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## Conceptual Framework of Minimalism and Absolute Music Composition in “Quarteve”

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| ABSTRACT  | ARTICLE INFO  |
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| <p>Music creation plays a role in the art world that has existed in society for generations against human civilization and is familiar in everyday life. Various forms of expression have an idea from the composer's background and are poured into music, thus creating satisfaction for the creator. Music continues to develop in society, experiencing gradations and reductions in the creative process of its creators. This research uses qualitative research methods because the focus of this creation is how to find the implementation of minimalist music by knowing the elements of music, including its form and structure. Qualitative research intends to understand the phenomenon of what is experienced by the research subject, such as behavior, perception, motivation, action, and others holistically. The conceptual framework is a method used to explain the relationship or relationship between the variables to be studied; in this case, minimalism music as a variable will then be associated with the creation of a musical composition, so it is hoped that the conceptual framework can describe the ideas that will be arranged and designed. The process of making this composition is carried out by researching using several stages, starting with analyzing literature studies. Based on the author's results in creating a composition design, the conceptual framework can be used as a basis for research.</p> <p>© 2023 Kantor Jurnal dan Publikasi UPI</p> | <p><b>Article History:</b><br/><i>Submitted/Received 27 Apr 2023</i><br/><i>First Revised 27 Apr 2023</i><br/><i>Accepted 30 Apr 2023</i><br/><i>First Available online 15 May 2023</i><br/><i>Publication Date 31 May 2023</i></p> <hr/> <p><b>Keyword:</b><br/><i>Composition,</i><br/><i>Absolute Music,</i><br/><i>Minimalist Music,</i><br/><i>Quarteve.</i></p> |

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Music creation plays a role in the art world that has existed in society for generations against human civilization and is familiar in everyday life (Nosirov, 2021). Various forms of expression have an idea from the composer's background and are poured into music, thus creating satisfaction for the creator. Music continues to develop in society, experiencing gradations and reductions in the creative process of its creators, causing many phenomena in the types, forms, and characteristics of music so that music is then used as a specific role for a person's background in expressing their ideas. Expert opinion confirms that music becomes an expression of the heart and is issued regularly as a sound language (song) (Perlovsky, 2010).

Over time, music became bound to a rule in culture, so in its application, music born from human expression would be formed in a specific rule or order. However, in the 20th century, this cultural stigma was broken with the emergence of the avant-garde movement, which described musicians' work radically and deviated from tradition altogether (Bürger *et al.*, 2010). This phenomenon continued to grow until music became more open and not bound by the cultural rules of society. Music that had undergone a transition then entered into new eras where composers created many new views on music, characterized by contemporary classical music having a new form of music in general.

Furthermore, regarding this phenomenon, the author is interested in creating a new musical composition with specific ideas so that the author can realize the thoughts and feelings poured into a musical work. The creation of this work will represent all thoughts represented through music. In creating music, some things must be understood, and special attention must be paid to musical creativity in each composer so that all understanding will be in-depth (Mielke, 2023).

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to formulate a conceptual framework for the creation of absolute music compositions using minimalist techniques. In this study, the minimalism technique plays an important role in the creation of music that will benefit developing a new implementation of minimalism music by incorporating various ideas of minimalist composers on certain instruments so that the results of this composition have a mature presentation.

The author intends to create a new composition with specific ideas and background: absolute music with minimalist techniques. Absolute music is created as the music itself, entirely instrumental, structure-oriented, unaffected by elements outside the music, and has an absolute function without being bound or referring to anything. So, in practice, the concept of absolute music does not use the concept of music that represents something in particular so that the music will be original and absolute. The concept of absolute music continued to develop from time to time until the 20th century, when various branch compositions were created from the concept of absolute music (Viljanen, 2020).

One type of work that became quite popular was minimalist music. Minimalist music originated in the 1970s when composers such as La Monte Young, Terry Riley, Steve Reich, and Philip Glass pioneered this type of music characterized by music that has a repetitive melody or rhythm and often undergoes gradual changes such as lengthening or shifting phrases in the music. Minimalist music in Indonesia is not very popular and rarely found, so the author hopes that this music composition will provide new glasses for the community,

especially in Indonesia (Devi, 2021). The interesting thing about creating the music composition "Quarteve" is that it uses a minimalist technique approach different from previous minimalist works (Oliveira de Mendonca, 2021); such differences include shifting techniques in the limited application of tones, using interval 4 (Quart) tones. From these differences, minimalist techniques will create new possibilities in music creation. The music composition "Quarteve" will also use a trio format instrument consisting of clarinet, piano, and cello. The choice of the three instruments is a consideration for the author, who needs different sound colours. In addition, the author also adds an audio sampling to fill in some parts so that the music will be fuller with the emergence of a new atmosphere in each part of the song. This sampling is in the form of drones, one of the characteristics of minimalist music.

## 2. METHODS

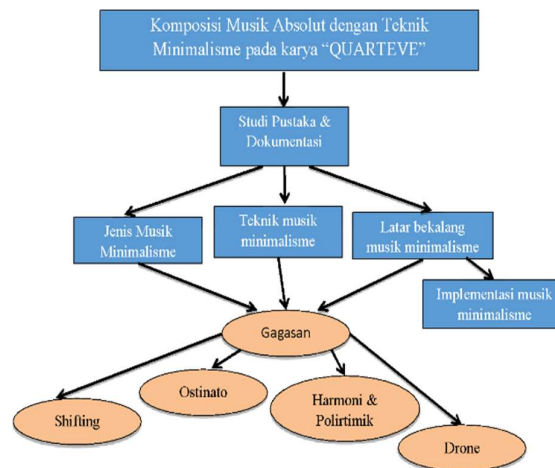
This research uses qualitative research methods because the focus of this creation is how to find the implementation of minimalist music by knowing the elements of music, including its form and structure (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Qualitative research intends to holistically understand the phenomenon experienced by research subjects, such as behavior, perception, motivation, action, and others, using descriptions in the form of words and language in a unique natural context by utilizing several natural methods. In addition, a qualitative approach is research aimed at describing and analyzing phenomena, events, social activities, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and thoughts of people individually and in groups (Destari et al., 2023). This research will use a qualitative descriptive analysis method to find data based on understanding certain subjects related to music creation. This study will use the Design Thinking Process method, an analytical and creative process involving participants in the field to experiment, prototype models, collect data, and draw conclusions.

## 3. RESULTS

### 3.1 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is a method used to explain the relationship or link between the variables to be studied (Victora et al., 1997); in this case, minimalism music as a variable will then be associated with the creation of music composition, so it is hoped that the conceptual framework can describe the ideas that will be compiled and designed.

The process of making this composition was carried out by researching using several stages, starting with analyzing literature studies in the form of types of minimalism music compositions, minimalism music techniques, and minimalism music composition backgrounds (Burnard & Younker, 2004). Next, the idea of minimalism music was developed as the initial process in making this "Quarteve" music. This aims to be adjusted to the music composition so that the design of the "Quarteve" composition is by applying the characteristics of minimalist music. In the chart below, you can see the conceptual framework as follows:

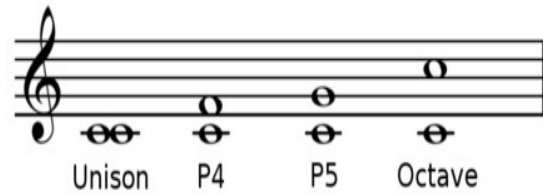


**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework absolute music composition with minimalism technique in "QUARTEVE"

### 3.2 Idea

"Quarteve" was designed using the results of a literature study conducted in the form of minimalist music. This etude is titled "Quarteve," derived from the words Kwart and Steve. Quart is a term in music that mentions the interval or distance on a note from the first to the fourth. The word Steve is the name of a minimalist composer, Steve Reigh, who became the inspiration and motivation of the author in making this composition. The name "Quarteve" is based on the author's idea of the music to be made, namely the selection of tones with an interval/distance of 4 scales. The quart interval, in English terms, is also called the fourth, and it has a perfect interval designation where the resulting sound has a purity of frequency that appears consistently in a harmonic relationship. In addition to a quart, intervals of 1, 5, and 8 tones called unison, quint, and octave are also included as pure or perfect intervals. Furthermore, the use of tones in this music will be limited to using quart tones, which are then adapted to minimalist music, which tends to have a small and repetitive melody character.

The work "Quarteve" is expected to be a form of music with a certain character, so the playing still produces a unique melodic rhythm, but no complexity is needed for the melody itself.



**Figure 2.** Inteval unison, quart, quint and octav as pure inteval

The musical ideas in the designed *Quarteve* refer to the research study of minimalist music. Therefore, detailed performance instructions in writing dynamics, articulation, symbols, structures, motifs, and so on are adapted to the minimalist music tradition.

The musical composition "*Quarteve*" itself has the concept of minimalist music with a new style. The author uses movement as part of the music chart to be developed. This movement is three in number, and each chart has a different story and atmosphere. One of the works that will be the author's first reference is "*Steve Reigh: Electric Counterpoint*," which in this work provides an overview of counterpoint on a rhythmic and melodic melody that is short and repetitive.

The image shows a page of sheet music titled "ELECTRIC COUNTERPOINT I" by Steve Reich. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 192. The score is for multiple instruments: Live Guitar, Guitar 1 through 10, and Bass Guitars 1+2. The music features repetitive rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings such as *p* (piano) and *f* (forte). The score is written in a multi-staff format, with each instrument having its own staff.

**Figure 3.** Steve Reigh, Electric Counterpoint  
(Sour: Hendon Music, Boosey and Hawkes Company)

The following work is "*Phillip Glass: Glasswork I*." The second reference piece has interesting tonal processing, using repetitive rhythms and structures, with gradual shifts and slight changes in melody and harmony.

**No. 1, Opening**  
from *Glassworks*  
by Philip Glass

♩ = 96

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**Figure 4.** Phillip Glass, *Glassworks I*  
(Source: Dunvagen Music Publishers)

Furthermore, the music composition "Quarteve" has certain stages so that the making of this composition will be more detailed and structured.

The first step is to determine the type of rhythm as the rhythmic fundamental of the music (Ismail *et al.*, 2021). At this stage, the rhythm is determined by looking for the possibility of repeating the melody that can be applied to the ostinato technique so that the motif sentence in the melody can be played cohesively (Lamb, 2022). In determining this rhythm, many considerations were made so that it experienced trial and error to make the right choice.

The next step is the selection of tones that will be arranged as the initial phrase to be processed and played with ostinato techniques. When choosing these tones, it is necessary to do a long enough experiment to use them according to the needs when playing ostinato (Salvador, 2019). Of course, determining the tone still considers the tone of the quart interval. After the selection of the tone has been determined, the selected tone is made into a motif in the melody that will fill the rhythm of the composition (Panayiotakis, 2019).

Next is the stage of determining the dynamics that will be played. This dynamic creates an atmosphere in a particular chart to create an initial journey to the climax of the composition (Slaby *et al.*, 2019). In addition, the dynamics will also affect the timbre or sound color that appears on each instrument. Various ideas for the composition of "Quarteve" are very much involved, so each selected idea is explored as a potential musical idea. At that stage, it is then adjusted to various minimalist music theories and techniques so that the composition will follow the author's expectations.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The interaction between absolute music composition and minimalist techniques creates a captivating merging of musical ideologies, leading to inventive expressions that defy and broaden conventional limits. Absolute music, a term that emerged during the Romantic period (Barrett, 2021), pertains to music composed purely for its intrinsic value, without any goal of conveying a story or visual imagery (Lehman-Wilzig, 2021). The subject matter centers around musical structures and the interconnections among musical components, particularly emphasizing the conceptual and structural aspects of music. Composers such as Johannes Brahms and Ludwig van Beethoven exemplified this approach by writing musical compositions that emphasized structure (Karnes, 2005; Korsyn, 1991), the development of themes (Frisch, 1982; Avins, 2021), and complex counterpoint rather than focusing on non-musical connotations (Viljanen, 2020; Micznik, 2021). The main objective of absolute music is to elicit a pristine aesthetic encounter using the inherent attributes of sound, harmony, melody, and rhythm.

Minimalism, in contrast, originated in the mid-20th century as a response to modernist music's intricate and emotionally charged nature. La Monte Young, Terry Riley, Steve Reich, and Philip Glass, among others, aimed to simplify music by emphasizing repeating patterns, consistent rhythms, and slow changes (Potter, 2017). Minimalist music is distinguished by its uncomplicated nature, lucidity, and contemplative attributes, frequently inducing a mesmerizing impact by the continuous repetition of concise melodies and modest alterations in texture, harmony, and dynamics (Oliveira de Mendonca, et al., 2021).

The fusion of absolute music and minimalist approaches provides a captivating pathway for modern composers, enabling them to delve into novel realms of musical expression. The integration of several musical elements is well demonstrated in the piece "Quarteve," where the structural integrity of absolute music is combined with the repeated and changing patterns commonly found in minimalism. This hybrid method allows composers to create structurally demanding and emotionally evocative pieces.

The utilization of a trio format consisting of clarinet, piano, and cello in "Quarteve" enables a nuanced and intricate interaction between different tones and musical patterns. Each instrument possesses distinct acoustic characteristics:

- The clarinet exhibits an expressive and reedy tone.
- The piano showcases its harmonic and rhythmic capabilities.
- The cello emanates a warm and resonant sound.

This combination enables a wide range of sound possibilities, which is crucial for investigating the subtle details of absolute music and minimalism.

One important characteristic of "Quarteve" is the utilization of interval 4 (Quart) tones, which establish a unique harmonic structure. The composer's decision demonstrates a deliberate intention to investigate particular intervals and their resonances, aligning with the absolute music tradition emphasizing musical form and structure. The interval of 4 tones contributes to a harmonically rich and stable sound, acting as a solid base for unfolding minimalist patterns.

The repeated patterns and incremental modifications typical of minimalism can be observed in "Quarteve." The piece utilizes recurring motifs that are subtly altered, resulting in a sense of uninterrupted flow and logical consistency. This approach aligns with minimalist ideas, prioritizing the transformation process rather than the outcome. The music undergoes gradual modifications to its rhythmic, melodic, or harmonic components, resulting in an

organic evolution that captivates the listener and creates a meditative and immersive experience.

Audio sampling, specifically drones, introduces additional intricacy and richness to "Quarteve." Drones, which are continuous tones or chords that serve as the foundation of the music, are a distinctive characteristic of minimalism. They create a steady acoustic background against which other elements might develop. In the composition "Quarteve," drones intensify the feeling of stillness and gradual change, strengthening the minimalist style and enabling lively exchanges between the musical instruments. The drones enhance the overall texture, producing a more complete and engrossing sound.

Integrating absolute music and minimalist techniques in "Quarteve" is a prime example of a broader pattern in modern music, where conventional boundaries are becoming more flexible. By amalgamating these two methodologies, composers can delve into uncharted realms of musical expression, crafting simultaneously intellectually invigorating and emotionally captivating compositions. This synthesis facilitates a more profound involvement with musical structure and procedure, offering a comprehensive foundation for artistic investigation.

The minimalist technique emphasizes repetition and gradual alteration by the formalist ideas of absolute music. The repeating themes and developing textures in "Quarteve" can be interpreted as a contemporary expansion of classical forms, emphasizing the importance of thematic growth and variation. This relationship emphasizes the ongoing link between the past and present, showcasing how modern composers can utilize historical traditions while creating innovative approaches. Utilizing minimalist approaches in compositions of absolute music also provides opportunities for enhanced audience involvement. Minimalism's mesmerizing and contemplative attributes might enhance the accessibility and attractiveness of the formal structures found in absolute music for modern audiences. Composers can bridge the divide between academic rigor and subjective pleasure by crafting structurally sophisticated and emotionally resonant music.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The concept of Quarteve's composition in absolute music using a minimalism approach demonstrates the delicate equilibrium between restriction and expression, form and freedom. A thorough examination reveals that Quarteve's songs go beyond simple repetition, providing listeners with a deep exploration of intricate soundscapes. Quarteve employs minimalism as a composing style to delve into the fundamental nature of musical elements, including melody, harmony, rhythm, and texture, in their most unadulterated state. Quarteve's approach removes unnecessary embellishments and intricacies, allowing listeners to connect fully with the underlying nature of sound. This results in a contemplative and all-encompassing auditory encounter. Quarteve's conceptual framework showcases a thorough focus on detail, with each repetition and variation being meticulously created to elicit nuanced changes in mood and feeling. The meticulous focus on particulars underscores the profound and intricate nature of Quarteve's minimalist pieces, encouraging listeners to interact with the music on several levels of comprehension and analysis. Furthermore, Quarteve's minimalist approach to composing absolute music defies conventional ideas about form and organization, presenting a rejuvenating alternative that prioritizes continuity and



progression rather than traditional narrative arcs. This deviation from tradition encourages listeners to reassess their previous ideas about musical creation, creating opportunities for new channels of study and interpretation.

## 6. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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