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OK SEBA Keroncong Reinterpretation in Digital Space: Repertoire & Arrangement Strategies

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Abstract: The rapid development of digital media has transformed the ways music is produced, distributed, and consumed, requiring traditional music genres, including keroncong, to adapt to contemporary trends and audience behaviors across digital platforms. This phenomenon is exemplified by OK SEBA (Orkes Keroncong SEBA), which actively reinterprets popular songs through repertoire adaptation and arrangement strategies to engage broader audiences. This study aims to analyze OK SEBA's performance practices in the digital space and examine the strategies employed in adapting its repertoire and musical arrangements. A qualitative research design with a case study approach and musicological analysis was employed. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The findings reveal that OK SEBA's reinterpretation of keroncong music in the digital space is realized through the adaptation of repertoire and musical arrangements. Repertoire adaptation involves combining currently trending popular songs with nostalgic classics to appeal to diverse audience segments. Arrangement strategies include the transformation of instrumentation, melodic elaboration, musical intertextuality, and the reconstruction of rhythmic patterns while preserving the original identity of each song within the aesthetic idiom of keroncong. These findings suggest that the sustainability of keroncong music in the digital era depends on musicians' ability to creatively reinterpret musical works without compromising the genre's traditional identity.

Keywords: Keroncong music, reinterpretation, repertoire adaptation, musical arrangement, digital space

1. INTRODUCTION

Keroncong music is one of Indonesia's musical cultural heritages with a long and complex history. Its existence cannot be separated from the process of cultural encounters between the peoples of the Indonesian archipelago and the Portuguese since the sixteenth century. Various Portuguese musical traditions introduced through maritime trade routes, which subsequently interacted with local cultures, communities of African and Indian descent, and coastal societies, became one of the earliest foundations for the development of keroncong music in Indonesia (Yampolsky, 2010; Darini, 2012). Through a process of acculturation that took place over several centuries, keroncong evolved into a musical genre with a distinctive Indonesian identity. This identity is reflected in the use of instruments such as the *cak*, *cuk*, cello, flute, violin, and bass, as well as accompaniment patterns that developed into several styles, including the Old Style, Jakarta Style, and Solo Style (Aprilia, 2015). With these characteristics, keroncong represents not only a form of musical expression but also the historical trajectory, cultural interactions, and cultural identity of Indonesia.

In music studies, reinterpretation is not merely understood as the practice of performing a song again (cover version), but rather as a creative process that generates new meanings, functions, and musical identities through changes in arrangement, performance



style, instrumentation, and performance context. This process positions musical arrangement as a form of artistic interpretation that enables a work to be renegotiated according to different cultural contexts and audience needs (Moore, 2012). At the same time, the migration of musical works into digital media can also be understood as a form of remediation, namely the process through which a medium or form of expression is re-presented through a new medium that influences how the work is produced, presented, and interpreted (Bolter & Grusin, 1999). Therefore, reinterpretation in this study is understood as a creative process that not only rearranges songs but also transforms the musical experience to suit the characteristics of digital platforms without eliminating the musical identity of keroncong.

As a traditional musical genre with deep historical roots, keroncong occupies an important position in the development of Indonesian music. During a certain period, keroncong even became a popular musical genre enjoyed by various segments of society through radio broadcasts, live performances, and the recording industry (Widyanta, 2017). However, social and cultural developments have significantly altered the position of keroncong within Indonesian society. Several studies indicate that keroncong tends to attract less interest from younger generations because it is associated with older audiences and is perceived as a static genre that has not kept pace with contemporary developments (Zahrotul & Rachman, 2020). Such perceptions present a serious challenge to the sustainability of keroncong in the contemporary era.

The development of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the ways in which music is produced, distributed, and consumed. Digital platforms, including YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and various other social media platforms, have created new spaces for musicians to introduce their works to broader audiences without relying entirely on the conventional music industry (Darmantho, 2024). These changes have affected not only popular music but also traditional music, including keroncong. Digital spaces provide opportunities for keroncong to re-emerge in forms that are more closely aligned with contemporary audience preferences through innovations in repertoire, musical arrangement, and the visual presentation of performances (Firman et al., 2024). This phenomenon demonstrates that keroncong is not an entirely static genre. Since its inception, keroncong has been inherently adaptive because it emerged through the fusion of diverse cultural influences (Supiarza et al., 2019). The adaptive nature of keroncong is reflected in musicians' efforts to reinterpret popular songs, regional songs, and even songs currently trending on social media within the keroncong format. This transformation involves two important aspects, namely repertoire selection and arrangement strategy. Repertoire determines the emotional connection between a musical work and its audience, while arrangement determines how the identity of keroncong is maintained amidst changes in musical styles and modes of presentation. Usready & Rachman (2025) emphasize that the transformation of repertoire and arrangement constitutes a crucial factor enabling keroncong to continue evolving and surviving amidst changing times.

Numerous international studies have shown that social media has become an important space for the revitalization of traditional and vernacular music. Platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and particularly TikTok enable musicians to reach new audiences

through recommendation algorithms, participatory culture, and short-form content that encourages the emergence of various forms of musical adaptation (Jenkins et al., 2018; Kaye et al., 2022). Within this context, the successful dissemination of traditional music is no longer determined solely by the authenticity of performance but also by musicians' ability to adapt their repertoire, presentation format, and communication strategies to the characteristics of each digital platform. Consequently, the transformation of traditional music on social media is not merely concerned with cultural preservation but also reflects an ongoing process of negotiation between tradition, creativity, and the logic of digital platforms (platformization) that shapes contemporary musical practices (Poell et al., 2022).

The adaptation of keroncong within digital spaces encompasses not only musical aspects but also strategies of visual communication and media presentation. Musical content on digital platforms generally demands shorter durations, engaging openings, high visual quality, and the ability to foster interaction with audiences (Ramadhani & Rachman, 2019). Such conditions encourage musical groups to restructure their performances. Songs that were originally longer may be condensed, introductory sections strengthened to immediately capture viewers' attention, and arrangements adjusted to the fast-paced characteristics of digital media consumption. Consequently, digital space functions not only as a medium for music distribution but also as a creative environment that influences the artistic form of music itself (Ridhwan et al., 2022).

One keroncong ensemble actively engaged in such adaptation is Orkes Keroncong SEBA (OK SEBA). Through content published on YouTube and other social media platforms, OK SEBA presents popular songs that are reinterpreted in the keroncong style. The selection of songs that are already widely recognized by the public demonstrates a strategy aimed at reaching broader digital audiences, particularly younger generations who are familiar with popular music and social media trends. The arrangements retain the original form of the songs while reworking them by preserving distinctive keroncong elements such as *cak-cuk* rhythmic patterns, the timbral characteristics of traditional instruments, and the harmonic nuances of keroncong. In several works, modifications to song structure, rhythmic reinforcement, and dynamic development are also evident in order to better accommodate the communicative and immediate nature of digital media consumption.

The phenomenon represented by OK SEBA is worthy of investigation because it illustrates the practice of reinterpreting keroncong music within digital spaces. In this study, reinterpretation is understood as a creative process that extends beyond the practice of cover versions, involving the reinterpretation of a musical work through the development of new arrangements, modifications in presentation strategies, adaptation to the characteristics of digital platforms, and negotiation between the musical identity of keroncong and the preferences of contemporary audiences. Through such reinterpretation, keroncong is not only preserved as a tradition but also renegotiated to remain relevant within contemporary digital culture.

The adaptation strategies employed in OK SEBA's digital content include careful consideration of music consumption trends across digital media. Repertoire selection tends to focus on songs

currently receiving widespread public attention and possessing high levels of popularity on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. Songs frequently used as background music for online content, featured on popular music charts, or currently trending on social media are selected and subsequently reinterpreted within the keroncong format. This strategy demonstrates that repertoire selection is based on considerations of digital audience characteristics and the mechanisms of content distribution on social media platforms. OK SEBA also employs various forms of musical development to create performances that are more appealing to digital audiences. One notable strategy involves incorporating introductions, interludes, or selected sections from other songs and integrating them into the primary song being performed. This practice establishes intertextual relationships between musical works, enriching the listening experience while introducing novelty into keroncong performances. In several digital contents, modifications to song structure, shortened durations, and the emphasis of specific musical sections considered more attractive to digital audiences are also evident. These various strategies indicate that the arrangement process employed by OK SEBA accommodates both aesthetic considerations and the patterns of audience consumption characteristic of the digital era.

Previous studies on keroncong have extensively examined its history, preservation, and innovations in modern keroncong arrangements. Hendrianto & Handayani (2024) investigated the integration of traditional and modern elements in keroncong arrangements, while Pradana et al. (2025) discussed strategies for producing musical content on social media from the perspective of the digital creative industry. However, these studies have not specifically examined how keroncong ensembles adapt to digital spaces through the interrelationship between repertoire selection strategies and arrangement strategies as forms of musical reinterpretation. A significant research gap therefore remains regarding how keroncong musical practices transform as they move from conventional performance spaces into digital environments.

Based on these considerations, this study investigates the reinterpretation of OK SEBA's keroncong music within digital spaces by focusing on repertoire adaptation and arrangement strategies. The study aims to understand how OK SEBA presents keroncong in the digital era, how repertoire selection strategies are employed to reach digital audiences, and how arrangements are developed to preserve the identity of keroncong while remaining relevant to the characteristics of digital media. It is expected that this research will contribute to the advancement of keroncong studies, particularly in understanding the dynamics of traditional music transformation in the digital era.

2. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research method with a case study approach and musicological analysis to examine the reinterpretation of keroncong music undertaken by Orkes Keroncong (OK) SEBA in digital spaces through repertoire adaptation and arrangement strategies. The case study approach was adopted because the research focused on a single musical ensemble as the object of an in-depth investigation within its real-life context (Yin, 2018). The musicological approach was employed to analyze the musical aspects emerging from the reinterpretation

process, including melody, rhythm, tempo, harmony, instrumentation, song form, and arrangement structure. Qualitative research was selected because it aims to understand the phenomenon, creative process, and adaptation strategies employed by OK SEBA within digital spaces (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted on OK SEBA's musical content published on digital platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram, with a particular focus on repertoire selection, arrangement forms, and content presentation strategies. An in-depth interview was conducted with Anwar, the leader and musician of OK SEBA, who served as the primary informant for this study. The interview was conducted on June, 2026, with a duration of 40 minutes and 29 seconds, using a mixture of Indonesian language varieties. Documentation, including performance videos, photographs, social media posts, and digital archives, was used to complement the research data. In addition, the musical data in the form of notation were transcribed aurally by Natanael Dwi Kusbayudana, the researcher, based on audio-visual recordings of the performances and subsequently notated using Sibelius 7 software. The use of these multiple data collection techniques was intended to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Data were analyzed using the interactive model developed by Miles et al. (2014), which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The analysis was conducted continuously from the data collection stage until findings relevant to the research focus were obtained. Data trustworthiness was established through source triangulation and technique triangulation by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation to enhance the credibility of the research findings.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Performance of OK SEBA Keroncong Music in Digital Spaces

Orkes Keroncong (OK) SEBA is a keroncong music ensemble established in 2016. Based on an interview with the group leader, Mr. Anwar, the ensemble was initially formed as a platform for positive community engagement as well as a means of empowerment through musical activities. In its early stage, musical activities were conducted conventionally through rehearsals and live performances. However, significant development occurred when OK SEBA began utilizing digital media as a new space for artistic creation and audience interaction.



Figure 1. OK SEBA Logo

Source: Researcher's documentation, June, 2026. The image is used by the researcher for scientific publication purposes.

OK SEBA consists of five musicians with complementary roles. The ensemble is led by Anwar Fauzi, who serves as the group leader, *cak* player, and is also responsible for digital content management and production. Aldino Yusuf plays the *cuk*, Agus Prasetya performs on drums, Asung Kristiya plays the cello, and Syair Gesang plays the violin.



Figure 2. Members of OK SEBA

Source: Researcher's documentation, June, 2026. The image is used by the researcher for scientific publication purposes.

Anwar explained that OK SEBA's engagement with digital platforms began around 2020, coinciding with the Covid-19 pandemic, which restricted live performance activities. This situation encouraged the group to seek alternative performance spaces through social media, particularly TikTok. In addition to functioning as a distribution medium, TikTok was chosen because it offers economic opportunities through its gifting system during live streaming sessions. According to Anwar, the decision to enter digital platforms was driven by the need to sustain the group's existence as well as to create alternative income sources for its members. To date, TikTok remains OK SEBA's primary digital platform. This choice is based on its relatively large follower base compared to other

social media platforms, reaching 313.7 thousand followers with more than 6.4 million accumulated likes. TikTok is considered highly effective in expanding audience reach through its For You Page (FYP) algorithm, which enables content to be distributed beyond existing followers. This provides greater opportunities for OK SEBA to increase visibility, broaden its audience base, and maintain its presence within the digital music ecosystem.

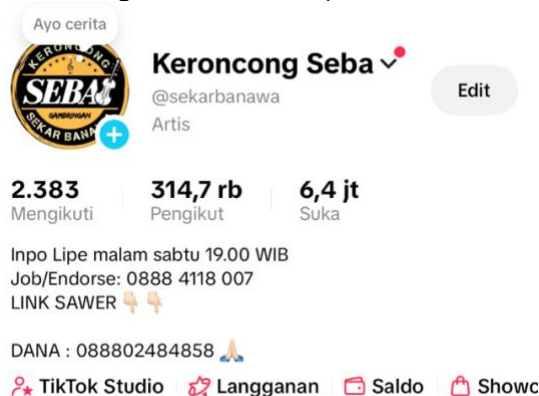


Figure 3. OK SEBA TikTok Account

Source: Researcher's documentation from the official TikTok account @ok_seba (<https://www.tiktok.com/@sekarbanawa>), accessed on June 6, 2026. The image is used for research purposes under the principle of fair use in scientific publications.

These findings indicate that digital space has become an essential component of contemporary musical practice. This aligns with Jenkins (2006), who argues that the development of digital media has given rise to a participatory culture, in which audiences actively participate in the production, distribution, and circulation of cultural content. In the case of OK SEBA, TikTok functions not only as a music publication platform but also as an interactive space that enables audiences to respond, request songs, and provide direct financial support to musicians.



Figure 4. Content Production Using a Mobile Phone

Source: Researcher's documentation, June, 2026. The image is used by the researcher for scientific publication purposes.

OK SEBA's entry into digital space has also transformed the presentation of keroncong music. Based on Anwar's interview,

there are notable differences between live performances and digital performances. In live settings, the group must prepare various aspects such as stage design, costumes, sound system arrangements, and adaptation to event themes. In contrast, digital content production can be carried out more simply using mobile phones and minimal equipment. However, this technical simplicity is accompanied by new demands related to the characteristics of digital media. Musicians are required to produce content that captures audience attention within a short duration and aligns with fast-paced and dynamic media consumption patterns. This phenomenon demonstrates that digital transformation influences the form of performance itself. This finding supports Ruddin et al. (2022), who argue that digitalization presents both challenges and opportunities for performing arts to adapt their presentation formats to digital technological characteristics. Darmantho (2024) further explains that the development of digital platforms has transformed music production, distribution, and consumption from conventional systems into media-based digital ecosystems. In the case of OK SEBA, this transformation is reflected in a more flexible, simplified, and audience-oriented performance concept.

Interview results also indicate that changes in audience behavior significantly influence OK SEBA's musical activities. According to Anwar, during the early stage of digital content production, keroncong audiences were relatively limited. However, as keroncong content gained popularity on TikTok, audiences began to show more active engagement through comments, song requests, and private messages expressing appreciation and interest in learning keroncong music. Some viewers even come from outside Indonesia, thereby expanding the reach of keroncong beyond geographical boundaries that were previously difficult to achieve through conventional performances. This condition demonstrates that digital media has created new relational patterns between musicians and audiences. In digital spaces, two-way communication occurs more intensively and continuously. Audiences influence artistic decisions through comments, song requests, and responses to uploaded content. This finding is consistent with Faisal & Fasa (2025), who state that digital media facilitates more active interaction between creators and audiences, thereby forming a more participatory cultural ecosystem.

The performance of keroncong music by OK SEBA in digital spaces no longer fully follows conventional keroncong performance patterns. Their musical practice increasingly considers social media trends, platform algorithms, and digital audience preferences. The success of a content piece is measured by its ability to reach audiences through the FYP system and generate high levels of interaction. These findings reinforce the view that keroncong, as a hybrid and adaptive musical form, continues to undergo transformation in response to its surrounding social context (Supiarza et al., 2019; Darini, 2012). In the digital era, such adaptation occurs through adjustments to media technologies, audience behavior, and platform algorithmic mechanisms. The performance of keroncong music by OK SEBA in digital spaces can thus be understood as a form of reinterpretation of keroncong performance practice that accommodates the demands of contemporary digital culture.

Repertoire Adaptation Strategy in Digital Space

Repertoire adaptation strategy is one of the key factors supporting OK SEBA's success in establishing its presence in digital spaces. Based on an interview with the group leader, Mr. Anwar, the selection of songs to be performed is strongly influenced by the dynamics of trends emerging on social media. Songs that are currently viral on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and other digital media are prioritized for rearrangement and production in keroncong format. The repertoire selection process is conducted collaboratively by all group members, considering several aspects, including the popularity level of the song, its "easy listening" character, and the simplicity of its chord progressions, which facilitates rehearsal and production processes, making them more efficient.

Mr. Anwar explained that the rapidly changing nature of digital audiences requires musical groups to remain highly responsive to evolving song trends. Therefore, in addition to performing classical keroncong repertoire, OK SEBA also adapts popular songs that are currently favored by the public. He stated:

"When selecting songs, we usually look at what is currently trending on TikTok or social media. Viral songs are generally more easily accepted by audiences. We also choose songs that are easy to listen to and have simple chord structures so that the arrangement and rehearsal process can be more efficient" (Interview, Juni 2026, in Indonesian).

This strategy is reflected in OK SEBA's repertoire. Within the category of popular and viral songs, OK SEBA has arranged "Tunggal Eka," "Cundamani," and "Negoro Angin" by Denny Caknan. Cundamani, which gained popularity in 2023, and Negoro Angin, released in 2024, were selected due to their wide audience reach across social media platforms. By reinterpreting these songs within a keroncong aesthetic, OK SEBA seeks to present a distinct musical coloration while maintaining relevance to younger audiences. In addition to trending songs, OK SEBA consistently performs nostalgic repertoire that is widely recognized across generations. These include "Bukit Berbunga," "Tenda Biru," "Bahtera Cinta," "Lilo," and "Stasiun Balapan," popularized by Didi Kempot. The inclusion of nostalgic repertoire serves as a strategy to reach broader audience segments, both younger audiences active on social media and older generations familiar with campursari, keroncong, and earlier popular music traditions.

Mr. Anwar stated that the balance between viral and nostalgic songs is a defining characteristic of OK SEBA's repertoire design:

"We do not only perform viral songs. Nostalgic songs are also included because many audiences enjoy them and have emotional memories attached to them. So there is a balance, young audiences can enjoy trending songs, while older audiences still feel connected to the music we present" (Interview, June 2026, in Indonesian).

The repertoire adaptation strategy implemented by OK SEBA demonstrates an effort to accommodate shifting tastes in the digital music market without abandoning the musical values embedded in keroncong tradition. The flexible selection of songs, responsiveness to trends, and ability to reach diverse age groups constitute important assets for maintaining existence and expanding audience reach in the digital era.

These findings indicate that virality has become a new consideration in keroncong repertoire selection in the digital age. In conventional keroncong practice, repertoire selection is generally based on canonical keroncong songs, *langgam*, *stambul*, and other works rooted in the keroncong tradition. In contrast, within digital spaces, song selection is more strongly influenced by media consumption trends. According to Mr. Anwar, the first step in repertoire selection is observing songs that are widely used in TikTok content. Songs with high usage frequency and frequent appearance on social media feeds are considered more likely to attract audience attention when reinterpreted in keroncong format. This phenomenon indicates a shift in repertoire orientation from a tradition-centered approach to an audience-oriented repertoire selection model. Repertoire is thus understood as a cultural communication strategy for building engagement with digital audiences. This finding aligns with Jenkins (2006) concept of participatory culture, which explains that digital media development has transformed the relationship between producers and consumers into a more interactive system. Audience preferences play a decisive role in content production processes. OK SEBA's repertoire selection is therefore inseparable from efforts to interpret audience taste dynamics emerging through social media.

Although classical keroncong songs continue to be produced and published by OK SEBA as part of its efforts to preserve its musical identity, the number of such contents is relatively limited compared to arrangements of popular songs. Based on the interview results, Anwar explained that keroncong repertoire such as *Kr. Mirah Delima* is still occasionally performed as a representation of the keroncong identity upheld by the ensemble. Nevertheless, data from digital platforms indicate that content based on popular songs receives a higher level of audience engagement. For example, the keroncong arrangement of *Ikhlās* by Didi Kempot has accumulated 25,300 views, whereas the *Kr. Mirah Delima* content has reached only 19,300 views (accessed on June, 2026). This difference indicates that content adapting popular songs tends to achieve greater audience reach than original keroncong repertoire. This condition explains why non-keroncong popular songs have subsequently become the repertoire more consistently produced and published by OK SEBA. These findings indicate that digital spaces operate according to a different logic of consumption from conventional performance spaces, where visibility and audience engagement are strongly influenced by the proximity of content to emerging trends.



Figure 5. Comparison of OK SEBA's TikTok Views

Source: Researcher's documentation from the official TikTok account @ok_seba (<https://www.tiktok.com/@sekarbawana>), accessed on Juni, 2026. The image is used for research purposes under the principle of fair use in scientific publications.

OK SEBA's repertoire adaptation strategy is also closely related to efforts to reach younger generations as the primary target audience. According to Mr. Anwar, one of the reasons for arranging popular songs into keroncong format is to introduce keroncong to audiences who are not previously familiar with the genre. By performing widely recognized songs, audiences are provided with an accessible entry point to appreciate keroncong's musical characteristics. Popular songs thus function as a bridge connecting keroncong tradition with contemporary popular culture. This finding supports Zahrotul & Rachman (2020), who argue that the sustainability of keroncong today is strongly influenced by its ability to adapt to changing audience preferences through repertoire enrichment and innovation in presentation formats. Similarly, Supiarza et al. (2019) highlight that keroncong's hybrid nature facilitates its continuous development through processes of cultural blending and adaptation to new influences, including other music genres and digital culture, which shape contemporary music consumption patterns.



Figure 6. OK SEBA Video Content on TikTok

Source: Researcher's documentation from the official TikTok account @ok_seba (<https://www.tiktok.com/@sekarbawana>), accessed on June, 2026. The image is used for research purposes under the principle of fair use in scientific publications.

Virality is not the sole consideration in repertoire selection. Mr. Anwar explained that, in addition to trending songs, OK SEBA occasionally performs nostalgic or memory-based songs that maintain emotional closeness with specific audience segments. This indicates that repertoire strategy is not entirely driven by algorithms, but also considers affective dimensions and listeners' musical experiences. The repertoire selection process thus involves negotiation between popularity demands, musical characteristics, and diverse audience needs.

Based on these findings, it can be understood that OK SEBA's reinterpretation of keroncong music begins at the repertoire selection stage. Popular songs originating outside the keroncong tradition are selected based on their virality and relevance to digital audiences, then re-presented through keroncong musical idioms. This process produces a form of reinterpretation that brings together digital popular culture and keroncong tradition within a shared musical space. The repertoire adaptation strategy employed by OK SEBA demonstrates that the sustainability of keroncong music in the digital era depends not only on preserving traditional repertoire but also on the ability to read trends, understand audience behavior, and transform popular repertoire into a renewed form of keroncong musical expression.

Arrangement Adaptation Strategy and Keroncong Reinterpretation

The reinterpretation of keroncong music by OK SEBA is also realized through arrangement strategies designed to align the characteristics of keroncong music with the demands of digital spaces. Based on an interview with the group leader, Mr. Anwar, the arrangement process begins with the identification of songs that are currently viral and widely used across various social media contents. After a song is selected, group members collectively listen to, study, and develop it into a keroncong format. The creative process does not rely on musical notation reading but instead on an aural-based learning practice, involving listening, memorizing, and collectively exploring musical possibilities. This finding indicates that OK SEBA's arrangement process is closely aligned with oral musical traditions, which have long been a fundamental characteristic in the development of keroncong music in Indonesia (Sokhiba & Rachman, 2021).



Figure 7. Song Learning Process Through Audio

Source: Researcher's documentation, June, 2026. The image is used by the researcher for scientific publication purposes.

From a musicological perspective, arrangement refers to the reworking of musical material through modifications of structure, instrumentation, texture, and presentation form to produce a new interpretation of a musical work (R. H. Adler, 2022). Arrangement functions not only as a technical process of reorganizing musical components but also as a creative space that enables reinterpretation of a work's meaning and identity. In the case of OK SEBA, arrangement serves as a medium for bringing together contemporary popular songs with keroncong musical idioms, resulting in new musical forms without eliminating the genre's foundational identity.

OK SEBA's arrangement strategy is also evident in its choice of instrumentation. The group reinterprets timbral qualities by substituting musical instruments. In the song LDR by Denny Caknan, the original version employs alto saxophone, synthesizer, strings, piano, drum set, and kendang, producing a modern Javanese pop musical character. When re-arranged by OK SEBA into a keroncong style, these instruments are replaced with violin, *cak*, *cuk*, cello, shaker, and cajon. This transformation demonstrates a process of musical adaptation aimed at preserving the song's identity while introducing the aesthetic character of keroncong. The presence of *cak*, *cuk*, and cello as core keroncong instruments establishes distinctive rhythmic and harmonic patterns that differ from the original version, while the violin functions as a substitute for melodic instruments such as saxophone and strings.

The use of intros and interludes from other songs is also an integral part of OK SEBA's arrangement strategy. Mr. Anwar explained that songs under development are often introduced with intros from different works, particularly Western songs with chord progressions similar to the main song. One frequently used example is the intro of Dear God by Avenged Sevenfold, which is then combined with other popular songs arranged in keroncong style. According to Anwar, this practice is deliberately employed to create attractiveness and surprise elements for the audience. This phenomenon can be understood as a form of musical intertextuality, namely the practice of incorporating elements from other musical works into a current performance, thereby creating relationships between musical texts. Kristeva et al. (1980) define intertextuality as the idea that cultural texts are always interconnected with prior works. Intertextuality may emerge through melodic quotation, chord progression usage, intro integration, or the borrowing of specific musical elements. The use of Western song intros in OK SEBA's keroncong arrangements reflects a dialogic process between global popular culture and local musical tradition. The reinterpretation is not merely a transfer of musical material from one context to another but also a negotiation space where diverse musical references intersect, producing new aesthetic experiences for listeners.

The most evident aspect of OK SEBA's arrangement adaptation strategy is found in the intro section. This section is selected as the primary analytical focus because it consistently undergoes transformation in the process of converting popular songs into keroncong style. In LDR by Denny Caknan, the original intro is constructed through a combination of alto saxophone as the main melodic carrier, guitar as harmonic support, and drum set as the rhythmic foundation. In OK SEBA's arrangement version, these

musical functions are redistributed into keroncong instrumentation, with the violin serving as the melodic lead, *cak* functioning as rhythmic-harmonic accompaniment, and cajon replacing the drum set. This transformation demonstrates a reinterpretation of timbre and musical texture without altering the core melodic identity of the song. Therefore, the comparison between the original intro and OK SEBA's arranged version is used to identify instrumental transformation strategies, particularly the substitution of alto saxophone with violin, drum set with cajon, and guitar with *cak*.



Figure 8. Notation of the Intro of "LDR" (Saxophone Instrument)
Source: Researcher's documentation, 2026.

The intro of the original song begins with a pickup note leading to a climactic pitch that immediately establishes the song's melodic identity. The melodic contour moves in a descending motion from the upper register toward the middle register through a combination of stepwise motion and small intervallic leaps. In the initial measures, the saxophone forms the main phrase through a gradual descending motion. After reaching the middle pitch range, the melody ascends again toward a higher pitch before descending once more. This up-and-down pattern produces an arch contour, which is commonly used in popular music as it provides a balance between tension and release. The phrase is dominated by eighth notes and quarter notes with relatively even rhythmic distribution. No complex ornamentation or dense rhythmic subdivision is found. This indicates that the primary function of the intro is to clearly introduce the musical theme to the listener. The intro consists of two phrase units with a strong motivic relationship. The second phrase is a repetition and refinement of the first phrase through variation in the cadential section.

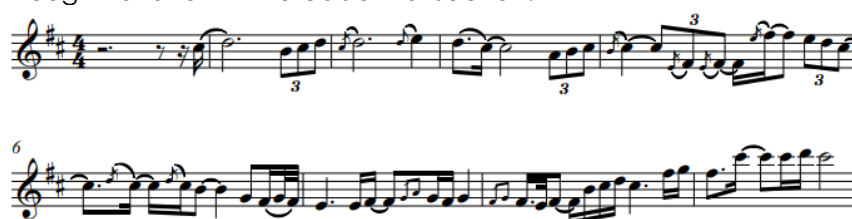


Figure 9. Notation of the Intro of "LDR" (OK SEBA Arrangement – Violin Instrument)
Source: Researcher's documentation, 2026.

In the OK SEBA arrangement version, the violin maintains the original melodic contour framework so that the song's theme remains recognizable. However, significant development occurs in the melodic structure. The opening phrase does not immediately present the full theme as in the saxophone version. Instead, the violin first constructs a melodic space through passing tones and neighbor tones that extend the journey toward target pitches. The presentation of the theme becomes more elaborate. The basic melodic shape still preserves the up-and-down pattern found in the original version. However, each transition between structural

pitched is filled with additional linear motion, making the melodic line denser. This can be observed in several sections where the violin connects two structural tones with short note sequences not found in the saxophone version. The violin presents a higher level of complexity. Triplets appear, which are not found in the original version. The use of triplets creates a more flexible sense of motion and produces a rubato-like nuance, even though the tempo remains stable.

These findings indicate that OK SEBA's arrangement strategy is oriented toward a reinterpetative arrangement principle, namely adapting an existing work without eliminating its melodic identity. This process is carried out through instrumentation substitution, melodic elaboration, and adjustment of musical idioms according to keroncong characteristics. OK SEBA does not position the original song as a static musical source but as material that can be redeveloped through keroncong arrangement principles. This makes arrangement a creative medium for generating new musical meanings and experiences without breaking its connection to the original work.



Figure 10. Notation of the Intro of "LDR" (Drum Instrument)

Source: Researcher's documentation, 2026.

The drum set functions as a pulse marker (timekeeper) and the main groove builder of the intro. The rhythmic pattern is dominated by hi-hat playing with consistent eighth-note subdivisions throughout most of the intro. This consistency produces a stable rhythmic drive and becomes the foundation for melodic instruments, particularly the saxophone. The snare is placed on the backbeat, while the bass drum reinforces the main beats in 4/4 meter. The combination of these three elements forms a characteristic pop rhythmic pattern that is measured and repetitive. The periodically repeated pattern creates metrical stability, allowing the listener's attention to focus on the saxophone melody as the thematic carrier. The drum set is positioned in the background layer. It maintains a relatively constant pattern to support melodic continuity. New variation appears toward the end of the intro through a fill-in consisting of short-note sequences leading into the transition to the next section. This fill functions as a structural marker connecting the intro to the subsequent part of the song.

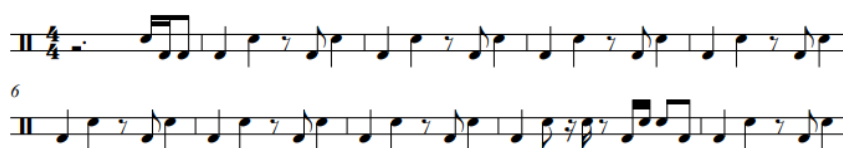


Figure 11. Notation of the Intro of "LDR" (OK SEBA Arrangement – Cajon Instrument)

Source: Researcher's documentation, 2026.

In the OK SEBA arrangement version, the drum set function is transferred to the cajon. The cajon produces a simpler and more open rhythmic pattern. The pattern is dominated by alternation between bass strokes and high-pitched slap tones, forming the basic rhythmic framework. The cajon rhythm is less dense compared to the drum set. The space between beats is intentionally left open, creating a lighter and less rhythmically crowded impression. The cajon emphasizes main beats rather than rhythmic subdivision. The rhythmic orientation shifts from groove-based accompaniment to pulse reinforcement. This pattern is commonly found in modern keroncong practice because the main rhythmic drive is also supported by *cak* and cello instruments. Toward the end of the intro, the cajon introduces simple rhythmic variation as a transition marker to the next section. However, this variation remains at a lower level of complexity compared to the drum set fill-in in the original version.

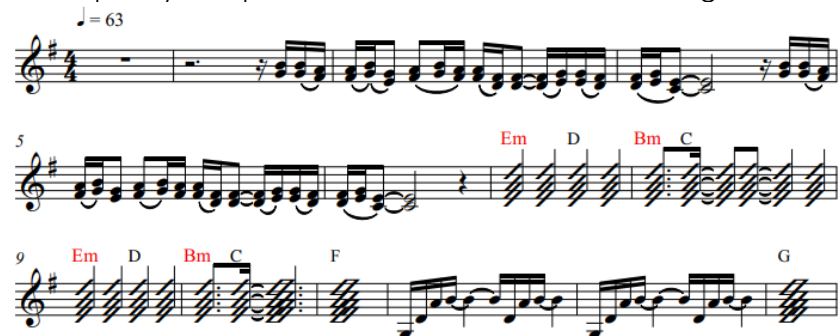


Figure 12. Notation of the Intro of "LDR" (Guitar Instrument)

Source: Researcher's documentation, 2026.

In the original version of LDR, the guitar functions as both a harmonic accompaniment instrument and a primary rhythmic component in the intro. The guitar performance is dominated by arpeggiated picking patterns that move continuously following the chord progression Em–D–Bm–C–F–G. These patterns are played using 1/16 and 1/8 rhythmic subdivisions, resulting in a relatively dense rhythmic flow. The guitar picking forms an inner melodic motion. The movement from the middle register toward a higher register creates a flowing melodic impression while reinforcing the intro's identity. The arpeggio pattern is played continuously with minimal rests. This rhythmic density creates strong temporal continuity, allowing the guitar to function as both rhythmic filler and harmonic support. The repeated pattern also generates metrical stability that supports the entry of other instruments. The guitar occupies the middle layer of the ensemble texture.



Figure 13. Notation of the Intro of "LDR" (OK SEBA Arrangement – Cak Instrument)

Source: Researcher's documentation, 2026.

In the OK SEBA arrangement, the guitar's harmonic function is transferred to the *cak* instrument. The *cak* plays a syncopated keroncong rhythmic pattern using repetitive strumming techniques. The pattern is dominated by short staccato chord strokes repeated at each harmonic change. The *cak* performs the chord progression Bm–G–A–F#–G–Em–F# with a consistent rhythmic pattern throughout most of the intro. It emphasizes off-beat accentuation. Placing accents on subdivisions between main beats creates a distinctive syncopation effect. The *cak* functions as a rhythmic-harmonic layer. Each chord is played briefly and detached (staccato), resulting in shorter resonance space between chords compared to the guitar. The resulting musical texture sounds lighter but carries stronger rhythmic energy. The *cak* emphasizes vertical chord representation rather than individual tone exploration as found in guitar arpeggiation.

The research findings indicate that the reinterpretation of keroncong music by OK SEBA in digital spaces is a form of musical adaptation strategy involving instrumentation transformation, intertextuality, and reconstruction of musical elements without eliminating the identity of the original song. These findings show that OK SEBA's "keroncongization" practice represents a negotiation between tradition and modernity in digital culture. The first strategy occurs through instrumentation change by substituting modern instruments into keroncong ensemble format. Instruments such as alto saxophone, synthesizer, strings, piano, drum set, and kendang in the original LDR version are replaced by violin, *cak*, *cuk*, cello, shaker, and cajon. This transformation indicates a timbral reinterpretation process aimed at maintaining musical identity while producing keroncong aesthetic characteristics. According to Adler (2016), instrumentation in arrangement involves redistributing musical functions according to the acoustic and expressive characteristics of each instrument. The instrumentation changes made by OK SEBA represent a redistribution of musical functions aligned with keroncong idioms.

These findings align with Supanggah (2002), who states that in Javanese traditional music practice, instrument changes are often accompanied by changes in musical function and performance structure. In OK SEBA's case, the violin takes over melodic functions previously performed by saxophone and strings, while *cak*, *cuk*, and cello replace harmonic and rhythmic accompaniment systems

originally built by guitar, piano, and drum set. This functional shift produces a new musical texture that preserves the identity of the original song while presenting it within keroncong aesthetic idioms.

OK SEBA's adaptation can also be understood through the concept of reinterpetative arrangement. According to Covach (1997), reinterpetation in popular music occurs when a work is represented through changes in medium, style, or performance aspects without eliminating its core identity. The findings show that OK SEBA maintains the main melodic contour of LDR, making the song still recognizable to listeners, while simultaneously introducing melodic elaboration, textural changes, and idiomatic adjustments that generate new aesthetic experiences.

Previous research by Aji (2020) shows that contemporary keroncong development is characterized by musicians' ability to adapt popular repertoires into keroncong formats as a strategy to maintain genre existence. This study supports those findings, as OK SEBA actively utilizes widely recognized popular songs as its main repertoire. Such adaptation enables keroncong to reach broader audiences, especially younger digital media users. In addition to instrumentation changes, this study also finds the practice of using intros and interludes from other songs, particularly Western songs, within keroncong arrangements. This indicates musical intertextuality in the arrangement process. Kristeva et al. (1980) explain that every cultural text is a mosaic of other interrelated texts. In music, intertextuality may appear through melodic quotation, chord progression borrowing, or incorporation of musical fragments from other works. The use of external song intros in OK SEBA's keroncong arrangements demonstrates a dialogue between global popular culture and local musical tradition. This finding supports Yampolsky (2010), who states that Indonesian popular music develops through cultural hybridization processes that combine local and global elements to produce new musical forms. Through this strategy, OK SEBA reproduces keroncong while simultaneously creating a hybrid musical space relevant to contemporary digital audiences.

Reinterpretation strategies are also evident in the transformation of musical elements in the intro section. Comparative analysis shows that the violin in OK SEBA's arrangement preserves the basic contour of the saxophone melody but enriches its structure through passing tones, neighbor tones, and triplets. According to Benward & Saker (2009), melodic ornamentation functions to enrich musical expression without changing the fundamental melodic structure. The presence of elaborative tones in the violin performance reflects an effort to adapt popular melodies into the more ornamented keroncong idiom. Changes also occur in rhythmic aspects. The drum set in the original version constructs a pop groove through continuous hi-hat patterns, backbeat snare, and bass drum, producing a stable rhythmic drive. In OK SEBA's arrangement, this function is transferred to the cajon, which plays a simpler rhythmic pattern oriented toward pulse reinforcement. This shift indicates a transition from groove-based accompaniment to pulse-based accompaniment. According to Harmunah (1987), in keroncong ensembles the rhythmic drive results from interaction among *cak*, *cuk*, cello, and other rhythmic instruments. Therefore, the simplification of cajon patterns in OK SEBA's arrangement is a logical consequence of keroncong's collective texture system. A similar transformation is also observed in the shift from guitar to *cak*. The guitar in the original

version functions as harmonic support through dense arpeggiation, while *cak* performs syncopated staccato patterns emphasizing off-beat accentuation. According to Harmunah (1987), syncopation is a core characteristic of *cak* performance that distinguishes *keroncong* from other popular music genres. This study shows that the shift from arpeggiated patterns to syncopated patterns also changes the musical orientation from melody-centered texture to rhythm-centered texture. This shift becomes one of OK SEBA's main strategies in constructing *keroncong* identity in popular songs.

In addition to the song *LDR*, this study also presents a comparison between the *pizzicato* cello pattern and the *kendang* pattern in the song *Sewu Kuto* by Didi Kempot. In the original version, *Sewu Kuto* is performed in the *campursari* style, in which the primary rhythmic function is carried by the *kendang*, whose distinctive syncopated patterns shape the accompaniment characteristic of *campursari*. The *kendang* serves as the principal driver of the tempo while providing accents that follow the vocal phrases and song structure, thereby producing a flexible and dynamic rhythmic character.



Figure 14. Musical Notation of the Kendang Part in the Song *Sewu Kuto*
Source: Researcher's documentation, 2026.

In OK SEBA's arrangement, this function is no longer performed by the *kendang* but is instead transferred to the *pizzicato* cello, one of the distinctive instruments in the *keroncong* ensemble. As shown in Figure X, the cello is played using the *pizzicato* technique, producing short and percussive sounds that imitate the character of *kendang* strokes. This functional transfer demonstrates that OK SEBA does not retain the original instrumentation of *Sewu Kuto* but instead transforms its musical function into the *keroncong* idiom.



Figure 15. Musical Notation of the Pizzicato Cello Part in OK SEBA's Arrangement of *Sewu Kuto*
Source: Researcher's documentation, 2026.

Musically, the *kendang* pattern in the original version of *Sewu Kuto* exhibits denser rhythmic variations through the use of syncopation and flexible accentuation that follows the dynamics of the vocal line. In contrast, the *pizzicato* cello pattern in OK SEBA's arrangement presents a more regular and repetitive rhythm, consistent with the characteristics of *keroncong* accompaniment. In addition to establishing the rhythmic pattern, the cello also performs the fundamental harmonic tones, thereby serving a dual function as both a rhythmic and harmonic instrument. This differs from the *kendang*, which functions solely as a percussion instrument.

This transformation demonstrates that OK SEBA's reinterpretation of *Sewu Kuto* is not merely a substitution of the accompanying instrument but rather a transformation of the musical idiom's function. The rhythmic patterns of the *kendang*, which constitute a defining aesthetic feature of *campursari*, are

translated into *pizzicato* cello patterns, one of the most distinctive idiomatic markers of keroncong music. Consequently, the melodic identity of *Sewu Kuto* is preserved, while its accompaniment undergoes a transformation that allows the song to be perceived as a keroncong work. This reinterpretation illustrates how a popular song from the *campursari* genre is negotiated within the aesthetic framework of keroncong without eliminating the principal identity of the original composition.

Thus, the findings of this study demonstrate that the reinterpretation of keroncong music undertaken by OK SEBA represents a form of creative adaptation that integrates the principles of preservation and innovation. The fundamental identity of the songs is maintained through the preservation of their melodic contours and principal harmonic structures, while transformations in instrumentation, melodic elaboration, intertextuality, and the reconstruction of rhythmic patterns generate new musical experiences that align with the aesthetic characteristics of keroncong and the needs of audiences in digital spaces.

However, the findings also reveal a paradox within this preservation practice. On the one hand, reinterpretation serves as an effective strategy for introducing the aesthetics of keroncong to a broader audience through popular songs. On the other hand, the dominance of non-keroncong repertoire in digital content has the potential to displace original keroncong songs as the core tradition intended for preservation. In other words, the success of increasing the visibility of keroncong on social media is not necessarily accompanied by greater exposure to the classical keroncong repertoire. This condition indicates that the preservation of keroncong music in the digital era is not merely a matter of maintaining its musical form, but also involves an ongoing process of negotiation among the authenticity of tradition, audience preferences, and the algorithmic logic of digital platforms. Therefore, the sustainability of keroncong music in the digital era depends on the ability of music practitioners to balance creative innovation with a commitment to preserving the keroncong repertoire as a cultural identity.

4. CONCLUSION

The reinterpretation of keroncong music conducted by OK SEBA in digital spaces represents a creative adaptation strategy encompassing performance practices, repertoire selection, and arrangement. The utilization of digital platforms, particularly TikTok, has transformed keroncong musical practice into a more flexible, interactive, and audience-oriented form aligned with the characteristics of digital media and audience preferences. The repertoire adaptation strategy is implemented by combining currently viral popular songs with nostalgic songs as an effort to expand audience reach while introducing keroncong to younger generations. The arrangement strategy is realized through instrumentation transformation, melodic elaboration, musical intertextuality, and rhythmic reconstruction. The substitution of modern instruments into the keroncong ensemble format, such as saxophone into violin, drum set into cajon, and guitar into *cak*, demonstrates a process of musical reinterpretation that still preserves the identity of the original songs. Musical analysis of the intro section of the song LDR shows that OK SEBA's "keroncongization" process does not merely involve instrument replacement, but also transforms musical texture and function in

accordance with keroncong idioms. The reinterpretation of keroncong music by OK SEBA can thus be understood as a form of negotiation between tradition and modernity that integrates preservation and innovation, ensuring that keroncong remains relevant within contemporary digital cultural ecosystems.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

1st author was responsible for research conceptualization, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of findings, and manuscript writing. 2nd author contributed to research conceptualization, provided methodological supervision and guidance, validated analytical results, and reviewed and refined the manuscript. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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DECLARATIONS

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Manuscript Preparation

The authors declare that the generative artificial intelligence (AI) tool ChatGPT (OpenAI) was used solely for language editing and grammatical refinement of the manuscript. The use of AI did not contribute to or influence the scientific substance of the research, including research conceptualization, research design, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of results, or the formulation of findings and conclusions. The content, accuracy, originality, and integrity of the manuscript remain entirely the responsibility of the authors.

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