasons, he left school for two years; this allowed him to improve his musical nuance and his father let him join Dharma Budaya and PMS art groups. In addition, in the next *kampung* to where he lived there were frequent *klenengan* rehearsals and performances. From the psychological side it can be set forth that it has also been supported by his self-motivation, such as direct observation to live *klenengan* and other arts performances, individual learning, and joining several gamelan groups. It can be said that in order to become an aspiring gamelan musician, he had to be self-motivated, and be able to rely on his powers of observation. Furthermore, he also needed to rely on his own ears to learn the musical details of performance practice. By considering these facts, this means he had a strong internal motivation to learn gamelan music both seriously and energetically. According to the theory of convergence that was introduced by W. Stern, personality is formed by outside influences and inside gifts. In this context, I have utilized Stern and H.C. Warpen's theories to expose the development of Wakija's personality and broadened it to include the competence of his musical development. In other words, the parents and neighborhood have an important role

in shaping a child's personality. This concept has been applied in order to expose the external influences in Wakija Warsapangrawit's learning of gamelan music. Of course, it must also be remembered that co-existing with these external influences are Wakija Warsapangrawit's personal motivations for playing this music, which cannot be underestimated.

In short, he had undergone a wandering process to become an aspiring Javanese musician. Furthermore, his excellent drumming is supported by his realization of proper tempo, a consistent and balanced touch (*kebukan*), and the richness of his variations, as well as a capability in organizing and making the piece vividly and perfectly performed. Clearly, Wakija Warsapangrawit has adventured for a relatively long time in Javanese performing arts activities, e.g. *wireng dance*, *gambiyong kethoprak*, *wayang kulit*, *wayang orang*, and *klenengan*. Apart from this, he has also made some cassette recordings for *wayang kulit* performances and *klenengan*. These experiences are facts which prove to us how Wakija Warsapangrawit has matured as musician and as a human being.

(Endnotes)

- 1 The name that was attributed by Paku Buwana XII in 1986. The attribute '*pangrawit*' is normally given to a high rank musician in the court of Surakarta.
- 2 Javanese term for drum. In gamelan music, there are four types of *kendhang* used depending on the performance context.
- 3 *Kroncong* is a genre of Indonesian music which is based on the diatonic scale and sung in Indonesian. This music is a synthesis of Portuguese and Malay-Indonesian musical styles resulting from the cultural interaction between Portugal and Indonesia during the colonial era. A regional variant of *kroncong* developed in Central Java and is known as *langgam kroncong*. This *langgam keroncong*, or *langgam jawa*, is sung in Javanese and uses pentatonic scales similar to the *slendro* and *pelog* scales of the *gamelan*. *Langgam kroncong*, therefore, may be played on the *gamelan*.
- 4 A *kampung* is the smallest unit of the formal Indonesian political area. It is usually inhabited by about 80-100 families.
- 5 As quoted by Waridi. 1997, in "R.L. Martopangrawit Empu Karawitan Gaya Surakarta" Sebuah Biografi, Program Pasca Sarjana Universitas Gadjah Mada Yogyakarta, p. 15.
- 6 *Kendang* (drum) player.
- 7 Medium sized *kendhang*, mostly used to accompany dance and livelier sections of concert gamelan music.
- 8 *Kethoprak* is a form of traditional Javanese drama or theatre. The stories are usually set in the era of the old Javanese kingdoms or taken from the *Menak* epic.
- 9 A *tarub* is a temporary structure erected for weddings and other events. This is the place where the gamelan is usually situated to play for the wedding or other event.
- 10 A *kampung* is the smallest unit of the formal Indonesian political area. It is usually inhabited by about 80-100 families.
- 11 A social organisation for the Chinese Indonesians in Sala (Surakarta). This organization was established in 1932, with the formal name *Chuan Min Kung Hui* (CKMH). Since 1959 the name changed to *Perkumpulan Masyarakat Surakarta* (PMS). See Rustapa in "Menjadi Jawa" (2007;73).
- 12 *Klenengan* is a gamelan music performance which is not used to accompany any other related arts. In the Javanese traditional community *klenengan* is played when celebrating a wedding ceremony, circumcision, or on other occasions.
- 13 In refined Javanese:
Dasaripun wonten Jagalan menika asring sanget wonten klenengan ... uger tiyang gadhah damel klenengan ... kula remen sanget ... sok wonten ngisor tratag ... nek wis rampung terus tabuhan dhewe, ning sing kula senengi ngendhang.
- 14 *Lancaran* is the simplest form of *gamelan* music, consisting of sixteen beats per cycle.
- 15 *Kiprahan* is a section of dance. During the *kiprahan* one of the principle characters is having make up put on his face because he is falling in love with a woman. The music which ac-

companies the *kiprahan* dance section is usually in either *lancaran* or *ladrang* form.

16 In refined Javanese:

Kula piyambak menika ngantos nggumun ... ingkang ngendhang kala rumiyin ingkang kathah Pak Turahya, Pak Panuju, kula sok mirengaken, ngertos ... kula sok mirengaken ping kalih sok ping setunggal sampun saget nirokaken. Ngantos kula menika nalika taksih wonten RRI kendangan kula mèh persis Pak Panuju.

17 The *wireng* dance is based on an episode taken from the *Ramayana*, *Mahabarata*, or *Panji* epics. Usually the dance is either heroic or romantic in character.

18 In colloquial Javanese: *Bola-bali mung dadi [penari] Bugis dadi [penari] kethek terus dangu-dangu jeleh kula, kira-kira setahun ... pawakane cendhek kurang dedeg tur rupane ora pati bagus ... ora mungkin dadi penari rol ... [kula] wangsul ngendhang malih.*

19 *Wayang orang* is a genre of dance drama in which the characters are played by people (orang) as opposed to the leather (kulit) puppets in the *wayang kulit*.

20 *Kethoprak* is a form of traditional Javanese drama or theatre. The stories are usually set in the era of the old Javanese kingdoms or taken from the *Menak* epic.

21 *Gong cycle* made up of a specific number of beats depending on the type of piece being played.

22 In refined Javanese:

Kula sok-sok tumut nonton kethoprak wonten Karangasem, bangsa gambyong sing aneh-aneh niku, gambyong nganti pinten-pinten gongan kalih ngeniteni penonton. Dados sekaranipun ngantos kathah sanget ... ingkang kula tiru naminipun Pak Parji. Kendhanganipun sae sanget, kendangan bangsa kemidhèn (English: comedian).

23 It is about 20-30 minutes long, while a normal *gambyong* performance lasts only 7-10 minutes.

24 *Sriwedari* is the location of the purpose-built *wayang orang* theatre in Solo (Surakarta).

25 In refined Javanese:

Supados kathah pengalaman, lajeng dateng salati-

ga ... nggih wonten nggèn tentara niku ... nggih URIL, wonten mrika tigang wulan nggih boten krasan, amargi pancen hawane adem sanget.

26 *Wayang kulit* is a Javanese shadow play which uses leather puppets operated by a puppeteer who also narrates the story, sings, and conducts the gamelan accompaniment.

27 In refined Javanese:

Kala rumiyin kendangan kula nggih dereng saged nata, mbuh kebanteren mbuh piyé. Saged nata menika sakplokipun wonten RRI ... mirengaken kendhanganipun Pak Panuju ... tur panci raos kula menika remen sanget kaliyan kendhanganipun Pak Panuju ... cetha, ... ketingalipun wonten ngriku boten cetha, ning wonten radio menika saé sanget utawi wonten rekaman menika.

28 Darsono cites that in 1953 at *Kampung Sewu* (the *kampung* next to *Jagalan*) there emerged a *karawitan* group which was led by Sumardi. During this time, the rehearsals were attended by several musicians from the *Karaton* of *Surakarta*. These contacts were able to increase the musical quality of the group. *Wakija Warsapangrawit* was the one of the young musicians who participated in this group (Darsono, 1999: 36).

29 In refined Javanese:

Pet setahun ... mangka wong jaba ora wani ngejak ... dadi dalang sanes sing asor-asor boten wani ngejak ... kula pun mati ... klenengan-klenengan nggih pun mati. Napa-napa ngomah nggih sampun telas, kula nganti nggrantes sanget.

30 *Warsina* is considered by many Javanese to have special powers. *Wakija* related the following story as below :

One day when he performed a *wayang kulit* performance suddenly the logs [where normally the puppets are put] became completely hard for about a quarter of an hour. I saw it with my own eyes. During the *Cakil* battle scene an arrow was thrown which penetrated the screen stand. [*Warsina* declared :] 'Anybody who is able to take off the arrow will receive my honor and I will also add some money.' Nobody dared .

In my opinion, this is proof of the high esteem (*çakti*) in which *Warsina* was held.

In refined Javanese:

Sampun naté mayang debogé ditancepi boten tedhas, kinten-kinten seprapat jam. Kula ngertos piyambak. Pas perang Cakil panah niku kaya diuncalké ngoten saged temancep nggèn cagak kelir. [Warsina ngendika :]

In colloquial Javanese:

'Sapa sing bisa njupuk panahku sesuk tak bayar opahku karo tak tambahi dhuwit.' Ora ana sing wani.

31 In refined Javanese:

Sakdèrèngé niku sok dikandhani Pak Warsina nèk pas mayang ngoten niku ... 'nèk kowé kepingin urip kepénak, nèk tengah wengi metua, mengko nèk malem Jemua adus, terus nyenyuwun karo sing gawe urip, supaya entuk pepadang'.

32 Quoted by Tubagus Mulyadi, in his thesis "Gugum Gumbira".

33 See also concept of self-actualization by Abraham Maslow in S.C. Utami Munandar (2002:24).

34 In refined Javanese:

Kula sok lungguh wonten ngisor tratag... kula remen sanget, ngrungokne klenengan. Wonten panggenan sanes sok nonton wong ngendhang, nek wis rampung terus tabuhan dewe. Wiwitane namung waton ngebuk, dangu-dangu saged piyambak.

35 The former name was Chuan Min Kung Hui (CMKH). Initially, this organization aimed its focus on the funeral activities of its own members, and also on helping members of the poor communities.

36 This is a colloquial language of Javanese musician in speaking drum syllable.

37 In refined Javanese:

Lagi mlebu rong dina mawon sampun dipakani gendhing kalih Pak Harja Kutuk, Ngrebab buka gendhing Bontit ngoten, kula dereng ngerti notasine, ning kula sampun nate mireng, lampahipun sampun ngertos, nadyan dah, dunge sing nggen gendhing kurang pas. Nganti gembroyos kula, ning saget suwuk... Wah isin kula.

38 The drummer should respond to the introduction of this piece with an irregular pattern.

39 Usually this piece is played in the pelog barang scale. If it were played one note lower e.g. in the pelog lima scale, the shape of the melo-

dy would not sound different.

40 This irama is never followed by the male singers.

41 In a wayang kulit performance, the drummer is one of the most crucial elements for the success of the dhalang and the wayang kulit performance as a whole. As one of the leading musicians, the drummer must be constantly alert to every nuance of the dhalang's speech, puppet manipulation, and also rhythmic tapping on the puppet box. Interpretation of the dhalang's cues into drum strokes and sonically enhancing the movements of the puppets in order to bring it [the puppet] to life is another main skill of a wayang kulit drummer (Brinner, 1995:269-270). During fight scenes, once the drummer has established an appropriate tempo, he focuses his attention on the puppet movements, anticipating, and responding to the puppets striking one another, being hit by arrows, falling, [kicking, flying, and biting, etc]. (Brinner, 1995:280)

42 He was known as a best kendhang player. For more details of Panuju, see the research by Sutiknowati in "Kendangan Ciblon Versi Panuju Atmosunarto", Laporan Penelitian, STSI Surakarta:1991.

43 He is one of best puppeteers of wayang kulit in Surakarta. During his most popular time, he received orders to perform 15-20 times a month. Recently he only gets about 3-4 orders a month.

44 In refined Javanese:

Kula piyambak menika ngantos nggumun nggih,... aku ki durung tau ajar karo... namung mirengaken ngaten menika saged. ingkang ngendhang kala rumiyin ingkang kathah Pak Turahya, Pak Panuju, kula sok mirengaken, ngertos ... kula sok mirengaken ping kalih sok ping setunggal sampun saget nirokaken. Ngantos kula menika nalika taksih wonten RRI kendangan kula meh persis Pak Panuju.

45 According to Panut (a childhood friend of Wakija), his excellent drumming is in klenengan, the anticipation of the laya is very perfect.

46 Term of cooked rice to proper softness

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