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Commons people: managing music and culture in contemporary Yogyakarta

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CHAPTER 5

JASMERAH: DON'T EVER FORGET ABOUT HISTORY

This chapter is about Nirmana Records and Lokananta Records. Nirmana Records, founded in 2014, is a Jogja-based independent record company, which releases music in vinyl format. Lokananta Records is a national record company, which based in Solo. Lokananta is a state-run record company and has been operating since 1956. Lokananta has a sense of authority, due to its position as a national company which is backed by the state. It is a factor, which sets the main difference between Lokananta and Nirmana. As a new record company, however, the people who work for Nirmana, have earned a reputation as important figures in the indie music scene. People who buy the records that Nirmana produce value them as the result of the selection of a group of qualified people in music.

Nirmana uses a reissue of the works of Jogja musicians as a production strategy. At the time of writing this chapter, Nirmana have only produced two records by Jogja based artists: Frau and Dom 65. The records have sold well, and Nirmana is emerging as a thriving small record company. On the other hand, despite its reputation, the productivity and influence of Lokananta Records is gradually diminishing. This provides the ground for Lokananta to be the focus of many projects about 'saving' the important elements of music history. A story of Save Lokananta movement reflects on the people who may not necessarily be music fans, but are moved by a campaign to save the record company.

This chapter focuses on the lives of two record companies. The emphasis on the description of the thriving Nirmana and the diminishing Lokananta is not intended to show the financial success of a record company. Rather, I want to use that as moments from which I can draw a narrative about the intertwinement between recording and archiving music. In reproducing the works of the Jogja-based musicians, referred to by Nirmana as "the Jogja sound", the company perceives its role as part of an archiving practice. Nirmana is targeting the music fans who decide to buy records and think about it as part of archiving. I argue that the establishment of Nirmana Records provides flexibilities in acknowledging certain sounds to be included in the production. Reissue does not only refer to a production strategy, but the power to certify the sound being reproduced. Separately, I also want to come to terms with the state of alarm relating to Lokananta Records through

describing its current condition. Through conversations with the people who still work at the company, I describe the conditions which intimate the underlying feelings of what is regarded as important (and less important) for the people who work around what is referred to as a living historical archive, that is Lokananta.

Part 1

NIRMANA RECORDS: REISSUES AND INDIE DOCUMENTATION

Uji Handoko, or Hahan, is a visual artist, a member of Punkasila—an artist collective and band, with Indonesian and Australian members. He is also the founder and leader of Ace House Collective—a Jogja-based artists collective. In November 2014, he told me that he was in the process of creating a new record company called Nirmana Records. Hahan said that Nirmana would release music in vinyl form only. Nirmana is a Sanskrit word, which means 'creation' or 'construction'. In art teaching practices in Indonesia, it is employed as a main reference to the formation and imagination of harmonious composition of different visual elements. According to Hahan, Nirmana would release their music using reissue method.

Reissue means to reproduce something that already exists. Reissue can be seen as a statement to pay tribute to the works regarded as valuable and worthy of being reproduced. Gregory's research (2012) about tribute bands is constructive to have a better understanding of what valuable means within music industry. Gregory largely based her research on the existence of tribute bands in the United Kingdom. Her research indicates that the kinds of musicians who are paid homage to by tribute bands conform to the hegemonic measurement applied in the industry (Gregory 2012: 47-50). Tribute bands demonstrate the politics of representation at work—they prioritize certain musicians as the representation of the popular icons, and put aside the works of the other musicians. An exploration of tribute bands provides insights into how standardization and uniformity works in the music industry (Gregory 2012).

Moist (2013) asserts that reissue is also a strategy, which displays ingenious curating capacity and a diligent effort of excavating unknown-rich music sources. A record company, which chooses to base itself around a reissue strategy, to follow Moist, picks a role as a preservationist. It works to "adding the world's musical library, broadening the documentation of musical history in both recorded and written form" (Moist 2013: 238). Moist's research

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indicates reissue as a practice generally organized by the collectors—the type of people who understand the historical value of certain matters. In practicing reissue, they intend to share their knowledge and good musical taste in the form of record production. Collecting is the engine of reissues.

The works of a reissue-based recording companies are appealing within collecting practices environment. They represent good quality music with high historical values. The collectors and reissue practitioners are both pitching their practices at music documentation. To buy them means to participate in an act of documentation, and at once to differentiate their music from the other kind of music packaged by the other recording companies. Their positions as the proponents of documentation reverberate with what Shuker (2010) asserts about music collecting as a valid social practice.

One of the most popular presentation about a music collector in the Indonesian context comes from the English film, *High Fidelity*. The film is based on Nick Hornby's best-selling novel with the same title. In the movie, John Cusack plays Rob Gordon, a vinyl collector and owner of a reputable yet failing vinyl shop. He ran the shop assisted by two friends, who shared similar high appreciation toward music. Rob Gordon character shows thorough and total immersion in his collection, to emphasize the exemplary behavior of collecting. Rob comes across as an anti-social type of person. Though this might be characterized as the charming side of a collector. The obvious useful value of Rob's collecting practices appeared in the ways he used it as modalities for expressing his music expertise in friendship. During fieldwork, I saw *High Fidelity* the book displayed on a shelf of a record shop in Pasar Santa, Jakarta. As this chapter would make clear, the diligence in collecting, or recognition of valuable material, make way for doing other things that go beyond collection material.

Hahan, the driving force behind Nirmana Records, is a collector too. The idea of building a recording company was born out of Hahan's personal collecting habit. Through organizing a record company, Hahan was dealing with the vinyl production, and at a certain extent, extending his personal taste in music and making it available to the public. To draw on from Gregory (2012) and Moist (2013), reissue practices stand on the notion of standard popularity and aspirations to assert inventive musical items. Hahan explained the decision to choose vinyl as the format released by Nirmana by stating that vinyl is a durable format. But this might also be their strategic business decision due to the recent inclination of local music fans toward vinyl. To produce music in

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vinyl form is to take part in the global revival of an analogue technology (Bijsterveld and van Dijk 2009, Bartmanski and Woodward 2015). In Chapter 4, I talk about the prominence of materiality that is celebrated in the collecting and buying of things. Reissue practices support such 'thinginess'. Although Nirmana is a Jogja-based company, they cater for a trans-local collectors market longing for valuable vinyl.

In practicing reissue, Nirmana Record company is asserting that vinyl production is something meaningful in the present, rather than simply hyping vinyl as a collectible music item from the past. The main purpose of Nirmana, as written (in English) on the website, is to "preserving best quality yet cutting-edge music from Yogyakarta exclusively on edition-numbered vinyl which in other way also has a strong visual aesthetic" (<https://www.facebook.com/nirmanarecs/>).

The word 'cutting-edge' is important in Nirmana's self-description. How would Nirmana use that as a means to select the works of the Jogja musicians? Though Nirmana Records would mark his debut as a vinyl producer, Hahan told me that he was quite optimistic about it. In his view, Nirmana would be able to produce well-curated music that would attract wide appreciation. I took that as a cue for making sense the meaning of cutting-edge—popular and high-quality music.

How would Nirmana define the idea of preservation? Taking the idea of preservationist as put forward by Moist further, and connecting it to the statement that Nirmana made on the website, Nirmana intended to make their Jogja music release part of the wider Indonesian music history. How would they achieve that goal? And what is the importance of taking the Jogja music focus? As we will see later in this chapter, a policy to focus on Indonesian music reverberates with the history of cultural politics that, in some points of historical junctures, has been highly charged with nationalism sentiments.

THE MAKING OF NIRMANA RECORDS

In his early 30s, Hahan was a young successful visual artist. Many collectors - local and international - desired his works. He owned a big house-cum-studio in Nitiprayan area in the west of Jogja. Since 2011, he has been a brand ambassador of Hurley Indonesia—a branch of Hurley International, an American brand of surf apparel and sportswear. Apart from regularly wearing Hurley t-shirts and baseball hats, he made ready-mades for sale at Hurley

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stores, designed Hurley's special t-shirts, and took part in the company's activities that employed his artistry abilities. It enables him to enjoy a wider appreciation outside of the usual contemporary visual art circle.

Meanwhile his position as the vocalist of the band Punkasila and involvement in various projects of Ace House Collective enabled him to circulate in prestigious exhibitions, international art biennales, and art activism. The work mode and some of the output of Ace House Collective were crisscrossed with casual attitudes and experiments towards pop culture and commercial art. This demonstrates his versatility to occupy multiple sites that might not sit comfortably together, and simultaneously makes it difficult to define the nature of his works. Nonetheless it makes him establishing stature as an artist.

A turntable on a desk at Hahan's house narrates a story of his development as a collector, and provides insights into how a vinyl is experienced as a new cultural object. The turntable was a gift from Gintas Kesminas – the brother of Danius, who is his band mate in Punkasila. Gintas gave it to him when Punkasila toured Melbourne and exhibited their archives at Monash University Museum of Art in 2011. It was not a new turntable. Gintas gave it to Hahan, because according to Hahan, Gintas already had four turntables. Hahan had not started collecting vinyl yet at that time, although he already contemplated it. He brought the turntable all the way to Jogja for him.

Initially the turntable was just sitting on a cupboard for quite a long time. He did not have many records to play on it. In fact, he did not know how to operate the machine. The first records to collect were bought during his visit in Hong Kong. The growing number of vinyl suppliers made it easier for him to obtain vinyl locally. When his collection began to grow, and reached a number that made it credible to call him a record collector, he decided to learn how to play a turntable. He looked up for useful information on the Internet, watched many tutorial videos, films about DJs and their sampling activities on YouTube, and tried to work it out for himself.

The narration of Nirmana Records in this chapter comes through Hahan and Uma Gumma, one of his best friends. Uma is also Hahan's colleague at Ace House Collective, and now a business partner in Nirmana Records. Nirmana Records is a small-scale company and is composed of local artists who are informed about the dynamics of Jogja's art scene.

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The company team members also include Wok the Rock (Yes No Wave initiator, director of Ruang Mes 56, curator of Jogja Biennale 2015), Uma Gumma (a member of Ace House Collective, and Hahan's band mate in many music projects—Hengki Strawberry and N.E.W.S Sound Collective), and Adi Adriandi, or Gufi (a musician, Frau's manager, and a part of Kongsu Jahat Syndicate—a Jogja-based music event organizer). All the team members are connected to each other through labor association, collaboration, and friendship. Wok's Yes No Wave has released Punkasila albums, and he himself has been involved in Punkasila since the band's second album—"Crash Nation Mantra". As a DJ Duo, Hahan and Uma received invitations to perform in numerous art events, including exhibition openings at Ruang Mes 56. Wok and Hahan are reputable visual artists while Gufi is a well-known music producer in the local music and performance industry. Uma has a formal education background in economics, and has always been interested in managing the financial side of Ace House Collective and Nirmana Records. The expertise of the company team defined the types of job descriptions in Nirmana. The personal nature of the company has allowed for a more informal style in executing certain tasks. Hahan played a major role by investing a considerable amount of money to get the company establishing its initial projects.

Since they announced the inception of Nirmana Records, many had waited their first release with anticipation. The composition of the team promises the cutting-edge vinyl production that was honed by their established fine intuition and clever taste. It serves as the gatekeeper mechanism for filtering the sound produced by the company.

The first release of the company was a reissue of Frau's first album, *Starlit Carousel*. Frau is a solo lead by a singer-songwriter, Leilani Hermiasih, and her keyboard, which she has named Oscar. Yes No Wave, Wok's net label, originally released the album in 2010. Due to the popularity of Frau within the indie scene, the company viewed the re-release of the album as a good choice. It is a good choice, and a safe one. "People would buy anything that comes from Frau even with their eyes closed," said Hahan.

But, there was more in Frau that propelled Nirmana to reproduce her music. Leilani of Frau was not only able to produce good music. The trajectory of her works shows a combination of strong artistic personality and intellectual capacity. She chose to distribute her music entirely through a net label, in this case Yes No Wave. She had a solo show in 2016 at the prestigious

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Jakarta Art Building concert hall. She is the co-founder of the Jogja-based Laras-Studies of Music in Society collective. With her colleagues in Laras, they make books about Indonesian music studies and hold regular discussions about music. The first book produced by Laras is an edited volume titled *Ensemble: The Mosaic of Music in Society*. I wrote a chapter about Wok's project—Burn Your Idol, in the book. Lani is also keen in producing music in an experimental manner. Her second album, *Happy Coda*, was initially released in the form of a music sheet book, with her own recordings of the album were made available as a download from the Yes No Shop.

According to Hahan, Nirmana is not only about finding and promoting good musicians. They want to work together with the musicians with certain artistic and intellectual attitude. At the same time, Nirmana hoped to grow as an independent and financially sustainable company. They wanted to produce music through which substantial revenue could be obtained.

In order to be able to set the price for Frau vinyl, Nirmana conducted a small research on the prices of CD and vinyl in local markets. One of their findings was that many people were willing to spend a lot of money for a secondhand record or CD, as long as it was about the album of the musicians they liked. For example, *Godzilla Necronometry* vinyl of Homicide, a Bandung-based hip-hop band that first released in 2002 was sold as high as 500,000Rp (or roughly \$50) in the online secondhand markets. The CD of the first album of White Shoes and the Couples Company that released on 2005 was sold at 450,000Rp (roughly \$45). The average cost of a CD at that time was around 30,000Rp to 50,000Rp. (roughly \$3-5). Such was the knowledge on which Nirmana people base the price of their first release.

The Frau vinyl release (*Starlit Carousel*), accompanied with a music sheet book (80 pages), also written by Lani of Frau, was sold at 395,000Rp (almost \$40). This price was not cheap at all, particularly in Jogja context where many things were regarded cheap – such as food and accommodation. The price of the record is also more expensive than what people are prepared to pay for clothing. During research, an official band t-shirt is sold at around 100,000Rp to 150,000Rp (\$10-15). As I write this chapter, Uma, the financial manager of Nirmana, told me that they had sold out of the first run of 200 copies of Frau vinyl. The number of copies of Frau vinyl is very limited. I see this as part of the company production tactics. What matters most is to be able to sell all copies—however limited is the number of copies. The 'limited edition' label attached to a record might provide a good reason to buy. Frau

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was playing to a full house in the concert launch in Ruang Mes 56, in early 2015. Reissue provides a niche market for quality vinyl and promises good revenues.

BUILDING UP A SENSE OF INDONESIAN MUSIC DOCUMENTATION

I was sitting on a couch at Hahan's house, talking with him while listening to some old Indonesian records. He put all his vinyl collection in colorful plastic crates. The crates did not have lids, and they were put in a corner of the living room—just behind his working table. He showed me his collections, and said, "It must be nice to live in a foreign country such as The Netherlands and Australia like you. They are so clean. It seems that there is no dust to damage the records."

A particular Indonesian record that always brought him a sense of pride and excitement among his collection called *Mari Bersuka Ria dengan Irama Lenso* (*Let's Get Happy with Irama Lenso*). The record was released in 1965, and has four songs on each side. The vinyl was a product of Indonesian artists and IRAMA Record Company in conjunction with the 10th anniversary of the famous Asia-Afrika conference held in Bandung. Soekarno, the first president of Indonesia, in collaboration with the prominent musician Jack Lesmana, wrote a song titled "Bersuka Ria" in the vinyl. Syaiful Nawas of Orkes Gumarang wrote the liner notes. Two sentences penned by Soekarno stamped the notes, as if to authorize it: "*Saia setudju. Setudju diedarkan*". This roughly translates as, "I endorse this product. I endorse the release of this (vinyl)."

I had previously heard the "Bersuka Ria" song before thanks to Acong, my colleague at Kunci. He had downloaded the song from the Internet and had stored it on his iPhone. When the song "Bersuka Ria" finished playing, Hahan said that it would be better if his collection were oriented more to Indonesian music. According to him, collecting Indonesian music was a worthy activity, because it was equal to learning history. He pointed to the back cover of *Mari Bersuka Ria dengan Irama Lenso* vinyl and encouraged me to read the notes. At this point I wonder whether Hahan also learnt about how Soekarno particularly despised rock and roll because it represented an inauthentic Western culture.

The notes start and end with emphasizing Soekarno as the authority to govern what would be the authentic representation of the country. Soekarno had created a new style of dance called Lenso. What kind of music to accompany the dance best? The notes persuaded the readers that such kind of music should be the one bearing a strong national personality. It should belong to the existing local tradition. Because only in tradition can the perfect rhythm (*irama*) adhere to the national personality be found. In the following, I quote the notes at length:

Our president/the great revolutionary leader, Bung Karno, has found the new style of the Lenso dance that he has always been performed on special dancing occasions. Surely, people would likely ask – what about the music style to accompany the dance? Would it go well with the rhythm of cha-cha, bossanova, to which the people, especially those who have a liking for entertainment music, have long been familiar with? Here is a straightforward answer: the rhythm mentioned above does not suit to the rhythm sound for accompanying the new style of the Lenso dance. Indeed, we need to have a certain character to accompany the dance, a distinct personality with a distinct musical rhythm that belongs to Indonesia. Our great revolutionary leader always encouraged us to be brave and stand on our own feet. Such a suggestion can be extended to the music field. Going back to the rhythm to accompany the new style of the Lenso dance, has it found yet? We have found it, and the result is extraordinarily enjoyable. You can hear it with your own ear here in the new record of “IRAMA” orchestra led by Jack Lesmana with various famous singers: Titik Puspa, Nien, Rita Zaharah and Bing Slamet. Through the performance of a new work of Bung Karno, his own creation/the result of his dwelling on something, a song titled “Bersuka Ria”, we can hear what the most appropriate rhythm sounds like. It is the original rhythm that belongs to Indonesia, and can be used to accompany the new style of the Lenso dance on a regular basis. The distribution of the dance should be widened, so that everyone in the society can do it.

To broaden the understanding of the people to the new style of the Lenso dance created by Bung Karno, other songs such as “Euis” (By Trihanto), “Soleram” (the folk song of the Maluku people),

“Malam Bainai” (By Karim Nun), “Burung Kakatua” (NN), “Bengawan Solo” (By Gesang), and “Gendjer-Gendjer” (By M.Arif), all have the appropriate rhythm, which can be used to perform the dance gracefully and gleefully. The songs collection is the favorite songs of Bung Karno, which gathered from various places. They are the songs that have long been known by the Indonesian society, who populated the area that stretched from Sabang to Merauke.⁴⁴ In conclusion, while you are hearing these songs, we suggest you to learn the new style of the Lenso dance created by Bung Karno in depth. This is the dance, which can be performed by everyone in the society, old and young people. At the same time, the Indonesian personality in the field of dance and music is nurtured. Our hope is none other than the new style of the Lenso dance to receive the warmest welcome from the society and... hope you would have a gleeful time.⁴⁵

The text indicates that the real good music is always ‘there’, rooted in the long history of Indonesian traditional music. But its value is concealed. There have been various reasons, which conditioned people to fail to see the ‘real’ value of the traditional music. One important reason, as explained in the text, was the fascination with foreign music. Lenso dance is the kind of dance that only goes well with the kind of music infused with Indonesian character. The character of Indonesian music can only be grasped through practicing the

44 “Sabang to Merauke” is a standardized way, fueled by the national imagination, to refer to Indonesia.

45 The Indonesian text of the notes reads as follows: “President/Pemimpin Besar Revolusi Bung Karno telah menemukan Tari Lenso Gaja Baru yang selalu dipergakan oleh beliau pada saat2 tertentu dimana atjara tarian telah terselenggara. Tentu orang pada bertanja, bagaimana tjorak musik pengiring tarian ini? Apa bisa disesuaikan dengan beat cha-cha, bossanova yang lama dikenal beat-nja oleh orang yang gemar pada musik hiburan? Djawabannya hanya singkat, beat-beat yang kita sebutkan diatas tidaklah sesuai dengan beat yang dikehendaki untuk pengiring Tarian Lenso Gaja Baru. Memang, kita harus punya kepribadian untuk mengiringi tarian itu, kepribadian tersendiri dengan memiliki beat musik yang khas milik Indonesia. Pemimpin Besar Revolusi Kita selalu mengandjurkan, agar kita berani berdiri diatas kaki sendiri, tentu andjuran beliau itu menjakup bidang musik kita pula. Tadi kita mnjebut tentang beat untuk mengiringi Tari Lenso Gaja Baru, apakah beat itu sudah diketemukan? Kita telah menemukannya dan hasilnya sangat memuaskan. Beat itu telah dapat didengar dengan njata melalui rekaman terbaru dari orkes “IRAMA” pimpinan Jack Lesmana bersama penjanji2 tenar seperti: Titiek Puspa, Nien, Rita Zaharah dan Bing Slamet. Dengan memperagakan sebuah karya terbaru dari Bung Karno yang boleh dikatakan galian/tjiptaan Bung Karno berupa sebuah lagu yang diberi judul “Bersukaria” dapat didengar dengan njata bagaimana beat yang dikehendaki itu. Beat asli milik Indonesia yang dapat dengan teratur mengiringi Tari Lenso Gaja Baru yang seharusnya diperluas penyebarannya, agar dapat ditarikan oleh segenap lapisan masyarakat. Untuk memperluas pengenalan masyarakat pada Tari Lenso Gaja Baru karya Bung Karno ini, lagu2 seperti “Euis” (tjiptaan Trihanto), “Soleram” (lagu rakyat Maluku), “Malam Bainai” (Karim Nun), “Burung Kakatua” (N.N.), “Bengawan Sala” (Gesang) dan “Gendjer-Gendjer” (M. Arif) mempunyai beat yang dikehendaki untuk menarik tarian itu dengan lintjah dan gembira. Koleksi lagu2 ini adalah lagu2 kegemaran Bung Karno yang diungkap dari pelbagai daerah dan ternyata lagu2 ini sudah lama dikenal oleh masyarakat Indonesia, yang terbudjur dari Sabang hingga ke Merauke itu. Kesimpulannya, sambil mendengar lagu2 ini kami menjarankan pada Anda untuk mempeladjadi setjara mendalam Tari Lenso Gaja Baru karya Bung Karno ini yang dapat ditarikan oleh segenap lapisan masyarakat, baik tua maupun muda sambil memupuk lebih mendalam Kepribadian Indonesia dibidang Tari dan Musik. Harapan kita tiada lain, semoga Tari Lenso Gaja Baru ini mendapat sambutan yang hangat dari masyarakat dan Selamat Bersukaria.

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Lenso dance. The text indicates that the music with Indonesian personality derives from the rich culture on which the feet of Indonesians stand.

The Lenso dance is related to the framing of what Indonesian music is and its character. The character is only partially implied by the text, rather than providing a direct answer. The anti-rock and roll attitude as demonstrated in Soekarno's cultural policy embodies the idea about Indonesian character that had been shaped by Soekarno in the 1950s and the 1960s. A volume edited by Lindsay and Liem (2012) provides valuable insights to understand the cultural politics in the 1950s and 1960s of Indonesia—what it means to be Indonesian and representing Indonesia, in the period where nationalism was shaped from the inside as well as from the outside through various forms of cultural traffic – such as performing cultural missions abroad, developing cultural organization, and expanding networks. To conform to the political context that was filled with anti-neo-colonialism and imperialism in the period, there was a strong call for returning to the originality by juxtaposing “authentic culture” with anything that was imported from the West.

Soekarno coined the word *ngak ngik ngok*, which later used as a generic term for all kinds of music not reflecting the soul of the nation (Barendregt 2002, Ryter 2002). In his speech that was delivered to commemorate *Sumpah Pemuda* day, or the National Day of the Youth Pledge, in Surabaya in 1959, he said, “Why don't young people today develop our national culture? Why do not you protect our national culture? Why do you show more love to cha-cha-cha, rock 'n' roll and *ngak ngik ngok* songs?” (Soekarno 1959). In this view, performing *ngak ngik ngok* is a “Western-imitation” (Barendregt 2002: 242) and thus inauthentic.

Perhaps it was no coincidence that after I listened to “Bersuka Ria” on Acong's iPhone, the next song to play was “Hidup di Bui” by Koes Plus. The song title “Hidup di Bui,” means “living in a jail”, captured the experience of the band members while living in jail during 1965 for producing a kind of *ngak ngik ngok* music. Soekarno despised such music, instructed the military to “wage war against Beatle music” (Farram 2007) and to put the band in jail. But, the criticism towards *ngak-ngik-ngok* or Western culture as illustrated here should not be perceived as the general picture of the period. Tony Day (2012: 119-141), also in Lindsay and Liem (eds.), writes an essay, which paints a positive picture, or rather, amazement to America as the center of popular culture.⁴⁶

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When Hahan found the *Mari Bersuka Ria bersama Irama Lenso* vinyl, he was not yet aware of Soekarno's cultural policy. It wasn't a part of his consideration of the album. In Hahan's case, it takes time and labor to be able to possess this Soekarno-era vinyl. Soekarno-era vinyl has become a rare item, as with other vinyl records from the same era. They are all rare, thus valuable, and in need of being preserved. Their value comes from the fact that they are rare; only a few remain in circulation. It was this quality which encouraged Hahan to document Indonesian music. They are the documents through which he could learn new knowledge of local music history.

In developing a vinyl collection, Hahan tried to grasp the idea of Indonesian music through gathering the rare sounds in various old records. This is a common attitude among the music collectors I talked with throughout my research. In the previous chapter, I told a story about Yoyok, who searched for old cassettes high and low, and tried to develop his own logic of collection. My observation of collecting practices indicates the desires for learning about meaningful things from various music matters that seem to be transient. It feels transient because the visibility of these sounds might not be easy to predict. To be a collector is to get hold of the physical things, cassettes, or records, which contain sounds.

To connect it to the idea of Indonesian music proposed in the notes of the Soekarno vinyl above, I am trying to build a ground to say that a sense of Indonesian music might develop from random yet noteworthy sounds. Further, these random and noteworthy sounds are to be found in the forms of physical music objects. In the next section, I explore how this sense is used to produce the Jogja sound in Nirmana Records. What are the other aspects that the record company employed to frame and produce the Jogja sound?

THE SOUND OF JOGJA

The list of the music to be reproduced by Nirmana Records consists of a range of well-known musicians from various musical genres. The music has been part of the sonic landscape, which signifies the relation between Nirmana Records and Jogja. According to Nirmana's view, the works of these musicians are regarded as the valid music representative of the city. They are the musicians who choose Jogja as the site where creative processes take

46 Day's essay takes examples from the depiction of Hollywood in the view of Usmar Ismail, who studied film for a year at the University of California Los Angeles in 1952-1953. Day also uses the stories derives from Soekarno's visit to Washington in 1956.

place. Such a view is not accompanied with a clear and rigid definition of the sound which has emerged from their record production.

Lovering's discussion (1998) about 'local musical space' is instructive to understand the meaning of Jogja in Nirmana's records. Lovering argues that "a local musical space can be thought of as a territory in which a 'community of musical taste' is identifiable to its participants emerges and is sustained by an apparatus of creation, production, and consumption" (1998: 47). The dynamics of a local musical space follows the activities of not only the musicians who live and work in there, but also those who work to organize the music venues, shops, managers, and fans. It might be too difficult, even among the music practitioners in Jogja, to define what can be referred to as a representation of a 'community of musical taste'. But this might be the room to provide flexibility for Nirmana Records for producing the sounds that they deemed important.

On the list of Nirmana Records were musicians such as Sapto Rahardjo, Sawung Jabo, Sheila on 7, Dub Youth Soundsystem, Seek Six Sick, and Dom 65. Sapto Rahardjo (d.2009) was a *gamelan* maestro. The usage of electronic music tools in his performances designated him as the avant-garde gamelan composer. Sawung Jabo is a prominent rock musician. His works is notably known through Sirkus Barock and his involvement in Swami and Kantata Takwa. He performed with other well-known musicians such as Iwan Fals, Setiawan Djodi, Inis Sri, Jockie Surjoprajogo, and Totok Tewel. The premiere of Sheila on 7, a pop band, in the musical event *Ajang Musikal* in 1998, a program on Geronimo Radio, which was dedicated to promote Jogja-based musicians, is often hailed as an important milestone in the development of indie pop. Dub Youth is an electronic music duo created by Heru Wahyono and Andy 'Metz' Zulfan. Heru is the lead vocalist of Shaggy Dog, a reggae-ska-rock n roll band. Metz was the former manager of Shaggy Dog. Both Seek Six Sick and Dom 65 are respected groups in experimental rock and punk music fields.

The scope of their music is varied, and it often surpasses the meaning of mainstream and indie in its limited sense. The listed musicians were related to the major record labels in different ways. For example, Sheila on 7 albums are produced and distributed by Sony BMG. Airo Records Production released the previous mentioned albums of Kantata Takwa and Swami, two groups in which Sawung Jabo is a part. EMI produced the first album of Shaggy Dog, a group that Heru and Metz closely affiliated.

But, they are also musicians who have respected independent practices and labels. Shaggy Dog now owns a record label called DoggyHouse Records through which they produce their albums as well as other musicians' music. One of their most recent releases is a single of Dub Youth ft. Masia One called Ba Ba Boom. Another respectful independent record label, Realino Records, produced Dom 65 album in the form of cassette in 2005. Realino Records, like many independent labels in Jogja, has since ceased functioning. As cassette becomes 'old-fashioned', it is increasingly difficult to find an opportunity to listen to Dom 65 album—unless one has an access to the cassette. The same applies to Seek Six Sick. Their previous albums were released independently; some of their music, in the digital format, appears in the online distribution platforms such as Free Music Archive and Yes No Wave websites. They have recently launched an album – Nothing Perfect Noise - produced by Rooftopsoundrecs in 2009.

Nirmana aims to reproduce the sound that has become limited due to the nature of their initial production - one of the main reasons was that such recordings were only produced in a small number of cassettes or CDs. I see a connection between the reproduction practice of Nirmana and documentation sense practiced by net labels discussed in Chapter 2. The development of digital technology that followed with the capacities for storage and reproduction engenders the rise of independent distribution platform. Due to the vulnerable character of the digital storage, digital files are unexpectedly prone to damage. Some net labels propagated documentation to include more music works in their platforms. In this case, to save is to reproduce. While net labels attempt documentation through digital reproduction, Nirmana Records attempts the same through physical reproduction.

Among other musicians and bands, which were listed, as possible future releases were Black Ribbon and Belajar Membunuh. Black Ribbon is one of Hahan's music projects. Belajar Membunuh is another band whose members are all closely affiliated to Hahan and other Nirmana staff. The inclusion of these bands indicates another important aspect to consider in the vinyl reproduction in Nirmana—they are included because they have been part of the personal music experience of Nirmana's people. They formed the landscape of the sound that would narrate their period of coming of age.

The map below best illustrates the close relation between Black Ribbon and Belajar Membunuh. The map itself shows the genealogy of Punkasila. Punkasila is a band and collective initiated by a Melbourne-based artist,

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Danius Kesminas, and Jogja-based artists—Hahan, Iyok Prayoga, Krisna Widiathama, Prihatmoko Moki, Rudy Atjeh, Janu Satmoko, and Wimo Ambala Bayang. Atjeh made the map in 2011. It encapsulates the development of the band members, recorded through the realization of different collaboration projects. Drawing on the history of creative trajectories of the band members, it makes an inventory of the band members' participation in various music projects. At the same time, the map represents the intersections that occurred between the band members with the other artists.

Black Ribbon is a band that consists of Hahan, Krisna, Iyok, and Moki; all of them are Punksila members. Atjeh, Blangkon, Tatang and Ikbai are part of a band called Sangkakala. Tatang is part of Belajar Membunuh. Other members of Belajar Membunuh are Rudi, Wedhar, Arwin, and Codit. Hahan and Wedhar have exhibited their works in numerous occasions of collective exhibitions. Hahan, Krisna, Iyok, Moki, Blangkon, and Tatang are all part of Ace House Collective.

The map serves as a map of work and artistic relations. Such relations tend to fluctuate from time to time. Shown in the Punksila map were the original members of Punksila—Danius, Hahan, Iyok, Krisna, Moki, Atjeh, Janu and Wimo. When the band launched their latest album, *Crash Nation*, in 2014, there was a change in the band membership. The band members in this album were Hahan, Wok the Rock, Terra, Blangkon, Moki, Danius, Atjeh, Iwank, Antariksa, and Janu.

The map does not represent something that is fixed. It captures the dynamic process of the Jogja music-scape in which Punksila is a part. It is the kind of map that always needs to be renewed, updated and elaborated. For example, listed as Hahan's music projects on the map are Punksila, Black Ribbon, The Spektakuler, Irama Peluru, The Psychoir, Hengki Strawberry, and El Jembt. But the map does not include NEWS, his most recent band. As I write this part, Hahan and other people being listed on the map might have started new bands or other music-related projects.

To connect the map with the idea of documentation that Nirmana upholds, the history of the past appears as something that opens for new data input, additional facts, and correction. The map does not only provide information on Black Ribbon and Belajar Membunuh. It provides insights into other possible sound to be included in the company's reproduction scheme.

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A wide range of musicians and bands that Nirmana envisaged as their future releases reflects the dynamic art and music scene in Jogja. To a great extent, they came from the indie music scene, and had only partial connections with the mainstream Indonesian music scene. Through their music, Nirmana does not only attempt at showing their knowledge of Jogja music in depth, but they seek to provide different views of what distinctive and original sound mean. They are distinctive, original, and deserve to be on record. I want to elaborate on the distinctive element in the Jogja sound and try to connect it with the other distinct sound in music.



Figure 1. *Punkasila* map

To follow Hemphill (2015: 60), the distinct characters of Nashville sound, for example, can be recognized from its relaxed atmosphere, or high level of country soul. The word 'sound' in Nashville sound resembles a certain genre; it is shaped by culture of listening to country music activated by fans and its music stakeholders. On the other hand, 'sound' in the Jogja sound is reconstructed from an independent curatorial process developed by Nirmana Records. It does not depend on the main stakeholders, who have important roles in characterizing the sound of local music. The sound of Jogja which might include the works of Nirmana people, or the works of their friends that deemed important and deserve respect. To establish a recording institution

means to possess production tools for deciding what kind of sound to be produced and reproduced. In Nirmana's case, reproduction serves as a process to certify the music they want to promote. Nirmana's releases relating to 'the Jogja sound' narrate some parts of the city music history.

THE AESTHETICS OF THE REPRODUCTION

Each cover of the vinyl being produced by Nirmana is a remake of the original cover using painting reproduction technique. In Hahan's words, they are using a 'hyperrealism technique.' I take this as another cue for making sense of the meaning of reissue conducted by the record company. In practicing preservation, Nirmana paid attention to the vinyl aesthetics too. Reissue is a reproduction practice propelled not only by what is inside certain album, but also an exploration of the exterior of it. To illustrate this, in the following I describe the reproduction process of Nirmana's first vinyl—Frau's *Starlit Carousel*.

Wok designed the original cover of the *Starlit Carousel* album. On the cover, Lani (whose stage name is 'Frau') was lying on her back. A painting had fallen on her body. In her right hand was a mobile phone. The impression is as if she is besieged with messages in any possible forms that came from the phone. It brings about a painful yet sensual image. The painting that had fallen on Lani's back depicts a woman, striking a similar pose as her (or perhaps it is Lani who is copying the woman's pose). A painting that fell on a woman on the painting depicts a sailing boat on an ocean.

The portrait of the woman with a painting that is falling on her back is the work of Guy Bourdin—a French fashion photographer. The cover, however, does not say anything about Bourdin. Wok downloaded the image of the painting from the Internet, framed it, and used it as the photo shooting property. He had appropriated the painting.

In order to understand the cover reproduction practice practiced by Nirmana, I bring in the concept of aura that Benjamin proposed (2007). To follow Benjamin, the aura is a distinct moment and phenomenon that is created from the unique compatibility between the subject and the particular environment (Benjamin 2007: 111-112). Developments in technology which facilitate greater reproducible capacities, such as in Benjamin's case—the camera technology – leads to the decline of the aura.

When Yes No Wave released *Starlit Carousel* in 2010, there was an electronic version of the cover available to download. For those who would like to own the album in the CD format, for example, they can download the music files as well as the cover. They can burn the files onto the blank disc, and print the cover on a piece of paper. Since the cover is a remix of Guy Bourdin's work, it does not hold the natural aura that might emanate from the painting. The concept of aura in Benjamin's proposal has certain materiality produced from the intertwined relation between the place and the ambience surrounds it. He asserts that the withering of the aura indicates the beginning of various new social practice functions (Benjamin 2007: 224). The aura in the digital cover of *Starlit Carousel* might be compromised, but the download option provided by Yes No Wave opens up a wide access to Guy Bourdin's painting, though in its remixed form.

In producing a reproduction of the album, Nirmana took the idea of remix up again and amplified it further through reproduction technique. Each vinyl cover is produced through painting the original cover of certain album. Prior to the painting process, the digital file of the *Starlit Carousel* cover is printed, and perceived an original work on which this painting work based. Since the original cover takes the form of a digital file (though it can be printed), to paint the cover can be perceived as an attempt at adding a distinct quality to it. Painting the cover is part of Nirmana's efforts at producing vinyl, which could emerge as a tangible and beautiful music document. The painting is later to be digitally reproduced into hundreds of vinyl covers. If a painting has its inherent distinct quality, or aura, to go back to Benjamin, to reproduce it would make the aura disappear. The production scope in Nirmana Records is limited, in order to keep the production fee within the budget. Each vinyl that the company produced would still be special – and even if not 'unique', at least being relatively few in number.

NARRATION OF EXPERTISE

Though vinyl is a favorite format for music collectors, establishing a record company turns out to be a challenging task. An increase in the number of musicians who produced their music in vinyl format and their wide network of friends do not necessarily make information about a place to outsource the vinyl production function is easy to get either.

None of Nirmana members had any prior experience in the record production. This provides the main challenge for Nirmana when they set up a record

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company. It is worthy noting here that among the people to be recruited as part of Nirmana, none of them has an expertise as a recording engineer—clearly an important role in a record company. Hahan, Uma, Wok, and Gufi, are very knowledgeable about music and their knowledge provides the basis for the company decisions about what music to record. But theirs do not extend technical expertise required for record production. When Nirmana began to operationalize as a record company in 2014, there was no a pressing plant in Indonesia. As a start-up in record business, Nirmana does not even have a recording studio where their recording process is centered.

Yampolsky's research (2013) about music and media in Dutch East Indies provides historical insights into recording industry in IMS (an abbreviation derived from Dutch East Indies, the Malay States, federated and unfederated, and the British Straits Settlements) from 1903 to 1942. In the previous part of this chapter, I explained about the establishment of Nirmana against a backdrop of a new fondness for records among music fans. In his extensive research, Yampolsky (2013: 55-163) elaborates on the facts that even when records development was emerging, the history of recording industry in Dutch East Indies painted a challenging picture.

The common ideology for European and American companies was to expand their markets and scope of recording material. Asia was an important target, but the Dutch East Indies market was considered small. The main challenge for the companies, as elaborated in Yampolsky, was not only how to sell well, but also to ensure the recording process was done adequately. The challenge appeared in the forms of war—which might hinder the travel schedule of the recording engineer, language gap, knowledge transfer between the company's recording engineer and the local people who would organize the company branch in future, to the local assistance to provide advice on music material and the character of the market.⁴⁷

Yampolsky's research points to a different period in the history of music in Indonesia. It gives an account of the course needed to take to be able to record music. The subjects of Yampolsky's research are experienced record companies. As far as the research tells, the challenges they faced do not revolve around technical problem. To draw an analogy between these record companies and Nirmana is to write a description of different expertise and resources in order to run a record company. In Nirmana's case, it seemed that the only way to start producing a record was to ask around.

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Wok suggested Hahan and Uma, who were in charge of finding the vinyl plant company, to make enquiries about it to a fellow musician who had recently produced a vinyl of an indie band in Jakarta. After a first attempt at enquiry had passed, there was no reply. Another musician friend suggested them to ask about it to an independent record company, which had released a vinyl of another indie rock band. There was a little bit of light this time. They obtained a contact of a vinyl plant company, but there might be an issue with customs and the possibility of the records not being delivered to Jogja perfectly undamaged. After another series of enquiries to a network of friends and colleagues, there was a suggestion to contact Gotta Groove Records, which is based in Cleveland, in the United States.

Hahan and Uma found the website of Gotta Groove Record provided useful information regarding pressing process and related services catered for prospective clients in distant places such as Nirmana. The price for vinyl pressing was within the allocated budget. But the distribution cost and the time duration spent from Cleveland to Jogja might emerge as a hindrance. This might sound too minor to make it problematic, but as a newcomer to the record production area, Nirmana felt the need to be cautious and calculate the cost spent from production to distribution. The reason was because they did not want the price of their records ended up being too expensive for the local market.

At that point, they thought up alternative and cheaper shipping scenarios. A possible scenario would be for Gotta Groove to send the records to Jogja via Singapore and Batam. A good friend of Hahan who was in the skateboard business, and recently imported skateboards from China via Singapore and Batam might be of assistance. The friend had a good connection with a forwarding company, which might help smoothing the way for Nirmana's vinyl delivery. The plan sounded promising, plus the price was reasonable. Until they realized that the price was not including the tax yet. A new homework for Nirmana then was to get information about the tax regulation set by Indonesian custom regarding vinyl.

In the midst of searching for the information about the tax price, they found another source that they might try to do a vinyl pressing process with the facilitation of David Karto, a co-founder of Demajors, a Jakarta-based record

47 See further in Yampolsky (2013), *Music and Media in the Dutch East Indies, Gramophone Records and Radio in Late Colonial Era, 1903-1942*, and Yampolsky (2014), "Music in Dutch East Indies Radio in 1938: Representations of Unity, Disunity, and the Modern" in *Sonic Modernities in the Malay World: A History of Popular Music, Social Distinction, and Novel Lifestyles (1930s-2000s)*.

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company and leading indie music distributor. After a series of correspondence, David expressed his willingness to facilitate Nirmana's vinyl pressing process with using his connection.

Nirmana did not need to spend more time to find the best and most economical ways for doing it. David would take care of the rest. Nirmana did not even need to think about how to deal with the exchange rate fluctuations, tax, customs, and shipping. They were part of the things that would be taken care of by him. All Nirmana needed to do was to pay a certain amount of money stated in the quotation sent by his company.

It would quicken the vinyl pressing process, and might lower the shipping costs. The scenario promised uncomplicated procedures. On the other hand, as a new record company, Nirmana also hoped to acquire first-hand knowledge of dealing with the nitty-gritty of vinyl production—finding a suitable pressing plant (establishing contacts with the people there), shipping, tax regulation, and customs. But it seems that the available options would make their position as a start-up precarious. In the end, Nirmana decided to proceed with the production plan offered by David. Though this would compromise their inclination for obtaining first-hand record production knowledge.

My exhaustive explanation of Nirmana's pressing plant search suggests the production process that is patchy, and points to many moments of uncertainty. They depended on online information and the expertise of other people. They queried friends and colleagues who might share information about recording process. However, Nirmana were being open about various inept points in the early stage of their company.

When I met Hahan and Uma for the last time in September 2017, they said that many of their projects were conducted based on the idea of learning. They initiated Ace House Collective not on the basis that they already knew how to run an artist initiative or gallery well. A considerable knowledge of running an artist initiative and art gallery would be acquired as they went along with the organization of Ace House Collective. They are learning about record production by establishing Nirmana Records.

Though still at its early development period, Nirmana promises to be a thriving record company. Their hard work has had a promising pay-off. Nirmana is already regarded as a young record company which produces a

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well-curated music selection. As a result of the rise of vinyl collectors, their records have sold well. The archiving strategy of Nirmana Records is compatible with the consumption taste of the music fans' new generation. Nirmana fills in the niche market for music fans groups who conform to the company's aesthetic taste, and would like to remember and acknowledge the value of certain music through buying records. In the future development of Nirmana Records, it would be interesting to learn about how they balance the needs for gaining financial success, maintaining interests in engaging in music archiving, and following the logic of the market. Market and the logic of the market are two important things to consider in a record company.

Though in Yampolsky's research (2013), while he emphasized the fact that a record company cannot be blamed for following the logic of the market, he states that he blames Lokananta Records, a state-run recording company, for simply obeying the logic of the market. I quote what Yampolsky (2013: 50) states here, "I, do, however blame Lokananta, independent Indonesia's national record company for choosing to follow market logic when it could have used its governmental authority and prestige to record and honor the unknown musics from all around the country." The statement also derives from his observation of the failure of the Indonesian media at the time to grapple with the idea of cultural diversity. The scope of Yampolsky's imagination of cultural richness in Indonesian music ranges is as wide as the archipelago—music from Flores and New Guinea, *Gamelan Banjar* from South Kalimantan, and *Hoho* from *Nias*. I perceive his statement to suggest the neglect of Lokananta in incorporating the richness in Indonesian music, the different sounds, to the company recording policy. The lack of different sound, in the cassettes and records produced by Lokananta, might play an important role in the diminishing of Lokananta performance within music industry.

But here, I want to recall to the discussion about the Jogja sound that Nirmana produces. Nirmana Records and Lokananta Records have different ideals about their sound production. At the same time, sound proves to be an open space to manage the market strategy as well as to emphasize the value that a record company wishes to assert in the recording industry. With this thought in mind, I move on to the second part of this chapter, which discusses the layered dimensions of saving, and caring about, Lokananta.

PART 2 SAVING LOKANANTA

Lokananta Records, Indonesia's oldest recording company, is a state-run recording company, founded around 1955-56 in Solo (Yampolsky, 1987: 1). Yampolsky stated that Direktorat Jendral Radio-Televisi-Film (General Directorate of Radio-Television-Film), which is also part of the Departemen Penerangan (Ministry of Information), was the state institution to control Lokananta. The Ministry of Information would later be dissolved by the Kabinet Reformasi Pembangunan, the cabinet of the Reformed Development, formed in 1998. Lokananta is now a subordinate to Perum Percetakan Negara Indonesia (Indonesian Government Printing Office).

For the past five years, there have been a series of initiatives to raise public awareness about Lokananta Records. The initiative sought to highlight that, although Lokananta was dormant, it was not yet a dead company. Lokananta was no longer producing many new recordings and the initiatives stemmed from the growing concern for the condition of the company. The decline of Lokananta happened quickly and it was perceived to be incapable of protecting the different forms of cultural assets that it had produced over several decades.

Many journalists, in the Indonesian media, drew attention to such condition and published articles about the fragile state of the historical music archives stored at Lokananta. In the context of social movements operating within the digital media ecology, to follow Tufekci (2013: 849), gaining attention is crucial since it is a means through which the cause and preferred framing for the movement, members recruitment and mobilization, can be introduced and take place. Social media platforms act as a powerful catalyst in promoting various ways of saving Lokananta.

One of the outcomes of the wide publication of the Lokananta precarious condition was the popularity of #savelokananta hashtag on social media. It quickly became a 'trending topic' on social media platforms—particularly on Twitter in 2012.⁴⁸ There are some variations of writing Save Lokananta--#savelokananta, #saveLokananta, or #SaveLokananta. Others added #Lokananta on their tweets. I also observed the appearance of another similar hashtag called #sahabatlokananta (Friends of Lokananta). Sahabat Lokananta seems to be a less popular hashtag than Save Lokananta. But the hashtags and their variations all serve as popular channels to convey support

and sympathies towards Lokananta. The supporters and sympathizers broadcasted tweets on Twitter, and posted articles, commentary or images on Facebook, with their preferred hashtag to share their concerns for Lokananta.

There are many aspects that play an important role in making something a trending topic. In the case of #savelokananta, the role of musicians was significant. Their significance relies on their celebrity power to command the direction of the public attention, select certain information from the overloaded online information, and bring back the 'fractured public' to focus on certain issues (Tufekci 2013: 856). Tufekci, writing in the context of Arab Spring in Middle East and North Africa in 2011 and 2012, states that the kind of celebrity that she researched is not necessarily the Hollywood type of celebrity, but a group of people who have been capable of guiding the public's attention. Tufekci coins a term 'networked micro-celebrity activism' to define their practices in utilizing personal testimonies, advocacy, and citizen journalism, to participate in the wider discourse about political issues in their environment (Tufekci 2013: 850).

Many Indonesian musicians have been trying to use their fame and influence to garner support for Lokananta. For example, popular bands such as White Shoes and the Couples Company, Efek Rumah Kaca, Pandai Besi, and Shaggy Dog, have all organized live recording sessions at the Lokananta studio.⁴⁹ To have prominent musicians record their music at Lokananta was seen as a strategic way to draw more public attention to the still functioning studio. But their prominence was not the only factor in this effort. These bands have developed their own strengths and currency, which can be utilized to influence the public attention into taking more concrete action towards the company.

White Shoes and the Couples Company is a Jakarta-based indie band. The band members—Rio Farabi, Aprilia Apsari, Saleh Husein, Ricky Virgana, Aprimela Prawidyanti, and John Navid—come from visual arts and classical musical background. In addition to their musical activities, each member builds their own persona and actively engages in the visual arts, exhibitions, and film scoring project, environment movement, and fashion. Efek Rumah Kaca is a Jakarta-based indie band. Pandai Besi is a separate music project of Efek Rumah Kaca. Efek Rumah Kaca is known for sharp-melodious song lyrics, inspired by current social and political issues in the country. It creates

48 A trending topic means a certain topic, which surged to become a source of conversation shared by many on different social media platforms.

the foundation for the fans, which is not only formed by good music, but also an inspiration to the music community. Shaggy Dog is a Jogja-based ska-reggae band. Shaggy Dog is strongly embedded within the Jogja ecosystem. The band has established an in-house record company, Doggy House Records in 2014. It marks the band's return to the indie way of music production (Shaggy Dog previously produced their music under EMI Indonesia), and sets out a new adventure of the band in engaging the music production in Jogja.

Glenn Fredly, a very popular Indonesian singer, was also active in promoting the Save Lokananta efforts. Fredly was known as an active promoter, or buzzer, of Save Lokananta. Compared to White Shoes and the Couples Company, Efek Rumah Kaca, Pandai Besi, and Shaggy Dog, Fredly differs greatly in terms of musical style, production, and circulation. Fredly music is always produced within major labels and mass media. Fredly is also a musician who can express his opinions and concern about the current social and political issues. His Twitter account, @GlennFredly, has some 2.26M followers. Fredly regularly tweeted about the needs for allocating time and energy to take care of Lokananta Records' archives. In collaboration with other musicians, he organized Rumah Musik Indonesia, a live music event dedicated to raise awareness of Lokananta Records in 2012. Indosiar, a national TV station, broadcasted the event. In the preparation of his solo concert in 2015 for example, he visited Lokananta Records, and made a series of tweets about it. Local newspapers wrote about his visit, which later being shared by his fans on Twitter. Part of his daily tweets provided his followers with links and comments regarding Indonesia's current news—corruption, Indonesian political exiles abroad, the Indonesian branch of the Hizbut Thahir, or a recommendation for a good Indonesian movie to watch.

On a different occasion, I read an article in a Solo-based online newspaper (www.timlo.net) about a group of music fans from the Museum Musik Indonesia in Malang, who organized *gotong royong*, a collaboration work, to clean the vinyl collection of the company. I found the article through a link provided by someone who tweeted it which appeared on my Twitter timeline. Half of

49 White Shoes and the Couples Company is well-known for producing retro sound, jazz, and ballads, all couched in high quality recording production. The band works in close relation with Ruang Rupa, a leading alternative space and art and cultural institution in Jakarta. The band manager, Indra Ameng, is a co-founding member of Ruang Rupa. Efek Rumah Kaca and Pandai Besi share the similar band members. In practice, it is difficult to differentiate both bands in terms of the musical style. The fans of Efek Rumah Kaca are usually also the fans of Pandai Besi. In Chapter 2, I wrote a section about crowdfunding, a practice, which was taken by Pandai Besi to fund both their efforts to do a live recording in Lokananta, and to produce a new album. Here one can wonder about what was more important—the funding availability to fund the band's travel to Solo, or the production of a new album. Shaggy Dog's music is a mixture of ska, reggae, and rock.

the article was used to explain some of the handy tips for cleaning vinyl. The vinyl-cleaning activity was read as a kind gesture of the music fans to Lokananta, as an important music institution.

I was able to attend an event called Lokananta Festival in December 2014. The festival was organized by local organizers and held in accordance with the spirit of saving Lokananta. The participants were invited to perform, set up non-permanent booths and sell old and new cassettes, records, and band related merchandise. They were also invited to create artworks to be displayed on the walls on the terrace of the Lokananta building.

Along with the development of social media, I noticed a surge of the #savelokananta hashtag appearing on Instagram. This photo-based social media platform is appropriate in recording both the beauty and abandoned state of Lokananta. Many people took their pictures in different parts of Lokananta building, and captioned them with appropriate words that described their feelings.

To portray the phrases used in the Save Lokananta postings on social media, using the postings in Twitter as an example, I categorize them into four kaleidoscopic categories: 1) definition/impression of Lokananta; 2) what should be done towards Lokananta, or hopes about the record company; and 3) depiction of the act of going to Lokananta. In the first category, the popular phrases used are *jadul*, an abbreviation of 'jaman dulu', or old-fashioned thing, *antique*, antique, *sejarah musik Indonesia*, the history of Indonesian music, *bersejarah*, historical, and *recording pertama*, the first recording company. In the second category, I find popular phrases *peduli*, to care for, *selamatkan*, to save or preserve, and *yang nyaris terlupakan*, that which is almost forgotten. The words used and categorized in the third category are *ziarah*, pilgrimage, *nostalgia*, and *blusukan*,⁵⁰ a Javanese word to describe an act of visiting an unusual place. They provide insights into the portrayal of Lokananta as a hidden historical thing, and something that is worthy of being revisited.

The social media messages containing #savelokananta were not always original posts, but an assemblage of reposts and retweets of other messages posted by others on different social media platforms. They were expressed to

50 *Blusukan* has been a very popular word during Joko Widodo's presidency. It is used to describe the habit of President Joko Widodo, or Jokowi, to visit certain places throughout Indonesia. An aspect, which makes Jokowi's *blusukan* practices standout, is that it is conducted often unexpectedly. Within the public discourse, the choice of the *blusukan* places indicates the ability of the president as well as his whisperers to see the real condition of the people.

show support to the activities initiated by other individuals. The practice of sharing the information about the activities through clicking a certain button makes it part of online activism that characterized new participation culture in Indonesia (Lim 2013).

The popularity of #savelokananta represents a case which has successfully mobilized the public attention on a large scale via the local social media realm. In studying Indonesian social media activism, Lim (2013, 654) concludes that a social media activism would be most successful when the symbolic icons represented an echo of the dominant readings of contemporary popular culture. In #savelokananta case, the hashtag became very popular because it expressed the widely shared public opinion about the value of Lokananta and what needs to be done about it. I imagine that in making comments about Lokananta, typing #savelokananta, or sharing various news related to that, there was a sense of being in the same caring community that developed in the process. In the case of Lokananta, people rarely made claims about the ownership of the hashtags. These hashtags were circulated freely across the vast social media network. It produced a public display of caring

According to Lim (2013), the thin, fast, and light character of social media, is not able to facilitate complex and layered discussion around certain issues, and thus it engenders the kind of activism that is prone to being thin, fast, and light. I see this in the case of #savelokananta too. Lim explores the downsides of the social media activism, that she refers to as “many clicks but little sticks.” It manifests in the online activism, which only results in a high number of clicks, but is limited to their transformation into a meaningful movement. In her research, she uses such downsides as key insights to shed light on the dynamics of the online movement organizations.

The pattern of the Save Lokananta appearance is up and down in accordance with the activities related to Lokananta Records. When Lokananta happened to be featured in local television, or appeared in a local newspaper, the Save Lokananta hashtag also appeared. For example, when Glenn Fredly visited Lokananta in 2015, leading up to his solo concert, there was a sudden surge of #savelokananta on Twitter. When there was nothing happening that could be connected to Lokananta Records, it led to a decline in the visibility of the keyword on social media platforms.

More poignant than reiterating the decreasing postings or mentions about Save Lokananta on social media through number, I find the decline is vividly

evoked through the postings of different people, who in their own ways, tried to say something about Save Lokananta. Their comments, however, seemed to dissipate quickly, until someone found them through an online search, and decided to respond by retweeting or reposting it. On 7 March 2015, a person called Hendra, using his @MrJavaJr Twitter account, tweeted “By the way, I am just asking here, so what is the continuation of #savelokananta?” Roughly a year earlier, on 28 April 2014, S.M.I.T.H, with @Racunhati Twitter account, said “Hey #SahabatLokananta Heyy @SaveLokananta how have you been? Have you been lost somewhere?” On 9 March 2015, Ermansyah or @SP_ERMan retweeted a tweet of @ejha_rawk that states: “:) RT @ejha_rawk Happy Indonesian Music Day to all musicians and music fans in Indonesia. How are you #saveLokananta?”

But Save Lokananta has become a known keyword to depict public desires for saving the record company. There is a shared sense of urgency to save the company, though the discourse around it seems to fluctuate. In many cases, #savelokananta has been stated by various people who might not always connected to each other. Nonetheless, the Save Lokananta keyword, or #savelokananta hashtag, became a kind of connector to gather different people in the imagined caring community.

The second part of this chapter focuses on aspects of the #savelokananta movement on social media that are potentially superficial, to follow Lim (2013), and uses the ups and downs of this outward public expression of feeling as a transient note in guiding me to look at what happened inside Lokananta.

LOOKING INTO THE INSIDE OF LOKANANTA

I long knew about Lokananta Records from my mother’s collection of Javanese wedding music cassettes and my father’s collection of *klenengan* (a kind of East Javanese music) cassettes.⁵¹ In between the hype of ‘saving Lokananta’ and my own memory of Lokananta, I was somehow reluctant to go there. It was not a reluctance that bordering on dislike, but rather it stemmed from feeling ‘too familiar’ with it. But as a matter of fact, I had never been there at all. It was the familiarity brought about by the power of the state which

⁵¹ Philip Yampolsky’s discography reveals that my memory and introduction to Lokananta through Javanese wedding and *klenengan* cassettes was not totally personal. It was informed by the company’s market policy to not participate in ‘pop Indonesia and dangdut’ arena and choose instead to produce a more regional-based music (p.13). The development showed that it gradually narrowed down the scope of the regional music production, resulted in Central Java being the focus (p.20).

emanated through the state-built buildings. The sense of power remained intact even when the buildings had slowed down their activities. I was sure that it would be there, at its historical spot, as long as I could imagine it. But, the Lokananta Festival seemed to be a perfect occasion to attend, so I boarded a morning train from Yogyakarta's Tugu Station to Solo.

There is no doubt that Lokananta is an important institution. While wondering about my own reluctance, I also realized that Save Lokananta was an initiative that I valued. Though perhaps an extension of the feeling, it posed new doubt. What was the use of all this? If Lokananta was an important institution, and there were some people who committed in doing good, I should not allow any reluctance to surface at all. My doubt was not without guilt about not feeling sufficiently motivated to join in the enthusiasm to 'Save Lokananta'.

At the same time, my reluctance also involved a degree of curiosity. What did the vinyl pressing plant look like? What did the studio look like? How were the records arranged? It is common knowledge that coffee powder is a natural substance that can be used to keep the room temperature dry. It might hinder the growth of the molds. I had heard from Wok the Rock, about the coffee powder that put under the record shelves in Lokananta, to keep the records free from molds. Was the coffee powder still there? Such curiosities excited me.

I decided not to have clear plans while in Lokananta; I tried to visit without having a clear or pre-determined agenda. I was letting myself to be carried by moments and hoping to have, to follow Spyer, "accidents" (2010). They are not the massive scale of accidents referred to by Virilio (2006), but rather of unexpected encounters, small-scale happenings that I could call discoveries.

Spyer emphasizes the importance of surrendering to the serendipity, *sérendipité*, or the happy chance (2010: 149-150). They facilitate further enquiries and happenstance to reveal insights beyond the otherwise considered ordinary occasions. In a similar line, when writing about ethnography practices, Okely uses Breton's concept of *disponibilité* to focus on chance and serendipity when being in a new place. To follow Okely, being disponible is "wandering without express and pre-formulated aims (2012: 53-55). Drawing on the notions of serendipity, accident, and *disponibilité*, lies in my decision to have a free agenda during Lokananta visit is an expectation of valuable findings that their ways through unexpected encounters.

In the previous chapter, I made an analogy between a collector and an engineer. A collector can also be seen as an engineer who is able to construct a building from different found objects. A secondhand market, for example, constitutes the perfect site to find the potential remains or leftovers to be collected. In this section, I again pick up the idea of building a respectable collection from a plethora of things, and try to connect it with an attempt to pay respect towards Lokananta.

There are many aspects of the Lokananta building that I saw during the visit, which reminded me of something that is half-abandoned. The building was not in complete ruin, but some parts did evoke a sense that they were in need of repair. I want to speculate that a condition where something seems to have suffered much, in ruins, is a key point in defining what is important or less important. Visweswaran (1994) views allegory as a situated practice to bear layers of meanings. In alignment with various social media postings, which describe the state of Lokananta in words that filled with both admiration and disappointment (and an urge to do something), I intend to show that perhaps through ruins, a sense of 'being alarmed' can be grasped.

IN BETWEEN OBSOLETENESS AND USEFULNESS

Dimuseumkan

The Lokananta logo, written in italic form, seemed to gaze at me, to the visitors and passers-by that happened to pass the building and wondered what it was. When passing the foyer, I stopped to look closely at the pictures that were hanging on the walls. In the waiting room, I saw some pictures, which depict the situation of the company's recording room during its early years. There was a placard on the table with "Lokananta cassettes are available here. Lokananta, satisfaction guaranteed" written on it.

As I walked down the terrace on which the participants of the festival set up their booths to sell old and new cassettes, records, bands merchandise, and stopped by to observe the stuff displayed, I looked for other things—rooms with the doors half open or glass windows through which I could see the room inside. I walked across the big yard of the building.

A room with 'Museum Lokananta' written on the door next to the director room was dedicated to display different cassettes duplication machines and other appliances related to audio recording and duplication tasks used by

COMMONS PEOPLE

MANAGING MUSIC AND CULTURE IN CONTEMPORARY YOGYAKARTA

Lokananta in different eras. Machines and tools in the room were arranged in serial and chronological order—"VHS Video Recorder 1980", "Record Player 1970", "Cassette Duplicator (High Speed Duplicating) 1980", "Equalizer 1960". The museum, as I found out later, was not a museum in a conventional sense. Based on my conversation with Bemby Ananta, one of Lokananta employees that I talked with during Lokananta Festival, the museum was perceived to be a room to store old audio recording machines used by the company.

To follow Clifford (1988), the museum and art market form a zone where matters that are officially regarded as important are kept and circulated. Clifford (1988: 222:226) proposed the concept of art-culture system, with the connoisseurs, curators and collectors, who work to set criteria for valuing. Though the museum room at Lokananta was not a museum per se as the company staff indicated, it was full of collectible items that were once part of Lokananta's greatness era. The existence of the Museum Lokananta room in the building indicates the desires for being regarded as important in the wider narration of music history. It serves as a reminder of Lokananta as the great cultural inheritance. To organize various technologies of sound production in a museum environment, I argue, is the route chosen to establish their significant position in the Indonesian music map.

Anderson's explanation (2006: 178-183) of the logic of political museumizing used in colonial states, continued in the post-independence colonies, is instructive here. Along with the intensity of the Save Lokananta campaign, I could sense that Lokananta appropriated negligence as condition to observe the lack of awareness of the company's historical inheritance value. It demonstrates the lack of caring towards the 'evidence of inheritance' (Anderson 2006: 318). The idea of developing a museum thus has been imagined and nurtured as the future of the record company. The Museum Lokananta is perceived as a stage of life to give evidence of the role of Lokananta in guiding the education of history to the future generations. It was readily available to be visited and checked upon. During the festival I saw many people coming and going the room.

I walked around the room twice to ensure that there was no particular interesting thing that I missed. This one-room museum displayed various technologies for audio production. All around me were things that Marx defined as "factors of production"—analog sound recording, mixing, and audio production tools. I walked around the room a couple of times, and tried

CHAPTER V

to become enthusiastic and find the revelation in the machines, but nonetheless I continued to feel a kind of emptiness.

The presence of the emptiness was all the more pressing because what I saw was a total contrast to the 'museum' as the space created for collection material. In a collector's 'museum', things are not only collected, but also gathered with an intention to revive them. But what I saw here were a combination of dysfunctional and irreparably damaged machines—an embodiment of the epitome of *dimuseumkan*, to 'museumize', an Indonesian expression, if derisive, to say to put something in a particular place and let it be abandoned.

While in the room, I saw there were many photos of the state officers who had paid their official visits to Lokananta hanging on the wall. Maybe this could be seen as another route to emphasize the important status of the record company, that is to show that the officials visited the company, and included it in their agenda. The state officers who visited the company posed with similar gestures: looking at things and observing. In amongst the similarities of their gesture and fashion style, I saw a familiar face—Harmoko the Minister of Information. Harmoko served as the minister of information, the head of the government department of which Lokananta is a part, during New Order era from 1983 to 1997. Therefore, he appeared in many photos. The wall was like a display of the New Order bureaucrats' visits to Lokananta and how the company prospered in that era.

The reason of how I immediately recognized the photo was because I grew up in the New Order era. An ability to memorize many details concerning the government was part of the requirement to pass history test in school at that time—to be able to memorize the names of the ministers in Soeharto's Development Cabinet was among other things. Indeed the state officials photo series did remind me of the photos of the national heroes, president and vice-president in the classroom. They have always been part of the compulsory things which are used to decorate the walls of any types of schools.

Each photo and clipping was a showcase for greatness, or remnants of past greatness. It demonstrated the undisputed grandeur, although being accompanied by clear traces of neglect. The pictures were old and worn. Together with the clippings, they were composed and put together just like that on the walls.

Greatness and neglect combined together brought to the fore such a familiar view, prompted me to accept the pair, and made my reluctance to creep up. Perhaps I was reluctant to go to Lokananta because I was too afraid to see the signs of the negligence, something that too often attached to all things considered old and unproductive. It brought about the feeling of hopelessness, which I would have preferred to avoid. But it already came into me and I used it partly as a lens, or shield, through which everything I saw during my visit, was understood.

A NEW SITE OF PRODUCTION

Bemby Ananto looked very busy during the festival. It seemed that he was the most sought-after person to talk with by the media people, visitors, or researchers. He was the Head of Remastering Section in the company. He introduced many innovative ideas to the company, which ranging from digitizing Lokananta's audio archives in the forms of CD and using them as a means to generate income, to utilizing the company's cassette reproduction machines to produce cassettes for numerous indie bands. He was known as the mediator between Lokananta and people or independent initiatives who attempted to organize events at Lokananta.

I stood in front of the big windows of the archive room. The door was locked. But I could see rows of shelves full of records. I was not the only one to stand by the window; there were others who like me, were standing there and whispering to each other while pointing at a certain record they saw. One of them said that I should try approaching Bemby if I wanted to go inside the room. I told Bemby that I was a PhD student from Leiden University who is researching Indonesian music. He drew a bundle of keys from his pocket and opened the door. For a moment I just stood there, looked around, and was somewhat overwhelmed by my surroundings—shelves and shelves full of records. I knew some of the musicians whose albums were displayed in the room. But most of them were unknown to me. This added another layer to my sense of being overwhelmed by the collection. I felt like I was on a tour in a totally foreign place and that Bemby was the tour guide.

Like what a tour guide commonly said to start the tour, he talked about the basic information of Lokananta: "Lokananta is an important place. In the past, the company was tasked with duplicating music material from the central office of the Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI) in Jakarta. The material was

distributed to the branches of RRI in various cities in Indonesia." I listened and looked around. There was no sign of coffee powder anywhere. As if to read my mind, Bemby told me that two air conditioners had just been installed in the archive room and the storage room for reel-to-reel tapes, contributed by a businessman from Jogja. The fact that he was a businessman, thus having financial capacity to contribute air conditioners, seemed to be a more important point for Bemby, rather than whether or not he was also a music collector.

The tour progressed with visits to the cassette duplication room and the storage room – which also doubled as Bemby's workspace. Lokananta started to appear not as a failing site of production, but as a site situated in between 'site of production' and 'museum'—presumed as the terminus of the production circuit. To imagine its in-between position is to imagine it is suspended on a certain axis. There were moments where it swung itself more to the side of 'site of production' and relativized the in-between position of the company. The board with the company name erected in front of the building emphasizes the meaning of Lokananta as a site of production. Below the company name was a list of its productivity capacities, all written in a single line: *Recording Studio Audio Video Duplicating Broadcasting Multimedia Printing*.

When we visited the cassette duplication room I saw piles of cassettes scattered across the table. The names of the people who ordered the cassettes were written on the notes that were pasted on them. With cassettes regaining their value as a medium for recording, Lokananta received orders from indie musicians and bands that wanted to release their music on cassettes. I saw a pile of *skripsi* (undergraduate theses) on Bemby's desk. The topics of the theses were diverse, ranging from elaborating on the state of Lokananta as the national museum of Indonesian music, computerization of administration system of cassettes selling, directing techniques for films in Lokananta film collection, the public trust of Lokananta as a brand, to designing graphic novels with Lokananta as the main character. Each thesis, in its own way, shows an attempt by the writer, at seeing Lokananta not as just a subject of study, but as an inspiration for further cultural production. Lying below the theses, so as to support them literally, was Philip Yampolsky's book, *Lokananta: A Discography of the National Recording Company of Indonesia 1957-1985*.

Bemby's work place is spacious – even if it is cluttered with long lines of

steel filing cabinets, which almost filled three sides of the room. He was always in a constant fear of the dust from the street entering the room and damaging the reel-to-reel tapes in the filing cabinets. The easiest solution was to keep the windows closed, so as to keep the room clean from dust - but shutting the windows made the room hot and stuffy. The installment of the air conditioner made the room fill with fresh air. He worked with two big computer screens—on one of which were covers for the newly released CDs of Lokananta that he had worked on for some time. Though to say that they were totally new materials was not appropriate since the contents were not new. They were the re-issues of the albums that previously released on cassette. But this was the moment I saw Lokananta being a functional production site.

Bemby opened the filing cabinets. There, I saw many piles of black and brown tapes. Attached on top of each tape was a label with numbers and words. Bemby started his career in Lokananta as a remastering staff in 2007. He had an education background in a vocational school of technology and four years' experience of working in a wood processing company. Remastering was a new skill that he had to learn it from scratch. Remastering is the technical term in which a sound quality of a recording is being restored and improved. In the remastering process, an old recording is reproduced into a new one with a much better sound quality. Remastering Lokananta's recordings entailed a high degree of familiarity with Lokananta's collection.

During the early phase of Bemby's work period in Lokananta, Parmin, the former head of the remastering department taught him the necessary skills and techniques. But the knowledge transfer process was interrupted when Parmin was transferred to the RRI office in Solo. Bemby was left with the task of remastering, even though he hadn't yet mastered the technique. The first thing he realized was that he had to find a method for arranging the reel-to-reel tapes.

Arranging was the first important step prior to doing the remastering. He used the word '*mengatur*', arranging, because the tapes, he said, were '*berantakan*', messy or disorganised. Lokananta neither had a catalogue nor any kind of system which would help him solving the problem. Then he found Philip Yampolsky's book and found it useful as guide in arranging the tapes. He said that his knowledge of the English language was not advanced enough. Nonetheless, he strived to read the book. Using the book, he rearranged the tapes according to the year of release, the details around the

production, *susunan koppeling* (coupling sequence), and other practicalities that he needed to know for remastering. I only had the opportunity to read Yampolsky's book while living in Leiden. As I began to read the book at the university library in Leiden, and imagined the cataloguing process that Bemby went through in Solo, Yampolsky's book felt like a meta-catalogue.

"I don't have a big salary here. We all here have to find our own ways to survive, so to speak. It is all right. I see myself as *penyelamat harta karun Lokananta* - the savior of the Lokananta's treasure," he said. When I was about to leave, I asked him to be photographed in front of the filing cabinets. He stood at the center of the room, in front of them, and looked at the camera with a proud gaze.

He asked Bimo, one of his staff, to accompany me to visit the old studio of Lokananta. The studio, just like Bemby's workplace, is also quite spacious. Posters showing musicians who did their recording sessions here were hanging on the studio lobby. I asked Bimo whether the mixing console in the room was still in function. He said that it was broken long time ago. "Then what happened during the live recording sessions with White Shoes and the Couples Company, Efek Rumah Kaca, and Pandai Besi?" I asked. He replied, "They brought their own mixing console here."

A VISIT TO THE FUTSAL COURT, AND A CONVERSATION ON WHAT 'IMPORTANT' MEANS

Two weeks after the festival, I visited Lokananta again. On top of the agenda of my visit to Lokananta that particular day was to observe the futsal court. Futsal had started to become a very popular sport for young people in the end of 1990s. To follow its popularity, there were many people who started a business from building commercial futsal fields. I wanted to see the futsal field because I learnt that it was the new business that Lokananta had become involved in. Lokananta's futsal court is very popular among the youth who lived in the area. It became a sign to locate the position of Lokananta. I took a *becak* from Solo Balapan train station. When I mentioned my destination, the *becak* driver asked me whether I wanted to play futsal too.

I walked through the narrow passage in between the rooms to store the records. On the left of the field was a row of toilets. On the right was a *musholla* (small prayer house). When I reached the end of the passageway, I

saw the futsal court. There was a wide, worn out net fixed on each side of the court which made the entire court look shabby.

A vending machine stood in the corridor next to the field. The lights in the vending machine were shining bright, in contrast to the dim ambience of the corridor and the court. The ambience of the whole Lokananta futsal court was dim. Bushes were growing in the space behind the court. I walked through the corridor—and saw a man squatting down in front of a stack of burning waste. I had seen him at the cassette duplicating room before, but we had just exchanged a smile and we did not talk to each other.

This time, he smiled, got up, and asked me if there was anything he could help me with. His name is Wawan. I said that I was in Lokananta to do some research about Indonesian music. He nodded and immediately asked, “Is there such a place like Lokananta in The Netherlands?” I could not think immediately of a Dutch equivalent to Lokananta – although I presumed that there was one. In return I only said that it was easy to find records in The Netherlands. Used records are cheap, compared to the high price set by record shops in Jakarta. Perhaps unsatisfied he asked me again, “But don’t you think Lokananta is important?” “Of course, it is important,” I replied. Lokananta’s recording studio has a wide reputation for being the recording place of many Indonesian pop superstars.

Then I continued talking about Irama Nusantara. Intrigued, he asked where they had got funding for their archiving activities. I told him that it was from Hivos, a Dutch funding agency. How could they access a funding organization like Hivos, again he asked. But he seemed not interested in my explanation of the proposal writing and funding application. Instead he said, “Maybe you can help us.”

Can “maybe you can help us” be perceived a small talk? It could also honest words. He was not the first to say that to me. Previously Bemby asked whether I could help with getting some funding for Lokananta. In response to that I said, “But as a researcher, my real contribution is writing. Right?” Wawan laughed a little and said that it was right.

Next to the vending machine was a long table with three plastic boxes neatly arranged on top of it. In the boxes were various kinds of snacks, chips, *kerupuk*, and biscuits. A tin tray was on top of the table with ten *nasi bungkus*—rice meals wrapped in used newspaper. The table has drawers on

either side where the books to keep the records of the financial activities of the futsal court (the list of the field users everyday and the time they would like to spend in the court) and the canteen (how many packages of chips or drinks sold today) were kept.

Wawan had worked at Lokananta for two years as an office boy. His tasks were a wide range of menial jobs, from sweeping the floor, tidying the rooms, cleaning up the bins, doing the bookkeeping of the futsal business, and now taking care of the small warung (it was not usually his job). December was a holiday month thus not many people came to play futsal, preferring instead to leave the city, he said. Nonetheless there were ten groups of people who used the court that day. It was an additional income of Rp.500,000 for Lokananta.

Wawan and his wife used to work as staff at the post office in Boyolali. He was forced to leave the job due to the office regulation, which did not allow an in-house marriage. His wife is now working at the post office in Solo, but she will be relocated again to Jogja beginning 2015. Working in Lokananta enabled him to be flexible between taking care of their son and managing the household. He initially thought of being an office boy as a stepping-stone to a much higher position. Now he felt like he was stuck in his position and began to lose hope of working for longer period in Lokananta.

"How did the knowledge transfer about the importance of Lokananta to all the workers here work?" I asked him. "It is not that deep," he responded. This prompted me to think whether he thought of Lokananta as an unimportant place, which contradicted what he said to me earlier, or whether the phrase 'knowledge transfer' that I used sounded a bit pompous.

"This futsal court was used to be a place to store the pressing plant machine. The records were all be kept here as well," he said. And what was now a row of white pillars, with growing shrubs and bushes in the column, used to be the space where the Lokananta employees parked their motorcycles. "Look at what this place looks now. They could have developed it into something," he said.

The stories of Lokananta came to Wawan in pieces. It reflects the way he got the stories—the same way he told me about them. They were told and retold to him not in the form of official documents published by Lokananta – it was not because he could not access it. But, it was because Lokananta never published such documents. His colleagues told him some bits of stories

about Lokananta. These colleagues heard of the stories from other people who previously worked there or knew a lot about it. They were told as parts of informal talks, which conducted during breaks in works. Here chatting performs a way of talking about office-related matters, other matters, and historical matters.

Just like the character of chatting might suggests, informal and relaxed, historical matters transferred from one person to another as snippets and fragments. Often, they came out unintentionally and unexpectedly. They emerged spontaneously during a conversation - when something suddenly stood out. This 'something' is not something that which is totally unfamiliar. It is something that has always been there all along. In fact, it might have always been in one's mind. It just needs the right moment to point at it, to remember a story attached to it, and to talk about it.

So as to retain the tone of the conversation, with a kind of historical sense that began to permeate through it, Wawan got up from his chair. He said he wanted to show me the other parts of Lokananta building that were located on the opposite side of the futsal court. "Of course, I am not a professional tour guide. This is just like a tour guided by a friend," he said.

Walking across the path in front of the court and turning left, we passed a row of rooms that are used by an agency of the state cryptography department as classes. Colorful murals were painted on the walls of this back part of the building. Clearly, they were not made with commission from Lokananta. A *pendopo*, the Javanese verandah, was installed in the patio, which connected the classrooms and the studio. It seemed no one sat on this *pendopo* anymore. "That is the unused *pendopo*," he said. Bushes were growing underneath and around it.

We walked into a narrow corridor and arrived back in the open area in front of the futsal court. "Don't you think that these parts could also be turned into something?" he asked me. Before I managed to ask him what did he mean by 'turned into something', he said, "They all could be monetized." I nodded and said that these parts of the building could be in a better condition than what they appeared to me at that moment. Monetization, or an attempt to convert particular matters into money, may look a blatant way of acquiring certain social status. The next thing he said, however, stresses another side of status brought by fortune that is having a dignified state of being. He said again, "Have you seen the room that they converted into a museum? It is not really a

proper museum, right? It is just a room where things were just being put there. And that's it."

He gazed at the bushes; giving them a pitying look of some sort, as if they were the embodiment of negligence. They are the unwanted growing things; things that perhaps I should not see at all. When I told Bemby that I wanted to see the futsal court, he looked at me in disbelief. The court is located far behind the office rooms, and according to him, going there would make visitors susceptible to being bitten by mosquitoes. That is the thing that worried him the most. But when looking at the bushes and the failing court on my left, I began to make sense of the reluctant air in Bemby's voice. One is not supposed to freely enter the back part of the other's home without the owner's consent. Wawan and me gathered at the back of the building and talked. What we knew as well as what we did not know about Lokananta enabled us to stand at the backside of the building and talk about its preciousness, and that it should not to be wasted, but it was wasted anyway.

JASMERAH: *DON'T EVER FORGET ABOUT HISTORY*

Wawan asked me when I would complete my PhD. I replied that my scholarship would end in September 2015. "But even though you are now living abroad and having an education there, you would go back to Indonesia and still be an Indonesian, right?" Perhaps because I did not immediately answer his question, he went on to quote the famous proverb from Soekarno, "Don't ever forget about history. *Jasmerah*." The proverb is best known in its abbreviation form, *Jasmerah*: which stands for *Jangan sekali-kali melupakan sejarah*. Do not ever forget about history.

"May I offer you a *nasi bungkus*? It is on me. If only I had a more dignified kind of meal to offer. Instead I only have these wrapped rice meals," he said. Politely I said no, and said that it was time to go. When I was about to pay for two bottles of *teh botol* and chips that I had, he waved his hand and said that I did not have to do it.

I recalled what Bemby had said to me. That if he was too busy working and therefore could not talk or take me around in Lokananta, I could just ask a *satpam* (security guard), for a company. Then he reminded me that if I did it, I should give a small amount of money to the *satpam*. The moment I heard him saying that, I thought about it as a generous gesture and a decent act. It conforms to the general narration of Lokananta's financial condition, which

affects the wealth of its employees. Bemby is regarded an important person in leading the direction of Lokananta. What he said to me can be perceived as an attempt to share the fortune, a splash of money, to the hands of the others. It seemed that he expected me to do the same—to give a bit of money to the people who have helped me, especially if these people are structurally positioned below him.

To interpret the food offered by Wawan to me as something bigger than just simply politeness, a person offered the food to another person, might be an exaggeration. The meeting with Wawan, however, emphasizes that an open path, indeed an essential one, to grasp the true meaning the transformation of old cassettes and records into historical music archives is not only through observing how the collectors live with things they collected. Rather, it is through understanding the people who live with the archives as part of daily work and learning how they position themselves in relation to the archives that the projection of some fragments of their lives can be seen. A life of an archive is forever depending on the life of the one who possesses it. Once the fragments are seen, the logic of the game of value would unfold. There are limits to certain things that we agreed on as good.

While saying 'Don't ever forget about history' seemed to be an obvious statement, Wawan could suggest that taking a more concrete action regarding the fate of important archives is a decent thing to do. I sensed that his offering to buy me food was a subtle and small act to show that however tattered and abandoned the situation of his work environment and the things kept there might be, they are nonetheless precious. They are worth of being treasured. His gesture can be related to his laments and accounts of a range of places we had seen that were all in the mixture state of being abandoned, unused, or only occasionally used. These are places and objects with a long historical background, and therefore they should be treated with a certain sense of dignity and respect. Taken together they compose a personal reflection on the current state of Lokananta and how he tried to make peace with the things that clearly had brought him a daily sense of unease.

In the end his unease is felt not only about Lokananta, but is mixed in with his own personal anxiety of an unsteady income and job. The state of Lokananta and things kept in there mirrored the situation he had to deal in personal life. My encounter with Wawan enabled him to share his thoughts about Lokananta. Though it might be not intentional, '*Jasmerah*' (don't ever forget about history) is a forceful statement. And, it is a part of Sukarno's legacy to

contemporary Indonesia. It emerged as a guidance to go back to the roots of the history. He has been clinging on to it all the time. It was quickly grabbed and used in the conversation to make me *eling*, a Javanese word for remembering.

When I was on the train going back to Jogja, I felt a mixture of regret and fondness for Lokananta. But to think of the conversations I had during my visits there brought a sense of comfort. As such, a conversation can be regarded as a caring substitute. It makes visible the emotion and affection of something and brings them into contact with other people.

CONCLUSION

The conversations I had detail examples of caring practices, which were driven by the good intentions of various collectives. Nirmana Records is a new record company to reproduce new music documents in the form of vinyl records. It uses reissues as a strategy to archive valuable music material. The choice of the vinyl form is supported by the rising popularity of vinyl as a collectible item among music fans. Lokananta Records is the first record company to play an important role in the national music trajectory. At the same time it is always being understood as a state company, which lacks resources to make the valuable archives kept in it properly maintained and preserved. Lokananta has regained popularity, and became a source of conversation, when the Save Lokananta campaign emerged in 2012. The campaign, and the public discourse to emerge from it, gave new impetus to the rising of public awareness of Lokananta as a historical asset.

Nirmana Records documents some parts of Indonesian music that they historically regard as important. A group of musicians, artists, managers, and other important people in the local music scene were behind the organization of Nirmana. The company's music products reflect the tastes of the people behind it, and what important music might mean for them. In the case of Nirmana, this might mean the sound produced through Jogja music scene. Through establishing a record company, Nirmana attempts to lay the foundation of being an authority in music and culture. To develop a record institution is to have an opportunity to take part in the authentication process.

Save Lokananta has become a known as a keyword to depict public desires for saving and doing a good thing for the record company. To transform

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public attention such as evidenced in the campaign into actual works, which has enabled Lokananta to thrive as a financially stable record company, however, has proved to be difficult. During my visits, I saw the employees of Lokananta who worked hard in order to keep the company afloat. They worked hard at monetizing whatever was at their disposal as a means to generate income, and open the door for various collaborations and opportunities. I observed a condition where Lokananta was perceived to be an emerging production site—a new favorite place to duplicate cassettes for indie bands and a new place to hold gigs. But still, there were too many damaged recordings that needed to be restored. Also, the building was in need of repair, which would take up a lot of money. There were too many things to be taken care of at Lokananta. At this point, I began to see #savelokananta as a concept, which is similar to *Jasmerah*. Save Lokananta becomes an ideal, a public invitation, to respect what is valuable around us.

At this point, I began to see #savelokananta as a concept, which is similar to *Jasmerah*. Save Lokananta becomes an ideal, a public invitation, to respect what is valuable around us. The public character of #savelokananta is situated in the fact that it is free to use for public. The prospect of #savelokananta to create commons was big. But it was not accompanied with the development of rules and norms to make #savelokananta effective for the betterment of Lokananta. It was not successful to be a medium for collective initiative creation. However, #savelokananta can also be perceived as a baggage of documentation spirit. To revive it remains a possibility.

I read an article on an online newspaper about Anis Baswedan, the current Jakarta governor, and the then Minister of Education and Culture, who visited Lokananta in 2016 (<https://bisnis.tempo.co/read/781925/anies-baswedan-lokananta-harus-jadi-museum-pendidikan>). As he was observing the records, touching them, in the manner very similar to the ministers and statesman of the New Order era whose photos hanging on the Museum Lokananta room described above, Baswedan said, “Lokananta has to be transformed into *the museum of education* so that the children who want to learn about history can come here.” A museum is an idea that holds the salient points of life. But until the idea is realized, it is just an idea.

I also recall a conversation that I had with Wok shortly after my first Lokananta trip. According to Wok, if one would like to show support to Lokananta, he or she should consider working there, to becoming a Lokananta staff and dealing with the daily problems that the company might

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have. Otherwise attempts to save Lokananta as shown by campaigns 'Save Lokananta' or 'Sahabat Lokananta' would not bring about any fundamental changes. They did not seem to be *nyata* - a real (or tangible) act of saving Lokananta, he said. Wok also stated that to save Lokananta is to be committed to it. Only when writing this part I began to understand that what seemed to be a small talk, such as the one I had with Wawan of Lokananta, could be a request for contributing something more real, permanent, not superficial, rather than just words on papers.

By what metric one should measure the success of archiving initiatives? What does documentation mean? Save Lokananta is an example of an independent initiative to respect the life of Lokananta, which is supported by many. Lokananta is undoubtedly regarded as an important record company to the history of Indonesian music. To position Lokananta as a historical site by reiterating statements that it is important seems to be inadequate too. The underlying feeling was that Lokananta was still a neglected historical site. The statements need to be accompanied with actual work.

My research at Lokananta led me to encounter moments where commitment, or the willingness to care, tends to appear as evasive as ever. Perhaps to commit is to be ready with tiredness. Commitment to care needs something that is binding. The success of Nirmana's vinyl sale leaves me wondering whether vinyl reissue should be seen as a kind of gimmick to ensure the favorable result of a documentation program. To archive is to devise strategies for endurance through time and make some adjustments to the current music culture. Preservation continues to exist as a promise and a challenge.

