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REVITALIZING BALINESE MUSICAL IDENTITY THROUGH EXPERIMENTAL *GONG KEBYAR*: THE CREATIVE PROCESS OF THE FRAGMENTARY PERFORMANCE "JAPA TUAN"

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Abstract

Balinese karawitan, particularly *Gong Kebyar*, ideally preserves traditional identity, philosophical depth, spiritual values, and local distinctiveness while remaining open to creative reinterpretation and experimental exploration in contemporary performing arts. However, studies on *Gong Kebyar* have often focused on history, technique, structure, or accompaniment function, while its role in reactivating *Atma Kerthi*, *Geguritan Japa Tuan*, *Gamelan Penting* Karangasem, and fragmentary performance without *dalang* as an integrated experimental-cultural process remains insufficiently examined. This study addresses how Balinese musical identity is revitalized through the experimental use of *Gong Kebyar* in "Japa Tuan" and what artistic-cultural contributions the work offers to local musical heritage and experimental performance. Using a qualitative, practice-based artistic research method with an R&D orientation, the study applies the *Metamorphosis Completa* model. *Ulat* for idea searching, observation, interviews, literature study, and cultural inspiration; *kepompong* for incubation, interpretation, musical experimentation, timbral exploration, and dramatic structuring; and *kupu-kupu* for composition, rehearsal, evaluation, revision, and final performance. The findings show that "Japa Tuan" revitalizes Balinese musical identity by transforming *Atma Kerthi, Geguritan Japa Tuan,* and Balinese musical traditions into new musical-performative expression. By expanding *Gong Kebyar* into a dramaturgical force and integrating *Gamelan Penting Karangasem, bedug, gong beri, peluit, suling basur*, vocality, movement, and visual elements, the work bridges preservation and innovation while opening new possibilities for contemporary *karawitan.*

Kata Kunci : Revitalizing, Balinese, Musical Identity, *Gong Kebyar, Japa Tuan*

Introduction

Balinese performing arts have long functioned not only as aesthetic expressions but also as cultural and social media through which local values are preserved, negotiated, and transmitted across generations (Pradana & Ruastiti, 2022; Pradana et al., 2024; Pradana, 2012; Pradana, 2018; Pradana, 2025). Within this context, *karawitan* occupies a central position because Balinese music is deeply embedded in ritual life, dramatic performance, collective memory, and the symbolic identity of the Balinese people. *Gong Kebyar*, as one of the most dynamic and widely recognized Balinese *gamelan* ensembles, has played an important role in shaping new Balinese musical expression. Its musical character, marked by sudden changes of tempo, sharp dynamics, rhythmic complexity, and expressive flexibility, enables it to function not merely as accompaniment but also as a medium for constructing atmosphere, emotion, dramatic tension, and cultural meaning. Balinese musical ensembles often function beyond their acoustic dimension. Mawan et al. (2023) shows that a local ensemble can support ceremonial practices, community identity, and regional musical continuity, while Nandana's (2023) indicates that Balinese musical creativity may emerge through the transformation of inherited motifs and instrumental idioms into new compositional forms. These findings support the argument that Balinese musical identity is not static, but continuously shaped through the interaction between tradition, locality, and creative renewal.

However, the development of Balinese karawitan in the contemporary era faces a crucial challenge. On the one hand, Balinese music is expected to preserve its traditional identity, philosophical depth, and local distinctiveness (Pradana et al., 2025). On the other hand, contemporary artistic practice demands innovation, experimentation, and new modes of expression that are capable of responding to changing social, cultural, and aesthetic contexts. This tension between preservation and innovation has become increasingly urgent in the field of Balinese performing arts, particularly when traditional musical forms are required to engage with new performance formats, new audiences,

and new dramaturgical needs. Recent studies on Balinese musical innovation show that contemporary karawitan increasingly develops through the creative combination of traditional concepts, modified instruments, expanded ensemble formats, and modern compositional orientations. Mawan et al. (2024), for instance, indicates that local ensembles can be developed through new instrumental configurations and contemporary creative strategies without severing their relationship with Balinese musical tradition. Therefore, the revitalization of Balinese musical identity cannot be understood merely as the reproduction of inherited musical forms, but must also involve creative reinterpretation, experimental exploration, and the reactivation of local cultural resources within contemporary artistic frameworks.

The fragmentary performance "Japa Tuan" emerges from this cultural and artistic urgency. The work is inspired by the concept of *Atma Kerthi*, which emphasizes the purification and ennoblement of the soul, and by the narrative of *Geguritan Japa Tuan*, a Balinese literary source that contains religious, philosophical, and moral values. The story of "Japa Tuan" is particularly relevant because it narrates a spiritual journey marked by grief, devotion, sacrifice, purification, and the search for transcendental meaning. In this sense, "Japa Tuan" is not merely a performance narrative but a cultural text that provides a symbolic framework for reflecting on the relationship between human beings, the unseen world, divine power, and the process of spiritual refinement. The use of traditional narrative as a source of new composition is consistent with recent studies showing that Balinese musical innovation often works by transforming existing repertoires, stories, motifs, and cultural idioms into new artistic configurations. Nandana's (2023) shows that the development of new musical forms may still be grounded in inherited Balinese compositional materials, suggesting that innovation can operate as a continuation and reinterpretation of tradition rather than as its negation.

The urgency of this study is also related to the formal and artistic challenge of presenting a fragmentary performance without the presence of a dalang. In conventional Balinese performance structures, the dalang often serves as a mediator of narrative, atmosphere, interpretation, and communication between the story and the audience. Without a dalang, meaning must be conveyed through other performative elements, especially music, movement, vocal expression, and visual composition. This condition creates an important space for artistic experimentation because Gong Kebyar is required to assume a broader dramaturgical role. It must not only accompany the performance but also articulate narrative movement, emotional transformation, symbolic tension, and spiritual atmosphere. In this regard, recent analytical work on gamelan performance also supports the importance of timbre, articulation, tonal organization, and large-scale form in shaping the identity and communicative character of gamelan ensembles. Linke et al. (2024) shows that performance characteristics may be distinguished through timbral features, articulation, tonal systems, and structural variation, confirming that *gamelan* identity is shaped not only by instrumentation or repertoire, but also by how sound is organized and articulated in performance.

In this creative context, *Gong Kebyar* becomes the main medium for revitalizing Balinese musical identity. Its dynamic, flexible, and expressive character allows the composer to explore various musical possibilities, ranging from calm, sacred, heroic, and dramatic atmospheres to more experimental textures and timbral combinations. Nevertheless, "Japa Tuan" does not employ *Gong Kebyar* in a purely conventional manner. Instead, it develops *Gong Kebyar* through an experimental *karawitan* approach by exploring timbre, texture, rhythm, dynamics, and the integration of instruments outside the standard *Gong Kebyar* ensemble. The work incorporates *Bedug, Gong Beri, peluit jeritan, suling basur*, vocal elements, and the *Gamelan Penting* Karangasem instrument to construct a distinctive sound world. This experimental approach is supported by recent studies which show that Balinese contemporary music can grow through expanded ensemble formats and new instrumental combinations. The development of Music *Gamelan* demonstrates how Balinese musical practice can incorporate modified instruments, amplified zither-like instruments, new rhythmic patterns, and modern compositional orientations while still maintaining links with regional musical identity.

A significant cultural urgency in this study lies in the use of *Gamelan Penting* Karangasem as part of the experimental musical structure. *Gamelan Penting* is a Karangasem local traditional instrument whose presence has become increasingly limited in broader performance spaces. Its declining visibility among younger generations raises concerns about the continuity of local musical heritage. By integrating *Gamelan Penting* Karangasem into the structure of "Japa Tuan," the creative process does not merely expand the timbral vocabulary of *Gong Kebyar* but also functions as an act of cultural revitalization. The instrument is repositioned not as an ornamental addition, but as a symbolic marker of local identity and a meaningful contributor to the dramatic and musical architecture of the work. This position is strengthened by Wijaksana and Garwa's (2024), which explores penting from Karangasem through polyrhythmic and euphonic approaches and shows that the instrument still possesses strong potential for contemporary musical creation. Thus, the inclusion of *Gamelan Penting* Karangasem, Bali in "Japa Tuan" can be understood as a strategic effort to transform a marginalized local instrument into an active medium of contemporary

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Balinese musical expression. Although studies on Balinese *karawitan, Gong Kebyar*, and contemporary Balinese performing arts have been widely conducted, several gaps remain. First, many discussions of *Gong Kebyar* still tend to focus on its historical development, performance technique, musical structure, or function as accompaniment, while its role as a medium for revitalizing Balinese musical identity through experimental creative processes has not been sufficiently examined. Second, studies on contemporary Balinese music often highlight innovation in general terms, but do not always explain how experimentation can remain rooted in local philosophical values, narrative traditions, and regional musical heritage. Third, the relationship between *Atma Kerthi, Geguritan Japa Tuan*, experimental *Gong Kebyar*, and the revitalization of *Gamelan Penting* Karangasem has not been systematically explored as an integrated artistic and cultural process. Fourth, the artistic contribution of fragmentary performance without *dalang* remains under-discussed, particularly in terms of how music can replace or transform the narrative-mediating function traditionally held by the *dalang*. The importance of local instruments, timbral exploration, structural innovation, and regional musical identity, yet they do not specifically address the integration of *Gong Kebyar, Atma Kerthi, Geguritan Japa Tuan, Gamelan Penting* Karangasem, and fragmentary dramaturgy as a unified creative process.

This research therefore seeks to address these gaps by examining how Balinese musical identity is revitalized through the experimental use of *Gong Kebyar* in the fragmentary performance "Japa Tuan." Rather than treating experimentation as a departure from tradition, this study positions experimentation as a creative strategy for reactivating tradition, deepening cultural meaning, and expanding the expressive possibilities of Balinese *karawitan*. The study also investigates the artistic and cultural contributions of "Japa Tuan" to the revitalization of Balinese *gamelan* musical heritage and the development of experimental performing arts. By focusing on the creative process, this article demonstrates how traditional values, local instruments, spiritual narratives, and contemporary artistic exploration can be integrated into a new performance form that is both innovative and culturally grounded. In this sense, "Japa Tuan" is aligned with recent scholarship that views Balinese musical innovation as a process of transforming inherited repertoires, local instruments, timbral features, and cultural idioms into new artistic forms without abandoning their cultural foundations.

Accordingly, this article argues that "Japa Tuan" offers a strategic model for understanding the future of Balinese *karawitan* : a future in which musical identity is not preserved through repetition alone, but revitalized through critical creativity, cultural sensitivity, and experimental transformation. Through the integration of *Gong Kebyar*, *Gamelan Penting* Karangasem, *Bedug, Gong Beri, peluit, suling basur*, vocal expression, movement, and visual elements, "Japa Tuan" affirms that Balinese musical heritage can remain alive when it is allowed to converse with contemporary artistic needs. In this way, the work contributes not only to the development of experimental *Gong Kebyar* but also to broader debates on cultural sustainability, local identity, and innovation in Balinese performing arts. The contemporary Balinese musical development increasingly depends on the productive relationship between local heritage, experimentation, timbral exploration, and new modes of performance presentation. The main problems : 1) How is Balinese musical identity revitalized through the experimental use of Gong Kebyar in the fragmentary performance "Japa Tuan"?; 2) What artistic and cultural contributions does "Japa Tuan" offer to the revitalization of local Balinese musical heritage and the development of experimental performing arts?.

Methods

This study employs a practice-based artistic research method, in which the creative process of the fragmentary performance **"Japa Tuan"** becomes both the object of inquiry and the primary site of knowledge production. Rather than treating artistic creation merely as a practical activity, this method positions the process of composing, experimenting, rehearsing, evaluating, and presenting the work as a systematic research procedure. The methodological orientation is qualitative and creative-practice based with an R&D tendency because the study seeks to understand how Balinese musical identity is revitalized through the experimental development of *Gong Kebyar* and how the work contributes artistically and culturally to contemporary Balinese performing arts. This methodological position is strengthened by recent studies on Balinese musical creativity which show that contemporary *karawitan* development often emerges from the transformation of local instruments, inherited motifs, and ensemble traditions into new artistic forms. Mawan et al. (2023) shows that local Balinese ensembles can function in ceremonial contexts and support regional musical identity, while Nandana's (2023) demonstrates that new Balinese compositions may develop through the transformation of existing motifs and instrumental idioms. The applied research method is grounded in the creation model called Metamorphosis Completa, a creative framework developed to explain the transformation of artistic ideas into a complete performance work. This method views the creative process as a gradual transformation from initial inspiration to artistic realization. It is adapted from the idea of complete metamorphosis, in which a living organism undergoes successive stages before reaching its mature form.

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In the context of "Japa Tuan," this model is used to structure the creative journey from the emergence of ideas, the absorption of cultural references, the exploration of musical media, and the maturation of compositional materials to the final presentation of the work. This approach is also relevant to recent discussions of Balinese musical innovation. Mawan et al. (2024) indicates that contemporary Balinese music can grow through the combination of traditional concepts, modified instruments, expanded ensemble formats, and modern compositional orientations. Such findings support the use of Metamorphosis Completa as a reflective model for explaining how artistic ideas are gradually transformed into an experimental yet culturally grounded performance structure.

The first stage, *tahap ulat* or the caterpillar stage, functions as the phase of idea searching, data gathering, and absorption of cultural inspiration. At this stage, the composer collected primary and secondary data through observation, interviews, literature study, and exploration of socio-cultural phenomena related to the concept of the work. Field data were obtained through interviews with community figures, customary leaders, and artists who understood the tradition of *Sanghyang* chanting in *Banjar Jangu* and *Banjar Griana Kauh*, Selat District, Karangasem Regency. Observation was also conducted to understand the spiritual, social, and cultural values embedded in those traditions. This stage is consistent with recent studies showing that Balinese musical creativity is often grounded in local cultural resources. The importance of local ensembles in maintaining ceremonial life and community-based artistic identity. It shows that local repertoire can become a source for developing new compositional ideas.

In addition, the first stage involved literature study on *Sanghyang* tradition, Balinese performing arts, Balinese *karawitan*, and musical concepts relevant to the development of the work. The composer also conducted initial exploration of instruments outside the standard *Gong Kebyar* ensemble, including *bedug, Gamelan Penting Karangasem*, wind instruments, and *Gong Beri***.** This exploration aimed to identify new possibilities of timbre, texture, and sound color that could support the dramaturgical structure of the fragmentary performance. Linke et al. (2024) study on Indonesian and Western gamelan orchestras shows that timbre, articulation, tonal systems, and large-scale form are important parameters for distinguishing gamelan performance characteristics. Although their study uses computational analysis, it supports the argument that timbral and structural exploration is a valid analytical and creative pathway in understanding the identity and transformation of *gamelan* performance.

The second stage, *tahap kepompong* or the chrysalis stage, is the phase of idea incubation, contemplation, internalisation, and artistic experimentation. At this stage, the data and inspiration gathered in the previous phase were transformed into more mature artistic concepts. The composer conducted musical experiments, developed dramatic structures, designed artistic elements, and explored the expressive potential of *Gong Kebyar* and its supporting instruments. This stage focused on the exploration of melody, rhythm, tempo, dynamics, timbre, texture, and instrumental techniques in order to produce musical characters appropriate to the dramatic needs of each scene. The relevance of this stage is supported by the 2024 discussion of *Gamelan Mandolin* innovation, which shows that contemporary Balinese music may develop through new instrumental configurations, modern creative strategies, and expanded ensemble formats without disconnecting from local tradition.

During this phase, compositional experimentation was carried out through the development of musical motifs, playing patterns, and new sound colors. Each exploratory result was continuously analyzed and evaluated to identify its strengths, limitations, and relevance to the dramatic structure of the work. In this way, ideas that were initially conceptual and abstract gradually became more concrete musical materials. The chrysalis stage therefore became the phase of creative maturation, selection, development, and refinement of musical materials before they were arranged into a complete performance structure. This process is also in line with Nandana's (2023), which indicates that Balinese musical innovation may occur through the transformation, elaboration, and recomposition of inherited motifs into new musical contexts.

The third stage, *tahap kupu-kupu* or the butterfly stage, refers to the realization, refinement, and presentation of the work. At this stage, the accumulated concepts, data, and musical explorations were transformed into a complete artistic form. The process included composing the musical structure, arranging the scenes, integrating *karawitan* and fragmentary performance elements, and conducting rehearsals with all supporting artists. Evaluation was carried out continuously during rehearsals to assess musical coherence, dramatic effectiveness, performance dynamics, and the clarity of the cultural and spiritual messages conveyed through the work. This realization stage reflects the broader tendency in contemporary Balinese *karawitan* to combine traditional identity with new presentational strategies. Balinese musicians have developed new ensemble models by combining local zither traditions with modern instruments, expanded performance formats, and new compositional structures.

The refinement process was conducted through repeated revisions based on rehearsal evaluation. Each section of the work was reviewed to ensure the integration of dramatic flow, musical expression, vocal elements, visual composition, and the values of *Atma Kerthi* embedded in the narrative of "Japa Tuan." The final outcome of this methodological process was the complete realization of "Japa Tuan" as an experimental Balinese karawitan

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performance ready to be staged and presented to the public. Thus, Metamorphosis Completa served not only as a technical guide for creating the work, but also as a reflective research framework for transforming ideas, cultural experience, and Balinese spiritual values into a conceptually meaningful artistic form. In this sense, the method corresponds to recent scholarly discussions that regard artistic creation as a process of knowledge production, where experimentation, reflection, documentation, and performance are integral parts of research practice.

Data analysis in this study was conducted through qualitative-interpretive reflection on the entire creative process. The analysis focused on how musical experimentation, instrument selection, timbral exploration, rehearsal evaluation, and performance realization contributed to the revitalization of Balinese musical identity. The interpretation was directed toward two central issues: first, how Gong Kebyar was experimentally developed to articulate the spiritual and dramatic narrative of "Japa Tuan"**;** and second, how the integration of local musical resources, particularly *Gamelan Penting* Karangasem, *bedug, Gong Beri*, *peluit, suling basur,* vocal expression, movement, and visual elements, produced artistic and cultural contributions to contemporary Balinese performing arts. This analytical orientation is supported by recent studies showing that local instruments, timbral features, structural variation, and new ensemble formats are increasingly important in understanding the transformation of *gamelan* and Balinese *karawitan* in contemporary contexts. Through this method, the study demonstrates that artistic creation can function as a rigorous research process capable of generating cultural knowledge, aesthetic innovation, and new perspectives on the sustainability of Balinese musical heritage.

Results

4.1. The Revitalization of Balinese Musical Identity Through The Experimental Use of Gong Kebyar in The Fragmentary Performance "Japa Tuan"

Balinese musical identity in the fragmentary performance "Japa Tuan" is revitalized through the experimental use of *Gong Kebyar* by transforming inherited Balinese religious, literary, and musical traditions into a contemporary artistic form that remains culturally rooted. In this work, *Gong Kebyar* is not merely positioned as a conventional accompaniment for dance or drama, but as the principal medium of musical expression that carries narrative, emotional, spiritual, and dramaturgical functions. This position is in line with recent studies on Balinese local ensembles, which show that musical instruments in Bali do not function only as acoustic media, but also as cultural markers that support ritual practice, social continuity, and community identity. Mawan et al. (2023) shows that local Balinese ensembles are connected to ceremonial life and regional artistic identity, while Nandana's (2023) demonstrates that Balinese musical creativity may develop through the transformation of existing repertoires and instrumental idioms into new compositional forms. Thus, the revitalization process in "Japa Tuan" occurs through the creative reworking of Balinese musical idioms, the expansion of timbre and texture, the incorporation of local instruments, and the reinterpretation of sacred values into a new fragmentary performance structure.

The first form of revitalization appears in the transformation of *Atma Kerthi* and the narrative of *Geguritan Japa Tuan* into musical and performative expression. The thesis explains that *Atma Kerthi* emphasizes the purification and ennoblement of the soul, which is closely related to the moral and religious foundation of Balinese Hindu philosophy. This concept becomes relevant in contemporary Balinese life because modernization and globalization have created challenges such as declining spiritual awareness, weakening cultural attachment, and crisis of values. Therefore, *Atma Kerthi* is used as a philosophical foundation to reconnect artistic creation with spiritual reflection and cultural meaning. This argument is strengthened by recent studies on Balinese musical innovation, which suggest that contemporary *karawitan* can remain meaningful when it is not detached from local cultural values, ceremonial contexts, and inherited musical memory.

The story of "Japa Tuan" strengthens this spiritual orientation because it narrates the journey of a figure who experiences grief after the death of his wife and seeks a way to purify her soul so that she may attain a proper place in the spiritual realm. The narrative contains values of devotion, sacrifice, sincerity, faith, and spiritual purification. By transforming this traditional literary source into an experimental *Gong Kebyar* composition, the work revitalizes Balinese musical identity not by simply repeating tradition, but by reactivating its philosophical substance in a contemporary performance language. This is consistent with Nandana's (2023), which shows that Balinese musical renewal can be achieved through the creative transformation of inherited motifs and repertoires into new musical contexts. In this sense, "Japa Tuan" treats tradition as a living source of creativity rather than as a static object of preservation. The second form of revitalization lies in the expanded function of *Gong Kebyar*. *Gong Kebyar* is selected because of its dynamic, flexible, and expressive musical character, which enables it to create various atmospheres, from calm, sacred, heroic, to dramatic. In "Japa Tuan," *Gong Kebyar* functions as a medium for conveying atmosphere, emotion, and dramatic meaning. This means that the identity of Balinese music is revitalized by allowing *Gong Kebyar* to move beyond its conventional role as accompaniment and become a narrative and

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dramaturgical agent within the performance. Recent analytical work on gamelan performance also supports this position. Linke et al. (2024) shows that timbre, articulation, tonal systems, and large-scale form are important parameters in distinguishing gamelan performance characteristics. This finding is relevant because "Japa Tuan" develops *Gong Kebyar* not only through repertoire, but also through sound organization, articulation, dramatic structure, and timbral transformation.

The third form of revitalization is achieved through experimental *karawitan.* The composer does not employ *Gong Kebyar* in a purely conventional form, but develops it through experimentation with sound and musical structure. The exploration is carried out through the processing of timbre, texture, rhythm, dynamics, and the use of instruments outside the standard *Gong Kebyar* ensemble. This experimentation creates a distinctive musical identity because it expands the sonic possibilities of Balinese karawitan while still retaining *Gong Kebyar* as the cultural and musical foundation of the work. This approach is supported by Mawan et al. (2024), which shows that contemporary Balinese music can develop through the combination of traditional concepts, modified instruments, expanded ensemble formats, and modern compositional orientations. Therefore, the experimental character of "Japa Tuan" can be understood as part of a broader tendency in contemporary Balinese music to create new artistic forms from within the resources of local tradition.

This experimental approach is further strengthened through the integration of *Bedug, Gong Beri, peluit jeritan, suling basur,* and *Gamelan Penting* Karangasem. These instruments are not merely added to enrich sound variation, but are given dramatic and symbolic functions. *Bedug* and *Gong Beri* strengthen rhythmic accentuation and help build ritual or sacred atmospheres, while peluit jeritan functions as an illustrative sound element that intensifies emotional situations in certain scenes. Through this strategy, Balinese musical identity is revitalized through the encounter between traditional *Gong Kebyar* and additional sound sources that broaden the expressive range of the performance. It show that Balinese contemporary ensembles may incorporate modified or non-standard instruments, amplified zither-like instruments, new rhythmic patterns, and expanded compositional strategies while maintaining links with regional musical identity.

The most significant cultural revitalization appears in the use of *Gamelan Penting* Karangasem**.** *Gamelan Penting* Karangasem is a local cultural heritage of Karangasem that is now rarely used in wider performance spaces. Its limited visibility has made the instrument less familiar to younger generations. By reintroducing *Gamelan Penting* Karangasem into "Japa Tuan," the composer does not merely use it as a musical instrument, but also positions it as a symbol of local cultural identity that must be preserved and transmitted. Thus, the work revitalizes Balinese musical identity by bringing a marginalized local instrument back into contemporary artistic circulation.

The fourth form of revitalization is related to the fragmentary structure without a *dalang*. The performance format requires the use of a Balinese story without the presence of a *dalang.* This condition creates an artistic challenge because, in conventional Balinese performance, the *dalang* usually plays an important role in explaining the plot, building dramatic atmosphere, and mediating communication between the story and the audience. Without the *dalang*, meaning must be conveyed through music, movement, vocal expression, and visual elements. Therefore, *Gong Kebyar* is required to assume a stronger narrative function. Recent gamelan performance analysis supports this dramaturgical shift because it shows that performance identity may be shaped through articulation, timbral features, tonal systems, and large-scale form, not merely through textual narration or conventional accompaniment. This expands the role of Balinese music as a communicator of story, emotion, and symbolic meaning.

The fifth form of revitalization is realized through the integration of musical, dramatic, vocal, and visual elements. The work combines music, movement, vocal expression, and visual composition into one artistic unity. The dancers are not only required to perform dramatic movements, but also to play certain instruments and engage in vocal expression as part of the performance structure. This interdisciplinary integration strengthens the communicative power of the work and shows that Balinese musical identity can grow through collaboration among *karawitan*, dance, vocality, and visual dramaturgy. New Balinese performance forms often emerge through the recombination of inherited musical idioms, expanded ensemble structures, and new performance contexts. "Japa Tuan" therefore participates in a broader movement of Balinese experimental performance that treats tradition as a flexible and productive artistic resource.

Scientifically, the revitalization of Balinese musical identity in "Japa Tuan" can be understood as a process of creative transformation, not mere preservation. The work preserves Balinese identity by maintaining *Gong Kebyar, Atma Kerthi, Geguritan Japa Tuan,* and local Karangasem heritage as its cultural foundation. This is manifestly evident in the structural configuration of the "Japa Tuan" performing arts, which has been successfully cultivated and rigorously constructed from the intrinsic meaning embedded within the "Japa Tuan" text.

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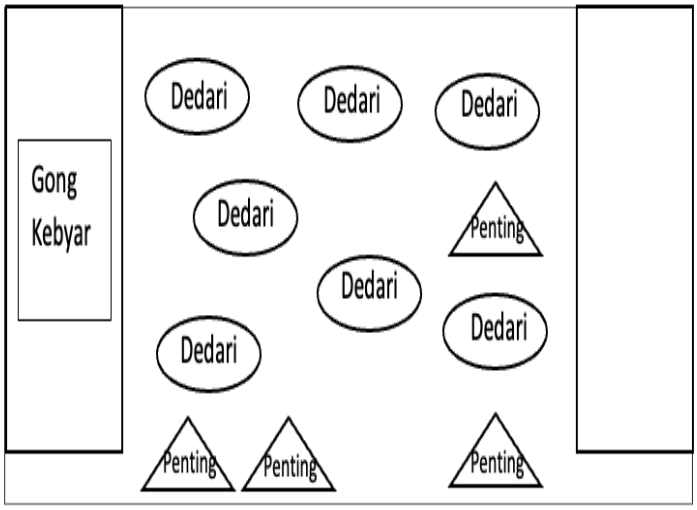


Figure 1. The Design of the Performative Formation and Structural Composition in the *Japa Tuan* Performing Arts. (Doc. Riki, 2026)

At the same time, it renews that identity through experimentation with timbre, rhythm, instrumentation, dramatic structure, and interdisciplinary performance. This view is supported by recent studies showing that local instruments, regional repertoires, timbral exploration, and new compositional strategies are increasingly important in sustaining Balinese musical heritage in contemporary contexts. It suggests that musical identity is produced through the interaction between inherited tradition, local context, sonic experimentation, and new performance needs.

Therefore, Balinese musical identity is revitalized in "Japa Tuan" through the experimental use of *Gong Kebyar* in three interrelated ways : first, by transforming spiritual and literary heritage into contemporary musical dramaturgy; second, by expanding the sonic and structural possibilities of *Gong Kebyar* through experimental instrumentation; and third, by reactivating local musical heritage, particularly *Gamelan Penting* Karangasem, within a new performance context. This shows that Balinese *karawitan* can remain culturally authentic while simultaneously becoming innovative, reflective, and responsive to contemporary artistic development. In this sense, "Japa Tuan" confirms the broader tendency identified in recent studies of Balinese music that cultural sustainability in *karawitan* depends not on static repetition, but on the creative recontextualization of tradition through experimentation, local identity, and interdisciplinary artistic practice.

4.2.The Artistic and Cultural Contributions of "Japa Tuan" in Revitalizing Local Balinese Musical Heritage and Advancing The Development of Experimental Performing Arts.

The fragmentary performance **"Japa Tuan"** offers significant artistic and cultural contributions to the revitalization of local Balinese musical heritage and to the development of experimental performing arts. Its contribution does not lie merely in producing a new performance composition, but in formulating a creative model that reactivates Balinese musical traditions through experimental exploration, local cultural representation, interdisciplinary performance, and spiritual reflection. In this sense, "Japa Tuan" becomes an artistic medium through which tradition is not simply preserved as a fixed inheritance, but reinterpreted as a living source of contemporary creativity. The creative agency at play in the performative realization of *Japa Tuan* can be identified and explicated as follows.



Figure 2. The actualization of the choreographic formation design inherent to the *Japa Tuan* performing arts.
(Doc.Riki, 2026)

This position is supported by recent studies on Balinese local ensembles which show that musical traditions can survive when they are transformed into new creative formats. Artistically, the first contribution of "Japa Tuan" lies in its development of an experimental karawitan work based on *Gong Kebyar*. The experiment work was created to realize an innovative karawitan composition based on *Gong Kebyar* based on "Japa Tuan" musical text, to conduct a creative process grounded in cultural research, musical exploration, and artistic development, and to contribute to the development of Balinese performing arts through the innovation of a fragmentary form without a *dalang*.

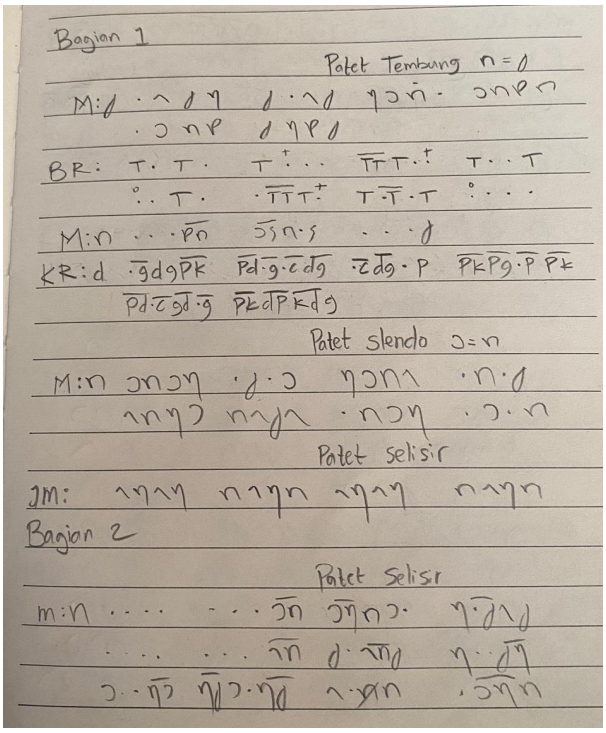


Figure 3.*Gamelan* Musical Notation for the *Japa Tuan* Performance
(Doc.Riki, 2026)

This indicates that "Japa Tuan" expands the function of *Gong Kebyar* from a conventional accompanying ensemble into a central dramaturgical medium capable of shaping atmosphere, emotion, conflict, transition, and symbolic meaning within a fragmentary performance structure. This artistic expansion is relevant to Linke et al. (2024), which shows that gamelan performance identity can be understood through timbre, articulation, tonal systems, and large-scale form, rather than through instrumentation alone. Therefore, the contribution of "Japa Tuan" lies in its ability to transform *Gong Kebyar* into a more autonomous narrative and dramaturgical force.

The second artistic contribution is the creation of a new performance language that integrates music, movement, vocal expression, dramatic structure, and visual elements. In the conclusion of the thesis, the work is described as a karawitan experimental composition that builds its identity through *Atma Kerthi* values, the story of *Geguritan Japa Tuan*, and the development of *Gong Kebyar* musicality through the exploration of various instruments and media of expression. The work also aligns musicality and visuality through the interaction of music, movement, vocality, drama, and visual elements, allowing music to function not only as accompaniment but as a narrative medium that constructs atmosphere, emotion, dramatic conflict, and transitions between scenes. This contribution is important because it shows that Balinese karawitan can operate as an autonomous dramaturgical force within contemporary performing arts. It also resonates with recent discussions of *Gamelan*, in which local Balinese zither-based traditions are developed through new ensemble models, modern compositional orientations, and combinations of Balinese and non-Balinese instrumental resources.

The third artistic contribution is the expansion of timbre, texture, rhythm, and compositional structure through the integration of *Gong Kebyar, Gamelan Penting* Karangasem, *bedug, Gong Beri, peluit,* and *suling basur*. The musical form of "Japa Tuan" is built through the combination of traditional elements and contemporary musical exploration, including timbral processing, texture, rhythm, dynamics, playing techniques, canon patterns, call and response, *tetembangan*, and illustrative sounds such as the atmosphere of the cemetery, nocturnal animal sounds, and ritual elements. Through this experimentation, "Japa Tuan" contributes to the development of experimental performing arts by demonstrating that Balinese musical tradition can generate new sound worlds without losing its cultural foundation. This argument is strengthened by Linke et al. (2024), which emphasizes the importance of timbral and structural features in distinguishing gamelan performance characteristics, Balinese musical renewal often occurs through the recomposition of existing motifs and the expansion of ensemble formats.

Culturally, the most important contribution of "Japa Tuan" is its role in revitalizing *Gamelan Penting* Karangasem as a local musical heritage. The use of *Gamelan Penting* Karangasem is a form of preservation and revitalization of a local cultural heritage that is increasingly rarely used in performance contexts. Its presence does not only create a distinctive Karangasem sound color, but also represents local identity and strengthens the overall character of the work. Thus, "Japa Tuan" contributes to cultural sustainability by reintroducing a marginalized traditional instrument into a contemporary experimental performance space.

The fifth contribution is the strengthening of local Balinese cultural identity through the reinterpretation of *Japa Tuan, Atma Kerthi*, and *Sanghyang* traditions. The creative process draws on *Atma Kerthi*, the *Japa Tuan* story, and *Sanghyang* tradition, which are then transformed through musical experimentation, motif development, timbral exploration, and the integration of music, vocal expression, movement, and visual elements. Culturally, this means that "Japa Tuan" does not merely reproduce a traditional narrative, but recontextualizes Balinese spiritual values into a contemporary artistic form that can be understood by present-day audiences. Musical ensembles can carry ceremonial, communal, and identity-based functions, not merely entertainment or acoustic functions.

The sixth contribution is the creation of a multidimensional performance format in which the boundaries between dancer, vocalist, and musician become fluid. The performers *tembang* and *kekidungan* inspired by *Sanghyang* tradition while simultaneously playing *Gamelan Penting* Karangasem in a standing position. This approach integrates movement, vocality, and musical performance into one simultaneous artistic activity. The presence of *dedari* as dancer, vocalist, and instrumentalist contributes to the formation of ritual and spiritual atmosphere, while the interaction between bodily movement, human voice, and the resonance of *Gamelan Penting* enriches the musical dimension and reinforces the magical and sacred character of the performance. This multidimensional format is consistent with recent developments in Balinese ensemble innovation, including Neo Nolin, which combines local zither traditions with modern instruments, expanded performance formats, and new compositional structures.

The seventh contribution is the treatment of performance space as an expressive medium. "Japa Tuan" does not treat the stage merely as a neutral location, but as part of the artistic language of the work. The stage space is managed to allow simultaneous interaction between *karawitan*, movement, vocality, and visual elements, player movement, formation changes, empty space, and visual objects are used to strengthen the narrative and dramatic rhythm of the performance. This spatial approach contributes to experimental performing arts because it expands

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Balinese karawitan into a more integrated dramaturgical and visual performance system. Such an approach is compatible with recent analytical perspectives on gamelan performance, which emphasize that large-scale form, articulation, timbral organization, and performance structure are important in shaping the identity and reception of gamelan ensembles.

The eighth contribution lies in the social and educational impact of the creative process. The creation of "Japa Tuan" involved collective work among the composer, supervisors, musicians, singers, dancers, artistic supporters, and production team. This collective process emphasized communication, coordination, discipline, responsibility, and shared understanding in translating the artistic concept into performance. It also became a shared learning space, because the musicians were involved not only as performers of the composition but also in sound exploration, motif development, the search for new timbral possibilities, and the adaptation of playing techniques to dramatic needs. This contribution corresponds to recent findings that local Balinese ensembles such as Mandolin Gamelans function not only as musical formations, but also as community-based cultural practices that support social continuity and collective artistic identity. In this context, Pradana's (2022) shows that collective cultural action can build awareness, participation, responsibility, and shared commitment among academic communities. Although Pradana's et al (2025), its main insight is useful for understanding "Japa Tuan" as cultural sustainability requires active participation, collective discipline, and the transformation of values into concrete practice. Therefore, the collaborative creative process of "Japa Tuan" can be understood not only as artistic production, but also as a pedagogical and cultural praxis that strengthens collective responsibility for sustaining Balinese heritage.

Culturally, "Japa Tuan" also contributes to the strengthening of local identity by reintroducing the "Japa Tuan" folktale and *Sanghyang* chanting tradition as part of the artistic concept. These cultural elements function as media for presenting Balinese spiritual, moral, and cultural values to society, especially to younger generations. This contribution is crucial because it positions experimental performing arts not as a rupture from tradition, but as a strategic mechanism for transmitting cultural memory and sustaining local heritage. New Balinese performance forms can be created by transforming local repertoires and instrumental idioms while maintaining continuity with regional musical identity. Pradana's (2022) study can also be seen in this point, because it demonstrates how local and social participation can become a medium for strengthening cultural consciousness and social responsibility. In "Japa Tuan," this logic is translated into the artistic field as the reactivation of *Japa Tuan, Sanghyang*-inspired vocality, and *Gamelan Penting* Karangasem becomes a cultural movement that encourages awareness of local identity through performance.

"Japa Tuan" contributes artistically by expanding the expressive possibilities of *Gong Kebyar*, integrating multiple performance elements, developing new timbral and dramaturgical structures, and offering a fragmentary format without dalang as an innovative performance model. Culturally, it contributes by revitalizing *Gamelan Penting* Karangasem, reinterpreting *Atma Kerthi* and *Geguritan Japa Tuan*, activating *Sanghyang*-inspired vocal traditions, strengthening local identity, and providing a creative space for intergenerational cultural transmission. Therefore, "Japa Tuan" demonstrates that experimental performing arts can serve as a productive bridge between preservation and innovation, between local heritage and contemporary creativity, and between Balinese musical identity and the future development of karawitan. The discussion also indicates that contemporary Balinese musical development increasingly depends on the productive relationship between local instruments, regional repertoires, timbral exploration, expanded ensemble formats, new dramaturgical strategies, and collective cultural participation. As shown by Pradana (2022), collective participation in culturally meaningful action can strengthen awareness, commitment, and responsibility in the case of "Japa Tuan," this principle appears in the collaborative creative process that transforms Balinese musical heritage into a living, reflective, and socially meaningful artistic practice.

Discussions

The findings of this study demonstrate that the fragmentary performance "Japa Tuan" revitalizes Balinese musical identity by placing *Gong Kebyar* at the intersection of tradition, experimentation, spirituality, and contemporary dramaturgy. This revitalization does not occur through the mere preservation of inherited musical forms, but through a creative process that reactivates Balinese cultural memory in a new artistic configuration. In this sense, "Japa Tuan" offers an important case for understanding how Balinese *karawitan* can remain culturally grounded while simultaneously responding to the demands of contemporary performing arts. This argument is supported by recent secondary studies showing that Balinese cultural sustainability is closely related to the ability of local communities to reinterpret tradition in changing social contexts. Pradana and Jayendra (2024), show that Balinese wisdom can be transformed into innovative service practices through the concept of local wisdom, indicating that traditional cosmology remains relevant when creatively adapted to contemporary institutional settings. Similarly, Pradana et al. (2025) emphasize that indigenous environmental stewardship is sustained through community-oriented

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strategies, while Pradana et al. (2026) demonstrate that cultural myths can be critically reinterpreted rather than merely reproduced. These studies strengthen the position of "Japa Tuan" as a work that revitalizes Balinese musical identity through cultural reinterpretation, not through static preservation.

A central point emerging from the findings is that *Gong Kebyar* is repositioned from a conventional accompaniment ensemble into a principal dramaturgical medium. In many Balinese performance contexts, *gamelan* often functions to support dance, *drama,* ritual atmosphere, or narrative progression. However, in "Japa Tuan," *Gong Kebyar* assumes a more complex role. It becomes a medium of narration, emotional articulation, spiritual suggestion, and dramatic construction. This shift is particularly significant because the fragmentary format used in the work does not involve a *dalang***,** who traditionally mediates narrative explanation, dramatic atmosphere, and communication between the story and the audience. Consequently, the absence of the *dalang* compels music, movement, vocality, and visuality to carry a greater interpretive burden. This finding is relevant to Pradana's (2023), which shows that Balinese cultural systems often function through collective organization, ethical responsibility, and the transmission of values across generations. In "Japa Tuan," Gong Kebyar similarly becomes a cultural system of communication. It organizes sound, emotion, movement, space, and spiritual meaning into a collective artistic experience.

This condition makes *Gong Kebyar* central to the revitalization of Balinese musical identity. The ensemble is no longer treated merely as a sound background, but as a performative language capable of shaping dramatic tension, emotional progression, symbolic atmosphere, and spiritual resonance. *Gong Kebyar* was selected because of its dynamic, flexible, and expressive character, enabling it to present various moods ranging from calm and sacred to heroic and dramatic. This confirms that the revitalization of Balinese musical identity in "Japa Tuan" is achieved by expanding the expressive authority of *Gong Kebyar* within a contemporary fragmentary structure. The expansion of *Gong Kebyar's* role may also be understood through the broader logic of Balinese cultural adaptation. Pradana and Arcana (2020) show that Balinese cultural forms can survive when they are creatively adjusted to new audiences, new expectations, and new social conditions. By analogy, "Japa Tuan" demonstrates that *Gong Kebyar* can remain culturally rooted while being refunctioned for new dramaturgical and experimental needs.

The findings also show that experimentation in this work does not represent a rupture from tradition. Rather, experimentation becomes a strategy for renewing tradition from within. This is crucial because discussions of contemporary performing arts often assume a tension between preservation and innovation. "Japa Tuan" challenges this binary by demonstrating that innovation can emerge from a deep engagement with local philosophy, traditional literature, ritual atmosphere, and regional musical heritage. The work is grounded in *Atma Kerthi***,** *Geguritan Japa Tuan*, and the cultural environment of Karangasem, yet it transforms these sources into an experimental performance language. This argument is strengthened by Pradana et al. (2016), which shows that Balinese ritual traditions can retain their religious and ideological meaning while negotiating the pressures of modern social change. In a similar way, "Japa Tuan" negotiates contemporary artistic demands without abandoning its spiritual and cultural foundation.

The use of *Atma Kerthi* is especially important in this discussion because it positions music as more than aesthetic construction. It becomes a medium of spiritual interpretation. *Atma Kerthi* emphasizes the purification and ennoblement of the soul, while the narrative of *Japa Tuan* presents a journey of grief, devotion, sacrifice, and spiritual purification. The transformation of these values into musical dramaturgy shows that Balinese musical identity is not merely a matter of melodic pattern, rhythmic formula, or instrumental structure. It also includes philosophical orientation, spiritual sensitivity, and symbolic depth. This interpretation is consistent with Pradana and Jayendra's (2024), which indicates that Balinese cosmological knowledge can become a foundation for contemporary innovation when spiritual values are translated into practical and experiential forms. Therefore, "Japa Tuan" revitalizes Balinese musical identity by reconnecting contemporary artistic creation with the spiritual and ethical foundations of Balinese culture.

The experimental dimension of the work is evident in its treatment of sound. The findings show that *Gong Kebyar* is developed through the exploration of timbre, texture, rhythm, dynamics, and instrumentation. This experimentation is significant because it expands the sonic field of Balinese *karawitan* without eliminating its cultural foundation. The work does not employ Gong Kebyar in a purely conventional form, but develops it through experimental karawitan by exploring timbre, texture, rhythm, dynamics, and instruments outside the standard *Gong Kebyar* ensemble. This indicates that musical identity is revitalized not through static repetition, but through the creative reorganization of sound materials. This logic of creative reorganization is also visible in Pradana et al. (2025), which shows that cultural and institutional participation can transform environmental action into a meaningful social practice. Although the object is different, the principle is similar as cultural sustainability requires active praxis, collective involvement, and the transformation of values into concrete action. In "Japa Tuan," sonic experimentation becomes such a praxis of cultural sustainability.

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The integration of *Gamelan Penting* Karangasem, *bedug, gong beri, peluit*, and *suling basur* strengthens this experimental orientation. These instruments expand the timbral vocabulary of *Gong Kebyar* and produce new dramatic possibilities. *Bedug* and *Gong Beri* contribute ritual, sacred, and monumental sonorities; *peluit jeritan* intensifies emotional and illustrative moments; *suling basur* enriches melodic and atmospheric layers; while *Gamelan Penting* Karangasem introduces a distinct local sound identity. These instruments are not merely added to create sonic variation, but function dramatically and symbolically in supporting the performance. In this regard, the experimentation undertaken in "Japa Tuan" is not purely formal, but culturally meaningful. It echoes the argument advanced by Pradana (2023), where hospitality is understood not merely as service but as a culturally meaningful practice grounded in respect, cleanliness, sacred space, and communal participation. Likewise, "Japa Tuan" treats musical experimentation not only as technical exploration, but as a culturally meaningful process that respects sacred atmosphere, local identity, and communal memory.

The most important cultural contribution of the work lies in the revitalization of *Gamelan Penting* Karangasem. The findings reveal that this instrument occupies a strategic position in the work because it represents a local cultural heritage that is increasingly rare in wider performance contexts. Its declining visibility among younger generations creates a cultural urgency. By incorporating Penting Karangasem into an experimental *Gong Kebyar*-based performance, "Japa Tuan" reintroduces the instrument into contemporary artistic circulation. This position is closely related to Pradana and Parwati's (2017), which demonstrates that Balinese local wisdom can become a distinctive identity marker when it is not merely displayed but meaningfully integrated into contemporary practices. In "Japa Tuan," *Gamelan Penting* Karangasem functions in a similar way. It is not presented as an exotic ornament, but as a living marker of local identity that actively shapes the musical and dramaturgical character of the work.

This point is essential because revitalization here is not understood as museum-like preservation. Instead, it is a process of creative recontextualization. Penting Karangasem is not presented merely as a historical object or regional ornament. It is activated as a living musical medium that contributes to the construction of atmosphere, texture, ritual nuance, and local identity. This means that local heritage is preserved by being made artistically productive. Such a strategy is highly relevant to contemporary discussions on cultural sustainability because it shows that endangered, marginalized traditional instruments can survive when they are given meaningful roles in new creative contexts. Pradana et al. (2025) similarly emphasizes that indigenous heritage is sustained when local communities remain active agents in managing, interpreting, and transmitting their cultural and environmental resources. Therefore, the revitalization of *Gamelan Penting* Karangasem in "Japa Tuan" may be understood as a form of community-oriented cultural sustainability in the field of performing arts.

The findings also indicate that "Japa Tuan" contributes to the development of experimental performing arts through interdisciplinary integration. The work combines karawitan, movement, vocal expression, dramatic structure, and visual composition into a unified artistic system. This integration is especially apparent in the role of performers who do not only dance, but also sing and play instruments. The performers sing *tembang* and *kekidungan* inspired by *Sanghyang* tradition while simultaneously playing *Gamelan Penting* Karangasem in a standing position, creating an integration of movement, vocality, and music in one simultaneous artistic activity. This multidimensional format resonates with Pradana's (2021), which highlights the importance of harmonious relationships among human beings, the environment, and spiritual values in social empowerment. In "Japa Tuan," the integration of body, voice, instrument, stage space, and spiritual meaning reflects a performative form of harmony that is consistent with the broader Balinese philosophical orientation toward balance and relationality.

This multidimensional format blurs the boundaries between dancer, musician, and vocalist. Such blurring is significant because it expands the performative grammar of Balinese karawitan. In conventional settings, the roles of dancer, vocalist, and musician are often more clearly separated. In "Japa Tuan," however, these roles are merged to create a more embodied and integrated performance language. The presence of *dedari* as dancer, vocalist, and instrumentalist contributes to the formation of ritual and spiritual atmosphere, while the interaction between body movement, human voice, and the resonance of Penting enriches the musical dimension and strengthens the magical and sacred character of the performance. This embodied integration also strengthens the social meaning of performance, because it positions the performer not merely as an executor of form, but as a bearer of cultural, religious, and communal values.

Another important contribution concerns the treatment of stage space. "Japa Tuan" does not regard the stage as a neutral container for performance. Rather, the stage becomes an expressive medium that participates in meaning-making. The stage space is managed to enable simultaneous interaction among karawitan, movement, vocality, and visual elements. Player movement, formation changes, empty space, and visual objects are used to strengthen narrative and dramatic rhythm. This spatial strategy is significant because it shifts *Gong Kebyar*-based performance from a primarily musical event into a more integrated dramaturgical system. Pradana (2024) shows that space can

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become socially meaningful when collective action, ethical awareness, and cultural responsibility are performed within it. Similarly, the stage space in "Japa Tuan" becomes meaningful because it is activated by sound, movement, vocality, visual arrangement, and spiritual symbolism.

The work also contributes socially and pedagogically. The creative process of "Japa Tuan" involved collaboration among the composer, supervisors, musicians, singers, dancers, artistic supporters, and production team. This collective process built communication, coordination, discipline, responsibility, and shared understanding in translating artistic concepts into performance. More importantly, the musicians were not positioned merely as executors of a fixed composition. They were involved in sound exploration, motif development, timbral experimentation, and adjustment of playing techniques according to the dramatic needs of the work. This indicates that experimental karawitan functions as a learning space. It encourages the transfer of knowledge, the development of technical sensitivity, and the growth of collective artistic awareness. This social-pedagogical dimension is supported by Pradana's (2022) which shows that collective cultural action can build awareness, responsibility, and shared commitment. In the context of "Japa Tuan," collective rehearsal and artistic experimentation become a pedagogical process for sustaining Balinese musical knowledge.

From a cultural conservation standpoint, the work also strengthens local identity by reintroducing the story of "Japa Tuan" and the vocal inspiration of *Sanghyang* tradition. These cultural sources operate as vehicles for transmitting Balinese spiritual, moral, and cultural values, particularly to younger generations. This suggests that "Japa Tuan" functions as a cultural bridge between inherited tradition and contemporary audiences. This interpretation is strengthened by Pradana's (2023), which shows that Balinese cultural systems can function as media for intergenerational value transmission, especially in relation to ethical responsibility, collective welfare, and cultural continuity. Likewise, "Japa Tuan" transmits values of devotion, purification, sacrifice, and spiritual awareness through contemporary musical dramaturgy.

The discussion also shows that "Japa Tuan" contributes to the theoretical understanding of revitalization in Balinese musical practice. Revitalization is often understood as an effort to maintain endangered traditions. However, this work shows that revitalization can occur through three simultaneous processes with reinterpretation, experimentation, and recontextualization**.** Reinterpretation occurs when *Atma Kerthi* and *Geguritan Japa Tuan* are transformed into contemporary musical dramaturgy. Experimentation occurs when *Gong Kebyar* is expanded through new timbral, rhythmic, and structural possibilities. Recontextualization occurs when *Gamelan Penting* Karangasem and *Sanghyang*-inspired vocality are placed within a new fragmentary performance format. Pradana et al. (2026) supports this theoretical position because it shows that cultural heritage may be productively renewed through critical reinterpretation of inherited narratives. In "Japa Tuan," Geguritan Japa Tuan is similarly reinterpreted so that its spiritual and moral values can speak to contemporary audiences through experimental *karawitan.*

Thus, the artistic and cultural value of "Japa Tuan" lies in its ability to negotiate between continuity and change. It preserves Balinese musical identity by maintaining *Gong Kebyar,* local instruments, sacred values, and traditional narratives as its foundation. At the same time, it renews that identity through experimental instrumentation, interdisciplinary performance, spatial dramaturgy, collective creativity, and contemporary staging. The findings confirm that the creative process is the key site of revitalization. Balinese musical identity is not revitalized only in the final performance, but throughout the process of searching for ideas, interpreting cultural sources, exploring instruments, developing motifs, rehearsing collectively, evaluating dramatic effectiveness, and presenting the work as a unified artistic form. Therefore, "Japa Tuan" should be understood not simply as an experimental composition, but as a practice-based cultural strategy for sustaining Balinese musical heritage through innovation. Its artistic contribution lies in expanding the expressive, dramaturgical, sonic, and spatial possibilities of *Gong Kebyar*. Its cultural contribution lies in reactivating local heritage, especially *Gamelan Penting* Karangasem, *Atma Kerthi, Geguritan Japa Tuan*, and *Sanghyang*-inspired vocality. Through these contributions, the work shows that Balinese musical tradition can remain alive not by resisting change, but by transforming itself creatively while remaining anchored in local cultural values.

Conclusions

Balinese musical identity in the fragmentary performance "Japa Tuan" is revitalized through the experimental use of *Gong Kebyar* as a culturally rooted yet innovative medium that transforms Balinese spiritual, literary, and musical traditions into a contemporary artistic form. *Gong Kebyar* is no longer positioned merely as conventional accompaniment, but as a principal dramaturgical force that conveys narrative, emotion, spirituality, atmosphere, and symbolic meaning. This revitalization occurs through the transformation of *Atma Kerthi* and *Geguritan Japa Tuan* into musical-performative expression, the expansion of *Gong Kebyar's* function as a narrative and dramatic agent,

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and the development of experimental karawitan through the exploration of timbre, texture, rhythm, dynamics, and non-standard instrumentation. The integration of *Bedug, Gong Beri, peluit jeritan, suling basur*, and especially *Gamelan Penting* Karangasem broadens the sonic and symbolic range of the work while reactivating local musical heritage that is increasingly marginalized. The absence of a *dalang* further strengthens the role of music, movement, vocality, and visual composition as communicative media. Thus, "Japa Tuan" demonstrates that Balinese musical identity can be preserved not through static repetition, but through creative transformation, interdisciplinary integration, and the recontextualization of local traditions within contemporary experimental performance.

The fragmentary performance "Japa Tuan" contributes artistically and culturally to the revitalization of local Balinese musical heritage and the development of experimental performing arts by transforming tradition into a living source of contemporary creativity. Artistically, it expands the function of *Gong Kebyar* from conventional accompaniment into a central dramaturgical medium capable of shaping atmosphere, emotion, conflict, transition, and symbolic meaning within a fragmentary performance without *dalang*. The work also creates a new interdisciplinary performance language by integrating music, movement, vocal expression, visual composition, dramatic structure, and spatial arrangement into a unified artistic form. Its experimental character is strengthened through the exploration of timbre, texture, rhythm, dynamics, canon patterns, call and response, tetembangan, and illustrative sounds, as well as through the integration of *Gamelan Penting* Karangasem, *bedug, Gong Beri, peluit,* and *suling basur*. Culturally, "Japa Tuan" revitalizes *Gamelan Penting* Karangasem as a marginalized local instrument, reinterprets *Atma Kerthi, Geguritan Japa Tuan,* and *Sanghyang* traditions, and reintroduces Balinese spiritual, moral, and cultural values to contemporary audiences, especially younger generations. Through collective creation involving musicians, singers, dancers, and artistic supporters, the work also becomes a space for learning, collaboration, and intergenerational transmission. Thus, "Japa Tuan" demonstrates that experimental performing arts can bridge preservation and innovation by sustaining Balinese musical identity while opening new possibilities for contemporary *karawitan* development.

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