

Composition and Arrangement Style of Modern Gospel Music: A Musicological Study of the Song "Kunaikkan Syukurku" by NDC Worship

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Article Details	ABSTRACT
Article History Received May 5, 2026 Revised May 5, 2026 Accepted July 9, 2026	Modern gospel music in Indonesia is growing rapidly, alongside the increasing production of contemporary worship works that meet high musical standards. NDC Worship's song "Kunaikkan Syukurku" has been viewed more than 17 million times on YouTube and listened to more than 12 million times on Spotify. However, no systematic academic study has examined its composition and arrangement. This study aims to describe the compositional technique and analyze the characteristics of the modern gospel music arrangement in the song, especially in the Reimagined version. The method used is a qualitative descriptive analysis approach grounded in musicology, using auditory transcription, score observation, document study, and practitioner interviews, with source triangulation as a data validity technique. The results showed that this song was built on the form of two parts (A–B) with 19 beats, developed through sequencing techniques, literal repetition, and interval enlargement, and dominated by deceptive cadence and intense syncopation. The Reimagined version evolved into an 11-part structure with extended chords, a brass section, call-and-response, and harmonic flexibility typical of modern gospel. The research concludes that modern gospel identity is embedded from the basic compositional stage to the final arrangement layer, and that the arrangement's creativity extends beyond the written record.
Keywords Music Analysis Composition Techniques Arrangement Style Modern Gospel Music NDC Worship	
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1. INTRODUCTION

Gospel music is one of the most influential spiritual genres in the development of world popular music. This genre was born in the African-American community, blending spiritual values with a spirit of freedom. Historically, gospel music evolved from simple church singing to a technically rich and expressive form of music (Woog, 2014). Wilson-Dickson (1992) explained that the power of the gospel lies in the combination of energetic rhythms and diverse harmonies, resulting in an emotional and majestic musical experience. Boyer (1979) notes that pioneering figures such as Charles Tindley laid the structural foundations that still influence gospel composition and arrangement today.

In Indonesia, the development of contemporary gospel music has undergone significant changes in the last two decades. Martasudjita (2011) explained that music in worship always adapts to the culture of the time. The *Nafiri Discipleship Church Worship* (NDC Worship) group is one of Indonesia's prominent contemporary worship music groups. NDC Worship is known for its blend of jazz harmonies, funk-gospel rhythms, and sequencers. Simanjuntak and Sejati (2021) found that musical elements such as dynamics and rhythm can encourage more expressive congregational participation in worship.

One of NDC Worship's main works is the song "Kunaikkan Syukurku". Based on data from the NDC Worship YouTube channel, the video for this song has been viewed more than 17 million times (NDC Worship, 2019). On the Spotify platform, the song has been listened to more than 12,3 million times (Kworb, 2025). This achievement shows that the modern gospel style offered by NDC Worship has received widespread support from the Indonesian Christian community. Ingalls (2014) explained that gospel music influences the shaping of the tastes and identities of the worship community.

In 2025, NDC Worship released a new version of the song called *the Reimagined* version. This version features a more dynamic rhythm, a more diverse use of chords, and the addition of a brass section not present in the original. Pratama and Sejati (2022) explained that the development of chords and song structures in the arrangement aims to provide a new, more lively feel. However, the technical elements that comprise the characters in this *version of Reimagined* have never been studied academically.

A common feature of modern Indonesian gospel music is the absence of official scores. The song "Kunaikkan Syukurku" also lacks an officially published score. The only written documents available are the chord notes and lyrics of the arrangements, which serve as a practical guide. Scott (2009) asserts that in popular musicology, sound recordings are the primary medium, and in-depth analysis requires visual representations, such as block notation. Cook (2013) corroborates this opinion by stating that music becomes a complete object of study when it can be analyzed notionally. Therefore, transcription of recordings into block notation is a necessary step in this study.

Several previous studies have examined arrangements of gospel and worship music. Legg and Philpott (2015) found that rhythm, improvisation, and lyrical structure are the main elements that shape the identity of the African-American gospel genre. Adeola (2025) examines the Nigerian gospel composition apparatus using a formal structural analysis approach. At the national level, Nugroho (2024) studied the arrangement of hymns in the journal *Repertoire* and found that musicological analysis can reveal creativity that is not seen in recordings. Naramy (2018) and Gunadi (2017) have also researched the arrangement of Indonesian church hymns, although the focus is primarily on music education. These studies show that there is still a need for more research on modern Indonesian gospel works, such as "Kunaikkan Syukurku".

The *novelty* of this research lies in the comparative approach between arranger records and recording realization. Lerch et al. (2020) noted an interesting difference between the arrangement as written and the one actually played on the recording. Dai et al. (2024) emphasizes that the interconnection among structure, harmony, melody, and rhythm can be understood only in its entirety through an integrated analysis. This study distinguishes between written notes and recording realization as the main objects of analysis, thereby revealing layers of creativity not found in written notes.

Based on this description, this study formulated two objectives. The first goal is to describe the compositional technique of the song "Kunaikkan Syukurku", including its shape, motif development, melody, harmony, and rhythm patterns. The second objective is to analyze the characteristics of *the Reimagined arrangement style, including instrumentation, extended harmony, dynamics, and melody-processing techniques*. Through these two objectives, this research is expected to produce the first academic musicological documentation of modern Indonesian gospel works, serving as a reference for musicians, researchers, and church music practitioners.

2. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative, descriptive-analytical approach. Harahap (2020) explained that qualitative research aims to understand phenomena in depth and present them in the form of detailed descriptions. This approach was chosen because the purpose of the research is to describe the compositional techniques and characteristics of the arrangement style without involving statistical numbers. Methodologically, this study uses the discipline of musicology as the basis of analysis. Kerman (1985) defines musicology as the science that systematically and scientifically studies music, covering its technical, cultural, and meaning aspects. The musicological approach is used to identify and describe the elements of the composition and the modern gospel style in this song.

The object of the research was an audio recording of the song "Kunaik Syukurku" Reimagined, produced by NDC Worship. The selection of this version was based on purposive sampling criteria: the Reimagined version is the most complex form of arrangement of the song and the most publicly accessible. Creswell (2014) suggests that qualitative research be focused on a single phenomenon, carefully narrowed to allow for in-depth exploration. The data source consists of three components: (1) audio recordings from the NDC Worship YouTube channel as primary data; (2) notes of the original chords and lyrics from the arranger as a comparative document; and (3) transcripts of interviews with two church music practitioners as triangulation data.

Data collection was conducted using four techniques. First, a study of documents on audio recordings and chord note arrangements. Scott (2009) explains that sound recordings are a major source in popular musicology research. Second, auditory transcription is the process of listening to recordings repeatedly and writing them in block notation. This process produces two types of scores: simple scores for composition analysis and complete scores for arrangement analysis. Hidayatullah (2022) explained that auditory transcription is a way of converting sound data into visual data that can be studied musicologically. Third, score observation, which is a systematic observation of the notation of transcription results to identify relevant musical elements. Fourth, semi-structured interviews with two church music practitioners to obtain confirmation and a practical perspective on the analysis findings. Creswell (2014) explained that this type of interview aims to explore the views of participants that are not obtained from the document.

The main instrument of qualitative research is the researcher, who serves as planner, data collector, analyst, and reporter of results. As an auxiliary instrument, three analytical guides are used: (1) a guide to the analysis of block notation for composition, covering song form, motif development, melodic movement, functional harmony, and rhythmic patterns based on the theories of Stein (1979), Prier (2015), and Clendinning & Marvin (2016); (2) a guide to the analysis of block notation for arrangement styles, including arrangement structure, melody processing, extended harmony (extended chords, passing chords, chord substitution), texture, and dynamics based on the theories of Kawakami (1975), Levine (1995), and Schoenberg (1967); and (3) an arrangement comparison instrument, which juxtaposes arrangement notes with recording transcriptions to identify creative shifts as novelty points of research.

The validity of the data is ensured through triangulation of sources: audio recordings and transcriptional scores, academic literature, and information from practitioner sources. Alfansyur and Mariyani (2020) explained that source triangulation is a technique to test the validity of data by comparing information from various sources. This step is especially important for interpreting complex chords. Data analysis follows the qualitative model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana. (2014) through four stages: (1) data reduction, filtering information relevant to compositional and arrangement elements from recordings, arrangement notes, and interview transcripts; (2) auditory-notation verification, aligning the auditory results with the visual evidence on the score; (3) presentation of data in the form of notation cuts, chord comparison tables, and comparative analysis; and (4) drawing conclusions that connect the findings with the theoretical foundation. This entire process is designed so that every analytical claim can be scientifically verified and accounted for

3. RESULT

The results of the analysis are presented in three subsections: (1) analysis of basic song composition techniques, (2) analysis of the arrangement style of the *Reimagined version*, and (3) comparative analysis between arrangement notes and recording realization. Data were obtained through auditory transcription, score observation, document analysis, and interviews with two church music practitioners, which were then triangulated to validate the findings.

3.1 NDC Worship Profile and Song "Kunaikkan Syukurku"

NDC Worship is a music ministry team from Nafiri Discipleship Church (NDC) based in Jakarta. The group became widely known through NDC's debut album, *Worship Live at Baywalk* (2015), and has consistently produced quality contemporary worship music. The song "Kunaikkan Syukurku" was first presented in the album *Purify* (2019) and was co-written by Joseph S. Djafar, Samuel Malik, Melodi Malinda, Maria Priscilla, and Joshua Sentosa. In 2025, Joshua Sentosa, as Music Director, composed a reimagined version that was performed in the *Live from Surrender* concert. This *reimagined* version is the main object of study.

3.2 Analysis of the Compositional Technique of the Song "Kunaikkan Syukurku"

Analysis of compositional techniques was carried out on the basic song "Kunaikkan Syukurku," which consists of 19 beats and is marked in 4/4 rhythm in the F Major scale. The analysis includes six elements: song form, sentence structure, motif processing, melody, harmony, and rhythm patterns.

3.2.1 Song Form

The song "Kunaikkan Syukurku" is classified in the form of two parts with the pattern A (a a') and B (b b'). Part A covers bars 1-10 and serves as an introduction to musical ideas. Part B covers bars 11 to 19 and serves as the closing of the musical statement as a whole. The consequential phrase in each sentence is a variation of the antecedent phrase, not just a repetition. Stein (1979, p. xi) explains that the two-part shape provides clear direction for the musical material through the balance between the parts. Prier (2015, p. 5) added that the form of music is the arrangement of all musical elements that form a complete whole.

3.2.2 Sentence Structure

Sentence A consists of antecedent phrases (scales 1–4) and consequent phrases (scales 5–10). Sentence B consists of an antecedent phrase (scales 11–15) and a consequential phrase (scales 16–19). The question-and-answer relationship between phrases creates a logical, easy-to-sing melodic groove. Schoenberg (1967, p. 3) explained that a phrase is a musical idea characterized by a closing in the form of a cadence. Prier (2015, pp. 2–3) adds that musical sentences reflect the relationship between questions and answers.



Figure 1. Sentences A: antecedent phrase, measures 1-4.



Figure 2. Sentences B: antecedent phrase, measures 11-

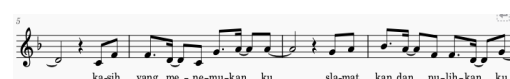


Figure 3. Sentences A: consequent phrase, measures 5-8—figure 4. Sentences B: consequent phrase, measures 14-16.

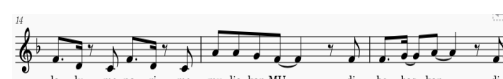


Figure 5. Sentences A: consequent phrase, measure 9-10—figure 6. Sentences B: consequent phrase, measures 17-19.



Source: Personal Transcription

Source: Personal Transcription

3.2.3 Motif Development

The development of motifs in this song is carried out through four techniques. First, the literal repetition: the m motif in the antecedent phrase of sentence A with an ascending quartet interval (c^1-f^1) is repeated in full at the beginning of the subsequent phrase of sentence A. Second, the ascending sequence: the m motif develops into the m1 motif with a large ascending tert (f^1-a^1), and the m2 motif with a large ascending second (g^1-a^1). Third, the enlargement of the interval: the motif o in part B that originally moved in the prim interval (a^1-a^1) develops into the motif o1 with a large ascending sext interval (c^1-a^1). Fourth, the magnification of the tone value: several motifs in the consequential phrase get an additional duration at the end of the sentence. Prier (2015(pp. 27–34) formulates seven ways of processing motifs common in tonal music, and includes the above techniques. Schoenberg (1967, p. 8) called the motif the smallest unit on which the entire composition is based.

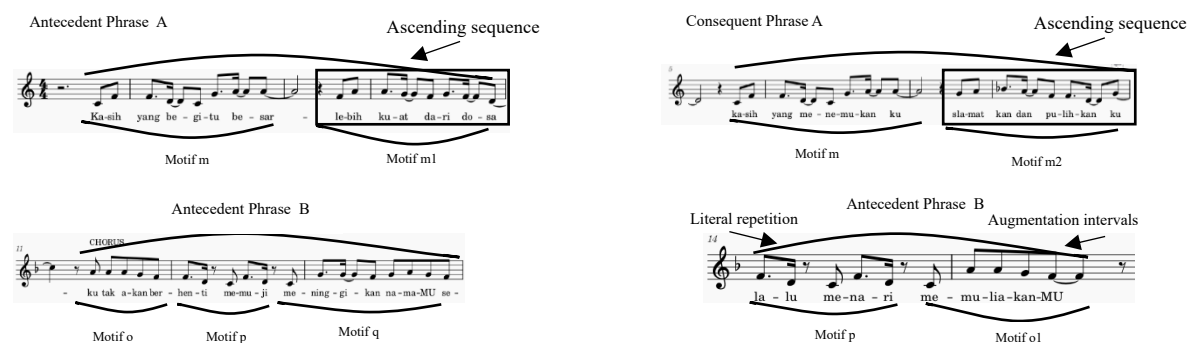


Figure 7. Motif Development, Sentence A and Sentence B

Source: Personal Transcription

3.2.4 Melody

The melody of this song is built from a diverse but structured range of intervals. In the antecedent phrase of sentence A, the melody begins at an ascending quart interval (c^1-f^1), then moves through the notes $f^1-d^1-c^1-g^1$ and ends at a^1 . In the consequential phrase of sentence B, the motif o1 uses a large ascending sext interval (c^1-a^1). Overall, the melody makes use of quartet, terts, seconds, and sext intervals. This movement is not too narrow so that it seems monotonous, and not too wide so that it is difficult for the congregation to sing. Jamalus (1988, p. 16) defines melody as a series of notes that are rhythmic and express a musical idea. Forney and Machlis (2011, p. 10) Call it the core of a musical work that is most memorable and hummed. The resource person stated that an easy-to-sing melody is a deliberate choice to enable the song to be sung together in worship.

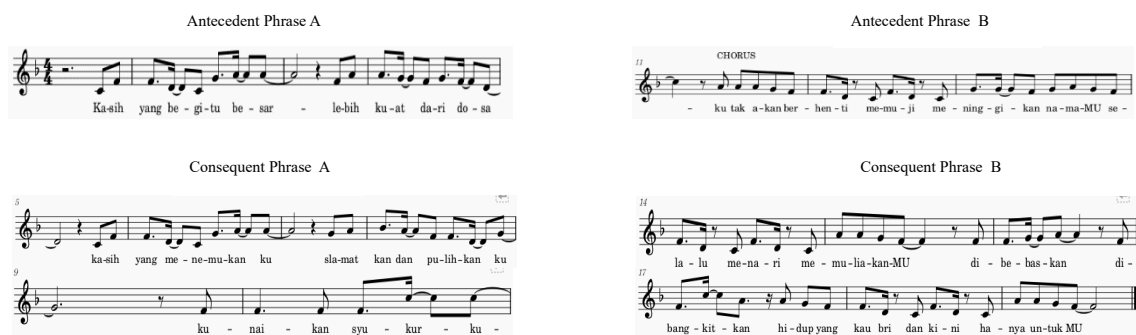


Figure 8. The melody of the song Sentence A and Sentence B
Source: Personal Transcription

3.2.5 Harmony and Cadence

The harmony of this song is built on the F Major scale. Two types of cadences dominate the harmonic course: *deceptive cadence* (V–vi) and *half cadence* (ii–V or IV–V). In sentence A, the progression IV–V–VI is repeated sequentially, so the harmony feels as if it continues to move without a complete closure. The definitive closure only occurs in the 18–19 scale, where the IV–I–V–I progression presents an *authentic cadence* as the end of the song. Table 1 summarizes all harmonic progressions along with their tonal functions and types of cadence.

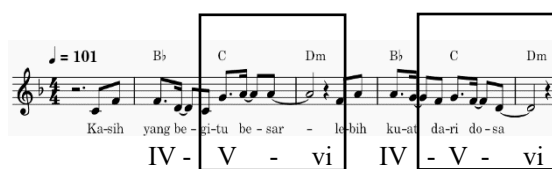


Figure 9. Harmony of antecedent phrase A.
Source: Personal Transcription

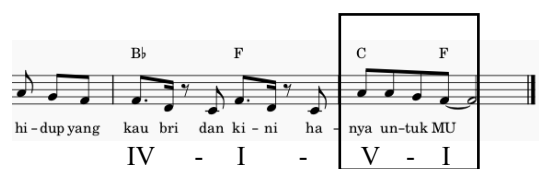


Figure 10. Harmony of consequent phrase B, measures 18-19.
Source: Personal Transcription

The deceptive cadence that dominates this song gives the impression of a harmony that flows without ever stopping. Schoenberg (1967, p. 21) Called deceptive cadence, an effective technique for lengthening phrases and avoiding closing too early.

3.2.6 Rhythm Pattern of The Composition

The rhythmic pattern that dominates this song is syncopation. Synopsis is realized through the use of *dotted quavers* (dotted eighths), *ties* between beats, and the inclusion of sounds in the hanging beat. At bars 9–10, the first sound appears in the weak fourth beat, not in the strong first beat. This pattern occurs consistently from the first rhythm to the last rhythm. Clendinning and Marvin (2016, p. 35) define syncopation as a rhythmic technique that shifts accents from strong to weak beats and identify it as a hallmark of modern gospel rhythms. Legg and Philpott (2015) found something similar in African-American gospel, where syncopation is the most dominant element in shaping genre identity. The interviewee called syncopation "singkup" and stated that it was the life of the song, making it feel less rigid.



Figure 11. Rhythm pattern of consequent phrases A (bars 9-10).
Source: Personal Transcription

3.2.7 Data Triangulation of Compositional Techniques

Table 1 presents a comparison of the analysis findings, the sources' statements, and the theoretical basis for each element of the composition.

Table 1. Triangulation of Composition Technique Data Sources

Composition Elements	Analysis Findings	Informant Statement	Theoretical Foundations
Song Form	Two parts (A–B), 19 beats, pattern A(a a') and B(b b')	The structure is made to flow so that the lyrical message is conveyed intact	The shape of the two parts gives a clear direction through the balance between the parts (Stein, 1979; Prayer, 2015)
Motif Development	Literal repetition, ascending sequence, interval magnification, and tonal value magnification	The motifs are easy to understand and fit the popular music genre	Motive is the smallest unit and the basis of the growth of the composition (Schoenberg, 1967, p. 8; Prayer, 2015, pp. 27–34)
Melody	Interval kuart, tert, sek, sext; berkembang dari motif dasar	Melodies are designed to be sung together	Melodies are a series of rhythmic notes that express ideas (Jamalus, 1988, p. 16; Forney & Machlis, 2011, p. 10)
Harmony	Dominance of deceptive cadence (V–vi) and half cadence; Authentic Cadence only in the last cadence	Progressions that do not end on a tonic are chosen to keep the song flowing.	Deception cadence effectively lengthens the phrase (Schoenberg, 1954, p. 21; 1954, p. 20)
Rhythm Pattern	Dominance of syncopation (dotted quaver and tie) throughout sentences	"Syncopation" is a song that does not feel stiff	Syncopation shifts the accents to weak beats, a hallmark of modern gospel (Clendinning & Marvin, 2016, p. 35)

Source: Researcher's Data Analysis (Mathias Diasmara Arfeni, 2026)

3.3 Analysis of the Arrangement Style of the "Reimagined" Version

The *Reimagined* version develops the 19-track basic song into a 97-track musical that is divided into 11 parts: Intro1– Song(Chorus)1– Intro2– Song(Verse1, PreChorus1, Chorus2)– Intro3 – Song (Verse2, PreChorus2, Chorus3)–Intro4–Bridge–Interlude–Song(Chorus4Chorus5)–Coda. The entire structure moves in the F Major scale, in 4/4 time, at 101 BPM. The arrangement of the pieces is designed to build to a gradual increase in musical intensity towards the climax. Sanjaya (2013, p. 35) explained that rearranging the song part and adding new ideas is an important step in building the intensity of the arrangement.

3.3.1 Arrangement structure and Instrumentation

The first characteristic identified in this arrangement is the placement of *the Chorus* immediately after Intro 1, on bars 7 to 14. In conventional worship song arrangements, *the verse* is generally placed before *the chorus*. Choosing the chorus as the opening is a strategy to introduce the song's main theme directly to the listener. Setiawan and Harbas (2023) emphasized that modern church music arrangements are tasked with managing the flow of energy and worship dynamics.

In terms of instrumentation, this arrangement uses a *full combo* format consisting of a drum set, electric bass, electric guitar, keyboard/synthesizer, and *lead synth*. Brass sections (trumpets and trombones), *handbells*, *lead guitar*, and *sequencer* technology for *beat loops* are also added in the opening section. Woog (2014, pp. 77–78) explains that modern gospel replaces traditional pianos and organs with a full band format supported by technology. Table 2 shows the distribution of the instrument and its musical function in each part of the arrangement.

Table 2. Instrumentation of the Arrangement Section

Sections	Bars	Main Instruments	Musical Function
Intro 1	1–6	Brass, lead synth, handbells, lead guitar, full combo, sequencer	Introduction of melodic themes; Opening
Chorus 1	7–14	Full combo, brass, synth pluck, vokal	Early climax; Song Identity Affirmation
Intro 2	15–18	Brass, full combo	Links to verse
Verse 1 + PreChorus1	19–28	Synth pluck, full combo masuk bertahap	Improved dynamics; Vocal Expression Space
Chorus 2	29–36	Full combo penuh	Climax after increased dynamics

Intro 3	37–40	Brass, handbells, lead synth, full combo	Liaison; increased energy
Verse 2 + PreChorus2	41–50	Full combo, brass, synth pluck, lead guitar, handbells	The texture is denser; Chorus 3 preparation
Chorus 3	51–58	Full combo + brass (pengisi melodi)	Climax with active brass
Intro 4 + Bridge	59–66	Brass, lead synth, handbells, full combo	Connecting to the interlude
Interlude	67–78	Solo slap bass, brass, organ, full combo	Texture variations; call and response
Chorus 4	79–86	Vokal+drum (breakdown) → full combo+brass	Energy reduction and replenishment
Chorus 5	87–94	Full combo + brass aktif, ad-lib vokal	The highest climax of the song
Coda	95–96	Full combo, brass, lead synth, handbells, lead guitar	Song Ending

Source: Researcher's Data Analysis (Mathias Diasmara Arfeni, 2026)

3.3.2 Harmonic Construction of Arrangement

Harmony is the most defining aspect of modern gospel in this arrangement. There are four harmonic techniques consistently applied. First, the use of *extended chords*: chords such as Bbmaj7, Dm9, Dm11, Am7, Gm7, and A7 are present in almost every section. Levine (1995, pp. 33–35) explains that *extended chords* with the addition of 7th, 9th, 11th, and 13th notes result in richer harmonic colors and are characteristic of modern gospel. Second, the use of *slash chords* such as Gm/C, Bb/D, C/E, and D/F#. *Slash chords* are used to produce smooth bass movements, making harmonic displacements feel smoother. Third, the use of *passing chords*: Gm7 and Am7 appear as a link between the main chords in Intro 3 and Chorus 4 to smooth the transition (Levine, 1995, pp. 303–350). Fourth, the use of *interchange capital*: the presence of Ebmaj7 in the rhythms of 77–78 in the Interlude section is a borrowed chord from another scale. Clendinning and Marvin (2016(pp. 530–531) explain that this technique involves a sudden shift in emotional nuances without leaving the main tonal center.

The progression that most often appears in this arrangement is Bbmaj7–A7–Dm7. In tonal functions, this progression moves from subdominant (IV) to secondary dominant (V/vi) and ends in a submedian tonic (vi). This pattern creates a repetitive, deceptive cadence, so that harmony feels as if it is always moving forward without premature closure. The resource person (Alckie, Music Director) stated that the use of these additional chords is influenced by the Afro-American musical tradition, producing more varied harmonic colors.

Figure 12. Chord progression in Intro 3
Source: Personal Transcription

Figure 13. Chord progression on the measures 44-46
Source: Personal Transcription

Figure 14. Chord progression in Chorus 4
Source: Personal Transcription

Figure 15. Chord progression on the measures 77-78
Source: Personal Transcription

3.3.3 Processing of the Arrangement Melody

The melodic processing in this arrangement involves five techniques applied to different parts. First, *the unison* with the register variation: in Intro 3, *the lead synth, handbells*, and brass section play the same melody simultaneously but in different registers. The result is a thick, wide sound with no overlapping frequencies. Second, *the counter melody*: in Chorus 1 (beats 11–14), *the synth pluck* plays a series of es in

the a to the 1 minus, c squared minus d square, eleventh note that runs in conjunction with the vocal melody. This technique produces a polyphonic layer that enriches the texture without disturbing the clarity of the main melody. Third, *dead spot filler*: on Verse 2 (beat 42), brass sections, *lead synths*, and *handbells* fill the pauses after the vocal phrase finishes with a short, firm melody pattern. Fourth, *obligato*: in Chorus 4 (bars 83–86), *the synth pluck* plays a melodic pattern that runs independently and repeats as a background melody. Fifth, *call and response*: in the Interlude (73 beats), the brass section and organ are in a question-and-answer melodic pattern. Legg and Philpott (2015) state that *call-and-response techniques* are an integral part of gospel musical expression rooted in African-American traditions. In addition, in Chorus 5 (bar 89), there is a vocal *ad-lib* that inserts the lyrics "liberated" through the notes f¹–c²–f¹–f¹. Kawakami (1975, p. 34) explains that improvisational melodic filling is an important element in creating variety and richness of texture in popular music.



Figure 16. Melody on the intro3
Source: Personal Transcription



Figure 17. Melody on the measures 11-14
Source: Personal Transcription



Figure 18. Melody on the measures 83-86
Source: Personal Transcription



Figure 21. Melody on the measure 89
Source: Personal Transcription



Figure 19. Melody on the measures 40-42
Source: Personal Transcription



Figure 20. Melody on the measure 73
Source: Personal Transcription

3.3.4 Rhythm Patterns in the Arrangement

The syncopation found in the original composition continues and is even stronger in the *Reimagined* version of the arrangement. In Chorus 1 (beats 7–10), accents move between beats 2 and 4 and beats 3 and 4. In Chorus 5 (bars 87–94), a disco-style rhythm pattern with accents in beats 1, 2 up, and 3 up creates a dynamic groove. In the Interlude (beats 67–70), the bass slap solo builds a distinct groove from the chorus parts and provides a variety of rhythmic textures. Dynamic improvement techniques (*build-up*) are also applied regularly. In the Pre-Chorus (bars 27–28), *the crescendo* is used in preparation for the chorus. In Chorus 4 (bars 82–83), the brass section enters on the upbeat as a sign of the transition to the climax. In the Coda (75–96), the rhythm is again simplified as a controlled closing. Clendinning and Marvin (2016, p. 35) identify this syncopated rhythmic pattern as a hallmark of modern gospel.



Figure 22. Rhythm Patterns , measures 7-10
Source: Personal Transcription

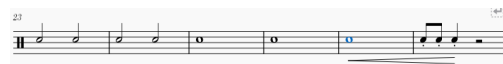


Figure 23. Rhythm Patterns, measures 23-28
Source: Personal Transcription



Figure 24. Rhythm Patterns, measures 87-94.
Source: Personal Transcription



Figure 26. Rhythm Pattern Slap bass, measures 67-70.
Source: Personal Transcription

Figure 25. Rhythm Patterns, measures 79-85.
Source: Personal Transcription



Figure 27. Rhythm Patterns, measures 95-96.
Source: Personal Transcription

3.3.5 Musical Texture

The dominant musical texture in this arrangement is homophonic. In homophonic textures, the vocal melody serves as the primary sound, supported by harmonies and rhythmic patterns that move in unison. Heterophonic textures are found in the Intro, transitions, and Coda sections, where multiple instruments play the same melody in different registers and with different sound colors. Polyphonic textures are found in the Pre-Chorus, Bridge, and Interlude sections through *melody counters*, melodic fills, and independent rhythmic fillings. Kamien (2021) explains that musical texture refers to the way musical lines are arranged and interact with each other. The combination of these three types of textures results in a layered, dynamic arrangement that remains centered on the main melody.

3.3.6 Data Triangulation of Arrangement Style

Table 3 presents a comparison between the analysis findings, the speaker's statements, and the theoretical basis for each aspect of the arrangement style.

Table 3. Triangulation of Arrangement Style Data Sources

Aspect	Analysis Findings	Informant Statement	Theoretical Foundations
Structure	11 parts; chorus at the beginning; oriented toward a gradual oriented	The order of the section was altered to avoid the monotonous impression	Modern arrangements manage the flow of worship energy (Setiawan & Harbas, 2023); rearrangement of the climax building section (Sanjaya, 2013, p. 35)
Instrumentation	Full combo, brass section, sequencer, handbells, lead synth, lead guitar	The full band and sequencer format characterizes modern style	Modern gospel uses a full-band format (Woog, 2014, pp. 77–78)
Melody Processing	Unisono register variation, counter melody, dead spot filler, obligato, call and response, ad-lib vocal	Call and response and ad-lib are typical of the gospel style	Call and response and vocal improvisation are hallmarks of gospel (Legg & Philpott, 2015; Kawakami, 1975, p. 34)
Harmony	Extended chords (7, 9, 11, 13), slash chords, passing chords, modal interchange; dominant deceptive cadence	Additional chords come from the Afro-American R&B/Jazz tradition	Extended chords are a hallmark of modern gospel (Levine, 1995, pp. 33–35); modal interchange adds nuance variation (Clendinning & Marvin, 2016, pp. 530–531)
Rhythm	Intense syncopation; upbeat accents; disco patterns in chorus; gradual dynamic build-up	Syncopation is the main feature that makes the arrangement feel alive	Syncopation is a characteristic of modern gospel rhythm (Clendinning & Marvin, 2016, p. 35)
Texture	Homophonic dominance; heterophonic in intro/transition/coda; polyphonic on pre-chorus/bridge/interlude	Diverse instrument layers result in a diverse feel.	Texture is the way musical lines are arranged and interact with each other (Kamien, 2021)

Source: Researcher's Data Analysis (Mathias Diasmara Arfeni, 2026)

3.4 Comparative Analysis: Arranger's Noted and Recorded Realization

A comparative analysis was conducted by comparing the arranger's chord notes with the results of the recording transcription. Grier (1996, p. 22) states that a musical work is not only found in the score, but also in the performance practices that govern its interpretation. Lerch et al. (2020) noted that there is a significant difference between the written plan of the arrangement and the actual realization in the recording. From the comparison between the arrangement notes and the results of the recording transcription, four chord differences were found, as presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Comparison of Chord in The Arranger's Notes and The Transcription Results from the Recording

Section/ Measures	Arranger's Notes	Recording Realization	Types of Changes	Musical Impact
Verse 2 / Bars 41 & 43	C7 (dominan septim)	Gm/C (slash chord)	Replacement with a slash chord	The harmony feels more fluid; the sharpness of the dominant chord decreases.
Verse 2 / Bars 42	Dm11 (ekstensi ke- 11)	Dm7 (minor septim)	Chord simplification	The texture is simpler; The space for vocal melodies is better preserved
Verse 2 / Bars 48	C7 (dominan septim)	Csus4 (suspended)	Replacement with a suspended chord	The transition to the chorus feels smoother
Interlude / Bars 78	Eb7 (dominant seventh)	Ebmaj7 (major septim)	Adjustment of tonal character	Disonansi berkurang; keseimbangan bunyi lebih terjaga

Source: Researcher's Data Analysis (Mathias Diasmara Arfeni, 2026)

These four differences reveal a common pattern. Changes were made to maintain the smooth flow of the harmony and provide enough space for the vocal melodies. Pratama and Sejati (2022) explained that creativity in chord development aims to present a more dynamic feel. These findings show that creativity does not always come from a written plan, but also from musical considerations taken during the recording process.

The difference between the written record and the recording realization suggests that modern gospel arrangements are open and customizable. The written notes serve as the basic framework, while the decisions made during the recording refine it. Grier (1996) calls this a dimension of interpretation that is not notated but still determines the final character of a work.

4. CONCLUSION

This research successfully addresses the two objectives formulated. From the results of the analysis of composition techniques, the song "Kunaikkan Syukurku" was built in the form of two parts (A–B) with 19 beats, following the pattern of A (a a') and B (b b'). Melodies are developed from simple motifs through literal repetition techniques, ascending sequences, interval enlargement, and tonal enhancement. Harmony is dominated by a *deceptive cadence* (V–vi) in almost the entire sentence, with *authentic cadence* appearing only once in the last cadence. The predominant rhythmic pattern is syncopation, with dotted quavers and ties that are consistent throughout the song. These findings suggest that modern gospel identity has been ingrained from the earliest compositional stages.

Based on the analysis of the arrangement style, the Reimagined version developed the song's framework into an 11-part (97 beats) structure, oriented towards increasing intensity leading to the climax. The four main characteristics of the modern gospel style in this arrangement are: (1) *full combo instrumentation* with brass section and sequencer technology; (2) the use of extended harmony in the form of *extended chords*, *slash chords*, *passing chords*, and *modal interchange*; (3) intense syncopation as the main driver of rhythm and dynamics; and (4) melodic processing through *call and response techniques*, *counter melody*, *dead spot filler*, *obligato*, and *vocal ad-lib*.

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Overall, this study concludes that the modern gospel identity in the song "Kunaik Syukurku" is formed in layers, from the basic composition to the final arrangement. The musical elements identified, such as extended chords, syncopation, passing chords, and call-and-response, can serve as a reference for Indonesian church music arrangers and practitioners in developing contemporary worship works. This research also opens up opportunities for further studies that examine more works from various contemporary Indonesian church music groups, in order to map the pattern of modern gospel arrangement more broadly.

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