

Musical Memory: Audience Redintegration through Tembang Kenangan Performances at THR Sriwedari Solo



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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine how the process of redintegration occurs in the audience through the *Tembang Kenangan* performances held at Taman Hiburan Remaja Sriwedari (THR) Solo. The primary focus of this research is to explore how the music group *D'Oldies*, as one of the performers, can trigger the recollection of past events among the audience through nostalgic songs. Using a music psychology approach, particularly the concept of redintegration, this study seeks to delve deeper into the relationship between music, memory, and past life experiences that are reawakened through *Tembang Kenangan*. Redintegration refers to the process of retrieving memories or past events through specific cues or triggers, in this case, through music. This research employs a descriptive analytical method to describe how *Tembang Kenangan* music can serve as a reminder and the psychological process that occurs in the audience. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the understanding of the relationship between music and memory, as well as how music can be used as a medium to recall and reflect on past life experiences.

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INTRODUCTION

This Musical activities can be carried out in various ways. One of the simplest forms of engaging with music is through listening to musical works. While listening to music, individuals often unconsciously experience emotions-whether joy, happiness, or sadness. These emotional responses are influenced by an individual's mood. Moreover, music can also serve as a stimulus for recalling past events. According to Schlessinger and Groves (1976), memory is a highly structured system that enables individuals to record facts about the world and use this knowledge to guide their behavior (Rakhmat & Surjaman, 2001a). Generally, psychology literature defines memory as the connection between current experiences and past events. What is remembered consists of events that were previously experienced, perceived, and encoded into the mind-meaningful experiences that, either consciously or unconsciously, may reappear later through the act of recollection.

Redintegration is the process of reconstructing an entire past event based on a single memory cue (Rakhmat & Surjaman, 2001). This process involves cognitive efforts in which the brain retrieves information-mental images of past events and experiences once lived. It refers to the act of recalling what has been experienced, thought, or learned. The recollection process typically consists of traces known as memories, which serve as repositories of both temporary and permanent information. Although memory traces can be stored, they may become difficult to retrieve if not accessed frequently. This phenomenon is commonly referred to as forgetting.

The redintegration process can be supported through the use of media, one of which is music. According to Rakhmat (2018), recalling with the aid of audio can help retrieve echoic memory. Echoic memory refers to the type of memory associated with auditory input or information received through hearing. The storage of this type of memory occurs rapidly,

typically lasting between one-tenth to one-quarter of a second. This form of sensory storage enables individuals to perceive a sequence of images as continuous motion when watching a film (Putriana, 2021).

Music may serve as a medium for conveying messages, which are then processed in the brain, either consciously or unconsciously, particularly when the listener is fully attentive. In such instances, the brain attempts to retrieve memory traces, potentially leading to the emergence of mental images. One common trigger of memory is listening to nostalgic songs. A nostalgic song is one that evokes memories of past experiences when heard. These songs are not necessarily from distant decades; they can also include contemporary pieces. It is not the age of the song that defines its nostalgic value, but rather its association with meaningful past experiences. For example, love songs by current musicians may become nostalgic for someone today or in the future. Thus, nostalgic songs are those that played a role in significant life events and become embedded in memory when they are heard again. It is important to note the distinction between the term "nostalgic song" and "*Tembang Kenangan*" (a specific genre or category of old Indonesian songs).

Tembang Kenangan is generally dominated by songs from the 1960s to the 1990s. This collection of songs is referred to as *Tembang Kenangan* because people who lived during the 60s to 90s era often feel nostalgic for the popular songs of that time, which are then played or performed again in the present. In other words, a song sung or performed during the 60s to 90s era (the period when the song was originally released) would not be referred to as *Tembang Kenangan*, but rather as a popular song from that era. It is only when these songs are sung or performed in the present era that they are referred to as *Tembang Kenangan*. This explains the emergence of the term *Tembang Kenangan* in the contemporary era. *Tembang Kenangan* refers to a collection of popular songs from around the 1960s to 1990s (as of now) that are part of Indonesia's music industry and are presented again in the present time.

However, it is possible that the types and scope of *Tembang Kenangan* songs will continue to evolve over time. In the future, songs from the 2000s may also be categorized as *Tembang Kenangan*, and this pattern will continue as time progresses. *Tembang Kenangan* is derived from two words: "Tembang" meaning song or melody, and "Kenangan," which means memories or events that remain in one's mind. *Tembang Kenangan* refers to songs or melodies that are deeply embedded in one's memory. The extended period of their popularity has made these songs seem inseparable from the listener's memory. Unlike songs performed by contemporary bands, which often have a relatively short lifespan on the top charts, these older songs continue to persist and remain relevant across time. Despite the emergence of new artists, these nostalgic songs still hold appeal for a segment of the population. This may be due to the fact that people continue to idolize the musical groups, their works, or because the songs are linked to personal memories from the past. This understanding gives rise to two research questions: How does the process of redintegration occur among audiences at *Tembang Kenangan* performances at THR Sriwedari? And how can *Tembang Kenangan* be used as a medium to recall past events?

METHOD

The methodology employed in this study is descriptive analysis with a qualitative approach. Data collection techniques include observation, interviews, and documentation studies. Observations were carried out during the *Tembang Kenangan* performances to understand the dynamics of communication between the *D'Oldies* music group and the audience. Interviews were conducted with members of the *D'Oldies* group and several audience members to gain a more varied and in-depth perspective on *Tembang Kenangan*, the process of recollection, and the responses experienced by the audience during the performance. Furthermore, the documentation study includes textual and visual material analysis related to the *Tembang Kenangan* performances at THR Sriwedari. The use of descriptive analysis with a qualitative approach is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the communication between *D'Oldies* personnel and the audience, including its relevance to the psychological

experiences of the viewers. This study also refers to theories of communication psychology to support the analytical framework applied. Document Length Restrictions

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Old Songs/ Pop Nostalgia

The term nostalgia originates from Greek (nostos) and (algos), referring to a person's melancholic longing to return home (Chen et al., 2014). The explanation of the context of "melancholic" does not pertain to sadness in the literal sense, but rather something that leaves a lasting impression in one's memory. These memories can be both sad in the literal sense or joyful ones. The past is understood as how an individual recalls events experienced in the present. This relates to the experience and stimuli of a person who has undergone an event, which in turn triggers the emergence of nostalgia (Setiawan, Nuri: 2024).

Several factors can trigger nostalgia in certain situations, such as social interaction or sensory inputs. Nostalgia is constructed when social interactions and sensory inputs are present in the form of verbal or nonverbal language. Social interaction is one of the triggers of nostalgia because it can bring back the memories of the audience when they begin interacting with others. Previous studies have shown that a nostalgic experience can be triggered by recalling autobiographical memories (AMs), such as through sensory inputs (smell, music, and visual stimuli related to the past), conversations about the past, and the experience of similar events (Oba et al., 2016:1070).

Triggers of nostalgia can occur through sensory inputs (such as smell, music, and visual stimuli related to the past). In addition, conversations about the past and the experience of similar events that resurface can also trigger the onset of nostalgia.

The availability of old songs today enables people to continue enjoying the melodies of popular songs from the past. Besides being a form of appreciation, it also offers an alternative to the vast array of music genres available today. According to Jeremy (Wallach, 2002), songs from the past that are played today can be categorized as a subgenre of nostalgic pop music. "Indonesian pop is divided into several subcategories. During the period when I conducted my research, 'pop nostalgia' (also called 'memory pop') was a beloved label given to Indonesian pop songs recorded in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s by artists such as Broery Marantika, Franky Sahilatua, Leo Kristi, and Gombloh."

Pop nostalgia is commonly referred to as *Tembang Kenangan*. Both terms center on songs from past eras that are enjoyed in the present. The difference in terminology arises from varying perspectives, particularly from the educational backgrounds of the audience, especially in the field of music education. Some of the prominent groups and musicians associated with *Tembang Kenangan* include Koes Plus, Panbers, D'Lloyd, Rinto Harahap, Ebiet G. Ade, Broery Marantika, Ernie Johan, Betharia Sonata, Leo Kristi, Hetty Koes Endang, and others.

Tembang Kenangan at THR Sriwedari

Tembang Kenangan, in addition to being found in media platforms such as cassettes, mobile phones, or YouTube, can also be encountered in musical performances, as seen in Taman Hiburan Remaja Sriwedari (THR) Sriwedari. Up until 2017, THR Sriwedari, located at Jalan Slamet Riyadi 275, Laweyan District, Surakarta, was still used for performances by new music groups that featured old songs, or *Tembang Kenangan*, as one of their entertainment variants. *Tembang Kenangan* at THR Sriwedari was performed or reenacted by emerging music groups. Although the presentation was not exactly the same as the original version, these new music groups endeavored to perform the *Tembang Kenangan* songs as closely as possible to the original versions.



Figure. 1 and 2. Advertising and Performance Schedule for *Tembang Kenangan* at THR Sriwedari in 2016 (Photo courtesy of the author, June 13, 2016)



Figure 3. *Tembang Kenangan* Performance at THR Sriwedari, 2016



Figure 4. *Tembang Kenangan* Group D'Oldies at THR Sriwedari, 2016

Retnosari Ariani (59), the sales marketing and show program coordinator at THR Sriwedari, added the *Tembang Kenangan* session to their performance schedule to offer visitors a variety of musical options, alongside Dangdut, Classic Rock, and Koes Plus performances. Although both Koes Plus and *Tembang Kenangan* refer to the preservation of popular songs from the past, the schedules for these performances were differentiated. Koes Plus performances were scheduled for Tuesday nights, while *Tembang Kenangan* shows were

held every Friday night. Tuesday nights were dedicated to songs from the legendary Koes Plus group, while Friday nights were specifically for the performance of nostalgic songs, other than those originally performed by Koes Plus (*Tembang Kenangan*). Audiences could enjoy these performances by purchasing an entrance ticket for approximately IDR 12,000.

In 2016, *Tembang Kenangan* performances at THR Sriwedari were routinely held every Friday night. Music groups such as *D'Oldies*, Heavenly, Gendis Manis, and Nusantara alternated in presenting musical performances from the 1960s and 1980s. During a single performance, the *D'Oldies* group could perform 25 to 30 *Tembang Kenangan* songs. These groups deliberately refrained from re-arranging the original songs. They imitated the music, striving to perform the repertoire as faithfully as possible to the original, including in terms of arrangement, vocals, and melody. This approach was consistent with the initial intent in performing *Tembang Kenangan*, which was to maintain a conservative spirit in presenting these songs.

Another effort made by the *D'Oldies* group was to match the tone color, or timbre, they produced with that of the original *Tembang Kenangan* songs. Timbre refers to the characteristic quality of a sound, whether vocal or instrumental. It denotes the unique vocal characteristics that distinguish one singer from another, even when they sing the same pitch at the same volume (Trisa et al., 2023).

Popular songs from the 1960s and 1980s were played again as a form of preservation and as a manifestation of the fans' love for the music. Aside from the familiar songs, another reason why the audience remains loyal to these nostalgic songs is because they want to reminisce about events from their youth. This activity of listening with the purpose of recalling past events is often referred to as nostalgia.

The Redintegration Process

When the *Tembang Kenangan* performance at THR Sriwedari took place in 2016, there was a noticeable audience response to the performance, both physical and non-physical. The non-physical response emphasized the audience's ability to think, feel, and process what they were watching and listening to in order to bring memories of the past to the forefront. This idea is supported by Storey (2003), who states that the memory industry produces representations that can serve as representations of a person's self. This process, which is closely tied to psychological (internal) aspects, involves several stages: thinking, feeling, and recognizing the past.

The nostalgia process depends on the cognitive and reflective capacity of each audience member. Jalaludin Rakhmat explains that memory undergoes three processes: encoding, storage, and retrieval. One way to trigger the recollection of the past is through the process of redintegration. Redintegration (reconstruction or restoration to the original state) refers to the reconstruction of an entire past event from a single memory cue. For example, when a person recalls a past event triggered by the scent of a perfume that was once worn by someone. The recollection is not due to amnesia, but rather due to an inability to recall or remember. Difficulty in remembering can occur because the event is too far in the past and has not been thought about in a long time. The limited time spent reflecting on past events also affects a person's memory.

In the act of "remembering," there are several interrelated processes, including communication, imagination (thinking), and the audience's response (Rakhmat & Surjaman, 2001a). Therefore, the redintegration process, as described by Jalaludin Rakhmat, is an effort in which the brain seeks and finds information (mental images of the past) based on specific cues or triggers. The act of recalling these memories is not a result of amnesia, but rather the inability to remember past events.

This recollection not only involves the return of memories but also the emotions associated with the emergence of these memories. The concept of redintegration, as presented by Jalaludin Rakhmat, is used in this study as a foundational explanation for the connection between songs and past events experienced by the listener. This concept is essential for explaining the process of recalling past events through the use of songs as a triggering medium.

The process of redintegration is closely related to the memories of past events experienced by an individual, meaning that the events had been personally experienced.

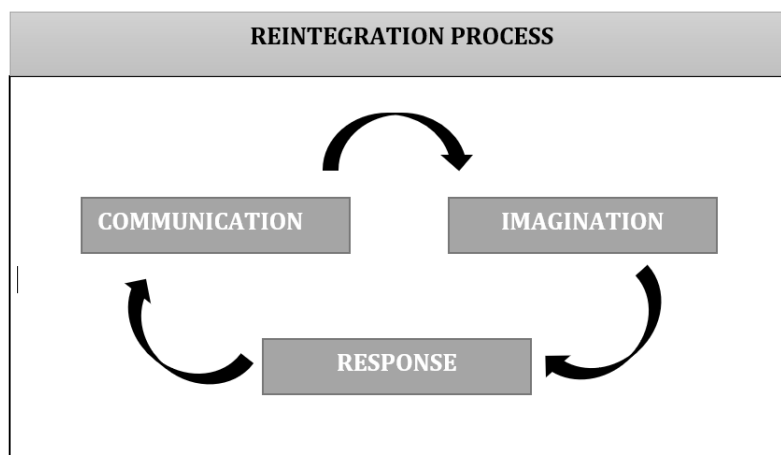


Figure 5. Diagram of the Redintegration Process

Djohan explains that, aside from the musical elements, factors such as the knowledge and experiences of the listener can influence the emotional response to music. Djohan also states that personal experiences are one of the key factors in generating a response when interacting with music. These experiences can be a mix of past events. The process of redintegration between a song and an individual's experience can be used to explain the relationship between the audience and the *Tembang Kenangan* performance at THR Sriwedari, Solo. In the case of the *Tembang Kenangan* audience, the connection between the audience's past experiences significantly influences their interest in attending the performance. Beginning with an interest, the audience then undergoes several redintegration processes when listening to *Tembang Kenangan*. These processes include the communication established between the audience and the performers. The audience then moves to a deeper process of imagination, which eventually leads to a response as a reaction to the performance (Salim, 2010).

Music, along with all its accompanying elements (such as the band, stage, costumes, and ambiance), can influence the audience both psychologically and sensorially. The experience provided to each audience member is generally similar, but when it comes to the non-physical aspects, they can feel something different in their minds. What is felt depends on the individual psychological state of each audience member. Unlike the physical realm, which is external to the audience, the psychological realm has the freedom to shape itself, and therefore its manifestation is not the same between one audience member and another (Santosa, 2014).

The Influence of the Audience

The extent to which the audience is influenced depends on their sensory perception. The relationship involves the sender conveying a message that is eventually received by the audience. The presence of the band is analogized as the sender of the performance message. In this communication process, *D'Oldies*, one of the groups performing *Tembang Kenangan* at Taman Hiburan Remaja Sriwedari, is seen as the sender of the message. The message in this case is the *Tembang Kenangan* song, while the audience is the recipient of the message. The vocalist plays a key role in delivering the message, as they are more likely to establish communication with the audience. The message refers to the content of the lyrics sung by the vocalist. The effectiveness of the message delivery depends on how well the audience captures the message. The message will reach the audience more effectively if the song is performed with deep emotional expression. The roles of the Guitar, Bass, Piano, and Drum players are also crucial. Without them, the performance would not be able to take place as intended. As Santosa (2011) explains, there are three elements involved in the communication process: the sender (communicator), the message, and the receiver. Imagination is the process that enhances the

audience's sensitivity to find logical connections between the song and their new thoughts about their past experiences. During this process, the intensity and reflective capacity of each audience member vary. This variation is influenced not only by the personal experiences of the audience but also by their different cognitive patterns. As Santosa (2014) states, "Unlike the physical realm, which exists outside of the audience, the psychological realm has the freedom to shape itself, and therefore its manifestation is not the same between one audience member and another."

In addition, each audience member has a different purpose for attending the performance, ranging from simply enjoying the entertainment to experiencing nostalgia. This depends on the individual's level of interest. Interest is defined as a feeling of curiosity or a desire to learn more about something (Megawati et al., 2022). The audience, familiar with *Tembang Kenangan*, can easily create a psychological construct within themselves. This process makes the audience more sensitive in finding logical relationships between the song and their thoughts and emotions. Subsequently, this state will influence a person's emotions. Djohan explains that emotions should not be seen as something abstract, such as just anger or happiness, but rather as an actual moment of emotional feelings expressed in specific situations and cultures (Salim, 2006).

Imaginary Processes in the Audience While Listening to *Tembang Kenangan*

When listening to *Tembang Kenangan*, there are two types of cases in which the audience engages in imagination. The first case involves the audience imagining the exact events that occurred in the past when the song was originally heard. The memory of past events can resurface in the audience's mind, triggered by the playing of the associated song. This process does not require a high level of concentration or emotional immersion because the power of the song itself can immediately transport the audience back to their past memories. On a subconscious level, the audience finds it easier to recall past events.

The second case involves the audience experiencing a more intense imaginative process. This process requires the audience to engage more deeply, to feel and pay attention to the song. In this case, the song does not directly represent a past event, but its power lies in the meaning or story embedded in the lyrics. How the narrative flow of the lyrics can touch the heart and lead the audience to imagine and relate the song's lyrics to their own past experiences. The interpretation of each audience member regarding the storyline within the song forms a series of mental images of past events, which is referred to as redintegration.

Changes in the audience's emotions or psychological state are not immediately visible, but can be observed through reactions such as facial expressions or movements that accompany the performance of *Tembang Kenangan*. The audience can be seen clapping their hands and tapping their feet, nodding their heads, or singing along. According to Djohan, music serves more as a representation of a symbol, equipped with the potential to evoke various emotions such as laughter, tears, enjoyment, or displeasure, and to leave a lasting impression in different ways (Salim, 2010).

Audience Response

The audience's activity when attending and watching the *Tembang Kenangan* performance can be seen in various ways, such as clapping their hands, tapping their feet, shaking their heads, and moving their lips along with the melody of the songs. While the psychological influence on the audience may not be immediately apparent, after experiencing the process of redintegration, visible responses begin to emerge. Musical communication requires an aesthetic understanding, which demands a deeper capacity for reflection and imagination. Therefore, even though the audience may not seem deeply engaged (especially when they do not explicitly express their reactions during the performance), in reality, they are undergoing a high-intensity psychological process while processing the message of the performance (Santosa, 2011).

The visible responses that emerge are influenced by the conditions the audience experienced during that time. When the audience is listening to a song whose vocal text content

is about sadness, the reality of the listener seems to dramatize their feelings in response to the lyrics and melody. This dramatic expression can be observed when the audience sings along wholeheartedly or remains silent. On the other hand, when listening to a song with cheerful lyrics, the listeners appear to be happy. In other cases, kinetic cues, such as tapping hands, clapping, foot-stomping, or swaying their bodies to the rhythm of the song, may be evident.

However, not all listeners respond to music in the same way. Djohan explains that when listening to music, one important factor to consider is what enables someone (the listener) to recall past events through music (Salim, 2005). Unconsciously, music can cause listeners to tap their feet, clap their hands, become immersed in the song, daydream, recall specific experiences, and evoke emotions. This perspective helps explain the various forms of listener responses to music.

Music groups, especially the vocalists, sometimes encourage the audience to sing along with part of the song being played, or even invite them to clap along to the rhythm. The *Tembang Kenangan* performance is still quite popular with a segment of society, either because of their love for the legendary music groups from the past, their appreciation of the groups' works that resonate with their tastes, or because the themes of *Tembang Kenangan* songs, which typically relate to love, social phenomena, and so on, strike a chord with them. When listening to *Tembang Kenangan*, people may experience nostalgia by reflecting on their past. This is because *Tembang Kenangan* has a special power tied to its vocal lyrics or because the songs seem to resonate with personal life experiences, making them feel as though the songs represent the listener's own emotions.



Figure 6 and 7. Photos of the Audience's Communication with the Vocalist of *D'Oldies* Group during the *Tembang Kenangan* Performance in Front of the Stage at THR Sriwedari (Wardani, April 8, 2016)

Cooke's statement in Djohan's book *Musical Emotion Response* suggests that emotional responses to music "remain alive and develop even after the parts are no longer heard," thus contributing to the overall response (Salim, 2010). In other words, in such situations, what the listener perceives is not consciously acknowledged knowledge, but implicit (subconscious) knowledge shaped by the listener's own life experiences. In this case, the triggering factors that lead a person to undergo the process of redintegration cause the audience to express reactions when they go through a psychological process tied to past life experiences.

At times, people may not realize that when they listen to music, they are going through the stages of nostalgia, such as communicating with the performers, imagining thoughts, and eventually reacting to the song being played. If all three processes are fulfilled, the reactions from the audience—whether physical or non-physical—during the "remembering" activity can proceed smoothly. The benefit of watching a *Tembang Kenangan* performance becomes an alternative for older audiences to enjoy and engage in nostalgic activities related to their past. This serves as an example of how music can act as a stimulus to trigger memories of past events.

CONCLUSION

The *Tembang Kenangan* performance at Taman Hiburan Remaja (THR) Sriwedari serves as an alternative form of entertainment for visitors, allowing them to enjoy and reminisce through songs that were once popular in the past. Such an activity offers considerable benefits for the audience, as it represents an effort to recall events from their personal histories. The occurrence of nostalgic experiences requires a certain cognitive process. Redintegration is defined as a mental process involving the brain's effort to search for and retrieve information (memories of the past), specifically events or experiences previously lived by an individual (the act of remembering).

When recalling past memories, the nostalgic process involves several interconnected stages: communication (interaction between the audience and the music group, and vice versa), imagination (thinking or fantasizing about the past), and the audience's response (emotional or behavioral reactions triggered by listening to the music) during redintegration. In essence, communication requires a connection between a message sender and a receiver. The communication process aims to transfer messages from the music group D'Oldies (as the sender) to the audience (as the receiver). There are several forms of communication evident during the *Tembang Kenangan* performance at THR Sriwedari. D'Oldies communicates with the audience by performing a repertoire of nostalgic songs, while the audience expresses themselves by requesting songs—either through the MC or directly to one of the D'Oldies vocalists. Another form of communication occurs through the interaction between the vocalist and the audience, such as when they respond to one another while singing (sing-alongs). The vocalist may also invite the audience to clap along to the rhythm of the song being performed.

The *Tembang Kenangan* performances at THR Sriwedari have made a significant contribution to the audience's redintegration process, transporting them back into their past memories. Through music, the audience not only experiences entertainment but also becomes emotionally engaged with memories evoked by the songs. This process illustrates the strong connection between music, memory, and emotion in human life. *Tembang Kenangan* music, with its meaningful lyrics and familiar melodies, possesses the power to evoke recollections of past events and influence the audience's emotional responses. This study highlights how music can serve as an effective medium for stimulating the recollection of past experiences.

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