

Negotiating the third space in contemporary *gamelan*: *multilaras* and rhythmic hybridity in “meeting in the kitchen” by the Kyai Fatahillah Ensemble



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ABSTRACT

Research on contemporary *gamelan* has primarily focused on the musical outcomes of intercultural collaboration, while the artistic negotiation processes underlying hybrid musicality remain insufficiently explored. This study investigates the intercultural collaboration in the *Topeng* Masquerade project by Ensemble Kyai Fatahillah, focusing on the composition Meeting in The Kitchen, which brought together Indonesian *gamelan* musicians and the Dutch ensemble Black Pencil. A qualitative case study approach was employed, with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation analysis. The findings indicate that musical hybridity emerged through negotiations involving *laras*, tuning systems, rhythmic structures, and patterns of musical interaction. These processes were realized through the application of *multilaras*, the use of a micro tuning system, the development of call and response patterns between *gamelan* and Western instruments, changing time signatures, and adjustments between strict tempo practices and the more flexible temporal approach of the Sundanese tradition. The study shows that the collaboration functioned not as cultural fusion but as a dialogic process that preserved the identities of both traditions while generating a hybrid musical form. It concludes that contemporary *gamelan* can serve as a space for intercultural exchange, fostering new musical identities through collaborative creativity and cultural interaction.



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1. Introduction

Gamelan music is one of Indonesia's traditional musical forms that has exerted a significant influence on the development of world music [1], [2]. This influence is reflected not only in its international recognition, including its inscription as an Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO, but also in its incorporation into various forms of contemporary music creation [3], [4], [5]. Over time, *gamelan* has come to be understood not merely as a cultural heritage that must be preserved in a fixed form, but as a musical system that continuously evolves through reinterpretation, experimentation, and interaction with diverse musical collaborations. This perspective underscores *gamelan* as a living, dynamic, and adaptive art form that remains open to transformation [6], [7], [8]. This perspective resonates with the critique advanced by Hardjana, who highlighted the tendency to perceive *gamelan* primarily as a symbol of cultural identity rather than as a medium for ongoing artistic creativity [9]. According to Hardjana, the veneration of *gamelan* as a cultural artifact may constrain opportunities for artistic exploration and hinder the emergence of new musical forms. Consequently, *gamelan* should be understood as a living art form capable of adapting to contemporary developments while maintaining its cultural foundations [10], [11], [12].

Such a perspective is essential for understanding the emergence and expansion of various forms of contemporary gamelan in Indonesia and beyond. The development of contemporary *gamelan* in Indonesia has also been shaped by the contributions of composers and scholars such as Suka Hardjana, Slamet Abdul Sjukur, and Dieter Mack, who have created opportunities for artistic exploration at the intersection of local traditions and contemporary music. Through educational initiatives, festivals, and compositional activities, they have contributed to broadening the understanding of gamelan as a creative resource capable of engaging with diverse musical systems [13]. Over the past three decades, this tendency has become increasingly evident through collaborative projects that bring gamelan into dialogue with musical traditions originating from different cultural backgrounds. This phenomenon demonstrates that musical creation no longer occurs within isolated cultural boundaries but is increasingly shaped by encounters and exchanges of ideas across cultures [14], [15], [16]. One notable example of this development is the *Topeng Masquerade* project initiated by Ensemble Kyai Fatahillah under the direction of Iwan Gunawan. The project brings together Indonesian *gamelan* musicians and the Dutch contemporary music ensemble Black Pencil in a performance that integrates *gamelan* instruments, western instruments, and visual elements in the form of masks. This collaboration not only produces a rich and diverse sonic landscape but also involves processes of adaptation, communication, and aesthetic negotiation among musicians from different cultural backgrounds. Through these processes, *Topeng Masquerade* offers a compelling example of how musical collaboration is constructed through intercultural interaction.

This phenomenon can be understood through the concept of third space proposed by Bhabha [17]. The concept of third space refers to a cultural encounter zone that enables the negotiation of meanings, the exchange of experiences, and the formation of new identities that do not originate exclusively from any single culture. Within music studies, this concept helps explain that intercultural collaboration not only generates the integration of diverse musical elements but also gives rise to new forms of artistic practice that emerge through ongoing dialogue and interaction. Therefore, the concept of third space provides a relevant framework for understanding the dynamics of collaboration in contemporary gamelan practices [18], [19], [20]. Several previous studies have examined intercultural phenomena from various perspectives. Fahlefi and Sriwulan, demonstrated that cross cultural interactions can generate processes of identity negotiation and the construction of new meanings [21]. Li *et al.*, found that participation in intercultural musical activities can enhance empathy and foster social connectedness across cultural boundaries [22]. Similarly, Crooke *et al.*, argued that cross cultural musical collaboration constitutes a dialogic process involving aesthetic negotiation and the formation of hybrid identities [23]. However, the majority of these studies primarily focus on cultural communication, music education, and participants' experiences. Consequently, discussions concerning how musical negotiation unfolds within collaborations between gamelan and Western music remain relatively limited.

Based on this review, a significant research gap remains regarding the mechanisms through which musical hybridity is constructed in collaborations between *gamelan* and Western music, particularly in relation to the negotiation of *laras*, rhythm, tuning, compositional structure, and performance presentation. Furthermore, studies that explicitly connect the concept of *third space* with creative processes in contemporary gamelan practices are still relatively scarce. This gap provides an important rationale for the present study. This study aims to analyze intercultural collaboration in the *Topeng Masquerade* project through a case study of the composition Meeting in The Kitchen. The research focuses on the compositional concept, the mechanisms of musical negotiation, and the formation of cultural hybridity that emerged throughout the creative process. The novelty of this study lies in its application of the third space concept to explain how new musical identities are constructed through the negotiation of *laras*, rhythm, tuning systems, compositional structure, and performative elements. Accordingly, this study is expected to contribute to the advancement of intercultural music scholarship, enrich contemporary gamelan studies, and offer a new perspective on the formation of hybrid musicality within cross cultural collaborations.

2. Method

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study method to examine intercultural collaboration in contemporary gamelan through the *Topeng* Masquerade project, which involves Ensemble Kyai Fatahillah and Ensemble Black Pencil. The case study method was selected because it enables an in depth exploration of the relationships among musical practices, participants' experiences, and the creative processes that shape such collaborative endeavors [24]. The investigation focuses on the composition Meeting in The Kitchen as the primary representation of the processes of musical negotiation and the formation of cultural hybridity emerging within the performance. The material object of this research is the composition Meeting in The Kitchen, composed by Iwan Gunawan and performed as part of the *Topeng* Masquerade project. Lasting approximately eleven minutes, the work brings together the musical idioms of *gamelan* Sunda and Western musical instruments through the collaboration between Ensemble Kyai Fatahillah and Ensemble Black Pencil. This composition was selected because it demonstrates intensive musical interaction, particularly in the negotiation of tempo, rhythm, *laras*, tuning systems, inter musician communication, and the implementation of multilaras, call and response, and improvisational concepts, all of which constitute the central focus of this study. As can be seen in Fig. 1.



Fig 1. Research Diagram Structure

Research data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis [25], [26]. During the participant observation process, the researcher assumed the role of an observer engaged within the Ensemble Kyai Fatahillah environment, thereby gaining access to rehearsals, artistic discussions, and performance activities. This position enabled the researcher to understand the dynamics of collaboration from the participants' perspective without being directly involved in compositional decision-making. Observations focused on forms of musical interaction, aesthetic negotiation, adaptation of performance techniques, the use of gestures, and social interactions emerging throughout rehearsals and performances. All observational data were systematically documented through field notes, photographs, and video recordings. Sem- structured interviews were conducted with Iwan Gunawan, the composer and director of Ensemble Kyai Fatahillah, as well as ensemble members involved in the project, including Hilmi Ridha Mahardika, Kurnia Eka Fajar, Hikmatpuji Nursapar, Mohamad Anjar Darjatun, and Aditya Pratama. The interview protocol was organized around three primary categories: musical composition concepts, musical exploration, and aesthetic negotiation. The category of musical composition concepts encompassed the use of *multilaras*, atonality, serialism, aleatoric techniques, and the micro-tuning system. Musical exploration focused on the development of rhythm, sound texture, *carukan*, improvisation, and inter-instrumental relationships. Meanwhile, aesthetic negotiation

was examined through musicians' experiences in adapting tempo, tuning systems, and collaborative decision making processes throughout the creative process.

Document analysis was employed to complement and verify data obtained from observations and interviews. The documents examined included musical scores, audio visual recordings of performances, rehearsal archives, documentary photographs, media publications, and presentation materials and public interviews related to the *Topeng* Masquerade project. Documentary analysis was conducted to identify manifestations of musical hybridity reflected in compositional structures, instrumentation, rhythmic patterns, and performance presentation. Data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles *et al.*, which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During the data condensation stage, observation, interview, and documentary data were thematically coded, resulting in three principal analytical categories: (1) musical composition concepts; (2) musical exploration; (3) and aesthetic negotiation. The first category comprised multilaras, atonality, serialism, aleatoric techniques, and the micro tuning system. The second category included rhythmic development, sound texture, interlocking, improvisation, and call and response. The third category encompassed tempo adjustment, tuning adaptation, role distribution, and collaborative decision making processes. During the data display stage, the coded findings were organized into an analytical matrix that compared evidence derived from observations, interviews, and documentary sources across each category. This matrix facilitated the examination of relationships between the identified musical practices and the concepts of interculturalism, cultural hybridity, and Bhabha, theory of the third space. Through this process, the findings not only described the observed phenomena but also demonstrated their relevance to the research questions. The conclusion drawing and verification stage involved interpreting patterns emerging from the three analytical categories. Interpretation was directed toward understanding how musical negotiation generated new forms of hybridity within the composition *Meeting in The Kitchen*. The trustworthiness of the data was strengthened through source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and member checking. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from the composer, musicians, and performance documents. Methodological triangulation involved comparing findings derived from observations, interviews, and documentary analysis. Member checking was undertaken by inviting participants to review the researcher's interpretations to ensure consistency with the meanings and experiences they had conveyed.

3. Results and Discussion

Based on an interview with Iwan Gunawan, the composer and director of Ensemble Kyai Fatahillah, the creation of this composition originated from an experimental and intercultural approach. This explanation is further supported by Iwan Gunawan's presentation on the Nusantara Arts YouTube channel entitled "*21st Century Sundanese Gamelan Composition in Performance*", which is consistent with the information conveyed during the interview. Gamelan is not merely regarded as a traditional heritage whose form must be preserved unchanged; rather, it is understood as a musical system that can continuously evolve through various new possibilities. One of the principal concepts employed is *multilaras*, namely the integration of multiple tuning systems, such as *salendro* and *pelog*. Through this concept, the possibilities for melodic and harmonic development are significantly expanded, while simultaneously creating opportunities for interaction between gamelan musical systems and Western music traditions. In addition to the concept of *multilaras*, Iwan Gunawan incorporates compositional approaches commonly associated with Western art music, particularly atonality and serialism. Atonality provides greater freedom in organizing pitch relationships because no single pitch functions as a tonal center. Meanwhile, serialism is utilized to arrange musical elements according to predetermined sequential structures. Both approaches offer extensive possibilities for constructing musical frameworks that do not necessarily adhere to conventional tonal principles. Furthermore, the application of aleatoric techniques introduces a degree of spontaneity, allowing performers to respond and interpret musical events according to the circumstances that emerge during performance.

The use of a microtonal pitch system also constitutes an important aspect of the compositional process. This system employs intervals smaller than a semitone, thereby

accommodating the distinctive characteristics of *gamelan*, in which pitch variations occur across different instrument sets. Tuning discrepancies that are often regarded as limitations are instead treated as sources of sonic exploration. Through this process, unique timbral qualities emerge that cannot be found within standardized musical systems. Consequently, the creative process is not solely oriented toward the final artistic product but also toward the exploration of diverse musical possibilities arising from the encounter of different musical systems. The artistic perspective underlying this work demonstrates that its objective extends beyond the production of a new composition. Iwan Gunawan seeks to establish a more open relationship between *gamelan* and Western music. *Gamelan* is not positioned as a closed or immutable tradition, rather, it is conceived as a musical system capable of interacting with a wide range of musical forms. This perspective is reflected in the use of a ten tone system derived from the Surakarta *gamelan* tradition, which exhibits certain affinities with the chromatic system. These similarities provide a point of convergence through which the two musical systems can interact without sacrificing their respective identities.

This exploratory approach is also evident in the treatment of rhythm and inter-instrumental interaction. The rhythmic patterns employed do not entirely follow traditional forms but are developed into more flexible and responsive structures. The technique of *carukan*, or interlocking, which is typically used in specific performance contexts, is expanded into a more dynamic form of musical communication through call and response patterns between *gamelan* instruments and Western instruments. In certain sections, the relationships among instruments resemble an ongoing musical conversation. Each performer listens, responds, and reacts to the musical gestures of others, resulting in a highly interactive musical environment. Perhaps the most distinctive aspect of this approach lies in the understanding of music as a medium of communication. The performers do not merely execute predetermined musical materials, they actively engage in processes of mutual adaptation and response. Consequently, the resulting work is not simply a fusion of *gamelan* and Western music, but rather the outcome of a dialogic process conducted through sound. The musical forms that emerge do not exclusively represent either tradition, instead, they arise from the encounter and interaction between both. Based on this artistic framework, the *Topeng* Masquerade project demonstrates a conceptual foundation constructed through the integration of *multilaras*, atonality, serialism, aleatoric techniques, and microtonality as fundamental principles in shaping an intercultural musical structure. As can be seen in Fig. 2.

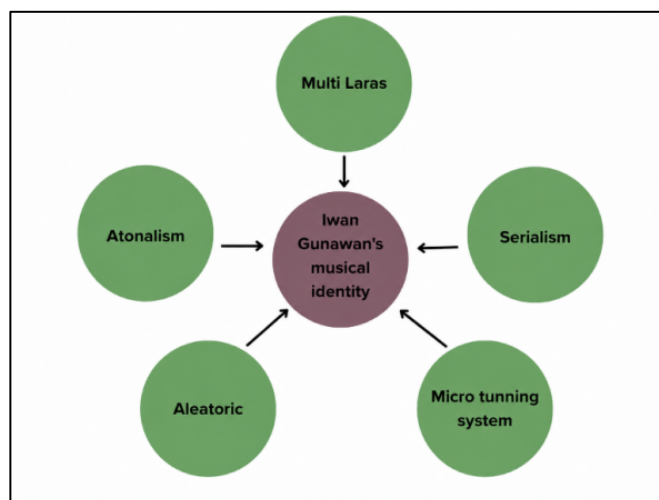


Fig 2. Compositional Identity of Iwan Gunawan

3.1. The Concept of Musical Composition in the Work “Meeting in The Kitchen”

In *Meeting in The Kitchen*, the composer develops a highly sophisticated compositional concept through the application of *multilaras*, atonality, serialism, aleatoric techniques, and call and response patterns as the foundation for constructing the musical structure. The use of *multilaras* constitutes the most prominent aspect of the work, as it integrates the five tones of the salendro tuning system with the seven tones of the pelog tuning system. The combination

of these two tuning systems generates broader possibilities for melodic development compared to the conventional use of a single tuning system. The pitch materials employed include Da/1 (B $\sharp$), Leu/5+ *pelog* (C), La/5 *salendro* (C $\sharp$), Ti/4 *salendro* (D $\sharp$) and Ti/4 *pelog* (D $\sharp$), Na/3 *salendro* (F $\sharp$) and Na/3 *pelog* (F), Ni/3– *pelog* (G), and Mi/2 *pelog* (G $\sharp$). It should be emphasized that the representation of *gamelan* pitches through Western staff notation in this study serves solely as a notational approximation intended to facilitate reading and analysis. It does not imply that *gamelan* tuning systems are equivalent to the equal temperament system of western music, as both *salendro* and *pelog* possess distinctive intervallic frameworks whose pitch realizations frequently vary among different *gamelan* sets. This integration not only expands the available pitch resources but also generates new intervallic relationships that are rarely encountered in traditional *gamelan* practice. From the perspective of western music theory, these pitch relationships may produce specific intervals, such as the seventh interval arising from the combination of Mi/2 and Na/3, or Da/1 and Mi/2. In addition to the exploration of tuning systems, the composer also investigates the rhythmic dimension of the composition. This is evident in the use of rhythmic patterns that are uncommon within traditional *gamelan* performance practice. One notable example is the employment of a 7/8 meter on the *bonang salendro*, performed in a *carukan* interaction with the *bonang pelog*. The use of this meter generates a more dynamic and diverse rhythmic character. The interaction between the two instruments produces an interlocking rhythmic texture in which each part complements the other, creating a complex musical sonority while maintaining a coherent sense of unity. The following notation illustrates the use of the 7/8 meter in Meeting in The Kitchen. As can be seen in Fig. 3.



Fig 3. *Carukan* notation for *bonang pelog* and *bonang salendro*, Part H, bars 164-169

The *carukan* interaction illustrated in the notation above begins with the *bonang salendro* and *bonang pelog*, which perform interlocking *carukan* patterns through a process of mutual filling and responsive exchange. This interaction establishes a dynamic musical dialogue from the outset of the performance and serves as the foundation for the development of subsequent musical interactions throughout the composition. The compositional structure is organized into several sections (Parts A–J), each characterized by distinct tempo and rhythmic features. Part A exhibits a particularly pronounced tempo contrast, ranging from 120 bpm to 35 bpm. In addition, the composition incorporates a variety of time signatures, including 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 6/4, and 7/8. This diversity indicates that the composer is not confined to a single metric framework; rather, the work is constructed through a flexible and evolving structural design that continuously develops from one section to the next. The following Table 1 presents the sectional divisions, time signatures, tempo indications, and measure ranges contained in the composition Meeting in Kitchen.

Table 1. The Structural Composition of “Meeting in The Kitchen”

Section	Measure/Birama	Tempo	Bar Range
Part A	5/4, 4/4	100, 50, 40, 80, 35 bpm	Bar 1-17
Part B	5/4, 4/4	78 bpm	Bar 18 - 48
Part C	6/4, 4/4	102 bpm	Bar 49 - 64
Part D	5/4, 4/4, 6/4	105, 102 bpm	Bar 65 - 80
Part E	7/8, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4	70, 68 bpm	Bar 80 - 97
Part F	5/4	68 bpm	Bar 81 - 121
Part G	3/4, 4/4	100 bpm	Bar 122 - 135
Part H	7/8, 4/4	100 bpm	Bar 136 - 178
Part I	5/4, 4/4, 3/4	100, 50, 120 bpm	Bar 179 - 187
Part J	4/4, 3/4	120 bpm	Bar 188 - 196

In Table 1 illustrates how the composer developed an unconventional metric structure that departs from commonly established compositional conventions. This finding indicates a process

of negotiation between two musical systems with distinct characteristics. One example can be observed in the treatment of tempo, which in Western music notation is typically prescribed with strict precision; however, in this composition, tempo is presented with greater flexibility. This approach demonstrates that the work functions not only as a medium for technical exploration but also as a space for musical experimentation through the convergence of ideas derived from gamelan and Western musical traditions. The complexity of the laras system, rhythmic organization, and resulting formal structure further reinforces the intercultural character of the composition. Rather than eliminating the differences between the two musical systems, the work transforms them into a source of creativity, fostering the emergence of new musical forms that are more dynamic and expressive. These findings are consistent with Bhabha, concept of the third space, which refers to a cultural site where new identities emerge through processes of negotiation. In *Meeting in The Kitchen*, the manipulation of meter, tempo, and rhythmic organization demonstrates that hybridity is not merely reflected in the use of different instruments but is also embedded within the compositional structure itself. This suggests that musical elements originating from different cultural backgrounds actively interact and contribute to the formation of a new musical configuration. Therefore, the musical structure of this work can be understood as an embodiment of intercultural interaction, in which differences between musical systems are transformed into a source of creative potential. Through this process, a new musical identity emerges while preserving the distinctive characteristics of each participating tradition.

3.2. Aesthetic and Visual Negotiations in the *Topeng Masquerade Project*

This visualization illustrates the intercultural interaction that occurs within the *Topeng Masquerade* project. This interaction is manifested through the integration of instruments, musical gestures, and visual elements derived from both the gamelan tradition and western music. The convergence of these diverse components reflects a process of cultural exchange and adaptation realized through the performance presentation, resulting in a form of artistic expression that brings together two distinct musical traditions. As can be seen in Fig. 4.

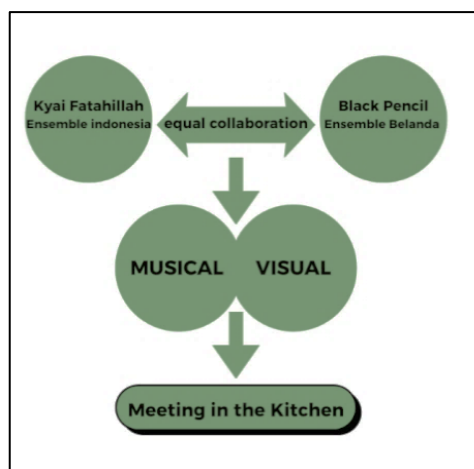


Fig 4. Intercultural Interaction in the *Topeng Masquerade Project*

As illustrated in the Fig. 4, the process of intercultural practice and negotiation in the *Topeng Masquerade* project, particularly in the work *Meeting in The Kitchen*, is manifested through two principal dimensions: (1) musical negotiation and visual negotiation; (2) both of which are rooted in the respective cultural backgrounds of the participating ensembles. In this performance, intercultural elements are evident not only in the musical presentation but also in the use of instruments and visual components. Kyai Fatahillah Ensemble employs gamelan as a representation of the musical traditions of the Indonesian archipelago (*Nusantara*), while Black Pencil incorporates western musical instruments. The encounter between these two ensembles highlights their distinct cultural backgrounds, which serve as the foundation for the interactions and negotiations that unfold throughout the performance. Furthermore, the visual dimension is reinforced through the use of different masks by each ensemble. Black Pencil utilizes masks inspired by western traditions, including modern variations of the *Bauta* mask, Colombina,

Jester, and Harlequin. In contrast, Kyai Fatahillah Ensemble employs masks inspired by the Sundanese *wayang golek purwa* tradition, particularly those representing *raksasa* or *buta* characters in puppetry. These *buta* figures symbolize giant beings commonly found in *wayang* narratives. The following section presents the masks used by Black Pencil and Kyai Fatahillah Ensemble in Fig. 5.



Fig 5. The form of the mask worn by Black Pencil (top) and the form of the mask worn by Kyai Fatahillah (bottom)

The use of masks in this performance serves not only as an aesthetic element but also as a symbol of cultural identity that brings together diverse cultural backgrounds within a shared performance space. The contrast between western style masks, such as *Bauta*, Colombina, Jester, and Harlequin, worn by Black Pencil, and the *buta* masks derived from the Sundanese *wayang golek purwa* tradition, worn by Kyai Fatahillah Ensemble, demonstrates that intercultural negotiation occurs not only within the sonic domain but also within the visual domain. Rather than being merged into a single form, these two mask traditions are presented side by side, allowing each to retain its distinctive cultural identity while simultaneously creating a visual third space in which two traditions encounter, engage, and negotiate with one another within the same performance setting. However, the masks are employed only during the opening and closing sections of the performance. In the composition *Meeting in The Kitchen*, all performers appear without masks. This decision was aligned with the artistic concept of the performance as well as practical considerations, including ease of movement and breathing comfort during musical performance. The absence of masks in this section, in fact, reveals a more open form of intercultural interaction. Cultural identities are no longer expressed through visual symbols; instead, they are articulated through musical performance and direct interaction among the performers. Through this process, intercultural experience emerges and is tangibly embodied throughout the performance. Fig. 6 presents the performance of *Meeting in The Kitchen* from the *Topeng Masquerade* project.



Fig 6. Performance of Meeting in the Kitchen in the Topeng Masquerade Project

The instrumentation employed in this work brings together two distinct musical traditions, namely *gamelan pelog-salendro* and western music performed by the Black Pencil Ensemble. The waditra utilized include *bonang pelog*, *bonang salendro*, *kenong*, *gender barung pelog*, *gender panerus salendro*, three *kempul*, a set of *gong salendro*, *kendang Sunda*, and *kulanter*. The tonal system consists of the *laras salendro* scale with five pitches Da/1, Mi/2, Na/3, Ti/4, La/5 (C#, D#, F#, G#, B#) and the *laras pelog* scale with seven pitches Da/1, Mi/2, Na/3, Ni/3-, Ti/4, La/5, Leu/5+ (D, D#, F, G, A, B#, C). The Western instrumentation comprises block flutes (bass, soprano, and sopranino), pan flutes (contrabass and soprano), viola, accordion, and various percussion instruments. Rather than eliminating the differences between these two musical traditions, the composition positions them as a starting point for a process of musical negotiation. One of the most prominent manifestations of this negotiation is evident in the treatment of tempo. The relatively fixed and regulated tempo practices characteristic of Western music intersect with the more fluid and flexible temporal character of Sundanese music. This difference is mediated by the composer through the performance of the *kendang*, which functions as a regulator of musical dynamics and directional flow. In this manner, both systems are able to coexist while preserving their respective musical identities.

The process of negotiation is also apparent in the domains of *laras* and pitch tuning. The western instruments continually adapt to the *gamelan* tuning system, in which pitch relationships are not always standardized. Black Pencil's efforts to adjust the tuning of their instruments for each performance, particularly when performing in Indonesia, demonstrate an ongoing process of adaptation. Minor discrepancies that remain audible, such as those produced by the accordion, are not regarded as deficiencies. Instead, they are accepted as part of the sonic character that emerges throughout the performance. This suggests that difference does not necessarily require standardization; rather, it can become an integral component of the creative process. Furthermore, the absence of a conductor in this work indicates that the musical structure is constructed through collective communication among the performers. Transitions between sections and instrumental entrances are coordinated through cues and mutually understood agreements, communicated either by the *kendang* player or by other instrumentalists. This condition demonstrates that music is shaped not only by compositional design but also by the social relationships and interactions that develop throughout the performance. This phenomenon may be understood through Bhabha, concept of the *third space*, a cultural arena in which new identities emerge through processes of negotiation and hybridity. Such a space is created when *gamelan* and western music no longer function as two separate traditions but instead interact in ways that generate a new musical form that cannot be fully categorized as either one. This process is particularly evident in Section E (approximately 4:23), where a musical dialogue in the form of a call-and-response exchange occurs between the *gamelan* instruments and the western instruments. This pattern reflects an intercultural musical conversation that constitutes a significant component of the compositional structure of the work. The notation is presented in Fig. 7.

The image displays a musical score for a multi-instrumental ensemble. The score is written on ten staves, each labeled with an instrument: Rec. (Recorder), Pan. (Pan flute), Vla. (Viola), Accord. (Accordion), Perc. (Percussion), K.d. (Kendang), Ba.P. (Bassoon), Ba.S. Kon.S. (Soprano Saxophone), Gr.B.P. (Guitar/Bass), Gr.Pa.S. 3K. (Guitar/Pan/Saxophone 3K), and G. (Gong). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. A red rectangular box highlights a specific section of the score, spanning from the beginning of the 'Rec.' staff to the end of the 'G.' staff, indicating the occurrence of call and response. The score is written in a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature.

Fig 7. Notation of the occurrence of call and response

The call and response phenomenon observed in Section E demonstrates a musical dialogue between western instruments and *gamelan Sunda* instruments. This dialogue is established through the alternating exchange of musical ideas, creating an interactive relationship of action and response between the two instrumental groups. In this section, the western instruments consisting of recorder, pan flute, and accordion perform short melodic motifs characterized by light, ornamented, and upper-register melodic movements. These motifs are presented repeatedly and function as musical statements that serve as the call. Following the presentation of these motifs, the *gamelan* ensemble does not respond by imitating the same melodic material. Instead, it provides a response through independently developed rhythmic patterns. *Bonang*, *gender barung*, *gender panerus*, and the colotomic instruments construct distinct musical layers while maintaining a relationship with the musical material previously introduced by the Western instruments. Consequently, the response does not take the form of repetition but rather of complementarity. Each instrumental group preserves its own musical identity while simultaneously contributing to the formation of a cohesive musical texture.

This form of response indicates that the phenomenon is not solely based on sonic similarity but also on the capacity of each instrumental group to engage with and react to the musical statements presented by the other. The Western instruments articulate musical ideas through prominent melodic patterns, whereas the *gamelan* ensemble responds by reinforcing rhythmic structure, timbral color, and the stability of the overall musical framework. This interaction generates a balance between melodic and structural functions, enabling both instrumental groups to support one another without compromising their respective roles. Another notable feature is the absence of dominance by either musical tradition. The Western instruments do not exert complete control over the musical dialogue, nor does the *gamelan* function merely as an accompaniment. Instead, both instrumental groups create space for one another, allowing musical communication to unfold in a balanced manner. This pattern reflects a process of musical negotiation in which differences in timbre, tonal systems, and performance techniques are maintained rather than standardized. Through this reciprocal interaction, the diversity of musical elements becomes a factor that strengthens the overall coherence of the musical presentation. The call and response phenomenon is not confined to Section E but reappears in bars 99-103. In this passage, the pattern occurs between *kendang kulanter* and the percussion instruments *woodblock* and *tom*. The notation is presented in Fig. 8.

The figure displays musical notation for three parts: 'perкуси' (percussion), 'kendang', and 'Perc.' (percussion). The 'perкуси' part features a melodic line with a 'p' dynamic marking and a 'kulanter improvisation based this model' annotation. The 'kendang' part shows a rhythmic pattern with a 'p' dynamic marking and a 'kulanter improvisation based this model' annotation. The 'Perc.' part includes a 'Percussions improvisation based this model. Use only woodblock and tom.' annotation. The notation is presented in a standard musical score format with staves and notes.

Fig 8. The call and response notation between the *kendang kulanter* and the percussion instruments (woodblock and tom)

In the except shown above (bars 99-103), the musical interaction is initiated by the *kendang*, which presents a rhythmic phrase as an opening gesture. This phrase is subsequently answered by the percussion instruments, creating a call and response pattern among the instrumental parts. The *kendang* player then expands the musical discourse through improvisation on the *kulanter*, generating more flexible and dynamic rhythmic variations. This improvisatory passage is further responded to by the percussion section, particularly the woodblock and tom, resulting in an alternating musical dialogue. Such an interactional pattern demonstrates active communication among the performers. Each instrument not only performs its individual role but also engages in attentive listening and responsive interaction with the other instruments, thereby fostering overall musical cohesion. In the final section of the composition (Parts H-I), intercultural interaction becomes increasingly evident through the convergence of western

musical idioms and Sundanese *karawitan*. This section begins with the recorder, pan flute, *bonang salendro*, *kenong salendro*, and gender barung *pelog* presenting a rhythmic pattern in a 7/8 meter. The rhythmic pattern is subsequently answered by the *bonang pelog* and gender *panerus salendro*, forming a musical dialogue that functions as the principal thematic material of the composition. Entering bars 168–177, the *kendang* and *kempul* introduce motifs derived from *tepakan/tabuhan* jaipongan. The presence of these motifs reinforces the Sundanese musical character within the previously established 7/8 rhythmic framework. As a result, two distinct musical idioms are perceived simultaneously: a Western rhythmic structure based on a 7/8 meter and a Sundanese rhythmic pattern derived from *tepakan* jaipongan. To provide a clearer illustration of this interaction, the notation is presented in Fig. 9.

The image shows a musical score for a multi-instrument ensemble. The instruments listed on the left are: SO (Soprano), Rec (Recorder), Pan (Pan flute), Vla (Violin), Accord (Accordion), Perc (Percussion), Kd (Kendang), Bn P (Bonang Pelog), Bn S (Bonang Salendro), Gr B P (Gender Barung Pelog), Gr B S (Gender Barung Salendro), and G (Gamelan). The score is written in 7/8 time. Four specific sections are highlighted with colored boxes: a green box around the Recorder and Pan flute parts in the first system; a purple box around the Accordion part in the second system; a blue box around the Bonang Pelog, Bonang Salendro, Gender Barung Pelog, and Gender Barung Salendro parts in the third system; and a red box around the Kendang and Kempul parts in the fourth system. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Fig 9. The *tepak kendang jaipongan* first emerges in bars 168-177

In this section, an intercultural interaction can be observed, initiated by the recorder and pan flute (green box) in the 7/8 meter, followed by the accordion (purple box). Together, these three instruments establish the principal thematic material of the composition. Subsequently, the gamelan (blue box) enters as a musical response, enriching the overall compositional development. In measures 168–177, the *kendang* and *kempul* (red box) introduce a *tepakan* jaipongan motif, creating a compelling encounter between Western rhythmic structures and the traditions of *karawitan Sunda*. The convergence of these two musical systems does not generate conflict; rather, it gives rise to a more complex and enriched musical form. This work may be understood as a representation of third space, a cultural arena in which new musical experiences emerge through intercultural encounters. Through the negotiation of tempo, tuning systems (*laras*), rhythmic structures, and performer interactions, a musical space is created that fosters the development of a flexible, dynamic, and evolving musical identity. The findings indicate that the collaboration in Meeting in The Kitchen extends beyond the mere combination of two distinct musical traditions. Instead, it creates a new creative space constructed through dialogue and mutual understanding. This finding is consistent with the arguments of Poplawska, and Tenzer, who position *gamelan* as an open musical system capable of engaging with Western musical idioms without compromising its essential characteristics [12], [7]. Cultural differences are not eliminated, rather, they are negotiated through processes of adaptation and shared understanding. In line with Bhabha, concept, such encounters generate a third space that enables the emergence of new meanings and identities. Consequently, the work not only produces new musical forms but also demonstrates how cultural meanings are continuously constructed and transformed through creative processes.

From a compositional perspective, the use of a *multilaras* system, atonality, and serialism reflects an effort to expand the possibilities of musical structure formation. This approach may be understood as an attempt to move beyond established tonal and modal frameworks. Such compositional treatment reflects an experimental orientation that positions sound as a primary material for exploration rather than merely a medium of expression. The integration of *laras salendro* and *pelog* with Western chromatic principles demonstrates an effort to reconcile

distinct modes of musical thought. This aligns with the concept of hybridity, which emphasizes the emergence of new forms through the interaction of diverse cultural elements [14]. Therefore, the compositional structure of this work reveals not only technical considerations but also a strong conceptual foundation. The rhythmic dimension and the musical interactions that emerge throughout the performance further illustrate an ongoing process of negotiation. The use of unconventional meters, such as 7/8, together with the transformation of *carukan* techniques into call and response patterns, demonstrates how musical idioms undergo adaptation and reinterpretation. From an ethnomusicological perspective, this phenomenon may be understood as a process of recontextualization, whereby musical elements are re-employed with functions and meanings that differ from their original contexts [27], [28]. Spontaneous interactions among musicians further reinforce the role of aleatoric processes as a compositional strategy. As a result, the musical trajectory of the work does not develop linearly; rather, it is shaped by continuously evolving interactions throughout the performance.

Intercultural dimensions are also evident in the processes of tempo and tuning adjustment during both rehearsals and performances. The contrast between the relatively stable characteristics of Western musical systems and the more flexible nature of Sundanese musical traditions creates a dialogic space that encourages mutual adaptation among performers. This condition suggests that musical meaning is shaped not only by compositional structures but also by the processes through which the work is realized in performance. The adaptation of Western musicians to gamelan tuning systems, together with their acceptance of pitch differences as an integral component of the work's aesthetic character, reflects a significant degree of openness within the creative process [29], [30]. This finding confirms that interculturality is not merely conceptual but is manifested through concrete musical actions and lived performance experiences. Overall, the findings demonstrate that the collaboration within the Topeng Masquerade project constitutes a complex and multilayered form of intercultural practice. Through musical, visual, and performative negotiations, the work produces a hybrid form that cannot be exclusively categorized within a single cultural tradition. Drawing upon Homi K. Bhabha's concept of third space, this condition reflects the emergence of a new cultural space in which flexible and dynamic identities can be formed. Accordingly, contemporary gamelan may be understood not only as a medium of artistic expression but also as a platform for intercultural dialogue that remains highly relevant within the context of an increasingly globalized society.

4. Conclusion

This study finds that intercultural collaboration in *Meeting in The Kitchen* does not occur through the fusion of two musical traditions into a single, newly unified form. Rather, the collaboration unfolds through a process of negotiation that enables both the *gamelan* and Western musical systems to retain their respective characteristics while jointly constructing a new musical form. The findings indicate that hybridity in contemporary *gamelan* is formed through a dialogic process involving the negotiation of *laras*, rhythm, tempo, tuning systems, and patterns of interaction among musicians. Consequently, interculturality in this work is manifested not merely through the combination of elements from different cultural traditions, but also through an ongoing process of musical negotiation throughout the creation and performance of the work. From a theoretical perspective, this study reinforces the concept of the third space proposed by Homi K. Bhabha. The findings demonstrate that intercultural space emerges not only through symbolic encounters between cultures, but also through tangible musical practices that generate hybrid artistic identities. Furthermore, this study contributes to the field of intercultural music studies by positioning gamelan not merely as a representation of local tradition, but also as a creative space capable of generating new knowledge, aesthetic perspectives, and musical forms through equitable cultural dialogue. From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that the success of intercultural collaboration does not depend on homogenizing different musical systems, but rather on the ability of musicians to establish communication, mutual understanding, and an equitable space for dialogue. These findings may serve as a reference for composers, musicians, and arts education institutions in developing cross-cultural collaborative practices that continue to respect the distinctive characteristics of each musical tradition involved. Based on the findings of this study, future research is recommended to examine collaborations between gamelan and other musical traditions with

differing musical systems in order to develop a broader understanding of processes of musical negotiation and intercultural dialogue. Further studies may also focus on communication among musicians, creative processes, and the dynamics of interaction during rehearsals and performances, thereby providing deeper insights into the formation of hybrid musical identities within intercultural musical works.

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