

Didi Kempot's Career Journey and Existence as a Javanese Cultural Artist

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ABSTRACT

Didi Kempot is a very popular Javanese cultural artist. Didi Kempot earned the nickname "The Godfather of Broken Heart" through his campursari song. This study aims to identify the career path and existence of Didi Kempot as a Javanese cultural artist. This research method is a literature study. Data collection was through literature in the form of books, journal articles, news, awards, and biographies related to artist Didi Kempot. The analysis identified that Didi Kempot's career journey began in 1984 until early 2020. Didi Kempot's career began with a music group until he finally decided to have a solo career. The existence of Didi Kempot in Indonesia is able to change the stigma of campursari music to be liked by various groups. The existence of Didi Kempot built fan loyalty. This was proven when Didi Kempot held a charity concert, and a donation of 7.6 billion rupiahs was collected.

Keywords: Campursari Music, Career Journey, Didi Kempot, Existence, Javanese Culture.

INTRODUCTION

Every country in the world has a culture that describes its identity. Indonesia is an archipelagic country that has a variety of cultures (Mangundjaya, 2013). Each region in Indonesia is synonymous with its own culture. The regional culture ranges from language, traditional dances, traditional clothes, traditional houses, traditional music, traditional songs, traditional events, and others. Examples of major cultures in Indonesia are Javanese, Sundanese, Balinese, Minangkabau, and others.

Music plays an essential role in the construction of meaning in cultural products, their translation and dissemination (Desblache, 2018). Music has a function as an instrument that accompanies a song. Music and songs can deliver a communication message through lyrics. Song lyrics are literary works that reflect cultural entities (Ukhrawiyah & Kurniawati, 2021). Even songs can convey motivational messages that can encourage individuals in life (Hidayat, 2014). Music continues to develop until it penetrates into digital culture. Optimizing this culture influences not only musicians but also content producers to continue to be able to follow digital culture and platforms (Morris, 2020).

Musicians are people who create musical works in the form of songs or albums. Every musician has an identity that leads to a musical genre. The pattern of the music industry in developing countries such as Indonesia affects its musicians. Indonesia has low regulation in the music industry due to massive piracy (Hermawan & Abiyusuf, 2021). A lot of traditional music comes from every region throughout Indonesia. Traditional music has been preserved from generation to generation. Traditional music is usually played as entertainment or accompaniment to religious and customary activities. Didik Prasetyo, commonly known as Didi Kempot, is a well-known campursari music artist in Indonesia.

Campursari is a form of Javanese art resulting from a combination of beautiful words, expressions of thoughts, and feelings of the author with ethnic musical instruments, namely gamelan and modern musical instruments such as electric guitar, bass, drums, and keyboards (Fadilah et al., 2021). Campursari is still sustainable today, but is considered an ancient music. Most campursari music fans come from the older generation and people who are synonymous with the nobility (Rahmawati, 2017). Campursari culture as

regional music needs to be preserved as identity and Javanese cultural heritage.

Realizing sustainable regional culture is a global challenge in the current era of modernization. Modern society tends to pursue things related to modern technology so that it puts aside its culture. Every community must play an active role in preserving the region's culture. Love for culture can grow and strengthen national values. Instilling a proud attitude towards culture can be done by playing a fundamental role in preserving the culture of the country by learning and practicing culture, promoting and strengthening local culture and introducing the wider community through culture (Fatmawati, 2021).

Several studies have shown that artists as actors who practice culture have proven capable of strengthening the preservation of regional culture. Preserving wayang culture from Indonesia requires hard work from artists through traditional performances (Suprihatin & Pratamawati, 2019). The creative movement of artists drives the preservation of batik culture through the development of Laweyan Batik Village (Harsanto & Permana, 2020). Research outside Indonesia also show that artists play a role in preserving culture. Artist actors including singers, leaders, and choir members defend the preservation of the Basque Choir as a symbol of the cultural identity of the Basque country, Europe (Bergadaà & Lorey, 2015).

Didi Kempot has an important role in the advancement of the music industry in Indonesia. In addition, Didi Kempot's activities as an artist play a very important role in preserving Javanese culture. Culture is susceptible to shifts due to global currents and developments in the times, including Javanese culture. However, the existence of Didi Kempot through his works in campursari music has been able to maintain Javanese culture and has even become very popular among various groups. This phenomenon is a form of positive cultural reconstruction. As a traditional Javanese music, Campursari can adapt to change and survive, thanks to hard work of the artist Didi Kempot. This cultural pattern is considered necessary for further research. Researchers conducted a study to identify the career path and existence of Didi Kempot who was able to influence the preservation of Javanese culture.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses literature studies method. Literature studies with cultural studies enable researchers to find critical views on cultural reconstruction (Parker, 2011). Researchers determine the literature systematically through the best way. The stages in systematically determining literature can be seen in Figure 1.

A systematic literature review is obtained from collecting literature based on predetermined topic boundaries. The stage is continued with conceptualizing, searching, screening, appraising, abstracting, and finally synthesizing and interpreting the results. Systematic reviews tend to be at the top of the evidence hierarchy because they analyze and evaluate the results of all available original articles on a particular research question.

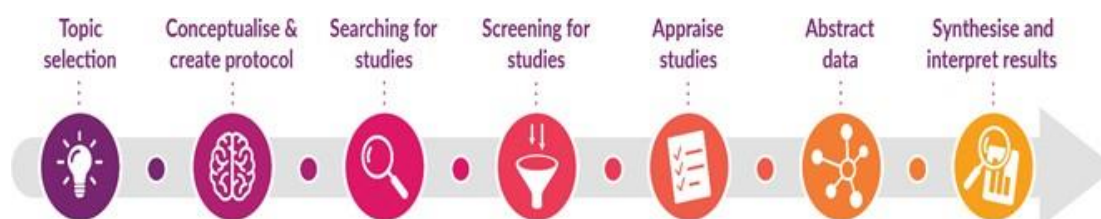


Figure 1. Steps in a systematic literature studies

Source: (Kib.ki.se, 2022)

Literature studies in this research reveal the career path and existence of Didi Kempot as a Javanese cultural artist. Literature studies are based on systematic analysis of literature or text production from various types of media (Rommel, 2004). Data related to Didi Kempot as a Javanese cultural artist was obtained from literature, books, journal articles, websites, newspapers, news, award data, and his biography.

Data from various kinds of literature are then read, understood, assessed, and selected according to the topic in this article. Through this process, researchers can select credible information and facts. In the last step, the researcher made an interpretation based on credible data and information about Didi Kempot as a Javanese cultural artist. This study offers new insights about cultural reconstruction in cultural studies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Didi Kempot is a musician with the campursari music genre which is well known in Indonesia. He has had a career in a music group and a solo career. He started his career in 1984 with the music group Kelompok Penyanyi Trotoar (Kempot). In 1993, Didi Kempot joined a new music group called Batara Group. His career in the Batara Group did not develop because he was no longer actively composing and promoting his songs. In 1989, Didi Kempot decided to leave the Batara Group and plan a solo career. Didi Kempot's career lasts until early 2020.

Didi Kempot's current popularity is not easy to get. He has experienced ups and downs in pursuing a career in the music industry in Indonesia. In Figure 3, the blue color describes his career in the group, the black color describes Didi Kempot's solo career, and the orange color describes his career in the international or foreign arena. Didi Kempot's career journey is shown in Figure 3.

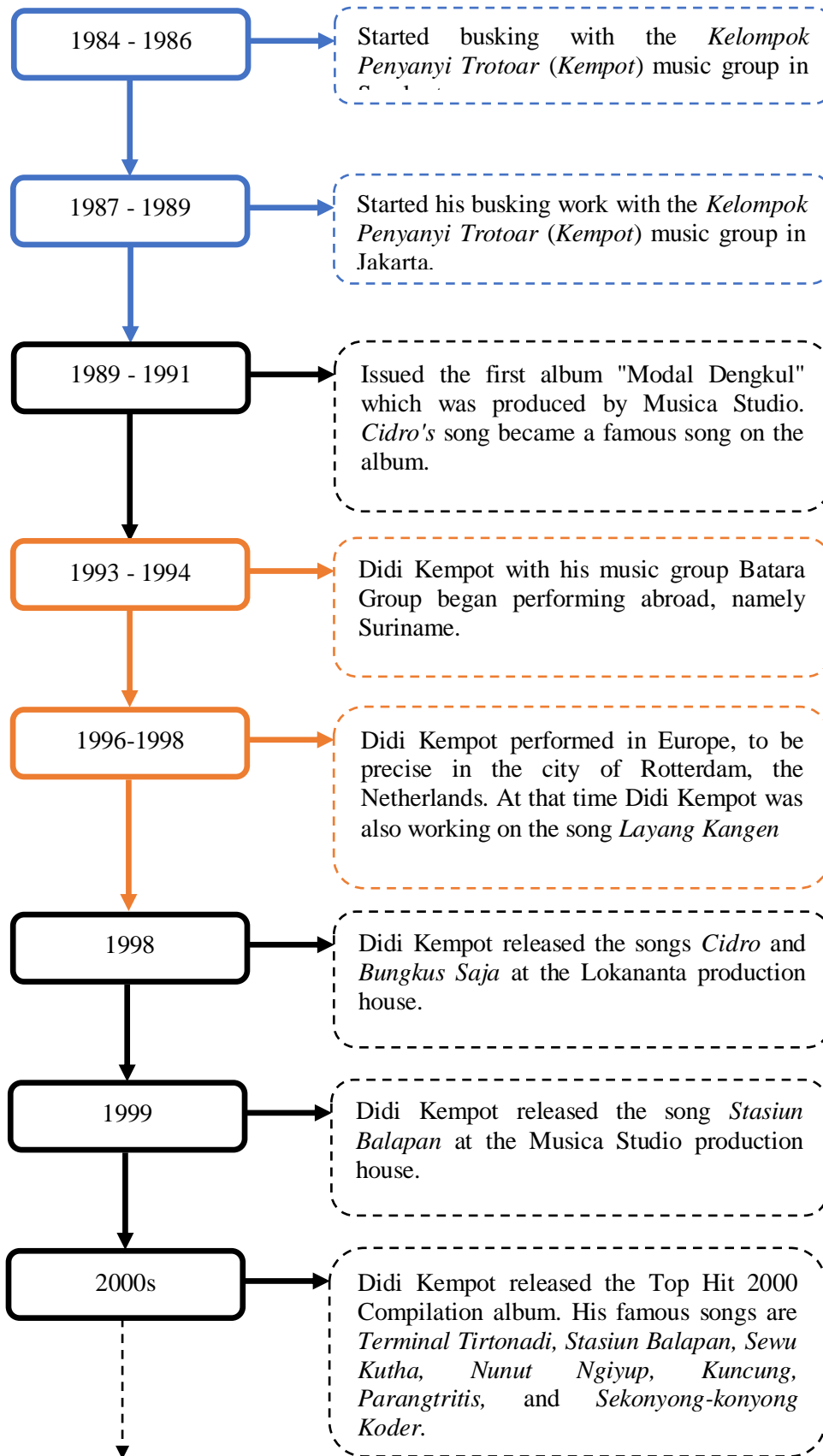


Figure 2. Javanese artist Didi Kempot

Source: (Wikipedia, 2023)

Didi Kempot is an artist who never stops creating works in the form of songs. Didi Kempot has composed more than 700 songs in more than 80 albums (Rahmawati, 2017). He not only composes songs but also performs songs by other musicians. Two factors make Didi Kempot want to always be consistent and exist working in Javanese music, namely internal and external factors. The internal factor is Didi Kempot's concern for traditional Javanese culture and a sense of responsibility towards the profession. While the

external factors come from connoisseurs and loyal listeners of Didi Kempot's works. He is enthusiastic about working to create the best campursari songs because he wants to satisfy his fans.



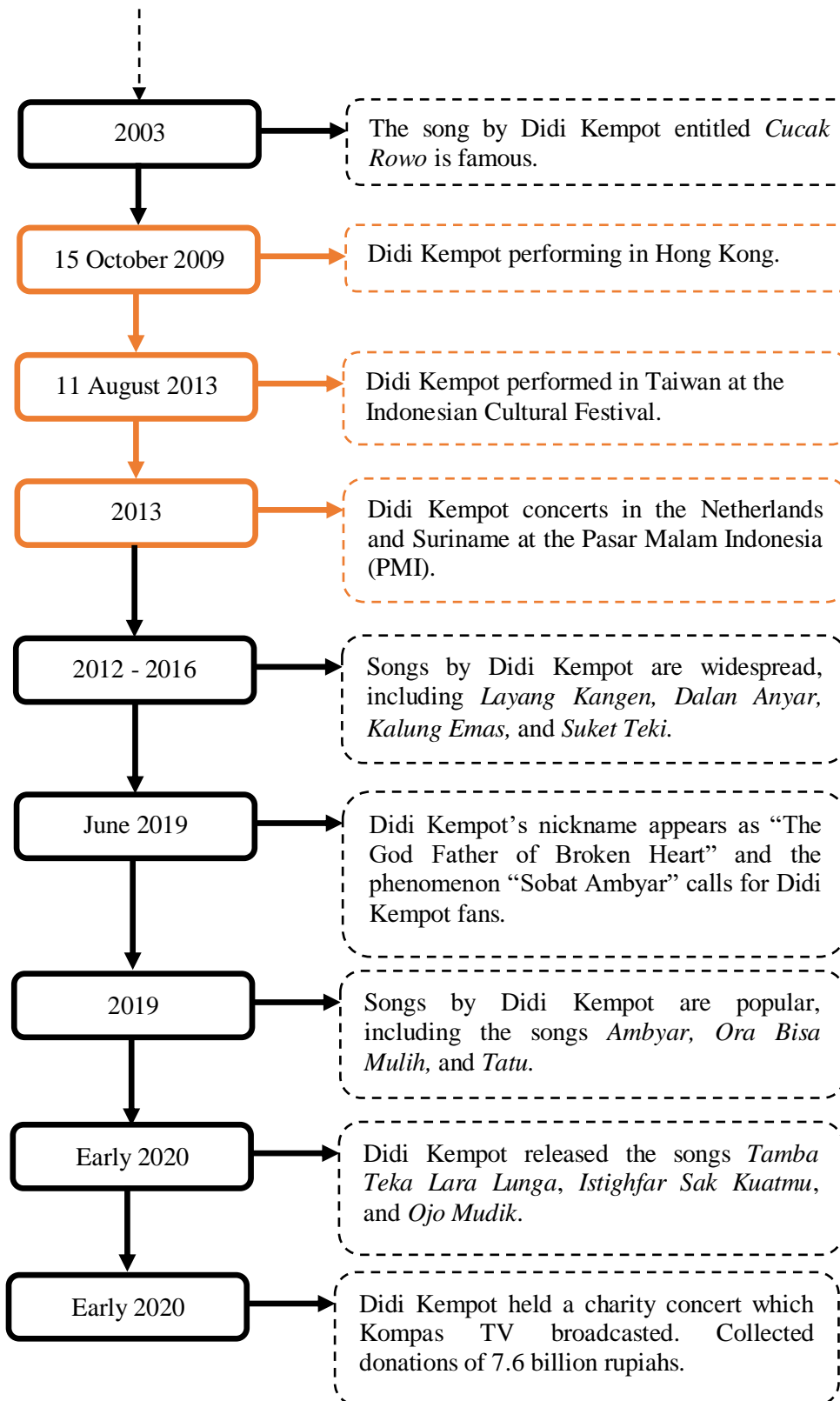


Figure 3. Didi Kempot's career journey

Didi Kempot's career had declined in the 2000s and bounced back in 2019 until early 2020 (Qorib & Dewi, 2021). His career began to develop until he received an invitation to appear outside Indonesia. He performed campursari songs abroad, such as in Suriname, the Netherlands, Hong Kong, Thailand, and others. He is increasingly famous through songs with the theme of love and heartbreak. Influencers in Indonesia cover a lot of Didi Kempot's campursari songs in various genres. Song cover activities by influencers indirectly helped promote the song as well as popularized Didi Kempot's name.



Most of the titles of Didi Kempot's songs use place names such as *Stasiun Balapan* in Solo, *Pantai Klayar* in daerah Pacitan, *Terminal Tirtonadi* in Solo, *Gunung Api Purba* in Nglanggeran, and Malioboro in Yogyakarta. The use of place names as the title of the song is intended to make the lyrics of the song closer to the people who have experienced heartbreak in that place (Muhammad, 2020).

Didi Kempot generally creates songs with the theme of love and heartbreak. He performed a broken heart-themed song with the aim that his songs could survive in the music market and be enjoyed by various groups. His hopes came to fruition, and it can be seen that the songs he composed in the 90s are coming back to life in the midst of modernization and globalization (Achsani, 2019). This is because the contents of the song can touch and represent the hearts of every listener.

Roro Ayu's research on the lyrics of the song *Pamer Bojo* created by Didi Kempot found the meaning of heartache because her lover left her, and the arrogance of her ex-lover because she found a new partner exacerbated the heartache she experienced (Ayu & Hariyanto, 2022). Songs of love and heartbreak are considered to carry negative energy because they make a person sad. This assumption was broken by the research results of Rachmatdana et al., which stated that Didi Kempot's heartbreak theme song is a source of strength in dealing with sadness, a source of motivation to rise from failure and a reminder in life for his fans (Rachmatdana et al., 2021).

The Indonesian people well appreciated the work of the Didi Kempot song. This is evidenced by the various awards he has won nationally and internationally. The awards that he got, namely Bintang Jasa Officer in de Ereorde van de Palm, POP FM Award, The Most Popular Singer in Suriname, *Anugerah Musik Indonesia*, Man of the Year, *Yayasan Musik Hanjaringrat*, *Patriot Kesenian*, *Anugerah Produktivitas*, award from Panglima TNI, *Anugerah Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia (PWI) Central Java* (Sari & Puguh, 2020). In addition, he is trusted to appear at Indonesian state events. He has been invited to the Indonesian state palace and ministerial events in Indonesia.

Through his works, Didi Kempot earned the nickname "The God Father of Broken Heart" with the nickname "Lord Didi", while his fans got the nickname "Sobat Ambyar". "The God Father of Broken Heart" is called because his songs, mostly nuanced with love and heartbreak, have succeeded in making his fans feel heartbreak. Then, the term "Sobat Ambyar" describes the feelings of his fans who are sad and scattered when listening to the song. This phenomenon is becoming increasingly popular, which has made many young people like his works. He advised his fans not to make a broken heart a deep sadness but to be passionate about creating (Muhammad, 2020).

Didi Kempot is considered successful in building a personal brand within himself. Many young people like his work, which means that the local branding of Javanese music is only sometimes accepted by the younger generation. This change shows that the songs performed by Didi Kempot are able to change the views of the Y and Z generations towards the campursari song (Qorib & Dewi, 2021). This campusari pop culture is supported by the millennial generation who can quickly change a person's popularity through social media (Maiers, 2017).

The success of Didi his personal branding can be seen from the extraordinary appreciation of the community. Fanatical fans love all of his works so that song works can be commercialized easily. Based on data for 2022, Didi Kempot's Youtube Channel has 1.98 million subscribers. He also held a charity concert from home which KompasTV broadcasted. The Didi Kempot charity concert collected a total of up to 7.6 billion rupiahs in donations. All of these donations are used to help communities affected by COVID-19 in Indonesia. This charity concert received full appreciation from all Indonesian people and was also his last concert. He breathed his last in the midst of the peak of his career on May 5, 2020.

CONCLUSIONS

Javanese culture is a culture originating from Java, Indonesia. This culture is preserved by the Javanese people, especially in Central Java, Yogyakarta and East Java. Javanese culture is known as a noble culture in the sense of high quality, so it strongly influences the people who adhere to it. Culture can experience shifts due to global currents and the times. But, the younger generation, such as the millennial generation (y) and the alpha generation (z), are starting to like the campursari song a lot. Initially, the younger generation is known as the generation that prefers foreign music such as western, Korean, and other music. Didi Kempot has the power to change the habits of conventional society to become popular. Currently, the campursari song is a song that various groups favour. Campursari songs are often viral on various digital music platforms. His campursari songs are also trending on the YouTube media channel. Every work created by Didi Kempot is highly appreciated by fans from all walks of life and ages.

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