Digging Through the Network of the Indonesian Noise Scene

Martinus Indra Hermawan

The Noise music scene in Indonesia has grown its popularity in recent years, thanks to the movie Bising: Noise and Experimental Music in Indonesia (2014) *about people who do Noise in Indonesia, Senyawa who plays everywhere, and the Jogja Noise Bombing Festival, which draws attention from Noise musicians and fans around the world who come to attend the annual festival. It is already acknowledged not only abroad, where it first gained its popularity, but also by several national media and music festivals who feature some Noise musicians in their programmes. From an unknown yet obscure genre, Noise music has been part of the independent music ecosystem in Indonesia. Nowadays, the Noise scenes in Indonesia are not limited to Java island, but include other islands such as Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Bali, Sumatra, Batam, and spaces in between. Studying the connections between the Noise activists in these islands through their network of touring, releasing an album together, or simply via Whatsapp group chat is interesting. This article aims at exploring the connections between Noise scenes in Indonesia. After studying the network directly through direct involvement and conducting interviews with some key figures in the scenes, we found some interesting facts such as the historical origin of its performers as well as infrastructures of the scenes (including but not limited to records labels, venues, communities, instrument builders, and festivals). The motivation of these Noise artists for networking and their desire to connect on a broader scale has helped the Noise scenes to achieve recognition.*

Keywords: Noise music, networking, history, Noise festival, records label, instrument builders, Noise community

Introduction

The Noise music scene in Indonesia has grown its popularity in recent years. Thanks to *Bising: Noise and Experimental Music in Indonesia*[1], Senyawa, who plays everywhere, and the Jogja Noise Bombing Festival, which draws the attention of Noise musicians and fans worldwide who come to attend the annual festival. *It is already acknowledged not only abroad, where it first gained its popularity, but also by several national media and music festivals who feature some Noise musicians in their programmes.* From an unknown yet obscure genre,

Noise music has been part of the independent music ecosystem in Indonesia since mid 2000's. Nowadays, the Noise scenes in Indonesia are not limited to big cities on Java island but include other islands such as Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Bali, Sumatra, Batam, and spaces in between.

To understand Noise music in Indonesia, one should be extraordinarily liberal and have a methodology of curiosity towards everything. Expect a set that was altogether different from the European/American scenes. Before we begin to examine Experimental and Noise music in Indonesia, we should first comprehend the meaning of Experimental and Noise music. Although the two terms are in some cases similar, there is a contrast between them.

Noise music fuses a broad assortment of melodic styles and sound-based innovative practices that include clamour as a fundamental point of similarity. Parts of Experimental music consolidate dubious music, in which the artist presents the aspects of shot or fancy as to either the piece or its execution. To the vast majority, separating Experimental and Noise music is challenging to do because both, for the most part, comprise similar components; one of them is exploration.

'Noise music is more than a single genre. It is very diverse in historical, social, and aesthetic terms. Noise music is a vast territory defined by its many influences ranging from underground radical or extreme subcultures, pop music (or vernacular music) and academic cultures.' (Faille & Fermont 2016, 23). These types of music wanted to redefine the norms created in routine musical practices. In other words, David Novak defines Noise music as 'a feedback loop of deep and multilayered significance, which brings the sounds of a distorted world back into earshot.' (Novak, 2013, 27).

Meanwhile, the term Experimental music is confusing because it may be utilised in a wide range of ways: either as a word expressing the expansive feeling of contemporary music, or going against the norm, from a confined perspective, alluding just to explicit patterns in that music. John Cage, an American pioneer of Experimental music, has been using the term since 1955, stating that 'an experimental action is one the outcome of which is not foreseen' (Cage 1961, 39).

These days, music performers in Indonesia involved in these scenes generally play music that on occasions covers at least two particular genres. Thus, a band portrayed as an Experimental band can be found to incorporate Noise music in their composition, and the other way around. The two genres can be seen to be overlapping, as one next to the other. 'It is important to note that these sub-genres

are flexible, and many artists do not feel comfortable with these labels. Many Noise performers and bands evolve and move in different directions throughout their careers.' (Faille & Fermont 2016, 24)

With its exceptional socio-political-financial setting, Indonesia develops an alternative pathway of articulations that changes perceptions of Noise music. There are shared definitions, for instance, that Noise begins from the surge of globalisation and has its beginnings in the Dada movements. Nevertheless, the description is rarely comprehensive. Etymological relativity is relied upon to understand such a brief and obviously innovative practice. We will find these terms, for example: improvisation, free improvisation, or even Sound Art utilised by the everyday citizens in Indonesia to depict Noise music overall.

Because the Noise scene is a close-knit community, and only a few people are involved, it is crucial to hang out with people who get the distribution of capital (information/opportunities/funds) to advance their careers.

> Noise communities in Indonesia are developing in interesting directions both within and beyond the Harsh Noise genre. Collaborative work between practitioners from different musical backgrounds is needed to maintain this. The intention is not to direct them to a certain genre but, rather, to give insights into various genres of experimental music and let them decide which path they choose. (Hartono 2015, 88).

Some Indonesian Noise artists have joined a Whatsapp group chat that is active in exchanging information about gigs, album releases, tours, selling gear, or even in ordinary daily conversation. As of April 2022, the group chat consists of 66 participants from Java, Bali, Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Batam islands, and some close friends from Asia and the USA.

Through field observations and interviews, I aimed to study the network of the Noise scene in Indonesia. I have interviewed some key figures of the Noise scenes in Java, Bali, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Batam, and Sumatra islands. I picked these islands because they have what we call a Noise music scene as Will Straw defines it, as 'a cultural space in which a range of musical practices coexist, interacting with each other within a variety of processes of differentiation' (Straw 1993, 373). From the definition of the music scene, it means there are musicians, record labels, media, and organisers who are all connected. When I wrote this journal, other islands in Indonesia did not qualify as having what we can classify as a Noise music scene.

The History of Noise Music on Java Island

The tight connection between every Noise collective in Java can be used as a piece of valuable information to write about the Noise scene on this island. The Noise scene on Java island also has better documentation about the scene, so the information is more complete than on the other islands.

Based on my research[2], the first Noise artist in Indonesia was Hubologist from Sukabumi city (West Java) in the mid-'90s. Unfortunately, there is no audio evidence of this history of the Noise project nowadays except for a review section in issue 4/5 of a local Punk fanzine called *Tiga Belas*. There, a seven-track demo CD-R by Hubologist titled ‘Under Constant Supervision’ was reviewed by Arian 13 (from the band Seringai) back in 2000. The movie *Bising: Noise and Experimental Music in Indonesia* managed to interview one of the members of Hubologist, however, the demo CD-R and video performance remain lost.

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Figure 1: Review section from Tiga Belas zine contains a review of Hubologist 'Under Constant Supervision' by Arian 13. ©Martinus Indra Hermawan

In the compilation ‘Pekak! Indonesian Noise 1995 – 2015: 20 Years of Experimental Music from Indonesia’, Worldhate is considered the oldest Noise project. A European label released the Worldhate album titled ‘Egodestroyer’ in the mid-90s. In April 1998, Worldhate released their sophomore album cassette titled ‘Self-Destructed Art’ which contains 11 tracks of Harsh Noise[3] on THT Underground. The man behind Worldhate is Jefray Kurnia Arwadi, the frontman of an old-school Black Metal band from Jakarta, Kekal. He was also active as the man behind THT Underground, a Do It Yourself (D.I.Y.) record label in the 90s, mainly releasing his band's albums. In 2006 he moved to Calgary, Alberta, Canada, and became a permanent resident there.

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Figure 2: Cover artwork of Pekak! Indonesian Noise 1995 – 2015: 20 Years of Experimental Music from Indonesia compilation released by Syrphe and Rela Mati Records. ©Martinus Indra Hermawan

Yogyakarta is known as a city in Indonesia that has many Noise projects. One of them is the Industrial Noise duo S.K.M. (Sejuta Kata Makian), fronted by Ishari Sahida, also known as Ari Wulu and Jompet, which started around 1996. Ari Wulu's father, Sapto Raharjo[4], was cited as one of the first people to bring a synthesiser[5] to Indonesia. Ari Wulu himself is the godfather of Electronic music in Yogyakarta and is also the founder of the underground D.J. collective Soundboutique and runs Yogyakarta Gamelan Festival[6].

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Figure 3: S.K.M. split cassette with G.O.R.B., a Noise duo from Malaysia released by Anak Liar Records in 1998. ©Martinus Indra Hermawan

Seek Six Sick, a Noise Rock band founded in 1999, was made up of some art students from the Indonesian Institute of Arts Yogyakarta (I.S.I. Yogyakarta). Along with Bandung-based A Stone A, these art students' bands would be some of the core influences for the next generation of Indonesian Noise artists in the 2000s. Seek Six Sick influenced the younger generation at I.S.I. Yogyakarta, specifically the group Black Ribbon. Black Ribbon began coordinating boisterous parts into their Rock music and added a Noise part through the contribution of Krisna Widhiatama, who balanced the sound of Black Ribbon with a tape D.J. and circuit-bent instruments. Krisna Widhiatama himself founded the Harsh Noise acts Feces Anatomy and Sodadosa, and was then involved in the Jogja Noise Bombing collective. In 2006 the fanzine Kompirasi #1: Kompilasi Bajakan Triwulan summarising the Yogyakarta Noise and Experimental scene at that time in a compilation consisting of Zoo, Belajar Membunuh, Black Ribbon, Melcyd, and Prodjek Babi #9.

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Figure 4: Front cover fanzine Kompirasi #1: Kompilasi Bajakan Triwulan. ©Martinus Indra Hermawan

Meanwhile, To Die started in 1998 as a band from the Hardcore Punk scene. To Die bridges the gap between the Hardcore Punk scene and the Noise scene in Indonesia. Later on, To Die became one of the Jogja Noise Bombing (J.N.B.) collective founders. J.N.B. is an open community for Noise artists based in Yogyakarta that started around 2009/2010. Inspired by graffiti artists, J.N.B. began to make a new concept of doing gigs illegally in the street, a practice they called Noise Bombing[7]. J.N.B. also organises workshops and an annual Noise festival

(Jogja Noise Bombing Festival) with Noise artists and fans worldwide every January. Some notable J.N.B. artists include Dea Karina, Mahamboro, Sean Stellfox, Adit (Arpappel), Rangga Nasrullah, Indra Menus, Wednes Mandra, Khrisna Widhiatama, Woro, Arie Mindblasting, Yogi Obluda, Hilman Fathoni, Rio Nurkholis, and Akbar Adi Wibowo.

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Figure 5: Noise bombing guerrilla-style performance at Graha Sabha Pramana, University of Gadjah Mada. Used by permission from Dea Karina

In the mid-2000s, the Indie Pop scene in Yogyakarta flourished with one of the influential communities, Common People[8]. Melcyd, one of the bands in Common People, found themselves more interested in Noise, and started playing Noise towards the end of their career. Bhakti, the bass player in Melcyd, went on to play in an experimental bass and drum band named Zoo. Zoo's vocalist, Rully Sabhara, would later form the duo Senyawa with instrument builder Wukir Suryadi. Senyawa showcases their unique sound that combines Wukir Suryadi's handmade bamboo instruments run through guitar effects pedals with Rully Sabhara's diverse vocal stylings, embracing Indonesian ethnic music with hints of Noise.

From the Electropop scene, there is Terror/Incognita, which was previously better known for its use of Björk-style musical characters. However, the duo from Semarang decided to split up and leave Bambang Ramantyo, who then started playing Noise while still carrying the name Terror/Incognita.

Based in Jatinangor (Bandung), Pemuda Elektrik is one of the earliest exponents of Noise music in Indonesia. Starting in early 2000, the group often carried video art, and Noise as performance art in their performances. Pemuda Elektrik disbanded at the end of 2005. Then in 2006, Gembira Putra Agam and Ageng, the two core members, continued their musical journey in Sungsang Lebam Telak, an Avant-Jazz unit.

In the Grunge scene, Surabaya-based Klepto Opera was the group responsible for the development of the Noise movement. In Surabaya (East Java), they are one of the crews who organise Melawan Kebisingan Kota[9]. Malang Sub Noise is another notable Noise collective in east Java, based in Malang (East Java).

Malang Sub Noise organised their Noise festival called Malang Noise Bimbang. In Ponorogo city, the Noise community organises Grebeg Noize and hosts local and international touring acts. Meanwhile, the Unen Unen Ambyar community created the idea to accommodate Noise artists based in East Java, such as Malang, Surabaya, Tulungagung, Kediri, and Kediri. They organise the annual Noise festival, Unen-Unen Ambyar.

In Central Java, Solo city has the Bengawan Noise Syndicate with their annual Solo Harsh Fest. Bench Laboratory started as a business that focused on the home interior sector and then expanded into a laboratory for audio and visual development. They opened a program called Suara Bench Lab, which focuses on the realm of audio-visual collaboration in which the Noise artists there have a space to expose their works. A more academic showcase Bukan Musik Biasa[10] is also held in Solo.

In Purwokerto, Banyu Noise organises workshops and their online/offline festival, Mbanggel Fest. One of the founders of Banyu Noise is Adit 505, who is a visual artist. Adit 505 was involved in Jogja Noise Bombing, then he came back to Purwokerto and founded Banyu Noise as a new platform for Noise artists in that city. Also, from Purwokerto, Susu Ultrarock Records is run by Ozsa Erlangga and mainly releases Noise music on CD-R with a hand painting cover.

In the west Java area, a Noise collective in Cirebon called Noise Harapan Cirebon organises Noise gigs under the title Sunyiragi. Between 2007-and 2010, the Experimental and Noise scene in Bandung had a regular gig and workshop using the name Common Room[11], although now it is not very active. Nowadays, there are a number of crews including Bandung Null Emergence (B.N.E.)[12], Salon[13], and Opus Contra Collective[14], among others, that work in the Noise scene.

Jakarta also has one of the earliest Noise scenes in Indonesia, and they have Noise festivals like Jakarta Noise Fest (2009) organised by New Wive Records[15] (now Wahana Records) and Wasted Rockers,[16] also Mindzapp (2011) by Studiorama[17]. New platforms such as Alur Bunyi[18] organised by the Goethe Institut Jakarta and Sinyal Selatan[19] organised by Forum Lenteng also give some opportunities to Noise artists to perform under their curation.

As for record labels from Java that release Noise albums, Yogyakarta has Rela Mati Records and Noise Bombing; both are my labels that are active in releasing music on cassette, CD-R, vinyl formats, and digital versions on Bandcamp. Another Yogyakarta-based label, Tilis Records, is a new record label that has released Experimental and Noise projects such as Potrojoyo, Wukir

Suryadi, and Ikbal S Lubys, mostly on cassette. Senyawa also created their Senyawa Mandiri unit to release their product, including merchandise and a record album. A new record label, 10 PM Project, run by Rio Nurkholis (Coffee Faith), is set to put some Noise albums on CD-R format and via Bandcamp. Gerpfast Kolektif, once based in Malang but then moved to Yogyakarta, is still one of the active labels that releases Noise albums, mainly from Indonesia and Japan, on cassette.

Once famous for its Psychedelic Rock roster, Bandung-based Orange Cliff Records recently seems active in releasing Noise artists on cassette, such as Kuntari and Mahamboro, and organising Noise gigs. Another Bandung label, Spasm Records, is engaged in releasing CD-R and tapes in limited quantities, and organising Noise gigs under the heading More Brutality, Less Harmony. Hasana Editions[20] based in Bandung, ‘curates and publishes physical archives and documents, including cassette tapes, records, experimental poems, early drawings, scores, early versions and unmastered music, artist books, zines, photographs, videos, digital data, artist statements, written concepts, manuscripts, to name a few.’ (Hasana Editions 2022 website). Their cassette releases include Riar Rizaldi's ‘I Only Have Visions On You’ and Nursalim Yadi Anugerah’s ‘Selected Pieces from H.N.N.U.N.G.'.

Jakarta also has Death Tiwikarma Productions[21] run by Danif Pradana, who played Noise under the name Kalimayat. After returning to Jakarta, he founded the Noise supergroup, Sabedarah, with Uri Putra (from the band Ghaust & Kelelawar Malam). Danif Pradana then became the writer of the movie Bising: Noise & Experimental Music in Indonesia, with Riar Rizaldi and Adythia Utama as the producers. Another important Noise label from Jakarta is Artrape Records[22]. There is also a new cassette label called Potong Jari Records[23] from Tangerang, a city near Jakarta.

Meanwhile, the first Indonesian netlabel, Yes No Wave, occasionally released some of the finest Noise albums digitally. Mindblasting Netlabel is still releasing a free digital download album in the internet world. Both netlabels are part of the Indonesian NetAudio Forum[24] that organises the Indonesian NetAudio Festival. Wok The Rock, founder of Yes No Wave, and Timothy O'Donoghue (Oxen Free) established Yes No Klub in 2010 as a monthly platform that hosts Experimental and Noise gigs. Yes No Klub later became part of the Nusasonic Festival[25] and the W.S.K. Festival of the Recently Possible (Manila), Playfreely/BlackKaji (Singapore), and C.T.M. Festival for Adventurous Music & Art (Berlin).

In the late 2000s, several initiatives started to connect Noise music and new media art. One of the critical bridges between Noise and new media art is Electrocore, a duo composed of Venzha and Istasius, founders of the House of Natural Fiber (H.O.N.F.)[26]. As Electrocore, they toured throughout Europe in the early 2000s and gained notoriety because of their interest in UFOs. Organisations such as Breakcore_LABS[27] and Lifepatch[28] were working on creative and commercial applications in art, science, and technology that sometimes intersect with the Noise scene. In Surabaya, there is WAFT-Lab[29] that focuses on the tension and interplay within the interdisciplinary art practices.

The kind of musical materials and instruments that Indonesian Noise artists utilise will more often than not be self-constructed for the most part. This is partly because of the expense of imported electronic music hardware, and the scene's D.I.Y-centered creative culture. ‘About 11% of the population lives under the poverty line. Hence, some independent instrument makers produce their own low-cost D.I.Y. synthesisers, sound generators and effects’ (Faille & Fermont 2016, 88). A few Noise artists use instruments made from junk, scrap metal, and springs, while others use D.I.Y. synthesisers and pedals from different creators around Indonesia.

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Figure 6: A set up from me, Taufiq Aribowo and Andreas Siagian at the RRREC FEST In The Valley Festival contains D.I.Y. synthesisers, guitar pedal effects, a shaker box from a candy container and a circuit bending instrument. ©Martinus Indra Hermawan

In the 1970s, Prof. Adhi Susanto, M.Sc., PhD, a professor at Gadjah Mada University, succeeded in creating a hybrid of synthesiser and *Gamelan* called Gameltron. Gameltron is an authentic encounter between *Gamelan* and electronics, resulting in the earliest synthetic *Gamelan* instrument[30].

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Figure 7: A recent photo of Gameltron. Used by permission from Lintang Raditya

Due to the limitation of the material available to build synths, the synth-building culture in Indonesia nowadays is fascinating to investigate. For those interested in the synth building culture in Indonesia, Synthesia, a D.I.Y. synth

archive blog, run by Lintang Raditya, a synth builder from Yogyakarta is one of the most important sources[31].

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Figure 8: One of the first Kenali Rangkai Pakai synthesisers, an Atari Punk console made by order for To Die. ©Martinus Indra Hermawan

How Noise Music Spread on Kalimantan Island

One of the first Noise projects from the western part of Kalimantan island was Fajar Rizki produced by Dimensi7 (Pontianak). His album was released by Yogyakarta's Netlabel, Pati Rasa Records. Meanwhile, from Sanggau, deep inside West Kalimantan, Melpomene At Orgasms is a Noise project run by Aditama Prasetya that has already been active since 2011.

In Kalimantan, I chose Sabrina Eka Felisiana from the duo Sarana based in Samarinda (East Kalimantan) to discuss her involvement in the thriving Noise scene. From Pontianak (West Kalimantan), Aldiman Sinaga, who runs the record label P.T.K. Distribution[32] also has a fascinating insight as a label owner who releases some essential Noise albums from Kalimantan.

Aside from their Punk-related releases, P.T.K. Distribution also caters to some Noise artists across the provinces of the island of Kalimantan. Noise projects such as Melponeme At Orgasms (Sanggau), HANNNGS (Pontianak), Terhimpit Dosa Dan Duka (Sintang) and Theo Nugraha (Samarinda) have released their albums on CDR via PTK Distribution.

Like most Indonesian people involved in Noise, Aldiman Sinaga knew Punk Rock and several kinds of sub/variants of this music before knowing about Noise[33]. Around 2014, Aldiman Sinaga met a friend that studied at the F.K.I.P. Music and Dance Study Program at Tanjungpura University (Untan Art campus), where he found some interesting facts. He pointed out that since the arrival of the Untan Art campus, many of his friends at that time began to explore sounds in music, including Noise.

Nursalim Yadhi Anugerah and Reza, who are members of an ensemble and music group, Balaan Tumaan, are alumni of the Untan Art campus. Both artists never claimed that their work was Noise or not, but Sinaga maintains that their works had a significant impact on the Noise artists in Pontianak.

Noise in West Kalimantan has spread among several individuals. They recognise each other and are connected. These individuals also take part in gigs and compilation albums that friends organise, alongside other bands from various types of music. Some have also joined Noise scenes in East Kalimantan, such as a split project between Melponeme at Orgasms and Theo Nugraha (Samarinda).

Theo Nugraha, who came from East Borneo (Samarinda), once watched To Die playing live and immediately changed his Electronic music into Noise[34]. After that, he single-handedly started the Noise scene in Samarinda.

In 2013 Theo Nugraha started to enter the Noise scene in Indonesia. After him, several names also emerged in Samarinda, such as Jeritan and Sarana. In the same year, Theo Nugraha released several albums on the internet and several split albums with names such as To Die and Shit Noise Bastard from Malaysia. His network began to form because, at that time, he decided to tour every year.

He then moved to the middle part of Kalimantan island, Palangkaraya, single-handedly spreading Noise music in that area. Recently he was back in Samarinda and focused more on performance arts, aside from running a new platform, MUARASUARA.

> MUARASUARA is a platform framing the experimentation in music, both in sound exploration or in the nature of its performance able to offer cultural discourses, both in Indonesia or in the region of Asia or even globally. MUARASUARA is also particularly one way to see the potential in the development of Samarinda experimental music and it becomes the laboratory for the dialogue and collaboration between various cultures through the art of experimental music, as well as the medium for knowledge distribution and the mapping of experimental music activist in Indonesia and around it. (MUARASUARA 2022 website)

Another Noise artist in Samarinda is Sabrina Eka Felisiana, who based on my research[2] was also the first woman who played Noise on Kalimantan island[35]. Together with Istanara Julia Saputri and Annisa Maharani, as found on my research[2] she created the first Indonesian female Noise group called Sarana.

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Figure 9: Duo Sarana line up in 2018 for the Nusasonic festival in Yogyakarta. ©Martinus Indra Hermawan

Sarana had two opportunities to play in the United States, but unfortunately, neither plan went well. The first time, Sarana got an invitation to play at Moogfest after they played interactively in one of the Moogfest sub-events (Always On) through the internet channel. However, their consistent work schedule and insecurities meant they had to turn down the offer to play at this prestigious annual music, arts and technology event, specially created to honour Robert Moog and his musical inventions. The second offer came from Red Bull Music Academy, which invited Sarana to play in New York. It failed because of the resignation of the project manager, and because Red Bull Music Academy cancelled the event because they also did not want to continue the project. In 2019, Sarana finally had the opportunity to play at C.T.M. Festival in Berlin[36].

Between 2013 – and 2015, the Noise scene in Samarinda began to increase. One of the reasons is that more Noise artists came to tour Samarinda. In 2013 there were two Noise groups: Bonne Humeur Provisoire (France) and Matikau (Solo), who came to Samarinda for a tour, with a show called Titik Berat. It was the first time that Sabrina Eka Felisiana organised Noise gigs. In the sophomore year, there was Jeritan, a Noise project from Faturrahman, and then Jeliwan Toq Hudoq by Happy Latemonthster. The latter also founded a record label called Loudness Record. After seeing the phenomenon of record labels focused on Noise from the other city, he thought about making one to cater to the emerging local Noise acts. Then there are Hirang records which are also engaged in releasing Noise albums via Bandcamp.

In 2015 a new platform appeared in Samarinda called Senandung Rusak, which until now is still active in organising Noise gigs. In 2017 Samarinda Noise Fest happened with many local and international Noise artists involved. In October 2018, Noise Bombing, released a cassette compilation of Noise artists based in Samarinda titled ‘Sounds From Samarinda’ that compiled the highlights of the emerging Noise scene there.

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Figure 10: Cover artwork of 'Sounds From Samarinda' compilation cassette by my label, Noise Bombing, to highlight the Noise scene in Samarinda. ©Martinus Indra Hermawan

The Unique Side of The Bali Noise Scene

Based on my research[2], Erlangga Giovanni was the first and only Noise artist in Bali for some years. Enggohoi, an alias used for his username on the internet, became a stage name when he worked as a cassette selector. He used the alias Enggohoi to contribute to the 2015 edition of Disrobot's Cut and Rescue (Jakarta) mixtape. He was involved in a Punk collective, Denpasar Kolektif, before getting involved in the Noise scene. He was also a vocalist for the Grindcore band, EscapeFromHell, established in 2011.

Grintabachan is Giovanni's first Noise project since 2011. It is considered the first Noise project in Bali[2]. Erlangga was trying to get into the realm of Noise music by creating a split album with several other Noise units, such as To Die (Yogyakarta), Hari Maia (Brazil), Projekt666:Satanoise (Malaysia), Nigeria (Germany) also, Acidwall (Bangkok). Grintabachan was involved in several essential Noise compilations, including 'Pekak! Indonesian Noise 1995-2015: 20 Years Of Experimental Music From Indonesia' (2015, End Of The Alphabet Records). Grintabachan also managed to do a European tour (Berlin and Amsterdam) in July 2019.

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Figure 11: A split album between Grintabachan and To Die 'Disket Split Terror' on floppy disc released by my label, Rela Mati Records and Erlangga's label, Ohoi Records. ©Martinus Indra Hermawan

Meanwhile, Konsultasi is a newer Noise project between Erlangga Giovanni and Putu Kawi of Stylucipher. Konsultasi started in 2017 and focused on psychological issues, such as substance abuse and mental disorders. Konsultasi offers some experimentation by combining Harsh Noise, collage sound with tape loops, and analogue/circuit bending techniques. Aside from organising gigs with Chaos Non Musica, Giovanni also runs Ohoi Records, specialising in releasing Noise music on cassette.

Another figure in the Bali Noise scene is Oduns. Oduns' stage name is Sooncrazy, a name inspired by the Apocalypse comic authored by Yuu Kuraishi

and Kazu Inabe. Born in Gianyar, Bali, Oduns has been active in the region's Noise music scene since 2013 and consistently produces releases. Besides being one of the Chaos Non Musica collective members, Oduns is also actively involved in different projects, such as a Harsh Noise group called Noise Sonata. He is also behind a Noise-specialised-record label, Moemoekyun Record.

Bali Noise's scene is different from other scenes in Indonesia because of the artists' roots. On November 25 2017, I came to the Chaos Non Musica festival #2 as a speaker to discuss Noise music and for the launch of my book titled Pekak. At that time, I saw something unique about the Noise scene in Bali because it did not only come from the Punk scene, like most noise scenes in Southeast Asia, but also from the D.J. scene that used to play in music bars & clubs around Bali.

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Figure 12: Flyer for Pekak book launching in conjunction with Chaos Non Musica Experimental/Noise Festival #2, November 25 2017, in Tuck & Trap, Bali. ©Martinus Indra Hermawan

Many Noise artists from Bali originated either from the Hardcore Punk scene or the local Electronic and Dance music scene, especially D.J. scene that plays in the clubhouses in Bali. The unique involvement of these D.J.s especially can be seen in the types of equipment they use, which are modern fabricated synths compared to the other Noise artists that use D.I.Y. synths. Naturally, Noise artists in Bali are sneaking in through their contributions of analogue and digital sounds of Electronic music. Propelled by the consensus of club and dance music and the tour and travel industry setting, Bali gives its own particular shading to the Noise scene.

One of the artists from the Electronic and club music scene is JAGAJAGA. JAGAJAGA is a medium for Pierre Alvian to juggle his experiments between his interests in raw noises and body-moving rhythms. Before listening to Noise, Alvian liked various music genres but was active in the House/Disco/Techno scene with a group of friends in Calypso (Jakarta). The first time he watched a Noise performance was when he was working at a music studio in Jakarta, which was used as the Noise venue. One of the performers playing in that gig was Sangsaka Worship. However, he felt the shattering at Noise gigs for the first time when he moved to Bali. Alvian recalls,

> The first thing I watched was the Kolaborasi Musik Setan; it turned out to be a collaboration whose formation can change. That time again with

> the formation of Sooncrazy, Sora Na Aya and Grintabachan. (Alvian 2022)

The genre bends and intensities of his works are influenced mainly by his active involvement in both the Noise and the dance music scenes in Bali since 2017. The desire to know more about the people in one scene, and the passion for performing with and for friends in Noise music became the main inspiration for forming JAGAJAGA's character. Pierre Alvian has a head that works as a house for thousands of beautifully terrible things. He uses sliced samples, haunting synths, and angry feedback as tools to let you catch a glimpse of his trademark sound. He is also the brains behind Justincase, a music selector project that channels energy from the same dance floor scene through different styles. Concerning the D.J and Noise artists being able to be in one gig, Alvian thought that 'it is because the genre of music/work has become the umpteenth number. The most important thing is to get together and have fun.' (Alvian 2022)

The Bali Noise scene has good affiliations with other cities and even with other countries. One can see their connection on the Grintabachan's Thailand and European Tour, JAGAJAGA in Jogja Noise Bombing Festival, and Gabber Modus Operandi at the 2019 Berlin C.T.M. Festival. The biggest Noise festival in Bali, the Chaos Non Musica festival, came about as a melting pot within which to share the finest Balinese Noise artists with the world.

Chaos Non Musica itself is a Noise collective based in Denpasar, Bali, and is also the name of their organic D.I.Y. Experimental/Noise festival. They also serve as a record label that releases Noise on CD, cassette, and digital via Bandcamp. Chaos Non Musica also organises many smaller Noise events, especially at their prime venue, Kedampunk. The Kedampunk was formerly known as Tuck & Trap, and Pierre Alvian of JAGAJAGA runs it. It is a venue that happens to be on Kedampang Raya street. The name Kedampunk is a play on words from the people who hang out there. Chaos Non Musica itself was already a guerrilla outfit putting on gigs before finally making friends at Tuck & Trap's, and they continued to put on frequent gigs there. The place hosts gigs primarily for touring musicians and impromptu performances.

Another new platform in Bali that gives space to Noise artists is Ravepasar,

> an independently organised counter-art festival materialised through the collaborative efforts of local communities and collectives. Merging music, visual arts, performance, fashion, and literature, RAVEPASAR offers an immersive audio-visual experience posing the question of what Indonesian Art is independent of a Western Aesthetic Influence. RAVEPASAR is emerging as a counter-movement to bigger art

> organisations by, for example, providing exhibition spaces for local creative practitioners to alternatively present their artworks, which are often undervalued in the context of the fast-developing internationally dominated art scene of Bali. (Ravepasar 2022 website).

Initiated by Gabber Modus Operandi (a duo consisting of Ican Harem & Kasimyn), the first event happened in January 2020 at the open-air Geo Open Space. Some of the performers include Gabber Modus Operandi, Tamat (Surabaya), Tarawangsawelas (Bandung) and Y-DRA (Yogyakarta).

During the month of the festival, workshops, talks, and interactive art installations are displayed as part of Ravepasar. The festival offers an audio-visual experience for the audience, both through the art performances themselves and through massive structures ‘and lighting design from the beginning of the event to the end of it as the form of presentation work for the artists.’ (Ican Harem website 2021).

Between 22-27 March, 2022, Ravepasar was a curator for the Ambruk stage in the Joyland Festival, a big music festival in Bali. The festival hosts many well-known national bands and Noise artists such as Sarana, Riar Rizaldi, Enggohoi, Senyawa and Gabber Modus Operandi. The Chaos Non Musica festival and Ravepasar are some of the platforms that have made the Bali music scene become one of the new highlights in the Indonesian music scene.

The Thriving Noise Scene in Sulawesi Island

In Sulawesi island, I found the Noise scene in Makassar and Palu[2]. Based on my research[2] the first person who made a Noise project from Sulawesi island is Ivan Baruadi, who lives in Makassar. Ivan Baruadi is the man behind many Noise projects, such as Satan Love Nintendo, Potassium Sianida, Busuk Yang Bernanah, and Torgis, and he also runs a record label, Frozen Grapes. Sadly, in June 2018, Ivan Baruadi passed away due to illness.

In 2019, Baruadi's family sent me some of his albums on cassette, CD-R and floppy disc. Different labels released these albums from Europe. The collection revealed that he was also behind several mysterious Noise projects, including two Dicnoaga albums released via the Greek label SUBliminal RECordings in 2009

and only available in a limited edition of twenty pieces each. Perhaps the most exciting thing is how he remained consistent with his Noise music without any community. For some reason, suddenly, in 2016, several Noise musicians appeared in Makassar at almost the same time.

INSERT FIGURE 13 HERE

Figure 13: Dicnoaga - Golgo Man and November, November, November cassettes released via Greek label, SUBliminal RECordings in 2009. ©Martinus Indra Hermawan

In 2017, Noise Bombing released 'Sounds From Sulawesi', a compilation of Noise artists from Sulawesi island (Palu and Makassar). The cassette compilation brings together Ivan Baruadi with his many projects and the new generation of Noise in Makassar, Wisnu Cahyadi of DarahRawa.

INSERT FIGURE 14 HERE

Figure 14: Front cover of the compilation 'Sounds From Sulawesi' released by Noise Bombing depicting a local ghost, Parrakang. ©Martinus Indra Hermawan

The intersection of the academic scene with Makassar Noise did not exist until now, and almost everything started from the Punk and Metal scene. Ghaliz Filkhair, a Noise artist from Makassar who has been staying in Berlin for several years, confirms this information. In 2015 he started to dig deeper into the Noise music scene.

Besides working with the C.T.M. Festival in Berlin, Ghaliz Filkhair usually plays in housing projects/squats. He primarily works in L.K.W. studio, an artist collective in Berlin, with more than half of them being Indonesian. He stated that:

> here, we can find interesting facts about the network between countries; for example, in 2019, Erlangga Giovanni (Enggohoi/Ohoi Records, Denpasar) came to Berlin and made a small tour. Interestingly, the Russian Noise community in Berlin organised his accommodation and tours. (Filkhair 2021)

One of the important events that preceded the Noise scene in Makassar was the Berdikari event, mostly filled with Experimental & Indie musicians. The first edition was organised on December 18, 2014. The second edition, on January 31 2016, was one of the first events that presented Noise music to a broader audience

because of Bob Ostertag (San Francisco)[38] in conjunction with his world tour in Indonesia. Eroko.org and Jalur Timur held the second edition. Supported by Jendela Studio, Asta Matra Studio and Icon 05 Camper, the event took place at Jalan Lasinrang No. 42, Makassar. The event featured Myxomata featuring Dian Mega of Theory of Discoustic, Reza Enem, and visual art by Rice /rais/ and Yudha Mappalahere.

INSERT FIGURE 15 HERE

Figure 15: Bob Ostertag play live at Berdikari #2 edition in Makassar. Used by permission from Ifan Adhitya

On November 1, 2017, Prolog Studio organised a workshop on sound design with Yasuhiro Morigana, a sound designer, music director, and film-maker from Japan. This time, Ivan Baruadi (using Torgis as his stage name) and Wisnu Cahyadi (DarahRawa) performed as a collaboration duo at the event. Achmad Nirwan from Prolog Studio recalls:

> that the collaboration at the Prolog Art Building could be one of my markers for understanding the movement of Noise music in Makassar. The collaboration performance, which opened the Yasuhiro Morinaga's workshop, made me realise that Noise music is better to understand if it is visually displayed to complement the audio rather than just listening to the audio. After the performance, I also suggested that Ivan Baruadi and Wisnu Cahyadi make Noise music events more often so that the movement of Noise music in Makassar would be more active. Slowly but surely, Baruadi and Cahyadi, together with Tesar (RuditRadio), finally took the initiative to create a Noise collective named Makassar Noise Terror. (Nirwan 2018)

In Makassar, there happen to be several members of Makassar Noise Terror who live outside Makassar. Whenever they return to their hometown, they always make an event to celebrate the reunion. Nowadays, the Siku Ruang Terpadu and Rockfort Studio are two venues that usually set up Noise gigs. One of the Noise gigs series organised by Makassar Noise Terror is called Mengolah Suara Kotoran Setan. They also released a compilation of newer Noise acts in 2018 on cassette titled 'Makassar Noise Terror Compilation'. Other Noise artists from Makassar are Destructo, Satanic Sativa, Robokop, Obscurus, MYTH and Rudit Radio.

On the cassette 'V/A Sounds From Sulawesi', is another Noise project that came from Palu, Ayam Kaili. The project consists of Rio Simatupang, Bayu and Arfan Maraulo. Before Rio Simatupang knew about Noise, he liked Pop and Rock

music, such as MR.BIG, and Nirvana. His first intersection with Noise started with a meeting with Senyawa while watching their live concert in Palu in 2016. His admiration for their performance inspired him to form a Noise band. Along with his friends, Bayu and Arfan Maraulo, they made a Noise band, arguably the first in Palu, Ayam Kaili.

INSERT FIGURE 16 HERE

Figure 16: Picture of Ayam Kaili: Arfan Maraulo, Bayu and Rio Simatupang. Used by permission from Rio Simatupang

The free-range chickens that Wukir Suryadi of Senyawa gave to Arfan Maraulo were the inspiration for the name Ayam Kaili. The chickens became their inspiration for making Noise music. Arfan Maraulo explained that the general description of the Ayam Kaili project consists of two essential things: audio and ethnic nature:

> First: audio sound. In the tradition of the Kaili tribe, there is such a thing as a Balia[39] ritual. The process of the ceremony requires a chicken. We tried to record and adapt the sound of the chicken from the natural side. The second: is ethnic nature, where the transculturation of traditional developments into electronics became part of the experimental work. (Maraulo 2021)

Ayam Kaili uses the same sound as the pedal effect. At first, they used a synthesiser. There is also a female voice (a mother figure) which they adapted into the music as an effect. For them, simple practices can make Noise, creating a material development laboratory on Noise music itself.

There were no memorable Noise gigs at that time in Palu. They play at Punk gigs or arts performances. In 2016 at the U.N.T.A.D. student art performance, Ayam Kaili first met their listeners. Later on, they made Noise events in cafes, music studios, open yards, and garages of friends' houses. Rumah Hutan Drupadi[40] once became the hub for musicians and artists in Palu, including Noise artists, before being burned by some arsonists in March 2016.

In August 2017, Rio Simatupang and some friends assisted in initiating the first BEBUNYIANX that later became the hub for Noise musicians in Palu. Some friends who make Noise music from abroad have also come to Palu, such as Arrington de Dionyso (U.S.A.), Baby Aspirin DVD (U.S.A.), NUR (Switzerland), and Tzii (Belgium).

INSERT FIGURE 17 HERE

Figure 17: The flyer of the first BEBUNYIANX with Kukuh Ramadhan, Juli Idin Lanja and Ayam Kaili at RDL Art Space. Used by permission from Rio Simatupang.

Rio Simatupang explains the process of the BEBUNYIANX:

> The process of running BEBUNYIANX has always had an interesting dynamic. For example, in Volume I, there is not much interaction that is sufficient to explain this performance as a medium for audio exploration. There were discussions driven by some of the Noise artists and listeners in volumes 2 and 3. The limited number of visitors created a slightly attractive discussion room with a simple question, "what music is this Noise"? (Simatupang 2021)

The most noticeable effect in BEBUNYIANX, from volumes 1 to 3, is the movement of space and audience. Responses are left entirely to the audience. In BEBUNYIANX volume 3, many people became interested in Noise music, thus creating newer Noise artists from this area. BEBUNYIANX has also started to accommodate more recent Noise projects from Palu, such as Sakaya Juan, Angasraya, Anonymous Gore, Tetra Pak, and Yoyowikan.

The Distance Between Noise Scenes on Sumatra Island

The compilation ‘Pekak! Indonesian Noise 1995-2015: 20 Years Of Experimental Music From Indonesia’ put APOCALYPTCORE as one of the first Noise projects on Sumatra island based on my research[2]. One of the members, Ade Greeden, then moved to Yogyakarta and Andre Siagian ‘Squaresolid’ and Iyok ‘Manticore’ founded the new media art organisation, LIFEPATCH.

In Palembang, there is Wan Is The Bastard, which is a Noise project from Rizky. He formerly played under the stage name Zafarynoizesore in 2011, and switched to Wan is the Bastard in early 2013. Rizky also plays a more ambient Noise project under the name Semestha and in the Noisegrind band Holiday Sucker.

In Muara Enim, Ihsanul Fikri, with his project called Artmosf, also makes his own electro-acoustic instruments. One of his homemade instruments, named TECHNATURAL, consists of plants, soil, rocks, and water that can be played

together to create a sound source. Ihsanul Fikri has been touring in Java, including playing in Jogja Noise Bombing Festival.

INSERT FIGURE 18 HERE

Figure 18: Artmosf with Wayan Mižu Sumitro live at Jogja Noise Bombing Festival January 22 2016 at iCAN (Indonesia Contemporary Art Network), Yogyakarta. Used by permission from Ahmad Imanuddin.

To learn more about the Noise scene in Sumatra, I conducted interviews with Benny Kay, Dewa Gugat, and Dharma Ferry. Dharma Ferry is a Noise artist from Sungai Penuh (Jambi) and also a lecturer at I.A.I.N. Kerinci university. Meanwhile, Benny Kay is one of the founders of Peoplelabs! a Noise and Experimental art space working between film, sound, with a performance-base in Padang. Dewa Gugat is also part of the Peoplelabs!.

Dharma Ferry was introduced to Noise music by Ramadhona Putra[41], also known as Donald from the band Johnny Depp Is Dead, when they met in 2010. Both of their Grindcore bands play at a chapter of the Grindonesia Tour 2010 in Sungai Penuh, Jambi. Grindonesia Tour 2010 is a tour by two Grindcore bands from Italy: Bestial Vomit and Kazamate. The tour is considered a massive breakthrough since they travel across many small cities in Sumatra, Java and Bali islands using a single van. The tour started in Jakarta on February 27 2010, and ended in Jakarta again on March 22 2010. The tour covers 20 cities on three islands and connects the dots in the scenes, mainly in Sumatra, which rarely has underground music shows.

INSERT FIGURE 19 HERE

Figure 19: Faggot Bulletin zine #5 (June 2012), Faggot Compilation #3 CD-R and Indonoise Compilation CD-R released by Grindlover Production. ©Martinus Indra Hermawan

In mid-2010, Dharma Ferry created Solitonoizer as his first Noise project that combines the sound of a corn milling machine mixed with songs using the music mix application on his laptop. ‘Indonoise compilation #1’ released by Grindlover Production is Solitonoizer's first and last release. Pathogenic is the next project that Dharma Ferry formed in early 2011. The foundation is an electronic Grindcore mix with Harsh Noise using F.L. Studio. Pathogenic then took part in

the compilation ‘Pekak! Indonesian Noise 1995-2015: 20 Years Of Experimental Music From Indonesia’.

For the academic scene itself, because of Dharma Ferry's profession as a lecturer at I.A.I.N. Kerinci University, he also researched the influence of Noise music on the concentration of his students who have an audio learning style. He stated that ‘although it does not coincide with the Noise scene directly, the research sees a form of intersection between Noise and the academic field.’ (Ferry Forthcoming, 15)

Meanwhile, in the late '90s, Benny Kay was active in the Kutaraja Punk/Hardcore Scene (Aceh) until early 2000. He moved to Padang and studied at the Faculty of Literature at Andalas University. Benny Kay got to know theatre and was more immersed in the theatre world the following year. Occasionally he tries to perform experimental music with friends in the theatre because he misses the band activities[42].

In the meantime, Dewa Gugat attended a school in Solo between 2013 and 2015. He usually played Hardcore, Crust, and Shoegaze music genres during that time. Then when he started getting to know many friends in Solo, finally he was invited to play Noise music with his friends at Ethnomusicology I.S.I. Solo. He became interested in Noise music and continued when he returned to Padang Panjang.

In Padang Panjang, Dewa Gugat, with his college friends, initially formed a group called Salah Lubang. The concept was that they combined Noise music with vocals and Minangkabau traditional music. The project is on a hiatus because they have all already moved to different cities. Dewa Gugat finally continued to create a duo project called Prokontra, which has released two tracks. He was also active with his solo project called A.G.D.G. (AvantGarde Dewa Gugat), that has released five digital albums. Dewa Gugat then met with Benny Kay and they worked together in Peoplelabs!.

Peoplelabs! has been active since 2016, initially when DJ Urine toured West Sumatra. After that, every year, Peoplelabs! usually organises the Peoplelabs Experimental Art Fest and Zikir Frekuensi. In addition to Noise performance, at this festival, there are also film screenings, performance art, and workshops from other communities.

INSERT FIGURE 20 HERE

Figure 20: Flyer of the PeopleLabs! Experimental Art Fest 2020 at Capricornis Space with Sumatra, Java, and Moscow performers. Used by permission from Dewa Gugat.

Noise music began to be noticed in Padang when Sete Star Sept held a Sumatra island tour in 2017, and Padang became one of their destinations[43]. At first, Benny Kay started the Noise movement in Padang with Peoplelabs! because he felt alone at that time. He thinks that by making a Noise festival, maybe other people with the same idea will come up, and they can work together to bring the Noise scene there to life. Benny Kay recalls,

> Noise music was not publicly known in Padang at that time. Some of my fellow artists we invited to watch the Noise performance were very surprised by what I performed at the first Peoplelabs festival!. It was only during the question and answer session that they could understand. This condition is not much different among academic artists. (Kay 2021)

After the first festival, Peoplelabs! kept trying to make as many gigs for Noise as possible so that the public would know more and not feel strange anymore. Having an intersection with other art disciplines proved to be an excellent idea, considering the main focus of Peoplelabs! is experimental art. So, the Noise artists there started to experiment with various other disciplines such as dance, music, theatre, and visuals.

At that time in Padang, there was no other Noise community than PeopleLabs!. There are not many Noise artists, too; 'even the active ones are only me and Dewa Gugat. There is also no record label specialising in Noise music in Padang.*'* (Kay 2022). The Noise festival organised by Peoplelabs! is usually scheduled at the end of the year. For smaller gigs or spontaneous ones, it usually depends on the conditions.

One of the obstacles to the Noise scene on Sumatra island is the distance between cities, which are far apart; here, there are no adequate toll roads and trains like in Java, which can significantly shorten the journey times. The members of Peoplelabs! now come from Payakumbuh, Padang Panjang, Padang, and several cities in West Sumatra.

> So every time we make a Noise event, we have to have extra energy, time, and capital. Because friends need more time to arrive at the event location and create a schedule, it will be challenging for us to meet the right one because most of the time sacrificed is spent on the trip.

> However, we have arguably managed to get over that so far because the same spirit of Noise is probably to support this scene. (Kay 2021)

The networking with other islands is mainly limited to online media. As Dewa Gugat stated:

> The network with the scenes of another isle is maybe not too much because we in West Sumatra rarely go on tours outside the island. Mostly we only know through social media with friends outside the island. In 2020, we had a plan for a tour together outside the island, but because of the pandemic, we have to postpone it until things get better. (Gugat 2021)

The Triangle Noise Connection in Batam Island

Located between Singapore and the Straits of Malacca, Batam Island is one of the islands in the Riau Archipelago group. In the 1970s, Batam signed the Presidential Decree (Keppres) No. 41/1973 to become an operational base for the oil and gas industry. This development is one of the entrances to the development of the music scene in Batam.

> In late 1989, spurred by considerable flows of foreign direct investment into Singapore and Johor (Malaysia), the Indonesian government liberalised the investment regulations for Batam, allowed more private sector participation, invested more resources in physical infrastructure and began to work with Singapore to develop its human resource base and market the island. (Hutchinson & Negara 2021, 6).

Many people from all over Indonesia come to work on this money-promising island. Some are Hardcore Punk kids from where they came who later found like-minded friends in Batam. Like most Noise artists in Indonesia, Hardcore Punk is their initial entry point before finding Noise music. Likewise, Fadli Tarigan is one of the perpetrators of Noise music in Batam.

From high school to early college, Tarigan listened to many kinds of music from Grindcore bands. When listening to Grindcore music, he often heard the noisy intros on those Grindcore albums but did not know what it was because, for him, at that time, the important thing was that it fit their sound. On November 15, 2015, he met directly with the origin of the Noise music that he heard on those albums. At that time, Hope, a Hardcore Punk band where he was the guitarist, became one of the opening bands for the American Grindcore band, Full Of Hell[44], which took place at Embrace Hall, Malaysia.

At the gig, it turned out that some of the opening acts were not just bands but also Noise artists from Malaysia namely ++++, also sIn and Circuit Trip from Singapore. Tarigan was also impressed by the sound they produced, plus the quality of the sound system at the venue, which was very capable of facilitating their Noise music. Because of that incident, he then made GanGanNoise, where at first he only used the guitar effects pedal he had, then later bought a new pedal and even designed his own effect pedal with the same name. GanGanNoise itself started as a pedal brand name created by Tarigan, who then continued to use it as his stage name, and he has released three albums. Apart from organising gigs, he also runs a record label, S.O.N. Records, interested in Experimental, Noise, and weird music released primarily on the cassette format. The longer Tarigan plays Noise music, the deeper the meaning he gets:

> It turns out that this is therapy for me to practise my shortcomings in various ways, for example, in the last album I made entitled '1 D.A.K.F.T.'. The album contains 16 songs about my good to bad memories because that is the only way to document them, so I don't forget." (Tarigan 2021)

Besides GanGan Noise, Ganjar Perdana, Tarigan's bandmate in Hope, created a Noise project called Room Temperature. Ganjar Perdana is very interested in applying low frequencies to Noise music. The low frequencies then become a specific colour in itself for him. Room Temperature once took part in a compilation: 'V/A Psychotropes volume 2' consisting of 18 Noise musicians from Indonesia and New York released by Continuum.

INSERT FIGURE 21 HERE

Figure 21: Cassette compilation 'V/A Psychotropes volume 2' contains 18 Noise and Electronic musicians from Indonesia and New York, released on cassette format by the New York-based label, Alrealon Musique. Me and Ken (Bloated), a Noise artist based in New York, curated the compilation. ©Martinus Indra Hermawan

Another Noise project is Ivory Betel which makes Electronic Noise music using software, synths, a virtual Euro rack, and other instruments. They have released a mini-album entitled 'Consciousness' and made a remix of the song Kiamat from the album 'Alkisah' belonging to the Yogyakarta duo, Senyawa. Not only does it stop at Ivory Betel, but Batam also has Polimorfik, a Noise/Drone/Ambient project from an artist named Oka, who has released a demo via Bandcamp.

Many people from all over the world have stopped by Batam because of its very strategic location. Being on the border of 3 countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore) has many benefits for the music scene in Batam. Among the many people who come to Batam for a shopping trip, some come to watch music shows and even play music or hold tours and other music-related things.

In the past, Batam once had a music venue called Pajak Babi Buta, which was a gathering place for almost all genres of music from the community on this island. Unfortunately, the Pajak Babi Buta officially had to be closed due to road widening as part of the massive development on this island. Until now, the music event entitled The Pajak Babi Buta is still ongoing, but it is nomadic because the most important thing for them is not the place but the people in it.

Nowadays, one of the important places to meet people interested in music and youth culture is Loka Suara. As an independent venue still active today, Loka Suara has many agendas, including D.A.R. (Disco Against Racism), Suara Raya (usually held every year for three days), and many more, especially for Hardcore Punk and Underground music in general. Noise music is generally involved in every gig held in these venues. So, it has become common to find Noise artists struggling with pedal effects on their table with Hardcore Punk and Metal bands.

Venues such as Loka Suara are also valuable for opening connections to the Noise scene outside the island to neighbouring countries, Singapore and Malaysia. Several Noise acts from other islands and countries have performed in Batam and then continued their tour to Indonesia via the island of Sumatra or continued to Singapore and then crossed to Malaysia. GanGanNoise has toured twice, to Kalimantan and Java, and Singapore only takes one hour by ferry.

INSERT FIGURE 22 HERE

Figure 22: Flyer for a gig at Loka Suara with Noise artists playing along with Hardcore, Punk and Grindcore bands. Used by permission from Ganjar Perdana.

Spots in Between

Lombok island, a half an hour flight from Bali, as far as we know, does not have any Noise scene. In 2015 Ozsa Erlangga, a Noise artist and instrument builder from Purwokerto (Java), was doing a synthesiser workshop there. The synth workshop was held on 9 May 2015, at Jalan Banjaran Sari No 20, Cakranegara, Lombok. Ozsa Erlangga initiated the synthesiser workshop collaborating between Organic Mind and Susu Ultrarock Records.

INSERT FIGURE 23 HERE

Figure 23: Flyer for the synthesiser workshop held on May 9 2015, at Jalan Banjaran Sari No 20, Cakranegara, Lombok. Used by permission from Ozsa Erlangga

The speaker in this workshop was Ozsa Erlangga, the man behind Susu Ultrarock Records and the Sura synth instrument. All the participants were invited to this workshop to make a simple synthesiser and to participate in a discussion about Noise music. However, as Erlangga recalls, 'there is no further information on whether the participants continue creating music using the synth they have made.' (Erlangga 2021)

INSERT FIGURE 24 HERE

Figure 24: Welding process in the workshop of making a simple synthesiser with Ozsa Erlangga. Used by permission from Ozsa Erlangga

Conclusions

The Noise scene in Indonesia stands apart on account of the solid presence of the Do It Yourself (D.I.Y.) culture. The D.I.Y. culture came about because many Indonesian Noise artists nowadays are from the Hardcore Punk and Metal scenes. It means that the Indonesian Noise scenes have a fascinating proposition, given their cultural roots in D.I.Y. Hardcore Punk, the instability of the technology in the country, and the current political circumstances. The Noise scene utilises the base procedure of Hardcore Punk ethics: networking and attempting to keep on doing improvisation.

It is interesting to find out how the Noise artists make sound hardware, instruments, subjects, and ideas accessible. This activity includes guerrilla tactics among the many talents (Noise bombing), and the fact that few venues accept Noise music makes the Noise artists find alternative ways to keep going, instead of complaining and quitting.

The fact that most of the people in the Noise scene did not want to get funding causes the Indonesian Noise scene to appear exceptionally non-institutional and independent, thus establishing a positive synthesis between community participation and political critique. It is additionally intriguing that the scene dodges support from government art funding programs. The D.I.Y. ethics derived from Hardcore Punk promote the values of autonomy and locale as favourable options, in contrast to capitalists' distance which also rejects government involvement.

Another fact that makes the Indonesian Noise scene different is the reality that only a small number of the Noise artists here are studying inside the academic field. Many Noise artists in Indonesia also wanted to stay mysterious, so it is common to find a Noise album without any information about the artist’s name. Not to mention the difficulty of finding documentation such as flyers and photos about older Noise music in Indonesia. Many of these mysterious Noise projects turn out to be by the same person!

Disclosure Statement

The author reported no conflict of interest.

Notes on Contributor

Martinus Indra Hermawan also known as Indra Menus, a musician based in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. He sparked the Hardcore Punk band, To Die in 1998. He is active in the independent music gig organisers, Kongsi Jahat Syndicate; band tour booking agency, Y.K. Booking; run three record labels: Doggy House Records, Rela Mati Records and Noise Bombing (with Sean Stellfox); engaged in zine archives and exhibition, Jogjakarta Zine Attack!. He is also the founder of Jogja Records Store Club, a collective of record stores and labels based in Yogyakarta.

In 2009 he became one of the initiators of Jogja Noise Bombing. In 2015 he released a compilation of 123 Indonesian Experimental Noise artists titled Pekak! Indonesian Noise 1995-2015: 20 Years of Experimental Music from Indonesia through Berlin-based label, Syrphe.

Hermawan also writes about music in a Malaysian-based music magazine, Shock and Awe, and Yogyakarta-based Warning Magazine. Under Japan Foundation's Asia Center 2016 fellowship program, he started his music research titled "Building a Network between Experimental Noise Scenes in South East Asia and Japan". In 2017, he released a book based on his research titled, Pekak! via Warning Books. In 2019, alongside Sean Stellfox, he released his second book Jogja Noise Bombing: From the Street to The Stage, via Warning Books. In 2022, his third book, a compilation of his music writings from 1999 - 2021 titled Prolifik was released by Samstrong Records.

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Notes:

[1]Movie about people who do Noise in Indonesia premiered abroad in 2014. The movie is written and produced by Danif Pradana, Riar Rizaldi and Adhitya Utama.

[2]I started the research in 2010-to 2015 by collecting Noise demos and albums from local Noise artists. The result came out as an accompanying article for the compilation 'Pekak! Indonesian Noise 1995-2015: 20 Years Of Experimental Music From Indonesia'. The compilation was released on digital download on Bandcamp and physically on DVD data via Berlin-based label, Syrphe and co-released by Rela Mati Records: https://syrphe.bandcamp.com/album/pekak-indonesian-noise-1995-2015-20-years-of-experimental-music-from-indonesia.

The research was perfected and became a part of the book Jogja Noise Bombing: From The Street To The Stage written by Sean Stellfox and me, released by Warning Books in 2019: https://archive.org/details/JNBFSS

[3]Harsh Noise is a sub-genre of Noise music that takes the genre to its natural limits, resulting in hugely aggressive walls of sound.

[4]Sapto Raharjo is an artist based in Yogyakarta who plays a role in developing the traditional *gamelan* musical instrument, even though he has a background in contemporary music. He also explores *Gamelan* using modern technology such as computers and synthesisers. His role in the development of *Gamelan* became apparent when he organised the international festival Yogyakarta Gamelan Festival in 1995, which is still ongoing.

[5]A conversation with Ishari Sahida (Ari Wulu), the son of Sapto Raharjo.

[6]Yogyakarta Gamelan Festival (Y.G.F.) is an international-scale festival accommodating meetings between gamelan music players and lovers worldwide. This festival has been going on since 1995.

[7]Noise Bombing is a performance concept of illegal Noise gigs in the street by stealing public electricity to run their small amps. The graffiti bombing inspired the Noise bombing activity hence the name Noise bombing.

[8]Common People is an Indie Pop music community from Yogyakarta. Starting in 2001, they have fostered communal D.I.Y. movement in the city by running gigs, fanzines and radio.

[9]Melawan Kebisingan Kota is a collective based in Surabaya that organises illegal Noise gigs in the street using battery-charged steampunk equipment.

[10]Bukan Musik Biasa was created in 2008 by I Wayan Sadra to accommodate young composers in their new creations in the world of contemporary music. It positions itself as a laboratory of experimentation for composers to rebuild creativity and find ways or methods, concepts, and new thoughts in creating music.

[11]Common Room was originally a forum for various activities developed by the Bandung Center for New Media Arts, an institution initiated by R.E. Hartanto, Gustaff H. Iskandar, T. Ismail Reza and Reina Wulansari in 2001. The place is welcome to anyone interested in forming their activities in this place.

[12]Bandung Null Emergence is a series of gigs that are a highlight of the contemporary music underground in Bandung. One of the gig series organised by B.N.E. is titled Resital Eksperimental.

[13]Salon is a platform for Experimental Music and Sound Art in Bandung founded by Riar Rizaldi, Bin Idris, Bob Edrian Triadi, and Duto Hardono. The Salon Volume 1: Conversation in New Music was first organised on July 3, 2015.

[14]Opus Contra Collective is a collective formed by a member of Experimental Rock based in Bandung, Gaung. The collective is active in organising gigs for Noise and Experimental music.

[15]New Wife Records is a D.I.Y. record label based in Jakarta specialising in releasing Experimental and Noise music owned by Sawi Lieu (Eat Me!, Sangkaka Worship). New Wife Records is now renamed Wahana Records.

[16]Wasted Rockers was a free bi-monthly music media based in Jakarta which focuses on reviews of non-mainstream music, including Experimental dan Noise. Wasted Rockers is now more focused on the internet: www.wastedrockers.wordpress.com. In addition, now it also has a record label division, namely Wasted Rockers Recordings & an affiliate record store, W.R. Store.

[17]Studiorama is a gig organiser founded in Jakarta in March 2011. Some of their earlier gigs focussed on Experimental and Noise music, especially Mindzapp. Nowadays, they organise the Ornaments music festival, Dentum Dansa Bawah Tanah, and concerts for more popular touring musicians such as Fazerdaze, Mac DeMarco, and Japanese Breakfast.

[18]Alur Bunyi has been a curated concert series highlighting Experimental and Electronic music since 2017. The Goethe-Institut Indonesien Cultural Program section then redesigned the concert in April 2020. It became part of the #MusicTalk series, broadcast once a week via Goethe-Institut Indonesia's Instagram channel.

[19]Sinyal Selatan is an art project initiated by Theo Nugraha to undergo an artist residency at Forum Lenteng, Jakarta, in April-May 2018. Intended as a sustainable project, several Forum Lenteng members developed the Sinyal Selatan as the beginning of constructing a sound study platform to be further created by the artist in his hometown, Samarinda, and other areas.

[20]Hasana Editions was initially started in 2010 by artist Duto Hardono as Hasana Private Press. It is an artistic platform and publication based in Bandung, Indonesia, focusing on archiving aural production and sound-based art practices, including cassette.

[21]Death Tiwikarma Productions is a D.I.Y. record label founded by Danif Pradana while he was studying in Australia. Since 2006, the label has released CD-R and cassettes, specifically for Noise and Experimental music. Now the label has switched functions to internet labels: deathtiwikrama.tumblr.com

[22]Artrape Records is a record label D.I.Y. based in East Jakarta founded in 2009 by Edi (Ed Mirrork) from the Noise project named Argot and Division Fracture. This label is devoted to releasing local Noise musicians. Artrape released a minimal number of releases in CD-R and cassette formats. Some of their releases include Bertanduk (Jakarta), Aneka Digital Safari (Bandung), The Crowded Room

(Bandung), Serigala Jahanam (Jakarta), Individual Distortion (Jakarta), Argot (Jakarta) and Feces Anatomy (Yogyakarta).

[23]Potong Jari Records is a record label focusing on Noise, Psychedelic Rock and Black Metal music released on cassette and digital via Bandcamp www.potongjari.bandcamp.com. The label is based in Tangerang, founded in 2016 by Nur Sabar Oktavani.

[24]Indonesian NetAudio Forum is a collective movement of Indonesian netlabels aimed at starting an inter-netlabel network and introducing to the public the existence of local netlabels, and becoming a forum for studying music discourse in the era of information technology. The collective was first named Indonesian Netlabel Union (Serikat Netlabel Indonesia). They organised the first Indonesian Netaudio Festival from 16-17 November 2012 in Yogyakarta.

[25]Nusasonic is a multi-year project initiated by the Goethe Institutes in Southeast Asia. “The project plunges into a broad spectrum of experimental sound and music cultures in Southeast Asia, enabling dialogue within the region, with Europe, and beyond" (Nusasonic - Goethe-Institut website 2021). The project adopts a multi-perspective approach created by Yes No Klub (Yogyakarta), W.S.K. Festival of the Recently Possible (Manila), Playfreely/BlackKaji (Singapore), and C.T.M. Festival for Adventurous Music & Art (Berlin). In Yogyakarta, the first Nusasonic was held in October 2018.

[26]House of Natural Fiber (H.O.N.F.) is an international new media art organisation based in Yogyakarta. Started as Yogyakarta New Media Art Laboratory in 1999 in Yogyakarta, they implement an open-community methodology, which is concerned with the need for cross-collaborative actions to technological development and its practical use in daily life.

[27]Breakcore_LABS is an open platform for Breakcore music, Experimental Electronic also audio-visual based in Yogyakarta. A small community consisting of several Electronic musicians, D.J.s and V.J.s from Yogyakarta established the event with the same interest in Breakcore music.

[28]Lifepatch has been an independent community-based organisation in Yogyakarta since 2012. Emphasising the spirit of D.I.Y, Lifepatch concentrates on the art and science education via techniques utilising the technology for others.

[29]Based in Surabaya, WAFT-Lab focuses on interdisciplinary art practices. Aside from organising music and video festivals, they also organise exhibitions and

workshops to benefit education development. One of their festivals is VIDEO: W.R.K., the largest biennial video festival in Surabaya in 2009.

[30]Final thesis project by Suci Rahayuningtyas titled Pembangkit Bunyi Nada Pengiring Pada Gamelan Elektronis (Gameltron) (Generator of Accompaniment Sounds in Electronic Gamelan (Gameltron). Susanto developed and built the synthesiser between the 1960s and the 1980s after he returned from his studies in America. The Pekan Raya Jakarta (Jakarta Fair) exhibited the Gameltron in 1977. Created and set in the golden era of synthesisers, where most synthesiser technologies compete to make almost the same innovations, Gameltron makes its trademark sound. Unlike the *Gamelan* that we often encounter, this wooden *Gamelan* which consists of *kendang*, *bonang*, *gambang*, *kendang*, *kempul* and gong, is equipped with sensors connected to *Gamelan Elektronik* (electronic *Gamelan*) technology hence the name Gameltron.

[31]Lintang Raditya runs a blog about his synth at www.kenalirangkaipakai.blogspot.com and his synth archive blog: www.synthesia-ind.blogspot.com. Raditya also runs his homemade synthesiser business under the name Kenali Rangkai Pakai (K.R.P.). K.R.P. has supplied many local & international musicians with their limited edition, handmade synthesisers. Raditya also organises synth-building workshops around Indonesia and abroad. In a conversation with Lintang Raditya, he emphasises that the D.I.Y. synth culture in Indonesia should be distinguished from the D.I.Y. Noise scene, although there are some overlaps. For example, the Noise artist from Purwokerto, Ozsa, made the Sura instrument and Ihsanul Fikri (Artmosf) made a plant-based synth. There is also @indomodular an Instagram community page dedicated to the Indonesian modular synth movement. In Bandung, the S.T.O.R.N. System (derived from SynThesizer electRONic) started with their interest in creating musical instruments such as analogue synths that can be used to play with a regular band. Other D.I.Y synth builders based in Java are INKGLOSPACE (Jakarta), Sura Instrument (Purwokerto), Aditya Krisnadio (VCONT), Toyol Dolanan Nuklir (Sidoarjo), WAFT-Lab (Surabaya), WAVEFORM (Malang) and Andreas Siagian ‘Squaresolid’ from LIFEPATCH (Yogyakarta).

[32]PTK Distribution, a D.I.Y. records label based in Pontianak started by Aldiman Sinaga to release underground bands from Kalimantan. P.T.K. Distribution wants to document the work of Kalimantan’s bands in the form of a physical release, especially CD-R.

[33]The first time Aldiman was exposed to Noise was when he watched a live video on YouTube about the Bandung-based Aneka Digital Safari. He recalls his first encounter with Noise previously, he only knew Noise music when he was active in the zine scene. This era is where he was already in contact with Indra Menus of To Die and Relamati Records; Donald (Faggot Bulletin/Grindlover Production) also read a gig report about Jakarta Noise Fest on the Wasted Rockers webzine (Sinaga 2022).

[34]Theo Nugraha explains the brief history of the Noise scene in Samarinda. At that time, Nugraha was still active in an Electronic music collective called Samarinda Electricity. Indra Menus, a Noise musician from Yogya, came to Samarinda in 2012 to play under the stage name To Die. Menus came to Samarinda with Noise experimentation and made several people who saw him there curious, including Nygraha. That was the starting point for Nugraha to learn what Noise and Experimental sound are.

[35]The first time Sabrina Eka Felisiana heard about the Noise was from a friend who happened to be playing Noise. Felisiana used to hear Brit-Pop music, then because she often hung out with the Noise kids, she was introduced to Noise itself and started to be involved in gigs that they organise. After getting acquainted with Noise, Felisiana started recording and participating in compilations and collaboration projects in 2014. Then in 2015, Felisiana created a female Noise group with two friends, namely Istanara and Annisa that is still active now. Even though Istanara has not been able to be an active member of the group anymore, Sarana still exists until today.

[36]Nusasonic presented many musicians and projects from Southeast Asia in the C.T.M. Festival 2019 program. The performers from Indonesia include Sarana, Setabuhan, Gabber Modus Operandi, Zoo, Tarawangsawelas and Sodadosa.

[37]Ghaliz Filkhair remembers his first experience of Noise music before knowing Noise music. He mostly listened to Metal music and played in a Death Metal band called Afterlife of God. Filkhair listens to Drone Metal music, especially albums from Sunn O))), via the YouTube algorithm. Then somehow, Jogja Noise Bombing appeared on his YouTube homepage.

[38]Bob Ostertag (b. Robert Ostertag) is a composer, sound artist, journalist, film-maker and activist based in San Francisco. In 2015-2016 he went on a world tour, playing venues all over the globe for 13 months, including Indonesia (Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Makassar).

[39]Balia is a ceremony to find a solution or ask for healing from those they believe to be helpers. The spirits of ancestors and the spirits of natural rulers are believed to have existed and carried out for generations. The culture has become entrenched in the people of Palu, especially in Tipo Village, Ulujadi District.

[40]Rumah Hutan Drupadi (Drupadi Forest House) is a space for artistic expression and a tourist location built by Rio Simatupang. Created on August 24 2014, the forest house is located right behind Tadulako University, Palu. This place is dedicated to all artists who want to use it for their art projects, including organising Noise gigs.

[41]In the Indonesian Grindcore scene, people know Ramadhona Putra as the editor of the House of Grind newsletter, one of the earliest newsletters in Indonesia that cover Grindcore and occasionally Noise music. In the past, when people talked about Noisegrind on Sumatra island, one might immediately associate it with the Sungai Penuh (Kerinci) scene due to Putra's activities. Ramadhona Putra later created the Faggot Bulletin zine and a record label named Grindlover Production that caters to local and foreign groups within the Grindcore, Noisecore, Noisegrind, Noise, and Experimental music genres. These musical genres make up the majority of Grindlover Production's releases, and the Faggot Bulletin zine. Starting from Glam Rock and then Punkrock to Thrash Metal and Nu Metal in the early 2000s, Grindlover Production and Faggot Bulletin made Dharma Ferry acquainted with Noise music.

[42]In 2012 Benny Kay went to Purwokerto to visit a friend previously known from Teater Nol (Aceh). He then lived there for a while and was more or less involved in several arts/cultural events in Purwokerto. DJ Urine (a Noise artist from France) was playing there at one time. His friend introduced him, who is also organising some Noise shows here for the foreseeable future. Thus began his Noise world adventure from then on.

[43]Taken from an interview with Dharma Ferry. Sete Star Sept is a Noisegrind duo from Japan that tours extensively worldwide.

[44]Full of Hell is an aggressive band that combines Grindcore music with Noise elements where the vocalist, Dylan Walker, also operates some gears that produce a very harsh Noise sound. Their third album, 'Full of Hell & Merzbow', released by Profound Lore Records in 2014, was a collaboration with Japanese Noise artist Merzbow.