

Unveiling the melodic traditions of Mahzani: an ethnomusicological investigation of Tombulu music in Indonesia's Minahasa region

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the Mahzani ethnic music tradition, which holds significance among the Tombulu sub-ethnic group of the Minahasa region. As an expression of their cultural identity, Mahzani encapsulates the richness of Tombulu music, encompassing artistic diversity, spiritual values, and the philosophy of life cherished by the Tombulu people. The aim of this study is to analyze the distinctive musical elements that contribute to the unique atmosphere of the Mahzani tradition. This study uses an ethnomusicological approach. This approach collects and analyzes data, namely the melodies of traditional Mahzani music in the cultural context of the Tombulu people as the owners of the music. The ethnomusicological analysis is carried out by analyzing the physical and non-physical forms of Mahzani music to reveal its melodic richness and its aesthetic and philosophical meanings. This comprehensive approach ensures a thorough examination of the musical elements and their cultural implications within the context of the Mahzani tradition. In the end, the result of this research is that the combination of poetry and melody in a single unit of Mahzani's expression at the time has unveiled a unique and mystical atmosphere. At this level, the Tombulu people believe that music has vibrations that are connected to nature and the creator. Music is no longer just a medium for expressing itself, but it is the intention of the expression of human life in relation to their living environment.

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1. Introduction

Mahzani, an artistic tradition inherited from ancestors, continues to thrive and be preserved among the Minahasa tribe, particularly the Tombulu sub-ethnic group residing in the administrative area of Tomohon City, North Sulawesi Province. This traditional art form is actively practiced during various social activities, including agricultural cultivation, harvesting plantation products, the initial procession of occupying a new residence (*Nae Rumah Baru*), village birthday thanksgiving, and numerous other cultural events. For the Tombulu people, Mahzani represents more than just a form of entertainment or self-expression; it holds deep spiritual significance and embodies a philosophy of life. Mahzani primarily encompasses vocal music rather than instrumental music and derives its name from the Tombulu language, where "zani" translates to sound or voice [1]. While the people in East and South Tomohon refer to it as Ma'zani, those in West and North Tomohon identify it as Mahzani. This traditional musical expression is typically performed in groups during social gatherings. Mahzani holds a multifaceted role for the Tombulu people, serving not only as a means of entertainment but also as a primary medium for expressing prayers, delivering messages, offering advice, and even conveying reprimands. Early accounts by N. Graafland, a Dutch priest in the 1800s, revealed that the Minahasa people would sing on various occasions, including while working in the garden, carrying loads, hauling wood, or constructing buildings [2].

Similarly, Josef Manuel Saruan's research indicated that music and singing played significant roles in manifesting various aspects of life through rites and myths [3, p. 32]. This study has two research gaps from previous studies. First, this study uses an ethnomusicological approach to analyze the physical and non-physical forms of Mahzani music, which have not been used in previous studies. Second, in relation to the ethnomusicological approach, this research reveals the aesthetic and philosophical meanings of the melodic richness of Mahzani music, which emphasizes the uniqueness of the spiritual values of human relations with nature and with the creator. Studies on the richness of musical traditions have been carried out globally. Sergey Bereg, José Miguel Díaz-Báñez, Nadine Kroher, and Inmaculada Ventura found that much of the traditional music that is still being preserved uses oral tradition. The authors offer a new geometric optimization problem, the spanning pipe problem, to approximate a melodic template for a series of labeled performance transcriptions that correspond to a particular style in an oral musical tradition [4].

Another creative way offered by Haijing Shi is to maintain traditional Chinese music in the era of digital development. Shi offers digitized music to achieve traditional musical heritage, which is considered to contain the spiritual wealth of Chinese society [5]. In Addition, Soul Louis and Elizabeth Hellmuth Margulis, in their research on *Creativity and Tradition*, assert that music can function as a time-sensitive lens into the interaction between instrumental and ritual attitudes in the cultural evolution [6]. Apart from preserving traditional music, the meaning and form of traditional music can also shape the cultural identity of a community, collective memory, and building peace [7]. All the research that has been done previously has a research gap with this research, even though there is a similarity, which emphasizes the importance of revitalizing the existence of traditional music in the midst of today's development of society.

This study aims to analyze the forms and aesthetic concepts of Mahzani music that are deeply rooted and internalized by the Tombulu people. By examining these forms and aesthetics, this research seeks to unravel the intrinsic meaning and significance embodied within Mahzani music. While previous research by Stefanny Mersiany Pandaleke and Meyltsan Herbert Maragani explored the cultural identity of the Minahasa people influenced by Mahzani music among millennials [8], their studies did not specifically investigate the diverse forms and aesthetic concepts of Mahzani. Therefore, this research fills a critical gap in the existing literature by providing a comprehensive exploration of the various forms and aesthetic principles inherent in Mahzani music, contributing to a deeper understanding of its cultural significance.

Furthermore, Christo Pua, Anatje Palit, and Rafael Terok's research focused on Mahzani music as one of the cultural assets of Katararan Simbolon [9], leaving room for further investigation into the distinct forms and aesthetic concepts specific to Mahzani music. By conducting this study, we aim to deepen our understanding of the cultural heritage and artistic legacy of the Tombulu people, as well as contribute to the broader field of ethnomusicology. Through our comprehensive analysis of the diverse forms and aesthetic principles of Mahzani music, we seek to shed light on the profound connections between Mahzani music, spiritual values, and cultural beliefs cherished by the Tombulu community. This research will expand the existing knowledge of Mahzani music, providing valuable insights into the intricate nuances and expressions of this traditional art form.

2. Method

This study employs a qualitative research approach, specifically a phenomenological approach [10], to explore the Mahzani music tradition. The research focuses on analyzing the physical and non-physical characteristics of Mahzani music. The analysis of the art of music involves examining various elements such as melody, rhythm, harmony, and instrumentation [11]. Additionally, the research considers the cultural, social, and historical contexts [12], that shape the form and development of Mahzani music. Through this approach, the study aims to gain a deep understanding of the aesthetic qualities and musical intricacies inherent in Mahzani. An ethnomusicological analysis [13], [14] is employed to investigate the cultural context of Mahzani music. This involves conducting fieldwork, participant observation, and interviews

with musicians and community members [15]. Through these methods, the research explores the social, cultural, and historical aspects that influence the creation and performance of Mahzani music. Audio and visual recordings of Mahzani performances are analyzed to uncover the significance of the music within the Tombulu community. By delving into the cultural context, the study aims to reveal the meanings, symbols, and practices associated with Mahzani music.

The research incorporates an interpretive and philosophical analysis [16] to delve into the aesthetic concepts of Mahzani music. Drawing upon relevant theoretical frameworks and philosophical perspectives, this analysis seeks to uncover the underlying meanings and symbolism embedded in the music. The researchers engage in reflective interpretation, exploring the subjective experiences and interpretations [17] of Mahzani music by both musicians and listeners. Through this approach, the study aims to elucidate the existential, spiritual, and philosophical dimensions of Mahzani as understood by the Tombulu community. Data collection involves multiple methods, including observation, interviews, and document analysis. Fieldwork is conducted to observe Mahzani performances in various contexts, and interviews are conducted with musicians and community members to gain insights into their experiences and perceptions of Mahzani music. The collected data is then analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques, including coding, categorization, and theme development [18]. The analysis is carried out in an iterative and interactive manner to uncover patterns, themes, and unique features of Mahzani music. The research team engages in peer debriefing and member checking to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings [19].

3. Results and Discussion

Etymologically, Mahzani consists of the words Mah, doing, and Zani, sound or sound. Thus, the equivalent words that make up the Mahzani phrase can be interpreted as musical and singing activities. These musical activities cannot be separated from the importance of social capital, cultural capital, and knowledge capital as the basis for developing music in a particular area [20]. Traditional communities in general do not recognize and call music and singing activities as musical activities as the understanding and concept of the Western world [21]. This can be seen by the absence of terms that specifically refer to music for instrumental or vocal art traditions. The Tombulu sub-ethnic community around Eastern and Southern Tomohon calls it the Ma'zani term, while the Western and Northern Tomohon people know it as Mahzani. In his presentation, Mahzani's expressions are displayed individually as well as communally in daily activities and official rituals. When the Tombulu people mention the word Mahzani, they will associate the word with daily activity and sing their traditional music. Mahzani is thus still known and practiced as a form of traditional music by the Tombulu people.

As a cultural heritage that is still preserved and sustainable, it shows that Mahzani has a vital role and function for the Tombulu people. In the concept of thinking, the Tombulu Mahzani community is more than just a medium of entertainment and self-expression. Mahzani can transmit noble values to the younger generation in terms of character building, ethics, morals, and spirituality. Meanwhile, on the one hand, the expression of Mahzani's cultural tradition can contribute directly to the world of tourism in the form of performing arts, which of course will open space for community participation in cultural awareness movements and strengthen one's own character as a nation. The preservation and sustainability of Mahzani as a cultural heritage among the Tombulu people are indeed significant, highlighting its vital role and multifaceted function within the community. However, a deeper exploration of this concept reveals the need to address certain challenges to ensure the continued relevance and effectiveness of Mahzani.

While Mahzani goes beyond mere entertainment and self-expression, transmitting noble values to the younger generation, it is crucial to consider the evolving dynamics of contemporary society. One of the challenges driving the vitalization of Mahzani music is the development of digital culture, which makes the younger generation prefer an instant, easy, modern, and global lifestyle, so they tend to be uprooted from their cultural roots or abandon various forms of tradition, including Mahzani music. Modern lifestyles often see local culture and traditions as out of date. The same context was also analyzed by Haijing Shi, who found that

the development of digital society had an impact on the disappearance of traditional music from Chinese society. For developed societies like China, Shi offers a solution to maintaining traditional music with an approach to digitizing the traditional music heritage [5]. The offer of this solution is, of course, still far from the development of the Tombulu people.

The rapid pace of globalization and cultural homogenization poses a risk to the preservation of traditional art forms like Mahzani, as the younger generation may be drawn towards more popular and globally influenced forms of entertainment. To maintain the cultural integrity of Mahzani, efforts should be directed towards revitalizing and contemporizing the art form, integrating elements that resonate with modern sensibilities without compromising its traditional essence. Additionally, while Mahzani's potential contribution to the tourism industry is acknowledged, a more comprehensive approach is required to fully harness its economic benefits. This includes creating supportive infrastructures such as dedicated performance venues, establishing training programs to enhance the skills of Mahzani practitioners, and implementing effective marketing strategies to attract both domestic and international tourists. By actively engaging the Tombulu community in the cultural awareness movement, Mahzani can serve as a catalyst for fostering a sense of pride and identity, strengthening the community's character as a nation.

However, it is essential to recognize the diverse perspectives within the Tombulu community itself, as differing interpretations and understandings of Mahzani's values may exist. To address this, open dialogues and inclusive platforms should be created to encourage discussions and promote a shared understanding of Mahzani's teachings. Furthermore, a comprehensive preservation plan must be in place to protect Mahzani from the potential threats of cultural erosion and appropriation. This entails documenting and archiving Mahzani's history, promoting educational initiatives to ensure its transmission to future generations, and enacting policies that safeguard the intellectual property rights and cultural heritage of the Tombulu people. By actively addressing these challenges, Mahzani can not only sustain its cultural significance within the Tombulu community but also adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing world, preserving its identity while enriching the wider cultural landscape.

3.1. Form and Structure of the Mahzani Music

Ethnomusicology studies aim to analyze the form and structure of traditional music. Form refers to visible parts such as performance, tonal system, language, and text. Xiuming Li defines a form of music as an art form with specific content [22]. Hernandez explained that the structure of music involves various aspects, such as the form and the interrelationships between elements or forms within a single musical composition [23]. Understanding the form and structure of Mahzani music cannot be approached using only Western scientific theoretical concepts. Hastanto argued that scientific theory is only a tool in formulating and formulating various data from studies to build theoretical concepts of research objects. The empirical research method becomes the main surgical tool in exploring the value and meaning of traditional objects. Theory of science which is a grounded research work method, is used at the beginning of research activities to identify the object of study.

In order to get the formulation and formula of the object of study, it must be approached empirically based on the views of the artists and the traditional actors themselves. Wang emphasized that, with the empirical research approach, music is the main subject of study and not merely an object studied to complement theory [24]. Dewi Tika Lestari revealed that there are two main characteristics of traditional music, physical characteristics and non-physical characteristics. The aspects that appear in the physical characteristics are the type of instrument, tone system or tuning, and language for aspects of vocal music. Non-physical features are melodic ornamentation, tunings and tunings, text, tone, tone color, structure, volume, tempo, rhythm, and dynamics [25, p. 31].

- Physical characteristics: (1) Perform, Mahzani is vocal music performed individually or in groups. Starting as a single (solo) or duet, then followed by all the singers in the group. J. Alb T. Schwarz, quoted by J Wenas, explains that each singing rite is led by the priest of the tribal religious ceremony who sings ahead then the other ceremonial priests follow, singing the chorus of the song [26, p. 26]. N. Graafland mentions that the presentation of

this music is done by a singer who brings a verse then followed by others by repeating the same part [27]; (2) Tonal System, the Mahzani tone system uses the pentatonic system. Interestingly, even though it is pentatonic, if the notes are notated using the diatonic system, the transcript will contain the complete tone arrangement 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 1 (octave). Of course, the use of all these tones is not used and will not be found all at once in one zazanin or chant. The tuning system or the basic Mahzani tone stem when the initial melody is sounded is not based on a certain pitch or frequency as is usually the case with the Diatonic system. The basic tone is chosen according to the feeling and atmosphere experienced by the singer when he starts singing. It often happens that the same zazanin is sung again with a certain time interval, but the initial pitch is different. Mood, condition, time of day, and even the location where the singer is located are factors that greatly influence the initial tuning of the zazanin; (3) Language or Text, Mahzani is not limited to singing the text of the song but is an expression of the words being sung. Dialect and accent have an important role in shaping the accentuation and rhythm of a zazanin. The Tombulu dialect, when pronounced is very melodious [28]. The connection between language and Mahzani's expression can be seen in the tone decoration or ornamentation when performing the zazanin.

- Non-physical characteristics; (1) Tone and Frequency, Mahzani does not know and has a specific designation for tone. Identities and designations that are known in connection with overtones on the size of the high and low frequency refer to the color of the sound (timbre). The high notes are called *zani natas*, the low notes are called *zani wawa'*, the middle notes are *zani unez*. Terms related to timbre, thin high notes are called *ririnteken*, and thick low tones are *lokonen*; (2) Scale System, in an interview, Resina Kaunang, a Mahzani artist, said that there is a Mahzani mode that cannot be found anymore and is extinct. The reason was that the Mahzani perpetrators who mastered this mode had died and had no time to pass it on to the next generation. Apart from these reasons, continued Kaunang, there are also arguments related to the frequency and vibration of the forbidden mode. Forbidden mode when sounded will result in no good, *ze'kan wagun*. Zazanin, which contains bad sounds, will have an impact and will greatly affect nature. The bad influence of the sounds that *ze'kan wagun* is related to gardening or farming activities where agricultural and garden products will be damaged. The results of research conducted by the *zazanins* that are currently displayed generally only revolve around 6 (six) Mahzani modes. Modus Karema, or the oldest tritonic tone system found in *Zazanian ni Karema*, see Fig 1, consists of three sounds or tones in the diatonic system note: *do* (1) - *re* (2) - *mi* (3) which are not rhythmic [26].

----- tumutu'uz -----										----- respon -----																		
1	2	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2								
O,	ta	-	li	-	ngan	ni	-	o	un	te	-	nge	mi	-	nan	-	ton	-	to	-	nai							
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Terjemahan: <i>Wahai dengarlah kamu sekalian, cerita yang diturunkan</i>																												

Fig. 1. Modus Karema

There is also the *Maowey Mode*, Fig 2, a song of thanksgiving and joy, in the form of *Tritonic* dan *Tetratonic*, Fig 3.

5	5	6	5	3	3	3	3	6	6	6	6	5	5	5	3	3	3	3									
Si	-	gi	wa	-	ngko	wi	-	a	ni	ka	-	mu	pe	-	leng	e,	tu	-	a	wo	ka	-	tu	-	a	-	ri
Terjemahan: <i>Hormat kami untuk kamu sekalian, Orangtua dan handai taulan</i>																											

Fig. 2. Modus Maowey Tritonis: *mi* (3) – *sol* (5) – *la* (6)

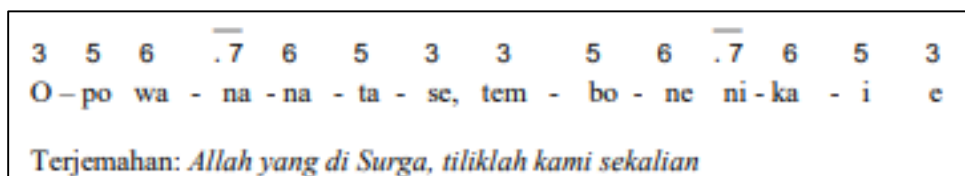


Fig. 3. Modus Maowey Tetratonis: *mi* (3) - *sol* (5) - *la* (6) - *si* (7)

Bomboya mode, *zazanin* for releasing the body for burial, see Fig 4.

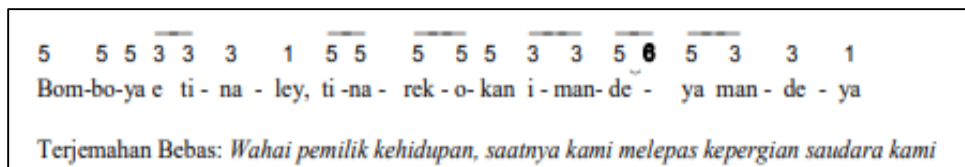


Fig. 4. Modus Bomboya: *sol* (5) - *mi* (3) - *do* (1)

In the Bomboya mode, there is an interjection or side note *la* (6) which is not part of the mode. There is also modus *Mengaley*, *zazanin* supplication to God. These songs are generally in the form of prayers asking for protection, consolation, strengthening, and inclusion. The uniqueness is that it only consists of two tones *mi* (3) - *sol* (5) and is sung in a way like reciting sentences, recitative. The term mode that the author has embedded in Mahzani's expression is not based on absolute tone. The mode is more about the tendency of pairs of tones that appear and often interact. For example, in the tritonic Maowey mode, which consists of the notes *mi* (3) - *sol* (5) - *la* (6). It is possible that in the expression of the melody, there are side notes or inserts that appear in connection with the singer's emotional mood. So, in the presentation, see Fig 5.

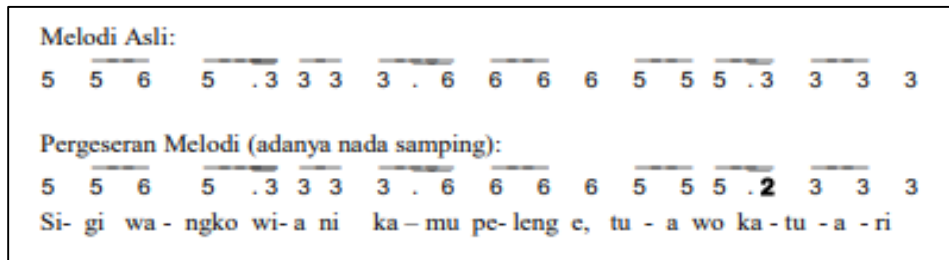


Fig. 5. Side Tone

In the example above, the note *re* (2) that is not part of the mode becomes the side note that appears. Apart from *re* (2), another side note that also appears frequently is the tone *fa* (4). It is said to be a side tone because apart from not being part of a fixed tone interaction pattern, the appearance of the tone is not in the accentuation of word stress. There are also notes that are reluctant and imply that they cannot be sounded, namely the high *do* (1) or octave tone. The tone is seen as a symbol of the existence of the Creator; (3) Rhythm and Duration, Mahzani, like other ethnic music, does not have a physical duration. The length of the sound is more influenced by the dialect of the language and based on word stress and sentence accentuation. The mood and feeling created by the singers are also important aspects of Mahzani's presentation. The process of togetherness is the key to whether a *zazanin* is performed simultaneously. Rhythm and sound are closely related to the poetry or text being sung. The strong bond between tone and poetry in the process of its expression gives rise to a style of presentation known as *pekazani*. For example, in reciting the *ala marcia*, *pekazani pahkompo'* will be used; the sound is sounded soft, suddenly loud, then suddenly softens again. In the diatonic musical symbol *sforzatto* (*sfz*) or *pekazani pahgo'go'*, the text that is recited is stressed with a sound semitone value whose treatment is like the term *stacatto* in the Diatonic; (4)Tempo (*Kaure*), *Kaure* (*how*

long) is more meaningful and refers to how fast or how long the sound is chanted. There are several terms related to the meaning of *kaure*, *Ngerez* = slow tempo; *Liasa* = regular or moderate tempo; *Rorot* = fast tempo. Besides being related to fast and slow, *kaure* is also related to the sign of silence, *menes* = silence, stop; (5) Vocal, the vocal technique in Mahzani is a natural sound placement and fully uses contractions of the glottis or neck sounds. It will feel awkward and strange when *zazanin* is served using the Bel Canto or Negro Spiritual Chest Voice technique. Vocals that are considered good and beautiful must be loud (*lengdeng*), not broken (*pēkpēk*) or shrill. Timbre, which is an important aspect of harmonizing Western diatonic music, is not given much attention in Mahzani. In Western music tradition, timbre has status and position. The soprano voice, for example, has its status as a melodic bearer where other voices harmonize with the accompaniment position. In contrast to Mahzani where the ability to sound a melody loudly and loudly is a prerequisite for a *tumutu'uz* without having to pay attention to the timbre. The sound hierarchy based on timbre in Mahzani's presentation expression is not too prioritized with the view that every sound has the same status; (6) Melody, Mahzani does not recognize the main melody when the *zazanin* is recited. According to Pamantung, Minahasa vocal music, including Mahzani, can be likened to impressionist music, wherein the singing creates a fleeting impression of sound as it passes by [29]. Still, according to Rumengan, Minahasa vocal music cannot be enjoyed note by note but in a combination of sounds and tones that create a certain atmosphere or atmosphere. Mahzani melodies are generally short and only repeated and are in the form of imitation based on the initial motive sounded, see Fig 6. As an example of a simple melody (notation uses the Western diatonic system to make it easier to understand).

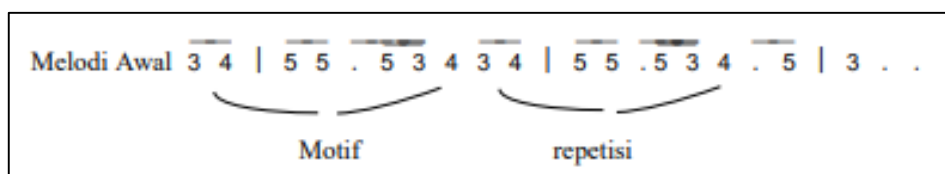


Fig. 6. Initial Melody

The motifs in the early melodies which are so simple when responded to and imitated by other voices (aligners 1 and harmonizers 2) expand on their own, see Fig 7.

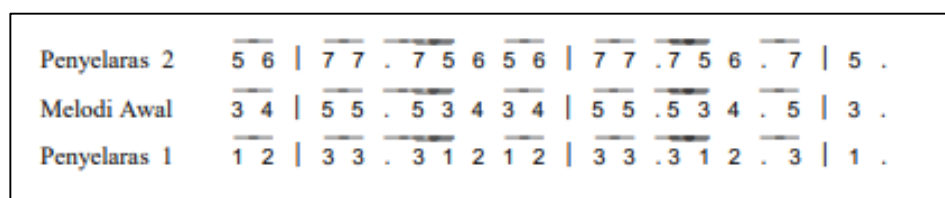


Fig. 7. Extended Melody

In Mahzani, every sound or sound moves independently, horizontally, and linearly. The sound encounter, which then creates a chord effect, is not something that was built on purpose but is built on its own; (7) Style, style is an important aspect of Mahzani because it forms the characteristics and identity of Mahzani. In reaching one note it is generally done indirectly. This method raises the presence of other notes that are not part of the *zazanin* mode being performed. If the concept of diatonic music is approached, then in Mahzani, the use of *glissando* and *portamento* becomes its distinctive feature. Even if any melody is sung in the Mahzani style, you will feel the distinctive atmosphere of the music. For an example of the initial melody of *Ngangi's Opo Wana Natas* song, see Fig 8.

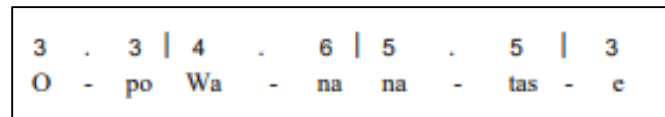


Fig 8. The initial melody of *Ngangi's Opo Wana Natas* song

When performed in the Mahzani style, the treatment will be like this (Fig 9):



Fig 9. The Mahzani style

These aspects, according to the authors, are important elements in finding the form and structure of Mahzani. Whereas the identification of Mahzani's physical and non-physical characteristics will provide space for the creation of methods of transmitting ancestral heritage from generation to generation. On the one hand, the diversity and aesthetic richness of the Mahzani tradition can be elaborated in a wider space and dimension outside the traditional context.

3.2. The Concept of Aesthetics and Mahzani

3.2.1. Mahzani's Aesthetics: Sensory Exploration

An aesthetic perspective is employed to explore the intricacies of Mahzani's compositions, where Mahzani's aesthetics come alive through our perception of sound. Drawing on the perspectives of Hasrat Inayat Khan and Perry Rumengan, this study delves into the mystical dimensions of music and sound within the context of Mahzani's compositions. Through sensory experiences, this study describes the profound interactions between subjects, objects, and values, encompassing various aspects of experience, attractiveness, and unattractiveness in the realm of Mahzani's musical artistry.

The approach taken to explore and discover Mahzani's aesthetics is to use the thought concepts of Hasrat Inayat Khan and Perry Rumengan. Inayat Khan's thoughts and views in the *Mystical Dimension of Music and Sound*, translated by Subagijono and Funky Kusnaendy Timur, place music as more than just an object. According to Khan, all manifestations are sound phenomena where everything is made in a certain measure based on sound strength and vibration. Each person has his own sound or tone when speaking, expressing the evolution of his life, his soul, and the state of his feelings and thoughts [30, p. 53]. For Khan, sound is a person's language to communicate with the outer life as well as the inner life where every sound that is expressed not only conveys meaning but creates a sensation.

Today's aesthetics cannot be limited to the notion of everything being beautiful. The reason is that the concept and value of beauty are different in size for each individual. Aesthetics must be interpreted as an effort to understand beauty. If the notion of aesthetics is interpreted as an effort to understand beauty, then the size of beautiful or not beautiful starts from the point of view of the object being measured. The size and value to be attached to the object of study must be explored from the object itself. If it is forced from the outside, it can happen that the conclusion will not be in accordance with the existence and nature of the object itself. Mahzani's research object on the existence of life is believed to have a special meaning in the spaces of social life.

This can be seen in the activities of the community when they are cultivating agricultural land to start farming and also during the harvesting period. While *ba pacol* (hoeing), *pete padi deng milu* (harvesting rice fields and gardens) in the form of group work (Tmbilu: *Mapalus*) there is a song sung in the middle of the activity. Generally, the singing starts with one of the groups and then the whole group responds. Sometimes the chant begins with a duet

composition and then continues with the response of the whole group in a multi-voice harmony composition. Mahzani's expression in the context of this group activity apart from being an encouragement at work, the energy vibrations of the singing in the form of sound waves are believed to affect the condition of agricultural land and the yield at harvest.

3.2.2. Mahzani's Philosophical Perspective

For the Tombulu people, music and singing embody a profound philosophical essence, representing a totality of artistic expression deeply rooted in their cultural fabric. These creative forms are not merely isolated acts but encompass a holistic integration of their beliefs, values, and emotions. Philosophically, music and singing serve as powerful conduits for connecting with their inner selves, the natural world, and the spiritual realm. The Tombulu people perceive music as a manifestation of their collective wisdom and love for life, as evidenced by the etymological roots of "zani," the word they use to refer to sound and music.

Through the medium of zani, they explore the nature of existence, seeking to understand its causes, origins, and laws. As they engage in these artistic expressions, they recognize the interplay of individual and communal philosophies, as well as their interactions with the universe. Ultimately, music and singing become a profound philosophical exploration of their identity, emotions, and relationships, fostering a profound sense of unity and cultural continuity among the Tombulu community. This basic *zani* word, if it is given an affix, will experience an expansion of meaning like *mah-zani*, meaning that it is carrying out an activity that reads; *zu-mani* means to do sound activities; *zi-mani* means that the activity reads; *mei-zani* means the sound that is sounded. Referring to the word *zani*, which is interpreted as sound or voice by the Tombulu people, of course, this word can also be understood as music in the context of music.

This understanding aligns with Campbell's view that, in general, music is composed of sounds that encompass both pitched and non-pitched song elements [31]. Philosophical aspects in the context of music at a certain stage reflect and express forms of contemplation. In other words, when considering or analyzing music from a philosophical perspective, certain ideas, thoughts, or reflections are revealed through the music itself. These philosophical aspects could pertain to themes, emotions, concepts, or even the deeper meaning or purpose of the music. Furthermore, music becomes a medium through which various forms of contemplation are conveyed or communicated to the listeners, allowing them to engage in thoughtful reflection or meditation on the ideas presented in the music. Contemplation in the context of musical aesthetics is a spiritual and even religious issue.

The human sense perceives the beauty of music not only at the limit of material existence but at the same time as a spiritual existence [32]. Mencke stated that the object of discussion in music aesthetics is the music itself, encompassing all its artistic values, its elements, and the human creators of music [33]. Associated with ethnic traditional music, philosophical and aesthetic issues of pre-modern culture are religious, cosmo centric – biocentric, and even theocentric. June Boyce-Tilman in Ingalls reveals that transcendent experiences can be realized when singers unite with singing which causes multiple interactions between music and words, content and context, attention and purpose [34].

4. Conclusion

The combination of poetry and melody in a single unit of Mahzani's expression at the time reveals a unique and mystical atmosphere. At this level, the Tombulu people believe that music has vibrations that are connected to nature and the creator. Music is no longer just a medium for expressing itself, but it is the intention of the expression of human life in relation to their living environment. The Tombulu traditional community believes that music has the power to influence and even change nature. The distinctive sound and uniqueness of Mahzani's expression must of course be approached with a paradigm of beauty based on the perceptions of the Tombulu people as the owners of their culture. Mahzani is the behavior of conveying meaning in the form of traditional musical idioms. This behavioral activity ultimately forms the identity of the Tombulu community.

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