

THE TRACK RECORD OF THE MOCCA BAND SEEN FROM HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract: This study aimed to find out the track record of the Mocca band in the music industry from its founding phase, the working phase, to the phase when they are being known abroad. The period investigated in this study was 1999-2014. Mocca, as an indie band, is well known in Indonesia and even abroad, but not many people know about the band's track record in the historical context. The method used in this study was the historical method which consists of stages of heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The results of this study suggested that Mocca, which was founded in 1999, has always been consistent in its work as shown through several albums that have been released, and has been active in entertaining the public from stage to stage for more than ten years. Mocca's historical journey was dynamic until it experienced a revival in late 2014. Mocca is an indie band from Indonesia that has the capability to release albums, arrange concerts, and become known abroad, especially in South Korea, Japan, Malaysia, and Singapore. This success is influenced by some factors, including their consistency, quality of music, management, and representative promotion.

Keywords: Mocca, music history, indie music

INTRODUCTION

Mocca is one of Indonesia's indie bands that is gaining popularity not only at home but also abroad. Their album distribution expanded to Thailand, Japan, South Korea, and other Asian countries. Their success was the result of a lengthy process that began in 1999. Mocca was born at a time when Indonesia's indie music scene was thriving, particularly in two major cities, Jakarta and Bandung. This gives the band an advantage as they build their career in the midst of the rise of independent labels introducing non-mainstream music. However, few studies have focused on Mocca's journey in the Indonesian and international music scenes.

In his article discussing Mocca's resistance as an indie band in confronting Indonesia's mainstream music industry, Naldo (2018: 1) stated that Mocca, as an indie band, has a role as an agent of change in the structure of Indonesian music. The color of Mocca's music, which differs from other bands in general, can be accepted by Indonesian music listeners. This is one of the factors that has propelled Mocca to the forefront of Indonesian music. In this study, Naldo does not discuss in detail how Mocca came to be and developed as a band historically.

Mocca is not only growing as an indie band that has broken the mainstream music climate, but it is also musically accepted by music listeners in Indonesia. Mocca fans became known as *Swinging Friends*. Not only listening to music performed by Mocca, *Swinging Friends* frequently holds various activities such as contributing writings and photographs related to Mocca (Pikiran Rakyat, 20 January 2015). Mocca and *Swinging Friends* have a long-standing friendship that benefits both parties (Pahlevi et al, 2018: 54). *Swinging Friend's* existence also represents Mocca's success because it has many devoted fans.

Mocca became more well-known as the 2000s progressed, which was accompanied by the release of new albums. However, Mocca's path in the music industry is not always easy. There are numerous challenges that must be overcome, particularly between 2011 and early 2014 when Arina, the vocalist, relocated to the United States until Mocca's rise in late 2014. From a

historical standpoint, Mocca's long journey in maintaining their existence and developing a career in the music world is fascinating to study.

METHODS

The method used in this research was the historical method. Systematically, the historical method consists of four stages, including heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The sources used in this research consisted of scientific articles, newspapers, and books that are relevant to the research topic. These sources were then corroborated as a form of source criticism to obtain credible and reliable facts. These facts were then interpreted and synthesized before being compiled in written form or historiography.

THE FORMATION OF MOCCA

Mocca's formation was highly influenced by Riko and Arina while they were still students at a university in Bandung. They both joined a band at their college in 1997. Riko (guitarist) and Arina (vocalist) formed a new band in 1999, inviting Toma and Indra to fill the bass and drum positions, respectively. Mocca was eventually chosen as the band's name. "Mocca" was a band name for a while, but it is still used today and is known as a big band in Indonesia's indie scene.

One of the identities associated with Mocca's trademark is 1960s-1970s pop music with lyrics about happy stories in English (Pusat Data dan Analisa Tempo, 2019: 31). The use of English lyrics was decided after careful consideration, despite initial hesitations among Mocca personnel. However, it did make Mocca known, and listeners thought the English lyrics were very appropriate to represent the color of Mocca's music. The use of English lyrics was eventually maintained, though some songs also included Indonesian lyrics. One of the primary reasons is that Mocca finds it easier to write lyrics in English (Jube, 2008: 105).

Mocca, who began the performance by bringing songs from other bands, then took the initiative to write their own songs. Indie bands and record labels flooded the music scene in Bandung and Jakarta at the time. Of course, these circumstances are very supportive of Mocca's creative process, which has chosen to go the indie path. Mocca has built a reputation as a professional band that plays with passion and is known to be friendly (Luvaas, 2012).

PROCESSING AND CREATING WORKS

Mocca managed to release their first album, *My Diary*, in 2002. Mocca's first album, released in collaboration with an independent label, Fast Forward (FFWD) Record, has sold over 100,000 copies (Naldo, 2018: 785). This is an incredible accomplishment given that Mocca is an indie band with all of its limitations. This achievement also gives hope for the development of Indonesia's indie scene, demonstrating that indie bands can garner widespread public attention.

In the same year, prior to the release of *My Diary*, Mocca's song *Secret Admirer* was included in the compilation album *Delicatessen: A Poptastic!*, alongside other indie bands such as The Upstairs and Blossom Diary (Utomo, 2020: 428). Mocca's inclusion in the compilation album places them alongside other indie bands who are already well-known in the Indonesian indie scene, particularly in Jakarta and Bandung. Furthermore, this reinforces Mocca's place in the hearts of Indonesian music fans, who were previously dominated by major label bands or mainstream music.

Mocca released the album entitled *Friends* in 2004. (Utomo, 428: 428). Mocca's character grows stronger in this album due to the consistency in the composition of the lyrics and the color of the music that is maintained. However, there are differences with the previous album, where the musical composition in the *Friends* album is more magnificent with a string section

wrapped. Mocca also collaborated on the song *I Would Never* with Karolina Komstedt of the Swedish indie-pop band Club 8 (Sakrie, 2015: 150). The *Friends* album has sold over 7,000 copies under the FFWD Records label (Poplak, 2009).

Mocca's third album, *Colours*, was released in 2007. The album features 13 songs, including mainstays that are frequently performed on stage, such as *I Love You Anyway*, *Do What You Wanna Do*, *The Best Thing*, and *You*. Mocca's characteristics from the previous two albums have been carried over to the *Colours* album. One of the album's highlights is Mocca's cover of the song *Hyperballad* by Björk (Wikipedians, TT: 356). Björk is a well-known Icelandic musician who creates works with a unique musical color.

Mocca has shown a movement to broaden their audience reach since the release of their first album by collaborating with several music labels abroad. Mocca collaborates with an indie label from Japan, Excellent (Sakrie, 2015: 150). Mocca also collaborated with labels from Thailand and South Korea for album marketing. Mocca's album was also released in Singapore under the Fruit Records label (Rez, 2008: 59). Furthermore, despite the rapid development of the internet, which provides songs in digital form, Mocca fans continue to purchase physical releases or physical Mocca albums (Nurnia & Rinawati, 2016: 436).

Mocca's international recognition stems from more than just physical releases or albums. Mocca is frequently invited to perform live in foreign countries, both off and on air. Mocca performed with The Rock Angels Band in Singapore in 2005. (Naldo, 2012: 99). In 2009, Mocca also performed in Thailand and South Korea. Indeed, it is a fantastic achievement for the Bandung-based indie band.

CRITICAL TIME AND THE RISE

In 2011, Mocca's condition nearly broke up, marking a critical period for the band. This is because Arina moved to the United States to live with her husband. Mocca finally decided to vacuum in the same year. The decision is undoubtedly difficult for Mocca employees who have worked together for over ten years. Nonetheless, Mocca's vacuum in the music world is unavoidable and has occurred.

In 2011, Mocca was still responsible to hold a concert. Mocca's last concert before the vacuum was held at Hall A Basket Senayan Jakarta, on July 15, 2011 (FAR Magazine: 2011). Mocca performed collaborations with several musicians, including White Shoes and The Couples Company, Float, Mondo Gascaro, Endah N Rhesa, and Ade Paloh during the concert. The concert was Mocca's first solo concert and the last concert before the vacuum in front of *Swinging Friends*.

Despite declaring the band out of the music industry, Mocca returned in 2013. Mocca sang 20 songs during the concert (InilahKoran, 6 May 2013). On stage, Arina stated that Mocca did not disband, but rather entered a vacuum first. *Swinging Friends* were encouraged by Mocca's performance that their idol would not disband and continue to perform. Of course, this is also good news for Indonesia's indie music scene.



Figure 1. Home Album
(Sources: moccaofficial.com)

Mocca went on hiatus from 2011 to early 2014 (though they did appear during that time) and returned in late 2014 with the release of a new album titled *Home*. The *Home* album is distinguished by albums with simple musical compositions. Mocca began to actively appear in various events, both off and on air, following the release of *Home*. This indicates that Mocca has risen again and is still working today.

CONCLUSION

Mocca's journey from inception to widespread public recognition both at home and abroad has gone through a long process. Mocca was formed in 1999 and has grown in the indie line alongside the emergence of new indie bands and labels. Mocca's most productive period was in the 2000s when they released the album *My Diary*, *Home*, and *Colours*. The three albums were also released in other countries, prompting Mocca to perform abroad. This success is influenced by some factors, including consistency, quality of music, management, and representative promotion. However, Mocca's success did not last indefinitely. Mocca experienced a critical period between 2011 and early 2014 when they were reported that they were almost disbanded. As a result, Mocca's historical journey was dynamic until it experienced a revival in late 2014.

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