

**Musical and Extra-Musical Texts in Christian Worship
(Based on Marco DeMarinis' Semantic Theory)**

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Abstrak

Pada dasarnya, musik sebagai sebuah pertunjukan memiliki dua karakteristik, yaitu musikal dan ekstra-musikal. Kedua elemen ini saling terkait, saling melengkapi, dan bahkan tidak dapat dipisahkan. Elemen-elemen musikal tidak dapat dipahami tanpa melibatkan aspek-aspek di sekitarnya, yang berada di luar musik itu sendiri. Karakteristik semacam ini juga berlaku untuk musik gereja. Namun, musik yang digunakan dalam dan untuk ibadah juga merupakan sebuah pertunjukan. Penelitian ini mengkaji keberadaan kedua karakteristik ini dalam sebuah pertunjukan musik selama ibadah Kristen. Melalui teori semiotik Marco DeMarinis, kedua karakteristik ini direalisasikan dalam hubungan antara teks, ko-teks, dan konteks. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa elemen-elemen musikal tidak lebih penting daripada elemen-elemen ekstra-musikal karena dalam ibadah Kristen, Firman adalah tujuan utama sebuah liturgi: Tanpa musik, ibadah/penyembahan Kristen masih dapat berlangsung, tetapi tanpa Firman, ibadah/penyembahan tidak dapat dilaksanakan.

Kata-kata kunci: konteks; ko-teks; ekstra-musikal; musik; teks, penyembahan

Abstract

Fundamentally, music as a performance exhibits two characteristics: musical and extra-musical. These two elements are interconnected, complementary, and inseparable. Musical elements cannot be fully understood without considering the surrounding aspects, which lie outside the music itself. This dual nature also applies to church music. However, music used in and for worship is also a performance. This research examines the presence of these two characteristics in musical performances during Christian worship. Through Marco DeMarinis' semiotic theory, these two characteristics are manifested in the relationship between text, co-text, and context. The study's findings demonstrate that musical elements are no more important than extra-musical elements because in Christian worship, the Word is the ultimate objective of a liturgy: Without music, Christian worship can still occur, but without the Word, worship cannot be conducted.

Keywords: context; co-text; extra-musical; musical; text; worship

INTRODUCTION

According to Charles Saunders Peirce, communication generally occurs through three elements: objects, signs, and meaning; “Pierce defined semiosis as a relationship between a sign, an object, and a meaning.” In a communication system, these three elements – objects, signs, and meaning — work simultaneously. If any one of these elements is missing, communication will not occur. Peirce refers this as a trilogy in the communication system. This applies to verbal communication involving two parties: the sender (message sender) and receiver (message recipient). Communication is considered 'successful' when the recipient understands the meaning conveyed by the sender based on a socially agreed-upon (arbitrary) object through a specific sign system, particularly language. In simple terms, the sender of message A expects the receiver to interpret it as message A. If this does not happen, the communication process is disrupted, may not occur, or could fail entirely. Additionally, the content of previous messages is often used to form subsequent messages, continuing the cycle of sending and receiving until the communication process reaches its conclusion.

This communication pattern in a semiotic context is also evident in Christian worship, especially when it involves the main musical elements of melody, rhythm, and harmony. This communication process cannot be separated from the broader characteristics of musical performance, which include both musical and extra-musical forms. In Christian worship, the success of communication lies largely in the presence of extra-musical elements, as church music is ultimately a form of program music. Its existence is deeply tied to its biblical nature. Apart from that, the behavior of the congregation during a Christian service depends entirely on the verbal communication that occurs.

This article analyzes the comparative role of musical text elements alongside extra-musical elements, which help create the aesthetic

atmosphere in songs used during Christian liturgy. Using Marco De Marinis' performing arts communication theory, the author examines how musical and extra-musical elements contribute to the construction of text, co-text, and context in conveying the messages embedded in song lyrics.

METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative method, specifically descriptive analysis (Ratna 2010:301-302), and involves a literature study with an interdisciplinary approach, engaging perspectives from different disciplines (Ratna 2010:170). The analysis is based on data from academic papers, books, and other literary sources. This method seeks to identify patterns of interaction, describe complex realities, and uncover the meaning behind phenomena (interpretive) (Geertz, n.d.) It also analyzes these phenomena and their relationship based on causality principles (Denzin & Lincoln, n.d.). The analysis is structured using semiotic theory in performing arts, with Marco De Marinis' theory as a guiding framework. The roles of text, co-text, and context are used to analyze the musical and extra-musical elements in church songs.

Marinis's Semiotics of Performance Theory

The term "text" is used in various contexts and can carry multiple meanings. In social life, anything that can be interpreted may be considered a "text." This broad understanding includes a wide range of expressions that enrich human interaction, including sculpture, film, dance, painting, theater, literature, and music. Each of this form is considered as texts that have a system within themselves and can stand independently in relation to other texts. Marco De Marinis is one of the key figures who uses the term "text" in this expanded sense (DeMarinis, n.d.). According to De Marinis, the performing arts consist of three interconnected elements—text, co-text, and context—forming what he calls the "trilogy of performance" (Marinis, n.d.) The general definition of

a text is a linguistic unit presented in spoken or written form, with the aim of conveying a meaning or message clearly within a specific context. Co-text refers to the accompanying text, while context encompasses everything that surrounds the text. However, musical performance texts differ from this definition. In the field of music, the use of musical texts in this way began in the 16th century (Apel, n.d.).

In this context, the text refers to a musical performance in Christian worship, for example, which is presented by musicians and listened to by the audience. Texts like these are closely related to music and are an inseparable part of musical performances in Christian worship. Since musical performances use both verbal language and vocal elements, the literary aspect of Christian worship performances is also considered a text. Literary texts (Tan, n.d.) that are still believed to have power in people's lives are often used in hymns in Christian worship, frequently originating from the Psalms.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In musical communication, the form and process of musical communication are more complex than those of verbal communication, where understanding the message is primarily achieved through discursive reasoning and the meaning of words. Discursive discourse requires a process that refers to the object or idea expressed. In other words, verbal communication emphasizes logical factors, while other factors may not be a priority and sometimes do not need to be present at all. In contrast, musical communication is greatly influenced by connectivity factors, incorporating many other elements that contribute to the overall communication (Sausri, n.d.).

Even though it is similar to verbal communication, musical communication has distinct complexities, namely:

First, musical communication occurs through several layers, each requiring its own process and existing in a different realm from other forms of communication.

Second, the transmission of messages in musical communication occurs in a unidirectional manner, unlike verbal communication, which can occur bidirectionally. The composer, songwriter, or musician conveys a musical message to the audience, but the audience does not convey a musical message back to the musician. This is because the audience often lacks the necessary competence to convey the message, and they do not engage in a 'musical dialogue.' Instead, the audience receives and processes the message in their own way, creating an impression that is relevant to their individual lives.

Third, musical communication requires aesthetic understanding, which involves a deeper level of reflection and imagination. Even though audiences may express their reactions explicitly during a performance, they are, in reality, undergoing a psychological process with high intensity, internally processing the message of the performance.

When the audience perceives the elements of a performance, they do not immediately grasp the content it conveys. To do so, they need a different set of abilities. They must develop sensitivity to the sounds in the performance—both from the instruments and the vocalists—so they can 'continue the journey' toward understanding the message. Audiences who 'know music' can derive various messages after undergoing several stages of reflection. For them, the sounds of the performance are processed through a mechanism that can be likened to movement through a 'machine' that transforms the experience from its physical form into mental images, offering new horizons. This is where the audience receives a message that has been processed through an 'aesthetic machine,' a result of mental engineering developed through a long process of learning.

Even though they come from the same source, the messages the audience receives from musical performances can vary greatly, depending

on each individual's background and motives. The factors that influence this variation in messages are as follows:

First, each audience member has different goals and objectives that influence how they respond to the performance. One viewer may seek comfort for personal family issues, another may look for enlightenment about the relationship between humans and God, while another may be interested in understanding a person's service to society, and so on. This diversity is due to the multifaceted nature of performing arts, which contain meanings with diverse and complex connotations.

Second, each viewer possesses a unique realm of knowledge and experience that shapes their perception of the message. Various domains of knowledge combine to form an aesthetic perspective that guides the audience in their response to the performance. In using this knowledge, the audience creates associations to interpret the music. At this level, specific knowledge about aspects of the performance becomes an important element in the process of forming these associations. For example, the message in a gamelan performance does not emerge on its own when the musician presents the piece; it results from the mental processes of the audience within the given context. The audience actively engages with the performance, utilizing their relevant abilities to respond.

Sound messages in musical performances are conveyed by musicians through both instrumental and vocal sounds. Instrumental sounds, produced through various methods, have a range of nuances and characters, allowing them to convey diverse messages. Musicians, considering various factors, 'express' their opinions and ideas through these sounds. Similarly, vocal productions, used for the same purpose, can generate a variety of messages that differ from those conveyed by instrumental sounds (Tan, n.d.). Thus, it can be said that the sounds of instruments can be interpreted in various ways, leading to a range of messages.

The sound messages conveyed by musicians, which differ according to their character, are not perceived uniformly by the audience, even when they are all present at the same performance. Audiences generally do not have a 'monolithic' perspective, as they each have their own viewpoints. These viewpoints depend on which elements they find meaningful at a particular moment during the performance, and at other times they may adopt a different perspective. This complexity in message interpretation arises because it is based on various modes of engagement when they experience the performance. Therefore, understanding the message from the performance is a complex process that requires special attention and preparation. Although this process is often carried out systematically and consistently, both by musicians and the audience, the audience engages with all aspects of the performance, using their own concepts and processing them mentally to reach a deeper, virtual level of understanding.

Texts in Worship and the Meaning of Musical Texts

The use of literary texts in worship is grounded in two key factors. First, literary texts are believed to possess the power to reinforce societal values, as they often encapsulate teachings that align with cultural norms and worldviews. In Christian worship, the emphasis is not solely on outward appearances but on the inward attitude of the heart toward God (Harahap, n.d.). According to Christian belief, music is not merely art but a divine gift. The ultimate goal is for individuals to cultivate love for one another. Thus, love serves as the foundation of artistic expression (Simanullang, n.d.). Texts of this nature play a crucial role in strengthening community bonds and reinforcing the shared identity of community members.

Second, the text serves an aesthetic function for certain communities. These values are still considered paramount today, and consequently, the biblical text maintains a prominent position in worship,

even among rural congregations. It's important to note that the text is never absolute or singular, in the sense that it rigidly refers to one reality and excludes others. Instead, it is always adaptable to the context and circumstances of the audience, in this case, "the congregation".

A word may be expressed with a long or short tone, or even omitted to conform to the desired number of syllables. In written language, particularly formal language, such deviations would be considered grave errors. According to Cooke, the musical aspect is not the sole factor that influences behavior in a musical phenomenon, as "musical language" is fundamentally more complex to grasp than verbal language. Musical language is constrained by the rules embedded in the musical structure, rendering it no more capable of conveying messages than verbal language. As Cooke observed,, "Music is no more capable of being emotionally intelligent because it is bound by the laws of musical construction than poetry is because it is bound by the laws of verbal grammatical construction" (Raynor & Cooke, 1960). In short, it can be said that verbal language is more effective in conveying messages than musical language.

Providing meaning to musical texts involves three layers: verbal, literary, and musical, which can be explained as follows.

At the literary level, meaning is interpreted as something concrete or "simple," a kind of "reference" to imagery in everyday language. Consequently, the audience understands it as a form of words with literal meaning, possessing meaning in a social context, rather than simply as sung words. As words with literal meaning, the text is perceived as the embodiment of something understood. At this level, the audience relies on associations derived from literal understanding.

In the second layer, the audience "follows" the conventions of literary works, where words are not always interpreted as they would be in literal listening. The meaning is expanded to yield a new interpretation. Similarly, the sentence structure does not adhere to standard rules, such as those governing subject, predicate, and object in formal speech texts and

school textbooks. Literary works have their own unique way of conveying meaning, not by strictly adhering to formal verbal and written rules but by employing the conventions specific to literature. The composition of a literary text (Sloboda, n.d.) aims to enhance the impact of words or the arrangement of words, ensuring that this impression is effectively captured by listeners and viewers.

In the third layer, the audience "follows" the vocalist's expressive style, considering the song, rhythm, stress, and dynamics of the "pronunciation" (Sloboda, n.d.). Here, the audience grasps and assigns meaning through musical elements that possess distinct qualities compared to words. The audience enters a musical realm that transcends the verbal realm of the first layer and the literary realm of the second layer (Hargreaves, n.d.). The unique situation that arises, even during the performance, can be "ambiguous," existing within the realm of both words and music. Depending on the audience, these flexible areas are then assigned their own meaning.

In addition to possessing special characteristics, texts in musical performances are subject to strict rules. The meaning is determined not only by the literary content but also by the rhythm and melody (Matejka, n.d.). In interpreting the meaning of a text, the audience relies on two factors: the literal meaning and the extra-literary meaning. So, how does the audience actually assign meaning to the literal text? The text in a gamelan performance can be considered one of the elements contributing to the overall meaning of the performance. Within the audience, texts often do not receive the same level of attention as written texts that are read outside the context of a performance. In determining their meaning, meaning is understood as a set of relationships for which a verbal symbol serves as a sign (Hendi, n.d.).

Musical Communication in the Aesthetic Realm

When audiences listen to musical performances, their musical aesthetic domain forms a worldview that triggers an associative process. In this process, the audience seeks to receive a message, namely the performance's content. However, how are these messages formed? While the aesthetic domain is crucial in the process of message reception, it cannot function in isolation, as it is interconnected with social life and societal values. Without these connections, interpretation is impossible.

For this reason, messages are formed through two levels of process: understanding musical elements and synthesizing these elements with community values. This occurs because musical performances do not convey messages in meaningless contexts, empty spaces devoid of social value structures, or physical worlds unrelated to creative associations and imagination. Audiences who possess knowledge of both domains (musical elements and church societal values) can generate messages. Conversely, audiences with knowledge of only one domain (either musical elements or church societal values) cannot fully comprehend the message, as both domains are symbiotic in providing meaning to each other.

Due to their multi-dimensional nature, musical performances do not convey a singular message. Instead, these messages form a continuum that is "constructed" by all aspects of the performance. However, the audience may not comprehend all aspects of the show. Every element of the performance—the melody of the guitar, piano, the beauty of the singing, the sound quality of the drums, the superior density of the violin or flute, the musical texture in a limited context or in its entirety—can contribute to the message that the audience constructs. Furthermore, these elements can be interconnected, such as how an instrument harmonizes with vocals. The meaning of the vocal melody singing text can also provide access to the message. In general, the messages of music are derived from one or more elements of the whole object, but they will not encompass the entire performance due to its complexity, which is too great

to be interpreted at once, regardless of the audience's strength and competence.

On the other hand, the content of the message in Christian worship music performances is viewed as an "extension" of the group's ideals and social concept (a particular congregation) and should therefore reinforce rather than contradict these social nuances. Worship music performances are regarded as a medium for strengthening life principles, introducing fundamental ethics, fostering harmonious relationships among congregation members, cultivating a sense of tolerance, and constructing building concepts based on specific policies within certain areas. The musical nuances are selected in alignment with the atmosphere, characteristics, and ideas prevalent within the community, not in isolation from the context.

The message conveyed in the performance not only aims to strengthen concepts within social institutions but is also expected to have a tangible impact on the character development of community members, directly influencing their actions and behaviors within society. The message transmitted through artistic media seeks to modify behavior based on the ideology of a particular community, in this case, Christian faith (Widodo, n.d.).

In this way, it is hoped that we can uphold and practice noble values within the church, society, and among other social groups. The themes derived from these efforts encompass the value of goodness, the purpose of life, mutual prosperity, hope for the family, the future of society, tolerance toward others, establishing positive relationships with the supernatural and nature, maintaining relationships with family and the state, and other aspirations that benefit collective interests. Church musicians should comprehend these values through their interactions with community members during socialization. Moreover, they can also re-engage with these values through biblical music performances held by congregation members on a regular basis. These performances offer

"echoes" of social value content, embodying diverse ideas and concepts within themselves.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis through Marco DeMarinis' semiotic theory, it can be concluded that the extra-musical context plays a more significant role than the musical text itself. The extra-musical texts within the church's musical repertoire are directly linked to the Words contained in the Biblical text. Christian worship can proceed without musical texts, but worship cannot exist without the Word, which employs verbal language as a means of communication. However, another essential orientation must be toward Biblical truth. Additionally, the songs in the Christian liturgy are inspired by the Bible. In other words, the Bible is a social and ideological construct of its author, and that is why a song is called a "church song."

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