

ANALYSIS OF HARMONY IN MOVEMENT AND SOUND: SPIRITUAL MEANING LET ALL PRAISE GOD

Levinson Y A Simaela¹, Junita Batubara², Dewi Tika Lestari³

^{1,3} Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Ambon, Indonesia

² Universitas HKBP Nommensen, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author's Email: simaelalevinson@gmail.com

Received : 20 May 2025

Published : 03 July 2025

Revised : 29 May 2025

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.54443/ijset.v4i9.858>

Accepted : 16 June 2025

Link Publish : <https://www.ijset.org/index.php/ijset/index>

Abstract

This study discusses a comprehensive analysis of the choral work "Let Everything That Breathes Praise the Lord" created by Levinson Simaela, focusing on its musical structure, harmony, and performative potential. This song was inspired by Psalm 150 and became a mandatory song at the Church Choir Festival (PESPARAWI) of SMTG (Toraja Church Sunday School) throughout the East Makassar Classis in 2022. **This work is a silent witness to the victory of the SMTG Satria Kasih Makassar Children's Choir at the event.** Researcher as the creator of this work, I intend to identify the compositional elements in the score, explore the performance implications of the existing notation, and examine the inclusion of Torajan nuances through the use of local language lyrics and Torajan drum accompaniment. The use of Torajan lyrics and specific directions for traditional instruments such as the Torajan drum demonstrate an effort to integrate local cultural richness into church music. Using qualitative descriptive methods of formal music analysis supported by ethnographic review, this study examines how the components of melody, rhythm, and harmony interact to shape the overall work. In addition, this article discusses how the tempo direction, dynamics, and "(Sambil Menari)" instructions in the score can influence interpretation and presentation on stage. The incorporation of Torajan lyrics and the option of Torajan drum accompaniment are important points in understanding how this work inculturates regional cultural values into expressions of church praise. The findings of this study are expected to provide a deeper understanding of adaptive choral composition practices, as well as the contribution of music to enriching spiritual culture in Indonesia.

Keywords: *Let Everything That Breathes Praise God, Choir, Analysis, Musicality, Ethnography,*

INTRODUCTION

Church choral music in Indonesia has historically played an essential role in facilitating spiritual expression and maintaining communal identity. Huka, RY (2023; 123) states that choir is a form of vocal art that emphasizes cooperation in harmony and vocal techniques. Each member has a role according to their respective voice types, thus producing a harmonious blend of sounds in terms of both tone and volume.

Types of choirs are divided into several categories, including:

No	Choir Category	Voice Formation	Age
1	Children's Choir	I, II, III or Soprano, Mezzo Soprano, Alto	9-15 years
2	Mixed Youth Choir	Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass	16-24 years
3	Male-Style Sura Chorus	Tenor 1, Tenor 2, Bass 1, Bass 2 (TTBB)	25 years and above

No	Choir Category	Voice Formation	Age
4	Similar Choir Woman	Soprano 1, Soprano 2, Alto 1, Alto (SSAA)	25 years and above
5	Adult Choir Mixture	Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Bass	25 years and above

Folklore, derived from the words folk (people) and lore (knowledge/tradition), refers to folk songs that are passed down orally and reflect the simple life of the community. Folk music has developed in various ethnic communities with characteristics according to their respective cultural backgrounds, so it is rich in instruments, scales, and pronunciation. However, complex pronunciation is often a challenge for choirs in Indonesia due to the use of uncommon regional or foreign languages (Almanda, HH; 2020, 2). Traditional music from various ethnic groups in Indonesia, which is passed down orally, has a diversity and unique identity that reflects the cultural character of each community (Kombong, Haryono, & Malarsih, 2023: 1315). In the development of church music in the archipelago, there is a dynamic of inculturation in which universal musical elements are combined with local richness. This process creates a unique and meaningful form of expression of praise, as conveyed by Saputri (2024: ix) that church music is a means of communication between the congregation and God and leads the congregation in worship.

In this context, Levinson Simaela's "Let Everything That Breathes Praise God" is a significant study because it combines choral notation with Torajan lyrics and Torajan drum accompaniment. This combination of elements represents a form of musical inculturation that goes beyond conventional compositional practices. Understanding the cultural meanings in this work requires an ethnomusicological approach that places the music in its social and cultural context (Nettl, 2015: 1–17). Singing is an integral part of music that serves as a means to express thoughts and feelings through words. As a form of vocal music, singing is closely related to literary art. The melody in a song reflects musical elements, while the lyrics are a form of literary expression. The work "Let Everything That Breathes Praise God" has strong contextual significance because it was specifically composed as a mandatory song for PESPARAWI (Church Choir Festival) of the Toraja Church Sunday School (SMGT) throughout the East Makassar Classis in 2022.

PESPARAWI is an important event that not only functions as a competition forum, but also as a strategic means for the development and guidance of Children's Choirs and motivates the creation of new works that are relevant to the local and spiritual context. In the context of the Toraja Church, which has strong cultural roots, the need for songs of praise that can embrace ethnic identity is very important. This is in line with the church's efforts to carry out a contextual mission of evangelism, where music functions as a bridge between universal messages and particular cultural expressions. Therefore, Levinson Simaela's work can be seen as a creative response to this need, attempting to unite the spirit of Christian praise with the richness of Torajan cultural heritage.

A thorough analysis of the work will reveal not only the complexity of its composition, but also how it reflects the dynamics of the interaction between theology, music, and culture. Performative aspects and choral technique are integral elements in this analysis, since the score is the blueprint for a performance. A comprehensive study of choral technique (Gordon Lamb, 2010; 161-180) will be used to investigate how the notation contained in the score—such as tempo markings ("Slow" (± 50), "Medium" (± 75), "Rit." (± 85)), time changes (2/4 to 4/4), dynamics, phrasing, and voice arrangements (S, MS, A1, A2)—can be effectively interpreted by the conductor and singers. Furthermore, the presence of the instruction "(While Dancing)" indicates that the performance of this work is not only auditory, but also involves visual and kinesthetic aspects. This opens up a discussion about the integration of movement and music, a characteristic often found in ethnic musical traditions. The performance analysis will explore how these notational elements and performative directions can be maximized to convey the messages and cultural nuances intended by the composer, as well as how the use of accompanying instruments such as Torajan drums can enrich the overall performance experience.

This research is based on three main theoretical foundations: formal music analysis, ethnography, and choral techniques. The integration of these perspectives is essential to holistically understand the work "Let Everything That Breathes Praise God" which not only displays musical complexity but is also full of cultural nuances.

Based on this background and urgency, this research aims to:

1. Analyze the musical structure and harmonic patterns used in the choral work "Let Everything That Breathes Praise the Lord".

2. Explores the performative potential of notation and direction in scores, including implications for choral technique and the use of accompanying instruments.
3. Identifying and examining the inclusion of Torajan cultural elements, such as local language lyrics and the potential of Torajan drum accompaniment, in the context of church music composition.

This study is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the adaptive practice of choral composition in Indonesia, as well as the contribution of music in enriching spiritual culture. More broadly, this study is expected to provide new perspectives on how Indonesian composers today adapt and develop church music traditions, especially in combining authentic ethnic elements. Thus, this study is expected to make a significant contribution to the inculturation of church music in Indonesia, offering an analytical model that can be applied to similar works in various other cultural contexts. Understanding the "Harmony in Movement and Sound" of this work means diving not only into what is written in the notation, but also the expressive potential and cultural meaning it carries.

RESEARCH METHODS

As the composer of the work "Let Everything That Breathes Praise God", the process of creating this song involves a series of stages that combine theological inspiration, musical exploration, and contextual considerations, especially for the PESPARAWI SMGT SE-KLASIS MAKASSAR TIMUR 2022 event. This process is in line with the composition concepts reviewed by William Russo (1988; 13-104) which emphasizes the importance of developing ideas and organizing musical elements. As explained by Cahyadi, IBP S (2023; 186), ethnography is a qualitative approach that aims to "describe a society, group or human life" as a whole through direct observation and interaction in their natural environment. In this context, movement and dance that blend with praise music in religious communities can be analyzed as cultural expressions that are full of spiritual meaning, which can only be understood through an in-depth ethnographic approach.

The creation of this song began with a deep reflection on the biblical text, especially Psalm 150, which explicitly calls on everything that breathes to praise God. This inspiration came not only from the verbal text, but also from spiritual experience and observation of the needs of contemporary church music that can accommodate a variety of expressions. The desire to create a song of praise that is majestic, solemn, but still has a strong emotional appeal, became the main starting point. Michael Miller (2005; 15-25) emphasizes that initial ideas often emerge from personal experience, observation, or response to a need, which is then processed into a musical concept.

The initial conceptualization also included a general idea of how the song would be performed. Since it was intended for the Toraja Sunday School Church (SMGT) church choir competition (PESPARAWI), there were considerations regarding the choir's vocal range, average technical ability, and the need for dynamic variation to keep the listeners and judges interested. The desire to include local Toraja elements was there from the beginning, as an inculturation effort that I believe can enrich the praise experience and root it in the congregation's identity. This is a manifestation of the understanding that music, especially in a religious context, functions as a bridge between the divine and the cultural, a perspective that is very relevant in ethnomusicology (Nettl, 2015; 10-25). Conceptual metaphor is a cognitive process to understand one domain of experience (abstract) in relation to another/concrete domain (Yulius Erie Setiawan; 2024, 53), the work "Let Everything That Breathes Praise God" explains how movement and singing are understood not only physically, but also spiritually through the metaphor of faith, praise, and worship.

After the initial conceptualization, the next step is the development of the musical material. This process begins with the search for a main melody that can capture the essence of the message of "praising the Lord" – something majestic yet memorable. The opening melody for the section "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord" (Simaela, 2022, bars 1-12) is designed to have a flowing contour and steady rhythm, creating a sense of solemnity. The choice of 2/4 time signature at the beginning followed by 4/4 is an attempt to provide rhythmic flexibility and space for the melody to "breathe," allowing for greater expression. This is a technique similar to how Russo (1988; 30-45) discusses the development of melodic ideas from small motifs.

Biarlah Segala Yang Bernafas Memuji Tuhan

Lento (♩=50) Cipt & Aransmen: Levinson Y. A. Simaela

(Bisa menggunakan iringan Gendang Toraja)

Adagio (♩=75)

Figure 1. "Slow" section

Organizing the song form is a priority. While it follows a basic verse-chorus pattern, the composer attempts to create variation through changes in tempo and character. The initial "Slow" section is designed to convey a sense of grandeur and devotion, as if inviting the congregation to reflect on the greatness of God. The transition to the faster, more powerful "Medium" section is intended to reflect the joy and enthusiasm of the praise. Prier (2009; 70-85) describes how changes in tempo and character can be used to shape the dramatic flow of a work, and this principle guides the arrangement of the song's sections.

The harmony and arrangement phase for the choir is the core of this creative process. Given that this work is intended for a church choir, I tend to use strong and clear functional harmony, which provides a solid foundation for the melody and supports the lyrical message. The use of diatonic major and minor chords predominantly ensures that the song remains accessible and singable to a wide range of choir abilities. Susanto (2021; 45-60) describes various harmony techniques that can be used, and I have attempted to apply these principles to create chord progressions that are logical and emotionally engaging. The division of the voices into Soprano (S), Mezzo-Soprano (MS), Alto 1 (A1), and Alto 2 (A2) was a deliberate decision to enrich the vocal texture. By dividing the Alto into two parts, the composer has more flexibility in creating denser chords and fuller sounds, especially at climax moments. It also allows for more independent movement of voices between the Alto parts, adding light counterpoint complexity. Lamb (2010; 50-65) discusses in detail how voice divisions can be used to achieve certain sonic effects and how to maintain vocal balance in an arrangement. Each voice is designed to have its own interesting melodic movement, while still supporting the overall harmony.

One of the most significant aspects of the creation process is the integration of Torajan cultural elements. The decision to include local language lyrics in the middle of the song (Simaela: 2022, bars 51-92) was a deliberate effort to bring a personal and cultural dimension to the hymn. The lyrics in Torajan aim to make the hymn more rooted and relevant to the Torajan-speaking congregation, as well as to celebrate their linguistic identity in the context of worship. The process of translating and adapting the lyrics involved consultation to ensure the theological meaning was maintained while maintaining the poetic beauty of the local language. This is a powerful form of inculturation, where religious practices are adapted to align with local cultural expressions (Hemetek, Kolbl, & Saglam: 2015, 25-40).

In addition to the lyrics, the direction "Can be accompanied by Toraja drum accompaniment" is another manifestation of the inculturation effort. Although there is no specific notation for drums in the score, the idea behind it is to provide interpretive freedom to the accompanying musicians to integrate authentic Toraja rhythms. This shows the understanding that ethnic music is often not completely bound by formal notation, but rather has room for improvisation and adaptation based on oral tradition. The presence of Toraja drums is expected to provide an energetic rhythmic foundation and at the same time strengthen the authentic cultural nuance, and can ignite the congregation's enthusiasm in praising God through their musical identity.

Performative cues such as tempo changes and dynamics are already integrated into the flow of the composition. However, the direction "(Sambil Menari)" is a cue that adds a broader dimension to the performance. The inspiration for including movement came from observing how music and dance are often inseparable in Torajan culture, especially in ceremonies and rituals. The idea is to allow for the expression of praise not only through the voice but

also through body movement, creating a more immersive and holistic worship experience. Although no specific choreography is written, the cue encourages the conductor and choir to explore simple movements or dances that fit the rhythm and meaning of the song, making the performance more dynamic and interactive. Lamb (2010; 120-135) also discusses how visual elements and movement can enhance the quality of a choral performance.

As Nicholas Cook (1992; 15-20) explains that the creative process often involves revision, after the initial draft is completed, the song goes through a process of revision and refinement. This involves adjusting the melody, harmony, and rhythm to ensure clarity, balance, and musical appeal. Feedback from other musicians or choir singers can be part of this process to ensure the score can be performed well. Finalizing the score for PESPARAWI SMGT SE-KLASIS MAKASSAR TIMUR 2022 involved writing clear and precise notation, ensuring that all composer instructions were understandable to the conductor and singers.

The entire process of creating "Let Everything That Breathes Praise God" was a journey that combined universal compositional principles with the spirit of cultural inculturation. The result is a work that not only functions as a hymn, but also as a powerful artistic and cultural statement, reflecting the identity and spirituality of the Toraja Church community.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This discussion will analyze the choral work "Let Everything That Breathes Praise the Lord" created by Levinson Simaela through three main lenses: musical analysis of the work (form, harmony, melody), the performative potential implied in the score, and the cultural relevance that is integrated.

The work "Let Everything That Has Breath Praise the Lord" can be classified as a church hymn written specifically for children's choir. Although the score features writing for Soprano (S), Mezzo-Soprano (MS), Alto 1 (A1), and Alto 2 (A2), this division is designed to accommodate the different vocal ranges of children and to add richness to the sound texture of the arrangement (Simaela: 2022, pp. 1-4).

Based on the score (Simaela, 2022):

- Soprano (S): The vocal range used generally ranges from F4 (the F note above middle C) to C5 (the C note one octave above middle C), or even up to D5. This range is perfect for bright child voices that do not yet have a very wide vocal range, making it an easy melody to reach.
- Mezzo-Soprano (MS): The vocal range used ranges from D4 to A4, functioning as a harmonious harmonic filler with the Soprano, while also providing a second melodic foundation that is not too high for the child.
- Alto 1 (A1): The vocal range used extends from C4 to G4, providing harmonic richness in the middle of the child's vocal register.
- Alto 2 (A2): The vocal range used ranges from A3 (the A below middle C) to F4, filling in the bottom of the chords and giving depth to the children's choir's voices. The division of the Alto into two parts is strategically used to expand the chord voicings, while still within the limitations of the children's range, creating a fuller texture without overwhelming their vocals.

Writing for a children's choir demands a different approach to harmony and melody than for an adult choir, where clarity, intonation and appropriateness of vocal range are top priorities.

In general, this song adopts the strophic form (verse) often found in praise songs, but with some variations that provide dynamics. Prier explains that the strophic form is a musical form that repeats the same melody and harmony for each lyrical verse, although there are possible minor variations (Prier; 2009, 53). This song can be divided into several main sections based on changes in tempo and lyrics.

- Section A (Opening & Verse 1 - "Let Everything That Breathes..."): Starts with a Slow tempo (± 50 bpm) and 2/4 time signature. This section introduces the main theme of the song with a calm and flowing melody. The change to 4/4 provides a breadth of expression after the opening phrase, showing the composer's flexibility in building atmosphere. The repetition of the phrase "Let everything that breathes praise the Lord" serves as a central motif that recurs. The soprano melody in this section tends to move around the diatonic tones with controlled interval jumps, giving a sense of grandeur and solemnity.

Lento (♩=50) A. Q. & A. G. LEVINSON, LEVINSON Y. A. SIMAELA

(Bisa menggunakan iringan Gendang Toraja)

Figure 2. Section A (Verse 1 – “Puji Dia karena kebesaranNya...”)

- Section B (Verse 2 - "Puji Dia karena kebesaranNya..."): there is a tempo change to Medium (± 75 bpm) and back to 4/4 time. This section brings greater energy, with a more rhythmic melody and more powerful harmonic progression. This section serves as a contrast to the slower section A, providing increased emotional dynamics. Prier (2009; 55) calls this kind of change a "simple binary form" if followed again by Section A or a "ternary form" if there is a repetition of the initial theme, which in this case is more of a ternary with variations.

Allegro 75

Figure 3. Section B ("Puji Dia karena kebesaranNya..." - Tempo changing to medium)

- Section C (Bridge/Interlude - Local Language Lyrics): The most significant change occurs on page 3, where local language lyrics (presumably Torajan) are introduced, followed by a tempo change to Rit. This section acts as a unique bridge or interlude. Although the tempo increases slightly, the main focus is on new lyrical expression and potential cultural nuances. Musically, this section may retain some of the existing melodic or harmonic elements, but provides a clear thematic break from the previous sections.

Moderato ♩=90 (sambit menari)

Figure 4. Section C ((Bridge/Interlude - Local Language Lyrics)

Repetition and Development: All of these songs demonstrate a structure based on the repetition of a theme with variation. Cook (1992: 12) explains that repetition is a fundamental mechanism in music to create coherence and clarity, while variation keeps the music interesting. Levinson Simaela uses repetition of core phrases and then develops these ideas through changes in tempo, dynamics, and the addition of lyrics and cultural elements, demonstrating a skill in building a cohesive yet dynamic form.



Figure 5. Repetition and Development

The harmony in this work tends to be functional and tonal, typical of church music, which aims to provide a strong and easy-to-follow foundation for singers, especially children's choirs are generally still in the stage of developing their vocals and harmonic hearing. The majority of chord progressions move in a tonic-subdominant-dominant (I-IV-VI) relationship, which provides a sense of stability and "completion." These basic progressions are carefully chosen to make it easier for the children's choir to identify and intonate the chords, while also building a strong and cohesive sense of harmony. Heri Yonathan Susanto (2021; 15-30) explains the basics of functional progressions that form the backbone of harmony in much Western music, which are particularly relevant in the context of children's vocal pedagogy. In this score, although the chords are not made explicit with chord symbols, a vertical analysis of the arrangement of the notes of each voice shows consistent use of diatonic major and minor chords, creating a clear and accessible harmonic structure.

In the Slow section at the beginning of the work "Let Everything That Breathes Praise the Lord", the harmony tends to be simple and transparent. This approach allows the soprano melody to be more prominent and easy for the listener's ear to follow, while also making it easier for the children's choir to focus on the intonation and clarity of the main melody without being burdened by overly complex harmonies. Chord voicing in this section tends to be open in the higher registers and denser in the middle register, designed to take advantage of the natural resonance of the child's voice without forcing it. The movement of the internal voices (MS, A1, A2) is often step by step (conjunct motion) or small intervals. This is a deliberate compositional choice to ensure smoothness, vocal cohesion, and ease for the child singer to move between notes. This is in line with the principle of good choral writing to maintain clarity in each section, as recommended by Susanto (2021: 78) who discusses the importance of good voice movement to prevent chords from sounding stiff—a vital consideration especially for children's choirs that are prone to unstable intonation due to large melodic jumps.

The main melody, which is mostly held by the soprano voice, is melodic, flowing and easy to remember. These characteristics are very important considering that this song is designed for active participation, both by the children's choir and the congregation in general, which requires a melody that is easy to digest and sing. However, I also paid attention to the melody in the lower voices (MS, A1, A2). Although their main role is to support the harmony, each part has its own interesting melodic contour, adding richness to the light polyphonic texture without weighing down the children's choir.

Alto division into A1 and A2 is a strategy chord voicing which is crucial for children's choirs. This approach allows me as a composer to create denser harmonies or thicker textural effects in certain sections, which would not be possible with just one Alto part, without having to stretch the individual children's vocal ranges to an extreme. With two Alto parts, the notes in the chords can be distributed more evenly, maximizing the volume and resonance of the chords in the children's vocal ranges. It also demonstrates a deep understanding of the techniques of writing for children's choirs, as explained by Lamb (2010: 50-55) regarding how voice divisions, including divisions, can be used to achieve optimum density and balance of sound in a choir.

The score for "Let Everything That Breathes Praise the Lord" is not just a collection of notes, but rather an instruction for a performance. Every tempo mark, dynamic, articulation, and extra-musical direction has significant implications for how the work is to be interpreted and performed. Composers often include instructions that are intended to guide interpretation, and in this case, the instructions are specifically designed for execution by a children's choir. The conductor is faced with the task of interpreting these instructions not only musically, but also taking into account the abilities and characteristics of the children's voices.

The direction "(While Dancing)" in bars 51-92 is the most unique and significant performative aspect. It shows that this work is not only designed to be heard, but also to be seen and felt physically. The potential for this movement can be interpreted in various ways: symbolic dance, minimalist rhythmic movement, or even full choreography

inspired by traditional Torajan dance. This integration of movement enriches the expressive dimension of the song, transforming it from a mere vocal concerto into a holistic performance.

Furthermore, the indication "Can be accompanied by Toraja drum accompaniment" opens up great opportunities for performance exploration. Toraja drums have distinctive rhythmic characteristics and can provide an energetic and authentic percussion foundation. Although the score does not provide specific notation for drums, an arranger or conductor can interpret and add rhythmic patterns that suit the Torajan musical style. This will add depth to the sound texture and provide a strong ethnic feel to the performance. The use of traditional instruments such as Toraja drums is also in line with the concept of "ethnic music" discussed by Nettle (2015: 70-85), where instruments often have deep cultural functions and meanings.

The Slow (± 50 bpm), Medium (± 75 bpm), and Medium Rhythm (± 85 bpm) tempo directions provide a clear framework for the conductor. The Slow tempo at the beginning of the piece creates a contemplative and solemn atmosphere, which is essential for conveying a profound message of praise. For a children's choir, maintaining a steady slow tempo with precise intonation can be challenging, so the conductor should focus on ear training and breath training. The transition to a Medium tempo increases the energy and pushes forward, which is generally easier and more enjoyable for children to sing because it matches their natural energy level. "Medium Rhythm" in a local lyric section might indicate a tempo that is still moderate but with a little rhythmic freedom or rubato nuance to highlight the section, allowing the children to convey the different lyrics with more authentic expression.

Dynamics, although not explicitly marked much, play a crucial role. In children's choirs, the dynamic range is usually more limited than in adult choirs. Therefore, conductors need to train children to produce controlled sounds from piano to mezzo-forte, avoiding excessive forte that can damage their voices. Lamb (2010: 80-95) outlines the importance of interpreting tempo and dynamics correctly to convey musical messages, and this becomes even more critical when working with children's developing vocals. Conductors need to guide them to understand how changes in volume can affect the emotional expression of the song, especially in the context of praise.

The division of voices into Soprano (S), Mezzo-Soprano (MS), Alto 1 (A1), and Alto 2 (A2) in the work "Let Everything That Breathes Praise the Lord" is a significant performative consideration, especially for a children's choir. This arrangement maximizes the potential of the children's voices by creating a rich, layered vocal texture without overwhelming any one part. The conductor needs to ensure balance between the parts, taking into account the differences in strength and quality of voice that may exist among the children. Careful intonation training and vocal harmony are vital, as children's voices tend to be more sensitive to pitch accuracy. Lamb (2010: 30-45) extensively discusses the importance of intonation, resonance, and articulation in choral singing, which form the basis of children's choral training.

The division of voices into Soprano (S), Mezzo-Soprano (MS), Alto 1 (A1), and Alto 2 (A2) shows the composer's desire to create a rich and layered vocal texture. The MS, A1, and A2 sections provide unique harmonic densities and may serve to fill in the lower vocal range with different timbres. The conductor needs to pay attention to the balance of voices between these sections so that the main melody remains clear and the harmonies sound cohesive. Good vocal technique from each singer, such as proper intonation and clarity of diction, is crucial. Clarity of pronunciation of Indonesian and local lyrics is vital so that the message of the song can be conveyed well.

The cultural elements in "Let Everything That Breathes Praise God" are at the heart of the richness of this work. The inclusion of local language lyrics and the potential of Torajan drum accompaniment clearly demonstrate the efforts of inculturation in church music. Inculturation in the context of church music refers to the process by which expressions of faith are adapted and integrated with local cultural forms so that they become more relevant and meaningful to the community.

The local language lyrics in bars 51-92 are the most direct manifestation of inculturation. Phrases such as "Panonian mi tu dandi sia katapi pa'gelluran mi tu ka penombanta" and "Mintu' angge menaa ma' pu di Puang namui ka na maparrisan katuanmu" are Torajan, given the context of the creation for PESPARAWI SMGT (Torajan Church Choir Festival). The use of the mother tongue in the praise not only strengthens the cultural identity of the congregation but also makes the gospel message feel more personal and profound. This is an effective way to "have one's own voice" in the expression of faith, as advocated in ethnomusicological studies on the role of music in the formation of group identity (Nettl: 2015, 120-135).

In this work, the Toraja drum is not just an ordinary accompanying instrument; it is a strong cultural symbol in Torajan society. The rhythm and pattern of Torajan drum playing are often related to traditional ceremonies, dances, and rituals. By indicating the accompaniment of the Torajan drum, the composer not only adds a musical element, but also brings deeper meaning and cultural nuance to the hymn. This integration shows that the boundaries between sacred and secular music, or between Western and local traditions, can be melted to create a work that is culturally

and spiritually relevant. This is a concrete example of how ethnic music can be used innovatively in a contemporary context.

CONCLUSION

This study has analyzed in depth the children's choir work "Let Everything That Breathes Praise the Lord" created by Levinson Simaela, focusing on its musical aspects, performative potential, and cultural relevance. From the analysis that has been done, several key conclusions can be drawn that confirm the significance of this work in the context of church music in Indonesia.

First, from the perspective of musical analysis of the work, it was found that "Let Everything That Breathes Praise the Lord" has a well-planned form and structure. The use of strophic form with variations in tempo and musical character (Slow, Medium, Medium Rhythm) creates an effective dynamic flow for a song of praise. The harmony that tends to be functional and tonal, with a dominant I-IV-VI progression, is strategically chosen to provide a strong, clear, and easily accessible foundation for children's choir. The flowing and catchy melodic choices, especially in the soprano part, support active participation. Furthermore, the strategy of chord voicing which involves dividing the voices into Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano, Alto 1, and Alto 2 is evidence of the composer's understanding of the vocal characteristics of children. The distribution of notes in this chord is designed to maximize the resonance of the child's voice, creating a full texture without overwhelming their individual vocal ranges. This shows that the work is not only melodically and harmonically beautiful, but also technically tailored for child vocalists.

Second, a study of performative potential. This work highlights how each direction in the score is an instruction that enriches the performance experience. The interpretation of tempo and dynamics adapted to the abilities of the children's choir is crucial in effectively conveying the message of the song. In addition, the direction "(Sambil Menari)" opens up a unique expressive dimension, allowing children to engage physically and emotionally in the praise, which is also in tune with their natural expression. Indications for accompaniment (Toraja drum) further expands the performance potential, adding authentic rhythmic and textural layers, while also providing opportunities for the children's choir to interact with traditional instruments. This proves that this work is designed to be a multisensory performance, involving voice, movement and instruments.

Third, and perhaps most significant, is cultural relevance of this work through deliberate inculturation efforts. The inclusion of lyrics in a local language (presumably Toraja) is a strong manifestation of the desire to present a hymn that speaks directly to the hearts and cultural identity of the congregation. The use of the mother tongue in the context of worship not only strengthens the spiritual bond, but also serves as a means of preserving and celebrating linguistic heritage. The addition of Toraja drum accompaniment further emphasizes the commitment to cultural integration. This work, created for PESPARAWI SMTG, is an excellent model of how church music can embrace and celebrate local identity, creating a harmony that goes beyond mere musical boundaries and into the realm of authentic cultural-spiritual expression.

Overall, "Let Everything That Breathes Praise the Lord" is a children's choir work that is not only musically sophisticated but also rich in cultural meaning and performative potential. It serves as a concrete example of successful inculturation in Indonesian church music, demonstrating how composers can create works that are theologically, artistically, and culturally relevant. This research is expected to inspire other composers and music practitioners to continue exploring the harmonious blend of existing musical richness and cultural heritage, for the development of more inclusive and meaningful church music.

Suggestion

Based on the musical analysis, performative potential, and cultural relevance of the song "Let Everything That Breathes Praise God" by Levinson Simaela, it is recommended that church music composers and arrangers continue to explore the integration of local culture into musical works, especially by paying attention to children's vocal comfort and technical abilities. Children's choir conductors and practitioners are also expected to apply a holistic interpretive approach, exploring cultural meanings and strengthening body expression and sensitivity to cultural elements, including the use of traditional instruments. Further researchers are advised to conduct more in-depth comparative studies and ethnographic research on similar inculturative works. In addition, church institutions and communities are expected to continue to provide creative space, support, and education that strengthens the collaboration of faith and culture in church music. Through the development of church music works rooted in local culture, we not only celebrate the richness of Indonesian music, but also build meaningful spiritual bridges for the younger generation in understanding faith through their own cultural identities.

The author would like to thank all parties who have provided support in the process of writing this article. Special thanks are given to Dr. Dewi Tika Lestari, M.Sn and Prof. Junita Batubara, S.Sn., M.Sn., Ph.D who have

provided guidance, reference sources, and very meaningful input in the preparation of this work. The author would also like to thank the Ambon Christian Institute for the support, facilities, and opportunities provided during the research and writing process of this article. Hopefully this article can provide a positive contribution in the development of traditional music studies and enrich the scientific treasury in the field of church music.

REFERENCES

- Almanda, H. H. (2020). Interpretasi Lagu "Segalariak" Karya Josu Elberdin Oleh Yosafat Rannu Lepong Dalam Tinjauan Conducting. *Jurnal Repertoar*, 1 (1).
- Batubara, J. and Maniam, S. (2019). Enhancing Creativity through Musical Drama for Children with Special Needs (Down Syndrome) in Education of Disabled Children. *Music Scholarship*, No. 2, 166–177. DOI: 10.17674/1997-0854.2018.4.166-177
- Batubara, J. (2021). Destinasi: Kolaborasi Kreatif Musik Digital, Puisi dan Tari. *Resital*, 22(1), 1–11. DOI: 10.24821/resital.v22i1.5866
- Cahyadhi, I. B. P. S., & Spyawati, N. L. P. (2023). Studi Etnografi Permainan Tradisional Gangsing di Desa Kayuputih Kecamatan Banjar Kabupaten Buleleng. *Jurnal Ilmu Keolahragaan Undiksha*, 11(2), 185–189.
- Cook, Nicholas. (1992). Musical Analysis. New York: Oxford University Press
- Ferdinan, R., Batubara, J., & Harefa, B. (2023). Teknik Permainan Dan Penyajian Saxophone Alto Pada Lagu E.G. Blues Karya Mezzoporte Band. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Konseling (JPDK)*, 5(2), 150–160. <https://doi.org/10.31004/jpdk.v5i2.12564>
- Galingging, K., Batubara, J., Marbun, T. and Marbun, J. (2023). Komposisi Musik Alam Menyapa sebagai Media Terapi Pasien Narkoba di Yayasan Mutiara Abadi Binjai (MAB) Sumatera Utara. *Resital*, 24(2), 157–166. DOI: 10.24821/resital.v24i2.7864
- Gurning, A., Batubara, J., & Simangunsong, E. (2022). Analisis Bentuk dan Struktur Musik Sihutur Sanggul dan Perubahan pada Musik Sihutur Sanggul Aransemen Hendri Perangin-angin. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Konseling (JPDK)*, 4(6), 9248–9260. <https://doi.org/10.31004/jpdk.v4i6.9843>
- Hemetek, Ursula, Kolbl, Marko, & Saglam, Hande. (2015). Ethnomusicology Matters Influencing Social and Political Realities. Wina Cologne: Böhlau
- Huka, R. Y. (2023). Paduan Suara Gereja dalam Konteks Pendidikan dan Pelayanan. *Jurnal Ilmiah Religiosity Entity Humanity (JIREH)*, 5(1), 122–129.
- Jovi, S., Batubara, J. and Simanjuntak, H. L. (2023). Blessing: Musical Composition and Collaborative Processes for a Contemporary Genre. *Sarcouncil Journal of Arts humanities and social sciences*, 2(8), 23–32. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8254642>
- Kombong, R. L., Haryono, S., & Malarsih, M. (2023). Analisis Bentuk Lagu Nyanyian Penanian Dolo Berjudul "Allo Lendu' Bulan Lendu". *Ideas: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial, dan Budaya*, 9(4), 1315–1324.
- Lamb, Gordon. (2010). Choral Technique. Long Grove: Waveland Press
- Lasar, E. L. (2021). Pembelajaran teknik vokal paduan suara di lingkungan St. Wilhelmus Lusikawak Paroki Waikomo Lembata Nusa Tenggara Timur (Doctoral dissertation, institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta).
- Marpaung, C. A., Panggabean, A. J., & Batubara, J. (2024). Bentuk Dan Fungsi Lagu Buku Ende N0. 435 "Marolopolop Tondingki" di Gereja HKBP Teladan Sei Mati Ressort Medan Labuhan. *Innovative: Journal Of Social Science Research*, 4(1), 8540–8550. <https://doi.org/10.31004/innovative.v4i1.8848>
- Marsaulina, D., Batubara, J., & Galingging, K. (2023). Analisis Struktur Dan Bentuk Lagu Jolma Biasa Yang Dibawakan Oleh Argado Trio Dan Duo Naimarata. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Konseling (JPDK)*, 5(2), 641–652. <https://doi.org/10.31004/jpdk.v5i2.12814>
- Miller, Michael. (2005). MUSIC COMPOSITION. New York: Penguin Group USA
- Nettl, Bruno. (1964). Theory and Method in Ethnomusicology. (Terjemahan Nathalian H. P. D. Putra, Jayapura: Jayapura Center of Music, 2015)
- Panggabean, A. J., Simangunsong, E. and Batubara, J. (2023). Gayutan Rondo Alla Turca Karya WA. Mozart sebagai Iringan dalam Film Amadeus. *Resital*, 24(1), 58–68. DOI: 10.24821/resital.v24i1.7865
- Paputungan, F. T., & Lapijan, A. (2020). Penerapan Metode Imitasi dan Drill pada Paduan Suara Manado Independent School. *Clef: Jurnal Musik dan Pendidikan Musik*, 1(1), 11–21.

- Prier, Karl Edmund S.J. (2009). *Ilmu Bentuk Musik*. Yogyakarta: Pusat Musik Liturgi.
- Prier, Karl Edmund S.J. (2009). *Kamus Musik*. Yogyakarta: Pusat Musik Liturgi
- Russo, W. (1988). *Composing Music*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.
- Simaela, L. (2022). *Biarlah Segala yang Bernafas Memuji Tuhan (Partitur Musik)*. Makassar.
<https://youtu.be/hYhcnSY5GjE?si=NHA-QtOmB0z0CPfH>
- Saputri, C. S. P. (2024). *Liturgi Gereja Toraja dalam Perkembangan Zaman: Studi Teologis Praktis pada Ibadah di Gereja Toraja Jemaat Pantan Klasik Makale kota* (Doctoral dissertation, Institut Agama Kristen Negeri (IAKN) Toraja).
- Setiawan, Y. E., Aribowo, W., Mibtadin, M., & May, A. (2024). Metafora Konseptual dalam Praktik Musik Keroncong Vernakular. *Resital: Jurnal Seni Pertunjukan*, 25(1), 48-67.
- Siahaan, R. (2005). Peranan paduan suara gereja dalam memperkuat spiritualitas dan memberi kontribusi bagi ibadah jemaat. *Jurnal Jaffray*, 3(1), 47-54.
- Susanto, H Y, M.Sn., Drs. (2021). *Harmoni Modern*. Jakarta: Yayasan Musik Gereja Indonesia.