CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The entry for 'drone' in the *Continuum Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World* defines it in the following way: one or more sustained notes of identical pitch that, usually, accompany a melodic line often performed in a higher register. The note(s) can be sounded continuously (a 'continual drone') or be repeated at short intervals (a 'rhythmic drone'). Drones act as a tonal reference point and background for the changing pitch of other strands in the music (Tagg 2003, p.532) (Purves, 2020).

"The aesthetics of drone sound can be subjective and vary depending on the listener's personal preferences and cultural background. However, in general, the drone sound is often characterized as a continuous and unchanging tone or sound that can create a sense of hypnotic or meditative atmosphere." (Purves, 2020,p.1).

The spiritual context of drone can be interrelated with various spiritual practises. (Innayat khan, 1923,p.13) states that "The life absolute form which has sprung all that is felt, seen and perceived and into which all again merges in time, is a silent motionless and eternal life which among the Sufis is called Zat." Sufi Inayat khan mentions in his book, "Vibrations, which are the source of all kinds of sounds or material. The vibrations of the kingdoms of minerals, plants, animals, and humans gradually vary, and each vibration has an impact on each plane's weight, length, width, colour, sound, and rhythm. Not only is a man made of vibrations, but he also resides and moves within them. His many moods, proclivities, affairs, successes, and all other aspects of life depend on specific vibrational activity, whether these are thoughts, emotions, or sentiments. All sensations are largely the outcome of a specific level of vibrational activity". The Islamic practice of 'Dhikr'[1] demonstrates use of the repetition of prayers as a way to reach God. Similarly, in the Hindu spiritual practises, 'Om' is considered a sound of importance. "The elongated chanting of "Om" produces a continuous sound wave or drone. Moving beyond music inward toward the centre we find stasis, minimal activity and minimal music, the sound of *Om* (harmoniousness as opposed to inharmoniousness, dissonance, noise) mantra science, drones and some drone based music, "sonic meditations" (Pauline Oliveros), the "Lesson of Silence" (Maria Montessori), and meditation." (Ahlstrom, 1982)".

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[1] Dhikr: ***Dhikr*** (Arabic: ذِكْر; lit. 'remembrance, reminder, mention) is a form of Islamic worship in which phrases or prayers are repeatedly recited for the purpose of remembering God.

The author of this research originates from Indian classical tradition in India. Through this study, author delves deeper understanding into the characters of Drone in Sound art in Indonesia, defining the cultural perspective of drone through the lens of his traditional practises. Tanpura is an ancient string instrument which consists of 4 strings and it is built on a gourd. Drone produced by the tanpura carries information about tuning, tonal quality, resonance and other acoustic properties relevant to vocal practises in Indian classical music. "The tanpura is often the primary archival embodiment of acoustic knowledge, serving as a repository of the most advanced tuning sensibilities and specialised vocal techniques" (Bhattacharyya, 2022,p.1099). In Indian classical music Tanpura is used to create a continuous drone which brings a contemplative and minimalistic framework for the scales or raag specific to the performance. Even the presentations of percussions need the continuous drone of Tanpura for a resonant and complete experience.

The nature aspect of drone based sound art is closely intersected with its sonic character and its ability to evoke natural phenomena and landscapes. "Drone music often seeks to capture the essence of nature and create sonic landscapes that reflect the organic rhythms, textures and atmospheres found in the natural world. The structure of drone music not only shows the minimalist aspect but also shows a disciplined, formative perspective of life as well as nature" (Imran Firdaus, n.d.). "The structure of drone music not only shows the minimalist aspect but also shows a disciplined, formative perspective of life as well as nature" (Imran Firdaus, n.d.).

Nature's unique drone has been utilized by artists to create innovation in sound art. (Nerone, 2015) says that, "There is a rumoured hum that is felt by all. An undetectable vibration that generates sound 10,000 times quieter than what the human ear is capable of hearing. Although its exact source is unknown, it can be monitored on the ocean floor. Possible sources include the quiet of ocean waves, atmospheric turbulence, or distant bluster from planetary storms."

The dissertation by LaBelle's (2006, ix) quotes the definition of sound art: "Sound art as a practice harnesses, describes, analyses, performs, and interrogates the condition of sound and the processes by which it operates" (Roth, 2016,p.8) .(Oliveros 1998) states that "Sound art is an explorative art form in the course of twentieth century. It has evolved as a major alternative to that of the romantic artist. The idea of a romantic composer was the artist who was gifted to create art which is even more beautiful than nature. The concept of music was

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therefore based on music as an analogy to nature". "The sound artist hence finds interest in sound as a medium not as a metaphor. To the sound artist, sound is not "beyond human control," it is neither a pure abstraction nor a metaphysical phenomenon, and it is not separated from phenomena outside the artistic work, the music culture or the art world" ("Bloom. Handb. Sound Art," 2020, p.4). The book also mentions how Sound art allows the artists to express their creativity through sounds which can be recordings, sound installations or a new media. "LaBelle (2006) positions sound art as an interdisciplinary practice bridging the visual arts with the sonic arts. Furthermore, he pronounces that sound art and space have a dynamic relationship, which stands at the core of the practice of sound art. LaBelle (2006) illustrates that subjects such as spatial thinking, environments and location are important for sound art" (Roth, 2016,p.8).

Sound art in Indonesia has its own unique, contemplative and inclusive approach towards drone inspired from indigenous traditions and technology. Artists like Slamet Abdul Sjukur (1935-2015) had inspired many sound artists during his times and started a new revolution amongst Indonesian sound artists. His work 'Uwek Uwek' is a visual representation of water droplets, where art work by Hanafi is used to create the video. He used every day sounds to create the soundscape. Sjukur used a minimal phenomena to being maximized into a composition for being creative in his music. The concept was called Min-Max. One of the well-known Indonesian drone music producers, Otto Sidhartha, was his student. Otto Sidhartha's interventions shifted the focus from the creation of music to the sound. The techniques used by Indonesian sound artists are distinctive and distinguish them from their international counterparts. Otto Sidhartha composed the music for his 1992 album Mitsuno Hibiki using sounds from indigenous cultures of Sumatra Islands and the natural world.

Indonesian sound artists have unique methods, which sets them apart from their global colleagues. Java futurism is one of the platforms that embodies an artistic and anthropological study endeavours that is in line with the continuous decolonization of experimental music, noise art, and sound art in the Indonesian setting. The project website provides an exhibition space for different sound art and experimental research projects carried out in Indonesia. The phrase "Java futurism" was created by the Yogyakarta-based instrument builder and sound artist Lintang Radditya. Java futurism refers to the Indonesian political imaginary and Javanese mysticism's non-secular temporality. These composers are activists in Indonesia, envisioning new political, social, and artistic trajectories based on the tangible foundations of Indonesian

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philosophy and culture. However, it is important to acknowledge the relative dearth of scholarly literature on this topic, especially with regard to Indonesia's emerging sound art movement. This research may help create a fresh viewpoint on drone utilization in Indonesian sound art.

Numerous contemporary Indonesian composers, including Nursalim Yadi Anugerah (Kalimantan), Rangga Purnima Aji (Yogjakarta), Enry Johan Jaohari (Bandung), Youga (Yogjakarta), Otto sidhartha, Monica Harpasari (Jakarta) and Lintang Radittya (Yogjakarta) have adeptly harnessed technology and nature in the creation of Sound Art. Nursalim used air compressors with Kledik, which is an ethnic Dayak instrument, to create his artwork called 'Lawing'. Rangga Purnima who is using coding to produce sound art based on drone sounds with the ethnic music of Java. Enry Johan from Bandung integrated special microphones to record drone from nature, creating his album called Overdoese Psycho-Catastrophe. Yoga from Yogjakarta has used nature drone sounds binded with the concept of observing nature drones, integrated with modular synths in a minimalistic way, to create sound art. Lintang Radditya is a sound artist who has engaged with sound installations, based on the drone of sounds of earth. His work Meru-Suara used the volcanic sand from sumeru to create drone in his artwork. Monica Hapsari used white noise from a tv signal and the sound of big bang stimulation *(Planck Version, 2013, John G. Cramer)* to create her work Relik #1. She also used singing bowls and *digital sequencer* as drone sounds in her work.

(Zhai, 2022) states that most of the miracles are created by having innovations and in the era of rapid changes, there are new technological miracles every day. Indonesia's diverse and vibrant ecology serves as a wellspring of inspiration for artists, propelling them toward creativity and innovation in their works. They seamlessly integrate these elements while preserving the core of their ethnic music and philosophical foundations. Indonesian sound artists have been employing their craft as a means of protest, pushing back against the ongoing onslaught on nature resulting from the surging forces.

"No sound is inherently bad. The way we hear it depends a lot on how we have been conditioned to hear it" (NEUHAUS, 1974,p. 39). Although there is a current understanding of noise as undesirable or unrequited sound, a statement that usually emphasizes the dangers of exposing the ears to excessively loud frequencies, there's also a poetic claim towards noise as eminently aesthetic, especially when used in a dynamic interaction with silence. When comprised into a contained, structured frame, noise and silence can stablish relations of tension

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and release, accentuating their discursive potentialities and creating experiential aesthetical meaning. "Within this context, it is the instance of listening that enables the articulation of sound as art, granting its significance as an element of epistemological imagination and meaning production (Luna, 2021)". The current dissonance in our environment and socio-political structure clearly explains the cause emergence of noise as drone in avantgarde music or sound art.

Through this exploration and examination, the drone unravels the deeply rooted connections between nature, ethnic music, sound art and the inherent human nature, thereby offering a profound insight into the interconnectedness and interdependence of these fundamental aspects.

The study inquired into the artistic approach by the research participants. Their methods, techniques and technologies employed in the art work were studied. The role of technology in the evolution of drone in their sound art and exploring how advancements in recording, electronic instruments and digital processing have influenced the creation and dissemination of drone based sound art. "To what extent are drone artists today doing something new, as opposed to merely perpetuating the past? As Barnett Newman would ask, are drone artists today actually creating, or are they simply making? Of course, at one level there is something different in recent drone music, but to what extent this is significant, or even recognized, remains unclear"(Schneider, 2009).

From a nature perspective, the research on the phenomena of drone in sound art in Indonesia has the potential to provide valuable insights into the intricate relationship between sound, culture, and the natural environment. This perspective involves considering how the research contributed to the understanding of the natural world, both in terms of the soundscape it generates and its connection to broader ecological and environmental crisis. By understanding how artists have drawn inspiration from nature, shedding light on how sound art contributes towards the awareness about environmental issues. "Environmental education has taken initial steps to considering the ways music can contribute to learning about the natural world" (Turner and Freedman 2004) (Studies et al., 2012).

The research studied the aspect of innovation with drone using sound art while being inclusive of the culture and philosophical aspect of Indonesia. "For La Monte Young, previous musical forms and traditions were the foundation of innovation, rather than an obstacle to it" (Schneider, 2009). The historical roots and cultural context from the ethnic music and artforms

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that shaped the incorporation of drone elements in Indonesian sound artists. Cultural significance, Innovation and Listenng associated with Sound art was investigated in the context of artwork by Lintang Radditya, Yoga Nugraha Usmad and Nursalim Yadi Anugerah.

1.2 Research questions

1.2.1 How do nature, ethnic music and technology interact to innovate drone sounds in Indonesian sound art?

1.2.2 How does listening to drone sounds affects the audience experience of Indonesian sound art?

1.2.3 How does culture influences the creation of drone in Indonesian sound art?

1.3 Aim of the research

The primary aim of the research was to inquire into the phenomena of drone in the context of sound art in Indonesia. The aim of the research was to characterize particular interactions with participants, performances, and spaces in both analogue and digital perspectives.

The study analysed the intersectionality between nature, tradition and technology leading to the creation of drone in Indonesian sound art. The study understood the concept of the artworks, investigating the role of drone in shaping sonic identities and innovation using natural soundscapes and ethnic music.

This study aimed to investigate how listeners or audiences were affected by drone sounds used in Indonesian sound art. It aimed to comprehend how drone affected the listeners feelings and imagination. The study also looked at the distinct sound experiences and visual imagery that drone-based sound art evoked amongst the audience

Lastly the research understood the perspective of culture influencing the sound artists to create drone in their artwork. The study aims towards understanding the cultural background of the sound artists and their understanding of culture in Indonesia. It enquires into the influences impacting the sound artists to create drone based sound art.

1.4 Benefits of the research

1.4.1 Practical benefits

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1. **Creative Experimentation: The study of drones in Indonesian sound art offered creative possibilities for artists to test out acoustic possibilities and expand the parameters of artistic expression. Through the examination of the visual and theoretical aspects of drone-based compositions, this study investigated distinct creative methods and strategies that further the development of sound art within Indonesia.**

2. **Cultural Preservation and Innovation:** Traditional cultural practices and musical forms were innovated and preserved through the use of drone elements in Indonesian sound art. Through observing how Indonesian artists incorporated drone sounds from their ethnic music and philosophical underpinnings, the author learned more about the ways in which modern artistic expressions preserve and modify cultural heritage.

1.4.2 Theoretical benefits

1. **Environmental Awareness:** Sound Artists were inspired by Indonesia's rich and varied ecology, which influenced their production of soundscapes that evoke the natural world. Raising awareness about environmental issues and promoting sustainable practices in artistic production was achieved through comprehending and listening to the ways in which drone elements interacted with nature through sound art in Indonesia.

2. **Interdisciplinary Collaboration:** In Indonesian sound art, the intersections of drone sounds, fine art, ethnic music, and technology offered chances for inter-disciplinary studies and knowledge sharing. Through investigating the intricacies of producing drone-based sound art and the function of technologies, author fostered communication among diverse domains and encouraged inventive methods of producing art.

3. **Enhanced Understanding about Listening:** The research sheds light on how the use of drone sounds in Indonesian sound art influenced the imagination and feelings of listeners. Sound designers can use this knowledge to produce more immersive and captivating experiences. It can also add to scholarly debates about how sound affects human psychology.

1.5 Thesis Organizational Structure: The writing system is based on the Guidelines for Writing Scientific Papers issued by the Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia(University of Education, Indonesia). This research consists of five chapters as described below:

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Background of the Research, Formulation of the Research Problem, Research Objectives, Benefits and Significance of the Research, Thesis Organizational Structure.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Discusses theories about the research topic like Constructivism, Cultural perception of drone, Drone and Listening and Avantgarde and drone.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design, Research Participants, Data Collection, Conclusion and Generalization and Research Plan

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results and Discussion: This chapter presents the themes discovered after the analysis of the data such as Innovation with drone, Aesthetic and Experienatial quality of Drone and Cultural context of sound art in Indonesia.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS