

THE MUSICAL FORM OF THE *GONDANG BOROGONG* ENSEMBLE WITHIN THE MALAY COMMUNITY IN TANGUN VILLAGE, ROKAN HULU REGENCY, RIAU

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Abstract

This research focuses on the musical form of the *Gondang Borogong* ensemble within the Malay community of Tangun Village, Bangun Purba District, Rokan Hulu Regency, Riau Province. The purpose of this study is to describe the musical form of *Gondang Borogong*. The method used in this study is a qualitative-ethnographic method to examine the musical form of the *Gondang Borogong* ensemble within the Malay community of Tangun Village. The ethnographic approach allows for a holistic understanding of the musical structure, social function, and cultural significance of this music. The *Gondang Borogong* ensemble consists of several main instruments: gongs, *calempongs*, and drums. In its presentation, this art is generally performed at joyful events such as thanksgiving, weddings, and welcoming important guests, which are usually accompanied by martial arts (*silek*) performances. The repertoire commonly performed by this ensemble includes Sasatu, Duo-duo, Tigo-tigo, Kukubiek, Tulak Serantau, Orang Kayo Belimau, and Taktuntun.

Keywords: Musical form, *Gondang Borogong*, Malay community, Tangun Village.

INTRODUCTION

Tangun Village, located in the Bangun Purba District of Rokan Hulu Regency in Riau Province, represents a region abundant in the cultural traditions of Mainland Malay heritage. Various art forms, including music, dance, *silek*, and singing, play a significant role in the daily cultural practices of its people (Anwar, 2025). One prominent art form is the *Gondang Borogong* Melayu, a musical tradition that serves not only as entertainment but also as a medium for expressing the culture and identity of the local community. In practice, *Gondang Borogong* is often present in various traditional activities, including the marriage ceremony of nobles combined with *pencak silat* performances.

The *Gondang Borogong* ensemble is characterised by its three primary instruments: *gongs*, *calempongs*, and *gendang*. The gongs function as indicators of tempo and enhance the overall musical framework, whereas the six *calempongs* are performed by two musicians, each fulfilling a distinct melodic role and rhythmic sequence. Moreover, the performance features two *gendang*, each serving a unique function: the *tukang tingkah* (player 2) and *tukang buat* (player

1), which contribute to the rhythmic dynamics of the overall presentation. The interplay among these instruments generates a unique musical identity and embodies the aesthetic traditions inherent in traditional Malay music (Wanti Sabilah HRP, 2022). An understanding of the historical context and compositional methods of these instruments illustrates the enduring sustainability and relevance of this cultural heritage, even in the face of contemporary challenges.

Within the social dynamics of the Tangun Village community, *Gondang Borogong* serves not merely as a musical tradition but also fulfils a significant social role. Prior to the emergence of contemporary music, including keyboards and bands, this artistic expression functioned as a venue for communal engagement in numerous traditional practices (Anwar, 2023). Beyond enhancing social connections, *Gondang Borogong* serves as a representation of bravery and dignity during wedding ceremonies, complemented by *silek* performances. Nonetheless, the evolution of modernisation and shifts in community entertainment preferences, particularly among the youth, have led to a decrease in the frequency of performances in this art practice. To

uphold its sustainability, various local individuals, including Mr. Nengky Tornado, engage actively in training initiatives and the organization of art performances within Tangun Village.

Prior research concerning *Gondang Borogong* has predominantly emphasised its historical context, social significance, aesthetic qualities, and initiatives for preservation. Currently, research focusing on the structure or musical form of the *Gondang Borogong* ensemble, especially in relation to the musical traditions of the Malay community in Tangun Village, remains relatively limited. However, ethnomusicology necessitates comprehension of musical structure, which encompasses rhythmic patterns, inter-instrument relationships, and musical organization in performance, in order to comprehend the musical system and character of a tradition.

This study aims to examine the musical structure of the *Gondang Borogong* ensemble within the Malay community of Tangun Village. This research aims to clarify the musical framework established through the interplay of the *gong*, *calempong*, and *gendang* instruments within the *Gondang Borogong* performance. Consequently, this study aims to enhance the field of ethnomusicology, while also aiding in the preservation of the traditional art of *Gondang Borogong*, ensuring its vitality and significance within community life.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on *Gondang Borogong* within the Malay community of Rokan Hulu Regency has been explored through multiple lenses, especially concerning its historical evolution, social roles, performance styles, aesthetic significance, and initiatives for preservation. Nonetheless, investigations that focus on the structural or musical form of the *Gondang Borogong* ensemble remain somewhat scarce.

Numerous previous studies have situated *Gondang Borogong* within the context of social and cultural analyses of Malay society. One notable study by Ratih Sukat Mini, titled *Gondang Borogong Di Ujung Batu: Sejarah, Fungsi, Dan Struktur Musikal Dalam Konteks Sosial Budaya*, explores the historical development, social role, and significance of this art form in the lives of the community. This research presents a comprehensive examination of *Gondang Borogong's* significance within the cultural practices of Malay society, highlighting its connections to various

traditional activities that have evolved in the region. The results indicate that *Gondang Borogong* serves a dual purpose, functioning both as a source of entertainment and as a medium for cultural communication, thereby reinforcing social connections within the community (Mini, 2012). Nonetheless, the study of the musical elements within this study remains broad and lacks a comprehensive description of the musical framework that constitutes the *Gondang Borogong* ensemble. The analysis has not primarily concentrated on aspects such as rhythmic patterns, the interplay between instruments, and the organization of music within the performance. Therefore, while this research significantly contributes to our comprehension of the socio-cultural framework surrounding *Gondang Barogong*, there remains a need for additional exploration focused specifically on the musical structure of the *Gondang Borogong* ensemble.

A comparable investigation concerning *Gondang Barogong* was carried out by Regina Wirdianingsih and colleagues, titled "Kesenian Musik Tradisional *Gondang Borogong* Rokan Hulu." This research centers on the social function by exploring the historical evolution and significance of *Gondang Borogong* within the Rokan Hulu Malay community. The findings of the research suggest that this form of art is intricately connected to a range of social and cultural practices, functioning as a venue for engagement between musicians and the community during performances. The discourse further explored musical components, including rhythm and melody, that contribute to the distinctive character of *Gondang Borogong's* sound (Wirdianingsih, 2024). Nonetheless, the analysis of musical elements in this research remains broad and has not focused on a comprehensive analysis of musical structure. The discussion surrounding rhythm and melody lacks a comprehensive analysis of the instrumental playing patterns, the interconnections among musical sections, or the compositional frameworks that contribute to the overarching structure of the performance. Consequently, the musical aspects of *Gondang Borogong*, particularly those pertaining to the musical system, the interaction dynamics among instruments, and the various compositional structures, necessitate further in-depth investigation, which is the primary aim of this research.

Additional research emphasising the connection between the performative elements of *Gondang Borogong* and traditional Malay practices has been carried out by Armansyah Anwar (2023, 2025) and

Lia Wardani (2016). Arman investigated the function of *Gondang Borogong* as a supportive element to *pencak silat* (martial arts) during numerous traditional ceremonies in Rokan Hulu. The research findings reveal that *Gondang Borogong* music is intrinsically linked to the context of silat performances, which play a crucial role in Malay traditional ceremonies. Within this framework, music serves a dual purpose: it acts as a complement to movement while simultaneously contributing to the overall ambiance of the performance and enhancing the symbolic significance of cultural practices.

In her 2016 study, Lia Wardani explored the role of *Gondang Borogong* within Malay wedding ceremonies, focusing on the composition of the ensemble, the style of presentation, and the dynamics of interaction among musicians during the performance. The research indicated that *Gondang Borogong* plays a crucial role in the framework of the wedding ceremony, serving both as an accompaniment to various traditional processions and as a performance component that enhances the ceremonial ambiance (Wardani, 2016). Nevertheless, the emphasis of both studies has been primarily on the functional elements and performance practices within the traditional framework, resulting in a lack of in-depth exploration of the musical system and compositional structure of *Gondang Borogong*.

This research, titled "Nilai Estetik Pertunjukan Gondang Borogong Dalam Upacara Pernikahan Di Desa Kepenuhan Barat Kecamatan Kepenuhan Kabupaten Rokan Hulu," emphasises the aesthetic and symbolic aspects of *Gondang Borogong* art within the context of Malay wedding ceremonies. This research demonstrates that aspects of the performance, including *silat* movements, musical presentation, and the ambiance of traditional ceremonies, contribute significantly to the aesthetic experience of the participants in the event. These results indicate that *Gondang Borogong* is not only perceived as a musical practice, but also as a form of aesthetic expression that is seamlessly incorporated into the cultural context of Malay society (Wanti Sabilah HRP, 2022). Concurrently, Armansyah Anwar (2023) investigates the traditional values and symbolic significance of the instruments utilised in the *Gondang Borogong* ensemble. This research highlights the fact that each instrument serves not only a musical purpose but also symbolises the cultural values and life philosophy of the local community (Anwar, 2023). While both studies offer significant insights into the aesthetic and symbolic

aspects of *Gondang Borogong*, they have not thoroughly examined the musical form and structure of the ensemble composition. Consequently, these elements necessitate further detailed investigation.

Conversely, Nandho Pur Pratama and Irwan Wilman (2021) have focused their research on the sustainability of *Gondang Borogong* art. The study examines initiatives to conserve *Gondang Borogong* to reinforce the cultural identity of the Malay people in Rokan Hulu Regency. This study characterises *Gondang Borogong* as both a traditional art form and a symbol of cultural identity, embodying social ideals, solidarity, and unity among the Malay community. Additionally, the research emphasises the diverse strategies that the community and cultural leaders have implemented to ensure the sustainability of this art form in the face of evolving circumstances. Preservation initiatives are implemented by organising performances of traditional activities, transmitting knowledge to the younger generation, and enhancing the role of *Gondang Borogong* in community cultural events (Wilman, 2022). This study primarily emphasises the preservation and enhancement of cultural identity, hence it does not thoroughly investigate the musical structures and forms that influence *Gondang Borogong* performance practices. This study aims to enhance previous research by analysing the musical form of the *Gondang Borogong* ensemble, specifically within the context of the musical practices of the Malay population in Tangun Village.

Previous studies indicate that research on *Gondang Borogong* predominantly emphasises historical features, social functions, aesthetic values, and preservation efforts within the Malay community's artistic practices. These studies elucidate the significance of *Gondang Borogong* within the cultural practices and traditional activities of the populace in Rokan Hulu Regency. Nevertheless, prior studies have not primarily concentrated on the structure or musical form of the *Gondang Borogong* ensemble, particularly concerning the interplay between instruments, rhythmic patterns, and the structuring of music during performances. As a result, the objective of this study is to conduct a more comprehensive analysis of the musical form of the *Gondang Borogong* ensemble in the practices of the Malay community in Tangun Village, Bangun Purba District, Rokan Hulu Regency. This work aims to enhance the understanding of the musical system underlying this art and to supplement prior research in ethnomusicology.

METHOD

In order to analyse the musical form of the *Gondang Borogong* ensemble within the cultural practices of the Malay community in Tangun Village, Bangun Purba District, Rokan Hulu Regency, Riau Province, this study implements a qualitative approach using ethnomusicological ethnography. This method was used because the study aims to comprehend musical activities as a component of the social and cultural life of the community as well as sound phenomena (Titon, 2020). The data obtained through this qualitative approach are descriptive and interpretive, thereby allowing researchers to comprehend the meaning, function, and musical practices of *Gondang Borogong* within its societal context. In terms of methodology, this study follows Alan P. Merriam's ethnomusicological approach, which consists of two primary phases: fieldwork and laboratory analysis. In order to fully comprehend *Gondang Borogong* musical practices, both in terms of their social background and the musical structures that influence them, these two stages are regularly carried out (Nettl 2005).

The purpose of the fieldwork phase was to gather empirical information about *Gondang Borogong* performance practices in the community. In order to directly observe the musical presentation process, the functions of each instrument, and the interactions between musicians, martial artists, and the community in attendance, researchers engaged in participant observation during *Gondang Borogong* performances during community events (Kawulich, 2005). A number of informants actively involved in the art practice, including *Gondang Borogong* performers, cultural leaders, and locals knowledgeable about the origins and evolution of this art form in Tangun Village, were also interviewed in-depth. Audiovisual documentation, which included field notes, photos, and video recordings that documented the musical practices and performance process, was also added to the field data.

Based on the data collected during the fieldwork, the subsequent phase involved conducting a musical laboratory analysis. At this point, performance recordings were examined to determine the musical components that comprise the *Gondang Borogong* ensemble, including the *calempong* instrument's melodic and rhythmic patterns, the *gong*'s role as a musical structure marker, and the *gendang*'s contribution to the performance's rhythmic dynamics. The links between instruments within the broader

musical organisation were also observed in this investigation (Nettl, 2005). Through these stages of analysis, this research attempts to reveal the musical form of the *Gondang Borogong* ensemble and understand its relationship with the cultural practices of the Malay community in Tangun Village.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

History and Origins of *Gondang Borogong*

Gondang Borogong is a traditional art form that originated in Riau Province's Rokan Hulu Regency. This artistic expression merges aspects of traditional percussion music with the martial discipline of *silek*, a vital component of the cultural heritage of the local Malay community. Within a socio-cultural framework, *Gondang Borogong* serves as both a source of entertainment and a vehicle for cultural expression, encapsulating traditional values, spirituality, and the shared identity of the community that has been transmitted through generations (Wardani, 2016). In numerous customary practices, this music frequently serves as an accompaniment to ceremonial events, including the reception of esteemed guests, traditional weddings, and *silek* performances during cultural ceremonies. This phenomenon suggests that traditional music within Malay society transcends mere aesthetic appreciation, functioning instead as an integral component of a symbolic framework that is intricately linked to the social structure and cultural values of the community (Kartomi, 1990).

Gondang Borogong is believed to have originated in the Ujung Batu area of Rokan Hulu Regency around the year 1937. In its formative period, this artistic expression was referred to as *Celempong*, which denotes the primary instrument, a collection of small, tuned gongs utilised as carriers of melody. Over time, the terminology transformed into *Gondang Borogong*. The term *gondang* denotes the utilisation of gongs and *gendang*, whereas *borogong* is derived from the word *borongan*, which indicates the combination of diverse instruments, including *gong*, *gendang*, and *calempong*, within a singular traditional musical ensemble (Mini, 2012). This shift in terminology reflects a process of cultural adaptation and the evolution of presentation forms within the traditional musical practices of the local community.

In the performance practice of the *Gondang Borogong* ensemble, the typical arrangement includes six *calempongs*, two *gondangs* (*gendings*), and one large *gong* (*ogong*), which functions as a significant marker for the musical structure of the performance. The *calempongs* serve as the primary melodic

instruments, whereas the *gendang* provide supportive rhythmic patterns that enhance the overall musical texture. The *ogong* functions as a definitive marker for the conclusion of the musical cycle, highlighting the structural dynamics of the ensemble's performance. Instrument playing patterns are typically transmitted orally through traditional learning methods, facilitating the evolution of musical practice through imitation, experience, and direct interaction among players (Mini, 2012). This model of musical transmission is a prevalent feature of oral music traditions throughout the Indonesian archipelago, where musical knowledge is conveyed through communal practice, direct observation, and active involvement in community cultural activities (Manggau, 2025).

Over the years, *Gondang Borogong* has experienced numerous transformations in its playing techniques and presentation styles, particularly in response to a growing variety of performance contexts. Nonetheless, this artistic expression upholds the cultural principles that support its very being. Initiatives aimed at safeguarding this cultural heritage received heightened recognition following the designation of *Gondang Borogong* as an Intangible Cultural Heritage by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia in 2018. This acknowledgement affirms that *Gondang Borogong* serves as a cultural manifestation that possesses historical, aesthetic, and spiritual significance for the Malay community in Rokan Hulu Regency (Kemdikbud, 2018).

Further advancements are apparent in the growing arena for *Gondang Borogong* performances. *Gondang Borogong* was previously primarily present in the context of local community traditional activities. However, it is now being performed in a broader spectrum of cultural activities, including regional arts festivals and traditional arts competitions. Nengky Tornado observed that *Gondang Borogong* is gaining recognition beyond the Rokan Hulu region and is increasingly featured in various cultural events (Personal interview, January 11, 2025). He also stated that *Gondang Borogong* represents a manifestation of the soul and identity of the Rokan Hulu Malay community. This art form functions as both a source of entertainment and a vessel of cultural heritage, embodying spiritual, social, and educational values. The rhythm and musical structure of *Gondang Borogong* embody the life experiences of the community and function as a media for transmitting traditional messages that have been handed down through generations.

Moreover, *Gondang Borogong* contributes to cultural education by facilitating learning activities within educational institutions and art studios. Through this process, engaging with this music fosters not only the development of musical abilities but also cultivates essential values such as cooperation, discipline, and responsibility among the youth. In the framework of contemporary societal progress, initiatives aimed at preserving this artistic expression persist through creative performances, educational endeavors, and digital archiving to ensure the longevity of the *Gondang Borogong* tradition in the face of globalization. Consequently, *Gondang Borogong* is perceived not merely as a relic of cultural heritage, but as a dynamic cultural practice that is continually evolving and negotiating its significance within the context of contemporary Malay society.

Musical Form of the *Gondang Borogong* Ensemble

The presence of *Gondang Borogong* within the Rokan Hulu Malay indigenous community, especially in Tangun Village and its neighboring regions, transcends mere traditional musical expressions. *Gondang Borogong* plays a vital role within the cultural framework, especially in traditional ceremonies including weddings, the reception of esteemed guests, and the formal bestowal of traditional titles. In this setting, *Gondang Borogong* is closely linked to the traditional Malay martial art of *silat* (*silek*), constituting a cohesive performing whole rather than existing as an independent entity.

The connection between *Gondang Borogong* and *silat* (martial arts) illustrates the fusion of musical composition and physical movement. Music functions as a rhythmic structure that governs the dynamics of the performance, whereas *silat* (martial arts) offers a visual representation of traditional values including courage, honor, and social ethics. Consequently, the two are inseparable, both in function and symbolism, as they collaboratively influence meaning within the framework of traditional performances.

According to an interview conducted with Mr. Nengky Tornado in January 2025, *Gondang Borogong* and *silat* are recognized as two interrelated components within traditional practices. In the absence of *silat*, *Gondang Borogong* is often relegated to the status of mere entertainment music. Conversely, *silat* devoid of *Gondang Borogong* accompaniment lacks both its rhythmic and emotional depth. In the context of local interpretation, *Gondang Borogong* can be seen as the "body," whereas *silat* serves as the "soul" that brings it to life. This

analogy highlights the role of music in shaping the structure and dynamics of the performance, whereas *silat* embodies traditional values. To gain a deeper understanding of the musical form of *Gondang Borogong*, it is essential to examine the musical structure of the ensemble. This includes analyzing the arrangement of instruments, rhythmic patterns, and the interrelationships between various parts that contribute to a cohesive performance.

The structure of *Gondang Borogong* music is integrated with *Silat* (Silek) movements.

The musical structure of *Gondang Borogong* is manifested through the arrangement of three primary groups of instruments, each possessing unique yet harmonious roles. These consist of the *Calempong*, featuring six instruments that provide the primary melody and rhythmic accompaniment; the *Gendang*, comprising two instruments that serve as regulators of rhythmic and dynamic patterns, commonly known as *Tukang Sikap* and *Tukang Buat*; and the *Gong*, which functions as a tempo and transition marker between sections.

All three elements function cohesively to establish a musical pattern that aligns with the movements of *silat*. The resulting rhythm transcends mere accompaniment, functioning as a crucial guide for the tempo, accent, and emotional expression inherent in each *silat* movement. The music orchestrates the rhythm of steps, strikes, and patterns of movement. In the dynamic practice of *silat*, various repertory instruments, including *duo-duo* and *tigo-tigo*, are being used. In contrast, slower movements like sword fighting or respectful gestures utilize *taktuntung*, *orang kayo belimau*, or *tulak serantau*, characterized by a more tranquil and dignified tempo and ambiance. Presented here is a visual representation of the *Gondang Borogong* ensemble:



Picture 1. *Gondang Borogong* Ensemble
(Source: Author, 20:01:2025)

In the context of performance practice, the choice of repertoire is adjusted to align with the nature of the

silat movements being performed. Fast-tempo repertoire, including *duo-duo* and *tigo-tigo*, are used to enhance dynamic and aggressive movements. In contrast, slower-tempo repertoire, including *taktuntung*, *orang kayo belimau*, and *tulak serantau*, are used during solemn segments, such as sword fighting or salute movements. This variation in tempo and musical character demonstrates that the structure of *Gondang Borogong* is flexible and contextual, following the dramatic needs of the *silat* performance.

The Symbolic and Social Function of *Gondang Borogong* in Traditional Practices.

One notable symbolic function of *Gondang Borogong* within the traditional practices of the Rokan Hulu Malay community is illustrated in the ribbon-cutting scene during a martial arts performance that takes place alongside a wedding ceremony. In this ceremonial practice, the groom or the champion is required to "battle" through a ribbon barrier that is protected by warriors representing the female side. This scene embodies not just an attraction but also serves as a symbolic representation of a trial that assesses the groom's readiness, courage, and worthiness to receive the blessing and honor of the bride's family. From a modern ethnomusicological perspective, this practice can be interpreted as a type of symbolic representation that illustrates the role of music as a medium for expressing cultural values within a performative setting (Irawati, 2021). Moreover, research on the dissemination of resilience education within formal learning environments indicates that musical practices not only embody values but also function as a medium for internalizing and transmitting these values through shared experiences, social interactions, and physical engagement in musical performance. Consequently, music significantly influences the development of cultural consciousness and fosters personal resilience amidst social changes.



Picture 2. *Pesilek* in the Ribbon Cutting
(Author: Author, 20:01:2025)

In an interview with Mr. Nengky Tornado (personal interview, January 2025), it was emphasized that the ribbon-cutting ceremony is conducted with careful consideration, adhering to a defined procedure that embodies the principles of politeness and traditional ethics. He emphasized that "the crucial aspect is that the ribbon is not cut carelessly. This statement suggests that the ribbon-cutting ceremony serves as a symbolic reflection of the dominant social norms present within the community. In this context, *Gondang Borogong* contributes significantly to the establishment of an emotional and dramatic atmosphere, utilizing rhythmic patterns and musical dynamics that enhance the sacredness of the moment. This supports the perspective that traditional music serves not merely as background but also as a significant influence that shapes shared understandings and feelings throughout a cultural event (Campbell, 2003).

In addition to its symbolic significance, *Gondang Borogong* plays a crucial role as a traditional communication medium within the community, fulfilling important social functions. Prior to the commencement of a *silat* performance, this music is presented as a *raun*, an introductory musical composition devoid of *silat* accompaniment, designed to capture the audience's attention in anticipation of the forthcoming traditional event. This practice illustrates the function of music as a potent medium for cultural communication in the pre-modern era. The sound of the *Gondang Borogong* functions not only as a signal for the commencement of an event but also elicits collective memory and fosters a vibrant social atmosphere. Mr. Anwar noted in a personal interview conducted in January 2025 that the sound of the *Gondang Borogong* has the ability to evoke a sense of excitement in moments of silence and serves as a reminder of historical narratives. This phenomenon illustrates the ability of music to evoke cultural memory and shape collective identity, a topic extensively explored in recent research on the interplay between music and memory (Wardani, 2016).

Moreover, the *Gondang Borogong* functions as a symbol of legitimacy within the framework of traditional ceremonies. In the Rokan Hulu Malay tradition, a wedding is deemed incomplete as a traditional ceremony without the accompaniment of *Gondang Borogong* and *silat* performance. The existence of these two elements serves as a crucial

marker that the ceremony has met the criteria for a comprehensive traditional rite. On the other hand, in the absence of either element, the event is likely to be perceived as a formal (national) ceremony instead of a traditional practice. *Gondang Borogong* serves as a cultural practice that reinforces and validates social values within society through its performative aspects (Manggau, 2025).



Picture 4.3. *Gondang Borogong* Activist
(Source: Author, 20:01:2025)

The connection between *Gondang Borogong* and *silat* within the culture of Rokan Hulu is deeply intertwined, both in terms of functionality and symbolism. Music serves to regulate the rhythm, emotion, and structure of the performance, whereas *silat* acts as a visual representation of traditional values such as courage, politeness, and struggle. The two create a cohesive performance framework, wherein significance is derived not solely from sound but also from the interplay of musical components and movement. This integration illustrates that the practice of *Gondang Borogong* is not a singular musical phenomenon, but rather a component of a more comprehensive cultural framework.

Consequently, *Gondang Borogong* functions not merely as a musical component but also as a symbolic, social, and legitimizing medium that embodies the values, norms, and cultural identity of the Rokan Hulu Malay community. The relationship with *silat* illustrates the combination of musical, ritualistic, and social elements that collectively create a cohesive significance within traditional practices. These findings further highlight the necessity of situating the analysis of *Gondang Borogong* not solely within a structural musical framework but also within a wider cultural context.

Musical Analysis of the *Gondang Borogong* Ensemble

The musical structure of *Gondang Borogong* pertains to the organization of musical components that create a cohesive entity within the traditional performances of the Malay community in Tangun Village, Bangun Purba District, Rokan Hulu Regency, Riau. The analysis of the musical structure of *Gondang Borogong* is juxtaposed with the research conducted by Ratih Sukat Mini (2012) and Lia Wardani (2016) to highlight both the commonalities and distinctive characteristics of the rhythmic patterns and melodic frameworks present in Tangun Village. This represents an aspect of an oral tradition in which music is transmitted across generations not through formal notation, but rather through direct learning and personal interaction. Elements including scale, tonal range, rhythmic pattern, melodic formula, melodic contour, and cadence pattern function cohesively and are articulated through three primary instruments: the *calempong*, the *gendang*, and the *gong* (Mini, 2012), (Wardani, 2016).

Gondang Borogong employs a pentatonic system centered around the key of A major, incorporating five primary notes: A – B – C# – E – F#. This scale evokes a distinctive sense of meditation and repetition, aligning with the sacred elements found in diverse traditional rituals. The A note functions as the central pitch and the focal point of resolution in the majority of musical phrases. *Calempong* playing encompasses a somewhat restricted range, extending to less than an octave, with the highest note generally being F# or G#, executed with a sense of restraint.

Calempong performs brief melodic patterns that can be interpreted as melodic formulas or motifs, which are the smallest musical units that comprise the foundation of musical structures. These formulas are reiterated at regular intervals and evolved through variations, thereby creating unique musical phrases, exemplified by the sequences Re–Mi–Fa–Re–Mi–Do or Mi–Re–Do. In the field of music studies, the concepts of repetition and variation concerning short units serve as essential principles in the construction of musical structures and phrases. In this context, William P. Malm (1977:15) asserts that traditional music is typically created through the repetition and variation of brief formulas and cadence patterns, in contrast to the harmonic progressions characteristic of Western music (Malm, 1977). In the context of *Gondang Borogong*, musical structures emerge through the cyclical repetition of melodic formulas,

leading to a pattern that is both consistent and dynamic, characterized by performative variations.

The gong instrument within the *Gondang Borogong* ensemble functions as a significant indicator of musical structure, especially in delineating phrase boundaries and facilitating section transitions. In practical application, the gong functions not merely as a tempo indicator but also as a definitive closure to a musical cycle, signifying the conclusion of a performance segment. This function corresponds with the insights in ethnomusicology that specific instruments within traditional ensembles serve a structural purpose as indicators of musical organization (Malm, 1977); (Nettl, 2005). In accordance with this assertion, Setyoko discusses that music serves as a medium for expression and communication, shaping and reflecting the social experiences of society (Setyoko, 2021). In the context of *Gondang Borogong*, the concluding phrase typically exhibits a tendency for melodic resolution towards the root note, exemplified by the Mi–Re–Do pattern, which functions as a recurring musical closing formula.

In the context of the *gendang* instrument, it is performed by two individuals who assume different responsibilities: the *tukang buat* serves as the primary controller of rhythm, while the *tukang tingkah* contributes to the rhythmic variations. This interaction pattern reveals a complementary musical framework, wherein the *gendang* not only establish the tempo but also influence the dynamics, accentuation, and musical responses throughout the performance. This perspective supports the notion that in traditional music, the framework is influenced not just by pitch sequences but also by the dynamic interactions among performers within a specific socio-cultural environment (Titon, 2020).

Moreover, the interplay among the gong, *calempong*, and *gendang* culminates in a sophisticated yet systematic amalgamation of rhythmic and melodic frameworks. The *calempong* performs brief melodic sequences that are reiterated and modified, while the gong delineates structural boundaries, and the *gendang* govern the rhythmic flow and dynamics of the performance. This pattern indicates that the musical structure of *Gondang Borogong* is constructed upon the principles of repetition and variation within a cyclical framework, a characteristic often observed in numerous oral music traditions (Manggau, 2025). This finding is further supported by earlier research focused on

Gondang Borogong, which illustrates that the role of each instrument within the ensemble is intricately linked to the social and cultural context of the community that sustains it (Mini, 2012); (Wardani, 2016); (Wardani, 2016); (Wardani, 2016); (Wardani, 2016). Consequently, the musical framework of *Gondang Borogong* serves not only as an arrangement of auditory elements but also as a manifestation of the knowledge systems and cultural traditions inherent in the Rokan Hulu community.

Melodic contour serves an essential function within this musical framework. Typically, the melodies of *Gondang Borogong* exhibit an arch-shaped or descending structure, which imparts a unique expressive quality to the *calempong* performance. Beyond its aesthetic appeal, this melodic movement functions as an emotional indicator, especially in concluding segments or transitions between different repertoires (Soeryana, 2022).

In the context of traditional performances, the musical structure of *Gondang Borogong* is comprised of a series of melodic contours, cadences, brief formulas, and repetitive patterns that are arranged in a gradual and layered manner. This structure transcends a simple musical form, serving as a vital component of the community's social and cultural practices, including wedding ceremonies, guest receptions, and various traditional rituals. Consequently, the musical framework of *Gondang Borogong* not only showcases musical proficiency but also embodies the cultural principles and shared identity of the Malay community in Rokan Hulu.

CONCLUSIONS

The *Gondang Borogong Melayu*, originating from Tangun Village in the Bangun Purba District of Rokan Hulu Regency, represents a significant aspect of intangible cultural heritage. This practice intricately weaves together traditional music and the martial art of *silat*, particularly within the framework of traditional ceremonies, with a notable emphasis on weddings. *Gondang Borogong* features a musical structure that includes *calempong*, *gendang*, and *gong*, serving multiple purposes beyond mere entertainment. It acts as a symbol of identity, a medium for cultural communication, and a regulator of rhythm and emotion within traditional performances. Its close existence is closely linked to social values such as politeness, courage, and honor,

making it an important part of the cultural system of the Malay community. In the face of modernization challenges, local advocates persist in their efforts to sustain cultural heritage through educational initiatives and performances. This study enhances the understanding of ethnomusicology by examining the musical structure of *Gondang Borogong*. Additionally, it offers a tangible contribution to the safeguarding of traditional arts, ensuring their vitality and relevance in the face of evolving cultural landscapes.

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