

Can We Dance While Seeing the Screen? Liveness in Three Dangdut Performances During the Covid-19

Dapatkah kita berjoged sambil Menonton Layar: Liveness pada Tiga Pertunjukan Dangdut selama Covid-19

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Abstract

This paper deals with the concept of liveness and digital performance during Covid-19 through Dangdut performance. This paper originated because after the spread of the Covid-19 virus in March 2020, Dangdut could not be performed in its regular stages and several performances cancelled. Covid-19 impacted many kinds of performances, but Dangdut is highlighted because the performance stimulates the audience to respond by dancing on the stage and giving tips to the singer (*sawer*). The live performance creates ambiance, intimacy, and interactivity among the singers, musicians, and audiences. In short, liveness is essential in Dangdut performance. How do musicians sustain live, staged performances of Dangdut during Covid-19? What efforts did the musicians make? How does digital technology assist in the production of liveness for Dangdut? This paper will discuss what has been done by Dangdut actors in media streaming. To articulate the phenomenon, I referred to a debate about the liveness of live performance and live streaming from a performance studies perspective. This paper discusses how performers such as Ndarboy Genk, Guyon Waton, Denny Caknan, and OM Wawes tried to solve the liveness problem. These performances have the intention to enlighten the experience of the liveness in digital performance. These performances proved the resilience of Dangdut agents during the Covid-19. This paper will enrich the point of view of performance studies and popular music studies.

Tulisan ini menyoal tentang *liveness* dan pertunjukan digital di masa Covid-19 melalui pertunjukan Dangdut. Tulisan ini terstimulasi pasca tersebarnya virus Covid-19 pada Maret 2020, Dangdut tidak dapat melakukan pementasan di panggung berkala dan banyak pertunjukan dibatalkan. Covid-19 terjadi dan berimplikasi kepada banyak jenis pertunjukan, tetapi saya menggarisbawahi Dangdut karena panggung Dangdut menstimulasi penonton untuk merespons, semisal berjoged di panggung dan memberi tips kepada penyanyi (*sawer*). Pertunjukan *live* mencipta *ambiance*, keintiman, dan interaktivitas antara penyanyi, musisi, dan penonton. Singkat kata, saya menyadari jika pada pertunjukan Dangdut perihal *liveness* menjadi esensial. Atas dasar itu, bagaimana musisi bertahan,

mementaskan pertunjukan sepanjang Covid-19? Apa upaya yang dibuat oleh musisi? Bagaimana teknologi digital membantu dalam memproduksi *liveness*? Artikel ini akan menyelidik dan meneliti apa-apa saja yang telah dilakukan oleh agen Dangdut pada media tertayang. Untuk meneliti fenomena ini, Saya merujuk pada perdebatan mengenai *liveness* pada pertunjukan langsung atau pertunjukan tertayang dari sudut pandang *Performance Studies*. Lebih lanjut, artikel ini mendiskusikan bagaimana musisi seperti Ndarboy Genk, Guyon Waton, Denny Caknan, dan OM Wawes mencoba meretas persoalan *liveness* pada dangdut. Pertunjukan-pertunjukan itu memiliki intensi untuk mencerahkan pengalaman akan *liveness* pada pertunjukan digital. Pertunjukan-pertunjukan itu membuktikan kebertahanan dari agen Dangdut selama Covid-19. Dengan membongkar hal ini, artikel ini akan memperkaya sudut pandang *Performance Studies* dan kajian musik populer.

Keywords: Dangdut, Digital Performance, Interactivity, Liveness, Temporal simultaneity | Dangdut, Pertunjukan Digital, Interaktivitas, Liveness, Simultanitas Temporal

Introduction

The king of Dangdut, Rhoma Irama, released his single "Virus Corona" on YouTube on 3 April 2020. The song's is about how the virus killed us, and God Almighty is the answer to make the virus disappear. In short, this song articulated how life was ruined by Covid-19—including the Dangdut live performance that stopped because of the virus. To date, the video has 6,822,959 views and 11,838 comments (Rhoma Irama 2020) and has resonated with many audiences. On another occasion, his organization, PAMMI (Association of Indonesian Dangdut-Malay Musicians and Singers), published a video collaboration to support the musicians and singers under PAMMI on 29 March 2020 (argya arsyilla zhafira 2020). It shows that Covid-19 cancelled many performances while the vital element of Dangdut is live performance. It seems like we swallow that jagged pill, but what we can do?

Live performance is a vital element for performing arts, particularly Dangdut music. *Dangdut music* is a popular Indonesian music genre combining Melayu music, Arabic, Indian, Western rock, and local music in Indonesia Weintraub, 2010; Raditya, 2022). This kind of music emerged in the early 1970s. Dangdut has an enormous number of listeners because of the representation lyrics—mainly dealing with daily lives and matters—, the beat of a drum (*kendang*)—that stimulated listeners to dance—, interactive performance. The important thing about this music is that Dangdut has continuously developed with new musicians and musical elements (Raditya 2022: 142). There are many aspects in Dangdut performance that make them attractive and powerful. Many interactions happen in Dangdut performance, for instance, dancing together, singing along, giving tips to singers, and so on. It also resonates with two pictures I captured in 2017 while researching in Jombang, East Java (Figure 1).



Fig. 1 Audiences responds the song with their dance. Source: Photo by author, 2017.

Figure 1 shows us audience responses to Dangdut. In the left image, the audience responds to the beat with a movement in the song's chorus. Audiences danced together while the singer sang. On the right side, the audience responded to the whole song with a specific choreography. It shows that there was a performance inside the performance. When I was there, I watched two performances—the actual Dangdut performance with the singer and the audience's response to Dangdut performance with their choreography—simultaneously. It was terrific and hypnotizing at the same time.

Regarding these pictures, some keywords come to mind: crowd, relation, interactivity, intimacy, reciprocity, ambience, response, present, temporal, spatial, and the vital thing is liveness. The Dangdut stage stimulates the audience to respond and dance. The dancing audience creates ambience, intimacy, and interactivity for Dangdut performance. It reminds me of Sanden's statement: "Because liveness is so closely tied to performance, our understanding of just how we filter musical meaning through liveness depends greatly on what is communicated by the concept of performance itself" (Sanden 2013: 25). In short, it is necessary to articulate the power of music through live performances.

Dangdut history describes the emergence and development of the Malay Orchestra that occurred because of the live performance, instead of a sound recording played on the radio, gramophone, and phonograph. Performance became the primary mode of the Malay Orchestra show in the 1960s, which influenced society to perform Dangdut music in life cycle activities and personal celebrations such as marriage, circumcision, job promotion and communal celebrations such as Independence Day, Eid, New Year celebration, or city and district celebrations, and so on.

Various records of the Dangdut stage can be found in many kinds of literature about Indonesia, either written by local or foreign researchers. The literature was also given specific details, for instance, singers, the name Melayu Orchestras, events, and places. For instance, in *Tempo Magazine*, 22 March 1975, it was recorded if Ellya Khadam had performed since 1956 with the Malay Orchestra Chandrala or Malay Orchestra El Sitara in 1969 (Panen Dangdut, Dangdut, Dangdut 1975). The same magazine also noted that the Malay Orchestra Festival was held on 4-9 April 1979 in Bandung (Dangdut Setelah Halal Di TVRI 1979: 51). Sociologist Sunyoto Usman noted that Dangdut was played in Yogyakarta in 1972 (Usman 2000: 160). Dangdut has also been staged in the same city in Sekaten (night market) since the 1980s (Raditya 2020b: 25).

Indonesian Mask dancer Wangi Indriya also noted that "Indonesians really like Dangdut. Even in the periphery or inland area the Dangdut was liked by them, before the performance start, the audience had asked Dangdut performance" (2006: 190). The book *Dangdut Stories: A Social and Musical History of Indonesia's Most Popular Music* written by ethnomusicologist Andrew N.

Weintraub (2010) also shows how the Dangdut stage occurred in the community from Rhoma Irama until Inul Daratista. He examined the relationship between politics and Dangdut music, for instance, the impact of the democracy that allowed regional Dangdut to develop. On the other side, in his thesis, anthropologist G. R. Lono Lastoro Simatupang (1996) articulated how Dangdut was performed in various classes and places. He used Pierre Bourdieu's theory, habitus, to reveal and solve the hierarchy as well as a gap in Dangdut music. However, those references showed the Dangdut had a performance history as well as a trajectory in several regions of Indonesia.

Dangdut trajectories show how live performance is a vital element in Dangdut music. The live performance gives space for the audience to experience, participate, and be sublime. Second, the essence and enchantment of live performance is liveness. This topic became challenging because Covid-19 ruined the live performance habit. The impact of the virus spreading on music performances limited Dangdut performance. Dangdut performances that were previously held almost every day have no space after the emergency restrictions were imposed. Instead of surviving in uncertainty and uncertain circumstances, young Dangdut musicians have taken various initiatives. This article is a response to the resilience of young Dangdut musicians during the Covid-19 era.

In this paper, I will concentrate on the complexity and interaction that occurs in Dangdut performances. Furthermore, I will articulate how musicians sustain live, staged performances of Dangdut during Covid-19. What efforts are musicians making? How does digital technology assist in the production of liveness for Dangdut? I referred to performance studies researchers Peggy Phelan and Philip Auslander to examine this phenomenon. Both scholars debate about liveness, either in live performance or live streaming. I used participatory observation, interviews, and the use of digital data. Furthermore, I have observed three digital performances shown on social media—two digital performances on YouTube and one on Instagram— as my study case. These methods will enrich the point of view of performance studies and popular music studies.

Literature Review

There is a vast amount of studies that deal with Dangdut from many perspectives, for instance, anthropology, sociology, cultural studies, ethnomusicology, musicology, communication, Islam studies, education, psychology, and so on. Some of them deal with Dangdut in Covid-19, but in this paper, I referred to four works that are more focused on the liveness and technology agency because I would like to examine how the musician faced the Covid-19 condition through digital performances.

In Sandra Bader's dissertation, *Intersubjective Realities: Women Dangdut Performers and their Lived Experience in Indramayu and Jakarta, Indonesia*, she discusses the agency of women performers that drives them to interact, adapt, and reshape their position in Dangdut landscape. This reference focused on the issues of Islam, sexuality, and morality in female Dangdut performers. This dissertation is critical to articulate because Dangdut performances mostly deal with visual—that relates to bodies, erotica, interaction, and so on.

Bader elaborated the sexuality, morality and Islam through Dangdut, and a particular activity, *nyawer*. *Nyawer* or *sawer* is giving tips to the singer. Through *nyawer* and performance, Bader examined the intersubjectivities and cultural practices for understanding

performers' points of view about sexuality and morality (Bader 2012). I focused on this dissertation because of recognizing the performer's point of view to read sexuality, morality, and religiosity. This reference resonated with me because of the issue of intersubjectivities. It is interpreted as a bodily being-in-the-world, an embodiment is a basic, primordial aspect of human intersubjectivity. This idea stimulated me to examine the type of liveness in digital performance as well as being-in-the-world in digital space and its interplay.

The second reference is *Performing Gender to Dangdut's Drum: Place, Space, and Infrastructure in Indonesian Popular Music* by A. L. Decker (2016). This master's thesis discussed how three singers used social media to reveal their performance identity and character to their fans. Decker researched three singers through several media forms: music videos, Instagram feeds, and online news (Decker 2016). They were using social media for self-branding and gender construction. This thesis was interesting because of the singers' agencies to interact with the fans. On the other side, this thesis was also related to me because of the differences among the three singers in how they respond to the media forms. It showed how the Dangdut musicians have their way of manipulating, elaborating, reshaping, and even building the character in the contemporary condition.

The third reference is *OM Wawes: Babat Alas Dangdut Anyar (OM Wawes: Creating a Path of the New Dangdut)* by me. This book deals with the new group of Dangdut, OM Wawes who reshaped the Dangdut trajectory with the advantage of technology. OM Wawes shared their music on SoundCloud and YouTube to gain popularity before other Dangdut groups and musicians used it (Raditya 2020b). This book articulates the band's journey moment by moment, for instance: distributing the song "Sayang" on the music platform SoundCloud; shaping the music (how the group put other musical elements); formulating the band (from trio to the band); organizing their popularity and fans; using social media strategically. Another important thing was how they reshaped the concept of performance dominated by women singers. Female singers stage this kind of music and make the audience refuse the male singers. The personnel of OM Wawes, Gendhut, also shared his experience, which was condemned by the audience in many performances because their singer was a man (Raditya 2020b: 244). Furthermore, the book articulated how the male singers faced and reshaped the condition over time.

In those previous works, there were no force major conditions, for instance, Covid-19 or other human disasters, but this literature review shows the agency of the Dangdut musicians on how they adapted, reshaped, interpreted, used, and so on. Those references drove me to think about the negotiation of Dangdut musicians on showing digital performance during Covid-19. I did not mention any references about Dangdut and Covid-19 specifically because most of the references focused on the product of adaptation and not issues of negotiation, agency, resiliency, intersubjectivity, and so on.

There were no articles specific to Dangdut and liveness in digital performance. Instead, I referred to my previous work (2021) about theatre and liveness in digital performance 's liveness in which I examined performances by the Garasi Performance Institute. They held a festival that performed ten repertoires with different modes: interactive performance, lecture performance, durational performance, interactive theatre game, theatre, performance video, dance, and sound performance. As a result, I mapped out four types of awareness, (1) awareness of performance, (2) awareness of time and space, (3) awareness of pictures, and (4) awareness of medium (Raditya 2021: 45–50). That awareness's created the liveness of digital performance.

These first three works relate to each other in the context of Dangdut, gender, and body. Bader's work reveals the deconstruction of seeing sawer and how we positioned women in sawer practice. Decker's work articulates how female singers used social media. The third reference discussed the journey of the new actor in Dangdut. They faced the reverse condition that the audience did not support the man's role as a singer. Furthermore, the issue about gender and body is still there, even with the reverse condition. Those works that focused on gender show the resilience of actors in the Dangdut scene. The last reference in my literature review has a different object to dangdut music, but it relates to the resilience idea. The reference also focused on liveness and digital performance, which had a similar issue to my present paper. In addition, these four references also discuss the agency of actors—musicians—and performers to face unbeneficial conditions. According to four references, this article examines the gap between Dangdut and COVID-19 as well as liveness and digital performance.

Discussion

Covid-19 significantly impacted the performing arts as well as the Dangdut music ecosystem. Regarding the impact, I divided it into two groups based on how Dangdut musicians survive. First, is the passive group. The passive group decided to stop their musical activity until the end of Covid-19. Many of the performers in this group changed their profession. Siregar (2021) conducted interviews with two singers and a Malay orchestra player who decided to work in another sector. The three informants stopped the Dangdut activity during Covid-19. According to the interview, there were several responses to life after Covid-19:

"Salsabila, the Dangdut singer-turned-cook, readily admitted that if there were opportunities, she would go back to singing again. However, she insisted that her culinary business would come first as her main job, singing and performing Dangdut as a sideline. "In the entertainment industry, there are newcomers every year, so I'll focus on my culinary business. But I would be happy if I could do both," said Salsabila. Keyboardist Suprpto and guitarist Pramono were also hopeful that the pandemic would be over soon, so they could return to their Dangdut music again. For some like Listiana who have moved on to other things, going back to the Dangdut life is not an option anymore. "I have forgotten the glamorous life because I feel that to be happy, I don't need to live a sumptuous life." (Siregar 2021).

It is not astonishing to read Siregar's interview of performers looking for other jobs outside Dangdut. In my opinion, it was logical because singers and musicians do not have a stable income, and their income is tied to ticket sales and bonuses that depend on the number of attendants. When Covid-19 means that they cannot be Dangdut performers, this group decides to find another job. According to the interview, two steps will be taken after Covid-19: people who return to Dangdut music and those who stay in their new job. These are the portrait of how Dangdut singers and musicians survived during Covid-19.

Second, active group. This group consists of musicians who still believe in Dangdut and found various ways of surviving as Dangdut actors in the Dangdut world, such as utilising YouTube as their space to disseminate their works and virtual Dangdut performances. In this paper, I only focus on virtual Dangdut performances rather than live performances. Live performances have temporal simultaneity and spatial co-presence, while live streaming have temporal simultaneity and spatial

absence. The streaming performances were held by the new Dangdut musicians, such as OM Wawes, Ndarboy Genk, Guyon Waton, and Denny Caknan. I chose their performances because they held live streaming performances with several settings for the audience. These digital performances are a way to survive in the pandemic era and a strategy to expand the liveness in Dangdut performances as well as performing arts.

Digital Performance: If We Never Try, We Will Never Know

Digital performances in Indonesia developed significantly because of Covid-19. It also impacted the Dangdut ecosystem. Various digital performances were presented by musicians, singers, producers, publishers, and companies. In this paper, I examined virtual Dangdut shows that were held in 2020, during the first year of Covid-19. The most exciting thing I watched was the live streaming of Dangdut performance on YouTube on 27 September 2020, where I was shocked to see the number of viewers. The singer from Ngawi, Denny Caknan, created an event "Denny Caknan Ndue Gawe" ("Denny Caknan has an event") that garnered 1,360,843 views [retrieved 21 November 2023]. The view count is the total number of times a video has been watched. This performance made me realise that the Dangdut performance has large audiences—even if it is not a physically present performance. Furthermore, I examine digital performance, which Dangdut musicians and artists had never tried before COVID-19. I focus on three digital performances that were selected based on several considerations, for instance, the credibility of the performer, the performers who distributed their songs internet-based, and the performers who performed one or more live streaming performances when COVID-19 occurred. Those digital performances reveal interaction and participation from the audience in live-streaming performances. It is essential because digital performances show the reverse fact despite the assumption that live streaming has limited interaction and participation between performers and the audience. Furthermore, this paper does not deal with technology and social media features. Instead, I would like to highlight how the artists respond and use technology strategically.

	Name of performance	Performer	Organizer	Date	Views	Platform	Retrieved
1	Konser Album Pertama OM Wawes (First Album Launched)	OM Wawes	OM Wawes	August 21, 2020	36,389	YouTube	Jul 10, 2022
2	Panggih Bintang Katresnan	Denny Caknan Ndarboy Genk Happy Asmara Nella Kharisma Dory Harsa Abah Lala	Aeromax Production	August 1, 2020	75,772	YouTube	Jul 10, 2022
3	No specific Title	Guyon Watton Official	Guyon Watton Official	April 4, 2020	1,176 (no total views. 1,176 was the total of audience while I captured the picture)	Instagram Live	April 4, 2020

There are three performances that I am dealing with, two performances shown on the YouTube platform and one performance shown on the Instagram platform. I examined those three digital performances, not to compare them; I used three performances to describe how performers deal with technology to reach an audience. YouTube and Instagram are also two platforms that have a large number of users and audiences in Indonesia. I examined the performers' strategies in presenting their performances. They did live streaming with several interactions. According to the OM Wawes vocalist Gaseng, OM Wawes wanted to show something different from recorded shows (Gaseng OM Wawes, personal communication, August 21, 2020).

The first performance was organized by OM Wawes that launched their new album through YouTube and received 36,389 views. The second performance was organized by a local producer that performed with six artists through YouTube. The performance has 75,772 views. The third performance was performed by the Guyon Waton on Instagram Live, which lasted for an hour. The number of views fluctuated, but during my observation I saw 1,176 accounts watching at the same time. Instead, they archived their performance on Instagram's feed but did not do it. Therefore, the viewers could not revisit, and we could not recount the viewers in the performance.

The first performance is presented by OM Wawes. On 21 August 2020, OM Wawes released their new album. The duration of the performance was an hour and a half, consist of album launching, book discussion, talk show, and performance. OM Wawes focused on their performance and the interactive session. Gaseng felt an interactive session was necessary to engage the audience with the conversation and the song (Gaseng OM Wawes, personal communication, August 21, 2020). The consequence of live streaming was playing the music without a large audience in front of them. Instead, the shooting technique was treated like a recording in a television program using multiple

cameras, spectacular visuals in their background, and other camera technicalities, for instance, zoom in, zoom out, focus and blur, etc. Those techniques are impossible to apply in Dangdut's live performance.



Fig. 2 Melayu Orchestra Sonata performed in Jombang, East Java. Source: Photo by author, 2017.

According to Figure 2, live performances in Dangdut music did not have a shooting technique. The audience watched the dangdut performance without the camera facilities that live streaming has. Many performances also do not put spectacular visuals, for instance, bumper videos, trueview videos—longer formats with more complex messages—, motion pictures, and video clips as their stage background. In short, the camera's point of view is a vital element in live streaming. It is the way that should be taken because, in the live streaming concept, temporal is the only element they have, while spatial is absent. In front of the screen, the audience watched the music performance from their mobile phones or laptops without delay to enjoy the show. The audience can watch from anywhere because live streaming has no spatial co-presence.



Fig. 3 Screen captured of OM Wawes live streaming performance. Source: WAWES OFFICIAL (2020).

Figure 3 shows how the performance can be seen from the user's screen. Regarding the performance, Gaseng said there is no difference in rehearsals between the live performance and live

streaming (Gaseng OM Wawes, personal communication, August 21, 2020). However, Gaseng also said, "The audience has a big influence on online Dangdut performances," so that is why the interaction for the audience has been organized as best as possible. OM Wawes accommodated the audience through a comment chat box during the performance. OM Wawes and the team responded to the comment after one song was sung. Gaseng's statement also reminds me that audiences that were previously visible and easily interacted need to be treated differently in live streaming. The chat box is a regular feature provided by YouTube. The interactions were also everyday conversations in many chat boxes, but the audience acted differently.



Fig. 4 The chat box of YouTube while OM Wawes perform online. Source WAWES OFFICIAL (2020)

The chat box is a YouTube function that gives the viewers space for comment during the performance run. Where OM Wawes did their live streaming, the team always showed the comments on the screen and highlighted which comment they needed to respond to. The comments from the audience was similar to those in live performances. According to Figure 3, several types of comments popped up such as: song requests, greetings, compliments, and even yelling to buy drinks ("Aqua Aqua", where Aqua is the type of bottled drinking water often found in performances in Indonesia). OM Wawes responded to the requests by mentioning the name of the account that mentioned the song. OM Wawes also responded to the greetings to the audience, either the name or the city. For instance, Gaseng said, "greetings for Yogyakarta", "Hi Kediri, I hope you are doing well", and so on. In my opinion, this interaction shows how the interaction changes in different forms but still retains specific characteristics that are similar to live performance interaction.

This kind of interaction also resonated with other performers. The Dangdut band, Guyon Waton, streamed their performance through another platform, Instagram Live. In their performance, Guyon Waton also did a live stream for an hour. Guyon Waton streamed another kind of performance—they performed their rehearsal or practice sessions on Instagram Live. On the other hand, Guyon Waton's performance was clever because the band responded to government regulations to stop the spread of COVID-19. The Indonesian President, Joko Widodo, enacted regulations to stop the spread of the virus, similar to other countries, encouraging working from home and social distancing (Raditya 2020a: 28). Unlike the spectacle show produced by OM Wawes, Guyon Waton streamed a simple single-camera video. Performing rehearsal in their base camp—their private area—is a strategy to reach the audience.

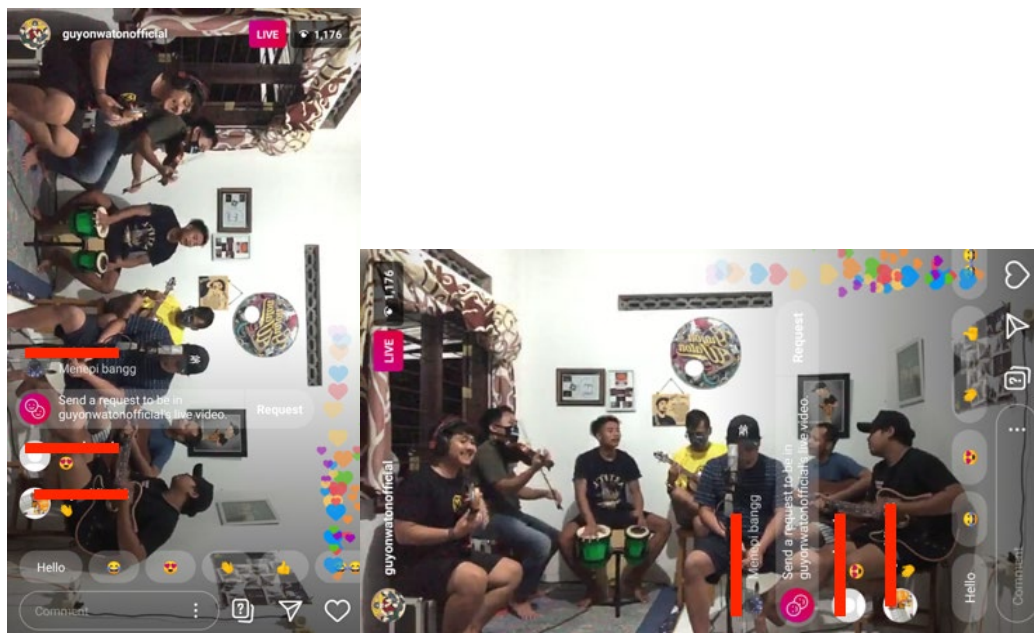


Fig. 5 Screen captured of Guyon Waton's Instagram Live perform. Source: Screen Capture from Instagram Account of Guyon Waton on 4 April 2020.

The performance was taken from their base camp, particularly in the living room. There are windows, picture frames, and the Guyon Waton symbol. It is different to the previous live streaming, OM Wawes. Furthermore, they played the music in the living room of a middle-class Javanese house. It matches the image of the band since simplicity becomes their character. This band is also famous because of its acoustic music. They play acoustic music, not a distortion or other effect guitar, to show simplicity. The band's vocalist, Bagus, also mentioned *cangkrukan* music—a place to hang out with friends (Spotify ID 2023). They would like to accompany the audience like sitting with friends with no barriers.

The Guyon Waton's performance has 1,176 views. It means there are 1,176 active accounts who watched the live streaming. The account represents a person or group because sometimes mobile users watch Instagram Live with their friends. Regarding the interaction, every account can make comments and tap love, as shown on the right of Figure 5. When I watched the performance, most of the comments also asked the same thing: song requests, compliments, greetings, and so on. The vocalist of Guyon Waton, Bagus, also answered and mentioned the account who gave the exciting comment about the performance. For instance, Bagus mentioned the message of the comment, like "Greetings to Sidoarjo", "Thank you for the impression of *noname*", and so on.

According to the two interactions on YouTube and Instagram Live, I analyzed two factors. Firstly, the interaction during the show happened because of the platform they used. YouTube and Instagram provide comments and accommodate expressions, for instance: "like" or "love". OM Wawes and Guyon Waton used the feature comment interactively. On the other hand, the dangdut audience responded interestingly. They act like they are on the actual stage, for instance, typing "Aqua-aqua", which is the symbol that the audience needs water, requesting a song, and even talking to each other. In short, the performer can engage with the audience in live streaming. Furthermore, the hypothesis that live streaming cannot connect to the audience can be questioned.

Secondly, the concept of the Dangdut performance, either as a spectacle or simple performance, works in live streaming. Nowadays, it is tough to show a simple thing to a Dangdut audience, furthermore, the Dangdut audiences usually watch the spectacle performance from the Dangdut show. Regarding those two performances, Instagram can be used for personal aims—that is why many live conversations on Instagram—, rather than YouTube. However, I found that through the different mediums, we can see how the dimension of closeness works based on the features, for instance, chat box; and the platform itself.

Secondly, the concept of the Dangdut performance, either as a spectacle or simple performance, can be worked in live streaming. Since Dangdut is presented on social media, showing a simple thing to a Dangdut audience is challenging. Furthermore, the Dangdut audiences usually watch the spectacle and massive performance from the Dangdut live performance. Regarding OM Wawes's performance, they have enriched the concept of spectacle in dangdut performance. In live performance, spectacle refers to how huge the stage is, how fantastic the lighting is, and how big the audience's capacity is. Meanwhile, in live streaming, OM Wawes expanded the concept of spectacle with bumper videos, trueview videos, motion pictures, and video clips as their background on stage, as well as multiple cameras and facilities. On the other hand, live streaming provides the idea of simple performance, as Guyon Waton did. Users use Instagram to share their pictures and videos that are easier and shorter, rather than making videos on YouTube. In 2022, the user of Instagram in Indonesia was 99 million (Kemp 2023). Instagram can also be used for personal aims—that is why there are many live conversations on Instagram—rather than YouTube. Users also use Instagram Live for direct interactions with followers, while users use YouTube for more formal events. In short, I found that through the different platforms, we can see how the dimension of closeness works based on the feature, particularly the chat box.

The last digital performance was “Pangging Bintang Katresnanan”. Six singers sang for four hours: Denny Caknan, Ndarboy Genk, Happy Asmara, Nella Kharisma, Dorry Harsa, and Abah Lala. The concept of this live streaming was a live performance that YouTube streamed. Interestingly, Aeromax Production shows another treatment and action. Instead of being limited to numbers and comments on the chat box YouTube or Instagram, their performance showed a different treatment. The organizer used multiple platforms, YouTube and Zoom. Zoom has the option of streaming on Facebook or YouTube, but the organizer uses other applications, such as, OBS Studio, streamlabs, streamyard, or restream—that accommodates more than one platform. The application makes the organizer can organize video and Zoom at the same time and streamed on YouTube. The organizer is considerate to interact and even show the audience. The Dangdut live stream on 1 August 2020 and can be accessed on YouTube. The performance had 75,772 views. In the video, audiences got spotlighted with their idol on the screen that was streamed to the masses (Figure 6). However, the producer uses zoom in specific times, so the audience was shown during this production. For instance, when the singer sang the audience was shown randomly.



Fig. 6 Screen capture of the interaction between the singer and audience. Source: aeromax media (2020).

In Figure 6 the live stream shows two frames on the screen. On the left is participant zoom, and on the right is a performance streamed from the studio. The important thing is that this performance allows the audience to express their feelings without texting in the chat box. Indeed, not all zoom participants can be shown in the live streaming, but even if they were not shown on the screen, they were happy and nervous at the same time. The zoom participant, Dandi, told me that his heartbeat like a drum while watching the live streaming through zoom. He should be ready to dance while the song is sung.

The organizers can see the audience in a different screen and randomly select audience members to be streamed. When streamed, the zoom participant typically responds by performing their best dance in front of the screen, and sometimes audiences compete with one another in the zoom frame. Sometimes viewers who are passive on screen automatically start dancing when the spotlight is shown on them. I noted many types of audience responses, for example, lip-syncing with the singer, laughing, doing hand-up, dancing with the thumbs-up style, doing a Javanese dance randomly, dancing by closing their eyes, and so on. In short, the audience has space to express their emotion through dance.

In addition, there are many ways for audiences to watch live streaming, either alone, watching with their partner, or watching with a group. It is certainly interesting how the audience creates the atmosphere and ambience of their spectacle. There is an audience who are a group of friends watching the performance together. I argue that these types of audiences want to create an enjoyable and comfortable ambience.

Watching Dangdut from the Screen: Liveness on Live Streaming[?]

These three performances show the willingness for performers to make space for the audience to participate. I argue that those performances have an awareness of the audience's presence. Using technology, they tried to make liveness occur in live streaming. From the point of view of performance studies scholar Peggy Phelan, liveness never happens in live streaming or other mediatized performance. She believes that mediatized performance is something other than performance (Phelan 1993: 146). In Phelan's opinion, performances can only happen in real time, not photographed, recorded, documented, and so on. Phelan says:

Performance's only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance... Performance occurs over a time which will not be repeated. It can be performed again, but this repetition itself marks it as "different." The document of a performance then

is only a spur to memory, an encouragement of memory to become present (Phelan 1993: 146).

She believes that recorded performance and [even] live streaming are things other than performance. Right here and right now are the keys to liveness in Phelan's thoughts. Furthermore, Phelan has robust reasons for her thought. First, Phelan has strictly separated the concepts between reality and representation. In her opinion, the representation declined and made the actual show incomplete. Two keywords from her perspective are "real physical matter of the performing body" and the psychic experience of what it is to be embodied (Phelan 1993: 167).

Phelan suggests that the concept of liveness represents authenticity. Otherwise, the use of electronic technologies creates inauthenticity. The other important thing is that liveness can happen when the audience watches the "real" physical performing body. Then, the audience's experience resonates with the "real" performance. You may see Phelan as an anti-technology person, but she has a robust idea about the liveness of performance. For her, the greatest strength of a performance is independence from mass reproduction, technologically, economically, and linguistically (Phelan 1993: 149). Therefore, Phelan's thought rejects any idea and effort to make the live streaming, documented, or recorded performance liveness. In my opinion, her point of view was a pessimist. Furthermore, her thoughts would be counterproductive with live streaming in Dangdut performances—as well as three live-streaming Dangdut performances that I discussed. Then, how do we explain the phenomenon, like the three performances I observed? Should we deny all the ideas and goals that they have made?

According to the liveness debate, Philip Auslander was one of many scholars against Phelan's thoughts. Auslander became central because he criticized Phelan's thoughts by writing numerous articles on mediated performances to deflate Phelan's analysis. In his book, *Liveness: Performance in Mediatized Culture* (1999), he sees immediate and mediated matters in his debate with Phelan, believing that live performance is also a product of media technology. He articulates how performance incorporates mediatization into live performance (Auslander 1999: 25). He even calls live events also a product of media technologies.

Auslander countered the argument that the experience of liveness is limited to specific performer-audience interactions; instead, he suggested "a sense of always being connected to other people, of continuous, technologically mediated co-presence with others known and unknown" (Auslander 1999: 61). Auslander also responded and classified the mediated performances that resonated by the technology. He identified spatial co-presence and temporal simultaneity, for instance, music concerts, theatre, and dance performances, as a classic liveness. If the audience is spatial absence and temporal simultaneity, Auslander classified "live radio", "live television", and "live streaming" as a group. For Auslander, the audience still experiences the performance even when they watch live streaming. Temporal simultaneity is vital for identifying performance as a live, either spatial co-presence or spatial absence. In my opinion, Auslander's thought proves how liveness can change time by time, including live streaming.

In "Live and Technologically Mediated Performance" (2008), Auslander expands his idea about immediate and mediated in the field of theatre. Questioning the live streaming and mediated theatre, he tried to extend his idea about connecting people, mainly technologically mediated. Auslander believes that mediated performance and live streaming also stimulate the affection dimension

among human beings. In my opinion, Auslander succeeded in extracting debate about immediate and mediated to highlight the affection dimension. In his writing, he extends the affection dimension with the mediated communication concept, particularly in chat. Furthermore, Auslander combined his idea with two new forms of liveness—online and group liveness—from media studies scholar Nick Couldry. In short, liveness is about real-time interactions among human beings (Auslander 2008: 111).

Interestingly, in “So Close and Yet So Far Away the Proxemics of Liveness” (2016), Auslander also formulated the affection dimension sharply. He argued that “liveness is not a stable ontological condition but a historically contingent concept, a moving target that is continuously redefined in relation to the possibilities offered by emergent technologies of reproduction” (Auslander 2016: 296). It resonates with McKenzie's idea about using technology. He believes that technology can be used to achieve the task in performance. McKenzie identified that the performance of technology refers to its technical effectiveness in a specific application or set of applications undertaken in a particular context (McKenzie 2001: 97). McKenzie realized that technical and applications would decide how technology achieves the task. Both Auslander and McKenzie show the importance of technology, but McKenzie has focused on the function of technology while Auslander articulated the essence of using technology in a more complex way.

In his writing, I highlighted the concept of being connected because it makes Auslander's concept of liveness robust and grounded. He questioned what kind of experience happens in live performance, and then he argued that the experience of having an active connection is the key to participating liveness. For Auslander, active connection is dealing with time. In Auslander, we can see that temporality is the keyword of liveness, while the spatial dimension is not everything that determines the existence of liveness. It accommodates livestreaming because it requires the audience to take place now, not taking place here. Auslander says it is the inviolable distinction on which all performance depends (2016: 298).

Being connected and mediated performance in Auslander's liveness theory resonates with the Dangdut live streaming I discussed, where OM Wawes, Guyon Waton, and Aeromax Production performances deal with it. Furthermore, the audience in those performances was not physically taking place. Instead, they connected through temporal. They can watch from anywhere and be connected with the performers through the internet, particularly when they are online simultaneously. YouTube and Instagram allow the audience and performer to meet in the virtual room without time delay. Through mediated performance—screen and internet platform—they can access what the performers do in the present time from anywhere. In short, OM Wawes, Guyon Waton, and Aeromax Production performances have spatial absence and temporal simultaneity.

However, I observed that being connected could be extracted in many ways. It has different treatments and actions for the audience in three live-streaming performances. Those performances expand and enrich the “being connected” concept in live streaming, where OM Wawes and Guyon Waton accommodated the comments from the audience during the show in their live streaming and gave space for interaction. The performer responded to how and what the audience reacted. It is a simple act, but it shows affection and emotion to the audience. It also gives the audience the feeling that “we are connecting with each other, even if we are not in the same place.” The exciting action happened in the aeromax media performance, where the organizer provided a specific frame and moment to show the audience through Zoom (Figure 6). The audience can interact “directly” and be connected with the performer by being in the spotlight side-by-side with singers when a song is played.

This treatment and action is a way to stimulate interactions and connection—even intimacy—from live performances. The audience who are spotlighted and streamed on the screen can see themselves, but because the organizer streams the audience randomly, they feel they must be alert and ready for the spotlight. Instead of waiting, many people on the screen enjoy and dance to the music, either in the spotlight or not. Therefore, they enjoy the performance as long as possible, with getting the spotlight only as a bonus. In short, a random spotlight puts them in being connected. It is not the same with the live performance, but at the same level, it connects them more with the performance. In the case of aeromax media, I argue that this treatment makes the audience more connected and engaged. Conversely, this treatment also shows temporality in which the audience dances while the performer sings simultaneously.

These three live-streaming performances stimulate liveness in some way. However, it is not fair to decide which treatment - and platform - is better because they all have advantages and disadvantages. For instance, commenting through text is more relatable to the internet user, but showing the dance as a part of the performance is challenging and fantastic. In short, all interactions have a chance to make the audience connect. According to the observation, two types of interaction are text and visual. While the interactions in the live performance depend on the visual-aural interaction, live streaming has two or more types of interaction: visual interaction, text interaction, or both.

If we go back to Phelan's perspective, which believes that not mediatized and live performance would produce connections, interaction, intimacy, and participation. In that case, I argue that through three treatments in Dangdut live streaming, they were not only trying but also making Phelan's thoughts, which must be criticized.

Conclusion

In the study of Dangdut as well as the development of Indonesian performing arts, digital performance is a vital historical record of the future of art. If we see the trajectory of digital performance, it was broadcasted by television before Covid-19. For the first time, television only shows pre-recorded and edited footage. Live streaming was usually found in sports events like a football match. After Covid-19, when the technology to enjoy entertainment changed, from television to the internet, particularly social media, well-prepared live streaming broadcasted on those technologies was rare. However, when Covid-19 ruined all performing arts agenda, the internet became the technology that helped them perform virtually and develop the liveness concept.

In virtual Dangdut performances, awareness of creating experiences and interactions is essential. In this paper, I analyzed three live-streaming performances using technology to interact and connect with the audience. In these live streams, there are text interactions and visual interactions. Those two methods have their way of making people "being connected". In this case, being connected plays a vital role in making and experiencing the liveness. In short, a virtual Dangdut performance does not have to be limited by physical space when connection can happen through text or visual interaction. In this case, temporality plays a crucial role in live streaming. Temporality can connect performer and audience interactively in ephemerals condition.

In terms of the Dangdut case study, we can see how Dangdut can survive in difficult circumstances. Where we could say that Dangdut music is the first genre to be ruined if there was no stage and interaction, with virtual Dangdut the idea of interaction in a virtual Dangdut stage has become something special, where participants have space to think about what makes Dangdut become Dangdut. These findings restore the nature of Dangdut to performing arts, where Dangdut does not produce objects but produces experience. Experience, where interactions occur in an ephemeral condition, creates an experience of watching and participating on the Dangdut stage, either immediate or mediated.

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