

Jejagulan Kendang: Oceanic Fauna as An Inspiration of Musical Concept in Karawitan Bali

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ABSTRACT

The seas and oceans hold profound significance within the cultural and spiritual milieu of the Balinese people. From a theological perspective, the ocean serves as a site for purification and spiritual cleansing, while for artists, it represents an abundant source of creative inspiration. Anecdotes abound regarding the profound influence of marine biodiversity on the composition of musical pieces and conceptualizations within the realm of Balinese karawitan. This scholarly endeavor seeks to undertake a comprehensive analysis of one such musical concept within Balinese culture, known as *jejagulan kendang*. It is mentioned in the Balinese Language Dictionary that *jagul* is a large and long fish, often compared to a whale. Although *jejagulan kendang* is a somewhat ubiquitous term, at times employed with a degree of ambiguity, a rigorous examination of its meaning and implications has hitherto been absent from academic discourse. Consequently, the principal objective of this research is to elucidate the early genesis of *jejagulan kendang*, tracing its evolution into the contemporary era, and exploring the manner in which marine fauna has served as a wellspring of inspiration for a distinctive musical concept within Balinese karawitan. This research is conducted within the framework of a descriptive-qualitative methodology, with an emphasis on the aesthetic paradigm and the domain of Balinese karawitanology. The empirical data are derived from a multifaceted approach, including in-depth interviews, meticulous observations, and intricate musical analyses of compositions featuring *jejagulan kendang*. It is envisaged that the findings of this study will provide a comprehensive depiction of the transformation and inspiration derived from oceanic fauna, as they manifest within the musical tapestry of Balinese karawitan. As such, this research is poised to serve as an invaluable reference for Balinese karawitan musicians, both in terms of theoretical knowledge and practical application.

KEYWORDS

jejagulan kendang, oceanic fauna inspiration, musical concept, Balinese karawitan

Introduction

The International Seminar for the XII Indonesian Arts Festival, also known as the Festival Kesenian Indonesian, has adopted the overarching theme "Samudra-Rakta-Samasta," denoting the "Ocean of Creative Artistic Potency in the Present Epoch." In the spirit of contemplating this theme, which accentuates the oceans as a wellspring of artistic inspiration, we endeavor to expound upon a subject matter situated within the purview of Balinese music, or karawitan.

Water and its rich biodiversity consistently serve as a profound source of inspiration within the realm of Balinese art, with a particular emphasis on Balinese karawitan. Notable examples of compositions within the Balinese karawitan tradition, such as Tabuh Pat Mina Ing Segara, Tabuh Pat Jagul (Lelambatan), Tabuh Jagul and Liar Samas (Palegongan), Gender Wayang Lasan Megat Yeh, Sesapi Ngundang Hujan, and Menanti Hujan Teduh, known as Palguna

Warsa within the Gong Kebyar ensemble, represent only a fraction of the extensive Balinese musical repertoire intricately interwoven with ideas inspired by the ocean.

This article, however, centers its attention on the term *jagul*, a term catalogued in the Balinese Dictionary as referencing a substantial and elongated aquatic creature, often likened to a whale. It is noteworthy that *jagul* is not only a descriptive term but also the nomenclature of a musical piece that finds its place in various musical genres, including *Lelambatan*, *Palegongan*, and *Bebarongan*.

In the initial musical repertoire, the term *Jagul* takes the form of a *Tabuh Pat Lelambatan* with a well-defined structural composition encompassing the *kawitan*, *pangawak*, *pengisep*, and *pangecet* elements [1].¹ This instrumental piece is traditionally performed within the context of *Gong Gede* and *Gong Kebyar* ensembles. The subsequent instance, employing "*Jagul*" as its title, manifests as a distinct musical composition within the *Palegongan gamelan* tradition. Despite the shared title, this composition exhibits notable dissimilarities in structure and execution, as it is affiliated with the *Palegongan* ensemble under the tutelage of the esteemed *karawitan* maestro, I Wayan Lotring, hailing from Kuta, Badung. A third illustration of the deployment of the term "*Jagul*" as a composition title can be discerned within the *Tabuh Petegak Bebarongan* repertoire. This particular *gending* repertoire serves as a *pategak* (opening instrumental piece) preceding the commencement of the *Barong* or *Calonarang* dance performance [3, p. 125]. Beyond its divergence in composition from the *Lelambatan* and *Palegongan* repertoires, this piece exhibits regional variations. Notably, we have identified a stylistic divergence between the Gianyar region, especially in the *Batubulan* and *Singapadu* areas, and the *Sanur* area of *Denpasar*.

While the term "*Jagul*" finds expression as a title for *gendings* spanning various musical genres, the primary focus of this research centers on a distinctive musical concept.

Method

This study adopts a qualitative research model characterized by an ethnomusicological approach. The qualitative method is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observed behavior [4, p. 21]. This method is particularly pertinent for the present research as it does not rely on statistical data or numerical figures in data compilation and analysis.

Ethnomusicology is a scholarly field primarily concerned with examining music within the broader context of culture or scrutinizing culture through the lens of music. Beyond the sonic dimensions, the scope of ethnomusicological research encompasses an array of facets within the domain of musical material culture, spanning musical instruments, textual and lyrical compositions, the typology and classification of music, the roles and status of musicians, the function of music in relation to other facets of cultural life, and music as a form of creative expression [5]-[7]. In this particular research, the emphasis is placed on a detailed analysis of textual and musical elements themselves. This analytical approach aims to provide a clearer and more comprehensive explication of the phenomenon known as *jejagulan kendang*.

The data collection process encompassed an extensive review of pertinent literature and source materials germane to this research. In addition to the literature review, we conducted in-depth interviews with three well-informed interlocutors who possess specialized

¹ Ardana said that the *Tabuh Pat Jagul* that famously played among Balinese musicians, is composed by maestro I Wayan Berata, where previously this *gending* only had *kawitan* and *pangawak*. In the *pangecet* section, Berata included elements of *jejagulan kendang* so that the *gending* became what is known today. Because the piece includes elements of *jejagulan kendang*, the piece is called *Tabuh Pat Jagul* [2, pp. 8-9]. After further investigation, Ardana's statement was inaccurate. A more detailed explanation will be discussed in the following section of this article.

knowledge concerning the subject matter. The three informants involved in this research are I Ketut Sukarata, I Ketut Gede Asnawa, and I Gede Yudarta.

Furthermore, this research integrates musical transcription through notation as an essential component of the analytical methodology. Simha underscores the significance of this approach by asserting that:

It [music] would seem extremely difficult to analyze in depth unless first reduced to the form of a written score, i.e., a transcription in the case of music from an oral tradition. The essential transience of music requires that its movement through time be fixed in writing as a substantive 'reference text' for the living reality. This is what the ethnomusicologist's attempts at transcription aim to provide, whatever the geographical or ethnic source of his material [8, p. 94].

Expanding on Simha's assertion, it is underscored that within the realm of music research, the necessity arises for conducting meticulous transcriptions in written form or through the medium of notations. The transcription process is a meticulously executed procedure, entailing the attentive auditory dissection of the intricate *kendang jejagulan* patterns, followed by their detailed transcription and subsequent analytical scrutiny.

In the process of analysis, the notation method employed is a fusion of two distinct systems. Firstly, traditional Balinese notation, referred to as the "ding-dong notation," is integrated into the analysis, primarily functioning to indicate pitch or tonal aspects. Secondly, the Time Unit Box System (TUBS) notation is employed, which adopts a box-based format to delineate the temporal value assigned to each drum stroke [9], [10]. Additionally, for the representation of the timbre inherent to the drum sounds, the utilization of letters is embraced, reflecting an onomatopoeic interpretation of the auditory characteristics [11, p. 33].

Discussion

The ubiquitous presence of *jejagulan kendang*, a term now entrenched in Balinese karawitan, is intrinsically linked to two pivotal factors: the locus of Beluan Sadmerta, Denpasar, and the composition known as Tabuh Pat Jagul. The inextricable connection between Beluan Sadmerta and *jejagulan kendang* is underscored by Yudarta's assertion that the inception of Tabuh Pat Jagul can be traced back to the Beluan area. This, our research confirms, is where the *jejagulan kendang* pattern first emerged, eventually evolving into a commonplace drumming motif in the realm of Balinese karawitan.

To support this notion, I Ketut Sukarata, better known as Tut Nang, a maestro in Balinese karawitan, mentions that he learned the *jejagulan kendang* pattern from his grandfather, I Made Regog, who was also a gamelan maker and musical maestro, from Beluan, Sadmerta. One of Regog's famous compositions was Kebyar Ding Sempati. He also taught gamelan in several villages, including Gladag Village and Seblanga Village, Denpasar.

Sukarata told me a fascinating story about his relationship with his grandfather when he was young. *Yen semengan, pesu be kak'e uli bale kaukine pak. "Tut, tut" jemak kendange ajak panggul kendange dua.* (If it's morning, my grandfather [Regog] will come out of his room and call me. "Ketut, Ketut," take the drums and two mallets).² Furthermore, we asked, what is being played? Sukarata explained that he would often play patopengan and lelambatan pieces. Notably, Regog would impart several drum patterns during these rehearsals, including the *jejagulan kendang* pattern. According to Sukarata, this pattern was taught when he was around 10 years old, in 1964.

While it was Regog who conceived the *jejagulan kendang* pattern, it was his son, I Wayan Berata, also an accomplished maestro in the realm of Balinese karawitan, who propelled its

² Interview with I Ketut Sukarata on August 17, 2023.

popularity. This family has a very strong karawitan genealogy that influences the Balinese musical scene in general. Berata adeptly integrated the *jejagulan kendang* pattern into his composition *Tabuh Pat Lelambatan* titled *Mina Ing Segara*. This composition was showcased at the Gong Kebyar Festival during the 1982 Bali Arts Festival, performed by the Sekaa Gong ensemble from Banjar Dalem, Angantaka, Badung.

According to Asnawa, it was subsequent to this performance that the *jejagulan kendang* pattern gained notoriety, perhaps due to its first-place recognition and the composition's inherent aesthetic allure. Asnawa further posits that Berata's composition drew inspiration from marine life (*mina*), hence the title *Mina Ing Segara*.³ The melodic narrative of the piece weaves and undulates akin to a fish navigating water. Although the exact correspondence of Berata's creation with *Tabuh Pat Jagul*, which also features a marine animal theme, remains speculative, conceptually, the two pieces share thematic resonance. In terms of musicality, Berata adroitly bestows distinctive proportions to the drummers, ensuring their prominence in the *pangecet* section. Subsequently, the *jejagulan kendang* pattern has become a recurring motif in various other compositions, such as in the *Tabuh Kutus Pelayon*.

Berata's dual role as an instructor at KOKAR Bali and a resident lecturer at ISI Denpasar positioned him as a pivotal disseminator of the *jejagulan kendang* pattern to his students. In turn, these students propagated the pattern to their respective locales, rendering it a commonplace element, notwithstanding its origin in the creative legacy of I Made Regog from Belaluan Sadmerta.

Next, we will discuss the compositional elements of the *Tabuh Pat Jagul*. This composition is one of the pieces included in the *lelambatan* repertoire, which can be played with the Gong Kebyar or Gong Gede ensembles. This musical composition consists of four parts, namely *kawitan*, *pangawak*, *pangisep*, and *pancecet*. Notably, in the context of this research, the overarching focus is expressly directed towards the *jejagulan kendang* motif located within the *pangecet* section.

Classical *lelambatan* compositions, especially within the *pangecet* section, often adhere to one of two recurring models. The first model commences with the *pangecet* section, incorporating *bebaturan*, subsequently transitioning into *tabuh telu*. Conversely, the second model commences with *bebaturan* and deviates into a sequence of *gilak* patterns. The primary distinction between these models lies in the number of beats constituting a single cycle and the dynamic features inherent to the gending. In the instance of the first model employing *tabuh telu*, the melodic duration extends to 16 beats, initiating with a moderate tempo, progressing to the *pengadeng* phase of *tabuh telu*, and culminating with the *pekaad tabuh telu*. In contrast, the second model places emphasis on the *gilak* structure, characterized by an eight-beat duration within a singular melodic cycle.

The colotomic structure of *gilak* is notated as follows.

(8)-	[1	2-	3	(4)-	5+	6-	7+	(8)-]
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Table 1. *Gilak* Colotomic Structure

The tabular data presented above offers insight into the rhythmic intricacies of the composition. It is discernible that the gong is struck twice, on the eighth and fourth beat, which are symbolized by parentheses (). The gong strike on the eighth count serves as a finalist, while the fourth mark marks the halfway point of the cycle. Apart from the gong strokes, there are also two kempur strikes, on the fifth and seventh beats using the + sign, and there are kempli strikes on every even count with the - symbol. Collotomically, these elements form the structure of the *gilak*.

³ Interview with I Ketut Gede Asnawa on August 15, 2023.

The transcription presented above reveals a distinct structure characterized by three delineated melodies designated as M1, M2, and M3, complemented by transitions labeled T1, T2, and T3. The classification of these segments as melodies and transitions is contingent upon their relationship within the composition cycle; a melody signifies a series of recurring notes, whereas a transition comprises a sequence of non-repeated notes. Notably, it is evident that each subsequent melody is consistently preceded by a transition, thus indicating an inherent pattern of progression. As mentioned, the melody is played repeatedly according to the drummer's command, so how do musicians understand that a transition will occur? The answer is *jejagulan kendang*.

The investigation conducted reveals that the drum pattern serves as a focal point for accentuating the technical prowess of the drummers. As elucidated by Yudarta, the *jejagulan kendang* pattern embodies a form of *geguletan*,⁶ akin to *angsel lantang*.⁷ Patterns of this nature serve a dual purpose. Firstly, they showcase the virtuosity of the participating drummers, essentially offering a spotlight on their instrumental skills. This compositional strategy is reinforced by the deliberate restraint in the performance of accompanying instruments, which are characterized by their subdued presence, thus ensuring the unequivocal audibility of the *geguletan jejagulan kendang*.

Secondly, these patterns function as a musical bridge or signal significant transitions within the *gending*. When the drummer initiates the *jejagulan kendang*, the dynamics of the piece undergo an increment, signifying preparations for a shift in the piece's tonic. To illustrate, the drummer executes a *batu-batu* drumming pattern⁸ on M1 for several repetitions, and when a transition is desired, the *jejagulan kendang* is introduced. These dynamic modulations serve as cues for the musicians, imparting an understanding that imminent changes are forthcoming. Consequently, at the cessation of the *jejagulan kendang*, the melody transitions from T1 to M2, with this pattern continuing until the culmination of the composition.

It is notable that in contemporary usage, the term *jejagulan kendang* has evolved beyond its original strict delineation; it is loosely used. No longer confined solely to the initial pattern, it now encompasses various *geguletan kendang* patterns intentionally designed by composers to accentuate the drum artists' proficiency. In such compositions, other instrumental sections commonly adopt softer dynamics or even silence to emphasize the drumming virtuosity. This semantic shift underscores a broader connotation, where *jejagulan kendang* no longer exclusively denotes one specific pattern but encompasses diverse *kendang geguletan* motifs intended to confer special prominence upon the drummers.

Having explicated the musical constituents within the *jejagulan kendang* concept, the ensuing phase of this analysis will furnish an interpretation rooted in the realm of oceanic fauna. As previously stated, the term *jagul* denotes a colossal fish, perhaps akin to a whale. Through our transcription analysis, it becomes apparent that executing this pattern necessitates heightened drummer energy expenditure, given its emphasis on drumming skill. Furthermore, the *jejagulan kendang* pattern exudes a commanding sonic presence, rendering it comprehensible to fellow musicians and serving as a herald of impending changes within the piece. Whales, as the most massive marine mammals endowed with formidable and explosive energy, serve as a poignant metaphor within this context. Ergo, the *jejagulan kendang* pattern can be construed as an artistic manifestation wherein the power and vigor of whales are transmuted into a musical paradigm within the realm of Balinese *karawitan*.

⁶ The word *geguletan* comes from the basic word *gulet* which means to wrestle. In the musical context, *gaguletan* is interpreted as an interlocking drumming patterns between two players, one playing on the *lanang* (male, higher pitch drum) and the other plays the *wadon* (female, lower pitch drum).

⁷ Interview with I Gede Yudarta on August, 16 2023.

⁸ For more details on *kendang batu-batu* see [14], [15], [11]

Conclusion

This research endeavors to provide a comprehensive explication of a prominent musical concept within the realm of Balinese karawitan, termed as *jejagulan kendang*. The research underscores the historical provenance of this concept, tracing its origins to Belaluan Sadmerta, Denpasar, where it was initially conceived by I Made Regog and subsequently incorporated into the musical composition known as Tabuh Pat Jagul. Notably, this *geguletan kendang* pattern has undergone a transformative evolution, eventually culminating in its adaptation within the composition Tabuh Pat Mina Ing Segara by I Wayan Berata. Capitalizing on his instructional roles at two prominent institutions, namely KOKAR and ISI Denpasar, Berata's stewardship facilitated the dissemination of the *jejagulan kendang* pattern across diverse regions of Bali, thereby elevating it to the status of a widely adopted and standardized drumming motif.

Remarkably, the contemporary usage of the term *jejagulan kendang* has engendered a semantic evolution, transcending its original singular denotation as a specific drumming pattern. In the contemporary milieu, it has come to connote a vital component within compositions, serving to accentuate the technical prowess of the drummers. Despite this semantic shift, a unifying thematic thread persists, bridging the historical and contemporary interpretations. The enduring inspiration drawn from *be jagul*, characterized by its immense size, strength, and energy, has been ingeniously transmuted into a quintessential musical concept within the realm of Balinese karawitan, reflective of the nuanced synthesis between the past and present interpretations of the concept.

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