

Nurfauzi Krisna's Interpretation in His Performance of "Lagu Biasa" by R.A.J. Soedjasmin

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Article Details	ABSTRACT
Article History Received October 6, 2025 Revised July 8, 2026 Accepted July 15, 2026	The purpose of this study is to examine interpretations of the composition "Lagu Biasa" by R.A.J. Soedjasmin and to analyze Nurfauzi Krisna's interpretation in his performance of the piece. The research method used is qualitative research, supported by journals, literature, and studies. The data consisted of relevant previous journal articles, expert theories, interview results, and documentation. The results of the study indicate that the song "Lagu Biasa" by R.A.J. Soedjasmin is a musical adaptation of Chairil Anwar's poetry in the form of a serious song. This song uses an andantino tempo, varied dynamics, changes in meter, and key modulations to build emotional nuance. Nurfauzi Krisna's interpretation demonstrates a good command of rhythm, tempo, and intonation, though dynamics and vocal timbre still need improvement.
Keywords Interpretation Singing Serious Ordinary Song R.A.J. Soedjasmin	
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1. INTRODUCTION

Music possesses a universal power that can touch the human soul and emotions, transcending cultural and temporal boundaries. Song interpretation, as one of the approaches in this study, allows us to explore the meanings embedded within musical works. According to (Kaelan) Interpretation is a form of art that conveys meaning indirectly yet remains clearly understandable to listeners or audiences. From this explanation, it can be concluded just how important interpretation is in performing a musical work.

The introduction of Western music to Indonesia began around the 16th century when Europeans explored the East in search of gold and spices. This was followed by the Portuguese, who conquered Malacca in 1511, and then by the Dutch, who arrived around the end of the 16th century. (Vetter, 1996). Indonesian musical traditions, passed down from generation to generation, contain elements of belief, values, and interpretations that are integral to community life. These elements shape a cultural identity manifested in cultural, social, and built environments. (Karyawanto, Sarjoko, & Dewi, 2022). In her research (Dewi, 2019) Dewi states that Indonesia is one of the countries that was physically colonized in the past. According to (Tjaroko & Bramantyo, 2007) Serious music was introduced to Indonesia by the Dutch in the 16th century. Seriosa music was first pioneered by Cornel Simanjuntak, an Indonesian composer, in the 1930s.

Serious songs are composed using Western musical techniques, such as the use of scales, clear and precise articulation, and accurate intonation when singing the notes written in the song (Manalu, 2014). Evidence of musical evolution lies in the changes and adaptations in form, genre, technique, delivery, and performance style of a piece of music or song. One example is the seriosa, an Indonesian vocal composition adapted from the German Lied, a form of song consisting of one, two, or three-line stanzas. (Prier, 2011). According to the explanation, seriosa is a type of song or music that is serious in nature, whether in vocal or instrumental form, possessing high artistic and technical value and regarded as a work of art in the world of music. Combining

artistic values unique to Indonesia, with vocal production techniques that incorporate both German and Italian singing styles, this singing technique is known in Indonesia as “Seriosa” (meaning “serious”), which refers to an art song with poetic lyrics intended for vocal performance featuring a steady vibrato, full volume, and a high level of mastery in solfeggio.

Vocal music is a type of music that focuses primarily on the human voice, as reinforced by (Simanungkalit) Vocal music is music whose sound originates from the human voice, whereas instrumental music is music whose sound originates from musical instruments. In line with this explanation, Siahaan (Siahaan & Sihombing) explains that the voice refers to a musical instrument produced by the vocal cords attached to the human body, and it is an instrument that is deeply tied to the individual. Vocal music also involves specific techniques or methods for singing well. According to Sinaga (Sinaga) Vocal technique is a method or approach for producing sound optimally and efficiently, so that the resulting sound is clear, beautiful, melodious, resonant, and technically sound in accordance with the principles of singing. Therefore, a singer must pay attention to and properly apply vocal techniques in every performance. (Soewito) points out that several elements often considered in vocal training include body posture, breathing, articulation, resonance, phrasing, and expression.

One of the composers who has made a significant contribution to the development of Indonesian music is R.A.J. Soedjasmin, a maestro known for his works rich in aesthetic value and reflecting local cultural identity. His full name is Raden Aloysius Joseph Soedjasmin; he was born in Muntilan in 1913. R.A.J. Soedjasmin completed his education in 1983 at the Dutch Catholic Church Music Institute in Utrecht, the Netherlands (Gati, 2018). (Gati) also notes that R.A.J. Soedjasmin returned to Indonesia in 1983 after completing his education in the Netherlands. Subsequently, Soedjasmin joined the Indonesian National Police Music Corps as a Brigadier General. He later joined the Mertoyudan National Police Academy (SPN) and was assigned by the SPN Director at the time, R. Soebarkah. This assignment marked the beginning of music education within the police force.

One of R.A.J. Soedjasmin’s famous works is “Lagu Biasa,” which is classified as an *Indonesian Art Song* (Tembang Puitik). According to Gati (2018:33), “Lagu Biasa” depicts the atmosphere of a meeting between two characters interacting on the terrace of a restaurant, who then show mutual interest and emotional attraction toward one another. R.A.J. Soedjasmin harmoniously integrated various musical elements in composing “Lagu Biasa.” In this work, the “Les Toreadors” motif from Georges Bizet’s opera “Carmen” is developed and integrated with the “Alberti Bass” figuration characteristic of Mozart’s compositional style, creating a musical atmosphere that flows gently, reminiscent of the “Ave Maria” in the Bach-Gounod version. “Alberti Bass” was commonly used in compositions for the clavi-cymbal or organ in the 18th century. (Banoe, 2003). According to Simamora and Indah (SIMAMORA & INDAH) The term “Classical” in the history of Western music refers to a significant period spanning the 18th and early 19th centuries, situated between the Baroque and Romantic eras. Based on an analysis of the musical style in the work “Lagu Biasa,” R.A.J. Soedjasmin appears to have adopted a musical approach characteristic of the Classical era. This approach not only provides a structured and balanced musical framework but also aims to transport the listener into a distinct atmosphere—one that adds a new dimension to the meaning and interpretation of the poetic text used.

“Lagu Biasa” was composed by R.A.J. Soedjasmin in 1955, based on the poem “Lagu Biasa” by Chairil Anwar, written in 1943. Chairil Anwar is a highly significant figure in the history of Indonesian literature. Chairil Anwar was not only a talented poet but also a brave and tenacious fighter and hero. Sutjiatiningsih (Sutjiatiningsih) explains in her book that Chairil Anwar was born on July 26, 1922, in Medan. Chairil Anwar’s family was well-respected in the civil service; his father’s name was Tulus, his mother’s was Saleha, and his older sister’s was Chairani. Chairil Anwar began his schooling at the Hollandsch Inlandsche School (HIS) in Medan, then continued to *MULO* in Medan. He then moved to Jakarta, which at the time—was still known as Batavia. Chairil Anwar married his wife, Hapsyah, on September 6, 1946, and they were blessed with a daughter named Evawani Alissa. Chairil Anwar passed away on April 28, 1949, at the age of 27.

Nurfauzi Krisna is a singer who performs “Lagu Biasa” by R.A.J. Soedjasmin. Nurfauzi Krisna Miyanto—often called Nurfauzi—is a singer of classical seriosa, keroncong, and choral music. Nurfauzi has performed many Indonesian classical songs, including “Lagu Biasa” by R.A.J. Soedjasmin, which he uploaded to his *YouTube* channel, “Nurfauzi Krisna Miyanto.” Nurfauzi has achieved numerous accomplishments in music, particularly in vocal arts. He has won many awards in various competitions, including:

- 1st Place in the Bass Section at the 2023 Gita Bahana Nusantara auditions at the DIY level
- First Place in the Men’s Classical Singing Competition at the 2023 National Indonesian Performing Arts Festival
- 2nd Place in the Men’s Keroncong Singing Competition at the 2023 National Indonesian Performing Arts Festival
- First Place in the Choir Competition at the 2023 National Indonesian Performing Arts Festival

- Third Place in the Men's Classical Singing Competition at the 2023 National Literature and Arts Competition

Given his numerous and impressive achievements, the researcher chose Nurfauzi as the subject of this study. Nurfauzi has demonstrated excellence in singing; his achievements span from the regional to the national level, making him an inspiring figure worthy of study.

(Sundari) has conducted a study titled "From Seriosa Music to Poetic Songs: The History of the Development of Art Songs in Indonesia." The main focus is on the influx of Western musical influences into Indonesia and the important role of formal music education institutions in shaping modern musical traditions. Through historical study and literature review, this research demonstrates that the term "art song" in Indonesia has undergone a terminological shift—from "Seriosa Music," rooted in classical Western influences, toward "Poetic Songs," which emphasize local character and poetic expression in vocal music. This research shares a common focus on the analysis of Indonesian classical Seriosa music.

(Taryadi & Latif) have also conducted a study titled "Interpretation of Baroque Music in Handel's 'The Trumpet Shall Sound.'" The study focuses on the musical interpretation of this work, applying theories of musical form, musical structure, Baroque-era principles of musical interpretation, and the distinctive musical expressions of that period. The similarity lies in the analysis's focus on the interpretation of musical works.

A related study was also conducted by (Welhelmina) titled "Analysis of Singing Techniques in the Indonesian Seriosa Song 'Gadis Bernyanyi Nyaring Di Cerah Hari' by Mochtar Embut." This research is a qualitative study that examines singing techniques in Indonesian serious songs, focusing on the song "Gadis Bernyanyi Nyaring di Cerah Hari" by Mochtar Embut. Although the serious genre is not yet very popular among the general public, its existence remains important and worthy of study because it possesses high artistic value. Songs by Indonesian composers demonstrate musical quality on par with international works, requiring singers to possess a high level of mastery of vocal technique. Every serious song has a complex musical structure and lyrics, which require a solid understanding of singing techniques to convey the song's message, meaning, and background fully and effectively to the audience. The findings of this study, which examines the works of Indonesian composers, reveal the following similarities.

(Siburian) In her research titled "The Form of Presentation and Interpretation of the Composition *The Nutcracker*, Op. 71: *A Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy* by Gamzatova," she also explains the findings of her research, which focuses on the interpretation of musical works. This study aims to examine the forms of musical presentation and interpretation displayed by Gamzatova, including rhythmic patterns, musical instruments, costumes, stage design, and piano-playing techniques. This study analyzes the interpretation of musical compositions.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze Nurfauzi Krisna's interpretation of R.A.J. Soedjasmin's "Lagu Biasa." It is hoped that the results of this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of Indonesian musical works and serve as a concrete step toward preserving the nation's musical heritage.

2. METHOD

The study titled "Nurfauzi Krisna's Interpretation in Singing Ordinary Songs by R.A.J. Soedjasmin" employs a qualitative approach; that is, this research aims to comprehensively study and explore information and phenomena as understood by the research subjects, such as behavior, perceptions, motivations, and actions. The research was conducted through verbal descriptions in a natural context, utilizing various qualitative methods that are natural and appropriate to the situation being studied. (Lexy, 2007).

In this study, the researcher focused on Nurfauzi Krisna Miyanto as the primary subject. The focus of this study is on Nurfauzi's interpretation of the song "Lagu Biasa" by R.A.J. Soedjasmin. The researcher is interested in analyzing how Nurfauzi sings and conveys the song's message. In qualitative research, the research subject is an informant or source who provides research data. (Mukhtazar, 2020). In qualitative research, the research subject is an informant or source who provides the research data. (Mukhtazar, 2020). The research subject in this study is Mr. Musafir Isfanhari, an expert in classical music. The researcher also included informants who are active listeners of classical music and possess in-depth knowledge of R.A.J. Soedjasmin's *Lagu Biasa*, namely Ruhannah Renanda Agustinah and Charles Ching Rumpuin, as subjects from whom to gather research data.

The data sources in this study are divided into two types: primary and secondary. According to Sugiyono (D. Sugiyono) Primary and secondary data sources are types of data sources that provide information to researchers, either directly or indirectly. Primary data is data obtained directly from informants; in this study, primary data was obtained from the sheet music for "Lagu Biasa" by R.A.J. Soedjasmin and from interviews with the informants involved. Secondary data, on the other hand, is data obtained not directly from informants but from other sources, such as documents. Observation was conducted systematically to collect data. Observation is a data collection technique with greater specificity than other methods, as it involves direct observation of the objects or phenomena under study. (A. Sugiyono).

In this case, the study of the song “Lagu Biasa” by RAJ Soedjasmin was conducted by analyzing the musical score and watching the music video online, and by collecting data through interviews to obtain authentic and accurate information from the research subjects. An interview is defined as a conversation between two or more parties with a specific purpose. (Moleong & Surjaman, 2014) . In this study, the researcher used semi-structured interviews. The researcher conducted interviews to collect data from the research subjects. The research subject was Mr. Musafir Isfanhari, a classical music expert. The researcher also consulted additional sources, including classical music enthusiasts and individuals with in-depth knowledge of R.A.J. Soedjasmin’s Lagu Biasa, namely Ruhannah Renanda Agustinah and Charles Ching Rumpuin.

In this study, the documentation consists of the researcher’s direct interviews with the research informants, as well as photographs and sheet music for “Lagu Biasa.” Documentation is a record of past events. The collection of material or recorded evidence—such as photographs or videos taken on-site during data collection—constitutes documentation. Documentation is essential because it reinforces the data obtained during observations and interviews. (Lexy, 2007) . In this study, data were collected through several literature reviews. The researcher gathered various sources relevant to the works of R.A.J. Soedjasmin, particularly the work “Lagu Biasa.” These sources include several books and scholarly articles discussing the works of R.A.J. Soedjasmin. Additionally, the researcher sought detailed information regarding the overall interpretation of the song in the study “Partitur *Lagu Biasa*” from the **Anthology of Indonesian Classical Music, Series I: Vocal and Piano ‘Seriosa’**, pages 264–268.

3. RESULT

This chapter presents the results of the analysis and interpretation of Nurfauzi Krisna’s vocal performance of the song “Lagu Biasa” by R.A.J. Soedjasmin. This discussion aims to describe the singer’s interpretation of serious Indonesian music and to reveal how musical elements and an understanding of the work’s background influence vocal performance in classical music concerts.

Interpretation of “Lagu Biasa” by R.A.J. Soedjasmin

A serious classical singer’s performance of a musical work is inseparable from interpretation. The theories of “(Hermerén) and “(Jamalus) are used as approaches to musical analysis—including in the context of vocal interpretation—because they help us understand how these elements are combined and interpreted by the singer.

a. The History of “Lagu Biasa” Music

The musical work “Lagu Biasa” is a poem set to music by R.A.J. Soedjasmin. The poem “Lagu Biasa” was written by Chairil Anwar in 1943 and depicts the inner turmoil characteristic of the era’s poets. Chairil Anwar passed away in 1949, leaving behind several works, including “Lagu Biasa.” In 1955, R.A.J. Soedjasmin, an Indonesian composer and classical musician, adapted this poem into a song with the same title, “Lagu Biasa.” According to Mr. Isfanhari’s explanation,

... This song was not written at the same time as the poem; the poem existed first, and its author, (Sutjiatiningsih) He has passed away. Six years later, the song was written. This was part of the process of adapting the poem into music (interview with Mr. Isfanhari on May 24, 2025).

Mr. Isfanhari defines the musical adaptation of a poem as setting an existing poem to music. R.A.J. Soedjasmin was an Indonesian composer and music educator. R.A.J. Soedjasmin was drawn to this poem for its excellent content and subsequently set it to music. The purpose of setting a poem to music is to clarify and emphasize the meaning of the poem’s verses for the listeners.

b. The Rhythm of “Lagu Biasa”

Overall, “Lagu Biasa” by R.A.J. Soedjasmin uses several variations in note values. The composition is dominated by eighth notes (1/8), which give a flowing, gentle impression. Sixteenth notes (1/16) are used to express emotional intensity and emphasize important words in the lyrics. Meanwhile, half notes (1/2) provide breathing room and create a reflective atmosphere.

“Lagu Biasa” by R.A.J. Soedjasmin is written in 3/4 time; the 3/4 time signature indicates that each measure consists of three beats, each with a quarter-note value. This time signature is commonly associated with a gentle, emotional, swaying rhythm. This rhythmic pattern allows singers to utilize the rubato technique (tempo flexibility) expressively.

In the piece “Lagu Biasa,” R.A.J. Soedjasmin introduces a time signature change in



Image1 , 3/4 Time Signature

(Source: Transcription by M. Iyyaka Bustanul

measures 44–94, where the time signature shifts to 2/4. A 2/4 time signature means each measure consists of two beats, each with the value of a quarter note. In this piece, the 2/4 time signature is not used as the main time signature but appears as a transitional section connecting several segments of the song.



Figure2 , 2/4 Time Signature

(Source: Transcription by M. Iyyaka Bustanul

c. Tempo of “Lagu Biasa”

Generally, “Lagu Biasa” by R.A.J. Soedjasmin is performed at an *Andantino* tempo, within a speed range of approximately 80–108 BPM. However, the tempo in this song is not static; rather, it varies expressively depending on the musical interpretation.



Image3 , Andantino Tempo

(Source: Transcription by M. Iyyaka Bustanul

In the middle section of the song, there is an increase in musical expression, including in terms of tempo. The tempo begins to flow more freely, conveying the emotions that are developing. A *ritardando* (tempo slow down) is used at the end of important phrases to emphasize their meaning.

At measure 44, there is a change in meter and tempo; in the score, this is indicated as “*Tempo di marcia*.” *Tempo di marcia* ranges from 88 to 108 BPM and features a steady, marching



Image4 Tempo di marcia

(Source: Transcription by M. Iyyaka Bustanul

Karim)

rhythm, evoking the footsteps of a marching formation and creating a bold, spirited atmosphere. In this piece, the “*Tempo di marcia*” section serves as a contrast to the preceding section, which tends to have a swaying quality. However, in this section, there is no vocal notation for the entire measure. This indicates that the “*Tempo di marcia*” section is specifically intended for the piano alone, which plays a referential fragment from Georges Bizet’s “Carmen.”

d. The Dynamics of “Lagu Biasa”

In terms of dynamics, Soedjasmin wrote rich notations such as piano (*p*), mezzo forte (*mf*), and forte (*f*), as well as crescendo and decrescendo. This creates an emotional journey that rises and falls in accordance with the lyrics, including fragments that quote motifs from “Carmen” and “Ave Maria,” which provide contrasting colors.

e. Tonal Color

The tonal character of this song is clearly evident in its wide vocal range, spanning from the lowest note, B-flat, to the highest note, F5. The song also features a modulation from A-sharp to B-flat and back, enhancing musical expression while demanding flexibility from the singer.

Nurfauzi Krisna’s Interpretation of R.A.J. Soedjasmin’s “Lagu Biasa”

The researcher conducted interviews with several listeners who served as validators, assessors, and evaluators of a musical performance. The informants interviewed were Mr. Musafir Isfanhari, Ruhannah Renanda Agustinah, and Charles Ching Rumpuin. These three informants were selected based on their ability to assess the quality and delivery of Nurfauzi Krisna’s performance of “Lagu Biasa” by R.A.J. Soedjasmin.

In terms of rhythm, Nurfauzi conveyed the song’s rhythm well. The singer was assessed as having stable rhythmic control, demonstrating an understanding of the phrasing structure in this serious song.

In terms of tempo, Nurfauzi’s tempo was also considered to align well with the instructions in the score. The basic Andantino tempo was maintained consistently. Sections containing rubato and ritardando were rendered subtly, reflecting the singer’s understanding of tempo flexibility in conveying emotion.

Meanwhile, regarding dynamics, the evaluators highlighted an imbalance in the handling of vocal intensity. Although there were sections that demonstrated the use of dynamics ranging from piano to mezzo forte to forte, their application was deemed not yet fully optimized, particularly during the climax, which should have been the song’s emotional peak. The dynamics presented were restrained, failing to convey the emotional outburst fully.

Regarding vocal timbre, the consensus is that the quality of Nurfauzi’s vocal timbre still has room for improvement. The singer’s timbre was deemed not yet rich or consistent enough to convey the character of a serious song that demands a high degree of expressive power. Some parts of the song sounded less rounded and timbre-wise unstable, thereby affecting the conveyance of musical meaning.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on an analysis of the composition of the song “*Lagu Biasa*” by R.A.J. Soedjasmin and the vocal interpretation by Nurfauzi Krisna, this study identified several key findings regarding the relationship between poetry and music, compositional techniques, and the quality of the singer’s interpretation. From these results, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. “Lagu Biasa” is a musical adaptation of a poem by Chairil Anwar (1943), which was set to music as a serious song in 1955 by R.A.J. Soedjasmin.
2. This composition blends elements of Western classical music (quotations from **Carmen** and **Ave Maria**), thereby creating a dynamic emotional atmosphere.
3. Compositional techniques are evident in the use of rhythm, meter, an Andantino tempo, varied dynamics, and a moderate vocal range, making the piece quite flexible for singers.
4. Modulation is used to heighten emotion and support the musical flow.
5. Nurfauzi Krisna’s interpretation demonstrates a good understanding of rhythm and tempo, in accordance with the score.
6. However, the dynamics, timbre, and vocal intensity during the climax were not fully realized, so the emotional expression was not fully conveyed.
7. With improvements in vocal technique, emotional expression, and recording quality, the interpretation of this song can become more compelling, allowing the meaning of Chairil Anwar’s poem to be conveyed more deeply.

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