INTERCULTURALISM AND THE MOBILITY OF THE PERFORMING ARTS
SOUND, MOVEMENT, PLACE—CHOREOMUSICOLOGY OF HUMANLY
ORGANIZED EXPRESSION
NEW RESEARCH: REVITALIZING AND CONSERVING TRADITIONS

Proceedings of the 3rd Symposium of the ICTM
Study Group on Performing Arts of Southeast Asia

Chief Editor
Mohd Anis Md Nor

Editors
Patricia Matusky, Tan Sooi Beng, Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan, Made Hood

Production Editor
Hafzan Zannie Hamza

Institut Seni Indonesia (ISI)
Denpasar, Bali
2015
INTERCULTURALISM AND THE MOBILITY OF THE PERFORMING ARTS

SOUND, MOVEMENT, PLACE—CHOREOMUSICOLOGY OF HUMANLY ORGANIZED EXPRESSION

NEW RESEARCH: REVITALIZING AND CONSERVING TRADITIONS

Proceedings of the 3rd Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Performing Arts of Southeast Asia

ICTM

Chief Editor
Mohd Anis Md Nor

Editors
Patricia Matusky, Tan Sooi Beng, Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan, Made Hood

Production Editor
Hafzan Zannie Hamza

Institut Seni Indonesia (ISI)
Denpasar Bali

Symposium 2014
International Council for Traditional Music Study Group on Performing Arts of Southeast Asia
Symposium Chairs

PASEA Study Group – Patricia Matusky (USA)
Program – Tan Sooi Beng (Malaysia)
Co-Chairs Local Arrangements – Mohd Anis Md Nor (Malaysia) & Made Mantle Hood (Malaysia)

Program Committee

Bussakorn Binson (Thailand), Ako Mashino (Japan), Paul Mason (Australia), Lilymae Montano (Philippines), Sumarsam (USA), R. Anderson Sutton (USA), and Tan Shzr Ee (UK), with Professor Emeritus Ricardo D. Trimilos (USA) serving as Symposium discussant.

Local Arrangements Committee

I Wayan Dibia (Indonesia), I Komang Sudirga (Indonesia), Clare Chan Suet Ching (Malaysia), Mayco Santaella (Malaysia), Patricia Matusky (Malaysia), Hanafi Hussin (Malaysia), Abdul Hamid Chan (Malaysia), in cooperation with the events organizer and staff of Maitri Enterprise of Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia.

In Denpasar, Bali the 3rd Symposium was hosted and sponsored by the Institut Seni Indonesia (ISI), Denpasar, Bali

Proceedings of the 3rd Symposium is sponsored by Institut Seni Indonesia (ISI), Denpasar, Bali

The publication was edited by a group effort with volunteers from the ICTM Study Group on Performing Arts of Southeast Asia

Chief Editor
Mohd Anis Md Nor

Editors
Patricia Matusky, Tan Sooi Beng, Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan, Made Hood

Production Editor
Hafzan Zannie Hamza

Printer
Institut Seni Indonesia (ISI), Denpasar, Bali

Printed copies
500

©2015, Copyright by ICTM Study Group on Performing Arts of Southeast Asia

Indonesia National Library

Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Performing Arts of Southeast Asia (3rd, 2014: Denpasar, Bali)

ISBN XXX-XXX-XXXX-XX-X

Design and Cover photographs by Hanafi Hussin.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS                                   | vii |
| INTRODUCTION                                       | viii|
| PHOTOS (EVENT)                                     | xi  |

## THEME ONE

Interculturalism and the Mobility of Performing Arts in Southeast Asia

- **Alex Dea** (Independent Scholar, Indonesia)
  Jamming: How Traffic and Javanese Gamelan Improvisation Music Works  
  1

- **Aline Scott-Maxwell** (Monash University, Australia)
  *Terang Bulan*: Multiple Identities, Regional Flows and Exoticised Mediations of a Popular Song  
  10

- **Arhamuddin Ali** (ISI Yogyakarta, Indonesia)
  The “Kirab” Warrior as Music Acculturation in the Yogjakarta Kraton  
  16

- **Bernard Ellorin** (University of Hawai‘i at Manoa, USA)
  Regatta Lepa 2013: A Case Study on the Politicization of Sama Bajau Music and Dance in Semporna Settlement, Sabah, Malaysia  
  21

- **Christine Yun – May Yong** (Wesleyan University, USA) – Lightning Paper
  *Alih PungGONG*: Expressing Femininity through Gamelan Theatre  
  26

- **Clare Chan Suet Ching** (Sultan Idris Education University, Malaysia)
  Hands Percussion Ensemble Malaysia: Interculturalism in the Construction of Chinese Identity in Performance  
  30

- **Dadang Wahyu Saputra** (ISI Yogyakarta, Indonesia)
  Existence of Inter-Religious Dialogue through the *Kiai Kanjeng* Music Group  
  35

- **Firmansah Mustari** (ISI Yogyakarta, Indonesia)
  Kitoka as a Cultural Strategy of South Sulawesi People  
  42

- **Hafzan Zannie Hamza** (University of Malaya, Malaysia)
  Performing Intercultural Experience: Negotiating *Igal* (dance) by the Bajau Community in Semporna, Sabah  
  49

- **Isabella Pek** (ASWARA, Malaysia) – Lightning Paper
  ‘Simfonika 1Malaysia’: Cross Cultural?  
  54

- **James Philip Sheng Boyle** (ASWARA, Malaysia)
  Popular Music of Penang of the 1940s and 1950s  
  57

- **Tan Shuh Hwa** (Universiti Putra Malaysia)
  Unfolding Meanings: Symbols in the Choice of Music for Urban Chinese Wedding Banquets in Malaysia  
  61

- **Lawrence Ross** (University of Malaya, Malaysia)
  Between Malay and Thai: The Orak Lawoi’s Cultural Mediation of a Malay Musical Legacy  
  69
Marie-Pierre Lissoir (Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium)
The Khap Singing of Tai Dam Community; Between Laos and Vietnam 75

Mohamad Jamal bin Mohamad (Malay Heritage Centre, Singapore) and Patricia Hardwick (Yale University, USA) – Lightning Paper Angin Singapura: (Re)presenting Kelantanese Main ‘Teri in a Bureaucratic City State 80

Mohd Anis Md Nor (University of Malaya, Malaysia) Intercultural Encounters: Ronggeng Dance of the Orak Lawoi 84

Neneng YK Lahpan (Monash University, Australia) The ‘New’ Meaning of the Old: Local Performing Arts and the Project of Identity in Indonesia 90

Nur Izzati Jamalludin (University of Malaya, Malaysia) The Transformation of the Wang Tepus Kedah Mek Mulung Performance Structure: From a Village Bangsal to Urban Concert Halls 97

Premalatha Thiagarajan (University of Malaya, Malaysia) Transgender/Sexual-ism in the Rong Ngeng Dance of the Orak Lawoi in Phuket 103

Sarah Weiss (Yale-NUS College, Singapore) Race, Place, and Music: Problematizing Nostalgia in Singapore 107

Sumarsam (Wesleyan University, USA) Bali–Java Cultural Exchange: Gamelan Carabalèn 112

Wim Van Zanten (Universiteit Leiden, Netherlands) Dancing Baduy Ascetics 117

Yohanes Don Bosko Bakok (ISI Yogyakarta, Indonesia) Acculturated Music in Kore Metan Ceremony among the East Timorese 122

THEME TWO

Sound, Movement, Place: Choreomusicology of Humanly Organized Expression in Southeast Asia 128

Ako Mashino (Tokyo University of Arts, Japan) Displayed Bodies: The Aesthetics of Penampilan in Balinese Gender Wayang Competitions 129

Chinthaka Prageeth Meddegoda (Universiti Putra Malaysia) Appropriation of Tabla in Malay Ghazal 133

David Harnish (University of San Diego, USA) “Dance to Your Roots”: An Exploration of the Indonesian Jazz-Gamelan Fusion Band, Krakatau 142

Gisa Jähnichen (Universiti Putra Malaysia) Parody and Dance in Ghazal parti 147

Henry Spiller (University of California, Davis, USA) Heavy Metal Bamboo: How an Archaic Bamboo Instrument became Modern in Bandung, Indonesia 154
I Komang Sudirga (ISI Denpasar, Indonesia)
Recontextualizing Pasantian: From Elitist Religious Chant to Mainstream Balinese Vocal Music in Post-New Order Indonesia 160

I Nyoman Cerita (ISI Denpasar, Indonesia)
Traditional Dance as a Point of Departure for the Choreography of Tari Kreasi Baru, New Dance Creations, in Bali 167

I Wayan Dibia (ISI Denpasar, Indonesia)
Teaching Kecak in Other Asian Countries 174

Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan (Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia)
From Ritual Object To Musical Instrument: The Sound and Place of the Drum and Drumming in Ritual and Non-Ritual Contexts among Dusunic Societies of Sabah 181

Kendra Stepputat (University of Music and Performing Arts, Graz, Austria)
Layers of Sound and Movement in Balinese Kecak 189

Leng Poh Gee (University of Malaya, Malaysia) – Lightning Paper
Gesturing Scripture as Community Performance 194

Mayco Santaella (Sultan Idris Education University, Malaysia)
Asserting Meaning in Tari and the Dialectics of Movement in Central Sulawesi 197

Meghan E. Hynson (University of California, Los Angeles, USA)
From Tradisi to Inovasi: Music, Power, and Change in Balinese Shadow Puppet Theater 202

Randal Baier (Eastern Michigan University, USA) and Dinda Satya Upa Budi (Gajah Mada University, Indonesia)
A Rice Harvest through Time: Visualizing the Performance of Sundanese Rengkong 208

Ruwin Rangeeth Dias (Universiti Putra Malaysia)
Idiosyncratic and Mutual Features of Violin Playing in Malaysian Joget and Sri Lankan Kaffirinna 212

Yukako Yoshida (National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka, Japan)
How Replicated Masks Work in Balinese Society: The Case of Topeng Legong 218

THEME THREE
New Research: Revitalizing and Conserving Traditions 223

Bussakorn Binson (Chulalongkorn University, Thailand) – Lightning Paper
The Folk Musics of Southern Thailand 224

Chow Ow Wei (Universiti Putra Malaysia) – Lightning Paper

Elizabeth A. Clendinning (Wake Forest University, USA) – Lightning Paper
Innocents Abroad: Edutourism and the Balinese Performing Arts 231
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Isabelle Wei, Xin-Yi (Thunghai University, Taiwan) – Lightning Paper  
Is this Real? The Performing Mechanism of the Healing Ritual “Kisaiiz” of Kavalan Tribe in Taiwan | 235  |
| Made Mantle Hood (Universiti Putra Malaysia)  
Towards the Applicability of *Musical Terroir* to the Context of Dwindling Sonic Structures | 239  |
| SARAH ANAÏS ANDRIEU (Centre Asie du Sud Est - CASE, France)  
Where is Kala? Few Remarks on a Contemporary Ritual Performance | 246  |
| ABSTRACTS (Symposium Papers Not Submitted For Publication) | 251  |
| COLLAGES                                                   | 254  |
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Proceedings of the 3rd Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Performing Arts of Southeast Asia (PASEA) is the result of a shared contribution of paper writers, editors and sponsors of this publication. We thank all of them for their contributions.

As a special mention, we wish to acknowledge the following individuals, institutions and agencies for their assistance in making the 3rd Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Performing Arts of Southeast Asia a success:

Dr. I Gede Arya Sugiartna, S.SKar., M.Hum., Rector
Institut Seni Indonesia (ISI) Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia

Professor Dr. I Wayan Dibia, Director
Geria Olah Kreativitas Seni
(GEOKS - Centre for Creative Arts)
Singapadu-Gianyar, Bali, Indonesia

Professor Dr. I Made Bandem and Dr. N.L.N. Swasthi Wijaya Bandem
Sanggar Makaradhwaja Performing Arts Troupe
Singapadu-Gianyar, Bali, Indonesia

THANK YOU!
(MATUR SUKSMAN)

Patricia Matusky
Chair, 3rd Symposium Committee
Chair of the Study Group (ICTM-PASEA)

Tan Sooi Beng
Chair, Programme Committee

Mohd. Anis Md Nor
Mande Mantle Hood
Co-Chairs, Local Arrangements Committee
INTRODUCTION

The 3rd Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Performing Arts of Southeast Asia took place at the Chandra Metu Auditorium on the campus of the Indonesian Institute of Arts Denpasar (Institut Seni Indonesia [ISI Denpasar]), in Bali on 14-20 June 2014. This Symposium was attended by 105 delegates representing Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, The Philippines, Thailand, Germany, France, Australia, Taiwan, Argentina, Austria, China, the United Kingdom, Canada and the USA. They came together to hear and discuss over 60 paper presentations and shorter reports on research by graduate students, as well as a film screening. In addition, the delegates were able to see nightly performances at the month-long Bali Arts Festival which took place adjacent to the ISI Denpasar campus.

The Symposium began with registration on 13-14 June. The formal Opening on the morning of 14 June was graced by Balinese dance with live gamelan accompaniment. During the official Opening we heard welcoming remarks from Dr. I Gede Arya Sugiartha, S.Skar., M.Hum., Rector of ISI Denpasar, Svanibor Pettan, ICTM Secretary General, University of Ljubljana (Slovenia), Patricia Matusky, Chair of the PASEA Study Group and from Tan Sooi Beng, Chair of the Program Committee.

**Themes.** For this Symposium themes were chosen from proposals by PASEA Study Group members. Theme I was **Interculturalism and the Mobility of Performing Arts in Southeast Asia.** The general focus of this theme was the movement of peoples across the region, bringing with them their music, dance and theater. The Study Group scholars examined the impact of the performing arts in new cultural spaces, and the way in which performers represent cultural difference and appropriation in the past and in the present.

Theme II was **Sound, Movement, Place: Choreomusicology of Humanly Organized Expression in Southeast Asia,** which provided a platform for description of the various aural and visual elements involved in Southeast Asian performing arts. Cross-modal relationships between sound and movement have deep implications for the way one perceives objects, moving bodies, color and sonic events among others, and the interactions between sound and movement are not always congruent even though the two mediums may cohabit the same space. This theme was intended to bring attention to multisensory experience, the interactions between sound and movement, and the field of metonymic relationships between music, dance, and space in Southeast Asian societies.

Theme III was **New Research,** which spanned the topics of music and healing, arts education, Thai music, and revitalizing and conserving traditions. Several reports (in the form of short ‘lightning’ papers) on activity and progress of on-going field research projects by graduate students and full-length papers by other scholars were presented.

All of the above themes were given in twenty sessions in the form of individual papers, panels and short lightning reports. In all, a total of 64 papers and one film screening were presented over a period of six days. The symposium concluded with a formal closing by Prof. Ricardo Trimillos (invited discussant on the Symposium), brief closing remarks by Patricia Matusky (Chair, PASEA Study Group) and a very short kecak performance by most members of the Study Group.

As pointed out in the summary comments on this symposium by Prof. Ricardo Trimillos, among the many categories covered in the papers presented were history, politics, advocacy and activism, mediatisation, organology, philosophies and beliefs, cross-cultural encounters, tensions of identity, change and the signifiers therein. A demographic overview noted the predominance of Indonesian and Malaysian delegates, and the symposium’s dynamics emphasized the comparisons among cultures, the great attention to the sonic aspects of music and also substantial attention to music as practice. Prof. Trimillos especially encouraged us to share and communicate our knowledge and findings among young and old scholars alike, to continue to establish a communitas among our Study Group members and to mentor our young scholars in continuing to present papers and panels in study group and world conference contexts of ICTM.
The Closing events continued with acknowledgements and ‘thank you’ from the PASEA Chair (on behalf of all Study Group members) to the Indonesian Institute of the Arts (ISI) Denpasar for providing a great venue, and to the event managers for this symposium, Maitri Enterprise of Denpasar in Bali, who diligently ensured that there were food, drinks, and all technical help. Finally, the official closing took place with a brief kecak performance within the auditorium by many of the participants who had newly learned kecak on the excursion day workshop led by I Wayan Dibia at his GEOKS performing arts center.

Excursion. The fourth day of this Symposium (17 June) was devoted entirely to an excursion away from the daily sessions. The cultural excursion took us to the village of Singapadu where approximately half of the 80 participants attended a kecak workshop led by I Wayan Dibia at his GEOKS performing arts creative center, and the other half of the participants attended a gamelan and dance workshop led by I Made Bandem and his wife Swasiti Wijaya Bandem at his home in the village. Both groups experienced rigorous and enlightening lessons on performance of these Balinese art forms. After the workshops finished at mid-day, buses transported the group to the home workshop of Mangku Pager and his Sidakarya gamelan factory in Blahbatu village, and then onward to the Setia Darma House of Masks and Puppets in Ubud where some 4000 masks, puppets and paintings from Southeast Asia are on display.

General Study Group Meeting. The schedule for the fifth day (18 June) of this Symposium included the General Study Group Meeting to discuss the business matters important to the running of this Group. A synopsis follows.

The hosting proposals for the 2016 Symposium were presented by Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan for Universiti Malaysia Sabah in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, and by Bussakorn Binson for Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok Thailand. The Executive Committee of this Study Group noted that all past symposia have taken place in the ‘island’ regions of Southeast Asia. This Committee also agreed that to be inclusive in regional focus and to encourage young scholars to attend our symposia, the next venue and lost host would be Chulalongkorn University in Thailand in 2016. A drop-box for proposed themes for the 2016 symposium was set up at the registration desk.

The Executive Committee as it now stands (Patricia Matusky, Chair; Made Mantle Hood, Secretary; Mohd. Anis Md. Nor, Publications Chair; Tan Sooi Beng and Patricia Matusky, Co-Chairs for the 2016 Program Committee; Bussakorn Binson, Local Arrangements Chair for the 2016 symposium; and David Harnish, Member-at-Large) will stay in place until new elections and re-appointments in 2016.

Briefly discussed at this meeting was the possibility to offer an outstanding student paper award, based on a student’s presentation at future meetings. This possible award, the criteria for determining it, and the administrative body to process it will be discussed by the Executive Committee in the future weeks and months ahead.

The Publications Chair explained the process for editing and formatting the Proceedings for the current 2014 Symposium. All papers actually presented in this Symposium can appear in the Proceedings, and once edited and formatted by the editorial staff, the Proceedings will be published by the Indonesian Institute for the Arts Denpasar (ISI Denpasar) for distribution and sale at the ICTM World Conference in Kazakhstan in 2015.

Svanibor Pettan spoke about the 2015 World Conference, and the Study Group members were urged to consult with colleagues and submit proposals for panels on Southeast Asian performing arts for the World Conference in Kazakhstan.

Finally noted was the generous financial aid obtained from the Study Group members to help graduate students attend this Symposium, and for the help we were given by the ICTM Secretariat to expeditiously enroll our Study Group’s new graduate students into the ICTM.
**Post-Symposium Cultural Tour.** A 3-day post-symposium cultural tour to Lombok to visit sites and performances by the Sasak community took place immediately after the symposium in Denpasar. This tour was organized by Mohd Anis Md Nor, David Harnish, and Made Mantle Hood, and included performances of *gendang beleq*, *rudat*, and *gandrung* and then to see a *wayang Sasak* at an evening performance. The group of over 20 people also visited Lingsar and Sasak villages.

**Acknowledgements.** On behalf of all members of the ICTM Study Group on Performing Arts of Southeast Asia, sincere thanks is extended to the host—the Indonesian Institute of the Arts Denpasar (ISI) in Bali. To Professor Ricardo Trimillos we say *terima kasih* for his astute and enlightening comments on this Symposium. Many, many thanks also to all members of the Program Committee and the Local Arrangements Committee for organizing this symposium. The complete Program, Biographical Notes of Presenters and the Abstracts for this symposium, and the current Minutes of the 2014 Study Group Meeting may be seen at this Study Group’s website at: <sites.google.com/site/PASEAStudyGroup>

This 3rd Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Performing Arts of Southeast Asia (PASEA) reflects the dedication to research activity in the region by local and international scholars. Chief editor Mohd Anis Md Nor continues to chair the Publications Committee for PASEA, which comprises Production Editor Hafzan Zannie Hamza along with co-editors Tan Sooi Beng, Patricia Matusky, Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan and Made Hood. In its editorial work on the written versions of the papers submitted by the presenters in the Symposium, the editors focus on uniformity of format and correctness of spelling and grammar, while the presenters themselves are responsible for the content and correction of the written text. The papers presented during the Symposium that were not submitted for this Proceedings are represented by their Abstracts only, with permission of the individual authors.

We wish to thank Hafzan Zannie Hamza for a very unique and attractive design for the logo of this Symposium, in which the figures of dancers are based upon drawings in the GEOKS performing arts creative center of Professor I Wayan Dibia in the village of Singapadu. Upon completion of formatting, layout and editorial work, the final production tasks for this volume were carried out by the Chief and Production Editors of PASEA (Mohd Anis and Hafzan Zannie, respectively) in cooperation with the administration of the Institut Seni Indonesia (ISI) Denpasar who is the 3rd Symposium host and publisher of this current volume of Proceedings. We wish to express our sincere thanks to the Rector of ISI Denpasar, Dr. I Gede Arya Sugiartha (S.SKar., M.Hum.), for ensuring that these Proceedings are published to be presented for distribution at the ICTM World Conference in Kazakhstan in July 2015. The staff and all persons in Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia involved with the production of this volume are also extended many, many thanks by this Study Group for their diligent work.

This published Proceedings is a permanent record of the 3rd Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Performing Arts of Southeast (PASEA), held in Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia in June 2014.
Rerenggan masked dance performance and a barong bangkal procession at the Bali Arts Festival 2014 during the Symposium
Balanganjur Processional ensembles featuring bamboo flutes (suling) and bamboo percussion (tek-tekan)
Bali Arts Festival 2014 during the Symposium
Workshop on Kecak given by Prof. I Wayan Dibya at GEOKS, Singapadu, Singapadu-Gianyar, Bali.
Exchange of gifts between the ICTM Secretary General Prof. Svanibor Pettan and Madam Endah Setyorini from the Lombok Culture and Tourism Department

*Gendang Beleq* (big drum ensemble) by Sasak musicians at Pura Lingsar (Wektu Telu temple)

Lunch at Pura Lingsar (Wektu Telu temple)  
Visiting Desa Sukarare, traditional Sasak handloom/weaving village

Traditional Sasak village of Desa Sade
THEME I – INTERCULTURALISM AND THE MOBILITY OF PERFORMING ARTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Theme I, Interculturalism and the Mobility of Performing Arts in Southeast Asia generally involved the movement of peoples across the region, bringing with them their music, dance and theater. The Study Group’s scholars examined the impact of the performing arts in new cultural spaces, and the way in which performers represented cultural difference and appropriation in the past and the present. The following narrative addresses the various papers that were presented according to sub-topics and orientations the presenters took in developing their papers on this general theme.

The topic of Interculturalism opened with a panel on ‘Music in Interculturalism Reality in Indonesia’, presented in both Indonesian and English languages. This panel was organized and presented by Yohanes Don Bosko Bakok and three of his fellow graduate students at the Institute of Indonesian Arts (ISI) Yogyakarta in Java. Arhamuddin Ali presented ‘The “Kirab” Warrior as Music Acculturation in the Yogyakarta Kraton’, Dadang Wahyu Saputra spoke about ‘Existence of Inter-Religious Dialogue through the Kiai Kanjeng Music Group’, Firmanah Mustari presented ‘Kitoka as Cultural Strategy of South Sulawesi People’, and Yohanes Don Bosko Bakok presented ‘Acculturated Music in Kor Metan Ceremony among the East Timorese’.

Another set of papers focusing on ‘Performing and Experiencing Interculturalism’ began with Hafzan Zannie Hamza (University of Malaya) presenting ‘Performing Intercultural Experience: Negotiating Igal (dance) by the Bajau Community in Semporna, Sabah’. This session continued with papers by graduate students from the Academy of Arts, Culture and Heritage of Malaysia [ASWARA] — Isabella Pek spoke about ‘Simfonika 1Malaysia: Cross-Cultural?’ and James Philip Sheng Boyle presented his paper entitled ‘Popular Music of Penang in the 1940s and 1950s’.


The continuation of papers focusing on Interculturalism, in the context of ‘performative presentations’, featured a paper by Bernard Ellorin (University of Hawaii, USA) on ‘Regatta Lepa 2013: A Case Study on the Politicization of Sama Bajau Music and Dance in Semporna Settlement, Sabah, Malaysia’. Sarah Weiss (Yale-NUS College, Singapore) spoke on ‘Race, Place and Music: Problematizing Nostalgia in Singapore’, while Mohamad Jamal bin Mohammad (Malay Heritage Centre, Singapore) and Patricia Hardwick (Yale University, USA) gave a lightning presentation on ‘Angin Singapura: (Re)presenting Kelantanese Main Teri in a Bureaucratic City State’.

Looking at new and old forms in Interculturalism, Nur Izzati Jamalludin (University of Malaya) spoke on ‘The Transformation of the Wang Terus Kedah Mek Mulung Performance Structure: From a Village Bangsal to Urban Concert Halls’, and Neneng Lahpan (Monash University, Australia) presented ‘The ‘new’ meaning of the old: local performing arts and the project of identity in Indonesia’.


The sub-topic of mobility of performing arts looked first at regional flows and travelling arts as Marie-Pierre Lissoir (Université Libre de Bruxelles, France) presented ‘The Khap Singing of Tai-Dam Community: Between Laos and Vietnam’, Wim van Zanten (Leiden University, The Netherlands) spoke on ‘“Dancing Baduy ascetics”, and Aline Scott-Maxwell (Monash University, Australia) examined ‘Terang Bulan: Multiple Identities, Regional Flows and Exoticised Mediations of a Popular Song’.

A final panel on Interculturalism focused on the Ronggeng Pelacak ritual of the Orak Lawoi in Phuket Thailand and was organized by Mohd Anis Md Nor, with two additional speakers, all from the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur. Lawrence Ross presented ‘Between Malay and Thai: The Orak Lawoi’s cultural mediation of a Malayan musical legacy’, Premalatha Thiagarajan presented ‘Transgender/sexual-ism in the Ronggeng dance of the Orak Lawoi in Phuket’, and Mohd Anis Md Nor presented ‘Intercultural Encounters: Ronggeng Dance of the Orak Lawoi’.
ALEX DEA  
(Independent Scholar, Indonesia)

JAMMING: HOW TRAFFIC AND JAVANESE GAMELAN IMPROVISATION MUSIC WORKS

In over forty years of studying to fathom the music of classical Central Javanese music by applying my Western training, I have found that the precision we have in the West which is associated with scientifically measurable exactitude is not something which is aesthetically – or perhaps even possibly -- desirable in Javanese music or culture. While the Western approach is to look for operational principles and the consistent application or repeatable evidence of some underlying principles, Javanese gamelan does not seem to have this type of consistency or systematic regularity.

Following Hood's concept of bi-musicality of play-as-research and research-as-play, I am a prototype extreme ethnomusicology practitioner. I have had the great fortune to play-research in Jogja and Solo continuously since 1992. I do not have to come to Java for fieldwork. I live in the field. At my teacher Pak Cokro’s house in Jogja, where I have lived since 1992, there were regular rehearsals. The best RRI national radio and Paku Alaman palace players came every Tuesday night to play the more esoteric compositions. When I practiced rebab (Javanese two-string spiked fiddle) and gendèr (a metal xylophone played with small round-headed beaters held in two hands) late into the night, Pak was sleeping in the next room, and in the morning, he would comment on my progress. In Solo, I lived in the house of dhalang Anom Suroto’s house, and followed him to rehearsals and all-night shadow plays. In the afternoons, I joined the Mangkunegaran Palace practices, and in the evenings, I could rehearse with expert players from the high school (SMKI) and university of arts (then ASKI, then STSI, now ISI), and the RRI radio station. I have played with and learned from a gamut of experienced players and teachers.

With full-time research, I reached a conundrum of whether I could ever play gamelan “Javanese” to a level like Asian classical musicians have achieved Bach, Beethoven, or Bartok and others. After I learn all the melodic patterns (céngkok) and the way they are put together, and I can play a number of pieces, then what? While the Asian player has the advantage of finding scores, notations, and many excellent recordings, I did not have that canon of Javanese gamelan. Therefore I -- as also many other foreigner students did -- recorded as much as possible, then got data; transcribed; deconstructed; found parallels; made things fit to my own understanding. But, even if I could record the same musician playing the same compositions over a long period of time (which I did), would I understand that which I desired? I achieved a certain level of technical skill, but the question is do I really play “Javanese”? Can I learn another person’s culture? How would I know that it is achieved?

A Sidetrack

In 1976, I was on a visa break in Singapore. It was a different time when the divide of cultures was much wider than the current compression of the internet and globalization. The background music at the lunch place was a song by the famous rock band Fleetwood Mac. I was comforted after a year of intense Javanese and Indonesian musical fare. But, something was amiss. It turned out to be an Asian copycat band. Feeling both delight and discomfort, I appreciated the copycat band’s love of the music, but also could not bear to hear the misunderstood feeling and flow of the song. The copycat had all of the notes correctly. I am sure they had -- as I do with notations of my teachers -- faithfully dissected and memorized every note of Fleetwood Mac’s recording. But something essential was missing. I suspect that my study Javanese music lacks this same. But how would I know?

What kind of investigation opens the door to understanding what even the most humble Javanese gamelan player knows, but which I in the West do not know? Most if not all of the gamelan musicology literature is systematic-oriented, scientific-oriented. Western music cherishes and respects technical skill, virtuosity, regularity. Being from the West, my efforts have been biased to the intellectual and scientific, theoretic and rational.

I had studied the canon of gamelan, poring the notations of rebab of Djumadi and the gendèr encyclopedia of Martopangravit, and discussing with other American students about stereotypical
melodies \textit{putut gelut, ayu kuning, debyang-debyung,} and \textit{kacaryan} -- finding how it all fits together with the theories of Hood, Becker, and Sumarsam.

I have followed the river and the current of the developments of \textit{gamelan}-ology such as "nuclear theme", "inner melody", and "gatra" with some suspicion although these concepts have certainly been helpful in contextualizing and giving a framework from which to study. But have I studied the correct things?

The bulk of "ology" of \textit{gamelan} has been a particular way, and its influence has been aptly summarized by Sumarsam (1995) who writes:

"The impact of Western Thought on Javanese views of music evidences the concentration on a certain focus which is intellectual rather than instinctive."

This impact has been my own making. Because Martopangrawit stands out from other \textit{gamelan} musicians for being able to articulate things in a way which the western mind understands certain things quickly, perhaps the writings of an instinctive master -- as he certainly was -- has received overemphasis on something which he may have not wished for students!

Fortunately, I was able to meet someone who also had cachet with the western students, who was at the same level of proficiency and teaching capability as Martopangrawit.

\textbf{Don't Too Much Teori!}

Pak Cokro (Wasitodiningrat aka Wasitodipuro aka Notoprojo) taught in America for over 22 years. I first studied with him in 1972 with vocal lessons, but only for summer programs. It was only in 1992 when I started living with him in Java that I started to concentrate on his \textit{gendèran} and \textit{rebab}. After living with Pak for a few years (where I had the unprecedented fortune of study, with him advising, prodding, pointing me day and night), I realized that he rarely mentioned any terminology. His teaching approach was quite different from all \textit{gamelan} that I had learned.

He always said that the important thing was \textit{pengalaman} (experience). When he knew that I had learned the advanced instruments like \textit{gendèr} or \textit{rebab}, and had learned enough cèngkok and compositions, he frequently said that I must make variations. Early in his time in America when we students were so thirsty to understand \textit{gamelan}, and when our western mind would ask question after another, he patiently explained and played or sang examples. Finally, he said "Don’t too much teori". Don’t think too much. Understand by playing. Even during the fifteen years when I had his highest attention, at most, he said “high and low is important to know. Make variations, be free, and know the vocal.”

\textbf{Traffic Jam}

For long, I have noticed the way cars, motorcycles, bicycles, and pedestrians negotiate traffic in Java. When a motorcyclist enters the main street, he (usually it is male) whizzes in without looking first to see if anyone was already on the main street. At a red light, it is not certain that drivers will stop. At a famous intersection in Solo, because it is a T-intersection, all drivers whizz straight through. Maybe it is okay for drivers on the straightway part of the T-intersection, but a few years ago, the city planners opened up the T into a regular four-way intersection. Drivers still whizz right through!

When people cross a busy street, they take what seems like terrible chances, sometimes ending up momentarily stranded in the middle of the road with vehicles whizzing by on both sides. Mothers foolishly (in my eyes) end up with small children by hand. It is likely that while the mother is waiting, other people may have joined in, all of them slowly sneaking ahead.

At busy intersections, a driver is forced to wait for the traffic passing by in front in order to get across it before making a right turn (in Indonesia, the traffic is the “opposite side” of the American way). But, just like pedestrians waiting, they each slowly creep ahead, sneaking their way into the crossing lane, until the drivers on the main road are forced to give way.

If the driver is impatient to wait, instead of sneaking to force the right-left drivers to give way, he might turn on the immediate near side of the traffic, going opposite the traffic, thus creating a threelane street! Eventually, he will find a free space to go across to the correct lane.

Even when traveling in the direction of the main traffic, drivers will pass each other, either on the left or the right of the others. (In America, drivers should only pass on the left of the driver ahead.)
Drivers will weave in and out, getting any small advantage of a few feet ahead. No one likes to stop or wait.

In the over twenty years that I have driven in this madness, I rarely have seen accidents. So it must not be madness. It is that I don’t understand the principles although I have negotiated it well -- just like I have reached a certain level of competence in the gamelan playing, but I do not understand the principles of gamelan.

The principles of traffic are: each person looks out for himself, but is aware of the others; people will cross together, but all working independently; no one wants to be left behind alone; but no one wants to start out and be the only one crossing either.

This is the Principal of Flow. Don’t stop, keep going ahead, don’t get too far ahead, and don’t be left behind. The smaller vehicles move faster and can go here and there freely. The bigger and heavier vehicles must be given the right of way. Importantly, “Don’t Look Back”. In Indonesia law, if a vehicle hits another, it is the one behind who is wrong. The person behind must watch for what is in front no matter what the one in front does, whether weaving here and there, or suddenly stopping.

In gamelan, what musicians do not like is stopping. That is the Principle of Keep Going Forward. In music, if western classical players lose the place, they would stop until re-synchronized, but a Javanese player might float around, noodling, hanging around while playing something -- anything -- until they reach the sêlêh (cadence). This is called ngawur. Ngawur can be a pejorative meaning that the musician doesn’t know what he is doing (which could be true). But ngawur can be a positive attitude that says, “Let me figure this out. It is more important to keep the sound going rather than having a gap.” This is Flow.

A corollary to the Principle of Flow is the Principle of Go Together. This is a strong cultural instinctual behavior: Never Go Alone. How many times have I showed up at an event in Java that friends will ask “who did you come with?” As an American, we go places alone. We are individuals. My frequent answer of “I came alone” still (although they have known me so many years) results in surprise or confusion. No one goes alone, unless there is something wrong, or secretive. When musicians come to Pak Cokro’s regular 35-day wiyosan (Javanese traditional birthday), even though they have been coming there for twenty years, if they have come alone, they will wait outside the gate until someone else shows up.

The Principle of Santai

Closely related to the Principle of Flow is the Principle of Santai. Santai means to do things easily, relaxed. If I struggle when working on some difficulty in my gamelan technique, I am probably doing it wrongly. The Principle of Santai says that it should be done with as little effort, physically and mentally, as possible. One never sees a Javanese musician grimacing in intense concentration the way Western musicians might.

There are many ways to see this concept of santai at work. I was watching the blind palace musician, Pak Karno, hold the gendèr tabuh (mallets). His hands were very loose and the tabuh seem to float lightly. I recall when I and other Americans first learned, that it was a struggle to find a comfortable hand position. Damping and the twisting and rotating of the wrists was a challenge and I often found myself (and I have heard many other foreigner students) banging rather forcefully and loudly on the keys. Blind Karno seemed to not even touch the keys.

Another problem for foreigners is learning the rebab, perhaps the premier instrument in classical pieces. I used to get cramps on my left hand (which does the fingering). Later, I noticed that each Javanese player had their own way of fingering.

The Principle of Own Way

Regardless of short, long, fat, or thin fingers, each player finds their own comfortable way to play. There is no special attention by teachers of the “correct” way to hold the bow or to finger the notes. Players usually do not play with the tips of their fingers as often (mistakenly) happen with Western rebab students who are perhaps accustomed to (and maybe entrapped by) violin or guitar technique, but use a variety of touch including the sides of fingers and the soft flesh of the joints. Some players seem to just slap their fingers haphazardly (but of course it is not). This individual way of fingering and bowing results in a wide variety of “voices”. The same instrument played by different players could sound totally
differently. This is due to the Principle of Santai, and the Principle of Own Way.5

The Principle of Enak

Besides the principles of Santai and Own Way, the Principle of Enak is important. The word enak means good tasting or delicious. This word connects closely with rasa which means “taste” or “feel” or “feeling”. In music (at least in Solo; Jogja may be another matter), new arrangements, improvisations as on the gendèr or gambang (wooden xylophone), or variations in melodic invention as by the rebab player or pesindhèn (female solo singer) are judged not so much by technical rules or considerations but by whether it is enak -- tastes good, delicious, or feels good.

The American composer Richard Teitelbaum, who early in his career studied Javanese gamelan, recalls Pak Prawoto, the resident teacher at Wesleyan at the time, teaching students how to play the gong, a seemingly simple instrument which is sounded only once at the end of each compositional cycle (typically once every 16 or 32 beats for the short pieces). He said “make feel good”.

The Art of the “Simple” Instruments

During my first lessons on gamelan, I viewed the so-called colotomic instruments -- the kenong, kethuk, and the Kempul -- as somewhat elementary instruments to be theoretically understood, tried a few times before moving on to the melodically more interesting sarons (xylophone-like metallophone) and bonang (horizontal kettle gongs in two rows). I was surprised when Pak Cokro said he knew a Javanese musician who was one of the best kenong players.

It was a wonder to understand how such a simple instrument which displayed no discernible melodies -- primarily a percussion instrument (and very minimalist at that!) -- could require expertise. The simple kenong marks major sub-phrases of the gong cycle and indicates and strengthens certain melodic movements (such as plèsèdan). If the kenong sounds the wrong note, other musicians may be misled about where the melody is going. Or worse, because some compositions share or have similar elemental phrases (i.e., 1612 1615 followed by 22... or not), playing the wrong kenong note may lead musicians to play a different composition. If the kenong plays on the wrong beat, it would confuse the musicians. At the very least, it would create disharmony in the musical flow. So, the kenong player must know many pieces and be sure of the formal structure.

Having finally learned to respect the kenong player for his breadth of knowledge, I was still surprised when Ibu Tugmi, one of the top pesindhèn recounted how one day she was entranced by the harmoniousness of the kenong playing. The touch and timing was so good (she said “enak” -- there again is the importance of rasa). She wondered who made such a beautiful sound. It was Pak Wahyo, the well-known rebab and gendèr expert. She said that Pak Wahyo was such a feelingful musician that even when he played the simple kenong, there was something special and extra beautiful about it.

The Principle of Inconsistency

While the Western approach is to look for operational principles and its consistent application, or consistent repeatable evidence of some underlying principles, Javanese gamelan does not seem to have this same consistency (although it may be a matter of degree). For instance, the pesindhèn theory (such as it exists) for the female vocalist is not comprehensive. It does not address that there sometimes arises counterpoints where she might go high while the rebab and gendèr go low. The theory does not tell her what to do when the balungan (basic melody) goes lower than is comfortable to sing – that sometimes, there should be silences even at the strong cadence points of the kenongan. With large pieces like Morosonjo, if the singer sings abon-abon (literally “shredded beef jerky” meaning additional melodic phrases) or isèn-isèn (a filling in) at all the theoretically prescribed places, there is a certain stiffness and boredom of structural repetitiveness.

Also, there are special melodies (pamijèn) for certain pieces which show no clue what she should sing. These melodies are learned by playing with others and by being taught (in situ) by master musicians, or at least by musicians who have had more experience.

In the early 1990s, Supanggah11 and I were discussing the difficulty of defining underlying principles in gamelan. He said that the most onerous thing for Westerners was the lack of consistency. Indeed, everywhere one looks for regularity in applications of musical practices, one will find exceptions. A telling simple example is in Martopangrawit’s book Pengetahuan Karawitan where he lays out the
The Principle of Whole Sound

I wonder if Javanese musicians hear everything. I think they must hear the gamelan as fragmentally as I do, but they must have another way of understanding hearing. Maybe, they can hear bits of the different instruments and put them all together as a whole. It does not matter which bits and parts they hear, but they can feel the whole – their own version of the whole. This seems congruent with what Supanggah told me in the early 90s, that he hears everything. In gamelan, I do not think that one can really discern every note as one might be able to follow a score of a western orchestra.

To return to traffic. One is aware of everything that one needs to not bump into anyone, or not to be in someone else’s way. This awareness is also clear in crowds at the market place or bazaar where people can casually mingle with very little touching of each other. Each person takes special care to be aware. In the same fashion, gamelan players listen to each other, at least enough to avoid bumping into anyone.

Can one really “hear everything”? I don’t think so, but one can perhaps hear what is needed, not hearing every note of the gendèr, rebab, gambang, or bonang, but enough to know what the other players intend -- to the general shape of the melody.

There are many of ways in which hearing the “whole sound” operates. Here a Kempul, there a Kenong, or one or two beats of a stereotypical pattern structure of the drummer; this can tell me where I am in the composition structure if I lose the place while playing. If I hear the male chorus Gérong, which typically starts phrases six beats before the Sélèh, I have plenty of time to remember or figure out to where to play -- to end correctly at the Sélèh.

As a player of Garapan (improvisational) parts, I listen so that I can follow the flow of what I hear. I do not need to hear every single note (that could be a Western belief that more facts mean more accuracy means more correctness), but I must hear enough to know-feel. I react or are reminded, or coaxed to play based on hearing a gendèr fragment, a gambang going high or low, or a drummer starting a Ngapak, Pilesan or other recognized rhythmic stereotypical phrase.

I take whatever comes to the ear (Principle of Santai and Principle of Own Way), and then, react accordingly and do not worry if the other players are hearing something else. The correct reaction, like in traffic, is to go when others go (do not go alone), don’t step on someone (flow), do not make sudden moves (Santai).

A good example is the grace of the slow-moving Javanese classical Bedhaya (palaces’ most sacred genre) dance. It is like the oft-compared-to music, moonlight on water. What gives this quality of flow, of otherworldliness? Dancers learn to see without looking directly. It is like there is an aura by which they can sense their position in the space. This is what I can learn when musicians are in noisy conditions.

The Principle of Whole Sound applies vertically as well as to the melody (which I consider is horizontal). Verticality is the combination of simultaneous notes such as: the dyads (Kempyung and Gembyang) of the gendèr; or the Kempul which plays a note which is not the same as the Balungan; or the Gérong sings a cadence (or mid-cadence) which does not match with the Balungan. This verticality produces differences of thickness and thinness of the timbre of the whole gamelan – which in turn could influence a musician’s choice of what to play.

Verticality is also in how microtonal intervals (Embatt) can influence a musician’s musical play. The scale intervals of Gamelans are not in standard tuning (such as equal temperament, or just intonation). From one Gamelan set to another, the frequencies and tunings can differ. Even the precise frequencies of the notes between instruments within a single Gamelan can differ (albeit only microtonally). Added to
the soup is that the singers and rebab player may choose (to give a particular feeling) to express phrases slightly higher or lower microtonally.\textsuperscript{17}

### Pulling It All Together – Let’s Jam.

In this paper, I presented how the analogy of traffic jams can illuminate understanding, suggest performing negotiation, and help my ability in “jamming” (musical improvisation). By looking at street traffic, I found how individuality, togetherness, freedom to improvise (going against traffic), and unspoken signals parallel the way in which musicians interact during music-making. I have learned to understand the big picture of the Principle of Santai, Principle of Inconsistency, and the importance of rasa (feeling) and enak (tasting good). In my research direction, there are many topics, ideas, and concepts which have congruency and are helpful referential links to the western ethnomusicological literature. But after one learns how to play a gamelan composition -- when the balungan and structural elements are understood; when time and synchronization with other players are achieved; and the cèngkok and the garapan are known -- how can one find one’s own way to Enak? How do we know when it is Enak? When rasa expresses the wilet (variation) of a cèngkok? When we can ngawur and noodle around in a nice way?

It is a question of competency, Pak Cokro said that only really good musicians can play “free”. What does that mean? When he admonished me to go beyond the techniques and melodies I had learned from him and recordings, and he said I must make variations, I demurred that I might play nonsense – that I could certainly make up variations, but how would I know if they were “good”, that they were enak?

Pak Cokro often mentioned that I (and other students) needed more pengalaman (experience). He meant that by playing often and in many situations with many different players, I would begin to sense and understand an acceptable aesthetic and quality of performance. I must find my Own Way, without force (Santai).

In this paper, I have contrasted the western scientific theoretic approach versus something different -- more intuitive, less consistent. The subtext may have implied that on one side was the Martopangrawit versus the Pak Cokro. This is far from correct or from my intention. Martopangrawit is one of the great masters in the same pantheon as Pak Cokro who said often that Martopangrawit could play “free” and that he played in-the-moment with intuition, expression, and creativity well beyond of most musicians. The difference is that Martopangrawit, uniquely, could explicate and give evidences of structures and elements that we in the western mind could grasp. Any misleading is not his.

I hope that this research provides a balance and an illumination to the more “scientific” approaches, so that non-Javanese players can find their own search for that “aura”, rasa, or whatever, of understanding Javanese gamelan, and ultimately, of the playing of it. Just like in jazz, it is a playfulness of play which is available in gamelan.

I hope to get beyond the copycat Fleetwood Mac recording I heard years ago, and can understand whether I have reached a level of musical competence -- that the complexities of things that we do not yet know how to question are learned and become interactive memory enabling playfulness; that all the “principles” are linked: competency to make expression, how Enak, Own Way, Ngawur and Santai all are a fluid confluence in our interactive memory.

Sometime around 2000, Pak Cokro surprised me by saying that karawitan (Javanese gamelan music) was like an ocean. I thought he meant it was vast (which it is), but he followed up by saying that in the ocean, there is everything. Like human life, it contains the happy and the sad; it contains all that is in life. But when seen from a distance or from the bigger view, it is a smooth and even surface.

It is a matter of emphasis between technical and emotive orientation. The greatest contribution of Central Java to the world of music may be the prominent use of intuition. Through intuition, Javanese players have followed their tradition and have found ways to modify, coax, and have fun with their musical structures. Developments are made somewhat slowly. Musicians feel their musical way carefully. Just as in daily life, they would carefully negotiate their way through personal relations as reflected by the intricate levels of speech and manners. Or, street traffic!

In the West, traffic jams are considered bad; the Javanese do not like them either, but are rather relaxed. In spite of jockeying for space, of passing “illegally”, or of being cut off by someone else, there is no or very little ego. One never sees anyone getting angry, giving someone the “finger”. That is the Principle of Santai. Just remember that the lines on the road are not lanes. They are guidelines!
Endnotes

1 I know many Japanese gamelan players but do not know if their endeavors and efforts are the same as mine – they are from a different culture after all!
2 Once, a whole group – with which I had been playing together for years – was invited to come to play Bu Bei Mardusari’s special kelenengan which I was holding for her entertainment when she was seriously ill. They waited outside until I showed up even though I was late.
3 For instance, the gender player (as well as the rebab and other players) will not play something that is too much work, too aggressive or which requires that he/she disturb his/her feeling of harmoniousness. This doesn’t mean that the music is lackadasical or slow. It can be very fast with flashy showing off.
4 This light touch also made damping much easier since there was less moving mass of the keys to damp.
5 Leaving matters for the individual to find their own way of holding the mallets, fingering or bowing the rebab, or even how to sing are paralleled in dance. One of the good dancers in Jogia, Padmo, noted how two pairs of dancers from the Pujokusumo style and the Siswa Among Beksa style were basically doing the same thing when they were dancing in a bedhaya, yet one could clearly see the differences between the two schools. Even two dancers studying with the same teacher would develop their own way of doing movements. In his early studying days, Padmo had learned to imitate his teacher Rama Sas’s movements and Rama Sas scolded him for imitating. He admonished to find his own way.
6 Other variants such as raos and even raras appear in many contexts. The noted dhaling Nartsosabdo’s group was named Condong Raos. The group of mainly Solonese radio (RRI) gamelan players recorded privately under Pak Ciptosuwarso was Raras Riris Irama. A sign on a busy corner in Jogia advertises a massage place (panti pijat) called Mulyo Waras (a play on the word raras -- waras means “health”). A Chinese restaurant in Solo is called Cipto Rasa and a famous chicken and fish restaurant is name Rasa Mirasa.
7 The gender was much too complicated to contemplate, and to me, the rebab still sounding whiny, scratchy, and out of tune.
8 Plèsèdan means a slip or slide. In music, instead of playing the tone of the cadence, the kenong would slip by playing the tone of the one after the cadence.
9 Unlike many singers, Bu Tugini can also play some of the more complicated instruments competently.
10 Also, the automatic application of abon-abon/isen-isen may clash with the longer balungan (basic melody) phrases, which may possibly have irregular lengths of sub-phrases.
11 Supanngah Rahayu is one of the former “younger” generation and now “older” generation of expert gamelan players, and is considered one of the top experts in gamelan. He is former rector of the university of arts STSI Solo, and has written articles on gamelan theory. He is a prolific traditional and contemporary modern gamelan composer.
12 This hearing of the whole, with each player hearing different sides of the whole, but able to feel and play as a whole, reflects on the concept of “inner melody”. This could start to explain why inner melody is difficult to articulate in plain notes.
13 This quite differs from western orchestra where players “know” that everyone is hearing (or rather “seeing”) the same thing because their parts are from the same one score.
14 This three-dimensional view of hearing and playing gamelan may contest the view that gamelan is a layered music object. Perhaps, at least, there has been an over-emphasis on the concept of layers to the detriment of non-Javanese students to learn gamelan.
15 I wonder if the sense of Whole Sound is culturally or genetically innate. It probably is related to the kind of quiet listening that happens in everyday Javanese life. While Americans and westerners generally talk a lot, the Javanese tend to be silent. Much verbal communication is done by subtext (what a Javanese friend calls “silent conversation”). My American upbringing (and probably my personal character) pays more attention to surface text. I probably need to develop my sense of listening, a kind of silent awareness of the subtext. The subtext in gamelan would fill in for the bits which I am not hearing.
16 Although they can be due to lack of re-tuning (since most of the instruments’ tunings are inelastic but can lose tuning over time, — and they cannot be tuned like a trombone or clarinet can be) these differences are usually intentional -- giving each gamelan set its own character.
17 Early in the 1970s, I was told that all singers adjust their embat according to each gamelan’s tuning. This aspect has not been investigated -- rather taken for granted -- but requires further research although it is difficult, if not impossible to scientifically measure. Perhaps now, in this age of software, it would be possible to research this area of what Martopangrawit called embat alam “ (natural tuning).

References


ALINE SCOTT-MAXWELL
( Monash University, Australia)

TERANG BULAN: MULTIPLE IDENTITIES, REGIONAL FLOWS AND EXOTICISED MEDIATIONS OF A POPULAR SONG

Abstract

The popular song, Terang Bulan, has circulated widely in the Malay world since at least the early twentieth century, performed and recorded across diverse popular genres from kroncong to Hawaiian style to early rock and also featured in a popular pre-war Indonesian-language film. It has acquired a multiplicity of meanings deriving from its contested origins and its history, including an alleged French source, its adoption as the Malaysian national anthem, and the cultural politics of recent competing claims to its ownership by Malaysia and Indonesia. The paper explores some of the song’s meanings, including its transformation and transnationalisation as musical exotica and some surprising Australian connections and identifications, manifest in the song’s Australian sheet music publication in 1946 (with a dedication to the ‘members of the 7th, 8th and 9th divisions who were in Malaya’) and an influential 1952 Australian recording on the Columbia label. Terang Bulan exemplifies the way a song can transcend the specifics of musical style, lyrics and socio-cultural positioning to capture a regional imaginary.

For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
ARHAMUDDIN ALI
(ISI Yogyakarta, Indonesia)

THE “KIRAB” WARRIOR AS MUSIC ACCULTURATION IN THE YOGJAKARTA KRATON

For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
BERNARD ELLORIN  
University of Hawai‘i at Manoa (USA)

REGATTA LEPÄ 2013: A CASE STUDY ON THE POLITICIZATION OF SAMA BAJAU MUSIC AND DANCE IN SEMPORNA SETTLEMENT, SABAH, MALAYSIA

The Regatta Lepä cultural festival of the Sama Bajau in Semporna Settlement, Sabah Malaysia is an annual event sponsored by the Sabah Department of Tourism, local assemblymen and the Barisan Nasional or BN party. Tourists witness the festivities of a fluvial parade of decorated lepa lepa (houseboats) and an evening concert featuring local Sama Bajau and popular Malay recording artists. In 2013, however, the BN party used Regatta Lepä as a platform for campaigning for the general elections in Malaysia. As a result, the Regatta Lepä festival organizers and the directors were compelled to highlight both Sama Bajau cultural practices - traditions disseminated and practiced transnationally in both The Sulu Archipelago and Semporna - while endorsing the BN party through their performance pieces.

This paper problematizes politically driven performance pieces by Sama Bajau composers, Johan Sawajaan and Jasnie Yaakub. Johan and Jasnie’s musical contributions to the Regatta Lepä festival of 2013 are indicative of the processes of negotiation and cultural plurality found in their works to satisfy the needs of both the community and the ruling party’s 1Malaysia campaign. In this paper I argue that although the Malaysian government sponsored the festival, the Regatta Lepä 2013 is an example of how political projects assert themselves on cultural festivals of a marginalized ethnic minority, such as the Sama Bajau - an ethnic minority who remains complicit to the political practices of the hegemonic state.

Background

Established in 1994, the Regatta Lepä festival highlights Sama Bajau culture and the tourism industry in Semporna Settlement – a coastal town off of Eastern Sabah known for its scuba diving and snorkeling. The festival is advertised as part of the Sabah Department of Tourism’s major events. For three days, visitors to Regatta Lepä experience commercialized activities valorizing Sama Bajau culture: boat racing, competitions for the most decorated lepa lepa, a Ratu Lepä beauty pageant, and contemporary performances of traditional music and dances for the evening concert. These activities provide a glimpse of Sama Bajau culture from a tourist and performative gaze.

Plate 1. Decorate lepa (houseboats) with sambulayang (colored flags) at the Regatta Lepä Festival
Sama Bajau recording artists under the Kota Kinabalu based Skyline Records perform annually at the Regatta Lepa Festival’s evening concert. As the lyricists and composers under Skyline, Johan writes song lyrics for sangbay (dance tunes for *igal*). Jasnie composes orchestral arrangements of these compositions. Their works are sold under Skyline record’s Sangbai DVD and CD compilations. Since 2007, Johan and Jasnie have been the festival’s program directors responsible for coordinating the entertainment for the evening concert. This entails inviting local folk dance troupes to perform choreographed dances based on traditional *igal* and *kuntao* (martial arts). Sama Bajau music performed at this festival includes *tagunggu* gong ensemble music and songs from the Sangbai series. As a unified performance piece, Johan and Jasnie work with the local folk dance troupe choreographers to create a spectacular dance routine to the Regatta Lepa theme song sung by the Kumpulan koir Anak Anak Semporna Chorus. The recording artists invited to perform also participate in this routine; soon after, they alone perform only one song from their Skyline record produced albums.

In the case of Regatta Lepa 2013, Barisan Nasional, the ruling political party of Malaysia for the past 40 years, seized the opportunity to have a campaign rally prior to the start of the concert. Before the election date, the BN party wanted to restore confidence in the administration after the Lahad Datu intrusion took place in March of that year. These “intruders” known as the Royal Sulu Army - from Sulu, Philippines - also engaged in kidnappings in the outlying villages of the town proper of Semporna. Hence, BN politicians made tenacious efforts to campaign in that area. For example, Datu Shafie Apdal, the Malaysian Minister of Rural and Regional Development and a local Semporna State assemblyman, commissioned Johan and Jasnie to put together a BN party and Sama Bajau repertoire.

From my observations of that festival, three performance pieces juxtaposed BN’s political influence alongside the conservation of Sama Bajau culture: 1) a choreographed dance routine to the BN Party’s campaign song “I Am For You”; 2) a politicized contemporary *aongka* composition praising Datu Shafie; and 3) a live performance of Sarung Sukul – the first single of the Sama Bajau “boy band” group B-pop, which indirectly endorses the BN Party. Overall, the performance repertoire exemplifies how the organizers navigated, through the influence of the BN party, their dual identities as Sama Bajau and bumu-putra Malay; the former being their indigenous ethnic heritage known primarily as a nomadic and trans-migrant between two modern Nation states of Malaysia and the Philippines; the latter - their citizenship status as Malays born in Malaysia who practice Islam.

**“I Am For You” Performance at Regatta Lepa**

Political parties during the general election in Malaysia campaign throughout different states in the country. A state controlled by politicians from that party posts their banners in the state capital’s town center and in the *kampung* (rural villages). For Semporna Settlement, Barisan Nasional’s political presence prevailed throughout the entire town; Regatta Lepa subsequently became a venue for BN to hold an election rally. In return, Datu Shafie subsidized part of the expenses for the festival as did his wife, Datin Seri Shuryani binti Shuai - a staunch supporter of Sama Bajau cultural arts. According to Johan and Jasnie, Datu Shafie required the organizers to teach the performers the BN political song entitled “I Am For You.”

![Plate 2. Sama Bajau folk dance performers sing I Am For You](image)
The political song, “I Am For You”, encourages the youth to subscribe to their hegemonic ideology of 1Malaysia – all ethnic minorities residing in Malaysia, regardless of their ethnic and regional identity, are first and foremost Malay citizens. During rehearsals, the Sama Bajau performers learned verbatim the song’s lyrics in Bahasa Malaysia with the song title sung as the chorus line. Members of all three major Sama Bajau folkloric dance groups - Warisan Bajau, Yayang Masuri and PETRAS - performed a unified choreographed dance routine. In the lyrics, the youth express their appreciation for the government’s support; in return, they acknowledge their role as servants to the nation.

Interviewing performers and the directors revealed that the majority of the youth who participated in this evening concert were not yet of age to vote and were indifferent towards Barisan Nasional. Therefore, BN politicians easily convinced the local dance troupe to perform “I Am For You” at Regatta Lepa.

During the actual performance, the dancers sang the campaign song in Sama Bajau attire. This juxtaposition reflects how the festival maintains this binary of the Sama Bajau community adapting to the political agenda of the Malay hegemony. With the performance of “I Am For You” for Regatta Lepa, Johan and Jasnie acknowledges Datu Shafie through a contemporary arrangement of an aongka composition.

“Sumping Sumping” – the Aongka turned Political Popular Song

The aongka music genre of the Sama Bajau is a symbiotic performance of a vocalist accompanied by a musician playing the gabbang - a bamboo or pinewood xylophone. “Sumping Sumping”, literally translated as “flowers,” is a traditional aongka with metaphorical lyrics describing the beauty of woman as a dainty flower. Aongka singers, primarily male, create their own flirtatious lyrics revolving around the topic of a man’s adoration for his significant other or “sumping.” For the Regatta Lepa BN-themed album Taakup, the lyrics of “Sumping Sumping” praise both Datu Shafie and Datin Seri Shuryani for their efforts to improve the livelihood of the people of Semporna and the rest of Sabah.

In the first quatrain of the contemporary version of “Sumping Sumping”, the Sama Bajau singer Habibul sings the traditional lyrical content about a man’s admiration for “his flower.” For the remainder of the song, however, he sings Johan’s version valorizing the Semporna couple as servants to the people when the lyrics in Sama Bajau state “SuvaentomtaDatukShafie makanynthiaiyaneyaMagpanangbangama daerah, which in English translates into, “We must remember Datu Shafie and his wife because they have been helpful to the people of our place (Semporna).” Sonic features in the music include a synthesized gabbang gabbang melody and a slow contemporary ballad drum pattern. In this piece, the lyrics are pre-composed with an improvisatory musical accompaniment – a compositional style typically found in Johan and Jasnie’s works. The re-invention of “Sumping Sumping” reflects how a politician’s position of power coerces a musician to politicize their compositions.

In the final example, Johan and Jasnie compose Sama Bajau contemporary music for the festival in the style of Boy Band music.

Sarung Sukul – B-pop’s Political Tribute Song

Sama Bajau popular music has evolved using Western popular musical idioms. Johan and Jasnie, as a marketing strategy to generate youth interest in their music, conceptualized B-Pop. All three members of the group were former singers of the Kumpulan Koir Anak Anak Di Semporna (the Children’s Choir of Semporna). Johan and Jasnie encouraged these former choir singers to form a Sama Bajau boy band in order to promote themselves outside of the realm of singing traditionally-inspired Sama Bajau or Malay popular music.

Sung in the Sinama language, “Sarung Sukul” meaning “Thankful,” indirectly acknowledges the Barisan nasional politicians for supporting their community. At the Regatta lepa concert performance, the members of B-pop wore long sleeved collared shirts and sunglasses in an attempt to fit the stereotypical “boy band” mold; a complete departure from the usual Sama Bajau recording artist wearing traditional attire on their first album covers or their premiere concert performance. Through “Sarung Sukul”, B-Pop expresses their gratitude for the guidance they have received from their mentors in the music industry. Towards the end of the song, B-pop pays tribute to the BN party in the following lyrics: Pagsukulan ta Ai Lagi he’ ta tinawaran, Lahat ta maerom kahapan; in English, this song lyric translate
into “To whom we are thankful for, and what we have to say, our place is in good governance;” the political tone of these lyrics alludes to the BN Party leaders present at the Regatta Lepa festival.

Analysis of Performance Pieces

In each political performance piece at Regatta Lepa, the Barisan Nasional’s urgency for re-election was evident that year in 2013. Influencing the under-age Sama Bajau performers to participate in “I Am For You” choreographed routine indicates the BN Party’s use of popular culture to encourage families living in the kampung of Semporna to have confidence in the party. Re-composing and re-contextualizing an aongka composition for political purposes, such as “Sumping Sumping”, is the Sama Bajau composing lyrics within a given context. B-pop acknowledging the promoters in “Sarung Sukul” is the Sama Bajau response of incorporating contemporary music for the younger Sama Bajau generation while respecting their “mentor’s” sponsorship.

The Barisan Nasional’s tactic for using Sama Bajau composers to write music endorsing their party served as a reminder that the politicians continue to promote and support local business in Semporna. On the contrary, Johan candidly expressed his personal sentiment towards BN Politicians when he observed that the politicians only show support during Regatta Lepa in order to solicit the public vote for re-election; Johan implied that most Sama Bajau live in poverty. According to my Sama Bajau informants from Semporna, some politicians secure votes from the community by providing IC citizenship cards and monetary assistance to those who are trans-migratory and have no formal citizenship documents.

Interviews from regular and previous attendees of Regatta Lepa attest to how this year’s festival resuming its function as a cultural event for tourists. For example, Judeth Jean Baptist, the Sabah Museum Archive Director, recounted how this year’s festival focused exclusively on Sama Bajau culture with no reference to promoting Barisan Nasional. University of Malaya – Kuala Lumpur dance ethnologist Desiree Seguritan-Quintero, a researcher and attendee of both Regatta Lepa 2013 and 2014, implied that the festival was “quieter,” than last year’s in 2013; hence no political endorsements for BN were made during the event. Overall, both attendees observed how Regatta Lepa 2014 resumed the festival’s main purpose as a cultural festival for tourist rather than Barisan Nasional’s political campaign rally.

Conclusion

In each example, Regatta Lepa remains a Sama Bajau festival that has been appropriated by the Malaysian nation state. Regatta Lepa 2013 is the year Barisan Nasional used the festival to continue their political presence in Semporna; this strategy led to their subsequent re-election back into office of that year. Politicizing Regatta Lepa through performance pieces such as “I Am For You”, “Sumping Sumping” and “Sarung Sukul” is part of the larger phenomenon in Asia for political parties commissioning recording artists and musicians to compose music endorsing their propaganda. Political songs such as “Sunshine is Warmest, Chairman Mao is Kindest” written during Mao Zedong’s era in China depict Chairman Mao as a caring leader regardless of the atrocities that occurred during the Cultural Revolution. The Marcos’ commissioned Manila-based composer to compose the choral arrangement for “Ang Bagong Lipunan” endorsing their new Society in the Philippines despite the human rights violations during the Martial Law period.

Although a highly political event, Regatta Lepa 2013 displayed the musical versatility of Sama Bajau musicians, such as Johan and Jasnie, who were both bribed to compose music under those circumstances. In conclusion, Regatta Lepa’s 2013 Barisan Nasional campaign is an event that reflects how politicians in post-colonial nation states in Southeast Asia exploit festivals, the arts, and musicians in order to produce works encouraging the masses to support the ruling parties. For one year, Barisan Nasional made their presence known at Regatta Lepa by subsidizing the activities in exchange for a political rally. Margaret Sarkissian notes that government troupes perform varied and eclectic “traditional” material presented as representative of all the nation’s people to create an image of multi-ethnic tolerance and national harmony (Sarkissian, 1998). Regatta Lepa festival 2013 reflects the reciprocal relationship of Barisan Nasional and the festival organizer’s to politicize and promote Sama Bajau cultural arts while the ethnic minority valorized at the festival continues to grapple with the political ideology of 1Malaysia.
Endnotes

1 Intan Sulga K.K. Tiring of Warisan Bajau, personal communication, May 2013
2 Judeth John Baptist, personal communication, May 2014
3 Desiree A. Quintero, personal communication, May 2014

Reference

This paper explores the connections between femininity and the gamelan, encapsulated within the staging of *Alih PungGONG*, a gamelan production conceptualized by the contemporary Malaysian gamelan ensemble Rhythm in Bronze. Staged in 2007, *Alih PungGONG* marked Rhythm in Bronze’s continuing exploration of Gamelan Theatre, a hybrid term invented by the ensemble in 2005 that saw the ensemble move beyond boundaries of its signature concertized-style gamelan performances. *Alih PungGONG* experimented with the idea of interspersing contemporary Malaysian gamelan repertoire with *extra turns*, short theatrical excerpts inspired by the multicultural *Bangsawan* theatre of the early 20th century. Interwoven into the staging of *Alih PungGONG* was also the theme of femininity, a concept that resonated strongly within Rhythm in Bronze’s all-female, multicultural construct. This paper explores the conceptualization, design and performance of *Alih PungGONG*, positing a hybridization that continues to be rooted in the past but contemporary to the endeavors of the Malaysia gamelan.

**Malaysian Gamelan Roots; 1960s Revival**

The roots of gamelan performance in Malaysia can be traced back to the royal Malay courts of Pahang and Terengganu, Malay states that were once ruled by the Riau-Lingga Empire of Java in the 19th century. From this Javanese connection, Pahang and Terengganu gained exposure to Javanese court dance and music, resulting in the development of the *Joget* gamelan, which thrived and developed in Pahang from 1811 to 1914, and later in Terengganu from 1914 to 1942 (D’Cruz, 1979; D’ Cruz, 2011). The *Joget* gamelan was a female dance form accompanied by gamelan music, and was said to have been heavily influenced by Central Javanese court dances such as the *Serimpi* and the *Bedoyo* due to similarities in movement, costume and form. It was performed at royal celebrations such as inaugurations, birthdays and weddings; its audience comprised members of the royal household, invited guests and dignitaries.

In 1941, following the onset of the Japanese Occupation in Malaya, the *Joget* gamelan experienced a decline. For the next 20 years, nothing was heard of the *Joget* gamelan until the 1960s when a chance meeting between the Terengganu princess Tengku Mariam and cultural enthusiast Mubin Sheppard resulted in the revival of the *Joget* gamelan. Following this, *Joget* gamelan showcases were organized, marking the very first time the *Joget* gamelan was now able to be seen within the public sphere. Alongside this new development, the *Joget* gamelan also began to be reshaped as a Malaysian national culture, further shifting the *Joget* gamelan away from its royal context. Subsequently, *Joget* gamelan performances were now increasingly a part of many government-organized cultural dance events that saw the *Joget* gamelan being performed alongside other Malay, Chinese, and Indian dances—significant ethnic markers in the construction of Malaysia’s national culture.

**The Formation of Rhythm in Bronze**

Rhythm in Bronze, a contemporary Malaysian gamelan ensemble based in the urban center of Kuala Lumpur, was formed in 1997 by ethnomusicologist and composer Sunetra Fernando. The roots of Rhythm in Bronze lie with the first gamelan group Fernando formed in 1993. Known as the Gamelan Club, the ensemble began as a social group based in the urban center of Kuala Lumpur, comprising friends and enthusiasts who were interested in learning how to play the gamelan. Members of the group met for weekly rehearsals and were exposed to an array of gamelan repertoires including traditional gamelan forms of Malay, Javanese, Sundanese, and Balinese styles, which Fernando had been exposed to during her years as a music student at the University of York in the UK, and at Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia (STSI) in Solo, where she had pursued a year of extensive gamelan study.

Besides regular rehearsals, Fernando and the Gamelan Club shared a collaborative relationship with the Five Arts Centre, a Malaysian theater company formed in 1984 by choreographer Marion D’Cruz and theatre directors Chin San Sooi and Krishen Jit. The Gamelan Club provided live gamelan performances at the Five Arts Centre, and the ensemble produced two original dance pieces inspired by the gamelan repertoire. These performances were influential in shaping the ensemble’s identity as a Malaysian gamelan group.

**Gamelan Theatre**

Rhythm in Bronze’s Gamelan Theatre concept was developed in 2005 as a hybrid form of performing arts that combines elements of traditional gamelan with contemporary theatrical techniques. The concept was inspired by the ensemble’s desire to explore new ways of performing and interpreting traditional gamelan repertoire. The Gamelan Theatre concept includes the use of traditional gamelan instruments, vocal performances, and theatrical elements such as lighting, set design, and choreography. The ensemble’s approach to Gamelan Theatre has been praised for its innovative and dynamic performances that challenge traditional notions of gamelan performance.

**Alih PungGONG**

*Alih PungGONG* is a 2007 production by Rhythm in Bronze that marked a significant milestone in the ensemble’s Gamelan Theatre concept. The production was a hybrid of traditional gamelan repertoire and contemporary theatrical elements, creating a unique and innovative performance that resonated with the audience. The production was divided into two acts, with the first act featuring traditional gamelan repertoire and the second act incorporating theatrical elements such as lighting and set design. The production was well-received and received positive reviews for its innovative approach to gamelan performance.

**Conclusion**

Rhythm in Bronze’s Gamelan Theatre concept has been influential in shaping the ensemble’s identity as a contemporary Malaysian gamelan group. The ensemble’s approach to Gamelan Theatre challenges traditional notions of gamelan performance and explores new ways of interpreting traditional gamelan repertoire. The ensemble’s production of *Alih PungGONG* is a testament to the ensemble’s commitment to innovation and experimentation in the field of gamelan performance.
accompaniment for a number of Five Arts’ theater productions, garnering attention for its eclectic gamelan repertoire, which included Fernando’s early and emerging gamelan compositions.

In 1997, Fernando formed Rhythm in Bronze, a gamelan group geared towards more intensive performances and contemporary compositions. Fernando invited trained musicians to join her newly-formed group, and what emerged was an interesting construct: members of Rhythm in Bronze comprised a multicultural-mutiethnic make up, and all were female. This construct was not intentional, but given how gamelan leadership and membership within traditional gamelan circles were largely male dominated, the significance of Rhythm in Bronze’s female construct was particularly pertinent.

Between the years of 1999-2004, Rhythm in Bronze forged ahead with numerous concertized-style gamelan performances. In 2001, their CD entitled *Rhythm in Bronze: New Music for the Malaysian Gamelan* showcased the group’s original compositions as well as rearrangements of a number of traditional gamelan pieces. By this time, the group had begun to actively forge creative collaborations with other gamelan composers that were based within Malaysia, Java, Bali, the UK, and New Zealand, exploring and creating new Malaysian gamelan music. Consequently, the repertoire of Rhythm in Bronze grew to become highly syncretic and eclectic over this period of time, reflecting the ensemble’s experience in collaborative work and composition.

**The Construction of Gamelan Theatre; *Monkey Business***

In 2004, Rhythm in Bronze’s concertized-style performances went through a radical transformation when the group began to explore the possibility of combining theatre with gamelan music for an upcoming production. Initially referred to as the Gamelan Music Theatre Project, this shift sought “to expand the performative capacities of Rhythm in Bronze musicians . . . into main initiators and creators of performance” (Fernando, 2004). To facilitate the project, the group held auditions to recruit other musicians, actors and dancers to join the project, consequently shifting the dynamics of the ensemble’s all-female construct. Directing this project was theatre director and founder of the Five Arts Centre, Krishen Jit.

As director of the project, Krishen’s theatrical strategy of the Gamelan Music Theatre Project was to create new gamelan compositions that would be drawn from personal stories written by every ensemble member “to evoke music from an autobiographical honesty” (Fernando & Ooi, 2005). To begin the writing process, Krishen started the ensemble off with the following question: “Did you ever think of quitting the gamelan? Give 10 reasons why you continue with the gamelan.” Over a series of workshops, these stories fuelled new gamelan compositions and were referred to as “musical nuggets.” Compositions were developed via “strategic improvisations and discussions . . . in order to find the dramatic essence of each [musical nugget] and to see how they could be transported step by step into the realm of theatre” (Fernando & Ooi, 2005).

In March 2005, the culmination of gamelan compositions, workshops, and rehearsals were staged in a Rhythm in Bronze production called *Monkey Business*. The production—now referred to as Gamelan Theatre—showcased Rhythm in Bronze as an ensemble of multi-dimensional performers who composed, played gamelan, sang, and acted. *Monkey Business* showcased a total of eight original gamelan compositions that were performed at random order. Devoid of the rigidity of a typical concert program, this unconventional showcasing of gamelan composition and performance required performers and audiences alike to adapt to the flexible and experimental nature of Gamelan Theatre and *Monkey Business*.

**Alih PungGONG; Exploring Femininity***

In 2006, Rhythm in Bronze began planning their second Gamelan Theatre production. Drawing from their collective experiences of *Monkey Business*, the ensemble began to explore traditional Malaysian performance forms that embraced music and theatre as part of their performances. One of these was the Bangsawan theatre of the early 20th century. Described as a form of Malay opera, the Bangsawan theatre was a popular form of entertainment in Malaysia’s urban commercial centers, comprising a multicultural cast of performers and audiences alike. A typical, eclectic Bangsawan performance would include a play ranging from “a Hindustani or Arabic fairy-tale, a Shakespearean tragedy, a Chinese romance, and an English or Dutch play” (Tan, 1993, p. 35). During changes in stage scenes, *extra turns*—a series of interludes unrelated to the main performance—were performed to keep
the audience entertained. These extra turns often comprised dance numbers, songs, pantomimes, and comedic acts that heightened the appeal and popularity of the Bangsawan.

Drawing from the structure of the Bangsawan theatre, Rhythm in Bronze conceived Alih PungGONG, its second Gamelan Theatre production. The term Alih PungGONG derived from the Malay alih punggung, literally translating to “shift one’s bottom” or to “move one’s behind”—providing a hint of what was to transpire in the production. On the other hand, the term PungGONG was deliberately misspelled (from the original punggung), consequently constructing it as an onomatopoeic word to describe the sounds made by the gongs of the gamelan: the higher pitched pung and the lower pitched gong. When combined, the term Alih PungGONG played on the shifting of sounds (PungGONG), and bodies (punggung)—themes which were explored through contemporary gamelan compositions and the extra turns of the production.

Alih PungGONG was directed by two male theatre directors, Nam Ron and Loh Kok Man, both well-known personalities within the Malay and Chinese theatre spaces of Kuala Lumpur. Alongside them, visual artist Bayu Utomo Radjikin, one of Malaysia’s leading visual artists, was both set and costume designer, while Mac Chan designed the overall lighting of Alih PungGONG. The Five Arts Centre, the theatre company linked to Rhythm in Bronze’s formation, was producer of the production, reflecting the hybridity and collaborative convergence of Rhythm in Bronze’s brand of Gamelan Theatre.

At the core of Alih PungGONG was its performance construct, comprising contemporary gamelan compositions and rearrangements that were interspersed with extra turns, a series of short theatrical skits. Unlike the Bangsawan theatre however, the extra turns of Alih PungGONG were not entirely distinct from its musical material. Rather, the extra turns were unified by the theme of femininity, which—in effect—significantly reflected Rhythm in Bronze’s dominant female membership. The extra turns of Alih PungGONG comprised an array of short comedic skits—including a mock beauty pageant—and a monologue, all of which explored, questioned, and challenged stereotypical feminine behavior.

Tied in to the construction of extra turns and gamelan compositions were visual imageries of femininity present in the circular set of Alih PungGONG, which comprised parasols strung up at varying lengths above the gamelan set. The costumes used in Alih PungGONG also expressed the theme of femininity, comprising feminine kebaya tops of various colors that were matched with a kain pelikat, a sarong typically worn by males. The gendered binary of the costumes functioned on two contrasting levels: as a visual extension of Alih PungGONG’s extra turns, as well as a reflection of Rhythm in Bronze’s female membership and leadership in contemporary gamelan.

Observations

I would argue that the exploration of femininity pertinent to the performance of Alih PungGONG takes place on a multiple levels. Firstly, femininity is expressed visually, through Alih PungGONG’s circular stage set comprising parasols and cascading flowers. Hair, makeup, and costumes also contribute to the overall theme, the latter comprising form fitting kebaya tops that accentuate the female body, which are paired with the male-worn kain pelikat, reiterating femininity as well as introducing masculinity—a contestation that is interwoven throughout the performance.

Contrasted against this backdrop however, is the underlying presence of masculinity, embodied in the form of Alih PungGONG’s all-male main creative team comprising theater directors Nam Ron and Loh Kok Man, stage and set designer Bayu Utomo Radjikin, and lighting designer Mac Chan. While the creative team is not seen during the performance of Alih PungGONG, their influence is pertinent during the showcasing of stereotypical female behaviors such as the giggling and chattering witnessed during the comical extra turns. In these instances, one can be tempted to conclude that Alih PungGONG is a performance constructed entirely by the male gaze, and, reiterated by visual signs of femininity, could even prompt one to dismiss the entire production as a misogynistic, eroticized view of women who perform gamelan.

The staging of Alih PungGONG however, is more complex. I would argue that notions of femininity—while well represented visually—is sophisticatedly articulated in the less prominent aspects of Alih PungGONG, namely in its contemporary gamelan compositions. Comprising an eclectic mix of Malay, Javanese, Balinese and contemporary composition styles, the repertoire reflects the urban space in which contemporary Malaysian gamelan compositions have been able to develop, in effect contesting
boundaries of the traditional Malay gamelan’s royal roots and its reshaping as part of Malaysia’s national culture.

More pertinently, I would posit that it is the construct of Rhythm in Bronze itself, a multicultural-mutiethnic female contemporary gamelan ensemble that both expresses and contests notions of femininity in contemporary gamelan performance. Where most gamelan ensembles have almost always been led by males, Rhythm in Bronze stands apart because its direction, which has consistently been shaped by an array of female leaders, from its founder Sunetra Fernando, to the ensemble’s artistic and music directors who have always been women. This leadership simultaneously resonates with Rhythm in Bronze’s invention of Gamelan Theatre, an experimental space that has paved the way for the staging of contemporary gamelan productions such as Alih PungGONG, which demonstrates interesting possibilities for the development of contemporary Malaysian gamelan that can be multicultural and multidisciplinary—one that can likewise contest boundaries of gender and gamelan leadership.

Concluding Notes

The theme of femininity, explored in the staging of Alih PungGONG by contemporary gamelan ensemble of Rhythm in Bronze, is multi-faceted. While physical elements of the staging showcased clear, visual signifiers of femininity, a deeper study of Alih PungGONG reveal contestations that have consequently reshaped notions of femininity and gamelan performance. Gamelan Theatre, an experimental hybrid that continues to resonate within urban Kuala Lumpur, is a space that has paved the way for Rhythm in Bronze, allowing the ensemble to express these gendered contestations, showcasing artistic endeavors for contemporary Malaysian gamelan that can both be rooted in its past, but contemporary to its present.

References


CLARE CHAN SUET CHING  
(Sultan Idris Education University, Malaysia)

HANDS PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE MALAYSIA: INTERCULTURALISM IN THE  
CONSTRUCTION OF CHINESE IDENTITY IN PERFORMANCE

Background

The identity of the Chinese in Malaysia, embodied in their performing arts is continuously  
being constructed and reconstructed in response to social political issues and phenomenon. Unlike the  
Chinese in other Southeast Asian countries, the Chinese in Malaysia emphasize their identity as  
Malaysian Chinese or Chinese from Malaysia. This phenomenon has its history in the British colonial  
“divide and rule” policy in Malaya throughout the late 19th and early 20th century. The polarization  
persists today (2014) as a response to sentiments felt with the perpetuation of the affirmative action  
that purports special privileges to the “bumiputera”, literally translated as “sons of the soil” group in Malaysia. These events have influenced the nature of the Chinese performing arts in Malaysia.

The early years of Malaysian independence from British colonial rule in 1957 saw an emphasis on affirming Chinese identity through the performing arts heritage of China. Today (2014), 57 years after independence, the Chinese in Malaysia have invented new cultural genres such as the Lion Dance on Poles and the 24 Jie Ling Gu (24 Festive Drums) to represent their identity as Malaysians with Chinese descent. These genres were still heavily inspired by the cultural heritage of its predecessor, China.

In 1997, Hands Percussion Malaysia or HANDS, a self-funded Chinese percussion group was founded by artistic director, Mr. Bernard Goh Seang Heong. Bernard established HANDS with a vision in his mind. He wanted HANDS to be freed from the constraints of having to represent an inherited Chinese identity from China and to focus on developing the artistry of the Chinese based on their experiences, emotions and issues encountered in Malaysia. HANDS explore this identity by integrating selected local, regional, and global cultural aesthetics into their creative sound, movement and art works through percussive drumming. From the original Chinese shigu (lion drums), HANDS have integrated musical instruments such as the gamelan, gendang, sitar, rebab, digeridoo, taiko, shimedaiko, etc. into their pieces. Today, HANDS is a performing arts group that comprise Chinese male and female artists ranging from the age of eighteen to their early forties. Many of the HANDS drummers grew up learning the art of drumming through participation as drummers in the 24 Festive Drum ensemble, a co-curriculum activity in Chinese schools. Since 1997, HANDS have had over ten concerts and have been invited to perform at many drum festivals around the world. Through HANDS, young Chinese artists experiment by connecting their music and drumming to a sense of place and presence in Malaysia.

Statement of Problem

The ethnomusicology discourse has used many terms to discuss the phenomenon of musical change due to culture contact (Kartomi 1995; Nettl 2005). Terms such as acculturation, syncretism, hybridity and recently, interculturalism, have been utilized to illustrate musical transformations. Interculturalism has emerged as a continuum from the politically charged term – “multiculturalism”. Today, multiculturalism is criticized for being discriminatory and creating racial divides, and no longer commands political and popular support (Cantle, 2012, pp. 141-143). According to Cantle, “host communities who felt threatened by ‘difference’ and are offended by what they saw as unacceptable social and cultural minority norms” led to the compartmentalization of communities and issues of “accommodation” rather than a developmental process for identity across communities (ibid., p. 141).

Developing alongside multiculturalism today is the notion of “interculturalism”. Interculturalism promotes cross-cultural dialogues and interaction across cultures. It challenges the passive acceptance of multicultural communities coexisting effectively (Penas, 2006, p.15). Meer and Modood (2011) states that “interculturalism” is “something greater than co-existence, allegedly geared toward interaction and dialogue than multiculturalism.” It is defined as:

1. Less ‘groupist’ or more yielding of synthesis than multiculturalism
2. More committed to a stronger sense of the whole, in terms of societal cohesion and national citizenship
3. Liberal and relativistic, likely lead to criticism of illiberal cultural practices (as part of the process of intercultural dialogue).

Objective

In this article, I posit that interculturalism in the performing arts is a conscious interactive dialogue between two or more cultures in the construction of new performance pieces. HANDS celebrate interculturalism, embracing philosophical and musical dialogue among artists from various backgrounds in the construction of new pieces. With the mobility of travels, easy access to the Internet, and global media, listening and learning about other cultures facilitate the choices for collaboration and appreciation of diverse cultural aesthetics. I discuss the identities of the Malaysian Chinese through an examination of the themes, aims and developmental processes of intercultural dialogue among Malay, Chinese and Taiwanese performing artists in their production. I also explore the inspiration and motivation for “interculturalism” in HANDS’ compositions.

Discussion

In the piece titled “Flesh and Bone” featured in HANDS’ 2012 & 2014 concert titled “The Next”, HANDS makes a metaphorical statement about these two elements, which cannot be detached, subtly addressing the bonding between man and their territorial land. It is also a statement about the Malaysian Chinese belonging to Malaysia, the land where they were born, bred and continue to live in. Malaysian Chinese identity is an integration of place (land and environment) and presence (cultural contact).

Inspired by Randai, a theatrical form by the Minangkabau culture of Negeri Sembilan in Malaysia, HANDS reinvent Randai dance movements and percussive rhythm patterns merging them with music accompanied by the Chinese shi gu (lion drum), dizi, rebab, gamelan, shigu and others. When asked why Hands Percussion incorporated Randai inspired movements into “Flesh and Bone,” Bernard Goh replied:

…when I was young, I saw the Malay performing groups in my hometown practicing Randai, I thought it was very cool … I was inspired to use Randai when I looked at the youngsters around me with their fashionable pants … it just struck my mind … why don’t we do something with this … Randai is a good choice especially since the slapping of the pants create rhythmic sounds …” (Bernard Goh, personal communication, 1 June 2014)

Randai attracted HANDS because it combined dynamic silat (Malay martial arts) movements with percussive sounds created by slapping the performer’s pants. Intrigued with the use of extensions of the performer’s costume for percussive effect, HANDS composed their own version of Randai and designed their own pants for their concert piece.

Dissessentalizing it from Randai’s traditional circle formation, HANDS choreographed the piece using vertical, diagonal horizontal line movements (See Figure 1). They replaced the melodic line sung by a solo singer in Randai performances with a Chinese dizi. Bernard Goh said,

Actually Randai, they have a singer, and they tell a story, but we decided to change it but we still have a taste of it … I could have used a Randai singer, but I wanted a sound that provided a Southeast Asian kind of feel … if I wanted to do something “Nusantara-like”, I must have an instrument that can represent this whole area. In Malaysia, we have the nose flute, Sarawakian or Chinese di zi, and Malay suling … I felt that a bamboo flute would be a good choice.” (Bernard Goh, personal communication, 1 June 2014)

During the staging of “Flesh and Bone,” Bernard said that before choreographing their piece, they had a few lessons on Randai from Pak Azmi, a Randai master. They also designed their own “Randai” pants for the concert. There were slow choreographed movements accompanied by the rebab and playful jogeit-like movements by other instruments.
Saman Dance

In the same Flesh and Bone piece, HANDS created their version of the Acehnese Saman dance, combining it with playful drumming on the tao gu, a Chinese frame drum (See Figure 2). They toss, roll and twirl the tao gu and dance around in choreographed lines and circles. They incorporate joget-like musical patterns and choreography into the piece. Hands Percussion had seen the Saman dance through their interaction with various cultural groups during their travels to perform at festivals in other nations. They composed part of “Flesh and Bone” utilizing ideas inspired from the Saman dance sourced from the Internet.
Taiwanese aboriginal singing: Sangpuy Katatepna Mavaliyw

In the restaging of “The Next” concert in 2014, HANDS had more serious training on Randai from Pak Azmi. They also custom-made the traditional Randai pants designed and imported from Indonesia. These lessons were part of Bernard’s aim to train and educate his musicians on other forms of music. In the restaging of “Flesh and Bone”, HANDS invited Sangpuy Katatepna Mavaliyw, a popular Taiwan aboriginal recording artist to integrate Taiwanese aboriginal songs and music instruments into this piece. Sangpuy is a popular indigenous singer who asserts the identity and origins of his people by composing songs about his homeland, Taiwan. When asked whether Hands Percussion specifically chose Sangpuy, Bernard said,

If we choose a local singer, he will sing something that matches Randai performances, but what I had in mind was someone from another side of the world, one who is fighting for the rights of his people. He sings about his land but the singing is also related to our land … the indigenous Taiwan communities are also claiming their rights and similarly, like us, use the arts to create awareness … We are both doing the same thing although we are not together in the same country … this is why a collaboration with Sangpuy’s makes more sense.” (Bernard Goh, personal communication, 1 June 2014)

In this version, Sangpuy replaced the solo dizi singer in creating the atmosphere prior to the Randai section. He performed on a Taiwanese indigenous double-piped nose flute known as ma-omui. The tunes of the indigenous communities in Puyuma Tribe’s Katipul Village (Chihben) in southeastern Taitung County lingered.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Sangpuy, Pak Azmi and HANDS share a bonding as professional artists who, through interactive dialogues, collaborations and training sessions mutually enrich each others’ performative skills and diversity in creative composition. HANDS’ familiarity and respect for artists devoid of their ethnic background shows that race and ethnicity is less relevant to the composition of contemporary pieces. Bernard’s emphasis that he was looking for specific sounds and intrigued with percussive genres, compared to the purposeful aim of creating a piece to showcase national unity, shows that artistry, knowledge and education is important in the construction of new pieces. This is supported by Mohd Anis’ (2008) statement that this generation of Malaysians are:

more interested in the present state of intercultural experiences rather than indulging in recreating the past to idealise separate cultural identities, which is often confronted with chasms of socio-religious divide. (Mohd Anis, 2008 p. 97).

In this paper, I have shown that HANDS’ music and choreography are much guided by concepts and philosophy that embody their sentiments and experiences. In the current phase, they are interested in mutual friendship and enrichment of their performances through dialogues with local and international professionals. HANDS performances embody friendship and artistic bonds that is geoculturally deterritorialized by political boundaries. As Mohd Anis (2008) states:

Awareness towards diversity as discourses for new works in contemporary performances has continued to provide the avenue for many young artists to showcase their newest works, which are often inspired by the works of others from diverse cultural backgrounds contesting long held assumptions of indigenous hegemony and subaltern acquiescence to the assumed hegemony (p. 96).

HANDS mark the future of performances that is not rooted in ritualistic practices, but one that will continue to evolve based on their philosophy of a continuous experimentation and search for beauty and aesthetics by exploring local, regional and global sounds and collaborations. In summary:
The Chinese in Malaysia are constantly creating and recreating their culture and identity as they adapt to the environment. The variety in the performing arts expresses the multiplicity in Chinese identities (Tan, 2000).

Endnotes


References


EXISTENCE OF INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE THROUGH THE KIAI KANJENG MUSIC GROUP

For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
EXISTENCE OF INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE THROUGH THE KIAI KANJENG MUSIC GROUP

For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
EXISTENCE OF INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE THROUGH THE KIAI KANJENG MUSIC GROUP

For article see published Proceedings
FIRMANSAH MUSTARI
(ISI Yogyakarta, Indonesia)

KITOKA AS A CULTURAL STRATEGY OF SOUTH SULAWESI PEOPLE

For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
PERFORMING INTERCULTURAL EXPERIENCE: NEGOTIATING IGAL (DANCE) BY THE BAJAU COMMUNITY IN SEMPORKA, SABAH

Introduction

Igal means dance in Bajau Laut, while the act of dancing the igal is known as magigal. The greatest emphasis of igal as a structured movement system of the Bajau Laut is on the flexing of the fingers and palms, hand gestures, arm movements, body posture and the subleties of shoulder lifts, side steps and foot shuffles, performed from slow to fast tempo of the accompanying tagunggu’ ensemble. The tagunggu’ ensemble consists of a set of six to eight small kettle gongs or pot gongs placed on a wooden rack (kulintangan), one or more large hanging gongs (agung), and a double-headed brass snare drum (tambal or tambol) (Hamza, 2012: 133). The tunes of the tagunggu’ for igal are known as titik. Specific tunes (titik) denote specific forms of igal performed entirely by men, women or mixed gender groups.

Igal is performed for sacred and secular events. However, the form and style of dancing the igal (magigal) remain almost the same in both events. At the annual three-day new rice ritual of magpaa-baha’u, the dance functions as a conduit that connects the living and the dead where the spirits of departed ancestors descend on the living (Sather, 1997: 304-308). The ritual of magpa-jin performed quarterly during full moon employs igal to entertain spirits of the ancestors and the wandering spirits inhabiting areas around which the dance is performed. In both events, the dance is performed by spirit mediums who dance to the spirits (jin) that have descended into their living bodies to become conduits between the realm of spirit world and the world of the Bajau Laut.

In secular events, it is performed to celebrate weddings (pagkawin) by the host and invited guests, cresting into boisterous social dance (magigal) while playing lively tagunggu’ music (magtagunggu’). The bride and groom are seated in the formal sitting-in-state ceremony (magpasandang). In this context, igal connects communities and families to celebrate rites of passage as public events. In addition to that, it is common for the Bajaus of Semporna to invite igal groups from other villages to perform for their weddings. However, it is also commonplace that other dance forms such as the mangiluk or daling-daling are occasionally performed at weddings. Mangiluk is relatively faster and livelier dance than the igal while daling-daling is performed to a popular song ‘Mai daling-daling, oh mai daling-daling’, recorded or live.

While uniquely belonging to the Bajau Laut, characteristics and movement nuances from the Tausug dance (pangalay) have greatly influenced the way igal is performed today. Fernando-Amilbangsa explains the differences in pangalay, “mangalay … means to dance (verb) or to move in rhythmical steps and glides and with rhythmical gestures, [while] Pangalay … generally connotes dance (noun) or a piece of dancing, regardless of the function or form” (1983:13). One of the reasons for the intercultural influence of pangalay in igal is most evident in the nearly similar ways of curling and flexing of fingers and palms, which could only be differentiated by igal experts and not by the general public. In addition to that, early research views it as an innovative, hybrid dance created by the Bajau Laut, who ingeniously invented the dance form from the Tausug’s daling-daling and pangalay dances in spite of the fact that daling-daling particularly, is considered as a dance of the Suluk people. The Suluk, who originated from the islands of the Sulu Sea, travelled extensively between Mindanao in the Philippines and the eastern shores of Sabah. The name of the dance is derived from the English word ‘Darling’ (Nor, 1998: 114). Similarities in these dance styles reflect the subtle cultural nuances of the Sulu Sea, and in turn, indicate uniquely shared regional identities of traditional art forms.

Igal at Weddings Celebrations

Igal and tagunggu’ music play vital roles at pagkawin ceremony (wedding celebration) of the Bajau Laut. Pagkawin is an elaborate ceremony which may last for one to two days, beginning with
maglami-lami (get-together), magbatal/magkawin (solemnization), and magpasandang (reception and sitting-in-state ceremony).

Plate 1. At magpasandang, Kampung Bangau-Bangau, Semporna, Sabah. (Photo: Author, Fieldwork 2009)

The peak of a traditional Bajau Laut wedding celebration is the magigal (social dance) and magtagunggu’ (lively tagunggu’) held during magpasandang sitting-in-state ceremony, where the newlyweds are seated on decorated chairs on top of a raised platform. Invited guests would gather around to mingle with the crowd and join in the dance to honor the married couple. It is a joyful festival where a large number of people gather together, adults chatting up with friends and relatives, young men and women seeking potential marriage partners, and children playing with their playmates. It is also a colorful event where flags decorated with bright colors (sambulayang) and banners (panji) fill the public space for the pagkawin celebration, which is concluded by the magpasandang sitting-in-state ceremony, held after sunset. At the beginning of magpasandang sitting-in-state, tagunggu’ musicians play instrumental pieces to encourage the attendees to dance. Often than not, the crowd would shy away until their host invites the family members to perform magigal. From that point onwards, the dance would pick up more participants as the tagunggu’ musicians play livelier pieces in the magtagunggu’ style. Gradually, the dancing begins to flow organically when the rest of the attendees begin to dance together in the open space in front of the newlywed couple sitting in magpasandang. Due to the confined space between the newlyweds at magpasandang and the sitting guests, magigal is often performed in groups of two to five people, taking turns to return to their seats to allow others to dance as well.

During the magpasandang, magigal is typically performed by women who are close relatives and friends of the host. Outsiders would refrain from joining the dance even if they are good dancers unless the occasion warrants their presence within the dance space. Men rarely dance at this event except for the bridegroom (pengantin lelaki) who dances with his bride. At this juncture, no other individuals will dance in the dancing space as they give way for the newly married couple to dance their magigal.

Magigal at weddings are meant to encourage social interactions amongst those present for public view. Encouraged by the others present, the dancers strive to captivate the audience, commanding their attention by exhibiting their talents and skills showcasing stylized but improvised dance movements. The dancers dance closely around and opposite one another while retaining public decorum by refraining from physically touching one another. The magpasandang ceremony is also a strategic place for people who may want to earn some extra cash. It is common practice for individual igal performers to receive ‘sabod’ or ringgit bills placed in between their flexing fingers by relatives of the newlyweds in honor of the wedded couple. On a good night, an igal dancer may accumulate relatively handsome earnings up to more than fifty ringgit if the igal dancer is supported by generous relatives at the magpasandang.
**Igal** dancing may even be performed outside of the Bajau community in Semporna when invitations for *igal* are made by the Tausug or Suluk community. An established *igal* group in Semporna such as Warisan Bajau which has always been invited to perform at Bajau’s *pagkawin* celebration is often asked to perform at *magtia’un*, the Tausug/Suluk wedding. Although wedding organizers do not normally ask for specific repertoires to be performed at their *pagkawin* celebration, the Warisan Bajau group would perform several known repertoires such as *igal tabawan*, *igal lolai*, *igal panansang* and *igal tarirai*, which denotes specific dance styles originating either from place names such as *tabawan* and *panansang*, specific styles (*igal lolai*) and with wooden castanets (*igal tarirai*). Such repertoires are enhanced by the tunes (*titik*) from the tagunggu’ ensemble or adaptations from songs/music played by the music DJ, live band, or from a single keyboard player depending on specific request from the relatives and audiences. Besides *magigal*, non-Bajau dance such as *mangiluk* or *daling-daling* are occasionally performed at Bajau weddings. As such, it is common practice that the Bajau community may perform the *daling-daling* dance of the Tausug during Bajau *pagkawin*.

**Performing - Pangalay**

In other words, the Bajau Laut and Tausug/Suluk communities may share common activity in the wedding ceremony. The Bajau Laut may perform the Tausug/Suluk *pangalay* as part of their dance repertoire to a point that the Bajau Laut even consider *pangalay* at *pagkawin* as part of *igal* in spite of the fact that the Bajau Laut understands that *igal* and *pangalay* have completely different form and nuances.

There is a general assumption however, that the Bajau Laut assumes *pangalay* to be a Malay word for dance, hence *pangalay* and *igal* are accepted as interchangeable term for dance in general. This had led to some confusion to the outsiders or non-Bajaus when the Bajau Laut performs *igal* and *pangalay* in the same way as *igal* and *magigal* are performed. To the Bajau Laut, both *igal* and *pangalay* are linguistically similar and therefore the Bajau Laut performs *igal* while referring to *pangalay*. The Warisan Bajau group who refers to themselves as Bajau Laut, assumes that the word *pangalay* is interchangeable with *igal* as a term for dance. Another common excuse is that many of the younger generation of Bajau Laut are of mixed parentage of Bajau and Suluk, hence *igal* and *pangalay* are accepted as interchangeable terms of reference for dance. But this has not resolved the persistent blurring of dance forms amongst the Bajau Laut and the Tausug/Suluk. One may ask why would the Bajau Laut perform *daling-daling* when it is not requested by the wedding host? Why would *pangalay* dominate *igal* to the point that the Bajau Laut assumes performing *igal* and *pangalay* at Bajau Laut *pagkawin* are acceptable? When asked, the Warisan Bajau dancers seem to have an answer when they unpretentiously say, “We are Bajau Laut, but we are also Suluk from one of our grandparents. Therefore we have the right to perform *daling-daling* dance as we are descendants of Bajau and Suluk”.

The interfacing of Bajau Laut’s *igal* and Suluk’s *pangalay* in *pagkawin* ceremony seems normal to the Bajau Laut. When the Suluk danced at *pagkawin*, they performed *pangalay* while the Bajau Laut performed *igal*. From the commonality of interchangeable terms of reference for dance, another version of intercultural mix is in the *pangalay* *daling-daling* dance performed by the Warisan Bajau. They believe that the *pangalay* *daling-daling* dance is an *igal* with additional one or two *daling-daling* dance motifs, performed with *daling-daling* tunes, played from CD or with the keyboard. The Warisan Bajau group termed this repertoire as ‘angigalan daling-daling’ which means ‘daling-daling dance.’ The dance motifs are combination of *igal* hands movements and *daling-daling* movement motifs which the senior dancers (who are also the group instructors) acquired through observations at different occasions, especially at Regatta Lepa Festival. At this festival, dance and music performances take place in many different spaces, from the boats’ prow to indoor stages, including specially constructed stages and open areas. In these spaces the audience, comprised of locals and foreigners, gather to watch and sometimes participate in the shows performed by local performers. *Daling-daling* has become one of the dance repertoires choreographed and performed by locals and non-locals at the Regatta Lepa Festival.
Conclusions

To the Bajau Laut the terms igal and pangalay are interchangeable terms for dance. Evidently, in Semporna, igal may be performed as a completely independent entity of the Bajau Laut or it could be performed with pangalay influence. It is interesting to note how two cultural spheres converged and crossed with each other through dance. The igal in pangalay as well as the influence of pangalay in igal are dominantly found in both pagkawin and Regatta Lepa. The Regatta Lepa Festival implicitly requires invited dance troupes to present the spectacle of pangalay, while the pagkawin have been greatly influence by the spectacles of igal-pangalay demonstrating cultural acceptance within the Bajau Laut community. The Bajau Laut has accepted the fact that performing pangalay in pagkawin is appropriate and acceptable, to the point that the current generation of young Bajau Laut are not able to differentiate the differences between igal and the pangalay. As an intercultural example, igal has incorporated pangalay into the structured movement system of the Bajau Laut, performed and accepted as being Bajau Laut.

Due to the common practice of open invitation to pagkawin celebration, which inclusively invites Bajau and Suluk to celebrate together, the two dance forms, pangalay and igal have became interchangeable entities where, the Suluk may bring pangalay into Bajau Laut performance space and the Bajau Laut bringing igal to Suluk’s celebrations. Within shared space and shared community, differences between the Suluk and the Bajau Laut becomes non-existent.

This study has shown how former sea-nomadic community negotiates dance practices and performances in relation to their common shared living space, not just as Bajaus, but also as Suluks. As a result of Bajau-Suluk intercultural experience, igal and magigal have been restructured, rearranged, and reproduced in new choreographies signifying intercultural experiments appropriated through an understanding of choreographic elements that are multi-layered and diverse for audiences who gaze the pagkawin and Regatta Lepa Festival as interchangeable events. Regatta Lepa has impacted the creation of spectacular stage performances by which the elements of pangalay in igal becomes stronger than the igal. In addition, the Bajau Laut continues to call their dance as igal in spite of the fact that there is the multi-layered influence of pangalay in contemporary igal. Indeed, the Bajau Laut performing arts within the context of the stage has borrowed many foreign elements as it continues to develop its unique identity, creating a niche in the regional performing arts scene, particularly with the experimentation, fusion, synthesization and hybridization that continue to evolve in the present day.

Endnotes

1 Mangiluk is a dance repertoire which is arguably invented in 1975 by Nasradi bin Abdullah when he was requested by the Ministry of Youth and Sports Sabah to create a dance repertoire to represent the Suluks of Sandakan, Sabah. Mohd Anis Md Nor (1998: 114) however, said that the dance was brought to the shores of
eastern Sabah through the fusion of Bajau and Suluk dance traditions. The dance is shared by both the Suluk and Bajau is the Semporna area and is performed by both ethnic groups with variants of their own (Nor, M. A. M., 1998: 114).

2 At the time when the researcher conducted his fieldwork in Kampung Bangau-Bangau in 2007 until 2015, the wedding was as elaborate as Sather (1997) had described. However, the weddings are only held for one day due mainly to economic reasons. Maglami-lami however, could only be held if the bride has sufficient wealth to procure a complete public address system, keyboard musician and/or singer.

3 Interview session with Warisan Bajau group, 26 April 2015.

4 The Regatta Lepa festival is an annual parade of Bajau (inclusive of the Bajau Laut and Bajau Kubang) boats called lepa. The lepa is ornately decorated with colourful, decorative cloths called tipas-tipas, which are triangular shaped sambulayang or decorated with panji-panji, colourful rectangular shaped cloth normally used for festivities and weddings. The festival has been held annually since 1994 to boost the tourism industry of Semporna and to promote regional and national agendas through the cultural heritage of the Bajaus. The Regatta Lepa festival is sponsored by the Sabah State Government through Sri Pelancongan, a subsidiary of the Sabah Tourism Board (formerly known as Sabah Tourism Promotion Corporation). The Regatta Lepa festival runs for two to three days in April, highlighting races between the lepa as a symbol of Bajau identity embodied in its material culture.

5 ‘Local’ refers to indigenous group of people residing in Semporna area, for example local dance troupes, competitors, and exhibition participants while invited cultural/dance troupes from Kota Kinabalu and from the rest of Sabah are considered as non-locals.

References


ISABELLA PEK  
(ASWARA, Malaysia)

‘SIMFONIKA 1MALAYSIA’: CROSS CULTURAL?  
(Lightning Paper)

This is a report on the lightning paper ‘Simfonika 1Malaysia: Cross Cultural?’ presented in the 2014 PASEA Conference held at Institut Seni Indonesia at Denpasar, Indonesia, 14-20 June. This lightning paper is a strand of the practice-based research ‘Judgement of Taste and Value: Malaysian Popular Music Composers at Work’.

Brief Background Information on the Topic and Statement

I have started this research as part of the requirement in a mixed-mode PhD program, where I explore my interest in what makes a ‘good’ piece of music. This question is important to me, who has since 1994 worked professionally as a piano player and music composer / arranger at the national broadcasting station (Radio Television Malaysia), ministry of culture and arts, and other general business platforms. That is, after years of professional work when it seems to have hit a creative plateau, how do I make a paradigm shift? At the beginning of the research, I had the impression that I would be searching for the next killer ‘hook’, the super harmony, and the next brilliant chord progression. Nevertheless, from the first meeting my supervisor has pointed out that I would most likely to be addressing issues of taste and judgement. In addition, with my concentration in employing the various Malaysian traditional instruments alongside a western ensemble, I have problematized the research to include identity politics and representation.

In this lightning paper, as part of an effort to understand identity and cultural (re)-presentation, I presented two occasions of popular music production in which I was involved – ‘Konsert Gemilang’ Orkestra Radio Television Malaysia and ‘Malaysia Week’ promotion in London presented by Istana Budaya under the Ministry of Tourism and Culture. I aimed to compare and contrast two distinct yet similar productions and presentations, pointing to the interculturalism that manifests itself in both occasions, recognizing the counterpoint of multiculturalism in the process.

Statement of Objectives

With the intention to explore the Malaysian judgement of taste and value, at least from the perspective of the current authority, I analyse two occasions of popular music production, both organized by government agencies utilizing public funds, within the framework of habitus (Bourdieu), of national and cultural identity, of popular music studies, and of political power.

Work to Date

A portfolio of compositions were prepared, presented in public and recorded during 2010 to 2012. The ensemble line up ranged from string quartet, jazz big band, Chinese orchestra, gamelan orchestra, to pipa plus string quartet, gamelan plus jazz big band, and Simfonika 1Malaysia, which was a hybrid line up of Malaysian instruments and western ensemble. In designing this set of compositions, I had systematically planned for works to be based in:

1. Euro-American tradition – string quartet and jazz big band;
2. Malaysian tradition – gamelan ensemble and Chinese ensemble; and
Questions and reflexive dialogues that occurred during the composition process include

1. Why do I intuitively, purposely, and generously use pentatonic motif in the string quartet piece, in all four movements? This is in spite of the German tradition of fugal form in the last movement. What does it tell me about my taste and my value inclination? And, how does my personal taste expose the Malaysian liking?

2. Why do I concentrate on the use of Malaysian traditional instruments in compositions? Does it have to do with the national agenda of cultural policy since I had been working in government agencies for more than two decades? What cultural policy are we addressing, and how has it changed since 1973 when it was first enacted?

3. Why do my British supervisors cringe when I use sitar to play a popular sounding melody, or when I pair gamelan with jazz big band? On the other hand, why did non-musician British acquaintances have no problems with it?

Against the above considerations, I find that initial studies and analysis of ‘Konsert Gemilang’ Orkestra RTM and ‘Malaysia Week’ promotion in London reveal evidence of political will shaping creativity, of commercialism / tourism constructing traditional performing arts, of globalized taste predominating in music creativity, and of musicians’ resistance in various forms.

Performing arts creativity is subject to the will of politics at the time: in both Konsert Gemilang and Malaysia Week shows, I find Malay arts and culture given the priority in line with the National Cultural Policy of 1973. This is the case despite the ‘other’ sources of the arts in Malaysia, including Indonesian, Indian, Thai, Arab and Chinese influence. In other words, political power claims ownership of incoming influence and subsequently constructs the Malaysian characteristics of a given musical form that are acceptable in the late 20th century.

Music, dance and other performing arts creativity is increasingly directed by commercialism in the broadest sense, that is, the agenda of tourist attraction, foreign investment, and cultural product exports take priority in the creative decisions. I find that to be true in the choice of programs and costumes in the two different shows, one staged nationally and the other in London. It seems that Malaysian tourism promoters expect international tourists to like traditional instruments and folk tunes, hence the impression at the London show. Konsert Gemilang, on the other hand, includes globalized music trends like rock, pop, jazz, hip-hop, rap and R&B, all of which were programmed to be broadcasted over national channels. The marketing or revenue people find that performing arts of globalized, or Euro-American tradition will better attract advertisers, or the Malaysian mass market. In other words, the onslaught of the globalized music taste is seemingly inevitable.

Musicians, however, attempt to resist the ‘standardization’ of their practice by invoking national, or local identities, including the use of folk tunes, traditional instruments, and local language in the songs. While the work sounds similar to their Euro-American counterparts in harmony, structure, or the use of electronic instruments, Malaysian assertion of its ‘identity’ is unmistakable – which, in turn, can be appropriated, constructed, and owned by political powers.

Possible/Projected Outcomes from the On-going Research

I now expect to find a highly fluid, complex, and ambiguous outcome from the research. That is, the context in and about the practice can be unfolded, analysed but not concluded – at least not in absolute terms. My quest for ways to compose ‘better’ music will probably result in further questions and reflexive dialogues, which fuel changes - philosophical and conceptual, in future and consequent music practice. I could still continue to search for the next Top 10 hit song idea.
References


JAMES PHILIP SHENG BOYLE
(ASWARA, Malaysia)

POPULAR MUSIC OF PENANG OF THE 1940s AND 1950s

‘It is from these diverse influences and backgrounds that Penang musician developed their talents and repertoire….’ (Lochhead, 2011).

Penang, possesses a rare and proud musical heritage. Attracting as it has a multitude of different peoples, culture and traditions in the years after it was colonised by Francis Light and East India Company, its popular music represents both an assertion of those different cultures as well as a rich fusion of the diverse influences and musical forms.

As stated by Penang historian and the curator of the heritage section of the Penang museum, Mr. Paul Augustin, the Managing director of Capricorn Productions, the emergence of Penang as a forefront of popular music in Malaysia in the 1940s and 1950s had existed in lieu with a tremendous increase in many social and political activities during this time.

Penang, being a potpourri of culture and tradition that boasts many races of various creeds and background was regarded as the melting pot and the keeper of cultural flame of the nation. Music, in particular, played a major factor in an ever increasing social past time for the people of Penang and thus resulting in a wide variety of music after the war during the 1940s and into the 1950s.

During the Japanese occupation in World War II, the Japanese felt it necessary that in the midst of a war the musical tastes of the public should be properly directed. In January 1943, the Japanese government imposed a ban on some 1,000 American and British musical compositions and a list that included not only military or patriotic songs, but also love songs and even jazz.

Mr Augustin also added that thankfully, all was not lost, as, the ever resourceful Penang musicians managed to find ways round this. For example, many local musicians began putting Malay words to the latest popular songs, which were predominantly jazz or more specifically Tin Pan Alley music during this period, from the west.

1.0 Unity through Diversity in the Penang Musicians

Due to the many types of races, and ethnicity in Penang, one would always be exposed to all the different genres which were played by all the various races. For example, the Malays, in particular had the minstrel shows which were immensely popular during weddings and family functions popularly known as Boria and there were music used for specific cultural events in the different communities, such as Bangsawan, joget, ronggeng, dondang saying, keroncong and also wayang peranakan. Apart from that, the Chinese had ko-tai which was a form of Chinese opera, music drama, dance and social commentary mixed with a tinge of local Penang humor.

It was also during this time when Penang’s musicianship was very much at the forefront of the national musical development. It was in Penang, and during this time, that musicians such as Jimmy Boyle, Ahmad Merican, P.Ramlee, Ooi Eow Jin, Ahmad Nawab, Albert Yeoh, Zainal Alam, Joe Rozells, Ahmad Daud musical icons and giants, as we would today, emerged. These musicians represented the diversity and fusion of styles that made Penang music or rather Malayan music of this time so exciting and challenging. According to Ooi Eow Jin, in the many musicians who he has witnessed in the countless clubs and venues in and around Penang during the 1950s, he stated that Jimmy Boyle’s technique on the piano, musical prowess and original compositions stands out way above the rest.

2.0 The Importance of Malaysian Music of the 1940s and 1950s

In an article written by Jimmy Boyle himself in the local newspaper in 1966, he greatly observed that if music is to remain a living language of Malaysia, it has to be a sincere and honest expression and like any healthy growing country, like Malaysia, music is based firmly on the accomplishments of the past and is essentially a synthesis, blending the rich heritage of the many facets and the musical assets which Malaysia had for many centuries, even with the ears of the people living in these parts were not adulterated or influenced by any form of music.
Malaysia is indeed rich in many forms of ethnicity in its music. Even though Malaysian music is influenced by neighboring Indonesian and Thai forms, as well as Portuguese, Filipino and Chinese styles, the core identity of Malaysian music comes from the various types and styles of what is commonly classified as Malay music which is the style of Asli, Masri, Zapin, Inang, Ronggeng and Keroncong.

In an article written in 1961, it has been observed that in Malaysia, with such diversity and rich rhythms at one’s disposal, the only thing that stands out from how Malaysian music is contrived is in the phrasings of the melody and the punctuation of notes and punctuations of rhythm and scales which are employed to write a tune which would sound progressively Malaysian. It has been stated that such a cosmopolitan nation like Malaysia should be welding all the elements that make up the country’s population.

In order to progress and to compete with musicians of international standing, the musicians of today must gradually accomplish a change, not by breaking away from the rich cultural heritages, but by preserving their basic ingredients together with the usage of new instruments of the western orchestra and present and to create the new fusion of Malaysian music and to honestly express the era that produced it.

3.0 The Great Composers from Penang of the 1940s & 1950s

According to Tan Sri Ahmad Merican, the 1950s and 1960s proved to be very fertile ground for many outstanding composers who were at the height of modern development of Malay music, both in Malaysia and also in neighboring Singapore. Just as Jimmy Boyle’s patriotic zest and his outstanding passion in writing tunes such as ‘Jauh Jauh’ (1960), ‘Sungai Pahang’ (1966) and ‘Chendering’ (1963), which were undeniably Malaysian sounding yet globally accepted, many of his great composing contemporaries were also cementing their own skills in terms of their identity and capability in composing tunes which were undistinguishably Malay yet maintaining a strong sense of Western or rather, at that time, a colonial flavor in most of their works.

The most striking similarity between Jimmy Boyle and actor cum musician and composer extraordinaire Tan Sri P. Ramlee (born Teuku Zakaria, 22nd March 1929) is that the both of them originated from the Pearl of the Orient, Penang. The other similarity is that the both of them were awarded the ‘Ahli Mangku Negara’ (Nation’s Artist) in the 1960s, and more importantly, both P. Ramlee and Jimmy Boyle’s compositions were laced with chords, which were commonly found in jazz music (Khor, 1971: 3)

As pointed out by the music director of Radio Television Malaysia (RTM), Dato’ Mokhzani Ismail, in P. Ramlee’s most famous composition ‘Getaran Jiwa,’ one can discern the similar structure of the chordal movement with Jimmy Boyle’s ‘Gema Rembulan’. The tempo, of which both are ballads, is similar too, as the former is in 4/4 and the latter 3/4. Amazingly, the two great composers never met, let alone collaborate. P. Ramlee went on to become an icon, a legend so loved, revered and so honored that streets are named after him and every year his legacy is commemorated.

Just like P.Ramlee, Jimmy Boyle’s compositions ranged from traditional to modern. Learning from the great Zubir Said, P. Ramlee was very meticulous about both the practical and lyrical aspect of each tune, which he has been widely quoted as believing that both the lyrics and melody must complement each other in all the jazz elements in his music, P. Ramlee was also quick to adapt ‘rock and roll’, a style of music which was heavily scorned by Jimmy Boyle (1966: 41) to suit the Malay taste. In his most ‘rock and roll’ tune, ‘Bunyi Guitar’ (The sound of the guitar), P. Ramlee’s use of a delicate balance in terms of tempo and lyrics in a style which was Elvis Presley’s, suited his conservative Malay listeners with the critics branding him (P. Ramlee) as a very innovative imitator. Mr. Ooi Eow Jin also added that till this day, the name P. Ramlee, in which has been conferred both a ‘Dato’, and a ‘Tan Sri’ title posthumously, is a name which towers above all names in the Malaysian Music and Movie industry.

4.0 The Compositional Techniques and Composing Influences of the Musicians from Penang in the 1940s & 1950s

Popular music of the 1930s was a style which was known as Tin Pan Alley music. Tin Pan Alley was a term coined in New York City, as both a place and a type of music which was to consistently churn out thousands of popular songs, which were soon be the staple great American
Standards. The Tin Pan Alley buildings hired writers, songwriters, composers, publishers and many business savvy personnel that catered to the ever expanding music industry. In other words, the Tin Pan Alley era marked the beginning of the music industry that we know today. Many laws of the music industry, such as copyright laws, percentage of publishing royalties, mechanical and the value added taxation laws were drawn out and legalized during this period of time in the United States of America.

Many of the top composers from Penang in the 1940s and 1950s’ compositional techniques drew very significant elements from the great composers who epitomized this era, such as the rhythmic and arranging techniques of George Gershwin, the lyrics that rhymes beautifully with his music of Irving Berlin, the melodic genius of Jerome Kern and the sentimentality and poignancy of national pride of Richard Rodgers.

In terms of duration, the length of the compositions of Jimmy Boyle reflected greatly on the principles employed by the Tin Pan Alley writers, such as a 5 minute duration for a given song. Apart from that, Jimmy Boyle, just like the Tin Pan Alley composers, had little space for tonal contrast and variety in a single piece, thus making many of his compositions stay in the same style and in the same key (with only brief modulations in the ‘Chorus’ section).

In his composition written about the natural beauty and landscape of the beaches of the east coast of Malaysia, entitled 'Chendering', Jimmy Boyle integrated a degree of tonal shifting in the chorus of a song or rather in the B song. Just like the song 'Blue Moon', the B section of the AABA structure begins in the dominant (The fifth chord of the key) and modulates back to the tonic for the reprise of A. Some of these tonal contrasts (or modulation of keys) necessitate considerable harmonic ingenuity in getting back to the tonic key in the final A section. Such freer modulations and greater harmonic sophistication was prevalent as Tin Pan Alley music evolved from the 1930s to the 1940s. Composers such as Jerome Kern (1884-1945) and George Gershwin (1898-1937) had pushed the harmonic bounds of popular song immeasurably further, and just like Jimmy Boyle’s ‘Chendering’, the composers had employed freer chromatic chordal movement semi tonal in nature anywhere in a song, inserting non-dominant chords, chords which used plenty of seventh and ninth chords, and with a willingness to alter almost any note in a chord for richer harmonic color.

The source of this new harmonic richness and variety in popular song derived from composers who were classically trained. Just like both George Gershwin and Jerome Kern, two of the greatest songwriters who epitomized not only the Tin Pan Alley era, but bench markers of American songwriters, one can echo the techniques employed by these songwriting masters in the music of Jimmy Boyle. In ‘Chendering’ which is an AABA tune, many chromatic chords are employed in the A section of the tune to add color and tone in enriching the melody.

As in ‘Jauh Jauh’, which is also essentially a tune every bit as influenced by the richness of the harmony of the Tin Pan Alley era, many chromatic chords, mostly non diatonic, are employed to accompany the ‘leaping’ of the melody which itself had echoes from the B section of a Jerome Kern classic ‘Smoke Gets In Your Eyes’, which not only had octave leaps in the melody but also had the implications of chromatic chords not dissimilar to Jimmy Boyle’s first 8 bars of ‘Jauh Jauh’.

5.0 A Summary on the Influences and Musical Passions of the Musicians from Penang of the 1940s & 1950s

The diversity of the culture and the richness in the potpourri of styles, languages and the richness of the musical landscape in Malaysia provided a firm plateau for many of the composers from Penang from the 1940s and 1950s to draw many of their inspirations from in many of their compositions and also in their playing.

The impact of the Penang’s musicians of the 1940s & 1950s on music academicians, students and working professionals...

1) Will shed a light in helping future composers compose tunes with multi functions, which is melodic, timeless, intricate, yet accessible and alluring.

2) Through the analysis of their essential compositions, future composers, arrangers and practitioners will be able to utilize harmony which is more advanced more complex and yet still able to capture the imagination of both the man on the street and the seasoned musician.

3) Students and musicians alike will employ elements of the western harmony effortlessly with melodic phrasings and scaling of the east.
4) Future composers will be encouraged even further in employing traditional rhythms with more jazzy syncopations.
5) Songwriters will learn how to integrate a close relationship between the melody and the harmony in its songwriting process.

Endnotes

1 James Lochhead, personal communication, 2010.
3 Ooi Eow Jin, personal communication, 2011.
5 Tan Sri Ahmad Merican, personal communication, 2009.
6 Ahmad Merican, Kuala Lumpur, 2005.
7 Jimmy Boyle was awarded Ahli Mangku Negara in June, 1968.
8 Dato’ Mokhzani Ismail, personal communication, 2009.
9 Richard Rodgers, 1927.

References


TAN SHUH HWA
(Universiti Putra Malaysia)

UNFOLDING MEANINGS: SYMBOLS IN THE CHOICE OF MUSIC FOR URBAN CHINESE WEDDING BANQUETS IN MALAYSIA

For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
UNFOLDING MEANINGS: SYMBOLS IN THE CHOICE OF MUSIC FOR URBAN CHINESE WEDDING BANQUETS IN MALAYSIA

For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
BETWEEN MALAY AND THAI: THE ORAK LAWOI’S CULTURAL MEDIATION OF A MALAYAN MUSICAL LEGACY

I begin with two terms that should be familiar to many of you: the first being *orang laut*, literally “sea people,” which refers to communities of people who live by, and make their livelihood from the sea. The second is *ronggeng*: a term that appears throughout the Malay-speaking world in association with the performing arts, but which has varied meanings depending upon place, time, and context. And so, before the preconceptions begin to develop in your minds, I will try to clarify what these terms mean for this paper, as well as the other two papers in this panel, within a context of southwestern Thailand.

The Orak Lawoi

Southeast Asian history is replete with stories of the *orang laut* and their important role in the formation of entrepôts, facilitating trade, and providing navies for pre-modern regional kingdoms. Scholars have given quite a bit of attention to nomadic groups found around Borneo, Sulawesi, the Straits of Melaka, and Myanmar, but literature on the sea people of southwestern Thailand’s Andaman Sea coast islands—those who call themselves Orak Lawoi—is still rather limited for any discipline. The Orak Lawoi—whose name is cognate with *orang laut*—inhabit an area that, politically speaking, is well within Thailand proper, but culturally and linguistically situated at the edges of the Malay-speaking world: a region that Thai historian Thongchai Winichakul would describe as an “overlapping margin” (Winichakul 1994), meaning that it has historically been subject to ambiguous or multiple sovereignties. For the Andaman, this overlapping margin was an underdeveloped and sparsely populated backwater located within larger, and shifting Siamese (now Thai) and Malay cultural realms and polities.

This intersection is crucial to understanding a unique historical role of the Orak Lawoi, which I address here: How the Orak Lawoi have become principal agents in the diffusion of cultural practices between these two realms. With no ill meaning intended, I sometimes refer to them as the “honeybees of the Andaman,” because they have been so active in pollinating the various forms of performing arts that have blossomed like flowers throughout the region, including the *ronggeng* that is the subject of this panel.

Larger Orak Lawoi communities celebrate biannual festivals for three days around the full moons in May and October. These are referred to as *usik pelacak*, and for each occasion the centerpiece is an elaborately decorated model boat that gives the festival its name. The term *pelacak* is cognate with two Malay words, which together reflect upon its form and function. The more obvious of these is *lancang*, which is a type of swift sailing vessel, but another related term is *ancak*, which means a physical form of spiritual ‘offering.’ Like many boat-shaped offerings found throughout Southeast Asia, the pelacak of the Orak Lawoi unites both of these meanings: it is a boat laden with various ritual items which carries away malevolent elements from the village, and returns the souls of the recently departed to the ancestral homeland (I discussed aspects of music and physical movement at the 2011 ICTM meeting in Newfoundland, some of you may remember).

The *pelacak* is not central to this paper, but being one of the few occasions in which the Orak Lawoi still perform *ronggeng*, a bit of historical context might bring some clarity to their often misunderstood relationship with the genre. To this objective, I’ll discuss how the Orak Lawoi came to perform and disseminate *ronggeng* among Malay- and Thai-speaking communities, and ultimately became seen—rightly or wrongly—as more than just its culture bearers, but also, retrospectively, as the originators-cum-guardians of present-day Andaman *ronggeng*.

My principle method for reconstructing Andaman *ronggeng* history and development has been to document oral accounts throughout the region, which I have collected over the past nine years or so, and encompasses a period extending from the mid-1930s until today. Other than writings produced from my studies, I’ve found a few ethnographic studies of the Orak Lawoi published in Thai and
English, and a couple of Thai-language ethnomusicological case studies of localized ronggeng. The shortcomings of these works of others—if I may speak a bit critically—is that they don’t do justice to the richness of this area as a confluence of cultures, but instead are often constrained by familiar yet pernicious nationalistic-, ethnic-, and/or religious-based preconceptions that are so pervasive in Thailand and Malaysia. These studies also tend to stop at the frontier, or just gaze across it, rather than engage with it directly. As such, my form of engagement has been to conduct multi-sited fieldwork on both sides of the border throughout the areas seen on the map in Plate 1.

![Plate 1. Map showing most Orak Lawoi settlements in southwestern Thailand](image)

Through oral histories, I have learned of the deeply intertwined kinship relations among local performers: not just the Orak Lawoi, but Andaman population at large. From these I have constructed detailed genealogies that reveal much about circulations of people and culture, and how ronggeng has been, in many cases, a catalyst for such movements, and facilitated by the Orak Lawoi.

The Plate 1 map shows most Orak Lawoi settlements, small and large—all of which are found on islands. The three largest are highlighted in the north (Phuket), middle (Lanta Island), and south (the Adang Archipelago) of the Andaman Coast. I will skip Adang today—as it was sufficiently remote that its interactions with the Thai-speaking mainland were limited—and instead look at the other two, which have had closer contact with the Thai-speaking world, and exist further up the geographical continuum that moves from being more culturally Malay, to increasingly Thai the further north one travels.
**Ronggeng (and Rong Ngeng) in Southwest Thailand**

Lanta Island is the physical center and spiritual heart of the Orak Lawoi. It was also the first point of arrival and subsequent launching point for Malayan ronggeng in the 1930s. I'll define what I mean by Andaman ronggeng at this point. It is not the centuries-old ronggeng of Java and Sumatra, but rather a more modern and heterogeneous amalgam of (1) the popular music that was contemporaneous with bangsawan theater, dance halls, and gramophone recordings in the early twentieth century—sung in Malay, but Western in many ways (think “Tin Pan Alley”); and (2) local tunes from the littoral region of northwest Malaya that are now considered “folk” tunes, but which evidence suggests are legacies of popular regional theater songs originating in an earlier era—particularly the makyong laut and likay pa. My working hypothesis is that the Andaman ronggeng “canon” of today is a chronological “layering” of popular songs that have accumulated with each generation, and that this phenomenon is observable in repertoires found elsewhere in Malaysia. Andaman ronggeng—then and now—has been played by a small ensemble of violin, two rebana frame drums, and a gong, which accompany quatrains of a Malay lyrical poetry known as pantun.

Ronggeng migrated to what is now called Thailand in the mid 1930s along with an itinerant violinist from Malaya named Abu Qasim, who sojourned in a Malay fishing village on Lanta Island for several years and taught a small coterie of musicians and dancers to perform the repertoire I just described (see Ross 2009). There were few points of contact with Malayan ronggeng beyond Abu Qasim and a few other travelers, and subsequent to its arrival, WWII and postwar nationalisms effectively shut down cultural flows between the two countries. Whereas in postwar Malaya, ronggeng merged with Latin rhythms, film songs, and P. Ramlee-style crooning, in southwestern Thailand it remained what it was, or became transformed into a Thai-language medium.

To illustrate this break, at this point I am going to stop using the familiar term ronggeng, and switch instead to the local Andaman name, rong ngeng, which applies both to its Malay- and Thai-language sub-genres.

Rong ngeng arrived in a predominantly Malay fishing village, but the Orak Lawoi presence has been there since the beginning, as they were, effectively, next door neighbors. The area, known as Tanjung, or ‘cape,’ includes the Malay village in the center, the Orak Lawoi settlement of Da’ao to its south, and a small administrative center and group of Chinese shop houses in Sri Raya at its northern border. During the heyday of rong ngeng in the 1940s and ’50s, this greater community was an epicenter for its performance, teaching and producing many of the region’s best-known performers who included locals as well as those from all over the Andaman who came because they were “attracted to rong ngeng,” as they tell me. Because rong ngeng was still a novelty in those early years, Lanta’s rong ngeng troupes were in high demand, and were regularly engaged around the region to perform. Performances were taxi dances in which male patrons paid token sums of money to dance with female dancers to the accompaniment of the rong ngeng ensemble.

Out of Lanta, mixed Malay and Orak Lawoi troupes carried rong ngeng to Thai-speaking mainland communities and set in motion its transformation into a new Thai-language sub-genre that has become known as rong ngeng tanyong or phleng tanyong, meaning “tanyong song.” As just a small sample of this process, I shall introduce a few of the principal agents from those early years, focusing on one particular Orak Lawoi clan from Lanta. I refer to them as the Iteh clan, taking the name of the matron whose children (from two different fathers) were so influential in the development of rong ngeng.
Figure 1. The Iteh clan

The Iteh Clan

An iconic photo of Lanta’s first generation rong ngeng performers from the mid-1950s is the only surviving image of Iteh’s daughter Sima I was able to find, and it shows her rather late in her rong ngeng career. Sima was an Orak Lawoi singer-dancer from Da’ao village, and is the only Orak Lawoi in the photo. Sima and her husband Long led one of the best-known rong ngeng troupes from the late-1930s onward. They were the first to perform in predominantly Thai-speaking areas adjoining the mainland on Krabi Province, and according to my informants, from them locals were inspired to form their own troupes. After all, rong ngeng was becoming a nightly affair, and it was much easier for a village to develop its own players than to hire them from Lanta.

When we see today’s performing communities in this part of Krabi (found among the mangrove-fringed coastlines and further inland), we are looking at a direct lineage connected to Sima in the 1930s. Although they are relatively few, they are among the best-known in this region. This map shows roughly the chronological and geographical progression from Lanta to Klang Island, and further onward to interior districts.

Sima was one of eight children of Iteh. I highlight them in the genealogical chart of Figure 1, first to show that seven were performers (indicated by black rectangles), but also to point out how important this family was to the spread of rong ngeng.

Sima’s elder brother was a blind violinist named Mat Deh. In the late 1930s, he moved up the coast to Phuket and founded a rong ngeng performing community that is still in existence. Today it is led by the doyen of Andaman rong ngeng, and Mat Deh’s erstwhile student, Jiu Pramongkit, a woman whose career has spanned eight decades, and for many represents the apotheosis of Andaman rong ngeng.

Sima’s younger half-brother, Sen, moved south to a mainland village in Langgu, and in the processed opened up a whole new performing community where none had existed previously, and which is carried on by a handful of aging performers.

In each of these cases—and many more that I do not have time to discuss—we see a broad diffusion of rong ngeng by the Orak Lawoi to all corners of the Andaman, resulting in the growth of this social dance form as illustrated in the map on the left side of Plate 2. From the hard-to-see circle on Lanta, which was the point of origin for Andaman rong ngeng, it moved into the black coastal areas—which were the first to receive it from Lanta in the late 1930s and early ’40s. From there, Andaman rong ngeng reached the peak of its extent in the postwar period until the late 1960s, spreading to the coastal areas marked in white.
Plate 2. The growth of Andaman rong ngeng, 1930s-1960s

Closing Thoughts

Subsequently, rong ngeng began a slow decline, furthered by several factors: changing generational tastes, an increasingly pervasive central Thai media industry, and in Muslim communities, the expansion of Islamic missionary, or dakwah, activites that grew in the early 1970s. For the generation that came of age in the ’60s, rong ngeng became a symbol of the old, rural, Malay identity that was anachronistic to an increasingly Thai-speaking, and (Thai) culturally assimilated Andaman youth.

Fast forward to 2014 and rong ngeng is experiencing something of a small revival in the Andaman. It is not a “revitalization” in the sense that we see new generations of performers—which for the most part we do not (although, as you will see in the Phuket presentations to follow mine, there are a few at this time)—but that rong ngeng has been belatedly recognized as an important marker of Andaman identity, and that this renewed interest has provided new opportunities to older performers. It has also left the Orak Lawoi as the sole “culture bearers” of the early Malayan style.

“Musical terroir,” is a term used earlier in this symposium by Made Hood to describe an organic sense of place, or local flavor. I wish to expand this concept to include the immediate geographical surroundings, or socio-economic “spheres” that develop around the traditional connections among communities—I’m thinking particularly in terms of relationships of villages and local markets, and the role of rong ngeng in facilitating these interactions as a popular form that transcended island and mainland. The previous two examples of Lanta and Phuket spheres are each bundles of stylistic terroirs, and the Orak Lawoi have been an important part within these ecosystems. In rong ngeng and other genres, they have adopted elements from their surroundings, and played the role of teacher and honeybee disseminator.
Endnotes


2 My research in folk musics of Kedah and Perlis states in northwestern Malaysia (and neighboring Thai provinces) has found similar chronological, or generational “layerings” of song repertoires.

3 Though not reproduced here in print, this photograph is in the possession of several Lanta residents. It shows the troupe in Bangkok, just prior to their first performance at Lumpini Park. They are photographed together with Krabi’s national representative of the time and his family who sponsored this maiden trip of rong ngeng to the capital.

References


THE KHAP SINGING OF TAI DAM COMMUNITY; BETWEEN LAOS AND VIETNAM

I. Introduction to Tai Dam Migrations

This paper examines the influence of migration on Tai Dam (or Black Tai) identity and singing, the khap Tai Dam. After a brief introduction to the history of Tai Dam migrations, it will discuss the main impacts of Vietnam-Laos migrations, as well as national migrations from villages to cities, on musical practices. Based on fieldwork conducted in five villages of Laos, this paper will focus on the musical practices on that side of the border.1

Tai Dam history is shaped by multiple migrations starting from Yunnan around the 11th century. Fleeing frequent pillaging, Tai Dam along with other Tai populations such as Tai Deng and Tai Khao started moving in stages, following the Black and Red Rivers. Little by little Tai settled in Muong (mandala states based on a feudal system) in the region that is today Northeast Laos, and most of all, Northwest Vietnam. From the 15th century, the united Muong Tai are known under the name Sip Song Chau Tai or Twelve Tai Districts, (12 is a symbolic number and they were most likely 16). Several conflicts arose for the head of the region between the Muong states, which were moreover vassals of different neighbouring powers, sometimes several at the same time: China, Vietnam and Lan Sang Kingdom. In the first half of the 18th century the Chau were sacked by brigands from Yunnan, and some of its inhabitants settled in Laos. The history of the Muong was then marked by occupation of Chinese brigands of the Red and Yellow Pavilions and internal conflicts when some leaders decided to negotiate with the French colonial power, while others were fighting it. At the end of the 19th century, all the Muong were under French administration, although some still resisted against the colonial power. At the beginning of the 20th century, several Tai Dam left the region because of forced labour and taxes, and settled in the neighbouring provinces of Laos such as Houa Phan. In 1946, while France tried to regain its position in Indochina that was lost the year before in favour of Japan, the Tai were once again divided. Some supported the Vietnamese resistance against the colonial power and later the USA, others remained faithful to their former ally, helping the colonial power (Câm, 2001). With the defeat in Điện Biên Phủ in 1954, several Tai leaders and their families left Vietnam for Laos, Thailand or France and USA2. Others, along with thousand of peasants from Laos, left Laos in 1975, fleeing the new communist government.

The Tai Dam migration spread on several temporalities and scales, with translational and national fluxes. This paper will mainly focus on the effects of transnational migration of Tai Dam between Vietnam and Laos during the 20th century. It will also briefly approach contemporary national migrations and their influence on musical practices.

II. The Tai Dam of Laos

The Tai Dam community in Laos is considered as a minority group compared to the Lao ethnic group which represents around 54.6% of the population (Pholsena 2011: 28). The community is settled today all over Southeast Asia, but mainly in the Northern part of Laos and Vietnam. Unlike the Lao population, the Tai Dam community does not practice Buddhism but a cult of ancestors and spirits (phi). This research is based on several fieldtrips conducted between 2008 and 2013 in five villages of North and Central Laos. Two of these villages will be discussed as examples of Tai Dam recent migrations: Houay Yong (Houa Phan Province) and Thongnamy (Bolikhamsay Province).

Houay Yong is a small village in the mountains of Houa Phan Province, close to the Vietnamese border. Its inhabitants consider themselves as Tai Dam, or more exactly Tai Wat, the Tai Dam originate from Muang Wat (Yen Chau) in Vietnam3. The history of the village has been shaped by migration. The first inhabitants came from Vietnam because of Chinese invasion (Hô) in the Sip Song Chau Tai (Tai feudal states) (Tappe & Petit, 2012: 3-4, 8-9). After the colonial pacification of the region, some Tai Wat living in Vietnam moved to Houay Yong in order to settle with parents and avoid
heavy taxes imposed by the colonial power. More came between 1951 and 1953, fleeing the hostilities of the first Indochina war. Although migrations between Yen Chau and Houay Yong stopped after the conflict, some inhabitants of Houay Yong were quickly back on the roads of migration. A first migration took place in 1998 as a consequence of the policy of resettlement of highland people in the plains, initiated by the government in 1989 (Tappe & Petit, 2012: 13-14). The second began in 2000, bringing over the years 60 families of Houay Yong to the village of Thongnamy in Central Laos. Compared to Houay Yong, Thongnamy is considered by Tai Wat as a “developed” place, with water supply and electricity, alongside the National Road 13. A third flux of migration involved mainly younger people working in factories in the capital Vientiane to support their family budget (Tappe & Petit, 2012: 14-15).

When questioned about their origins, most adults in Houay Yong and Thongnamy mention that their Vietnamese ancestors originated from Yen Chau in Vietnam. Situated close to the Vietnamese border, Tai Wat of Houay Yong have frequent contacts with Tai Dam from Vietnam through traders crossing the frontiers, visits to relatives, and more recently, new media. Not completely disconnected from their homeland, the Tai Dam in Laos remain very attached to Northern Vietnam which they consider as their homeland, where “real Tai Dam” live, with “real traditions”. As this paper will develop, one of the main influences of migration on culture and identity in Laos is the idealisation of the Tai Dam community in Vietnam, which, from the Laos point of view, embody the authentic Tai Dam culture and identity.

III. Music and migration

The song genre khap of the Tai Dam ethnic group is a monodic form, sometimes close to recitative. It can be considered as a singing technique made of a few identical principles present at each interpretation: a fixed structure, some poetic rhymes, and a melodic pattern used as a model and around which the singer creates his song. It exists in several musical patterns, varying according to the original region of its users. For example, Tai Wat (Tai Dam from Muang Wat) sing khap Tai Wat. Of course with migrations and sharing phenomenon, a model is not limited to its original region, but seems to remain linked to a specific identity.

The impact of migration on musical practices will be approached under the three main axes brought to light during fieldwork: the idealisation of the Tai Dam community in Vietnam, the relative isolation of the Tai Dam in Laos from the main community in Vietnam, and a new media very popular in villages of Laos—the VCD.

1. Vocabulary of Authenticity

Tai Dam in Vietnam are considered as a model, a reference, by the community of Laos. In the villages where the research took place, the community settled in Vietnam is often referred as Tai Dam the the or Tai Wat the the: “real Tai Dam”, “real Tai Wat”. An old informant explained that he uses those terms because Tai Wat from Vietnam are not, according to him, influenced by other cultures. The son of the head of the village of Houay Yong once declared, “you’ve never heard real khap Tai Wat”. For him, real khap Tai Wat are like the songs that can be heard in Vietnam: repartee songs and love songs, two kind of khap that ask a great mastering of the art of singing and are less and less performed in the Tai Dam community of Laos.

This idealisation of Tai Dam singing in Vietnam is also embodied by the notion of muan, often used by informants to describe the differences between khap Tai Dam from Vietnam and Laos. Khap Tai Dam from Vietnam is always considered as more muan than the one in Laos. The term muan refers to an activity, which is fun, good, appropriate, attractive, and realised in the proper way. Concerning Tai Dam of Vietnam, two elements are considered as more muan: their language, and singing. Indeed, Tai Dam speaking accents can sometime strongly vary according to the region. Moreover, Tai Dam in Vietnam use Vietnamese words in their language, and Lao words are mixed with the Tai Dam language on the other side of the frontier. Tai Dam speech of Vietnam is considered as sweet and nice, while the one of Laos is described as hard and crude (siang tat, hard/chopped sounds). The khap performance in Vietnam itself is also considered as more muan, as the interpretations follow the aesthetic criteria of the khap Tai Dam: continuous flow of words, creativity and capacity of improvisation, use of metaphors and rhymes.
2. A Fragmented Community

While having an important impact on the perception and description of Tai Dam identity and cultural practices in Laos, migration also has a more direct impact on musical practices.

Despite their presence in every interview, questions of identity or history of the community, migration and the Vietnamese origins of the group are hardly mentioned in the khap Tai Dam of Laos. Most singers were born in Laos or were very young at the time of the migrations. Moreover, although practiced by both genders, khap Tai Dam are mainly performed by women in the villages studied. However, the knowledge about the history of the community seems to be men’s business, as those topics are generally approached in social settings from which women are absent (generals are, for example, separated during meals and rituals) (Tappe & Petit, 2012: 8). Traditional singing is not used as a tool for the transmission of village history. Performed during feasts and celebrations, the khap rather plays the roles of entertainment, social linkage and source of advice for younger generations.

Contemporary economic migrations, in the other hand, are more often discussed in khap Tai Dam. During the Tai Dam New Year in 2012, the singer Nguan from Houay Yong performed a khap Tai Wat explaining the recent development of the village, and the reasons some people left for Thongnany while others decided to stay and develop the village.

The most direct impacts of migrations on musical practices are in fact mainly coming from the fragmentation of the Tai Dam community in Laos and its small size compared to the important Tai Dam community still present in Vietnam6. This relative isolation, combined with local migrations of young people working in the cities and economic migrations to bigger multi-ethnic villages such as Thongnany, have affected today’s musical practices and their survival.

The variety of musical instruments used in Tai Dam villages of Laos has been influenced by past and present migrations. Although the use and type of instrumental accompaniment varies according to the region (some Tai Dam sing a cappella, while other use the free reed pipe pii or the mouth organ khaen), the number and variety of musical instruments seems less in Laos6. Unlike khap singing, the practice of instruments requires a specific training, and most of them are reserved for men. In the villages studied, musicians are very few, and so are the instrument makers, who grow old, often without finding any successor for their activity. Thus, in the villages of Laos, the presence of an instrumental accompaniment varies more according to the availability of musicians and instruments than according to the taste of the singer. Although other factors are involved in the limitation of instrumental accompaniment (local traditions, lack of interest from younger generations, and so on), the fragmentation of the Tai Dam community in Laos and the migration of teenagers to the cities have had a direct impact on the availability of musical instruments and their variety in the villages studied.

The musical patterns used as frameworks for the construction of the songs, also seem to be limited by the separation of Tai Dam in Laos from the main community of Vietnam. While the singing in Vietnam reveals numerous melodic patterns in the construction of khap Tai Dam, only four were heard during the fieldwork conducted in Laos between 2008 and 2013. Two of these were recorded in Tai Dam villages, and two in Tai Wat villages, where one of the models is now only performed by a handful of elders and is close to disappearing.

Finally, transnational but even more national migrations, along with the arrival of new media and the multiethnic context of some villages, has contributed to a disaffection of younger people for Tai Dam traditional practices such as singing, and the slow disappearance of genres such as love songs and repartee songs7. Working in textile or ice factories of Vientiane, teenagers are constantly in contact with the Lao and Thai pop music that they watch on television and sing at the karaoke. While most of the traditional Lao singing (khap lam Lao) can be found in a pop version with faster rhythms, addition of electric instruments and the beat box, khap Tai Dam, with its non-measured rhythms, is hardly capable of being modernized and broadcasted in a more attractive and popular version. Living away from the village, young city workers lose the traditional apprenticeship mechanisms, based on memorizing the melodic model and imitation. Combined with the spread of new media and literacy, local migrations have also led to a deep modification of musical transmission, such as the transmission of the musical patterns for example, that used to be implicitly learned by listening to other singers. Musical patterns now tend to be explicitly taught by a teacher. Although younger people are encouraged to learn the khap by elders in their families, there are no specific organisations or structures developed to safeguard and promote traditional music. Khap Tai Dam can be performed by anyone in
the community. There are thus no specialised families, clans or guilds that could supervise the apprenticeship and safeguard its traditions.

According to the head of the village of Ser complaining about the disaffection of teenagers for traditions, the Tai Dam community in Vietnam possesses more resources to safeguard traditions, such as cultural centres, frequent performances, trainings, and books. “Here, we have nothing to attract younger people and show them traditions. Teenagers are attracted by what they listen on new media and have less contacts with elders, so those cannot transmit their knowledge about music”.

While the nature of Vietnamese infrastructures cannot be confirmed, it shows once again the status of the model of authenticity filled by the Tai Dam community of Vietnam, from the Laos point of view. The idealisation of the Tai Dam community of Vietnam, deeply influences the discourse and representation of culture in Tai Dam villages of Laos. Having arrived in the villages in the wake of electricity, a new media produced in Vietnam plays an important role in the diffusion of those idealised images of cultural practices in Vietnam: the vcd of Khap Tai Dam. Very popular in Laos, this media could also lead to a re-evaluation about the limits of melodic patterns and the younger generation’s disaffection for traditional singing.

3. Inspiring Videos, the VCD of Khap Tai Dam from Vietnam.

Video cds of Khap Tai Dam are produced by local firms in North Vietnam. They can be found easily by Tai Dam of Laos in the local markets or directly in Vietnam by crossing the nearby border. In general, the videos show one or two mo-khap (khap singers), performing a khap Tai Dam in front of a traditional house or surrounded by verdant paddy fields. The singers wear traditional Tai Dam clothes and hairstyles. The setting is bucolic, showing traditional dresses, houses, instruments and handicrafts.

Video clips on the vcds showing standing performers in a meticulous setting, are far from the usual circumstances of live interpretations in Laos, often performed by a drunk singer seated among his audience during a festive meal and surrounded by dishes’ noises and conversations. This aesthetic of the vcds confirms (or even contributes to create), from the Laos point of view, the image of Tai Dam from Vietnam: traditional and authentic.

The head of the village of Ser explained in 2011, that people were listening to vcds of Khap from Vietnam to be reminded of the “real culture of Tai Dam”. They like to play them to the guests, to show what they consider to be the authentic culture their group.

As well as being a symbol of cultural authenticity, the vcds from Vietnam have a direct influence on cultural practices in Laos. With their elaborated lyrics, they inspire the mo-khap from Laos. In every village visited, singers borrowed lyrics of the khap from vcds to create their own compositions. The inspiration of those new media is not limited to music. Clothes worn by the singers become models as explained by Noi, a Tai Dam singer from the village of Na Kai:

“We’ve learned by the vcds how to make our traditional clothes and hairstyles. Since we live in Laos, we dress like Lao people. But we want to keep our culture and traditions, and like to wear those clothes.”

Moreover, the portable and replayable format of the media itself allows high quality singing to enter every home, where it will touch easily the younger children of the household who hardly participate to the celebrations where khap is performed. vcds can also be bought by teenagers working in the city, allowing them to keep in touch with the singing of their community. While implying modifications in the traditional transmission mecanisms, vcds contribute to the implicit apprenticeship of the song and allow its pursuance in a period where younger people have little interest in traditional practices.

IV. Conclusions

The Tai Dam in Vietnam are considered a model of authenticity by the community settled in Laos; and this idealised image is nothing but reinforced by the vcds of khap produced in Vietnam. However, the appearance of these new media that arrived with electricity few years ago also marks a new cultural link between the Tai Dam communities of Laos and Vietnam. vcds hold an ambivalent place in cultural relations between Laos and Vietnam by fulfilling a cultural gap, while giving an idealised image of Tai Dam culture in Vietnam, rich and embellished.
Migration has mainly influenced these musical practices as it has cut off the Tai Dam settled in Laos from the heart of the community in Vietnam, who are larger in numbers and culturally stronger. Facing new issues such as economic migration and influence of new media is a different challenge for a community much smaller than the one in Vietnam. Beyond musical limitations on diversity of instruments and the monopoly of a few melodic patterns, migration has influenced the image and discourse of the migrant community in Laos about itself, and about the original community of Vietnam. But even though marked by migration, Tai Dam music in Laos has maintained its essential elements of melodic model, structure, and poetry, remaining *khap Tai Dam*, although sometimes considered as imperfect compared to the singing of Vietnam.

**Endnotes**

1 The research was conducted in the villages of Houay Yong, Na Kai, Ser, and Xieng Khoun (Province of Houa Phan), and the village of Thongnamy (Bolikhamsay Province), between 2008 and 2013.

2 Hundreds of Tai Dam settled in Des Moines Iowa after 1975. A part of this community is still very active in the preservation of Tai Dam cultural practices. A Tai Dam Cultural Centre (a replica of a traditional Tai Dam house) was built in 2003 for the promotion and safeguard of Tai Dam singing, dancing, food and writing system.

3 The denomination Tai Wat is itself marked by migration. Besides referring to Muang Wat, the name of Tai Wat would come from an answer given by their ancestors to the native community of their region in Vietnam questioning about their plan of settlement or migration. Their answer was “tham wat” (“in an non-definitive way”): they did not know if and how long they would stay (Tappe & Petit 2012: 4).

4 The first Tai Dam settled in Thongnamy always mentioned the forbidding of slash and burn agriculture decided by local authorities in 2000 as a reason for their migration (Petit, 2006:32).

5 It is very hard to find reliable sources of Tai Dam population estimates in Vietnam, which is more often counted up as a part of the Tai ethnic group (including Tai Deng, Tai Khao and Tai Dam, three Tai speaking groups considered as culturally close). Hardy and Nguyên (2004: 429) estimate the Tai group in Vietnam at 1,328,725 persons, while Stuart-Fox (2010: 334) evokes 80,000 Tai Dam in Laos.

6 Several instruments, such as the mouth harp *heun* and the fiddle *soo*, are mentioned by the informers but absent in the Tai Dam villages studied. However, they seem present in Vietnam, as suggested by the informants of Laos as well as video clips of *khap Tai Dam* from Vietnam.

7 It should be noted, however, that migration is not the only reason explaining the disappearance of those songs. Moreover, the Tai Dam community of Laos has also developed new kinds of songs, linked for example to national politics or the recent development of villages.

8 The spread of recorded songs and literacy modifies the practice of singing apprenticeship based on oral tradition. Musical transmission tends to become shorter and more punctual, with the help of writing or recording in the learning process.

**References**


In September 2013, the Singapore Malay Heritage Centre (MHC) presented a three-week-long festival highlighting Malay culture. The festival marked the centre’s first anniversary after its recent facelift and inclusion as a Heritage Institute under the National Heritage Board. A highlight of the 2013 Malay Culture Fest was a performance of main ‘teri, a Kelantanese Malay healing ritual. Main ‘teri has been well documented in ethnographic literature (Kessler 1977; Laderman 1991; Hardwick 2009, 2013a, 2013b, 2014) and continues to be used to treat psychological and spiritual illness in rural Kelantan. The underlying philosophy of main ‘teri, the concept of angin, and its connection to Malay cosmology, is shared and understood with varying degrees across Nusantara. The MHC’s programming team concluded that a historically and culturally contextualized presentation of a main ‘teri healing ritual would provide a means to explore the theme of adat, Malay customary practices, and support the MHC’s proposed special museum exhibit of Ilham Alam: Nature and Healing in The Malay World.

Singapore’s arts and culture landscape is highly regulated. Policies and funds are under the purview of statutory boards such as the National Arts Council and National Heritage Board. These statutory boards determine how funds are disbursed. Applying for state support requires knowledge of the bureaucratic framework, and few artists or arts and culture organizations are able to benefit from the many grants and funds offered. Funds are often denied to artists and organizations whose works are deemed controversial.

Singapore operates along a racial system whereby an individual’s ethnicity is determined by the father’s race. The state defined racial composition of Singapore’s population is Chinese, Malay, Indian and Others. As art and culture activities are managed through state defined quotas, many artists from the minority Malay and Indian communities are at a disadvantage. Malay cultural groups in Singapore suffer from a lack of state and public support. The majority of Malay cultural groups who are unable to obtain government funding generate income as wedding entertainers and cultural programmes educators.

National events like the National Day Parade and Chingay provide an opportunity for many Singapore Malay cultural groups to perform. However, these presentations often fail to represent the diversity of artistic expression that exists within the local Malay society. As cultural activists desire to generate income to provide for their members’ livelihood, they tend to adhere to the requests of national festival organizers who lack knowledge of the heterogeneity of Singaporean Malay experiences. Thus, the performances created for national events are often stereotyped presentations of Singapore Malay culture that are entertaining, colourful, but superficial.

The MHC realizes the importance of providing more depth in the presentation of Malay cultural activities to engage an educated and critical public. The rising awareness of heritage conservation and promotion in Singapore has led to a demand for presentations of Malay culture that move beyond weddings, Chingay, and the National Day Parade. In response to this demand, the MHC has begun to implement new programmes including monthly outdoor performances, a public lecture series, regular gallery activities, activity books, special exhibitions dedicated to Malay history, heritage and culture, and the Malay Culture Fest. These initiatives were created to provide cultural revitalization in a city-state that has neglected cultural expression in favour of economic gains.

Conceptualized as a month-long celebration of the centre’s reopening in 2012, the Malay Culture Fest has become the signature event of the MHC. Some of the festival highlights have included open-air screenings of early Malay language films, a kuda kepang performance, a night of Bunga Tanjung (re-enactment of a Malay cabaret), and the representation of a main ‘teri ritual.

In Kelantan, main ‘teri is often organized when Western medicine has failed to cure a patient. Angin, or wind, is one of the four humors understood to compose the human body, and is a term used by Kelantanese Malays to describe internal human desire. Symptoms of blocked wind are similar to those
of psychological illnesses or depression. The goal of a *main ‘teri* performance is assess to what type of blocked wind is causing a patient’s affliction, and to facilitate its release through performance (Hardwick 2014). As the museum exhibit, *Ilham Alam: Nature and Healing in The Malay World*, was also launched during the Malay Culture Fest, the MHC decided that a *main ‘teri* performance would provide an embodied illustration of the subject of the special exhibition.

![Plate 1. Tok ‘Teri Hassan bin Sammah sings over patient Awang bin Mat Ali in front of the gallery of the Malay Heritage Centre (Photo: Malay Heritage Centre, 2013)](image)

MHC organizers sought an ensemble that would present a *main ‘teri* healing ritual as it is still performed in Kelantanese villages. While it would have been more convenient to work with government and cultural organizations in Malaysia, the MHC felt that many Malaysian cultural troupes tend to tailor their performances to meet specific national and commercial goals. MHC staff members chose to collaborate with Patricia Hardwick, an anthropologist and folklorist who has conducted a decade of research with *main ‘teri*, *mak yong*, and *wayang kulit* performers in Kelantan to develop a three day presentation of Kelantanese folk arts.

The proposition to include a *main ‘teri* as a festival highlight raised several concerns. *Main ‘teri* is not practiced by members of the Singapore Malay community, thus few Singaporean cultural activists or academics are familiar with the healing ritual. A lack of knowledge about *main ‘teri* led to questions of its relevance and appropriateness at a Singapore festival. The MHC senior management and board of directors also voiced concerns regarding the 1991 ban on the traditional performing arts by PAS, the ruling party of Kelantan, who claims the arts promote polytheism. The directors questioned how local audiences would receive these performances. There were also concerns regarding whether an observation of trance would affect audience members, particularly those sensitive to the more esoteric elements of Malay cultural practices. The directors were also concerned about audience members who might themselves practice some sort of “magic” “disturbing” the performance. These concerns led to the General Manager of the MHC to suggest the imposition of age limits and pre-registration.

To address these concerns, the MHC’s programming team decided to stage the *main ‘teri* as a representation of the ritual rather than an actual ritual. Interestingly, the concerns of the MHC board of directors were in contrast to those of the Kelantanese practitioners. While the board worried about the ritual, the Kelantanese performers were debating how to create the appearance of efficacious healing without actual patients. As it would have been unethical to ask a patient to travel with the performance troupe, a seasoned performer, Awang bin Mat Ali (Abang Mat) volunteered to pose as patient. As he was not ill, Abang Mat worried that he would be unable to obtain a state of *lupa*, or forgetting, in which the inner wind of the patient is released and takes over his or her actions. Trained in the oral tradition and
singing style of wayang kulit Siam, Abang Mat improvised his performance as patient. In doing so, Abang Mat bent the frame of main 'teri performance. In a typical main 'teri healing performance it is the Tok Teri and the Minduk who act out a negotiation from sickness to health in highly coded metaphoric language over the body of silent patient. Unable to achieve lupa, Abang Mat, the patient-performer, chose to sing, narrating and dramatizing his “cure”.

Most of the rural Kelantanese practitioners of main 'teri have little understanding of the documentation and regulations required for an event sponsored by a Singaporean state institution. We worked to translate village construction methods into architectural drawings, memorised mantras and tales into scripts, and the natural materials usually acquired from village gardens into specific store-lists. Many ritual items had to be imported with special permission from Malaysia. Restaging a main 'teri in Singapore meant that limitations were imposed on performance duration and composition. In rural Kelantan, a main 'teri usually lasts three nights, but Singaporean audiences are accustomed to shorter performances. In order to capture a Singaporean audience for three nights, it was necessary to offer a different type of performance each night. The first night included a ritual to open the performance space and a wayang kulit performance of the Blood of Hanuman, a branch story from the Ramayana. The second night featured a lecture by Patricia Hardwick and a main 'teri demonstration. The third night, a performance of the mak yong tale Dewa Muda contextualized within a main 'teri ritual. This format allowed the Kelantanese performers to demonstrate their artistic versatility as well as the interconnected nature of three different performing arts often combined during ritual healing events. This performance structure also helped convince MHC senior management that the cost and effort put into inviting the main 'teri ensemble offered a variety of activities, and was “value for money”.

The event was designed so that members of the public could participate in a week of performance preparation. These participatory events included the construction of the traditional stage or panggung, cooking, and the creation of ritual offerings. The MHC invited student scouts to help in the construction of the stage. Practitioners demonstrated and explained traditional building techniques including the proper way to lay thatch, notch bamboo, and tie together structures with rattan. School children were invited to interview Wan Midin bin Wan Majid, the troupe leader for class projects. Members of Singapore’s wayang kulit community also came to learn performance techniques from the Kelantanese troupe. By creating programs that involved the community in the preparation for the performances the MHC simulated the community involvement important to these events in a village context and was able to demonstrate the Malay spirit of gotong royong.

The MHC estimates that over one thousand audience members attended the three nights of performances. This presentation was the first of its kind in Singapore and its successful implementation has stimulated dialogues on cultural tourism, conservation and censorship of the arts within the frameworks of Singapore’s cultural institutions. Given the controversial status of mak yong, wayang kulit, and main 'teri in Kelantan, the MHC found it surprising that the Singapore performances did not provoke criticism from more conservative members of Singapore’s Malay Muslim community. The overwhelmingly positive community response to the event demonstrates that there exists an interest in continued explorations into the diverse expressions of Malay identity and culture in Singapore and has opened up the opportunity for the MCH to continue to push for the future development of innovative programmes.

Endnotes


References


MOHD ANIS MD NOR  
(University of Malaya, Malaysia)

INTERCULTURAL ENCOUNTERS: RONGGENG DANCE OF THE ORAK LAWOI

Intercultural encounters assume that people from different cultures may not only work together successfully but may also harmonize different aesthetic, social, and belief systems, creating fusions or hybrids that are whole and unified, evolving something new from a basis of mutual respect and reciprocity (Schechner, 2006: 304). These encounters are between or among two or more cultures emphasizing connectivity or shared experience that come in at least two varieties, integrative and disruptive. The integrative variety assumes that people from different cultures may work together successfully harmonizing different aesthetic, social, and belief systems by creating fusions or hybrid that are a cohesive entity. The interlocutors are interrogators who work at the level of public performance. By the same token, intercultural performances may not aim for integration but disruptively unloaks the parodies of power relations. Research into the artistic processes of intercultural encounters can either be vertical or horizontal. The goal of vertical research is to discover performances of performance fragments that have survived from very early time. Horizontal research compares the codified practices of contemporary performances to identify what is general or universal (Schechner, 2006: 263). Hence, integrative and disruptive varieties may play mutual or adverse roles in the constructions of intercultural performance.

Intercultural encounters are entrenched within the philosophy of interculturalism, which advocates exchanges between cultural groups within a society. Although states may institute interculturalism as policies, which seek to encourage the socialisation of citizens of different ethnic origins as an instrument to fight racism and overcome prejudice against others, interculturalism may also be a way of approaching things with an inherent openness to expose the cultures of the "other" for an ensuing dialogue. These encounters may become a very powerful tool in enhancing fusion of commonalities of cultures in constructing a new world culture, philosophizing harmony and accordace through interaction, merging and blending of cultures creating new cultures alongside the existing ones focusing to possible trajectories for the near future (Nor, 2007: 109).

Ronggeng Dance of the Orak Lawoi

From the abovementioned discussion on intercultural encounters and causalities for intercultural representations, this paper aims to deliberate on the performative dialogics of intercultural encounters in ronggeng dance during the pelacak ritual of the Orak Lawoi (semi-nomadic sea people) in Phuket from 2013 to 2014. Though the primary purpose of the Orak Lawoi’s celebration of the semi-annual pelacak ritual serves to venerate safe passage to the recently departed souls to their final resting place in Gunung Jerai (Kedah peak) located in northern state of Kedah in Malaysia, the ceremonial space of placak offers interstitial moments for the Orak Lawoi communities to perform a “newer” representation of ronggeng dance within the conventional practices of “traditional” ronggeng repertoires. The Orak Lawoi communities in Sapam, Ko Sireh, and Rawai on the western and southwest coast of Phuket perform ronggeng for enjoyment to celebrate placak, spontaneously with songs, music and dancing on the fringe of the ritual space as well as in the circumambulation parade with the placak boat prior to it being launched to sea at daybreak in the following morning. Ronggeng dance is performed separately from the rituals of pelacak including berana responsorial singing accompanied by several frame drums (berana). Dancers perform circumambulatory or pusing berana around ritual and sacred objects over the course of an evening of berana ritual. Ronggeng, which is unrelated to the ritual berana performances, is performed as a social dance and a musical form for entertainment and enjoyment. Placed within the spectrum of spiritual offering of the pelacak, represented by the pelacak boat full of ritual items to accompany the recently departed spirits out to the sea, ronggeng dance stands out as social entertainment exclusively for the ronggeng practitioners.
whose numbers are greatly reduced as ronggeng today does not attract a great deal of attention from the younger crowd. Ronggeng has been overtaken by Thai popular songs including central Thai luk thung melodies and disco dancing.²

Traditional ronggeng dance repertories of the Orak Lawoi were greatly influenced by the Malay ronggeng social dances of the pre second world war and the Malay gramophone popular songs of the 1950s. Between the 1950s and the 1960s, repertories from ronggeng choreographed for Bangsawan and Malay movies in Singapore were copied and performed by the ronggeng patrons and the taxi dancers in amusement centres in North Sumatera, Malaya and Singapore. The new choreographed form of ronggeng social dance became part of the standard repertoires of the ronggeng in the Malay speaking communities in Southern Thailand (Nor, 1993: 42-45). However, ronggeng of the Orak Lawoi was least affected by the choreographed ronggeng dance style in contrast to ronggeng in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat in southeast Thailand. This is primarily due to Orak Lawoi’s isolation from the influence of mainstream Malay movies and popular songs. As strand dwellers living as minorities in Phuket, the Orak Lawoi did not have access to Malay movies and the changes that had taken place in Malay popular culture since the end of the Second World War. The Orak Lawoi’s ronggeng dance and music repertoires closely follow the Andaman ronggeng, pronounced as rong ngeng by the Malay-Thai speakers, which came about through the early migration of ronggeng from Malaya in mid 1930s. It is also referred to as rong ngeng tanyong referring to the cape or Tanjung in Lanta island where ronggeng began in the 1940s.³ The Andaman ronggeng dance has kept to the conventional structured movement system in a cycle of repertoires emulating the conventions of traditional Malay ronggeng as practiced in North Sumatera and Malaya. However, the conventional Malayan ronggeng dance cycle within the progressive order of repertoires of senandung, lagu mak inang, lagu dua or joget, and terancang or patam-patam could, to some extent be observed in the ronggeng dance of the Orak Lawoi.

---

**Figure 1. Malayan Rong Ngeng dance cycle**

1. Senandung or Gunung Sayang or Asli
2. Lagu Mak Inang
3. Terancang or Patam-Patam
4. Lagu Dua or Joget or Tandak

---
Malayan and Orak Lawoi Ronggeng Dance

A significant aspect of Orak Lawoi ronggeng which differentiate it from the Malayan ronggeng dance is in the wai khru (paying respect and honouring the teacher) at the beginning of each performance consisting of three main consecutive tunes, lagu dua, mak inang and burung putih, and the closing rendition of lagu tabik (salutation). Within these three consecutive tunes, ronggeng dancers may choose to dance or to remain seated before the rest of the ronggeng tunes are played. The tunes for the major section of ronggeng dance at the conclusion of wai khru may consist of a juxtaposed collection of ronggeng songs from the Malayan ronggeng songs often with mixed tunes and not necessarily played within the progressive order of the Malayan ronggeng. For example, the repertoires which form the bulk of ronggeng dance and music of the Orak Lawoi ronggeng may consist of the following tunes randomly played without specific order.

1. Lagu Dua (wai khru)
2. Mak Inang (wai khru)
3. Burung Putih (wai khru)
4. Canggong (inang)
5. Mak Inang (inang)
6. Cinta Sayang (senandung/inang)
7. Sinandong (senandung)
8. Kayuh Sampan (senandung/asli)
9. Tarok Tok Tek (inang/canggong)
10. Sinadong Sayang (senandung/inang)
11. Anak Ayam/Ayam Didik (inang/pari)
12. Sapa Itu (inang)
13. Lagu Dua (lagu dua)
14. Lagu Tabik (closing song)

In contrast, the Malayan ronggeng dance cycle of repertoires begin with the senandung or asli tunes, identified by an eight-beat phrase in 4/4 time where the first four-beat phrase has a fixed pattern while the second four beats are usually improvised but are end-accented by a gong beat on the fourth and eight beat. When danced, the senandung or asli utilizes the lenggang patah sembilan dance motifs considered to be the most refined of ronggeng dance motifs due to the curling and flexing of fingers on the fourth and eight beats while the dancers dance in a slow, pedestrian motion. In North Sumatra, this musical form is also known as gunung sayang. In Malaysia, however, a variation of the gunung sayang is found in the musical traditions of the Malay and Baba communities in Malacca, Penang, and Singapore, where it is known as dondang sayang or love song (Nor, 2011: 52-53).

After a series of senandung tunes, the Malayan ronggeng would play several inang songs for the ronggeng dancers. Etymologically, the word inang, which literally means wet nurse, appears as tarian mak inang, or “the dance of wet nurse/nursemaid” in the collective ronggeng repertoires. The dance consists of walking motions either in relatively slow or in fast tempo with the arms swaying back and forth with the hands folding in and out gesturing stylized movements. Although the term mak inang place a special reference to the lady-like qualities of the wet nurse-dancers, the dance itself eventually took form into a folk dance when men and women dance to the tunes of the inang songs. Dancing the inang is relatively easy, its rhythm consisting of a variation of the 4/4 beat pattern, which is accented at the end by the gong, could be performed in relatively slow or fast tempo. A fast-paced inang is also known as masri, “with a rhythmic pattern similar to the Middle Eastern beledi dancing,” (Tan, 2007: 293) Masri as a variant of Inang manifest the eclectic nature of the inang genre embracing
a rhythmic style common in Middle Eastern music. Dancers face one another while making turns and dancing in circular path around each other (Nor, 2011: 51-52).

Lagu dua songs are played at the end of the senandung tunes, sometimes with an eclectic collection of musical instruments (violin, accordion, drums) and tunes borrowed from Portuguese branyo and the stylistic singing of mata kantiga originating from the sixteenth and seventeenth century Malacca. Although the performative past of lagu dua are rooted in branyo and Kristang (old Portuguese dialect) lyrics, branyo has changed considerably today “sandwiched between latest hits and played by pop bands using electric guitar, keyboards, and trap set (replacing the old-fashion hybrid ensemble of violin and Malay rebana)” (Sarkissian, 2000: 108). The ronggeng dance in lagu dua represents the archaic tandak and joget shared similar performative styles of singing and exchanging of quatrains (pantun) between performers, which could be sung to the accompaniment of drums and gong, which provide rhythm and agogic accents. The singers-dancers dance simple steps of walking and skipping in between singing the quatrains. The Malay pantuns are improvised stanzas similar to the mata kantiga, a duelling genre of exchanged quatrains sung to the accompaniment of branyo music. Sarkissian clarifies, “with the exception of language, branyo and mata kantiga are – today, at least – virtually interchangeable with the Malay genres joget and dondang sayang, respectively,” (Sarkissian, 2000: 181). The evolution of tandak infused by the eclectic music of branyo and the stylistic singing of mata kantiga has made joget and lagu dua synonymous. The joget, known as lagu dua in the Sumatran ronggeng is a fast-paced dance with duple and triple beat divisions enabling dancers to dance and sing in duets or in the free folk style of dancing in rows or in groups making it one of the most sought after repertoires in the Malayan ronggeng during its heyday of taxi dancing in the 1930s to 1960s (Nor, 2011: 48-50).

The final section of the Malay ronggeng dance cycle is terancang or patam-patam. Terancang is commonly performed in the Malayan ronggeng while in North Sumatera, it is patam-patam. Both signifies the end of the lagu dua or joget repertoires as the ronggeng dancers improvise skip-jump steps, with one foot alternately gesturing forward diagonal movements in front of the supporting leg. Patam-patam on the other hand is performed for men displaying improvised silat (martial arts) movements individually or in a group performance.

Altering Ronggeng Dance of the Orak Lawoi

The celebration of the pelacak biannual festivals cantered around the full moons in May and October, gave the Orak Lawoi strand dwellers a communal space, autonomous and imagined as the exotic sea-gypsies by the Thai nation-state and commoditized as tourist attractions by the Tourism Authority of Thailand. As an intercultural discourse, ronggeng dance of the Orak Lawoi signifies performative autonomies and cultural signifiers segregating them, ethnically and socio-religiously from the Thai-Buddhist communities in Phuket. These autonomies existed through time tested performative reconstructions of the music and dance by the beholders of the ronggeng dance tradition, which are almost entirely free from the mediation of the nation-state. It not only deals with issues of performing and choreographing dance for inter-cultural dialogues but also acknowledges diversities as substantial constructs in dance discourses. The downside of intercultural influence is in the new construction dance movements during the pelacak ritual. It has been observed that intercultural engagement in the ronggeng dance challenges the very existence of ronggeng as a tradition for pelacak celebration when relatively younger performers can no longer perform Andaman ronggeng dance techniques such as melayah or melapai (lowering, decentering and extending the body forward and backwards towards the floor), languid arm sways and pedestrian steps, and terancang (side skips and forward diagonal foot gesture), which are the kinesthetic signifiers of the Andaman ronggeng or ronggeng tanyong dance styles. Instead, ronggeng dancers have copied ramwong staccato foot-steps and circular hand gestures, eliminating terancang (side skips and forward diagonal foot gesture) all together.
Hitherto, in spite of its intercultural origin and essentiality of ronggeng as secular entertainment in the pelacak ritual ceremonies, ronggeng dance has given way to disco dancing, luk thung and mor lam music, and ramwong dance. The dominance of ramwong dance with luk thung and mor lam music amongst the younger generation of Orak Lawoi during pelacak have altered the way ronggeng is performed. The ramwong dance, which had evolved from the ramthone dance influenced by the thone drum (a goblet drum with a ceramic or wooden body) has greater popularity than the older ronggeng. Within the ronggeng dance repertoires, ramwong dance steps may be performed in slow and fast tempo or vice versa, regulated by the thone drums, small cymbals (ching) and castanets (krab) giving greater flexibility for the dancers to improvise. Loud luk thung and/or mor lam music and ramwong dance have overpowered the sounds of berana frame drums, subduing the ronggeng songs and the traditional styles of ronggeng dance.

In addition, waning interest on the Andaman ronggeng amongst the Orak Lawoi is further augmented with the disappearance of male and female dancers, which has now been replaced by katoey, the transgender woman or effeminate gay male. As a result, ronggeng dance resembled a fringe performance executed by effeminate males and transgendered dancers for the curious gazes of the younger generation of the Orak Lawoi. Ronggeng dance of the Orak Lawoi has now become a curiosity associated with restoring cultural memory by the Orak Lawoi during pelacak rather than celebrating a living tradition of the Orak Lawoi. Instigated by social-cultural necessity, ronggeng dance has undergone a new phase of intercultural encounter, altering its previous dance form and dancing style to fit into Thai movement nuances, hitherto transforming ronggeng into a “newer” structured movement system.

Intercultural Encounters

Even without state mediation, intercultural encounters in the Orak Lawoi ronggeng dance during pelacak have altered its performative autonomies by embracing Thai music and dance forms within the rubrics of Thai secular entertainment. The progressive cycle of wai khru, senandung, inang and lagu dua in Andaman ronggeng have given way to mainstream Thai performative folk culture of luk thung and/or mor lam music, and ramwong dance. The hybrid compositions of Andaman and Tanyong ronggeng dance continue to evolve from its Malayan affinities into a new crossbreed of ronggeng and ramwong dance. The ronggeng dance of the Orak Lawoi lingers as an imagined performative tradition of “exotic sea-gypsies” from the point of view of the Thai tourism industry whilst Thai folk dance and music traditions have reshaped ronggeng dance. Intercultural encounters have altered the fragmented histories of ronggeng into a discourse of Thai national heritage as the Orak Lawoi integrate the cultures of “others” whilst disrupting their shared experience as a marginalized community in Phuket.

Intercultural encounters have integrated Thai influence in ronggeng dance and disruptively unclad the parodies of power relations between Orak Lawoi minority and the Thai majority in Phuket. The vertical processes of artistic creation in present day ronggeng and the horizontal narrative of ronggeng as an Orak Lawoi performance tradition embrace all possibilities of dissent amongst the younger generation of Orak Lawoi. This may have been caused by a tremendous resistance by the younger generation of Orak Lawoi for being commoditized as the exotic “other” and remnants of a bygone past. Consequently they have arbitrarily become cultural ancillaries to Thai ramwong and luk thung rupturing the image of their primeval past and breaching the notion of timelessness in ronggeng dance and music. Bharucha poignantly points out, “while there are any number of reasons that can contribute to the voluntarist dynamics of intercultural encounters, interculturalism itself as a cultural phenomenon should not be reduced to a pre-existing beneficient state of being” (Bharucha, 2001:39). A shift in the time-frame of the Orak Lawoi have leveraged intercultural encounters in ronggeng dance to create a hybrid that continues to evolve.
Endnotes

1 This paper is part of the collaborative research undertaken by, Lawrence Ross, Premalatha Thiagarajan and Mohd Anis Md Nor from the University of Malaya from 2013-2015 funded by the University of Malaya Research Grant (UMRG-RP009A – 13HNE).

2 *Luk thung* or *pleng luk thung* (children of the fields) is one of the most popular forms of music found in Thailand, which typically reflect the everyday life among the rural poor and are sung in slow tempo with expressive vibrato singing style. Since the 1990s, *luk thung* and *mor lam* (a traditional form of song popular in Laos and Isan communities in Northeast Thailand) have come together to produce a new genre called *luk thung Isan* or *luk thung prayuk*, which incorporates the faster rhythms of *mor lam*.

3 Please refer Lawrence Ross’ doctoral thesis and article published in 2011 for more information on the migration of *ronggeng* from Malaya to Lanta Island in mid 1930s by Abu Qasim, the itinerant violinist from Malaya, and the formation of Andaman *rong ngeng*.

4 *Ramwong*, in which men and women dance in a circle, dates back to 1944 when Phibunsongkhram's wartime government introduced a suite of official dance songs to compete with the popularity of Western dances such as the foxtrot or waltz. Phibunsongkhram's patronage of *ramwong* and *ramthong* as a new Thai art form was significant in the creation of *ramwong* between 1945 and 1955 when the Thai Fine Arts Department was commissioned to create *ramwong* as a national social dance of Thailand.

References


NENENG YK LAHPAN  
(Monash University, Australia)

THE “NEW” MEANING OF THE OLD: LOCAL PERFORMING ARTS AND THE PROJECT OF IDENTITY IN INDONESIA

For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
The *Mek Mulung* is a traditional dance theatre style performance which incorporates dialogues, acting, singing, dancing, and playing of specific musical instruments. Presently, there is only one known performance group in Malaysia which is found in the village of Wang Tepus in the northern state of Kedah. As a secular performance where it is presented to celebrate ceremonies such as harvesting of their crops, weddings, and circumcisions, it has its entertaining value. As a ritualistic performance, it provides the community with opportunities for seeking treatment for various types of ailments. The traditional practice of restricting *Mek Mulung* performers to members of certain families in the village, and confining its performances to a particular area within the village of Wang Tepus may be the reason why it is less visible to the general public, and thus not familiar to the general population of Malaysia (Matusky & Tan, 1997; Ghulam-Sarwar, 2004; Wong, 2008; Madiha & Quayum, 2010). In fact, even those residing outside of Kedah, and possibly those outside Jitra, a small town closest to Wang Tepus, may not be aware of the existence of this unique traditional Malay theatre performance. The decline in the number of current performers/practitioners and lack of interest among the younger generation to replace them may slowly lead *Mek Mulung* towards extinction.

In recent years, efforts have been made by various groups to transfer *Mek Mulung* from a traditional village-based performance in Wang Tepus to that of a modern concert-hall presentation (Mohd Anis, 2001; Ellyna, 2002; Solehah, 2008; Rais, 2009). The PETRONAS Performing Arts Group (PPAG), a performing arts group based in Kuala Lumpur, has been instrumental in introducing *Mek Mulung* out of its exclusivity among village folks in Wang Tepus to the nation’s capital so it can be appreciated by a wider audience, especially theatre-goers who are more urbane, sophisticated, and cosmopolitan. Such efforts would be a positive approach towards ensuring its preservation, continuity, and ultimately its survival as one form of traditional folk performance which hopefully can be accorded the status as a cultural heritage.

Nonetheless, taking out *Mek Mulung* away from its original, local community base to that of a new and unfamiliar venue cannot avoid the possibility of adaptations and changes to various aspects of the performance, be it with the performance structure, costumes, props, music and songs, dances, and performers. This is unavoidable not only to generate and maintain audience interest but also to accommodate the capabilities of the professional performers which require them to master the skills within a short period of preparation in comparison to the village performers who take a few years to develop the characters which they play. A successful staging of *Mek Mulung* outside of its traditional context requires finding the right balance between maintaining its ‘authenticity’ and meeting audience expectations. According to Mohd Anis (2001),

“the central issue is the revitalization of … (these traditional arts) … and its survival in an environment that is most conducive. If theatre spaces and proscenium stages are to be the conduits for their survival, it should be deemed appropriate that (they) be allowed to move unhindered from the traditional performance spaces to the new performance space” (p. 241)

The first staging of *Cahaya Bulan* at the Dewan Filharmonik PETRONAS (DFP) in 2002 by the PPAG was followed by *Malim Bongsu* (2007), *Dewa Muda* (2010) and *Cahaya Bulan* (2011) before the PPAG was dissolved in 2012. As a pioneer of the reconstructed and concertized style *Mek Mulung*, the PPAG’s version has been influential in determining the form and structure of performances undertaken by other groups such as the National Arts Academy (ASWARA), a Kedah-
based performing arts group known as Angkatan Penggerak Warisan Budaya (AKRAB), and the Kedah Department of Culture and Arts (Jabatan Kebudayaan dan Kesenian Negeri Kedah or JKKN).

Thus, to what extent are the original characteristics of the performance maintained, and to what extent it involves a reinvention of the traditional performance? This paper focuses on the adaptations and changes to the performance structure of Mek Mulung to accommodate to the new venue and performance space as well as to audience expectations.

The Village Mek Mulung Performance

Mek Mulung is typically performed outdoors in a make-shift open stage or bangsal. Besides the four pillars which serve to support the roof, there is one pillar which has a special significance to the performers. Referred to as the Tiang Seri (the Main Pillar), this pillar is situated at the front facing the direction of sunrise between two other pillars. It is believed to have a spiritual connection with the people of Wang Tepus. A mat is spread out in the middle of the stage for the performers to sit or perform while facing the Tiang Seri and with their backs towards the audience. Towards the periphery of the stage are the musicians with their musical instruments (Figure 1). Musical instruments used are the Gendang Ibu, Gendang Anak, Semborong, Kecerek, Serunai, and Gong. The Mek Mulung music repertoire consists of instrumental music as well as sung songs. The Serunai provides the main melody in the instrumental music. Sung songs are the responsorial or the call-and-answer types. A soloist sings a phrase which is repeated by a chorus.

![Plate 1. The Village Mek Mulung Performance Space](image)

The Mek Mulung performers consisted of two main characters which are the Puteri (the Princess) and the Raja (the King). Other supporting characters include Inang (the Maids), Awang (the Servants) and Tok Wak (the Fortune Teller). Together, these characters act out the Mek Mulung stories while improvising jokes consisting of dialogues that can be understood by the local audience. It is believed that Mek Mulung comprises of about twenty original folk stories, but only about five or six are commonly performed, namely Cahaya Bulan, Malim Bongsu, Dewa Kaca, and Dewa Muda which depict local legends and myths.

When performing, the actors put on their own daily clothing, with the exception of the Raja who puts on a traditional Malay outfit complete with a headgear (tanjak or tengkolok) and a wrap-like piece (sampin) around his waist. The Raja may carry a traditional weapon, the keris, to complete the attire. The Puteri is easily identifiable from her baju kurung or kebaya outfit, while the Inang wears a sarong and a headscarf. The Awang puts on a sarong or kain pelikat with a white singlet top or regular
attire of shirt and pants. The *Awang* usually performs with a wooden mask covering his face and carries a *golok* (dagger). The dancers usually put on traditional Malay attire, either the *baju kurung* or *baju kebaya* complete with a headscarf.

There are no special props in a *Mek Mulung* performance, with the exception of the masks worn by *Awang*, weapons carried by the *Raja* and *Awang*, and a wooden stick carried by *Tok Wak*. The overall performance structure is maintained each time *Mek Mulung* is performed in the village with variations found only in the story line which thus differentiates one performance from another. Its three main components are the beginning, the body, and an ending. Figure 2 shows the sequential flow of the performance structure and what happens during each of the phases. It begins with (1) Pre-Opening phase, (2) Opening phase, (3) Summoning of servants, (4) Introducing and performing the Story, (5) Closing phase, and (6) Post-Closing phase with or without a trance healing component.

---

A: **PRE-OPENING**

1. Rituals to ensure the safety of the performance. Done under closed doors

B: **OPENING - The salutation and beginning music of each Mek Mulung Performance**

1. Bertaluh
2. Berteluk
3. Gerak Timpuh
4. 4 dances (*Puteri Melabak, Anak Mornora, Gambang, Sedayung*)
5. Berjalan ke Bilik Ayaq
6. Makan Pinang

C: **THE SERVANTS ARE SUMMONED**

1. In the absence of someone capable of performing *Puteri* role, the *Raja* will summon his servant first

D: **STORY IS INTRODUCED (PECAH LAKON)**

- Story commences

E: **CLOSING SONG**

F: **POST-CLOSING**

1. Rituals performed to ensure the safety of the performers after the performance

G: **TRANCE HEALING**

1. In the presence of a *Sambut Guru*, trance healing is done after the story ends.

---

Plate 2. Sequential Flow of *Mek Mulung* Performance Structure
The opening to every Mek Mulung performance consists of a series of music, songs and dances irrespective of the story line. The usual music sequence is the instrumental Bertabuh (Drum sequence) which signals the start of the performance with the performers taking their position around the perimeter of the performance space. This is followed by the performers moving towards the center of the space as the Bertabik song (Salutation piece) is sung to pay tribute to the spirits and ancestors guarding the performance space. This is immediately followed by the performers beginning the dancing in a sitting position and slowly getting up in the middle of the performance as the Gerak Timpu (Reverential position) song is played. Without any break in the singing, the performers continue their dancing in a circular formation to a medley of instrumental songs consisting of Puteri Mabuk (Indulgent/intoxicated Princess), Anak Menora, Gambang, and Sedayung. The dancing stops when the Serunai stops playing; the Puteri (the Princess) continues to sing Berjalan ke Bilik Ayaq with the accompaniment of the dancers at the center of the performance space. When the song ends, the Puteri remains alone at the center of the performance space as she sings Makan Pinang while the other performers become the chorus as they take their position among the musicians.

The next phase is marked by the Puteri calling out for her Inangs which also marks the ending of the opening section. Two songs are sung by the Princess to call out for the Inangs. Burung Odang (a polite serenade) is a song in which the Princess politely calls out for the Inang for the first time. When the maid does not respond, then the Princess resorts to singing Panggil Inang (a contrast and stern serenade) whereby the Inang obeys and responds by singing Inang Terkejut Jaga (awakening of the maid). The ensuing dialogue between the Puteri and Inang in interspersed with songs such as Berkhabar whereby the Puteri tells her reason for calling the Inang and for the Inang to perform the tasks given by the Puteri. This section ends when the Puteri and then the Inang move away from the performance space towards the back to join the chorus.

The next section follows whereby the Raja calls out to the Awang through the Burung Odang song in a manner similar to that between the Puteri and the Inang. This is followed by alternative songs such Panggil Awang and Awang Terkejut Jaga. The dialogue which follows describes the Raja telling the Awang the tasks given to him and the Awang performing the tasks. Awang then sings Timang Welu to politely tell the Raja that he has completed the tasks.

This is followed by the Raja singing the Tangkap Lakon song to introduce to the audience the story for that particular performance. The story section which marks the main phase of the Mek Mulung performance has its own dialogues, acting, and singing. A series of Berjalan songs (travelling songs), which are sung as well as played instrumentally, describe the activities of the characters in the story. Other optional songs are included as supplementary songs, such as Masuk ke Taman (entering the garden) and Mengulik (night serenade). At the end of story, the Puteri or the Raja sings the Kecil Milik song (Closing song of praise) to mark the closing section of the performance. A post-closing section follows with a ritual which is normally conducted behind closed doors and involving certain members. It is conducted by the troupe leader, whereby the performers (excluding musicians) express their gratitude to the spirits and ancestors for their safety and successful performance.

An additional ritual is incorporated during a Sambut Guru performance which offers the village community the opportunity to seek treatment for various kinds of ailments. This component of the performance involves the shaman or the healer going into a trance. This may take a long time and may finally end in the wee hours of the following morning to accommodate all those who have come to seek treatment.

The Urban Concertized Mek Mulung Performance

The form and structure of the village-based Mek Mulung is largely determined by the performers themselves who picked up the skills from their understanding of the tradition which is passed from one generation to the next. Even though there is a clear performance structure, the performers approach it in a casual manner. The concertized version, on the other hand, is largely influenced by decisions made by the performance makers who have the obligation to find the right balance between retaining as much of the original village version and presenting a version which have the necessary features that can satisfy audience expectations. As in other forms of tradition which evolve into a modern version (Mohd Anis, 2001; Schechner, 2002; Solehah, 2008), some form of reinvention of the Mek Mulung performance occurs when it is transferred from the village bangsal to
the urban proscenium stage. For one, it is performed to an entirely different audience with a totally different set of expectations. Figure 3 shows a stage setting for a concert hall performance.

![Stage Setting for a Concert Performance](image)

Plate 3. Stage Setting for a Concert Performance

In the village, the performance may last for a couple of days whereby members of the audience come and go while the performance is going on. For the urban paying audience attentively sitting in the concert hall, they would expect to be entertained by a performance lasting for a couple of hours. The performance itself is expected to have common features with other traditional theatre presentations that the audience are familiar with, such as the use of elaborate stage design, costumes, and props, a large ensemble of actors and musicians, and complex plots in the story line. A coordinated effort is crucial on the part of the performers to deliver a well-executed performance without any, or minimal amount of mistakes. Thus, a large part of the performers’ time is taken up by rehearsals. Audience etiquette and concert hall formalities are expected to be respected for the enjoyment of those present in the concert hall, and there is clear separation between the performers and the audience, with an absence of, or very minimal, interaction between them.

In view of all the above implications relating to various aspects of the *Mek Mulung* performance when it is transferred to the concert hall, what happens to the performance structure itself in terms of its content and form?

The flow in the sequence of the performance structure of the village version is retained in the concertized version although there are omissions and reduction in duration of some of the contents. In the village performance, the fixed structure with its appropriate contents is strictly followed as it is believed to help appease the spirits of the ancestors and to protect from any harm befalling their village and community. It is so important that the beholders of the tradition are willing to put less emphasis on the story component so that a larger portion of the performance can be concentrated on the lengthy opening phase. On the other hand, many of the ritual aspects of the performance during the pre-opening and the post-closing phases are left out or conducted off-stage in the concertized version. Instead, the emphasis of the concertized version is on the complex plots in the story which takes up the major portion of the performance duration. Thus less time is devoted to the earlier phases of the performance structure, namely the opening section.

After attending a number of concert performances, it became apparent that the number of songs in the opening phase was reduced with the complete omission of the *Bertabik* song in all the concertized versions and the *Makan Pinang* song in one *Cahaya Bulan* performance. Abbreviated versions of the *Bertabuh*, *Gerak Timpuh*, and *Berjalan ke Bilik Ayaq* songs were performed as a result of omission of some verses. The shortened duration of the opening songs allows the performers to move on to the dance section. As the performance continues, the opening section is further reduced by including only three of the four instrumental dance components as well as through modifications to the three dances. As a result, a concertized version of the dance section has evolved. The decrease in
duration for the opening phase enables the *Pecah Lakon* section to begin whereby the story component can be performed.

To capture audience attention and to sustain their interest in the performance, there is more concern shown towards the visual aspects, such as through the use of elaborate design sets, props and costumes. The large performance space also enables the inclusion of more actors, dancers, and musicians, as well as musical instruments.

**Conclusion**

*Mek Mulung* that is performed in the urban concert halls has evolved from the traditional version performed in Wang Tepus. The nature of the performance venue, specifically the performance space and the target audience, has had a major influence on the contemporary form that it has evolved into. Nonetheless, in spite of its emphases on different aspects of the overall performance, the concertized version has not deviated much from the Wang Tepus version in terms of its performance structure. The PPAG version has been successfully used as a template for *Mek Mulung* performances by other groups. In its concertized version, *Mek Mulung* serves a different type of audience and has the potential to thrive when staged as a concert for the enjoyment of the urban community.

The *Mek Mulung* troupe of Wang Tepus continues to make their presentations as an effort to maintain the village tradition, although there is a decline in the frequency of its performances. Some form of intervention is necessary to improve the situation so that it can continue to exist in its traditional base and can be used as a reference for those interested in the original/authentic *Mek Mulung*.

**Endnotes**

1 *Bangsal* is the performing stage consisting of a wooden shed built on bare ground with four pillars that support the roof. With the exception of the back side which is walled, the three sides are left open for viewing by the audience.

**References**


PREMALATHA THIAGARAJAN
(University of Malaya, Malaysia)

TRANSGENDER/SEXUAL-ISM IN THE RONG NGENG DANCE OF THE ORAK LAWOI IN PHUKET

For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
This still nascent project began as I tried to figure out what was going on at three sold-out musical performances that I attended in the Concert Hall at the Esplanade Theatre complex within the span of just two weeks in August and September of 2013.

On arriving in Singapore, I started scanning the papers to see what was happening and where in terms of performance. Although I had originally been looking for local neighborhood events, I discovered that they were not usually advertised in the big newspapers (unlike in other places where I had lived). Instead, all I could find listings for were major performances in the big halls around town. I was immediately struck by the diverse selection of performances on offer at the Esplanade in particular and so I purchased tickets to several different events and set out to see what I could see.

Esplanade Theatres by the Bay, opened 2002, cost 600 million Singapore dollars and is meant to look like Durian fruit on the outside. It offers a “a complete lifestyle experience including dining, shopping and the performing arts.” Before the cynical among you begin to snicker too boisterously, branding of this sort is quite common among this kind of international performing arts center of the world, think Sydney Opera House or Lincoln Center in New York City. A multitude of performance venues and spaces is distributed throughout the area, the main inside ones ranging from the large concert hall to the intimate 150-seat venue located inside the library at the Esplanade. The mix of performances on offer in any week is astounding: Inside outside, free and fee paying events, open to passers through in one of the busiest locations in the new down town, invites everyone in, regularly hosts school events and local groups to fill spaces not booked by others. People actually go to drink late into the evening in the outside spaces while observing the performances that occur in different spots around the perimeter of the area along the river basin.

The first event I attended was a performance by the City Chinese Orchestra on 18 August entitled, “A Southern Breeze: Music of the Min Nan Chinese” and featured performances of folk and classical music from the Hokkien-speaking diaspora of Southern Fujian, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia in particular Singapore. The ensemble is conducted by Tay Teow Kiat a Mainland Chinese person who has made his entire career in Singapore.

The second event was on 30 August entitled, “Sayang disayang: Kartina Dahari” and celebrated the life and music of one of the most famous Malaysian/Singaporean singers from the 60s and 70s, the Keroncong diva Kartina Dahari. Here is Kartina Dahari singing her most iconic song. She was not able to sing the concert but many others did and all paid tribute to her influence on them.

The last was a concert on 4 September entitled, “Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music 10th Anniversary Celebration Concert.” It featured the musicians of the first Western Art Music conservatory in Singapore, the visiting American conductor Robert Spano, and the pianist Thomas Hecht who leads one of the piano studios in the Conservatory.

Each of these concerts was professionally performed at a high level for an appreciative crowd that filled the house to overflowing. I hadn’t really had a thought about who might be attending the performances with me, but once there I was struck by the racial uniformity of the people attending the first two of the concerts, one all Chinese and one all Malay. This kind of racial distinction didn’t represent what I saw on the streets or public transit, nor did it intersect with the storied cultural fusion that forms part of the entrepôt mythologies of the city. Intrigued, I began reading. In just the short time I find I have already engaged the work of many scholars, predominantly Singaporean, on issues of economics, history, politics, state planning on race and ethnicity, the rapid pace of urban growth and renewal through destruction and rebuilding, aesthetics, identity, migration, discourses on postcolonial belonging and disaffection, urban housing, cultural sustainability and at least two forms of nostalgia: that generated individual longing for things past, whether or not they ever existed and that generated by a government’s efforts to reconstruct the past and formulate a history that is favorable to its many agendas. Cultural tolerance and despair, snobberies and cringes, desires for both ethnic and racial purity and hybridity have all revealed themselves to be both present and absent in the performances I
have witnessed, each of which was simultaneously understood to be distinctly from Singapore and decidedly not Singaporean.

So let me ask the question: What is Singaporean Culture?
If I ask you to think of what people outside of Singapore, and especially outside of the rarified world of Southeast Asian and Asianist scholars represented here, might say in response to this question, it’s possible you might get a list that looks like this: shopping, malls; good health care; public systems that work – water, electricity, transport; efficiency; Singlish; hawker centers; extreme punishments for spitting, littering, sale of drugs; a ban on chewing gum and homosexuality; and a lack of a free press.

When you ask a moderately random collection of Singaporeans that same question this is what comes up.

Hawker centres - satay beehoon, chili crab, Indian rojak, Singlish, Hokkien, Teochew
HDB, shophouses, kampongs, National Service, libraries
Multicultural multiracial and multilingual
Hybrid Creole Eurasian
Strict discipline - always obey the law
Never pays to speak against the government publicly.
Compliant society, passive
Academic grades very important
Peranakan culture, hybrid mix of Malay, Chinese, and Indian

This data is from an anonymous survey investigating the intersections of performance, race and nostalgia in Singapore that I am conducting using the website called Survey Monkey. I advertised this survey among my students, colleagues and friends as well as the members of three active Facebook pages dedicated to Singapore heritage and culture. To date there are about 38 completed responses, the majority of whom are Singaporeans of Chinese and Malay heritage. The survey is still live, if you want to fill it in yourself.

These characteristics do bear some slight resemblance to those that are stereotypically connected with Singapore. But as we might expect, people living inside a culture have a much more nuanced perspective on their lived experiences. Important to note here is the frequent reference to hybridity and cultural fusions such as the kinds of foods mentioned as well creole and Peranakan multi-lingual, multi-cultural, multi-racial.

Here is a Wordle image of the all the words that people used when they responded to this first question in the survey. The bigger the word the more often it was used. I have filtered the data to take out common English words like – the, of, and etc. -- but all the other words included in the free-ranging answers are represented here. From this angle, Singaporean culture seems rather definable.
Let me ask another question: What comes to mind when you think of Singaporean performance culture?

Asking this group of people interested and knowledgeable about performance in general, I might get something like this:

- Bangsawan
- Boria
- Kuda Kepang
- Wayang of various sorts – Malay and Chinese
- Southern Chinese Teochew/Guangdong Opera
- South Indian classical traditions
- Chinese orchestra, Gamelan of various sorts
- Bhangra, Keroncong, Min Nan melodies
- Getai, Xinyao songs, Pop Yeh Yeh
- Dick Lee, Musical theatre
- Singapore Symphony Orchestra, National Day Songs

Singaporean answers to the same question produce these kinds of responses:

- “None” - Respondent 5, 2 Jan 2014
- “There’s nothing that’s really FROM Singapore, everything is borrowed” – Fellow audience member, 18 Aug 2013
- “Performing arts doesn’t really thrive in Singapore, despite government efforts” – Respondent 14, 19 Dec 13
- “Nothing” – Respondent 18, 18 Dec 2013
- “Why you want to know that?” – Taxi driver, 4 Sept 2013
“Well, Singapore is a void. There’s nothing but international culture here.” – North African ex-pat, 7 Sept 2013

These comments are representative of the responses to this question from the survey. The majority of the responders were of Singaporean nationality and they were predominantly Chinese or self identified as Peranakan with a sprinkling of people of Malay and Indian ethnicity. Of the 35 respondents who completed this question, only a few were inspired to reel off several of the genres listed above, most felt there was nothing that was Singaporean, per se, although several mentioned national day songs (a couple were cynical about the effects and aesthetic value of the national day songs) and one or two mentioned a lot of different genres simultaneously declaring them all dead, either through neglect or government meddling. How should we interpret these negative statements about Singaporean performance arts in the context of evidence of a veritable smorgasbord of performance offerings on any given night?

The population of Singapore is historically cosmopolitan and perennially mixed, probably for longer than a millennium if John Miksic’s (2013) recent archaeological work is to be considered. There is little discourse on ethnic and racial separation in the centuries before the arrival of the British, although the Sejarah Melayu does mention different ethnic groups as does Eredia in his detailed 1613 treatise to the Spanish king. (Emanuel Godinho de Eredia was born in Malacca in 1563). The richly developed forms of Peranakan culture, predominantly made up of Malay/Chinese and Malay/Indian family groupings, suggest that ethnic and racial boundaries were frequently crossed in multiple ways. However, since the arrival of the British in the region the strategy of organizing and controlling society along the lines of race and ethnicity has been policy for successive governments into the present.

Yet, you will remember that two of the largest terms on the Wordle image I just showed you are Singlish and Food (along with culture, Chinese, Malay, and fusion). These two forms of cultural expression language and food, both identified by many survey respondents as iconic with Singapore, happen to be locations of extreme cultural mixture. Anyone who has savored the delicious and surprising dishes of Fishhead Curry, Chili Crab, or Indian Rojak understands that the culinary and cultural fusion of these dishes is well beyond a simple hybrid whose parents are still evident in the mix. There is an aesthetic for each dish that is distinct from any of their various sources. Why isn’t this true for performance cultures?

Just a note, I am not going to wade into the culture debates about which side of the Johor Straits these iconic elements developed. I could make the incendiary suggestion that these dishes and many other aspects of culture are regional rather than specifically national, but I won’t because that would take away some of the fun, and national value, of the perennial argument about these things.

Wherever they originated, these culinary and linguistic hybrids reveal a persistent comingling between races and ethnicities. Although there are performance traditions from Singapore and the region in which similar levels of mixture and fusion are evident, why is it that they are not as well known and accepted as food traditions and Singlish? Based on comments from the survey, I would surmise that Singaporeans believe these other places of cultural mixture have been obscured, made redundant or simply killed off by government policies, CMIO or CIMO policies of shoring up racial difference or through the destabilizing effects of the extremely rapid urbanization of Singapore which has systematically involved the radical reconfiguration of landscape and replacement of buildings at the pace of about once every 20 years. In addition, the language campaigns featuring specifically Mandarin, Tamil, Malay and English rather than the host of dialects that clambered to be heard prior to the 1980s, the focus on “pure” representations of cultural performance heritage involving performance in halls rather than at life or year cycle events, and, ironically, the engineered integration of races in the housing development board buildings have all worked to obscure and decenter any hybrid performance genres that once held the interest of multiple ethnic groups. The crystallization of cultural difference is moving toward perfection.

But why do all these different performers want to perform at the Esplanade? What does it do for them/mean to them in the Singaporean context? The Esplanade is an impersonal space, marked by the aura of internationality and suggesting a high standard of performance quality. Importantly it is Singapore’s impersonal international space. Everyone can “own” the space and fill it with their particular performance culture for the evening.

In what ways are these performances Singaporean or not?
People argue that none of these performances is Singaporean, all derive from different places: south China, Malaysia, the West. People are looking for performance traditions that come directly from the 716.1 square kilometer (and growing) area that is the island nation of Singapore. Yet at the same time they are all Singaporean. How long does an important genre or tradition have to live in a place before it can become local? Or is localness now to be eschewed?

Is Singapore a multi-cultural place or a melting pot? Do the culture groups represented stay distinct and separate or do they merge gradually over time. Food and language traditions suggest a melting pot but the state of performance traditions suggests a multi-cultural ethos.

In the aftermath of WWII when the British left Malaya in the late 1950s Singapore joined Malaysia as one of the federated states in 1963. After tensions regarding primacy of Malayan and Chinese cultures erupted between the political elites, Chinese-majority Singapore was kicked out of the Malayan federation. Not quite prepared for independence, war-bedraggled and still poverty-ridden Singapore was thrown into the business of creating itself a national identity that would not threaten its big Malay-majority neighbors in Malaysia and Indonesia but that would allow its multi-ethnic Chinese majority to thrive while fostering easy intercultural relations and possibilities with the rest of the ethnic groups on the small, resource-poor island. The ruling party could have capitalized on what was already a thriving hybridizing context and urged their foundling community to embrace Singlish and hybrid food traditions and encouraged them to foster other pre-existing hybrid cultural habits, such as performance traditions, and create others. But they didn’t. Old mixed neighborhoods called kampong were knocked down at a great clip. Locations where people from different cultures had watched and participated in and competed with the cultural traditions of others – marriages, funerals, festivals – were destroyed and cultural practices moved indoors as people and places became more urbanized. Immigrants from all the original source cultures continued to arrive bringing in new waves of ethnic authenticity and separatist perspectives. There is much more to say here but you get the gist.

Most people I’ve queried suggest that the rapid rate of landscape and life-style change (whole neighborhoods and ways of life disappeared in only 20 or 30 years) that Singaporeans have endured is what has generated the active culture of nostalgia. I don’t think they are wrong. But I think it is more complicated even. I think there is also a nostalgia for an easier cultural mix, and the loss of the pleasure and pains of the process of self formation that are necessarily part of the transformation from colonial to postcolonial society. The travel down these pathways has been foreshortened in the quest for dominance in education and modernity in Asia and the world.

References


Bali-Java Cultural Exchange: Gamelan Carabalèn

Ethnicity is a collective subjectivity or group consciousness that expresses a cultural identity. Performing arts is known for marking and strengthening this collective consciousness. But cultural identity is historically constructed. It follows, therefore, that ethnicity is not a monolithic phenomenon, but “a loose, labile repertoire of signs by means of which relations are constructed and communicated; through which a collective consciousness of cultural likeness is rendered visible; with reference to which shared sentiment is made substantial” (Comaroff 2009).

This general and abstract statement is to remind us that ethnicity and cultural identity is the product of specific historical conditions. Viewed in a context of the history of ethnic relations, we find a very complex picture, dynamic process, and multifaceted forms and meanings of ethnicity and its performing arts. With this perspective in mind, my presentation today is about Java-Bali cultural encounters, its impact on the development of music and musical culture.

Java-Bali Relations

We learn that Java-Bali relationship is one of the features of historical events in around tenth to fourteenth century, in terms of cultural exchanges, encroaching and influencing one another, in the context of Hindu-Javanese culture. However, as it has commonly been understood, the contact between these two islands ended when Java was Islamized in the fifteenth century. Here, following Vickers (1987), I take a position that this is not true; actually the relation continued, especially through war and trade. Also, because of the perspective of Balinese and Javanese on the difference in their religions they saw the difference between Hindu and Islam only on the surface, such as food they eat and styles of dress they wear, but not the difference in religious doctrinal terms. Strengthened by a belief of hereditary connection, as Balinese and Javanese people perceived the kingdom of Majapahit as their “imagined center,” this perspective has made it possible for Java-Bali relations to continue.

To that end, I would like to illustrate and hypothesize the Balinese origin of Javanese gamelan carabalèn. The Javanese believe that this is one of the ancient ensembles, together with monggang and kodhok ngorek. It has been suggested that the word “carabalèn” means “in the manner of” (cara), or à la Bali (balèn) (Kunst 1973, 265); hence, it refers to a Balinese style of gamelan. In fact, older literature employs the term cara bali, a clearer reference to Bali, instead of its derivative, balèn. Certainly, the fast tempo and interlocking style of the bonang and two-drum in carabalèn remind us of the Balinese gamelan bebonangan or blaganjur (also spelled bleganjur or beleganjur). But no one has yet traced the possible historical connection of these two ensembles. I’ll try to do so here, in spite of the lack of contemporaneous historical facts.

I should mention that a musical term “ganjuran” appears in the fourteenth-century kekawin poetic work Negarakertagama. It has been suggested that this term might relate to or a precursor of a Balinese bebonangan or blaganjur (see Bandem 2013; Bahar 2009). However, whether or not this is the case is a moot question, since the author of Negarakertagama did not provide us with any detailed description of the term—more evidence to support the hypothesis is needed.

Giri, Surabaya, Mataram

Let me begin with some historical background of a regional state in East Java, Giri. Giri was one of the earliest historic Islamic states. It was founded in the mid-sixteenth century by Sunan Giri, one of the nine Islamic saints (walisanga) responsible for the spread of Islam in Indonesia. Politically, religiously, and in terms of trade, Giri, with Gresik as its harbor, was one of the most influential states at the time, extending its influence outside Java into Lombok, Sulawesi, Kalimantan, and Maluku. In their journal, the Portuguese adventurers Tomé Pires and Duarte Barbosa, who visited Java in the early sixteenth century, testified to this highly influential state and other states in the north coast area, the pesisir. The rise of these states happened as a result of the fall of Majapahit (the last Hindu–Javanese kingdom) and the rise of elite Islamic commercialism in the fifteenth and sixteenth century in the pesisir.
These two major events brought about economic development and the emergence of political centers throughout the area, resulting in an intensive development of performing arts there. “There are great musicians and sempstresses who are very cunning in work of every kind, and are given to love-enchantments,” says Barbosa, who visited Java in the sixteenth century (translated by Dames 1921, 194). Javanese gongs of different sizes from the north coast area were transported to other islands, reaching as far as North Borneo and the Southern Philippines (Skog 1993, 168–74). Barbosa also reports that gongs from Java were valuable commodities and important instruments in the royal music ensemble of Maluku (Dames 1921, 202–3). Traders spread news about the exuberant life of performing arts in Giri, and this news reached as far as South Kalimantan. As told in Hikayat Lembu Mangkurat, the traders noted that in the kingdom of Giri people very noisily entertain themselves day and night with all kinds of wayang and mask-dance performances, gambus (short-necked lutes), and dancing, because the king is very intelligent (Ras 1985, vii). This artistic fame compelled the king to summon his minister to go to Giri, near the town-harbor of Gresik, to borrow people who were skillful in all sorts of theatrical performances and music, including wayang, mask dance, and the playing of gambus (Ras 1985, vii).

All the above happened in the contexts of competitions among several states in the pesisir area. Demak was known as one of the first influential centers after the fall of Majapahit. The history of Java became more complex when another influential center of power emerged in inland central Java, namely the Mataram kingdom. It is a commonly held opinion that in the seventeenth century, the ruler of Mataram and his heirs developed a genre of court, “classical,” style performing arts that would last for centuries to come.

After the emergence of this new power, there were many conflicts and betrayals among the royal families, encroachments of one center against another, and brutal campaigns to expand sovereignty and gain economic benefits. In this regard, Sultan Agung was known as a ruler with an iron will. Year after year, he ordered his armies to war, conquering his rival states and bringing back to Mataram treasures from the defeated kingdoms, presumably including musical instruments and artisans, and queens and princesses, as the booty of war.

In his campaign to expand his power, Sultan Agung confronted the mighty state of Surabaya, a powerful, influential, and rich state because of its intensive trading. It took Sultan Agung five years (1620–25) to defeat Surabaya. As with other assaults of the time, the treasures and royal princesses became the booty of war. Realizing the importance of Surabaya, however, Sultan Agung brought the king’s son, Pangeran Pekik, to Mataram, married him to his sister, and reinstated him as ruler of Surabaya. This marriage diplomacy established an alliance between Surabaya and Mataram that lasted for a long time. But it did not insure the safety of all the towns in the region. Pursuing his wish to rule all of Java, Sultan Agung, in collaboration with Sunan Pekik, destroyed Giri in 1636.

With the downfall of Giri, Surabaya became even more powerful. Surabaya’s political prestige and economic advantage brought about a cultural efflorescence. In light of the relationship between Mataram and Surabaya (in war, and later as close allies), it is safe to suggest, as has Peter Carey (1997, 717), that the Mataram kingdom emulated the cultural attainments of Surabaya. This is a plausible hypothesis, although direct evidence of the nature of this emulation is hard to find.

**Bali–Java Continuing Interaction, and Gresik’s Dynamic Cultural Life**

Let me now move on to Bali-Java interaction. Throughout the seventeenth century, Blambangan in the most eastern part of East Java was under the sway of the Balinese rulers of Gelgel, Buleleng, and Mengwi. These Balinese courts assisted Blambangan against Sultan Agung and/or the Dutch and also against the rebel Surapati when he established his headquarters in East Java. It was in this context, I would suggest, that a Balinese gamelan blaganjur was introduced to Blambangan; this is because blaganjur was an ensemble to be played in battle. Subsequently, the Javanese created an ensemble that was inspired by it, leading to the development of gamelan cara bali (gamelan in a Balinese style).

The most likely scenario of the transfer is that blaganjur was brought to the eastern part of Java by Balinese armies fighting in the service of the rulers of Blambangan during the period when Blambangan was under the sway of Balinese rulers (Carey 1997). In fact, some of the Blambangan rulers and members of the aristocracy were of Balinese descent. The East Javanese cara bali gamelan was then introduced to and subsequently adapted by the courts in central Java. In the past century, carabalèn in the court of Surakarta was used to accompany wirèng (a fighting dance) and a soldiers’ drill using lances (Kusumadilaga 1930, 182); hence, we find a military connection with the original context of carabalèn.
and blaganjur in Bali. At the present time, the ensemble can be heard in festivities to honor the arrival of guests and to accompany certain ritual processions.

Now I would like to show another evidence that will strengthen my hypothesis of this musical transfer from Bali to Java. As I mentioned earlier, after Giri was destroyed, the cultural center was fully taken over by Surabaya, which came to control territory associated with Gresik. Here I introduce Gresik, a town near Surabaya that in the past centuries was known for its dynamic cultural life. Two references from the early nineteenth century testify to this fact. British Lieutenant Governor Raffles (1982 [1816], 473) mentions the importance of Gresik as the principal manufacturer of gamelan instruments. He remarks: “the gongs in particular furnish a valuable article of export. Every native chief in authority has one or more gamelans, and there are more or less perfect sets in all the populous towns of the eastern provinces” (473).

Rather comprehensive information about gamelan and performing arts in Gresik was written by Dutch official Cornets de Groot (1852)—this is the archival document I mentioned earlier. In his long ethnographic report, he included sections on various kinds of performing arts, including wayang, dance, dance drama, and gamelan. His report includes the descriptions and instrumentation of each of the ensembles, descriptions of each of the instruments and their playing techniques, and a list of the pieces performed by each ensemble. In addition, he provides drawings of the instruments of six different gamelans. He makes a chart, showing nine ensembles with a list of pieces and their usage in performance. Examining the pieces and the kinds of gamelans reported by Cornets de Groot, I find a strong similarity between gamelan tradition in central Javanese courts and the Gresik gamelan tradition.

Specifically regarding gamelan cara bali in Gresik, there is a strong evidence for its connection to Balinese gamelan. As I mentioned above, Cornets de Groot’s archival document of Gresik gamelan includes a list of gendhing repertoire performed on each of the gamelan types. Examining closely Cornets de Groot’s list of the pieces performed in Gresik cara bali gamelan, I found a revealing evidence of a Balinese inspiration of the creation of the Gresik cara bali: the names of two of the pieces clearly point to Balinese origin.

Plate 1. (Groot 1852, 415)

Clearly “Reijongan” (ij is the Dutch spelling for j or y; hence “Reyongan”) derives from “Reyong”, the main melodic instrument of Balinese blaganjur. “Tabuh pisan” is the name of a colotomic structure of Balinese composition. Here my point is that the names of these two pieces of cara bali gamelan in Gresik are direct quotation of a Balinese instrument and a compositional term, respectively; hence suggesting a direct link of the Gresik cara bali and Balinese music.

What is also relevant to our inquiry is the fact that Gresik produced many fine gamelan of all sorts, including gamelan cara bali. Gresik maintained its strong economic development because of its harbor and the presence of the elite community of Islamic traders there. Confirming this point, additional gamelan manufacturers in the early nineteenth century can also be found in other north coast trading centers, including Banyuwangi, Semarang, Cirebon (Cirebon had six gamelan manufacturers) (Fernando 1996, 82), Blora (Kunst 1973), and Jepara (according to a passage from Serat Tjentini). The dynamic life of music culture in the northern coastal area, from Banyuwangi to Cirebon, strengthens the point I have mentioned before: the pesisir area was where the early development of
Javanese performing arts took place. This was possible because a robust economic development occurred there; the elite Islamic traders there were responsible for this development. The relationship between Java and Bali continued because of this trading. In addition, the war between the Javanese power-holders, and Javanese against the Dutch, have also made the relationship between these two islands continued. This does explain the continuing cultural encounters between Java and Bali. The creation of Javanese gamelan carabalèn, which was inspired by a Balinese blaganjur that might have first presence in Blambangan, is a plausible process.

Conclusion

The present study shows that the dynamic interaction between the center and the periphery—between Mataram and Surabaya and the pesisir in general (including Bali)—through trade, warfare and other means, have brought the dynamic process in which ethnicity is experienced, apprehended, enacted, and represented (Camaro 2009). Having experienced an economic boom resulting from the work of the Islamic commercial elite, the pesisir became a hotbed of performing arts, gamelan-making, and the creation of myths about the past. The creation of Javanese carabalèn, its connection with Balinese and East Javanese musical identity, is an example of the fruit of the center-periphery dynamic interaction.

Let us return to the sketches of Gresik’s gamelan that I mentioned earlier: gamelan instruments are presented in juxtaposition with all kinds of paraphernalia, including flags, flowers, pikes, and weaponry. I think that this juxtaposition captures well the context in which music was performed and developed. The artist of these sketches tells us not only that gamelan was an integral part of ritual and celebration, but also that its development and survival were linked to warfare.

Endnotes

1 The drawings appear in Ann Kumar’s book chapter, Java and Modern Europe: Ambiguous Encounters (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1997). Much of Kumar’s chapter is drawn from Cornets de Groot’s manuscript. The list of gamelans and their repertoire is from the Groot article published in the journal “Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch Indie” (1852/53). See Cornets A. D. de Groot, “Bijdrage tot de kennis van de zeden en gewoonten der Javanen,” Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indie 2 (1852): 419–21. In the summer of 2010, I had the opportunity to see the original drawings and documents at the KITLV library in Leiden.

2 For example, thirty-three gendhing are listed in the saléndro gamelan used for accompanying wayang. The nine ensembles in the list are gamelan senèn, kodok ngorèk, tjara bali, bonang rèntèng, saléndro, mentaraman, pêlog, soerabayan, and salomprèt. Elsewhere in his report, he also mentions gamelan sekaên: a large gamelan tuned to pêlog, used for the Islamic festival to commemorate the life of the Prophet Muhammad.

3 Many pieces in his list are classical pieces associated with Central Javanese court gamelan. It is true that the name gamelan surarip ngàngan (another name for the city of Surabaya) points us to the East Javanese identity, but other gamelans and many of the pieces listed by Groot are also known in the courts of Central Java.

4 In their work, originally published in 1907, Edward Jacobson and J. H. van Hasselt inform us of a detailed process of gamelan making in Semarang, where gongs were manufactured since early times. See Edward Jacobson and J. H. van Hasselt, “The Manufacturer of Gongs in Semarang,” trans. Andrew Toth, Indonesia 19 (April 1975): 127–52. The Semarang gongs were particularly well known; they were sold not only within Java, but a large number of gongs also went to Bali and Lombok. Smaller size gongs of low quality were exported to islands outside of Java, and also to Singapore, the Malay Peninsula, and Brunei. Ibid. pp. 150–51. The best quality of large gong was usually made for the courts of Surakarta and Yogyakarta.

So far I haven’t found any references to the existence of an old gamelan smithy in inland Central Java. From aural information, we are told that the oldest and best-known gamelan smith in Surakarta was born in the mid-nineteenth century, giving us an idea that gamelan instruments were manufactured in this town in the late nineteenth century. Sam Quigley, “Gong Smithing in Twentieth Century Surakarta,” Asian Arts and Culture 8,3 (1995): 12–31. However, this does not rule out the possibility of gamelan-making before the nineteenth century. We know from Bemmelen (quoted in Reid) that in the seventeenth century, a significant source of copper was found in a village southeast of Surakarta (Tegalombo), implying the possibility of important bronze work in the area. Nevertheless, no evidence can be found of gamelan manufacture there at the time or afterward. See Anthony Reid, Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce 1450–1680, vol. 1 (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1998), p. 118.
References


DANCING BADUY ASCETICS

The Baduy are a minority group in West Java. According to their worldview they have to live in a very modest way. I will argue that despite their special position as “ascetics”, in the field of music and dance there is much interaction with the other, Muslim, Sundanese people. The Baduy musical world is changing, possibly more rapidly than we may expect (see also van Zanten 2004).

Baduy Group in West Java: Indigenous Community

The Baduy form a minority group of some 12,000 people who live in Kanékés village, West Java. This village is located almost 100km southwest of Jakarta and its size is about 51km.² For at least two hundred years there were no other groups except the Baduy living in Kanékés village. Baduy religion is called Sunda wiwitan, and this religion is one of the differences with the surrounding Muslims. In 1999 the Baduy were recognized as an indigenous community (masyarakat adat) with collective land rights (hak ulayat). Baduy life is regulated by many prohibitions and regulations, as handed down by the ancestors: for instance, rice should be grown on non-irrigated fields (huma). Some musics, such as angklung (set of shaken bamboo idiophones) and pantun storytelling, are connected to the agricultural tasks. The people of Kanékés are supposed to live in a very modest and ritually pure way.

There are two main groups of Baduy:

1. About 1200 people living in three hamlets (Cikeusik, Cikartawana and Cibéo) and occupying about half the size of Kanékés village, called the Inner Baduy (Pajéroan), who are, to the north, east, and west, surrounded by
2. About 10 000 Outer Baduy (Panamping) living in the other ca. 60 hamlets of Kanékés village.

Further, there are also about 700 Baduy living in hamlets outside Kanékés (dangka), who follow the rules of living in Kanékés and take part in the rituals. This system used to be more elaborate in the past: the Inner Baduy surrounded by the Outer Baduy and another “circle” of dangka hamlets north of Kanékés to protect the sacred places and the ascetic way of life in the southern part.

Inner Baduy should follow the many prohibitions more strictly than Outer Baduy. For instance, Outer Baduy are allowed to travel by car or train, to play gamelan and the six-fingerhole flute sulung lamus and in the last decade Outer Baduy started to vote in the Indonesian general elections (participation up to 70%). This all remains forbidden to the Inner Baduy.

In this essay I will look at some changes in Baduy music and dance in the periods that I recorded their music (between 1976 and 2014), in relation to the music of the outside world. I will mainly discuss music from the Outer Baduy area, because foreigners are not allowed to enter the Inner Baduy area. In 1974 the Indonesian government described indigenous groups as “isolated groups” (masyarakat terasing), and in 2002 this was changed to “remote [or isolated] communities governed by custom” (komunitas adat terpencil). How isolated are the Baduy with respect to music and dance?

I will discuss three examples in relation to this question of isolation:
1. A melodic phrase that was used by the Baduy singer Raidah; this may possibly have been influenced by the typical phrase in the popular Bandung song “Kalangkang” that appeared on cassette tape in December 1986;
2. Baduy gamelan do not use drums (kendang), like the outside Sundanese gamelan; in 2013 the gamelan of the secular village head used a xylophone to play this role of “drumming”: gambang kendang. In the surrounding Sundanese area drumming is very much associated with dancing. However, Baduy are not allowed to dance with gamelan.
3. Baduy angklung is played in the ritual in which the goddess of rice is engaged to the earth. Angklung is also used for accompanying love songs and this is the only form that is known to
most other Indonesians. Outer Baduy are allowed to dance with the angklung that is played for entertainment.

Melodic Phrase

Outer Baduy women hardly play instruments,\(^1\) but they do sing, for instance with gamelan (also called lénong, koromong/keromong, and goong) or other accompaniment. The female vocalist Raidah is an Outer Baduy and a much appreciated performer. I recorded her in 1992 and 2003. In the 2003 recordings she was accompanied by a kacapi zither and violin (viol). In the song “Jalan” she used a melodic phrase that was very typical and did not belong to the Baduy musical idiom. It sounded like a melodic phrase that had been used by the pop Sunda composer Nano Suratno in 1986 for the song “Kalangkang.” This song became very popular and it was discussed by Sean Willams (1989) in her article on Sundanese pop music.

In Figure 1 you find:

(a) My transcription of the first part of the song “Jalan,” about one semitone higher than the sound, as sung by the Baduy vocalist Raidah and with the accompaniment by Arib (playing violin) and Satra (playing zither) in Kaduketug, Kanékés, 26 March 2003;

(b) A transcription taken from Williams (1989:115) that was based on the “Kalangkang” recording sung by Nining Meida accompanied by gamelan degung ensemble and released by Wishnu Recording on cassette tape in December 1986.

Williams described this musical phrase as an “unusual descending melodic line”. The eight-note melodic phrase of Raidah marked in red is, except for the temporal organization, in these transcriptions exactly one fourth higher than the one by Nining Meida.


\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Tu-ri - ang} \\
\text{muh}
\end{array}
\]


\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Mung-gu-ling} \\
\text{di-na im-pe-nan}
\end{array}
\]

Figure 1. Transcriptions of first parts of the Baduy song “Jalan” and the song “Kalangkang” by Nano Suratno

Generally speaking we know that songs or parts of songs may travel between different groups, although it is not always easy to prove that there is a connection. I assume that Nano Suratno was the first one to use the discussed “unusual descending” melodic phrase and not Raidah or some other Baduy. It may also be that Nano S. borrowed this musical phrase from Baduy music. Anyway, it shows that from a musical perspective the Baduy are not that isolated as the outside world sometimes thinks: they hear the pop songs from town, as Raidah’s husband Arib told us in June 2014. For me the most important issue is that this example gives evidence of a musical relation between the Baduy and popular music in West Java.
No Drums in Baduy Gamelan

Outer Baduy play gamelan; not the Inner Baduy. There are about 15 gamelan in Kanékés. The sets of bronze instruments of the gamelan are not made by the Baduy themselves, but bought in West Java outside Kanékés. This is also an indication of the musical relation between the Baduy and the surrounding Sundanese. The gamelan instruments made of wood (xylophone, violins) or bamboo (flute) are mostly made by the Baduy themselves.

Whereas in the different Sundanese gamelan the drums (kendang) are very pronounced, the Baduy gamelan do not use drums and Baduy are not allowed to dance with gamelan. I assume that the reason for this is that drums are strongly associated with dancing and erotic feelings. Henry Spiller elaborated on this in his book (2010) about the “erotic triangle” between female vocalist/dancer (ronggeng), drum player and male dancer in Sundanese music.

In December 2013 I noticed a change in gamelan music: the introduction of a “drum xylophone” (gambang kendang) in the gamelan just bought by the secular village head Daénah in Kaduketuk. This “drum xylophone” was added to the regular gamelan ensemble that contains already a xylophone (gambang) playing the melodic parts; see Plate 1.²

Plate 1. Gamelan played in house of secular village head Daénah in Kaduketug, 9 Dec 2013. The “regular” xylophone may be seen on the right at the back and the “drum xylophone” (gambang kendang) is played in the centre.

During my 9 December 2013 gamelan recording there was clapping of hands and a man was moving his body to the played gamelan music, again a sign of the relation between clapping, drumming (“drum xylophone”) and dancing. In January 2014 Mumu Zaena Mutakin, who had assisted me on two trips to the Baduy, filmed Outer Baduy men and women dancing to gamelan music during the wedding of Daénah’s son. Officially this is not allowed by the spiritual leaders of the Baduy. Dancing is only allowed during the playing of the angklung set of shaken bamboo idiophones that is used for entertainment and that includes drums.
Baduy Angklung Music Includes Drums

The Baduy angklung accompanied by drums is the only music to which Baduy are allowed to dance (ngalagé). I have only seen Outer Baduy men dancing with the angklung music. Information on dancing by Inner Baduy men is not consistent: some say they are not at all allowed to dance, others say that they are only allowed to dance during the night of the most important rice ritual.

There are two different social settings in which angklung music is used by the Outer Baduy: for entertainment and in a ritual setting. When used for entertainment the male players also sing and there may be dancers. A soloist will sing the main text, and a chorus of players answers. The angklung is also closely associated with the ritual of rice planting. It is always played during the ceremony held the night before the ceremonial planting of rice. This night ceremony is to “wake” the goddess of rice, Nyi Pohaci Sanghyang Asri1 and to announce her marriage (ngarérémokeun) the following morning to the earth (Geise 1952:36-7). This ritual text is started around midnight by a solo singer, accompanied by the angklung players who play the song “Maréngo” and sing while circling in a clockwise direction (the “sacred” direction) around the mat on which the soloist is sitting. The song Maréngo takes about one hour and during this song there is no dancing, only walking. Before and after the song Maréngo the angklung players are circling in an anti-clockwise direction, that is the “secular” direction, and there is occasional dancing with the angklung playing. See further van Zanten (1995:532-7).

Feed-back on Film

In October-November 1992 I filmed angklung playing for entertainment, which includes male dancing. The ritual angklung playing that I saw could not be filmed in 1992. It was dark, lamps were not allowed, and I was only allowed to be present in a house, out of sight of the participants of the ritual: I could only record the sound and look through two very small holes in the wall (van Zanten 1995:532). Therefore, in the 2007 version of my film on Baduy life and music1 I included a scrolling text from Geise (1952:37-8, 190-1) with words used in the engagement ritual: “The rice goddess is married off to the earth Paratiwi … Please fill the empty ears and make the lean ones full.” The singing below the text came from my 1992 audio recording of the angklung song “Maréngo,” sung around midnight at the engagement ceremony for the goddess of rice. In August 2007 the computer on which the film was being constructed broke down and I did not yet have the opportunity to reconstruct the film.

In December 2013 I showed this unfinished 2007 film version to a group of Baduy, including the secular head of Kanékés village (Daénah). I asked them to comment on the film and in particular whether they thought that certain elements should be left out, because these were considered too sensitive to be shown to the outside world. I had my doubts about (1) the ritual angklung playing, that is, the “Maréngo” song and (2) an excerpt of pantun storytelling.2

The village head commented that the storytelling was no problem, as the used section was very short. Maybe his reply was also influenced by the fact that the storytelling had been recorded outside Kanékés village and the performer, although from Baduy descent, was no longer recognized as a Baduy, as he had transmigrated and become a Muslim (van Zanten 2012:129-30). However, the audio recording of ritual angklung was a problem. Daénah thought it should only be used for documentation and not in a film for the general public. Hence this section will be left out from the eventual film. It was interesting that the village head also commented on the clothes of the angklung players in my film: they should have been dressed in their “official” black-blue clothes.

Angklung on UNESCO Representative List 2010

In 2010 Indonesian angklung was inscribed on the Representative List of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. In the video example on the UNESCO site, section on Baduy angklung, the Indonesian government presented the Baduy angklung to the outside world, in line with what the village head had said, by filming “properly dressed” men. The total film Indonesian angklung may be found on the UNESCO Internet site and YouTube. The Indonesian government emphasized possible economic profits and ownership, like patents on angklung making (van Zanten 2012:138-9). At the same time the Indonesian government tried to emphasise the long tradition of angklung in West Java, also by including the angklung of the Baduy minority group in the video film for the nomination.
Conclusion

Baduy music and dancing, the “outer form” (lahir) of “inner life” (batin), are changing. It reflects the changing Baduy worldview. When Baduy men started dancing with gamelan, one of the important rules of their ascetic life was broken: ascetics are not allowed to dance with gamelan music that is played for entertainment.

The Baduy leaders do not yet allow ritual angklung music and detailed texts of pantun storytelling to be made known to the general public. At the same time the Baduy area has been made an object of “cultural tourism” (wisata budaya) by Indonesian authorities. We may ask how long the Baduy will be able to keep their worldview as expressed in their ritual song texts away from “those with little knowledge” about it.

Endnotes

1 Women play a kind of mouth harp (karinding) and do the ceremonial pounding of rice (van Zanten 1995:523, 525).
2 Notice in the back a young man with a mobile phone in his hand, officially forbidden in Kanékés. However, these days in Kaduketug hamlet almost every adult has a mobile phone. Although Baduy are not allowed to go to school, the owners of mobile phones should have some competence in reading and writing.
3 Also called Nyi Pohaci, or Dewi Asri; in other parts of Java she is called Dewi Sri.
4 This film version was shown at the ICTM world conference in Vienna, July 2007.
5 Baduy leaders have always shown a positive attitude to my recordings (van Zanten 1995:519-21). I reflected in more detail on the meaning of Baduy ‘prior informed consent’ in van Zanten (2009:291-8).

References


YOHANES DON BOSKO BAKOK  
(ISI Yogyakarta, Indonesia)  

ACCULTURATED MUSIC IN KORE METAN CEREMONY  
AMONG THE EAST TIMORESE

For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
THEME II – SOUND, MOVEMENT, PLACE: CHOREOMUSICOLOGY OF HUMANLY ORGANIZED EXPRESSION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Theme II, Sound, Movement, Place: Choreomusicology of Humanly Organized Expression in Southeast Asia, provided a platform for description of the various aural and visual elements involved in Southeast Asian performing arts. Cross-modal relationships between sound and movement have deep implications for the way we perceive objects, moving bodies, color and sonic events among others, and the interactions between sound and movement are not always congruent even though the two mediums may cohabit the same space. This theme was intended to bring attention to multisensory experience, the interactions between sound and movement, and the field of metonymic relationships between music, dance, and space in Southeast Asian societies.

The early sessions of the Symposium focused on Sound, Movement and Place, with Balinese performing arts were featured with Kendra Stepputat (University of the Performing Arts, Graz, Austria) speaking on ‘Layers of Sound and Movement in Balinese Kecak’, followed by I Wayan Dibia (ISI Denpasar, Indonesia) focusing on ‘Teaching Kecak in Other Asian Countries’, and Yukako Yoshida (National Museum of Ethnology Osaka, Japan) presenting on ‘How Replicated Masks Work in Balinese Society: The Case of Topeng Legong’. We also heard about musical instruments on the move in papers by Chinthaka Meddegoda (Universiti Putra Malaysia) speaking about ‘Appropriation of Tabla in Malay Ghazal’, Ruwin Rangeeth Dias (Universiti Putra Malaysia) on ‘Idiosyncratic and Mutual Features of Violin Playing in Malaysian Joget and Sri Lankan Kaffirinna’, and Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan (Universiti Sabah Malaysia) speaking on ‘From Ritual Object to Musical Instrument: The Sound and Place of the Drum and Drumming in Ritual and Non-Ritual Contexts among Dusunic Societies of Sabah’.

Continuing the theme of Sound, Movement, Place, but focusing on the sub-topics of ‘Expression and Particularity’ as well as ‘Changing Contexts and Functions’, Gisa Jaehnichen (Universiti Putra Malaysia) presented ‘Parody and Dance in Ghazal Parti’, Meghan E. Hynson (University of California at Los Angeles, USA) presented ‘From Tradisi to Inovasi: Music, Power, and Change in Balinese Shadow Puppet Theater’, Ako Mashino (Tokyo University of Arts, Japan) spoke about ‘Displayed Bodies: The aesthetics of penampilan in Balinese gender wayang competitions’ and Randal Baier (Eastern Michigan University, USA) and Dinda Satya Upaja Budi (Gajah Mada University, Indonesia) jointly presented a paper entitled ‘A rice harvest through time: visualizing the performance of Sundanese Rengkong’.

The theme Sound, Movement, Place with focus on meaning, continuity and change, was first presented by Mayco Santaella (UPM, Malaysia) in his paper ‘Asserting Meaning in Tari and the dialectics of Movements in Central Sulawesi’, followed by I Nyoman Cerita (ISI Denpasar, Indonesia) presenting ‘Traditional Dance as a Point of Departure for the Choreography of Tari Kreasi Baru, New Dance Creations in Bali’, and Leng Poh Gee (University of Malaya) presenting his lightning report on ‘Gesturing Scripture as Community Performance’.

The final session of the symposium focused on the sub-topics of popular music, dance and localized modernities with David Harnish (University of San Diego, USA) speaking about ‘Dance to Your Roots: An Exploration of the Jazz-Gamelan Fusion band, Krakatau’. Henry Spiller (University of California Davis, USA) presented ‘Heavy Bamboo: how an archaic bamboo instrument became modern in Bandung, Indonesia’, and I Komang Sudirga (ISI Denpasar, Indonesia) speaking on ‘Recontextualizing Pesantian: From Elitist Religious Chant to Mainstream Balinese Vocal Music in Post-New Order Indonesia’.
DISPLAYED BODIES: THE AESTHETICS OF PENAMPILAN IN BALINESE GENDER WAYANG COMPETITIONS

1. Short History of Gender Wayang Competitions in Bali

This paper discusses how musicians present their bodies and how they are perceived in Balinese gender wayang music competitions. Gender wayang is an ensemble, usually consisting of four metallophones, traditionally performed for rituals and as accompaniment to wayang kulit, shadow puppetry. Although competition in gender wayang has only recently become common in Bali, it has quickly established a new performing style emphasizing visual impact and the physical display of the musicians.

In Bali, as well as in other districts of Indonesia, competitions, or lomba, have long been favorites of the public and so have functioned as one of the most effective tools of cultural policy in promoting, preserving, and developing the traditional performing arts (see Bakan 1999, 85–169). In 2005, the city of Denpasar introduced a gender wayang competition, lomba gender wayang, as part of the annual Pekan Seni Remaja (PSR), Youth Arts Week, which comprises various kinds of competitions, including traditional music, dance, speech, choir, and so on. The original purpose of lomba gender wayang in the PSR was to encourage elementary, junior high, and high school students to study the music, which was felt to be in imminent danger of extinction. Because of the technical demands and complexity of the music, gender wayang “sounds like one impossible instrument played by four pairs of hands” (Gray 2011, 3), and has been thought of as the most difficult gamelan to master (Gold 1998, 23). It seemed too demanding for children. However, the PSR’s lomba gender wayang met with great success (see Mashino 2009). Since 2005, the number of children studying gender wayang has soared, and there are estimated to be more than three hundred children learning gender at sanggar, private music schools, in Denpasar and the neighboring Badung area today, mostly aiming at participation in competition.

Finally, in 2013, the first official all-Bali gender wayang competition for children under 15 years old was held in the Pesta Kesenian Bali (PKB), Bali Art Festival, in which all prefectures of Bali sent representatives to compete. It was even difficult to find child performers to participate in districts other than Denpasar and Badung, although competitions in other genres are common everywhere.

2. Competition and Its Performing Style

Lomba is a performance context with its own venues, criteria, preparation process, and evaluation system—all clearly different from those used in other contexts. These distinctive factors work together to create a specific performing style. In rituals, the music is seldom the focus of the event, despite its indispensable function, and few people watch the performance attentively. In lomba, in contrast, the performance is held on stage, to be watched raptly by the audience and seriously evaluated by the juries. As the performers are naturally more conscious of being watched, a new performing style was explored, in which the visual aspects of the performance, such as body movement, facial expression, attire, and make-up, are emphasized.

An even-more influential factor for lomba performing style is the competition criteria, which for the lomba gender wayang PKB 2013 consisted of the five elements below.

a) suara gender (the sound quality of the instruments)
b) teknik dan kekompakan (technique and unity)
c) komposisi (composition)
d) kreativitas (creativity)
e) penampilan/ekspresi (presentation/expression) (Dinas Kebudayaan Pemerintah Provinsi Bali 2013).

These criteria are largely shared with other lomba gender wayang, as well as lomba in other gamelan genres (see Bakan 1999, 93, for the case of lomba baleganjur). Among these, teknik,
kekompakan, and penampilan/ekspresi are mostly related to the visual and physical aspects of the performance.

The basic physical movements essential to gender wayang performance are striking (pukul) and muting (tekep) the keys—each hand holding a beater, panggul, strikes a key, and then moves to the next key, while simultaneously muting the previously-struck key with the outer edge of the palm. These movements create the sound and determine the sound quality; if the muting is faulty, unnecessary sound lingers and interferes with the following notes. Controlling the degree of strength is another bodily skill necessary for playing gender wayang. The body should be relaxed during performance, while focusing strength as necessary to control the dynamics. Body movements are directly related to the musical sound, and specialists like the jurors can clearly evaluate a performer’s competence by watching the performer’s body, recognizing and interpreting the musical competence to be evaluated as teknik.

Kekompakan, cohesion, means that everyone in the ensemble performs together in a unified way, reflected by their body movements in perfect order, as well as the musical sound itself. That sense of oneness is always assigned a high level of importance in any genre of gamelan ensemble.

Penampilan, presentation, includes the performance even before the music starts, entering the stage and bowing, for example. The musicians are always expected to behave consciously onstage. Moreover, in lomba performances, we can often identify body movements serving primarily for visual effect. Additional, deliberate gestures, such as conspicuously waving and moving the hands before starting the music, are called gaya. Deliberately swaying the body during the performance is also a form of gaya, which emphasizes comfort and relaxation of the performers. Gaya is also a part of penampilan and partially overlaps with ekspresi, which basically corresponds to facial expressions in this context, such as smiling or glancing at one another, to strategically show that the musicians enjoy the performance and are in harmony with each other, expressing elegance or confidence. Completely synchronized gaya also emphasize the kekompakan. Most of these penampilan and ekspresi do not directly influence the sound, but they express its rasa, the emotion and feeling involved in the music, and contribute to the quality of the performance as a whole.

3. The Body in Lomba Performance

During the gender wayang competition of PKB 2013, the most impressive physical displays were in the performance of the group from Denpasar. In the introductory section (gineman), they decoratively shook, spun, and clapped their panggul, took mischievous poses between phrases, and smiled deliberately, so that they could visually show their vigor, self-confidence, and cohesion. Many said that the group’s performance was lucu (funny), which is often a term of praise, as people particularly love lucu performances by children.

For plates see published Proceedings
A group from Badung followed another strategy for *penampilan*, emphasizing an *alus*, or elegant, quality through their swaying bodies and the exchange of smiles. According to Ni Ketut Suriatini, a well-known *gamelan* musician teaching for this group, she chose a *manis* (sweet) piece to fit the children’s character. The swaying bodies of the musicians showed that the performers were elegant and relaxed, not tense.

*Gaya* originate in the kinesthetic movements of creating sound, and reflect how the musicians feel the music. Even in rituals, a musician’s body sometimes naturally performs with *gaya*, expressing how they feel on the spot. The *gaya* in *lomba*, however, are more elaborate, previously prepared, and usually choreographed by teachers, not by the children themselves. Perhaps the body gestures help the young musicians to fully understand how they should feel the music—elegantly or vigorously—because they can understand the *rasa* of the musical piece more easily and clearly through these visual and physical signs. Furthermore, complicated choreography needs precise timing, which requires the players to be more conscious of their unity with the other musicians. Clapping with *panggul* held in both hands, a recent invention, even creates a sound which was originally not involved in the music. *Gaya* originate from the music, but the music can also be led, at least to some extent, by *gaya*.

Over the seven years of *lomba gender wayang* in Denpasar, a specific performing style has gradually become established in which body displays for visual impact were intensively explored. These have grown more and more gorgeous, complicated, and theatrical every year. The body displays of the Badung and Denpasar teams in PKB were a crystallization of the *lomba* inventions accumulated in PSR.

### 4. Penampilan Aesthetics Disseminated

The first all-Bali *lomba gender wayang* in the PKB 2013 was clearly stimulated by the successful experiences of competitions in Denpasar, in PSR, among others. All three jurors for the PKB competition had actually also served as jurors for the Denpasar area competitions several times.

A month before the competition, the judges travelled to each district to offer suggestions for improving performance quality. As most of the *gender wayang* musicians, except those in Denpasar and Badung, had never participated in *lomba gender wayang* before, many were unfamiliar with the *lomba* performing style. In some cases, the jurors specifically suggested adding body displays. However, the musicians in each district naturally have their own local and personal performing style and aesthetics, which do not always easily conform to the judges’ standards.

When the child musicians from Sukawati, Gianyar district, watched a recorded performance of the PSR from Denpasar several months before PKB, their first reaction was laughter. The display of body gestures might have looked funny or strange to them, but may also have been impressive and entertaining. I Ketut Buda Astra, their supervisor, teacher, and also the father of one of the performers, however, had already noticed that such conspicuous physical gimmicks were common in Denpasar, because he had worked as a juror there. Recognizing the significance of these body displays for competition, the group strategically adopted them.

I Nyoman Sutawa, a teacher of the children from Saren Anyar, Karangasem, was advised by the juror to add *gaya*. Although he thought that the *gaya* were not suitable for their performing style, the group added small gestures before starting the performance (pers. comm., 22 March 2014). According to Ni Wayan Apriani, who also took care of the same group, the performers were surprised and unnerved when they saw the conspicuous body gestures of the Denpasar team on the spot, right before their own performance, and she felt she should have soothed them, to be relaxed and calm (pers. comm., 22 March 2014).

I Nyoman Sumandhi, the former president of the Music Conservatory (SMKI) in Bali, said to me that *gaya* are not appropriate for *gender wayang*, and might even be disturbing, especially to the performing style of his home village of Tunjuk, Tabanan. According to Sumandhi, he was strictly taught in his childhood to keep his hands on the keys and not to move them away. Thus, the hands of Tunjuk musicians usually crawl over the keys rather than jump up. He was against the jurors’ suggestion to add the decorative body gestures, as it made the performers’ hands leave the keys and rise up higher than necessary (pers. comm., 24 June 2013).

Although Buda, Sutawa, and Sumandhi did not completely agree with the body displays, they complied to some extent with the established *lomba* performing style and the jurors’ suggestions, and their children included some minimal body displays, especially when they picked up the *panggul* before starting their pieces in the PKB competition.
In my interviews with the gender wayang specialists and the judges, including those from Denpasar and Badung, they largely agreed that the body displays were additional and unessential for performing gender wayang. However, most of them also recognized, or at least accepted, that they are more or less necessary in the lomba context. First, they are thought to motivate the children, and help them to be confident and enjoy their performance. Competition is generally considered an opportunity for youth, not for experienced elders. Body display is also more suitable for youth and children, as it is lucu and entertaining for the audience. I Wayan Suweca, an excellent musician and one of the jurors of PKB, said that body gestures are necessary, because lomba performances are basically tontonan, entertainment to be watched (pers. comm., 25 June 2013). Gaya makes the performance a visually-attractive entertainment, as rasa is expressed and reinforced physically by body signs as well as through musical sound. It might help the audience to more easily understand the rasa, even though they are not always familiar with the music.

Another possible rationale is that body displays have already become fixed as an indispensable part of the criteria of lomba—penampilan above all—legitimized by the juries with the support of the performers and audience, so that they are repetitively re-produced, beyond personal aesthetics and opinion. This, however, may change or transform in the future, as lomba values and aesthetics are elaborated through persistent invention, interaction, and negotiation by the participants, including the juries and the audiences (Mashino 2009, 134).

Conclusion

An emphasis on the visual and physical aspects of performance is required in lomba, where the performers’ bodies are attentively interpreted and evaluated. The context of lomba and the expectations of the participants, including the audience, jurors, and teachers, require the creation and change of a new performing style, which better fits the context. In lomba gender wayang, the bodies of the musicians have been formed and transformed by the gaze of the people surrounding the performance. Musicians’ bodies do not simply produce the sound, but also visually contribute to the performance as a whole, as they are consciously displayed on the stage as evidence of competence and artistry, expressing how the musician feels during the performance, whether the movements of that body are intentionally, deliberately, or naturally constructed.

Acknowledgement

I greatly appreciate all the Balinese musicians whom I interviewed during my research. I also acknowledge Wendell Ishii for his editorial assistance with this paper.

References


CHINTHAKA PRAGEETH MEDDEGODA  
(Universiti Putra Malaysia)

APPROPRIATION OF TABLA IN MALAY GHAZAL

For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
“DANCE TO YOUR ROOTS”: AN EXPLORATION OF THE INDONESIAN JAZZ-GAMELAN FUSION BAND, KRAKATAU

“Without your roots, there is no tree
Let me tell you that your culture is the key”

The sentiment in these lyrics, part of “Dance to Your Roots” (Mystical Mist 1994) celebrates Krakatau members’ rediscovery and embrace of their own Sundanese, or West Javanese, heritage. This turn from their first passion, jazz, toward their cultural roots to find new identity or inspiration is not uncommon for jazz bands in the developing world. As stated by E. Taylor Atkins (2003: xiii), hybrid forms of jazz in world cultures occur when local musicians choose to root their creative endeavors in their own localities.

Krakatau is a jazz-gamelan fusion band from West Java that performs hybridity in reverse – that is, they respect local tradition and retune Western instruments to Indonesian/Sundanese tunings. Unlike many bands producing hybrid music linking peoples and regions together, Krakatau embraced a global influence often overlooked in the literature: Jazz, one of the first arts globalization projects. Initiated in the early 1980s by Dwiki Dharmawan and Pra Budidarma, Krakatau made a switch from jazz-pop to jazz-gamelan fusion in the 1990s and added gamelan musicians from the Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia (STSI) academy in Bandung, sacrificing their popularity by embracing their roots and fusing global with regional. Consequently, over the past 20 years Krakatau has become more popular outside of Indonesia than within the country, though a fan-base of Indonesian intellectuals, college students and artists have stuck with Krakatau through the band’s evolution.

This paper traces the band, examines the goals of the founders, particularly Dharmawan, and explores the musical elements in several compositions. I draw on the many interviews that Jeremy Wallach, Andy Sutton, and I have held with the band (see also Harnish and Wallach 2013). Many recorded compositions follow a formula fluctuating between a jazz and gamelan “space”; in concert, however, the band features improvisations that place them squarely into jazz, which is generally foregrounded over gamelan in the hybridic mix. But, much of the band’s music cannot be so easily defined.

Historic Developments

Over the last century, Indonesia has produced a number of highly accomplished jazz players whose work generally does not incorporate Indonesian indigenous "ethnic" musics. Introduced by Dutch colonialists, some of whom formed bands, jazz is believed to have entered Indonesia in or before 1920. As in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Singapore, and other colonial urban centers, the growing cosmopolitanism of such places as Batavia (now Jakarta) on the island of Java in the late 1920s and 1930s attracted skilled Filipino musicians, most of whom played for the Dutch military. Such figures opened the door for later Indonesian and bicultural musicians, such as pianist Bubi Chen. The style became popular again after WWII and independence in 1945-50 and many jazz clubs opened in Jakarta and in larger urban areas around the country. McGraw (2012:273) believes that jazz, for many Indonesians, “embodied the complex and ambivalent transformations of freedom” as the country emerged in the late 1960s.

The 1980s saw the decline of standard jazz and the move toward jazz-rock fusion as figures such as Indra Lesmana, Candra Darusman, and the first incarnation of Krakatau produced sophisticated, radio-friendly music that combined jazz with pop. Krakatau’s later less-consumer-friendly hybrid style inspired a generation of jazz players who have conducted their own experiments with Indonesian jazz/ethnic fusions, including guitarists Tohpati, Dewa Budjana, and Balawan and drummer Gilang Ramadhan. “Jazz” remains arguably the most prestigious popular music genre in Indonesia, associated with urbanity and musical sophistication (Wallach 2008:30).

The dissemination of jazz in Indonesia by the global music industry refused to acknowledge its African American origins, thus there has been a continuing perception that jazz is a white American
music. Dharmawan told me and other ethnomusicologists that the realization by the members of Krakatau that jazz originated as an "ethnic music" of African Americans helped steer their musical path towards creating music influenced by their own Sundanese "roots." The sentiment in the "Dance to Your Roots" lyrics at the beginning of this presentation celebrates the band members’ rediscovery and embrace of their own Sundanese heritage.

Since the early 1990s, Krakatau has produced a deliberate hybrid music of electric jazz and Sundanese gamelan music, which mixes multiple elements and escapes easy definition. Even bandleader and main creative force, Dharmawan, cannot describe Krakatau’s style. When asked, he prefers to discuss an easier topic: the backgrounds of the different musicians. And therein lies part of the music’s definition. Dharmawan declares that Krakatau’s music is an “acculturation” (akulturasi) between musicians with two differing backgrounds: those with a background of studying Western music (like himself) and others with a background of studying karawitan gamelan (the science or intricacy of gamelan). The music thus becomes an “acculturation” of karawitan Sunda (Sundanese classical music tradition) and jazz. R. Anderson Sutton (2009: 237) explains that Krakatau’s music’s appeal is its ability to "Sundanize" jazz or pop music and to "jazz" or "modernize" Sundanese music at the same time. This ambiguity provides a bridge between the seemingly incompatible worlds of local Indonesian/traditional culture and Western/modern culture. The band has constructed a multidirectional, often seamless fusion that, for many listeners, allows the shape of each form--jazz and gamelan --to emerge anew within the other.

Formations

Like other band members, Dharmawan grew up in Bandung, a center of Sundanese culture. Classically trained at an early age, he studied jazz in high school before founding Krakatau in 1985 with bassist Prabudharma, who had just returned from playing stints in the US. Dharmawan and Budidharma attended weekly jam sessions in Bandung and formed the original Krakatau. The band made its international debut at the 1985 Yamaha Bands Explosion in Tokyo. Dharmawan, then 18, won Grand Prize as the best keyboardist at the Explosion. He immediately began a sponsorship with Yamaha that lasted five years, and Krakatau’s name quickly spread.

Krakatau produced 4 jazz-pop albums over 6 years that generated a number of hit songs. Vocalist Trie Utami and some of other personnel moved in and out of the band until 1990. The band reunited in 1992 and revealed their new jazz-gamelan hybrid direction at the 1993 Jakarta Jazz Festival. Dharmawan began experimenting with microtonality on his synthesizers to match the intervals of gamelan instruments. With his fretless bass, Budidharma could also match the gamelan pitches. This novel approach to hybridity--modifying modern global instruments to a regional pitch framework--distinguishes this band from such artists as Balinese guitarist Balawan, who temppers pitches of an enlarged gangsa metallophone to match his fretted guitar (see Harnish 2013).

The first Krakatau album that featured this “microtonality” was Mystical Mist (1994), in which Dharmawan reprogrammed his electronic keyboard to replicate the scales of Sundanese traditional music (primarily sléndro but also pèlog and madènda) for the various compositions. Vocalist Trie Utami also discarded some of her vocal pop style for the timbre of a pasinden, a female Sundanese traditional singer. In her decade of work with Krakatau, Utami established the sound and face of the band. An attractive female vocalist fronting a male ensemble has been a bridge linking jazz and gamelan; Trie Utami and (later) Ubiet have vacillated between jazz (or jazz-pop) singer and pasinden.

Krakatau has released four albums of “acculturated” music: Mystical Mist (1994), Magical Match (2000), Rhythms of Reformation (2005), and 2 Worlds (2006). Added to the personnel have been a number of gamelan musicians, all of whom have strong connections as traditional music instructors at the prestigious STSI academy in Bandung. In 2004, vocalist Ubiet, an Acehnese (rather than a Sundanese) with a PhD in ethnomusicology replaced Trie Utami. Since the mid 90s, Krakatau has performed in 24 different countries, some numerous times, and has become much more popular outside of Indonesia (particularly Australia and Europe) than within the country. The band, which had scored a many hits with its previous jazz-pop format, has not had a hit as a jazz-gamelan fusion group. But, all of the band members have nurtured independent projects in the breaks between recordings and tours and most of those projects have been successful. Krakatau had become a group that, according to Trie Utami in 2000, members brought money to put into rather than expected to derive money from.
The Allure of the Indigenous

Neither Dharmawan nor Budidharma played gamelan while growing up in Bandung; both were attracted to jazz, particularly artists like John Coltrane. Dharmawan found that jazz was “so wide!” However, Dharmawan and Budidharma always respected Sundanese traditional music. Dharmawan, in fact, took trips to villages in the region to see local music and to watch the various *gamelan* “maestros” directing performances. He was impressed that even with crude instruments in “humble situations,” the musicians could create music of power and beauty. He told me: “These maestros were like heroes to me.” He also appreciated these musicians’ efforts at transmission to the next generations; he adds that he has been inspired to reach out, mentor younger musicians, and encourage Indonesians to retain their cultural roots.

In explaining the *gamelan* collaboration, Dharmawan told Sutton that he began to “question his musical integrity in mostly imitating Western sounds” (2010: 190) and he told me that he was weary of the format of Krakatau’s jazz-pop sound. He respected Sundanese *gamelan*; as a maturing musician in a jazz idiom, he realized that jazz was an ethnically African American music and then reflected upon his own ethnicity. He had already been performing jazz-pop fusions; incorporating gamelan would simply be a new fusion or “acculturation.” As Budidarma switched from fretted to fretless bass and began to teach himself how to play *gamelan* scale intervals (a process that took two years), Dharmawan dialogued with innovative Sundanese gamelan musicians and the new direction emerged. He found these musicians had “the same inspiration” in joining the project, “based on tradition but performing the global.”

The western or global instruments rather than the local/regional ones were modified in this collaboration. Dharmawan, like many intellectuals and artists, is sensitive to honoring regional diversity and the inherent spiritual wisdom of village traditions. Instead of imposing modernism upon rural traditional arts or appropriating the elements into modern arts, he sought an attitude that “originates from the traditional arts themselves that receive modern arts from a modern view within the path of the old, traditional arts.”

This century brought many changes, such as the change from Sundanese vocalist Trie Utami to Acehnese Ubiet, occasional political commentary, new collaborations with musicians inside and outside of Indonesia, and new tour opportunities, including Krakatau’s first tour to North America in 2004. The band also now exhibits a social awareness and provided assistance to survivors via fundraising concerts following the 2004 tsunami off Aceh and North Sumatra. Dharmawan has initiated so many music projects – music schools, orchestras, collaborations, film and television scoring – that he is now well known. Religious organizations often request his participation and political parties have asked him to stand for election. The other musicians, particularly Budidharma and Ubiet, also have music projects outside of the band. Today Krakatau is just one of their projects. Since they realize revenue from outside projects, they are neither concerned that they lost most of their fans with the shift to acculturated music nor that most of their fans reside outside of Indonesia - in Europe, Japan and Australia.

The Music of Krakatau

The four albums that mark Krakatau’s “microtonal” fusion music are mixtures of accompanied vocal songs and pure instrumentals. In any hybrid music, it is essential to look at the two (or more) streams in the new product and determine if the music is a balance between the two or if one stream tends to dominate. In Krakatau’s albums, some pieces foreground *gamelan*, others jazz. All pieces make use of jazz, broadly construed to include harmony (though functional harmony is not possible with an alternate tuning system), rhythms, and/or improvised solos.

Krakatau’s music is accessible; pieces are rarely longer than six minutes. Percussion is a central element in all metered compositions featuring both traps and traditional drum, *kendang*. Krakatau features Sundanese gamelan instruments such as *bonang* gong chime, *rebab* 2-string fiddle, *suling* bamboo flute and *tarompet* wooden reed. Recordings occasionally feature multiple tracks of percussion and in concert the other musicians pick up a variety of percussive instruments to play along. The band follows a jazz format in concert and lengthens pieces with more improvisation, longer solos, and breaks featuring instruments not found on recordings, such as *bonang*. Dharmawan made it clear that the band does not play “traditional music” that restricts improvisation or allows only limited variations. “Here there is improvisation,” he said. “Pak Yoyon, when he plays *rebab*, he improvises. If playing *kendang*, also improvises. [Zainal] Arifin, when playing *bonang*, improvises.” This level of improvisation, which
sets Krakatau's music far apart from traditional gamelan practice, is found primarily in live concerts and only rarely in the shorter and tighter studio compositions available on audiocassettes and compact discs. I explore two pieces from the album, Magical Match: “Pukul Pitu” and “Egrang Funk.”

“Pukul Pitu” (“Seven Strikes” or “Seven O’Clock”) has, as suggested by the title, a seven-beat metric cycle. Most Krakatau compositions consist of three or four contrasting sections. “Pukul Pitu” has three, with one formal section differentiated only by melody and instrument. It begins with bonang in the lower register playing a pattern over 16 beats (which continues, creating a floating polymeter when the other instruments enter in seven beats), while kendang, traps, and a higher bonang melody enter in respective 7-beat patterns. The rebab player performs a featured solo utilizing characteristic Sundanese vibrato and ornamentation. As the rebab drops out, the synthesizer kicks in playing a heavily syncopated jazz line. The rebab alternate their melodies, which alternate between a more Sundanese and a more jazz “space,” with the underlying framework utilizing the world jazz elements of asymmetrical meter, funk bass line, and two separate bonang lines relatively distinct from traditional playing. The third section creates contrast by moving to a quadruple meter, featuring bonang and saron playing a melody, outlined by bass, in unison and octave with higher-pitched gamelan instruments in interlocking parts. The piece returns to the 7/8 groove later for an extended rebab solo. At 4’37” “Pukul Pitu” is a compact piece. There is no true solo improvisation by the synthesizer, which performs virtually the same melody in each statement; the rebab lines vary and A² is noted for its brevity. This type of piece would be greatly extended with multiple solos in concert.

“Egrang Funk” is a funky instrumental featuring syncopated melodies and an ascending bass line (echoed by saron). Dharmawan plays the lead melody in octaves in the A section (the higher melody uses a flute sample); B contrasts and features bonang and saron. After repeats, the kendang enters C and the music slows to feature Sundanese suling with synthesizer playing and light bonang interlocking parts. “Egrang Funk” is 3’13”. The YouTube clip (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vPH0SbLOdrQ) features an extended solo on bonang, a synthesizer solo in the C section, and a cut-time jazz extension in which Dharmawan uses chromatic and “outside” lines.

In “Egrang Funk” and “Pukul Pitu” as well as such pieces as Shufflending-Shufflending” (Sutton’s recording in Titon’s Worlds of Music (see, for instance, 2009), there is a gamelan-centric section that contrasts with the synthesizer lines in a section. In those gamelan-featured sections, the gamelan instruments perform lines that are not idiomatic. Occasionally, as in “Egrang Funk,” a third section creates greater metric contrast and features a slower, floating groove and either rebab or suling. The formal sections in many compositions are quite similar.

Though the keyboards are reprogrammed to the fixed-pitch gamelan instruments, the frequent pentatonic lead melodies are jazz-inspired and the lead parts played by bonang and saron are non-idiomatic and must be considered jazz-inspired. When the kendang emerges and traps recede, the rhythmic groove becomes Sundanese as rebab or suling perform characteristic melodies and ornamentation and other gamelan instruments momentarily play lines familiar to gamelan practice. So, the music is founded primarily upon a broadly defined jazz aesthetic and references Sundanese characteristics. What Krakatau has achieved is to synthesize these streams of influence into a product that attracts intellectuals, college students, and musicians within Indonesia and a much larger world jazz/fusion audience outside of Indonesia.

Concluding Thoughts

Krakatau transformed from a pop/jazz band to a hybrid jazz/gamelan ensemble over a period of about ten years, fully reemerging by 1994. During those years, the principal members, Dharmawan and Budidharma, underwent personal musical journeys (by way of their original training in Western music and jazz) that brought them right back to Sunda to rediscover their roots. Through a series of actions—studying Sundanese gamelan music, interacting and collaborating with noted traditional music teachers at STSI, and deciding to modify Western instruments to adapt to local tunings—Krakatau emerged with an entirely new sound and image. In the process, they lost most of their domestic fanbase while gaining international recognition and credibility among musicians and intellectuals within Indonesia.

The ensemble’s music is consistent both within the studio and on stage. Recorded compositions tend to be under six minutes in length and consist of three to four sections that 1) feature jazz grooves centering on keyboards and fat bass lines that often accentuate percussion; 2) highlight Sundanese instruments (bonang especially) performing patterns or melodies not idiomatic to those instruments; and
3) feature a more traditional section allowing local Sundanese flavor to momentarily color the work. Dharmawan and/or one of the gamelan musicians may take solos on recordings. In performance, pieces may double in length as several musicians will solo in nearly every piece. Krakatau thus reveals its emphasis on jazz tradition in live performance. The gamelan musicians (on bonang, rebab, suling, tarompet, and even kendang) have learned to improvise in two ways: 1) to extend traditional patterns to new pieces in a localized hybrid context and 2) to solo outside of the idiom of Sundanese gamelan in a more globalized jazz format. Dharmawan and Budidharma, meanwhile, have adapted their parts to local tunings while mostly performing melodies and patterns idiomatic to their instruments and to the broader, modern jazz tradition. It is in these ways that the music is, in Dharmawan’s words in August, 2008, “acculturated,” and meant to originate “from the traditional arts themselves that receive modern arts from a modern view within the path of the old, traditional arts.”

While they certainly have always aspired to greater international recognition, Krakatau’s music remains a disciplined musical synthesis by serious, highly skilled performers rather than a slickly packaged product tailored for the world music consumer. Furthermore, while they are justifiably proud of their international exposure (and many would say they deserve more of it), the members of Krakatau have never turned their backs on their domestic audience. The group has continued to play a pivotal role in Indonesia’s small but vibrant creative jazz scene and is a leader in the “progressive ethnic” music scene that overlaps with the Indonesian jazz world and includes groups such as Samba Sunda and such figures as Balawan, Djaduk Ferianto, and the late Harry Roesli.

Apart from some recent efforts to incorporate more African and world percussive elements, “gamelan-inspired jazz” might be the best moniker to describe the music of Krakatau. This glossing, however, does not encapsulate the history, transformation, or outreach efforts of the band, nor the musicians’ struggles to disseminate their message and music to the greater world or to inspire the future direction of Indonesian jazz or popular music. While once the centers of their careers, Krakatau is now a side project for Dharmawan, Ubiet, and Budidharma, albeit one with a distinguished and creative background representing the ingenuity of its members and the aspirations of their educated and cosmopolitan fans to be both progressive and ethnic at the same time.

Endnotes

1 This paper liberally draws upon Harnish and Wallach 2013.
2 Henry Spiller (pc) mentioned that bonang players can perform fast parts similar to those shown in the clip.

References


PARODY AND DANCE IN GHAZAL PARTI

Background

Ghazal parti, also called Ghazal parti utara, denotes an event, a group of performers playing music, acting and dancing, as well as a repertoire. This paper is to introduce some features of this genre that is found in Penang, Kedah and Perak. In result, a discussion of concepts should help to find a more differentiated view on performance genres that evolved as entertainment among the Malay population in the region and shaped a distinct perception of Malay performance culture.

Ghazal parti is described by Sohaimi Hj Abdul Aziz in result of a project on cultural traditions in Penang in 2006 and further promoted by Omar M. Hashim alias Omara. However, the named sources depend strongly on individual interpretation and might be extensively biased depending on the purpose of writing. Both writers confirm a number of interesting points though being little sensitive for historical facts; however, they are different in their conclusions. In order to draw a more differentiated picture of entertainment music that emerged nearly synchronically at the beginning of the 20th century, a critical review of sources seems to be helpful.

Sohaimi deals in his description (2006, 2012) mainly with the Ajinda Ghazal parti Kepala Batas, to which he is personally related and which seems to him the initial point in the development of Ghazal parti. Explaining the meaning of ghazal and Ghazal parti, he cannot really substantiate the use of the term ghazal since ghazal as an imported poetic as well as musically applied genre known from North India or the Middle East, is rarely part of the repertoire. The solely justification might be the rough text contents that draws mainly on love songs. Any love song, therefore, can be called ghazal. His reports on the history are confirmed by Omara (2009-2014).

The history of Ghazal parti starts, according to Sohaimi, in the time from the 1920s to the 1950s, depending on the actual place and the development during the wartime. In Kepala Batas, the Muslim scholar Haji Abdullah Ibrahim [Fahim], returning from the Middle East in 1916 after staying there for few decades, integrated music playing and singing into his teaching at a newly established Quran School in Kepala Batas and co-educated a male audience that appreciates so called lagu-lagu Padang Pasir (Songs of the Desert / Songs from the Middle East) which originated mainly in Egypt and were distributed through records and later the early Egypt film industry. Other songs were added subsequently, especially Hindustani songs experienced through Bollywood productions, and some popular Malay songs known through early Malayan cinema that was brought to Kepala Batas in the 1950s.

From Kepala Batas, Ghazal parti spread all over southern Kedah, northern Perak and Seberang Prai becoming Ghazal parti utara. Penang was spared due to the competing Boria in its rather secular version that fit the cosmopolitan layout of George Town.

In the ensemble of Ghazal parti, Sohaimi counts: 8-12 musicians playing rebana, bongos, tambourine, maracas, accordion, flute, gambus, violin, and double bass, 1-2 singers, 1-3 dancers, 1-2 comedians.

Dancers were and are all male following the advice of Badawi’s father, Haji Ahmad Badawi, who was strongly involved, but they did and do wear female dresses. When in the 1970s male dancers were seen or associated with transgender in response to ongoing social changes in Europe and America, public performances in groups of higher social status were discouraged. Sohaimi explains that “In the 1970s, there was a sort of missionary wave that struck the ghazal dance party until events are no longer encouraged. At present, the party ghazal performances along with belly dancers greatly diminished.” (Sohaimi, 2006:63). This phenomenon embraced many countries with a mainly Muslim population. Saiyid describes similar problems with dance in general for Karachi following the 1971 political reorientation on Middle Eastern conservatism during the civil war. Hammond (2007) gives an account on Egypt writers of that time. However, the comedians sustained. Sohaimi (2012) explained the change in attitude towards the whole concept of Ghazal parti following global changes in religious policy with the words: “the people were not very happy about these dancers”.

147
In this he differs from, Omar Hashim alias Omara (2012), who states that women cannot replace the dancers since the “fun” would instantly disappear. These two simple statements made by Sohaimi and Omara are the point of departure in this study.

Omara emphasises that Ghazal parti is a show that combines music, song, comedy and dance and is famous in Northern Malaysia, especially in Penang. The style of language used is the northern dialect of Kedah and Penang. According to Omara, it was very often the case that Ghazal parti musicians played in more than one band and that they also played in completely other functions such as for berzanji or hadrah competitions. Comedians attended boria as well as bangsawan performances. Omara also says that:

“Performing Ghazal parti is acceptable to the Muslim Malay community because there is Arab and Persian influence. Indeed, it is received by the Malay culture in northern Malaysia for not breaking the bounds of Islam. Mixing between men and women in the show are taken care of.” (Omara, 2009).

History

Observing Ghazal parti as an entire performance design and as a historical product of cultural interaction, the features of dance, comedy and repertoire may point to at least four important key figures that are:

1. Samia Gamal,
2. Ismail Yasin [Yasinne / Yaseen],
3. Umm Kulthum, and
4. Farid Al-Atrash.

Telmissany writes about Samia Gamal: “Within the context of mainstream Egyptian cinema, oriental belly dance delivered two main messages to Arab audiences: in melodramas, it was equated with prostitution and often denoted social strain and moral decadence; in musicals and comedies, it represented a candid source of entertainment, a profession like any other and a trigger for repent and happy endings. Yet Egyptian stars of belly dance such as Taheya Carioca, Samia Gamal and Naima Akef, despite the stigma put on their practice, inspired admiration thanks to their stunning elegance, their gracious beauty and their unapologetic affiliation to the profession. Carioca's soft style, a fusion between baladi (local) belly dance and cabaret techniques was often compared to and contrasted with Gamal's playful and hybrid style. Gamal's full use of the stage and the ballet steps she introduced into oriental dance improvisations were bold and graceful at once, confirming her regional as well as her international reputation throughout the 1940s and 1950s. Later on, actresses such as pin-up star Hind Rostom and Souad Hosni (nicknamed the Cinderella) were also known for the magnificence of their belly dance performances in film.” (Telmissany, 2003, 158).

However, all named key figures are closely related to the early Egypt film industry (Telmissany, 2003). They symbolized modernity and religious integrity since deriving from a culture that produced most of the important religious scholars. Their performance elements were definitely imported by Muslim scholars travelling the Padang Pasir, the Middle East, in connection or following their pilgrimage to Mecca.

In the eyes of the transmitting agents, other experiences might have played a role such as observations of gamat from West Sumatra and other complex performance styles, tabuk from Bengkulu or Pariaman, boria from Penang Island, Parsee theatre, Komedie Stamboel, or Bangsawan in various versions, Jikey as well as anything from early cinema or Wayang Peranakan, in which comedy and dance were important highlights. The experience with local performance practice and their special features regarding dance and comedy smoothed the way for the imported sensation operating with a culturally approved yet modern set of musical repertoire. TV programmes were latest in the 1980s more effectively controlled and guided (Thompson, 2007: 158). However, in the beginning, anything could be screened. This initial experience with mass media technology had an enormous impact on the transformation of entertainment needs.

Furthermore, a steady interaction with other genres through trade and personal exchange could easily contribute to the dynamics in development and in establishing a distinct need for entertainment in urban periphery and developed rural areas of the Malay North.

Cross-dressing is actually nothing surprising in the history of Malay performing arts. The graphic overview along an approximate timeline starting with the grey circle in the late 19th century
PARODY AND DANCE IN GHAZAL PARTI

shows very roughly some interesting interconnections that are of importance to the development for the *Ghazal parti*. The italic names of functionally very different genres do not involve cross-dressing, nevertheless they are substantially contributing to later developments. The overview cannot claim to be comprehensive. It is limited to the territory of today’s Malaysia and some parts of Indonesia and mentions only the most obvious features. As this territory was widely travelled by performing artists, mainly from India but also internally, and the territory was part of an international trading network affecting knowledge distribution on technology and consumer needs as well as experiences with evolving urban art forms, the ‘explosion’ of performance practices in the light of a wildly growing entertainment industry may not surprise as well.

Figure 1. Examining literature of Kartomi (1999, 2005), Tan (1997), Sohaimi (2006), Indrayuda, Muasri & Budiman (2013), Nor (1993), Nasaruddin (2000), Jamil (1996), Yusof (1982), Darwi (2004), Omara (2012), Hansen (1999, 2003), Yusof (2010), Ramlan & Quayum (2010), Mandal (2007), Gerke & Evers (2011), Martarosa (2014) and Zakaria (2011), the scheme marks the relationship between various performance practices involving cross dressing (except those written with italic letters that nevertheless had a strong impact on other performance elements). The grey circle is the geographical area of interest where elements and observations from very different origins were absorbed and transformed. The timeline is not fixed, however, the sequential appearance indicates a timely order with the grey circle starting approximately in the late 19th century and reaching into the 1960s.

Dynamics of Transculturation

Looking under the surface of the outer appearance some dynamics in the transculturation of obviously imported performance features can be detected such as the development:

- From female impersonation to imitating female impersonation
- From imitation of female impersonation to parody of male projections
- From drama A to drama B, while drama A represents the copied original and B the copied copy.

Some of these developments are mirrored in Boria (Yousof, 2010), a performance practice that derives from taziya in a slight different way as tabiuk or tabut in West Sumatra, however, it was rather secularized and replaced a kind of carnival held in parades or entertainment halls. There, again female impersonators who combine dance and comedy appear. Similar features can be observed in local Hadrah performances (Zakaria, 2011).

The questions ‘What is actually parody’ and ‘what is dance in the eye of the audience’ have to be looked at: Generally, parody draws on re-contextualised conditions that are perceived as an imitation and its exaggeration of anything publicly familiar. Dance, taken in the social and cultural context given, is an art expression using movements set to music (Jewell & Louise, 2012). Since the dance in *Ghazal*
parti is in its essentials a belly dance copy in terms of place time and agents, the dance is exotic to the local audience and at the same time the dance symbolises the cultural distance as well as the religious relatedness.

In so far, the dance itself – despite being conducted by men in woman’s dresses – fulfils some requirements of becoming a parody right from the very beginning. Latest at the point of average familiarity through the upcoming talkies in the 1950s cinemas, the Ghazal parti dance must have been a parody as it may imitate male dancers impersonating female belly dancers rather than representing female belly dancers.

Looking at the role of the comedians, Ghazal parti offers some quite distinct features compared to other genres that involve complex performances of music, dance and acting.

![Figure 2. Spatial design of a Ghazal parti according to Sohaimi (2006: 66).](image)

Especially, the layout of the space in which a Ghazal parti is conducted must be considered in order to understand the diverse perceptions of dancers and comedians.

The comedian has to be the member of a Ghazal parti who keep all time the overview about the ongoing development in relationships between performers and audience. He has to show high sensitivity towards any issue that could cause subsequent action. The comedian has to speak the language of the audience and at the same time he must create an emphatic authority that guides musicians and dancers through the event. As the one who makes people laughing, he is responsible for the elimination of seriousness through the audience’s gaze on the scene.

However, the comedian’s success strongly depends on the audience’s response and the protection through the audience. He has to continuously defend his ‘historical space’ in the front area of the stage. The singer though important is only in the second row. The comedian’s space covers the whole intersection between musicians and audience sharing his area with the dancers. On the other hand, the cultural space of the comedian has to be well determined as member of the same community in which Ghazal parti is conducted though the comedian knows best that the repertoire is taken from extra-cultural sources in lack of anything that could become attractive in a similar way without challenging religious feelings, and, additionally, he also has to defend his individual space as he has to develop his own unique character. Omara reports on comedians who attracted a large audience only through their outstanding reputation as unique and intelligent comedians.

The comedians have to take care of many aspects in the performance and they interact with varying partners during the entire performance. They even participate in cross-dressing elements and burlesque the dance parody. On the other side, definite male roles such as the role of the musicians require women who replace men to wear at least symbolically men’s cloth. Hashim Putih is a famous violinist and singer in the Ajinda Ghazal parti Kepala Batas and performs also with some other groups. She appears usually in pants and jacket. As such, she is included in the parody flow of the dancers, who approach her from time to time during the performance as if they are flirting with her. This element of the performance underscores the dancers’ role as male cross-actors.
The same applies on the comedians. The serious function of the comedian in balancing and moderating the relationship between performers and audience, between extra-cultural repertoire and its intra-cultural perception, between adventurous amusements and their communal permissibility, cannot be missed. Considering recent observations and various sources of information (Halim Ibrahim 2012, Omara 2012, Muasri 2014, Martarosa 2014), the role of the comedian seems to be far underestimated. The comedian is actually responsible for balancing the perception of music, dance and stories. He is keeping the connection tight and clean through his acting. Only the comedian could make the dancers looking relatively serious and also, the comedian could convey one very important message: it is a parody embodied through the dance. Only the “clown” can ridicule seriousness thus giving the audience the feeling of watching a story from far away rather than a dance.

The driving forces and the resulting uniqueness of Ghazal parti utara are based on two important conditions:

- **Experience with:** text (musical practice), context (cultural environment), function (social needs)
- **Unique offer through:** modern technological achievements, personal encounters during journeys.

Both conditions depend on each other. So to say, the experience with early Egypt films, followed later by Malay film and Bollywood experiences came in a time when the same forces that enabled the film technology were contributing to an increasing leisure time budget and wealth in the urban periphery of colonial Malaya.

The modernity of Bangsawan, the liveliness of Boria and especially their relatedness to other preceding entertainment practice lead logically to a new need for those who do not take part in modern urban life due to cultural reasons of which religious understanding seems to be the strongest.

**Other Ways and Other Views**

Interestingly, there can be observed a parallel development from the 19th century onwards in Great Britain. Ackroyd describes that in the British pantomime, especially in the music hall, important actors played the ‘dame’, a female impersonator dressing up either in an ugly way or exaggerating aggressiveness and sexual desire thus attracting fearful attention of the audience. However, “All of these fears are subtly represented, and then detonated. Thus transvestism can be a way of releasing sexual anxieties through laughter” (Ackroyd, 1979: 194). He also states, “comic transvestism continued in all-male revues” (ibid.). As such, cross-dressing combined with comedy indicates a type of social therapy. Bullough & Bullough (1993: 236) describe in detail: “Female impersonation, which had been declining since women had been allowed to appear as themselves on the legitimate stage in the seventeenth century, made a comeback in the nineteenth century. It became an entrenched part of the British pantomime, particularly during the Christmas season. Major actors often took a woman’s role, but it was always clear that the person playing the dame (…) was a man; he dressed as an absurd and ugly woman, and much of the comedy was derived from the fact that he was burlesquing himself as a male actor. Even in this form, however, the stage impersonator made an effective challenge to traditional ideas of gender.” It became a standard amusement especially among a male audience and it was practiced under quite similar contradictory conditions balancing between a performance habit and the enforcement of cultural values in a society that emphasises conservatism in order to regain control and ideologically opposing an industrial revolution. The experience of this type of British entertainment might have contributed to the tolerance of similar practices in the colonial context. On the other side, it also could have been an attribute of modernity to those who imported the core repertoire from the Middle East, where it surely affected the early creative film industry. Further, Parsi Theatre and Komedie Stamboel travelling Northern Malaya included this type of comedy in their performances which could resonate with and inspire other upcoming practices from local theatre such as Bangsawan in Penang, Jikey on Langkawi or modern cerita Randai in West Sumatra.

However, in Ghazal parti, as it is practiced today, the audience views definitely male actors impersonating Arab or Hindustani female dancers who determinedly exhibit femaleness. Most of the attraction might have been transformed after humble beginnings into this type of amusement that is indeed unique and much different from many other performance practices that include cross dressing. The parody, therefore, embraces in the first line the dance thus the jokes are the medium to transport the diffusional effect. The “sexy” (Sohaimi, 2006) dance style is commented in a way that it ridicules serious desire.
A scene from Ahabibina ya aini with Farid Al-Atrash shows one of the key scenes that might have been an inspiration for the logic operation of dancers and comedians in Ghazal parti. The scene shows a recording studio looked at through the engineer’s window. Farid Al-Atrash sings into a microphone, in the background sits the orchestra, all men with their typical fez, a symbol that is taken over by many Ghazal parti musicians as well as boria dancers in Penang. Behind the studio engineer sits a lady listening highly moved to Farid Al-Atrash’s performance. In the background of the lady, however, are three men dancing belly dance and having fun. The scene ridicules the romance of the foreground and de-dramatizes the story.

Final Remarks

Satisfying religious custody, the main justification for the establishment of Ghazal parti was given rather retroactively. In times when travelling was still a big achievement, the geographical distance and religious relatedness of the distant culture might have been sufficient in declaring the performance outcome for being appropriate. Similarly, the appearance and musical quality of Hindustani ghazal and movie songs deriving from it were taken as culturally related elements since ghazal is mainly a field of Muslim musicians and singers. However, this justification could not be applied anymore in the 1970s, following a strong U-turn in cultural development of societies with a major Muslim population for reasons that cannot be subject of this paper. As a result, the world shranked to a global anonymity in which cultural values were commodified and re-ritualised in various ways. The enforcement of conservative gender ideas and views on music and dance was one version that was operated through verbally uttered rules and later discussions based on religious texts. Von Nieuwkerk describes in 2003 a recently converted Muslima who tried to convince her with the words: “The general rule on music, singing, and listening to music is that it is haram, forbidden. It is a grave sin and just as bad as drinking, gambling, or adultery.” (von Nieuwkerk, 2003: 269). In her analysis, she relates this view to the teachings of Al Qaradawi, who constructs an opposition between Muslim women and non-Muslim women (ibid.). However, the performative exhibition of men wearing women’s dresses seems to indicate a worse type of perception through the gaze of the communal authority. Muasri (2014), director of the Cultural Centre in Padang, West Sumatra, comments on the introduction of female actors into Randai Drama that better education has led the stage directors to allow women to perform since men performing may imply other problems.

Nevertheless, Ghazal parti is not yet going to decline. The existence of Ghazal parti embodies a very interesting part of Malaysian performance history and the knowledge deriving from it should be captured in a more comprehensive way.

References


Ilbrahaim, H. (2012). Personal communication, 9 December, in Georgetown. Accessible as audio files ARCPA 2065, 2066, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Faculty of Human Ecology, Music Department.


Martarosa. (2014). Personal communication in Padangpanjang, Indonesia, 2 February.


Omara, H. (2012). Personal communication, 28 November and 9 December, in Kuala Lumpur and Georgetown. Accessible as audio files ARCPA 1690, 1691, 2065, 2066, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Faculty of Human Ecology, Music Department.


Sohaimi, A. A. (2012). Personal communication, 8 December, in Penang. Accessible as audio files ARCPA…., UPM, Faculty of Human Ecology, Music Department.


Since 2009, a group of musicians who came to prominence in the 1990s in Bandung's thriving death metal scene have been performing original songs, covering international death metal hits, and engaging in collaborations with musicians who specialize in other genres (blues, jazz, and capoeira, to name a few)—all to the accompaniment of Sundanese bamboo musical instruments that were virtually extinct only twenty years ago. And a sizeable contingent of young Sundanese fans are following their lead by procuring and learning to play these once rare instruments. In this essay I focus on one such instrument: karinding (bamboo jew's harp). I will begin with an overview of the instrument’s history as reported by western observers. I next analyze how Sundanese people’s embrace of a hegemonic modernity in the 20th century relegated karinding to obscurity. Finally, I argue that karinding’s reflorescence represents an alternative modernity in which, instead of adopting disdain of their own past as the primitive “other” against which European hegemonic modernity is constructed, Sundanese people create their own Sundanese history against which to articulate a coherent Sundanese modernity.

In West Java, karinding is a bamboo jew’s harp (see Plate 1). The player strikes the end of the instrument to set the incised lamella vibrating, holds it to the mouth, and modulates the instrument’s timbre by changes in breathing and in the shape of the mouth cavity. A variety of western documentation from the 19th and early 20th centuries suggests that karinding was once a common Sundanese instrument.
dictionary (1862:203) and Jaap Kunst's Music in Java (1973:360) suggest that karinding was always played in conjunction with a foot-long bamboo resonating tube. A short karinding performance is among the earliest recordings of music from Java: Benjamin Ives Gilman made a cylinder recording of a Sundanese karinding player at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Illinois, where an entire Sundanese village was transported from West Java to the US as a marketing gimmick for a Dutch coffee and tea enterprise. Descriptions of the Village suggest that playing karinding was something the residents did on their verandas for their own entertainment, as well as for the vicarious pleasure of American visitors who might overhear them.

Karinding receded from view in the latter half of the 20th century. In 1972, Sundanese scholar Iwan Natapradja remarked that karinding "is almost never heard anymore" (1972:315), and Wim van Zanten reports that it is rarely played even among the Baduy, those isolated ethnically Sundanese communities that ardently preserve ancient ways of life (1995:525).

Hegemonic Modernity in West Java

Karinding had, for all intents and purposes, disappeared by the 1980s, an inevitable outcome, I argue, of the embrace of a monolithic European modernity in the locales that eventually became the modern nation-state of Indonesia, including West Java. A modern 20th-century European's view of Asia tended to be one of a timeless, backward place, outside of history, whose residents were "people without history," as Eric R. Wolf famously described them (2010:18)—living representatives of the pre-modern, backward past. As the historian Zvi Ben-Dor Benite argues, "Europe became the point of origin even for non-European history, and other civilizations were cast outside history or lost it altogether" (2011:643).

To fit into hegemonic modernity, Indonesians, like other colonial subjects, were compelled to internalize what the historian Tani Barlow calls "a false ideal called ‘the west" (2012:625). For Indonesians eager to be modern, the path was to align themselves with modern Europeans by distancing themselves from their own backward Asian past either by (1) erasing the local past completely or (2) finding ways to modernize the past in ways consistent with modern European values. Although Europeans admired bamboo’s obviously remarkable versatility as a raw material, they also perceived the “rough-hewn” qualities of many bamboo products as iconic of static Asian backwardness. It is no wonder, then, that upwardly-mobile Sundanese aspired to abandon their bamboo-and-rattan building technology and replace it with the smooth lines of industrial materials and methods such as plaster, glass, steel, and wood carpentry.

Partial modernizations enabled two other bamboo instruments, suling and angklung, to acquire modern credentials. The suling’s association with aristocratic ensembles (tembang Sunda and degung) gave it a modern patina even as its repertory remained Sundanese, and the angklung’s “rebirth” as a diatonic instrument for instruction in western music gave it modern credentials by virtue of its western repertory and its role in western-style education (Perris 1971). There was no such modern redemption available for karinding, however. A quiet instrument, intended for personal amusement or courtship, it had no viable foothold in the loud, busy, modern world.

Alternative Modernities

The hegemonic, monolithic, Eurocentric modernism described above is essentially a thing of the past in our putatively post-colonial world. Most social scientists speak now of multiple modernities; Jan Pieterse’s statement, "All modernities are mélange modernities, composites of diverse elements, improvisations, hybrids of place and space" (1998:82) sums up the current consensus. Many scholars argue that modernity is a state of mind that assumes a self-reflective approach to understanding the world that privileges science, order, essence, and universal truths over local custom (Raud 2007:v; Chakrabarty 2011:669). Perhaps C. A. Bayly has the most succinct statement of this key pillar of modernity: “In the first place,” he writes, “… an essential part of being modern is thinking you are modern” (2004:10). To be modern, in other words, one must establish what it means to be not modern—to have a vision of an “other” who is not modern.

Hegemonic European modernism articulated its others on two planes: first, through the colonization of non-European countries, that is, in geographical space; second, in time—by colonizing their own European past. As the historian Carol Symes writes, "Colonization of the past is an indispensable companion of empire" (2011:716). She argues further that the construction of a medieval
“period” and medieval people provides a means to relegate undesirable—unmodern—parts of European history to a pre-modern past (ibid.:721–722).

It is hardly a controversial notion any more that history is not simply the uncovering of facts, but a subtle spinning of those facts to create, in the words of Eric Wolf, a “genealogy,” that relates a “moral success story,” and tells “a tale about the furtherance of virtue, and how the virtuous win out over the bad guys” (2010:5). Initial forays toward modernity for Indonesians forced them to adopt European conflagrations of the European past with the Asian present and to disregard their own history. An alternative modernity for musicians in a post-colonial Indonesia requires establishing a music history that roots contemporary values in a distinctly Sundanese past, rather than in a European one.

We’re talking about a generation of Sundanese/Indonesians who have never been "colonial subjects" in the way their grandparents were. Most were born during the capitalistic, industrialized “New Order” era. They came of age toward the end of Soeharto’s rule, as resistance to his repressive policies escalated, and during a time when mobile phone technology spread rapidly (Barendregt 2008:160), providing ready access to the global internet, and a wealth of information, genres and styles of expression, and the like.

A New Karinding History

Karinding Attack (see Plate 2) is a group of musicians who came to prominence during this time. According to Jeremy Wallach, the embrace by Indonesians of metal music—a style characterized by distorted guitar timbres, aggressive drumming, emotionally extreme, often raspy and unpitched singing techniques, transgressive song texts, and musical complexity (Wallach, Berger, and Greene 2011: 4, 10, 14; see also Wallach 2008:115–117; Harris 2000)—stems from “rage and frustration engendered by the exploitative industrialization of the developing world” among a “disenfranchised working class” (Wallach, Berger, and Greene 2011:17).

Like metal music across the globe, the Indonesian metal scene is not simply rebellious, however; it is, as Harris Berger argues, also “a constructive force, providing alternative cultural identities to those offered or projected by the cultural traditions, nationalisms, and religious movements that are influential in the locales where the music takes root” (Wallach, Berger, and Greene 2011:23) and provides a context for establishing and maintaining wide alternative social networks.

Like many other turn-of-the-21st-century residents of Bandung, metalheads self-consciously sought to recover bits of local heritage since the fall of Soeharto in 1998. They made an effort to use the Sundanese language in more public and private contexts, and they embraced a few sartorial signs of Sundaneseness, especially the wearing of iket (traditional headcloths). A few members of a metal band called Ujungberung Rebels were among those who adopted these mannerisms. Their subsequent
acquaintance with traditional bamboo instruments was in part an outgrowth of this interest in traditional Sundanese culture. It also was sparked by the tragic trampling death of ten teenagers at an overcrowded Bandung metal concert on February 9, 2008. Musicians were horrified by the tragedy, and, to make matters worse, the authorities stopped allowing metal concerts in most of their usual venues.

When they saw Abah Olot, the latest in a family line of karinding and celempung makers and players from a remote village (Maulana 2010:49; p.c., Gustaff Harriman Iskandar, 6/3/2013), perform as part of an all-day music festival at a local restaurant, they invited him to teach at Common Room, a center for alternative arts activities where the group hung out (Kimung 2011:16–17). In a quest to reinject local Sundanese values of community and cooperation into the metal scene, and to work around prohibitions on electric metal performances, the musicians began to work on songs they could perform with Abah Olot’s instruments. The karinding’s buzzy timbre was vaguely reminiscent of distorted guitars. The group began to perform in a variety of venues under the name Karinding Attack, and developed a sizeable following. They invited their young fans to come to Common Room to learn to play karinding.

Through social media, as well as a variety of books and essays, Karinding Attack, along with its fans and imitators, have discovered and disseminated much karinding lore through oral histories, library research, and, of course, by surfing the internet. From these various sources a local history of the karinding is emerging that lays a solid and respectable foundation for the instrument’s modern repurposing.

Regarding the instrument’s origins:
- It has a distinguished history; karinding is mentioned in an old manuscript that has been dated to six hundred years ago.
- It was not just a knickknack for idle amusement, but also a functional means for keeping pests away from the rice fields. Depending on who is talking, it is either the high frequencies or the low frequencies that drive either rodents, or mites or other insects, away.

Regarding technique: there are four codified pirigan, or playing patterns:
- tonggeret, named after an dry-season evening cricket.
- tutunggulan, based on the sounds of rice pounding in a lesung (hollow log), which also for sending signals about important events.
- tereogan, based on the interlocking sounds of four hand drummers as they accompany themselves in comic routines.

This history spins the karinding as a venerable instrument with serious functions, such as pest control and communication, rather than the more frivolous uses for personal entertainment that were typically ascribed to the instrument, as well as an instrument with a codified playing technique.

What is left out of history is important, too. For one thing, modern karinding players usually use a microphone to amplify their sounds. Electronic amplification obviates the need for a bamboo resonating tube, of course. The popular bamboo microphone stands that Karinding Attack and other groups use to hold their microphones in place, however, are reminiscent of the resonating tubes.

Perhaps, most significantly, karinding historians must skirt the question of the instrument’s pre-Islamic past and its continuing associations with agricultural lifestyles that still involve vestiges of worship of the rice goddess; they must maneuver carefully to ensure that karinding is compatible with modern Indonesian Islam.

What good is this sense of history? According to Hermann Danuser, an awareness of history opens up the possibility of "musical pluralism," and the possibility of "reverting to earlier styles, genres, and patterns of musical thought" (2004:260). Other-ing (or colonizing) one’s own past, in other words is a prerequisite to transforming the past to fit the present. The development of an indigenous karinding history sets the stage for adapting karinding into other modern musical idioms.

The karinding’s chief limitation in a modern context is pitch—it has only one, unless you exploit the harmonics. Now, if any genre of modern music can do without pitched instruments, it’s heavy metal … nevertheless, there have been several approaches to making diatonic, even chromatic karinding. We can only wait to see where these experiments lead.
Conclusion

In the span of a decade, karinding has gone from extinction to wild popularity in West Java. And it’s not just Karinding Attack. There are dozens, maybe hundreds, of bamboo groups in Bandung. Middle and High Schools sponsor extracurricular clubs for performing bamboo music. Karinding is as common in Bandung as guitars were among American youth in the 1960s and 70s. Even the government-sponsored performing arts university (Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia, STSI) has gotten into the act—they recently established a bamboo music department.

I have argued that two different modernities are responsible, first for the extinction, and then for the florescence of these instruments. While earlier generations eschewed karinding as a marker of their status as others in order to secure themselves a spot in European history and modernity, current generations have carefully fashioned a uniquely Sundanese history of their own that imbues karinding with modern values, and paves the way for karinding’s reincorporation into a uniquely Sundanese modernity.

Endnotes

1 This paper was written for and presented to the Balzan Foundation Workshop Conference in January, 2014, in Berlin, Germany, with the support of the Balzan Foundation’s Programme in Musicology, “Towards a Global History of Music,” under the direction of Prof. Reinhart Strohm. I am grateful to the Balzan Foundation and Prof. Strohm’s Programme for their permission to publish this abbreviated version here.

2 "'Sabab kitoe hate kaoela, ngalengis koe hal Moab, saperti soeling; djeung angen kaoela ngalengis koe hal oerang Kir-Heres, saperti karinding …" (Therefore My heart wails for Moab like flutes; My heart also wails like flutes for the men of Kir-heres, New American Standard Bible).

3 “Karinding, a musical instrument made of a tube of bambu [sic] about one foot long and one inch in bore, at the end of which is held a small instrument with a tongue to it. This instrument is struck by the finger and blown upon, when a sound like a jew's harp is produced” (Rigg 1862:203).

4 a.k.a. Endang Sugriwa, b. 1964 (Riyadi 2011:10).

5 To see a video featuring Abah Olot demonstrating the four pirigan, see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RMnMjZ-r2q8&noredirect=1.

References


RECONTEXTUALIZING *PASANTIAN*: FROM ELITIST RELIGIOUS CHANT TO MAINSTREAM BALINESE VOCAL MUSIC IN POST-NEW ORDER INDONESIA

For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
TRADITIONAL DANCE AS A POINT OF DEPARTURE FOR THE CHOREOGRAPHY OF
*TARI KREASI BARU*, NEW DANCE CREATIONS, IN BALI

For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
I WAYAN DIBIA
(ISI Denpasar, Indonesia)

TEACHING KECAK IN OTHER ASIAN COUNTRIES

For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
JACQUELINE PUGH-KITINGAN  
(Universiti Malaysia Sabah)

FROM RITUAL OBJECT TO MUSICAL INSTRUMENT:  
THE SOUND AND PLACE OF THE DRUM AND DRUMMING IN RITUAL  
AND NON-RITUAL CONTEXTS AMONG DUSUNIC SOCIETIES OF SABAH

In line with the theme “Sound, Movement, Place: Choreomusicology of Humanly Organized Expression in Southeast Asia,” this paper will seek to answer the following questions concerning drumming as humanly organized expression among three Dusunic cultures in Sabah, the east Malaysian state of northern Borneo. What is the significance of the sound of the drum and drumming in the contextual place of ritual performance among Dusunic peoples? What is the significance of the sound of the drum and drumming in the contextual place of non-ritual performance among Dusunic peoples? How has the importance of the drum in ritual and non-ritual social contexts in these cultures ensured its continuity or contributed to its decline?

Sabah’s Membranophones and Their Performance

Sabah’s membranophones include both drums and frame drums. Frame drums, which have shallow wooden bodies and wide heads, are relatively rare and are traditionally only found among the Brunei of the west coast and the Tidong of Tawau District on the east coast where they are played with gong and kulintangan ensembles or with other instruments. Frame drums are of Arab origin, and have come into these coastal Muslim communities through contacts with Arab traders over the centuries (Pugh-Kitingan, 2004, p. 22, p. 87).

There are three main types of true drums found in Sabah. Native drums have heads made from deerskin, goatskin or sometimes cowhide, affixed to their wooden bodies with cane hoops into which wooden tuning pegs are inserted. Those from the interior usually have single heads, while those from communities closer to the coast tend to be double-headed. They are usually hit with a single stick that has a rubber or beeswax end, or else with a flexible length of coconut stem. The Rungus tontog, however, is beaten with a pair of rubber-ended sticks. In Dusunic and Murutic cultures, hanging gong ensembles often include a drum like these (Pugh-Kitingan, 2003, pp. 4, 34; 2004, pp. 19-20, 83, 85).

By contrast, double-headed red or brown barrel-shaped drums, with cane tuning strings across their bodies from one head to the other, are played in pairs in the kulintangan and gong ensembles of the Iranun, Bajau and Dusun Tindal on the west coast. The seated performers usually hold these diagonally. The upper head is hit by the left hand, while the lower head is struck with a cane or wooden stick (Pugh-Kitingan, 2004, pp. 20, 84, 113-115, 123, 154-163, 170-172, 189).

East coast Bajau ensembles include the tambol, a double-headed, brass-bodied Spanish military drum that has been acculturated from communities in the southern Philippines. This hangs from a strap or string worn by the standing performer, and is struck with a pair of wooden drumsticks. Larger versions of this drum are found among some Paitanic peoples along the eastern rivers and the Id’a’an of Lahad Datu. They are laid horizontally on the floor and hit with a single beater (Pugh-Kitingan, 2004, pp. 21, 85-86, 163-166).

This article focuses on the performance of native type drums from some of Sabah’s many Dusunic cultures—the Kadazan Dusun of the inland upland Tambunan plain and also of the west coastal Penampang plains (known there as Kadazan), and the Lotud Dusun of Tuaran on the west coast (Plate 1). The Kadazan Dusun are Sabah’s largest indigenous isoglot and the largest ethnic group overall in Sabah, at around 25% of the state’s traditional population (Regis, 1989, pp. 409-410). They inhabit the upland Districts of Ranau and Tambunan in the interior, and the west coastal Districts of Kota Belud, Penampang and Papar. The Lotud Dusun, by contrast, number around 10,000, and are found mainly in Tuaran District and Tamparuli Sub-District on the west coast (Pugh-Kitingan & Judeth John Baptist, 2009, p. 249).
The Karatung in the Moginakan of the Kadazan Dusun of Tambunan

The karatung, also known as gandang or gondang in some villages, is a single-headed drum, with tuning pegs inserted into the cane hoop around its head. It is usually played with the sopogandangan gong ensemble that includes one hand-held gong and seven hanging gongs of various types and names. Gong ensemble music (generally called tinondot) accompanies dance or magarang and is played during weddings and other important social occasions such as post-harvest celebrations (Kaamatan), church events and Moginakan (Pugh-Kitingan, 2003, 4-11, 35-37; 2011a).

The Moginakan is the largest and most important social gathering for the Kadazan Dusun of Tambunan. It is a huge feast initiated by a conjugal family during times of an abundance of rice and livestock. Extending over three to four days, it is held to honour the Creator for His providence to the family by sharing this abundance with close relatives, distant kin, other villagers and friends from afar. Sometimes, Moginakan are held in conjunction with the wedding of one of the children in a family (Pugh-Kitingan, 2011b, pp. 168-171; 2012, 119-130).

Tinondot gong music (with the rhythm tindoti dot tinondot in Kg. Karanaan) is played periodically by the sopogandangan ensemble throughout the Moginakan. This may also accompany dance or magarang. In traditional Moginakan that use the services of priestesses (called bobohian or bobolian in Tambunan) who chant the long sacred ritual poetry or rinait, the karatung is a ritual object. In Moginakan organized by Christian families, however, the karatung is a musical instrument and plays along with the gongs.
Process of Moginakan

As an example, the Moginakan in Kg. Karanaan (among the oldest villages on the Tambunan plain) is preceded by three months or more of Magahap (to invite) or Mongoi Tuhun (call people) whereby different family members visit the homes of bilateral kin, both near and far. They share a meal and invite them to the forthcoming Moginakan.

After a day of preparations, the Moginakan begins on the first night as the family eats rice and meat together. No green vegetables or fruits are permitted inside. The bobohian performs Momohou (calling the spirits) to call back all the lost subsidiary spirits of sick and injured people in the family and the village. The Kadazan Dusun believe human beings have a main spirit in the chest and six subsidiary spirits in the shoulders, elbows and knees. If one of these becomes lost due to an accident or capture by a demon, a person becomes sick.

On the second day, family members and close kin in the village help with preparations. Men make suki or bamboo cups for drinking tapai rice beer. They slaughter animals for the feast, including two large water buffaloes, several pigs and hundreds of chickens. Some of the buffalo meat is divided among the family’s immediate kin to take home later. The women cook the chickens, the rest of the meat and rice and prepare the feast. Meanwhile, the bobohian performs rituals for cleansing the house and blessing the tapai. After this, green vegetables and fruits can be brought into the house.

On the third day, other villagers and non-relatives arrive for the feast. The bobohian drives away sickness from the home. Rituals conclude with Humanau by the riverbank where pigs’ entrails (unpalatable for humans) are left for wandering demons in the river to send them away from the family. Feasting, gong music and dancing continues until the food and drink run out (Pugh-Kitingan, 2012, pp. 120-126).

Moginakan organized by Christian families follow this same process, but without the rituals, chanting and offerings by the bobohian.

The Karatung as a Ritual Object in Traditional Moginakan from Tambunan

In Moginakan that include rituals by priestesses, the karatung is a spiritually powerful object upon which the bobohian sits (literally) at the back veranda of the house to begin the first night of rituals. Placing small offerings of rice and fermented fish near the mouth of a large conical bark-sided basung basket, laid horizontally on the ground, she chants the rinait for Momohou.

Thereafter, the karatung is laid horizontally in the ritual space in the sitting room of the house with offerings and other ritual paraphernalia. When chanting rinait in this ritual space, the bobohian holds the drum and her gonding (spiritually powerful metal clapper) together, with the gonding hanging over the drumhead.

On the second day during cleansing rituals outside the back of the house, the bobohian again sits on the karatung (Plate 2).

During Humanau rituals at the riverbank, as her assistants wash pigs’ entrails and leave them for demons in the river, the bobohian sits on the karatung while reciting rinait. She then beats the karatung seven times to conclude the Moginakan rituals (Pugh-Kitingan, 2012, p. 126).

Ritual Place and Sound of the Karatung

As a ritual object, the karatung drum provides empowering support to the bobohian as she mediates between the human and spiritual worlds, both outside the house where she sits on the drum and inside beside her in the ritual space as she holds her gonding on the drumhead while reciting rinait. As a sound-producing instrument that is struck seven times on the riverbank at the end of Humanau, it addresses and informs the spiritual realms that the ritual proceedings are completed and that the family has shared its bounty from the Creator with their kin and friends.

Throughout the Moginakan, the sopogandangan ensemble plays the typical music for dancing and celebration. In some villages, this may also include a karatung that beats the composite rhythm of the gongs. Its sound with the gongs informs the spiritual world about the celebration.

Non-ritual Place and Sound of the Karatung

The sopogandangan ensemble with the karatung is also played at Moginakan held by Christian families and on other social occasions such as weddings and Kaamatan. As a musical instrument, the
karatung played with the sopogandangan has the overall rhythm of the other instruments and its sound is embedded in the composite instrumental texture. In some villages, it has a leading role and begins the music while in others the small hand-held koritikon gong has this function. This drum is not played solo in non-ritual contexts.

Plate 2. Kadazan Dusun drums as ritual objects (left to right) – bobohian Odu’ Soinggit sits on a karatung while chanting rinait during a Moginakan at Kg. Karanaan, Tambunan, 2005; Matang by senior bobohizan Inai Lovinin during a Monogit at Kg. Kituau, Penampang, 2004 (Photos: J. Pugh-Kitingan)

The Gandang in the Monogit of the Kadazan of Penampang

The gandang of the coastal Kadazan of Penampang is a double-headed native drum with tuning pegs inserted into the cane hoops around each head. It is normally played with the sompogogungan ensemble that includes six hanging gongs of various sizes. The sompogogungan music accompanies dance or sumazau and is played during weddings and on other occasions such as Kaamatan, church events, and rare ritual ceremonies.

In Penampang, the term Monogit refers to a cycle of ceremonies performed by the priestesses (called bobohizan among the coastal Kadazan), who chant the sacred inait. It is held every two years at the household level to promote the fertility of the family’s rice plants, to cleanse family members from bad dreams, to cleanse the house from evil spirits, and to feed the miontong or house guardian spirit that lives in one of the upright posts of the house. Nowadays, this Monogit is largely obsolete and is organized by only two families in Kg. Kituau, Penampang (Pugh-Kitingan et al, 2009a, pp. 103-106, 111-116; 2011).

Process of Monogit in Penampang

The Kotudungan (“beginning”) on the first night begins with the father in the family beating the gandang to announce the event to the spirit world, while the bobohizan group cook rice to be made into tapai. Later, as family members dance socially to the music of the sompogogungan, individual bobohizan beat the horizontal gandang as they chant inait. Later after midnight, while skilled villagers play the gandang and sompogogunan continuously for several hours, the bobohizan go into trance (modsuut) to summon spirits from various realms to attend the event.

The second day of rituals or Mamasa’an (“feeding the spirits”) begins with a bobohizan beating the gandang while chanting inait. Various rituals and dancing by bobohizan (including a possession dance where a bobohizan is possessed by the miontong) take place throughout the day, accompanied by the continuous beating of the sompogogungan with the gandang by village musicians.

In the early hours of the third day, the Kinapangasan (“closing”) takes place without any gong ensemble music or drumming. The bobohizan again enter trance to send back all the spirits that attended the event.
Formerly Pa’atod Hangod (“sending the offerings to ask the local dudui spirit to guard the padi field”) took place on the fourth day. Since most families in this village no longer cultivate rice and have utilized their padi land for constructing houses, this is no longer performed (Pugh-Kitingan et al, 2011, pp. 129-138).

The Penampang Kadazan Gandang as a Ritual Object in the Monogit

The ritual importance of the gandang is clearly seen during Mamason (“announcing”) which opens rituals on the first night, as the husband in the senior conjugal couple beats the gandang to announce the event to the spirit world. He stands the drum on its rim and beats it on one head, then turns it over and beats the other head. It announces the event to good spirits in various spiritual realms.

Matang (“awakening”) is then performed by the most senior bobohizan. She stands the drum upright and using the drum beater smashes uncooked rice grains against her sindavang (spiritually powerful metal clapper) on the drumhead then eats the smashed grains (see Plate 2). This is to awaken the spirits in all the ritual paraphernalia. It is believed that the spirits possessing the gandang and sindavang, as well as the rice grains, which are imbued with their own spiritual life force, will strengthen her own spirit for when she travels into the spirit world in trance with after midnight.

The gandang is also laid horizontally and beaten by individual bobohizan when chanting their inair, to draw the attention of the spirit world. It later leads the sompogogungan gong ensemble when the priestesses go into modsuut (trance) after midnight, and during gong music accompanying the ceremonies and ritual dancing of the bobohizan over the next day.

Ritual Place and Sound of the Kadazan Gandang in the Monogit

The beating of the Kadazan gandang in the Monogit draws the attention of the spiritual realms. During Mamason, it is said to sound like thunder in the spirit world. It awakens and summons good spirits in various spiritual realms. As a solo accompaniment to chanting by a bobohizan on the first evening and the morning of the second day, its sound also draws the attention of the spiritual world.

When played with the sompogogungan ensemble throughout the modsuut of the bobohizan and throughout the second day, it is regarded as superior to the other instruments. The gandang delineates their composite rhythm.

Non-ritual Place and Sound of the Kadazan Gandang

Like the sopogandangan and karatung from Tambunan, the Penampang sompogogungan is played with the gandang at non-ritual social celebrations. As a musical instrument, it begins the music and outlines the basic rhythm. As the gongs enter one by one, the gandang continues and supports the overall patterns of the gongs. Its sound and rhythm is embedded in the composite texture of the ensemble. This drum is not played solo in non-ritual contexts

The Gandang in the Mamahui Pogun of the Lotud Dusun

The Lotud gandang is a double-headed drum with tuning pegs inserted into the cane binding around both its heads. When making a gandang, animal bones are placed inside its body to enhance its spiritual power. This power increases the more the drum is played in ritual contexts. Nowadays, some people cover the bodies of gandang with zinc sheeting to protect the drums from termites. This gandang is only played in ritual contexts, such as various family level ceremonies and the Mamahui Pogun.

The Mamahui Pogun (“Cleansing the Universe”) is a major community-wide series of rituals conducted over several weeks for cleansing the universe during times of extreme weather, epidemics, and other major crises believed to be caused by human sins. It is presided over by the tantagas group of priestesses who chant the sacred rinait. The series proceeds in three phases over several weeks, and each phase is characterized by specific pieces of ritual instrumental music or basalon played on basalon instruments including the gandang and two kinds of hanging gongs (tanyang and tawag).

Ideally, the gandang should be accompanied by as many gongs as possible, but usually three to five tanyang and three to five tawag are used (Pugh-Kitingan & Judeth John Baptist, 2009; Pugh-Kitingan et al, 2009a, 2009b).
Process of Mamahui Pogun

The Mamahui Pogun begins with the construction of a turugan ritual house at Kg. Bantayan, Tamparuli, representing the inland zone of Lotud villages. Turugan are constructed consecutively at Kg. Marabahai, Tuaran, representing the central zone, and finally at Kg. Tutu Solupuh (formerly Kg. Olung) representing the coastal zone of Lotud villages.

The first phase of the series, called Manawah do Turugan (“cleansing at the turugan”), begins with early morning (3.00 am) drumming or Tumahan (“announcing”) of the gandang by the village headman, in the turugan at Kg. Bantayan. This is followed by the instrumental music Ginandang Papatarok played on the gandang and gongs by skilled villagers. Ginandang Papatarok is played throughout the first day or Manawah, in which rituals by the tantagas take place inside the turugan, and the second day or Tumabur when rituals occur outside the turugan. Thereafter, Manawah occurs at Kg. Marabahai (beginning with Tumahan by that village headman) followed by Tumabur, and after that at Kg. Tutu Solupuh where the same process is repeated in that village. Instrumental music for this first phase is thus Tumahan and Ginandang Papatarok.

The second phase, or Monumbui Sidangon (cleansing in the open air), takes place a week later. It involves the mass assembly of all members of all Lotud villages at the Tamparuli market ground near Kg. Bontoi. Each village brings their basalon instruments, village flags and other paraphernalia. The tantagas perform their slow circular mangain dancing throughout the day, before concluding with the sacrifice of three piglets representing the three village zones.

Instrumental music for this phase and also for the third phase is long rounds of ritual music Ginandang Popotumbui (“summoning the spirits to the sacrifice”) interspersed with short bursts of Mojumbak (“rejoicing”) or entertainment music. This Mojumbak, however, is played on the ritual basalon instruments not on jumbakon or secular instruments (kulintangan and barrel-shaped drums) that are forbidden in ritual contexts. Just before the sacrifices, the solemn Mongigol motif from Ginandang Papatarok is played. Then Mojumbak bursts forth after the sacrifices.

A week after this, villagers travel by boat from Tuaran Town down the Tuaran River for the third phase called Monumbui Makanton (cleansing at the river mouth) or Monumbui Sisiron (cleansing at the coast) near Kg. Hampalan at the river mouth. This again involves the mass assembly of all members of all Lotud villages, the slow mangain of the tantagas, and the sacrifice of three piglets. The mangain with the accompanying Ginandang Popotumbui music and the final Mongigol are particularly solemn, while the final Mojumbak indicating the success of the ritual series is especially joyful.

The processual flow of the Mamahui Pogun is thus from inland to the coast, sending all the impurities and calamities caused by sinful human actions and wandering bad spirits from the land (symbolising the human world) out to the sea (symbolising the spiritual world). This processual flow is framed by the special ritual music or basalon played on ritual instruments, also called basalon (Pugh-Kitingan & Judeth John Baptist, 253-271, 274; Pugh-Kitingan et al, 2009a, 100-103, 106-111; 2009b).

Ritual Place and Sound of the Gandang in the Mamahui Pogun

Each basalon instrument is believed to be possessed by a powerful dahau spirit, but the gandang is particularly powerful. Its sound is said to awaken the spiritual realms and announce the beginning of the series through the early morning Tumahan drumming at the start of Manawah consecutively in each of the three key villages.

The gandang plays an integral part in the musical pieces played in different phases of the Mamahui Pogun. These pieces are believed to merge the human and spiritual worlds. The musical part of the gandang does not parallel the composite rhythm of the gongs, as in Kadazan Dusun gong ensemble music, but has its own motifs that fit in with those of the gongs. Without the gandang parts, the different pieces cannot be performed.

Drums in Non-ritual Contexts among the Lotud

Among the Lotud, basalon instruments used in ritual are not played in secular contexts for entertainment. This is a different situation from that of the Kadazan Dusun, where ritual gong ensemble music is the same as that used in non-ritual social contexts.
The jumbakon or instruments for entertainment include the kulintangan and two red, barrel-shaped gandang parang drums. These instruments have been adopted from the neighbouring Bajau community, along with the rhythmic joyful mojumbak music.

Conclusions

In many Dusunic cultures, drums are primarily important as ritual objects when used in ritual contexts. They are said to be spiritually powerful and in some cases are part of the ritual paraphernalia of the priestesses. Thus, the bobohizan sits on the karatung during some rituals for the Moganakan in Tambunan. On the first night of Monogit in Penampang, the senior bobohizan awakens the spirits in ritual paraphernalia and strengthens her spirit by eating uncooked rice grains that have been smashed against her sindavang with the drum beater on the top drumhead.

When played as solo musical instruments in ritual contexts, the sound of each drum is believed to awaken or attract the spiritual realms and inform them of the ritual event. Thus, at the start of Manawah in each of the three main villages during the first phase of the Lotud Mamahui Pogun, the village headman beats Tumahan to awaken and announce the event to the spiritual world. At the start of the Monogit in Penampang, the husband in the conjugal pair organizing the event beats Mamasan to announce it to the spiritual realms. Individual bobohizan beat the gandang to attract the attention of the spirits while chanting solo inait. At the end of the Moginakan from Tambunan, the bobohizan beats the karatung seven times to inform all the spiritual realms that the rituals have been successfully completed.

Drumming and gong ensemble music are believed to enable the human and spiritual worlds to merge, and facilitate ritual dancing by priestesses. Without this music, the ceremonies cannot proceed.

In non-ritual social celebratory contexts among the Kadazan Dusun, the drum may start the music but assumes a composite musical role with its sound embedded in the texture of the gong music. Although this gong music is the same as that used in ritual, the drum is regarded as a musical instrument not as a ritual object. Its beat articulates community solidarity in celebration, as the gong ensemble music accompanies secular dancing.

Among the Lotud, however the gandang is always a ritual instrument playing specific ritual music. Like the hanging gongs and the various kinds of ritual music, it cannot be performed outside of its specific ritual context. At secular social events among the Lotud, a pair of red, barrel-shaped Bajau gandang parang drums are played with the kulintangan as entertainment instruments for mojumbak or entertainment music.

Between the Kadazan Dusun of Tambunan and the Kadazan of Penampang, the transcendence of ceremonial gong ensemble music across both ritual and non-ritual social contexts has ensured the continuity of these genres, and this extends to the drums in most cases. The Lotud gandang, however, will eventually decline as rituals and their unique music become obsolete with the passing of the tantagas, unless the Lotud community decides to utilize it in new contexts.

References


LAYERS OF SOUND AND MOVEMENT IN BALINESE KECAK

This paper aims to present how a performing arts genre like the Balinese kecak, that to an unacquainted onlooker might seem like unrelated music and dance on stage, is actually filled with layers of intense interrelation between sound and movement. It will also show how these multiple layers are not only a byproduct of the performance, but form an essential part of it.

I will start with a short introduction into the kecak, and continue with a description and analysis of the layers of music and dance in the kecak and their varying forms of interrelation. The conclusion will be an outlook into the importance sound-movement interrelations have for the definition of a genre.

The Kecak

The Balinese kecak is a dramatic dance performance, where stories can be told through depiction by a solo dancer or an ensemble. Although improvisational elements can be found, in general the music of a kecak performance is composed, and the dance is choreographed. The dancers are acoustically supported by a group of mostly men – the pengecak – who are also present on stage and provide both vocal accompaniment and scenic background. The name “kecak” was given to the art form shortly after its genesis in the early 1930s, with the oldest record of the name dating 1934 (Spies 1934). The interlocking cak calls voiced by the pengecak are the onomatopoeic source of the name. Regularly performing kecak groups are mainly community based, their main performance venues are outer temple courtyards, hotel and restaurant stages. These groups mostly perform a standardized form of kecak, called kecak ramayana with the plot “The Abduction of Sita” (Kepandung Sita), for tourists. The kecak is an important part of the strong cultural tourism economy on Bali (Stepputat 2014), where a variety of dramatic performing arts have a major share in offers for cultural tourism (Picard 1996).

In addition to its performance in tourist contexts, kecak is often used, in an almost emblematic way, as a visual symbol for Balinese culture outside and inside of Bali, aiming at an international target audience. Postcards depicting scenes from the kecak ramayana are a common sight, one can also find fridge magnets, wooden statues, and small to medium sized oil paintings with kecak scenes, manufactured for the tourist market. Additionally, photographs of kecak scenes are often used for hotel or tour advertisements, and even the 2013 official “Wonderful Indonesia” tourism commercial featured a short fragment of a kecak.
Above this emblematic and standardized way to perform kecak, more contemporary forms do exist and aim at a different audience, which is mostly local (Stepputat 2012). Groups performing kecak outside of the tourist track are mostly comprised of professional dancers and/or musicians gathered temporarily, and organized either in form of a sanggar (artistic association), or based in educational institutions like the Institute for Indonesian Arts (ISI) Denpasar.

Layers of Music and Dance

A kecak performance can differ enormously in terms of plot, number of participants, length, complexity, professionalism, costumes, and also performance venue and target audience. Yet some elements are essential for the genre kecak: the musical structures and the interrelation of these with movement. Several layers of music and dance, or sound and movement, can be found within the kecak:

First, each pengecak moves while voicing his cak calls. The basic movement for a pengecak throughout a performance is called ngoyog, a fast bouncing of the upper body, often combined with a slight sidewise swaying, while the body from the waist downwards stays unmoved, seated in a cross-legged position. Sometimes arm movements are added to the ngoyog (see Dibia 2000:22), which are based on a turning movement of the wrists. While these movements are carried out, the pengecak voice their fast and repetitive, interlocking cak rhythms.

The second layer of movement is provided by the musical leaders, the juru-juru. They are seated among the pengecak group and are visually not distinguishable from the other members of the cak chorus. There are three main leaders: the juru klempung who provides the basic beat, and the juru gending, who provides the repetitive basic eight-beat melody. These two have mostly an auditive function; their voices are necessary elements of the overall musical composition, provide orientation to all other participating performers, adding significantly to the particular kecak sound. The third leader is the juru tarek, who signals changes in tempo, dynamics, phonetics, or transitions from one musical part to the next (angsel). He does so by voicing loud calls that function as cues for the other pengecak-pengecak, and by carrying out particular movements that provide visual cues for changes in movement for the cak group. As all other pengecak-pengecak, his part in the performance is based on both sound and movement elements.

The third layer are the solo dancers. Basically there are two categories of dance presentation, depending on the choreography and the portrayed character. The refined (halus) characters in a performance do not speak or sing, their roles are restricted to elaborate, choreographed dance movements. Other characters might speak while dancing, which is more common in more contemporary performances, but also for strong or wicked (keras) characters. In some instances, keras characters take
over the role of the juru tarik and verbally lead the cak group. The solo dancers therefore are a primarily visual element of the kecak, although some of them might temporarily, in accordance with their role and the choreography, add speech or musical elements to the whole.

The final sound element is the narrator (dalang) whose general function is to give background information on the happenings, narrate the course of events, comment on emotions, bring forward dialogue by the main (refined) actors, and describe the setting of the scenes. Often an additional juru tembang, complementing the dalang’s speech, is added to the cak chorus, who sings highly emotional songs as part of the composition, to establish a particular mood in a scene. Both the narration and the songs are in kawi, a language that is understood by few, if not none of the audience members, and mostly not even by fellow performers. Hence, the dalang and juru tembang are perceived by most to be one more – yet essential – element of the kecak sound, though the spoken or sung contents might not be understood.

Interacting Sound and Movement

As could be seen, several forms of connection between music/sound and dance/movement exist in overlapping layers during each kecak performance: There are performers who move and voice sounds simultaneously, which are all pengecak, including the juru-juru, providing the kecak musical structure, and also those solo dancers who perform keras characters. Then there are performers who move but do not sing or speak, which are solo dancers portraying halus characters. Finally, there are performers who are mainly heard, which are the juru tembang and dalang. Their movements are limited to ‘not catching the audience's eyes' by roughly following the other pengecak-pengecak's movements.

These groups of performers all contribute to the kecak performance in terms of music and dance, but such would not work without the interaction between all of these layers. I will continue to give an overview over the interrelation, in particular differing ways of interaction that take place between the above described groups of performers.

1) sound to sound interaction

Most prominent in this category is the connection between all members of the cak chorus, and also the juru-juru and the pengecak-pengecak. Each pengecak, in order to ensure a functioning interlocking, has to match his own cak calls to those of his fellow pengecak, but also needs to listen to the structure-giving sounds of juru gending, juru klempung and juru tarek. The juru-juru in turn have to relate their parts to each other, through listening and adjusting, in order to establish a stable musical structure.

2) movement to movement interaction

Movement elements are essential for communication in performance, where performers are limited to dance. This is particularly relevant for all choreographed elements that the halus solo dancers carry out. They react to each other by watching the other dancers’ movements and adjusting their own accordingly.

A second element where movement cues lead to movement response is the interaction between juru tarek and pengecak as stated above. Corresponding to the juru tarek’s auditive cues, leading to auditive responses, his visual, movement cues will lead to the imitation of them by the pengecak, his movement cues thereby generating movement.

3) movement to sound interaction

There are moments in a kecak when sound is directly generated by visual cues. This kind of interaction takes place in scenes where the group of pengecak reacts acoustically to the solo dancers' movements. Exemplarily, I want to describe a scene that is always incorporated in kecak ramayana performances and can also be found in more contemporary pieces. The cak chorus is split into two halves and positioned facing each other with some space between them. In this central, free space, a mock fight between two solo dancers takes place, while the two groups of pengecak depict the opposing armies, each supporting one of the fighting solo dancers. Such a fight scene is generally fixed in progress, but may vary performance-specific. When one of the opponents gains the upper hand, the pengecak react by voicing encouraging, dominating sounds, while also getting up and a bit towards the succumb army and fighter, moving in a stylized, aggressive and dominant way. After a short while, they will get back into their position and the fight will continue. Usually, the other opponent will gain the upper hand in the
following, and the same structure is repeated. The *pengecak* groups watch the fight, and as soon as they have the visual cue of “falling down” (mostly the fighter withdraws or gets down on one knee), they react by voicing particular “fight” sounds. Several other examples of this kind of interaction can be found throughout a kecak performance.

Plate 2. One half of the *pengecak* group depicting the succumbing army led by monkey king Sugriwa. Krama Desa Ubud Kaja, Ubud Palace, 18 June 2010, photograph by the author

4) sound to movement interaction

The final and probably most intensely connecting element is the interaction where sound leads to a movement reaction. The most obvious example for this is how the dancing of the solo dancers is connected to the kecak music: the solo dancers listen to the *pengecak* group – and of course particular cues from the *juru-juru* – and react by adjusting their movements to the sounds. The *dalang* and to some extent the *juru tembang* have an additional, essential auditive role: Solo dancers and *pengecak* alike have to listen closely to their speech and song, and adjust their movements (dancers) or movements and sounds (*pengecak* and *juru-juru*) accordingly.

Summary and Conclusion

Kecak is based on many layers of sound and movement. During a performance, most members of a kecak group carry out both sound and movement elements at the same time. The interaction between music and dance in the kecak cannot be captured by a simple dichotomy of either “music follows dance” or “dance follows music.” Instead, multiple ways of sound-movement interaction can be seen and, for a clearer overview and understanding, have here been grouped into four categories: sound to sound, movement to movement, sound to movement and movement to sound interaction. All four of them are present in a kecak performance, overlap, intermingle and complement each other. From this primary analysis, a simple conclusion can be drawn. In a performing arts genre where multiple layers of sound and movement are crucial, regardless of any improvisation or compositional and choreographic structures, the interaction between all of these layers must necessarily form an essential part of the genre. In addition, it appears to be obvious, that the more layers there are, the more complex the interaction is. Deriving from the kecak example, in conclusion it can be said, that for the definition of a genre, the ways of interaction between sound and movement are just as important to put into focus as the particular sounds and movements themselves.
Endnotes

1 Correct Indonesian plural is pengecak-pengecak.
2 See Dibia (2000) and Stepputat (2010), also Spies / deZoete (1938: 80-85)
3 Shown are elements from a performance in Uluwatu, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IzL3gJpyZh8. In the promotional film dedicated to Bali in particular, we see parts of a legong and a kecak. Here the group is “Cak Rina” see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjP4qZK7tke&index=1&list=TLZqPq0HEJEYk.
4 I use the male term here because most kecak groups employ male pengecak only. Recently there have been some experiments and also tourist performances with all-women kecak groups, additionally some professional performances have combined female and male pengecak, yet these are still exceptions.
5 For a transcription of cak patterns and types of interlocking see Stepputat (2013:70).
6 While the term “interrelation” refers to the fact that two things are related, “interaction” implies an active, reciprocal reaction of two related things. See Stepputat in Nor / Stepputat (upcoming).
7 The juru tarek’s leading as explained here is often a theoretical one. Depending on the artistic ability of a group, and the number of performances of the same kind, groups tend to incorporate a fixed, invariable course of events in performance, where the juru tarek no longer actively leads.
8 Of course the reaction is also physical, which would need to be covered with the movement to movement category.
9 In practice, many kecak groups have a dalang and juru tarek who both do not speak kawi, which makes a smooth progress and real interaction based on language difficult if not impossible. Many groups will just stick to their learned patterns and progress without any variation and active interaction.
10 For a more thorough and theoretically generalizing investigation of this matter see Stepputat in Nor / Stepputat (upcoming).

References


LENG POH GEE  
(University of Malaya, Malaysia)

GESTURING SCRIPTURE AS COMMUNITY PERFORMANCE  
(Lightning Paper)

Year End Blessing by Tzu Chi Foundation

Tzu Chi Foundation focuses on community service and outreach programs, and the Foundation operates its own television channel, “Da Ai”. Drama, dance and Taiwanese opera are utilized to promote missions of Tzu Chi. As opposed to other Buddhist organizations, Tzu Chi promotes the teaching of Buddhism through a practical approach that is concerned with material values rather than a spiritual existence such as meditation or pure recitation of a sutra or scripture.

Year End Blessing (YEB) 2012 and 2013, which was replicated from the Taiwanese headquarters, was organized respectively on January 2013 at Stadium Melawati, Shah Alam and December 2013 at Bukit Jalil Putra Indoor Stadium, Kuala Lumpur. The YEB series had been initiated since the 1960s in Taiwan, when the Foundation commenced Winter Distribution by volunteers to poor families. From family-scale gatherings, it evolved into broad-scaled assemblies to share what had been achieved over the years. The events were deliberately designed to include many aspects, especially religious protocols to develop pious and solemn surroundings. The duration of the events last around 90 – 140 minutes, and is watched by over 15,000 audiences for each live event. Full video documentation, including the processes of preparation and participants and audience feedback is carried out by the organization. The edited video footage with a carefully prepared script is broadcasted on “Da Ai”, the official website, and on YouTube before and after the productions.

There were specific themes for the ceremonies that was based on selected Buddhist sutras. The sutras provided inspiration for the artistic development of the events. The adaptation of The Sutra of the Water Repentance, and the Sutra of the Innumerable Meanings were the themes for YEB 2012 and 2013. New Buddhist devotional songs, adapted from the sutras, were composed to fit into the scriptures. Songs were all composed in Western musical styles and free from the usual nature of monastic chanting.

Gesturing the Scripture

Gesturing in scripture recitation is a significant cultural feature of the Tzu Chi members as they believe that metaphorical inscription of gestures cannot be separated from the textual tradition. The door-plane-dimension-gesture was designed by the experts from the headquarters. Arms, hands, fingers, head and upper torso are utilized. The kinesphere of a performer is minimal; just an adequate amount of space around the body that can move without touching another person or object – self-space.

The gesture design is based on lyrical-Chinese characters scripture and Chinese Han characters called logograms. For an example, Bei悲 means sorrow or sad, and is presented with a pictorial approach by both index fingers, middle fingers and ring fingers pointing at each other, and 人ren (human) is depicted by the left index finger touching the middle of the right index finger. Besides this pictorial presentation, imagery-verb approach is utilized. For example, ren is also signified by a thumb up. 爱ai or love, is signified by a palm caressing circularly behind a thumb up. The action literally shows the palm lovingly touching a human (thumb). Such dramatic actions that manipulate the thumb up as human (ren) makes sense as many verbs are related to humans as shenjiao圣教 (to teach) and yang养 (to feed someone). From these examples, it can be seen that recognizing Chinese characters and meanings associated with the particular character is essential to rationalizing the gestures, and to coordinate between the physical action and verbal recitation. Scripture and iconographical notation with written description are distributed to the performers. Thus, the scripture serves as memory aid to the performers, and by understanding the motifs behind the movement, privileges those who understand Han characters.

The gestures are stylized and standardized in terms of level, direction, duration and involved body parts. The gestures can be combined with walking steps, knee bends, turning torsos and bending in order to create floor patterns or shapes associated with Buddhist’s philosophy. The choreographic work
is an embodiment of the scripture can be enjoyed aesthetically, even for those who do not wish to narrate gestures and its relation to the scripture.

**Voluntary Performers**

The Foundation takes great pride in its volunteerism. The in-house volunteers are easily recognized by their blue and white uniforms and they must undergo a series of training so as to equip themselves to promote Tzu Chi’s philosophy. Recognition will be awarded to those who complete certain tasks and thus gain promotion. Understanding Buddhist scriptures through gestured recitation is one such task. The volunteers learn and become acquainted with the recitation, no matter what kind of cultural and musical background they have had. The terminology used for ritualistic performances are a very matter of concern for the volunteers. For instance, instead of *biaoyan* 表演 (performance or performing), they use *rujingzang chengxian* 入经藏呈现 or literally translated as “the presentation of entering the Sutra” in such ceremonies.

The broad-scale events involving 2000-4000 volunteer-performers is extended to non-trained ad hoc volunteers. They mostly comprise Chinese students and collar workers who are educated. The age ranges from primary school students to grandmothers. The ad hoc volunteers undergo intensive training to recite and gesture the scripture simultaneously. They participate in these ceremonies as social activities and consider it a platform for learning something new that engages movement and performance. They are not keen to do a deep study of the scripture as compared to the in-house volunteers.

The completion of a performance is a great challenge for ad hoc volunteers, even with the help of the scriptures as memory aid. Considering the ability of the performers and the conditions of the venues, certain negotiation are made in re-designing the structured gestures during the rehearsal process. The ad hoc and the in-house volunteers work together to understand their situation bodily and to rehearse new forms of being together. Thus, the production increases access of movement and performance through sacred experience and serious participation, which is one of the criteria of this community performance. Complicated gestures are simplified, changed to stillness or replaced with common movements such as the bow and the bringing together of the palms. The duration of certain movements have been lengthened or shortened depending on the ability of performers and the necessary need for particular floor patterns and images. Consequently, the honouring of the Buddhist sutras – the initial purpose of the performance – has shifted to become an experience of performance pleasure through aesthetic practise.

**Gesturing Scripture as Community Performance**

The ad hoc-volunteers selectively perceive physical and verbal sensations of performing gestures and scriptures simultaneously in this highly theatrical ritual event. They undergo intensive physical training that engages the coordination of different body parts along with verbal recitation. Scripture that serves as memory aid is a quantitative notation that indicates movement within space and time measurements. The degree of scripture memorization is less emphasized when compared to the proficiency required in gesturing, as gestured executions carry much more substance that enables visual pleasure from the public gaze. On the other hand, scriptures were projected on the screens and the verbal recital was pre-recorded. When performed as a large ensemble, the worry of committing faults in verbal recital was eased. Thus, deep satisfaction is gained once the challenge has been encountered, and the study of the respective sutras became less significant.

As suggested by Kuppers (2007), community performance is communally created and it rests in the process rather than the product. The events can be considered a secular community performance due to the minimal spiritual attachment and the larger involvement of executing accurate movement, the re-designing of gestures, and negotiations of choreography based on the structured compositions from its Taiwanese headquarters. The relevancy of such performance, which combines sacred Dharma sharing and secular bodily engagement practise in contemporary society will be the next trajectory of this ongoing research.
References


MAYCO SANTAELLA  
(Sultan Idris Education University, Malaysia)

ASSERTING MEANING IN TARI AND THE DIALECTICS OF MOVEMENT IN CENTRAL SULAWESI

Independence in Indonesia resulted in the celebration, as a form of unification, of both its regional cultures and territories. The politicized process of building the nation generated dialogues on the construction of a national identity. The development of the performing arts became an arena of contestation due to its presentational and representational qualities. At the provincial level new music was composed, expanding traditional ensembles and repertoire. Yet dance, at the forefront, took a leading role in visualizing Indonesia’s national process. This paper interrogates the nature of Central Sulawesi dance internally asserting meaning to a new experience and externally establishing a territorial presence in the national process.

The 20th century concept of tari or dance marked its arrival in Central Sulawesi as part of Indonesia’s post-independence phenomena. The new conceptual umbrella of Seni Pertunjukan (performing arts) established a new presentational arena for the performance of regional tari. Using the arrival of tari in Central Sulawesi as point of departure, this presentation considers Murgianto’s (2000) post-independence notion of imported Malay dances in the new Indonesian national framework. Through a historical developmental analysis to present day positionalities of hermeneutical discourses (Nor, 2012) in the region, this paper looks at tari as a structured movement system of the emergent Indonesian national culture in which Central Sulawesi asserts its presence.

To begin with, this paper presents an overview of traditional structured movement systems among the Kaili. Among these there are movement as offering, movement as procession, movement as play, movement as defense, and movement as communication, in the larger context of a ceremony, ritual, martial arts and other communal practices as an “entire configuration” and not simply a performance. (Kealiinohomoku, 1974) The second part of this paper will focus on the introduction of tari or the Malay concept of dance in Central Sulawesi, as a new platform for the development and presentation of cultural movements under the rubric umbrella of the performing arts. This section focuses on the Kaili ethnic group, with a wider conceptualization of tari as a new phenomena in Central Sulawesi, where tari developed within specific political boundaries. Lastly, this paper presents a consideration towards a reflection upon current trends in Central Sulawesi of an established performance medium through the re-interpretation of meaning in tari.

Structured Movement Systems

Traditional structured movement systems among the To Kaili (or Kaili people) reflect connectivity to communal practices as a cultural component of a holistic occasion. The meaju as structured movement system is often carried out by two men for the accompaniment of respected individuals from the community or abroad. Without a specific choreography, the display of structured movements takes place in-situ following a personal set of patterns and in relation to the other person doing meaju as well as the location. In the accompaniment of guests, meaju both leads and follows in front, and its performance is dependent upon distance, width and pace of the procession. This system reflects both Kaili specificity in its movements and practice while denoting cultural links to the cakalele in Maluku, the sagayan among the Maranao of Mindanao, or the kancet papatai among the Dayak in east Kalimantan, neighbors of the Kaili.

The rano structured movement system is communally carried out as part of the vunja ceremony following the harvest season. This circular (generally counter-clockwise) communal movement system follows a set of stepping patterns moving to the pulse (but not necessarily the structure) of improvised singing to a set melody in the form of call and response. At the micro level, patterned communal movements as well as the melodies reflect cultural specificity of the community participating in the vunja ceremony. At the macro level, this circular movement system reflects cultural connectivity to the dero in Poso, the raego in Kulawi, and the ma'badong in Tana Toraja, thus a practice of the geographical region of Central Sulawesi.
The notaro as a structured movement system takes place in the balia healing ritual of the Kaili. Often involving altered states of consciousness, cultural movements such as walking, hopping, as well as circular patterned and unpatterned movements, take place in the balia ritual reflecting specificity to each locale. Aside from different expressions of notaro, there are specific types of balia rituals, such as the balia tampilangi, balia tomanuru, or the balia bayasa (the last carried out by transvestite priests) to name a few, with their own expressions of cultural movements. While maintaining local differences, they are part of a culturally structured movement system of the balia ritual among the Kaili.

Other types of traditional structured movement systems among the Kaili are those historically executed for the nobility, such as the pajogemaradika in the district of Parigi. The latter, carried out by young girls, reflects a cultural link to the form as present in South Sulawesi. The latter are no longer observed after communist raids affected the local infrastructure, and due to a general decline of activities at royal residences in the new Indonesian national setting. After the introduction of the Islamic faith during the 17th century by religious teachers from West Sumatra, Malay movement systems such as the jeppeng or joget found their way to Kaili lands. While considered as arriving from abroad in Kaili culture, these forms reflect a communal sense of belonging to the extended Malay world through lineage descent, the observance of adat (indigenous custom), and religious practices.

The movement systems mentioned above belong to larger communal practices among the Kailinese. These include movement systems of both internal and external provenance, the latter expanding local conceptualizations of entertainment that are still part of an encompassing cultural event such as weddings ceremonies, and royal occasions, to name a few. The Indonesian post-independence phenomenon of tari marked the beginning of a new performative era in Central Sulawesi. Such events not only encouraged a development of the performing arts (tari, musik, teater or dance, music and theater respectively) but also traditionalized pre-independence culturally structured movement systems previously part of the ada totua nggaulu (ancestor’s custom). In the interests of time this paper sets aside the traditionalization discussion, and focuses on this new sense of performativity through tari, its development, performance, and asserted meanings.

Central Sulawesi’s Tari

The conceptualization of Central Sulawesi’s performativity in this paper derives from a linguistic point of view. Proficiency in both Kaili as a mother tongue (through home, family, and market settings among others) and the new Indonesian language (through school classes, radio, and television, among others) in Central Sulawesi after Indonesian independence, generated a local cognitive flexibility for the community at the time. Both Kaili (mostly kaili ledo in Palu) and Indonesian are able to adapt foreign lexical items by using affixes. In Indonesian the prefix “me-” and in Kaili the prefix “no-” can be attached to local nouns as well as various loanwords to form transitive verbs. (For Indonesian see Hiramoto, 2007, for Kaili Ledo see Evans, 2003) Creating verb forms of local structured movement systems such as no-taro, no-rano, no-meeju involve multiple inherent understandings as cultural subtexts of an accompanying event, context, and specific procedures. Similarly, the new 20th century concept of tari in Central Sulawesi, along with its prefixed verb form me-nari, produced in the latter a new ascribed sense of performativity to choreographed, staged, and performed pieces under the new rubric umbrella of kreasi baru (new creation).

The development of tari in Central Sulawesi rapidly generated numerous genres through different forms of presentation and representation. The latter process was part of the birth and maturation of the new national concept of seni pertunjukan (performing arts) together with musik and teater in the region. Continuing a linguistic stance, musik and teater, both in label and cultural expression, developed in Central Sulawesi with a conscious use of internal “traditional” and external “western” compositional tools. Yet, tari, also both in nomenclature and cultural expression, developed as a shared movement system of what is locally conceptualized as dunia melayu (the Malay World) in Central Sulawesi. Unlike liminal musik spaces marked by the use of different compositional tools, tari functioned as an entirely new platform for the incorporation of inter-“traditional” and intra-“Malay” elements for new choreographical presentations.

The germination of tari in Central Sulawesi resulted in two initial branches, namely, garapan and ciptaan. Governmental projects functioned as continuous fertilization through festivals, school competitions, and other national sponsored events. The term garapan from the verb garap (cultivate) alluded to developed or “cultivated” culturally structured movement systems often in the rather oxymoronic’ category of “garapan tarian tradisional” (developed traditional tari). The term ciptaan
(creation) was often present in the category of “ciptaan tarian daerah” (creation of regional tari). The latter endorsed new choreographical works that presented and represented new political regional confines. The original presentation and representation of the Indonesian nation through the sum of its different provinces, functioned as a top-down organizational form of governmental cultural events for each provinsi (province), kabupaten (district), and kecamatan (subdistrict), respectively. Presenting and representing Central Sulawesi, this paper presents two examples of the first branches of tari deriving from the above mentioned categories, namely tari pajoge from garapan tarian tradisional and tari pomonte from ciptaan tarian daerah.

The Pajoge Maradika is a structured movement system found within Parigi royalty in this district of Central Sulawesi. The term pajoge makes reference to the person carrying out the movement while maradika refers to nobility circles. In this sense, the movement system was usually carried during an appointment celebration by young noble women following the king’s daughter as the leader or tadulako. The movement system, characterized by the use of the kaveba (hand fan) and the distinguished vidu or noble headdress among other elements, maintains cultural links in form, practice, and context with the Buginese court dance pajoge (pajaga in Luwu) in present South Sulawesi. The new tari pajoge maradika developed this structured movement system with new corresponding performative elements of timed choreography, staging, costumes, the use of penari (dancers), and newly developed movements. This new form, developed by a musician and composer by training in 1955, begun to follow more prominently newly composed rhythmic patterns that were to become characteristic of Central Sulawesi’s tari.

The tari pomonte is an example of a ciptaan tarian daerah, among the first and most influential of its kind in Central Sulawesi. From the prefix po (to carry out) and monte (harvest), choreographed in 1959, tari pomonte is a harvest dance that reflects agrarian communal activities as the main occupation in Kaili society. In this dance young girls are guided by a tadulako to carry out the various activities involved in harvesting. Thus the choreographed movements reflect the steps of this agricultural activity as carried out among the Kaili, such as notabe (pay respect), nomonte (plow), and nombayu (pound), to name a few. This new type of tari, not only illustrates examples of new choreographical works based on local activities, but also a shared national aspiration towards the notion of kerakyatan (proletarianism) inspired by LEKRA a cultural organization founded in 1950 associated with the PKI (Indonesian communist party).

The 1954 Kongres Kebudayaan (Cultural Congress) in Surakarta was well attended by LEKRA artists. A members report in this congress expressed a joint sentiment in shared cultural activities among different communities that supported ideological models at the time. As expressed in the report “They share their regional experiences with each other. We can see and feel it. Among the results that are well known in Bandung are the following: Peasant Dance [Tari Tani], Collective Martial Arts [Pentjak Kolektif], Bamboo Orchestra [Orkes Bambu], Bamboo Rattle Orchestra [Orkes Angklung], etc. Their popularity and honesty in playing is not merely recognized by cultural critics but by the People at large too.” (English Translation in Notosudirdjo, 2001) In Central Sulawesi, Tari pomonte functions as a vivid ideological reflection of this national era, a peasant dance accompanied by a suling (bamboo flute), wearing a red kebaya (women blouse) adorned with golden looking threads. Due to its prominence, accessibility, and lack of complexity, tari pomonte became an iconic representation of Kailiness in Central Sulawesi through its wide dissemination in the local education system. It also became an iconic representation of the province when performed abroad due to the regional association of tari at the time.
Both *tari pomonte* and *tari pajoge maradika* became influential prominent dances performed on numerous occasions including Istora Senayan (Jakarta) in 1961 (*tari pomonte massal* performed by 61 dancers), the presidential palace (Bogor) in 1961 (*tari pajoge maradika*), and ASEAN games (Jakarta) in 1961 (*tari pomonte massal* performed by 200 dancers) among others. After the dissolution of LEKRA in 1965 and the massacre of numerous PKI members, Indonesia was subjected to Suharto’s *orde baru* (new order), with Jakarta as a national center for cultural development. Following these events along Central Sulawesi’s “cultural success” at the time, new works were developed and created by the same choreographer for festivals, competitions and other national events. This established the foundations for Central Sulawesi’s *tari* as a new structured movement system. This echoes Murgianto’s (2000) post-independence notion of imported Malay dances, as a new movement system that allowed for peripheral communities (the Minangkabau in his study case), to “menjangkau prestasi yang sama tinggi” (achieve a merit of the same niveau) as those of Java and Bali.

This new movement system during the *orde baru* (new order) period, under the rubric umbrella of *kreasi baru* (new creation), continued to solidify choreographical approaches with a representational ownership shift from the community to the choreographer. Similarly to Huriah in West Sumatra (See Murgianto, 2000), and Andi Nurhani Sapada in South Sulawesi (see Sutton, 1998), the choreographies of Hasan Bahasyuan, beginning with *tari pomonte* and *tari pajoge maradika* and continuing with many others developed mainly during the *orde baru* period, paved the path for the aestheticization of *tari* in Central Sulawesi. Hasan’s participation in numerous national events outside of Central Sulawesi, exposed him to innovative performance techniques including the development of *tari* movements. His works established a ‘standard of measure’ towards success when participating in competitions for district, provincial and national events. The contestation of *tari* endorsed standardized aesthetic approaches for this new structured movement system both in the province and the nation simultaneously. In this sense, *tari*, at the forefront, took a leading role in materializing Indonesia’s national process.

**Considering Current Tari**

The end of the *orde baru* period in 1998 was accompanied by an ideological change for the standardization of forms that had ruled for over three decades. This change, referred to as the *era reformasi* (reformation era), saw the performing arts in Central Sulawesi beginning to switch from a top-down, centralized, and externally directed focus towards a bottom-up, localized internally informed one. A reason for this change in focus is the representational nature of performing outside a specific cultural circle. For example the Minakabau community looks at Huriah’s works as her own work and no longer “owned” by the community. Yet, a non Minangkabau audience who does not fully comprehend the subtleties of Minangkabau structured movement systems refers to her work as *tari minangkabau* (Murgianto, 2000). An awareness of of *tari* as reflecting ethnicity took place in Central Sulawesi during the *era reformasi* in the development of new choreographies. During this present era national competitions continue to take place, and other forms such as “contemporary dance” in Indonesia continued to reshape *tari* in Central Sulawesi. Yet the following inquiry became foregrounded for analysis: how does the presentational choreography represent its cultural community? The answer to this question relies on present day positionalities of hermeneutical discourses (Nor, 2012) in the region, understanding the text, context and subtexts, of both traditional structured movement systems and Central Sulawesi’s *tari*.
Endnotes:

1 While “Oxymoron” is a foreign noun, it is present as a linguistic phenomena such as rahasia umum (public secret).

References:


MEGHAN E. HYNSON
(University of California, Los Angeles, USA)

FROM TRADISI TO INOVASI: MUSIC, POWER, AND CHANGE IN BALINESE SHADOW PUPPET THEATER

Introduction

In this paper I present a glimpse of my dissertation titled “From Tradisi to Inovasi: Music, Power and Change in Balinese Shadow Puppet Theater” (forthcoming in 2015). As one of the oldest and most important elements in the Hindu-inflected cultural and religious life of the Balinese, shadow puppet theater (wayang) and its development can also provide a lens to observe how music and the arts shape and reflect society. Following the assertion that changes in convention and tradition are “evidence” of social change and are “important symptoms and therefore indicators of problems or developments,” I analyze how power and authority are created, negotiated and transformed between a traditional, purificatory kind of shadow puppet ritual known as wayang sapuh leger and a contemporary innovative form called wayang cenk blonk (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983, p. 12). In doing so, I not only present two unique forms of Balinese shadow theater performance, but also highlight several ideological, political, and economic trends reflected in the context of ritual change.

While detailing these two genres of performance, I draw on Max Weber’s theory of “the three pure types of legitimate rule” (traditional authority, legal authority, and charismatic authority) to organize a discussion of power and change within several contexts: 1) traditional authority accorded to performing arts and artists that serve a religious function and employ traditional ritual music; 2) legal authority and the effects of Indonesian politics, making rituals more economical, and institutionalization of Balinese arts; and 3) charismatic authority and Balinese spiritual power (taksu) in the innovation of ritual media to both develop and promulgate the Balinese shadow theater tradition (Whimster, 2004).

Traditional Authority and the Wayang Sapuh Leger

When discussing traditional authority, or power accorded to traditions or customs because they are thought to have always been that way, I analyze the wayang sapuh leger ritual. The importance of the wayang sapuh leger tradition is underscored by its ties to the Balinese Puwakon calendar, as anyone born during the week of the shadow puppet theater (wuku wayang) must be ritually cleansed of the mala, or impurity, of their inauspicious birth by an initiated shadow puppeteer called a pemangku dalang. It is in this performance of ritual Balinese shadow theater that the dalang’s (shadow puppeteer’s) actions most resemble those of a religious figure – making holy water, reciting sacred mantra, and cleansing the afflicted in ritual baptism, or melukat.

Traditional authority, while perhaps not recognized as such amongst the Balinese, plays an important part in how the Balinese people perform and execute rituals and in the way that they live their lives. According to the pemangku dalang, Ida Bagus Anom Suryawan, ritual execution and daily life is influenced by a Balinese tripartite conception of tradition, namely: kuno tah, or how things are done based on the ancient way they have been done; sastra tah, or the way things are done based on authoritative writings; and dresta tah, referring to the particular customs of individual villages. In an effort to explore traditional authority as the Balinese might conceive it, I divide my analysis into these three categories.

Kuno tah

When analyzing how Balinese wayang gains traditional authority under the concept of kuno tah, a number of historical, ideological, and religious elements come into play, namely: 1) the extensive history of wayang performance in Indonesia as evidenced by ancient inscriptions, or prasasti; 2) creation stories involving the gods and the first dalang; 3) astrological beliefs and the Balinese calendrical tradition for divining auspicious and inauspicious days of which the wayang sapuh leger is inextricably
linked; 4) the wayang sapuh leger and its place within the panca yadnya, or five kinds of Balinese ritual, and 5) the classification of wayang sapuh leger as a sacred, or wali, ceremony within the threefold classification of Balinese performance sanctity. Through a detailed explanation of these topics, I am able to demonstrate how the wayang sapuh leger gains kuno (traditional authority) in the Balinese collective imagination. This then serves as a foundation to explain how a dalang accrues cultural and social capital, and, how ritual media such as gender wayang music (the traditional musical accompaniment for Balinese shadow puppet theater) acquire symbolic capital.

Sastra Tah

I next observe how the wayang sapuh leger, the pemangku dalang, and the gender wayang music gain traditional authority through authoritative written tradition, or sastra. The wayang sapuh leger story and various lontar (palm leaf manuscripts) provide the basis of this analysis. Let us consider a brief example. In the wayang sapuh leger story, Lord Siwa’s demon son, Bhatara Kala, is granted permission to eat people born during wuku wayang. Later, Siwa and his wife have another son, Kumara, who is born during wuku wayang and is in danger of being eaten by his demon brother. Throughout the story Kumara is chased by Bhatara Kala and hides in a number of places to try to escape; however, Kumara is unable to get away until he stumbles upon a shadow play performance where he asks the dalang for help and hides in the resonators of the gender wayang instruments. While Kumara is hiding, Bhatara Kala arrives, and, starved and angry, eats all of the dalang’s offerings. Bhatara Kala then owes a great debt to the dalang, whereupon the dalang negotiates Kumara’s safety in return for his offerings (Wicaksana 2007).

It is because of this story that Balinese Hindus consider wuku wayang to be an unlucky time to be born and believe that they must employ the services of an initiated pemangku dalang to perform a wayang sapuh leger and make holy water to protect them from Bhatara Kala.

Plate 1. A photo of pemangku dalang Ida Bagus Made Geria from Mas village making holy water.

Similarly, the gender wayang instruments are an integral part of the story and thus gain a measure of traditional authority from the story when Kumara hides in the resonators of the gamelan gender. A photo of a gender wayang instrument with its bamboo resonators is pictured here.
Other textual sources such as the *Dharma Pewayangan* (Hooykaas 1973) and Sugriwa’s *Ilmu Pedalangan/Pewayangan* (1963) also become important in this section, as they are two authoritative writings that outline the personal strengths a dalang must possess in order become a pemangku dalang and perform wayang sapuh leger. Sastra and lontar dealing specifically with music, for example, *Prakempa*, are also referenced to demonstrate the traditional authority of music like the gender wayang.

**Dresta Tah**

The final concept, dresta tah, is also related to the Balinese notion of desa, kala, patra, or “place,” “time,” and “custom,” and recognizes that the amount of traditional authority accorded to a ritual, its media, or its officiant is variable and directly related to the place and time a ritual is conducted and how a specific village interprets its importance. To gain a sense of dresta tah, I present a case study of the wayang sapuh leger tradition found in the village of Mas. As a predominantly Brahmin-caste village home to a long lineage of pemangku dalang and a unique style of gender wayang music, the ritual activities conducted in Mas during wuku wayang take on their own measure of traditional authority. In addition to detailing the wayang sapuh leger performances in Mas village, I outline the activities of the Mas village pemangku dalang during *Tumpek Wayang* (the Saturday of wuku wayang), when many in the village come to the dalang’s house seeking holy water. I also report on other Mas village-specific activities during this time, such as how the wayang wong masks (human-danced wayang) are laid out in the Mas Pura Taman Pule temple. In this way, I am able to present an example of how dresta tah factors into traditional authority within a specific village.

This is also demonstrated by analyzing musical aspects of the Mas wayang sapuh leger ritual. Typically, a wayang sapuh leger performance requires a sacred composition to be played on the gender wayang instruments while the pemangku dalang recites a mantra and makes holy water. Within the village of Mas, this piece is considered especially sacred and is given the name *Astu Pungku* (cleansing the “eight directions”) after the name of the mantra that it accompanies. While a similar piece is also found within other gender wayang styles such as Sukawati or Kayu Mas, they usually fall under a different title (*Tabuh Gari, Swan Dewi* or *Sudamala*). Given the sacred name attached to the gender wayang piece in Mas and the large population of spiritually educated, Brahmin-caste citizens living there, I delve into the subtleties of how this particular tradition is sometimes portrayed as having more power and authority. Given that the Mas style of gender wayang music and the religious duties of the pemangku dalang are not taught at the university, the Mas tradition holds even greater measure of power and authority under Maurice Bloch’s theory of traditional authority, as being able to conduct such a ritual or
play the challenging music that accompanies it are seen as something outside of oneself and the capabilities of the common Balinese people (Bloch 1974).

Legal Authority

Within the context of legal authority, I observe how political, economical, and institutional influences have affected Balinese shadow puppet theater and even sparked change and innovation. I begin with Indonesia’s political history, discussing the formulation of the Pancasila principles after independence, which later led to religious reforms in Bali as Agama Tirtha (“religion of holy water”) was changed into Agama Hindu Bali (Balinese Hinduism) in order to conform with the first Pancasila principle of monotheism. In the eyes of scholars like Hideharu Umeda some of the new religious mandates have left the dalang and the wayang sapuh leger ritual oscillating in a liminal space between adat, or “culture,” and agama, or “religion” (Umeda, 2006). Whether Umeda’s assertion is actually felt amongst the Balinese is something I contest, as although the religion may have been modified on paper, the Balinese still consider the ritual and the pemangku dalang’s role to administer the wayang sapuh leger as an important part of their belief system.

When discussing initiatives to make ritual more economical, I explore the recent practice of wayang sapuh leger massal, or mass wayang sapuh leger rituals. Although the origins of this practice are not clear, I have heard from informants that the idea was taken from the mass ruwatan (cleansing) ceremonies in Java. A number of wayang sapuh leger have been held since 2011, with one ritual in Badung regency boasting 545 attendees and one in Tabanan regency boasting 776 (Juanartha 2012 and Nusantara 2011). While I cannot assert that these practices are a direct initiative of the Indonesian government, they have been supported by political divisions within these regencies and demonstrate an economical consciousness remnant of the New Order obsession with progress.

The wayang sapuh leger massal have also been a site of contestation. Although there have been dalang performing, it has been a priest who administers the holy water to the recipients. In traditional practice, this is a right given to the dalang, and some have argued that this is a sign of the dalang’s loss of power; however, dalang are still performing the ritual and the shadow puppet theater for hundreds of people at a time. While the dalang may be administering holy water, I see the wayang sapuh leger developments as being a gain in power for the dalang, as hundreds of citizens are coming from afar to participate in the ritual and attest to the dalang’s power in this particular ceremony.

Amongst the political, religious, and economic changes taking place after Indonesian independence, importance was also placed on establishing arts institutions such as the KOKAR high school for performing arts KOKAR (now SMA3) and the arts university Institut Kesenian Indonesia Denpasar (ISI DPS). Arguably an arm of legal authority, ISI DPS does not teach the ritual role of the dalang and requires each of its students in the pedalangan (puppetry) department to produce a karya baru, or “new work,” to graduate. Musically, the gender wayang styles taught at the university are predominantly from Sukawati and Denpasar, which has resulted in other styles such as those in Karangasem, Tabanan, or Mas fighting for survival in the villages on their own.

Even so, a bigger threat to gender wayang’s authority is the choice for ISI DPS students to use experimental gamelans for their new works. While some innovative gender wayang pieces have been created, students tend to choose other kinds of gamelan for their musical accompaniment, as it is more feasible to write new music and find musicians who can play it. As I observed during my time studying at ISI DPS many are willing to sacrifice this traditional element in favor of the power, validation and social capital that having a degree from the arts university can afford; however, even then it is only a select few that have the power, or taksu, to become fully self-supporting artists and performers after graduation. This brings me to my next point about innovation and charismatic authority.

Charismatic Authority

Within the context of charismatic authority I report on one of the graduates from the ISI Denpasar program, I Wayan Naradayana, who has gone on to become extremely famous with his innovative form of shadow puppet theater called wayang cenk blok. Also applicable here is the Balinese term for charismatic authority and spiritual power, taksu. The term taksu can be applied to any number of situations to explain why one person might have success and not another, but within shadow puppet theater “the gift of taksu is a type of divine inspiration and spiritual power that enables the shadow master
to hold the audience’s attention throughout the performance” (Heimarck, 2000, p. 43). As Nardayana said to me in an interview, not all dalangs are laris, or sought after, because today is a period of competition and one must have a great amount of taksu to compete in the market.

Given his taksu and brilliant performance skills and artistic innovations, Nardayana and the wayang cenk blonk have become wildly famous. His humorous plays comment on issues such as AIDS, drugs, polygamy, pollution, cell phones, TV and technology. He cleverly weaves traditional teaching with modern ideology and has been able to publicize his work through traditional means by performing at temples and festivals and through modern means via weekly performances on Bali TV and by releasing a number of CD and DVD recordings through Aneka Records.

Musically, the accompaniment for the wayang cenk blonk is also full of charisma and unlike any other musical ensemble found on the island. While developing the wayang cenk blonk Nardayana teamed up with the composer Made Subandi from Batuyang and the *pande* (gamelan maker) Wayan Pager from Blah Batuh and discussed how to create a gamelan that would still retain the gender wayang qualities of wayang performance. Together, they created Nardayana’s gamelan *sekar langon* and some audience members come just to hear it played. Somewhat similar to typical gamelan, Nardayana and his team cleverly combined 16 keys so that *gender wayang*, *gong kebyar*,9 *semarandana*,10 *angklung*,11 and diatonic styles could be played on the ensemble. Nardayana also chose to include *gerong* singers from the *sendratari* tradition (dance drama) and electronic sounds to add dramatic effect.12 This musical flexibility gives Dalang Nardayana an additional edge when trying to communicate the story to his audience, similar to Stanley Tambiah’s stance on information theory and how ritual elements such as music can help to communicate with the audience. For example, Nardayana might use slendro scale for the love scenes, or a fast pelog piece for the battle scenes. By analyzing the major theatrical and musical innovations within wayang cenk blonk, a real tangible example of charismatic authority and taksu can be seen.

**Conclusion**

As Dalang Nardayana explained to me, the wayang comes from the people and the society, and as the society changes so does the wayang. Music, too, helps us to see the correlation between changes in the arts and changes in society, and it is my hope that this paper helped to demonstrate some of the societal variables tangled up in the distribution of power and authority within the Balinese wayang tradition.

**Endnotes**

1 Where specific sources are not cited in this paper, the information comes from my personal observation during 4 years of research conducted between 2007 and 2014. See forthcoming dissertation for details.
2 The Puwakon Calendar is one of three calendars used in Bali. It consists of an endless cycle of 210 days, broken up into 30 weeks or wuku. Wuku Wayang is the 27th week of the Balinese Puwakon calendar (Eiseman, 2010, pgs. 3–4).
3 For more on the wayang sapuh leger see Wicaksana (2007) and Umeda (2006).
4 Ida Bagus Anom Suryawan, personal interview with the author, 14 June 2014.
5 *Manusia yadnya, Pitra yadnya, Dewa yadnya, Bhuta yadnya, Resi yadnya.* For more see Hinzler (1981) and Hooykaas (1975).
6 1) *Wali*, or sacred performance such as *wayang lemah*, *wayang sapuh leger*, or *wayang sudamala*; 2) *bebali*, or semi-sacred performance to accompany the *panca yajna* or *seasaun* (a promise); and 3) *halih-halihan*, or performance for entertainment, which emphasizes artistic and didactic points, for example *wayang petang* (wayang cenk blonk) (Wicaksana, 2007, pg. 51).
7 In an effort to better describe the Mas tradition and preserve the gender wayang music found there, my dissertation also presents a full, descriptive transcription of a Mas wayang sapuh leger performance.
8 The Pancasila principles were created as the foundation for Indonesian nationhood and include: 1) belief in one supreme God; 2) just and civilized humanitarianism; 3) nationalism based on the unity of Indonesia; 4) representative democracy through consensus; and 5) social justice (Aragon, 2000, pgs. 311-312).
9 A genre of Balinese gamelan (pelog) characterized by explosive changes in tempo and dynamics.
10 A genre of Balinese gamelan with seven tones versus the usual five. This type of gamelan has the ability to play in a number of modes and is derived from older court and ritual gamelan music.
11 A genre of Balinese gamelan tuned in the *slendro* scale, usually with about 4 or 5 keys per octave. This gamelan is often carried and played to accompany a cremation procession to the cemetery.
12 Interview with Dalang Nardayana, 11 May 2014.
References


A RICE HARVEST THROUGH TIME: VISUALIZING THE PERFORMANCE OF SUNDANESE RENGKONG

The Sundanese comprise the largest ethnic population of West Java, and are known for their music, their syncopated popular dance forms such as jaipongan and dangdut, a martial art known as pencak silat, their poetic and alliterative language, and myriad combinations of performance ensembles centered around rice ritual and sound-making instruments – percussive as well as melodic -- made from wood and bamboo. Sunda is a mountainous region, with many remote villages, but it also includes the cities of Bandung and Jakarta, the Indonesian capital. The highlands in the central range are known as the Priangan, and it is in this area that many indigenous rituals honor the life cycle of rice and a female deity known as Nji Pohaci, or by her Indic name Dewi Sri.

Rengkong is one of these ensembles, constructed from large bamboo tubes, and it is most often performed in procession with other musical groups, most notably drums known as dog-dog and the ubiquitous shaken bamboo tube ensemble known as angklung.

Rengkong is unique in the Sundanese “instrumentarium,” as it is designed to make entertaining noise due to its construction as an echo chamber that uses bundles of rice, which swing back and forth, creating a squawking or creaking sound from the sound holes in each tube.

In this presentation we would like to look at some visible evidence of rengkong and consider some of the ramifications of the nature of rengkong’s “authenticity,” that is the association that many Sundanese attribute to bamboo instruments with a nostalgic rural past. We’d also like to consider if visualizing rengkong and other indigenous genres, through photographs and video, comprise indexical rather than representational, relationships to so-called “ancient” traditions.

Throughout West Java, annual rice harvest rituals, known as seren tahun, or ngunjat, have become major attractions for internal tourism and for popular discourse about the nature of Sundanese culture in the greater Indonesian context. In some cases these events are like living theme parks, complete with rationalized belief, consistent patterns of activity, and one could say regular commercialized schedules. But these intentional celebrations reflect what is still a “living tradition,” in smaller villages that follow planting and ritual cycles that maintain ancestral connections to the past. In villages such as Ciptagelar, a mountainous and remote desa about four hours from Bandung, or in the very remote Kanees villages of Banten (West, West Java), daily and seasonal rituals that honor Nji Pohaci are part and parcel of the regular agricultural cycle for both wet and dry rice cultivation. Sound is an essential element in this complex of activities, as the rice is likened to a pregnant deity, and grows as a gestating child in the womb. Rengkong is part of this complex and contributes unique, percussive syncopation as it leads newly harvested rice from the field to the storage barns.

But what got us here? Accidentally in the summer of 2013 I came across this image, illustrated and painted in different instances between 1818 and 1824 by the Belgian painter Antoine Payen. Payen was the official artist for two expeditions to the East Indies, due to his extensive background as an architect, illustrator and painter, and was hired much in the same way that a photographer or videographer would be hired today. His paintings and illustrations opened up the interior of Java and the spice islands to viewers in Europe, especially professional viewers. To quote Marie Odette-Scalliet, “His patrons placed great value on being presented with a correct image of the tropical vegetation and the natural habitat.” (Pictures from the Tropics, 1999, p. 49). Many of his lithographs are found in the botanical collection Rumphia, by C.L.Blume (1835-1847), and it was in this 4 volume set held in the archives of the KITLV in Leiden, that I found the following illustration.

One might question the accuracy of the “correct image” in terms of the human portrayal, but I think you will see that this early illustration captured some of the elements of performance that have been maintained over time. This is what struck me about this painting/illustration. This is a rengkong
performance, or at least a processional dance carrying rice bundles – that could be rengkong. The gestures are very similar and the setting is convincing. But the image is painted in a style that captures the beauty and enormity of the forest and the natural environment – a prelude to a style that later became known as the nostalgic landscapes of mooi Indie, or “beautiful Indies” style. In the painting there are also elements of village life that persist today. Raised bird cages, roof beams and thatching that is still similar, and rice barns on stilts that are designed to keep out vermin and ground water.

Karen Strassler has a comment on “the authentic” and “the indexical.” If I may paraphrase, in writing of a digitally enhanced photographic painting of Ratu Kidul, the Javanese Queen of the Southern Ocean, she states the following: “[the painting] serves as a medium of spiritual contact between the beholder and the spirit queen.” She considers this the indexical properties of the image. She continues in later paragraphs --- “Each remediation [does mot] simply replace previous iterations in a linear progression, but [adds] another layer or dimension to [the] accumulated potentiality as image-icon.” … “The photograph is not conceived as a trace of a past but now absent present, but rather as a medium for transmitting an ongoing ut otherwise invisible presence…”

Could other images have a similar function. I think perhaps they might.

But first, what does rengkong sound like?

Rengkong is a sound apparatus made to carry paddy and also produce, with a length of about 2 meters, made from the largest bamboo ‘gombong’ (Gigantochloa verticillata). At the two ends of each rengkong tube, a long square hole about 1-2 cm wide is cut into the bamboo which acts as a sounding hole. The length of the hole is determined by the size of the diameter of the bamboo that will be made into a Rengkong. Using sugar palm fibers (tali Injuk) and a bamboo strap made from bamboo “tali” (Gigantochloa apus), bundles of rice, or “pocong,” are hung from each end of the rengkong, and as the instrument moves back and forth the straps cause the instrument to sound. Some of ‘pocong’ weigh up to 40 kg.

Rengkong is played by swinging the bamboo pole to the left and to the right with a steady and regular motion. The movement requires precise balance both in walking and swing side to side. The sound is produced from friction, as the Rengkong rope fibers that have been oiled, rub with bamboo rubbing right in the middle of the perforated section.

In the communities of Kasepuhan Adat Banten Kidul, an extensive agricultural area in the mountains near Sukabumi West Java, particularly the village or “desa” of Ciptagelar, rengkong players are those people whose duty it is to play rengkong or angklung during village celebrations.

Rengkong are used in a ritual context in both Ngunjal, from the word “kunjal,” or “to bring, to carry,” and seren taun ceremonies. Rengkong, angklung and lisung, a communal rice pounding trough made from a tree trunk, are three key components of Ngunjal and seren taun ceremonial music for the community of Kasepuhan Adat Banten Kidul. During these ceremonies other ensembles join the festivities as well.

Ngunjal is a ceremonial procession carrying rice hanging on large frames known as Lantayan, which serve as temporary storage for newly harvested rice from dry fields and paddys, or “sawah.” The rice is carried to various 'leuit' or rice granaries in the largest village, or “kampung gede” of the district. The Ngunjal ceremony is only intended for local communities or the local population only (i.e. within the kasepuhan), but other people from outside may also be welcomed to witness the events. In May 2014, several ngunjal processions were organized in the villages around Kasepuhan Ciptagelar. The year 2014 saw a good harvest, with at least 8,000 pocong or rice bundles carried by almost 1,000 people, including the 30-40 bundles carried by the rengkong players.

Rengkong is also performed as an arts ceremonial ritual for Public harvest events, known as “seren taun,” which often includes many domestic and some international tourists. Due to the importance of rice and its relation to the circle of community life, both private and public ceremonies that involve rengkong include offerings and ritual preparations that are virtually identical.

In other areas of West Java, rengkong is also evident as a performing art, outside the context of ritual, featuring several aspects of dance and movement. These events, such as the Ngalaksa “ritual” in Sumedang, or seren taun in Cigugur, have become a kind of cultural packaging, or “kemasan,” and are encouraged by the regional West Java board of tourism.

The performing arts scholar Soedarsono (2001) pointed to one function of the performing arts as serving that of aesthetic presentation. In such a case, rengkong might only serve as a prop, or as an artistic object. One such example might be the production of rengkong hatong from Bogor, pictured here as our last example.
As another note, we should point out that the ethnomusicologist Henry Spiller (2010:58) has noted the following about dog-dog village performance in relation to both sound and dance: “the interlocking configurations of dog-dog players are iconic of the egalitarian nature of small Sundanese agricultural communities. … the patterns … have come to stand for the sound of walking, and Sundanese listeners, upon hearing them, respond by imaging or performing walking movements.” The syncopation and interlocking signifies, “in some sense, the sound of a body walking (but not necessarily the sound a body makes when walking).”

And what are its gestures, its characteristic representations? It’s shape? You’ve seen Payen’s illustration, let’s move forward to contemporary scenes.

Plate 1. Rengkong and Angklung at Tungtang Karang Tengan, Semarang 1910, Koleksi Tropen Museum

It is appropriate to introduce the concept of ‘ancient’ here from an intriguing book by John Taylor, i.e., *A Dream of England: Landscape, Photography, and the Tourist’s Imagination*. In an analysis of recreated photographic historicity as well as commentary of the nature of nostalgia, distance and authenticity, quoting Kharegat (1932), he states “indigenous peoples were shown to be exotic, proud and beautiful, satisfying tourist’s demands for signs of authentic culture.” In many ways this is not far from the reality of today’s global middle class in various nations, who look for some kind of indigenous authenticity to maintain social identity. Commenting on early photographic brochures, “both [viewed and viewer] are very different from what they have come to see.” In a sense a modern photograph, extracted from YouTube or Flickr, has no historical connection to a place, a development through time, in Taylor’s terms “no scenes of displacement … ready-made and self-perpetuating … a radical emptying of the category of production.”

Taylor (1910, p150) “The photographs demonstrated the tourist’s need to discover ‘unspoiled’ beauty.”

In the context of harvest ritual, *rengkong* is one element of this nostalgic complex. I think the most compelling concept from Taylor that I can find to apply to the indexical aspect of *rengkong* visualization is his comment about “the ancient,” or rather that creating to performing the ancient, becomes the ancient. (Paraphrased)

Taylor, quoting Patrick Wright’s Mythical History (2010), “Anyone who repeats the ancient, is ancient.”

What we have hoped to show is that there are multiple dynamics going on in 1) the diachronic present extending from Payen to the present, and 2) that connections to the past through performance can maintain but also create disjoints in cultural flow.
References


RUWIN RANGEETH DIAS  
(Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia)

IDIOSYNCRATIC AND MUTUAL FEATURES OF VIOLIN PLAYING IN MALAYSIAN JOGET AND SRI LANKAN KAFFIRINNA

For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
HOW REPLICATED MASKS WORK IN BALINESE SOCIETY: THE CASE OF TOPENG LEGONG

Introduction

Topeng legong (also known as sanghyang topeng, sanghyang legong) is a ritual dance in which masks of celestials are worn by prepubescent girls. These masks are objects of worship in the Payogan Agung Temple (hereinafter PA Temple) in Ketewel village. The highly sacred dance is performed in an annual temple ceremony (odalan) held in PA Temple and certain other places.

In addition to their centuries old masks, Ketewel people own another set of masks that are replicas or imitations. They made these replicas when they were invited to an art festival in 1988 so that they did not need to bring their sacred masks into a secular context or place. At first glance, those people seem to differentiate sufficiently between “secular performance” and religious rite by using non-sacred masks. However, the actual situation is more complicated. Later I will show that these new masks also gain a kind of sacredness and special social status.

Previous studies on topeng legong emphasized that this dance has a highly sacred quality, and that one of most popular Balinese dances called legong had originated from it (e.g. Sedana, 1977; Agus, 2006; Bandem & deBoer, 1995). Topeng legong therefore has been regarded as a dance of sacredness, history, and authenticity. As a result, the role played by the secular, new, and non-authentic masks has never been closely examined.

In this study I set two goals: (1) to show the replicas’ multiple and ambiguous meanings and their change; (2) to analyze how the replicas affect topeng legong’s performance and local communities. I will argue that not only the original masks but also their replicas are important agents in topeng legong that influence the expression and development of the dance in their own ways.

What is Topeng Legong?

The masks or deities within them are called “tu dari”, which is short for “ratu bidadari” and means celestials or angel. Ketewel people never say that a dancer performs topeng legong using a mask. Rather, they say “tu dari masolah (the celestial dances)” or “tu dari medal (the celestial comes out)”. Therefore, it is not the dancer but the mask or deity within it that performs topeng legong borrowing the dancer’s body.

There are some different legends about the origin of topeng legong (e.g. Sedana, 1977; Agus 2006). Most accounts tell us that this dance originated from a dream of Prince Dewa Agung Karna (hereinafter DAK) at some point during the 18th and 19th centuries. According to those legends, when Prince DAK meditated in the PA Temple, he dreamed of beautiful celestials dancing. It is said that based on that dream, the prince created the dance now called topeng legong. There are a variety of stories that tell the origin of the masks. In some versions, they are said to be made by DAK himself or somebody who was ordered by him. Alternatively, there are also stories that tell us that the masks already existed in the PA Temple and DAK started to use them after his meditation.

The dance has two ritual functions. One is to make the temple festival complete. The other is to protect the community from epidemic. People are in awe of the masks, and there are many taboos related to the masks and the dance. Only prepubescent girls are allowed to dance with the masks. These girls must keep their bodies and minds ritually clean. People never directly touch the mask. During the performance, dancers hold a small piece of cloth so that they can protect the mask when they need to hold it. The dancers are not allowed to talk about what they saw or felt behind the masks. Taking photos of tu dari is not allowed or thought to be undesirable, especially if it is for commercial purposes.

When a dancer gets her first period, she retires from dancing topeng legong, and becomes an assistant until she marries and leaves topeng legong activities. These dancers, assistants, the temple priest, and gamelan players who accompany the dance are the people who take central roles in topeng legong’s activity.
How the “Replicas” were made

According to previous studies, the new masks were made to be used in the Bali Art Festival (Pesta Kesenian Bali) in 1988 (Agus, 2006 pp 63-64). The festival is an annual event commissioned by the Balinese government. It is a great honor to be invited to this prestigious festival. However, Ketewel villagers were worried about bringing their ritually important performance to the secular festival. They were especially anxious about the masks. They were afraid that highly consecrated masks might be “polluted” when they were brought outside the ritual context. At that time, the Walter Spies foundation, which aims to preserve and promote the development of Balinese culture, advised the villagers to make a set of replicas of the masks so that they could use them instead of the sacred ones. Use of replicas is not uncommon in Bali, especially in art festivals and tourist performances.

Before making replicas the priest of PA Temple at that time, mangku Putus, asked tu dari for instructions. According to his son Widiana, who is now the priest of PA Temple, mangku Putus had a revelation from tu dari and was told that he was allowed to have replicas as long as he would treat those new masks in the same way he treated the originals. Mangku Putus was asked to apply the same dances, rules, attitudes, and discipline to the replicas as the original masks (Widiana interview 4 Nov. 2011).

A meeting was held. Not only ordinary villagers but also members of the royal families and high priests joined the meeting and they agreed to have new masks. When the replicas were made, they held a consecration ceremony called pasupati. This practice might seem strange for us as foreigners. Why did they consecrate the masks while the very purpose of making new masks was not to use sacred masks for a secular festival?

Taksu is an important concept in Balinese art. “Taksu” is often translated as charisma or aura. It is the supernatural power to enchant or attract people. Balinese artists and performers try to get taksu not only by practicing and improving their skill, but also by praying, giving offerings, and also using sacred objects that have magical power or taksu.

A former priest of PA Temple once told me the reason for consecrating the replicas. “If we don’t consecrate the masks, they don’t have taksu. As such, they are nothing more than masks in a souvenir market so we created taksu” (Windia interview 23 Aug. 2007). According to him, to get taksu they especially chose a mask maker from the Brahmana (priest caste).

After performing at the art festival in 1988, there were only a few opportunities to use the replicas on a secular occasion. However, the temple priest started to use the replicas in the annual ceremony of PA Temple. According to him, there are two reasons for that (manku Widiana interview 22 Apr. 2011): (1) to have additional topeng legong performance with the replicas to enliven the atmosphere during the temple festival especially on a day when the original tu dari does not dance; (2) to give the replicas an opportunity to dance. In his opinion, the masks like to dance. Here we can see a kind of agency or active side of the masks. Once a mask is produced, it starts to motivate people to perform with it.

The costumes, dancers, and offerings for the replicas are the same as those for the originals. According to the present priest of PA Temple, performance with the replica has the same ritual effectiveness as the original does. However this does not mean he does not care about the difference between the two sets of masks. For example, there are special procedures needed for a performance with replicas. When replicas perform, a priest will pray for tu dari so that they help or give “life” to the replica. Before the performance, holy water made by tu dari is scattered. These processes are not necessary if the masks are original. The positions of both sets reflect the superior status of the originals over the replicas. During the temple ceremony, the box containing the original masks is usually placed slightly higher than that of the replicas. In Balinese cosmology, upward is the direction of gods, or purity, while downward is related to evil spirits.
The Ambiguous Status of the Replicas

a) The core members

The core members of topeng legong activity such as the priest of PA Temple, performers, assistants, and accompanying musicians show respect for both the originals and the replicas. They call the replica “tu dari putra”, which can be translated as “tu dari’s son” or “tu dari junior”. Then they call the original “tu dari lingsir” which means “old tu dari”, “great tu dari”, or “tu dari senior”. Nowadays, some of them hesitate to call the masks made in 1988 “duplikat ” because the word replica carries a connotation of fake (a retired dancer interview 3 Mar. 2013).

Interestingly, the present priest of PA Temple told me that he uses both names depending on the context. In the context of national language (i.e. Indonesian), such as an art festival, he calls the masks replicas, but in a ritual sphere, he calls them “tu dari putra (junior)”. With this dual standard or context-dependent status, the son of tu dari still can be brought to secular festivals.

b) Ordinal villagers or those from outside of Ketewel

While those core members conceptualize both sets of masks as parents and children, the name “tu dari junior” is not well known outside of the temple. It is more common to call the masks either replica, or tu dari duplikat which means duplicate tu dari, rather than call them tu dari junior. Ordinal villagers other than core members of topeng legong practice, and people from outside of Ketewel can be categorized into three groups.

1. Those who think the replicas are objects of worship or objects with similar status;
2. Those who think the replicas are just secular substitutes for the originals used for secular purposes only;
3. Those who don’t know that tu dari masks were ever duplicated.

Many of those in these three categories can not distinguish the original from the replica when they see a mask. As a result, when the replicas are used in the temple ceremony, those in the second or the third categories are very likely to think those are the originals. Those in the third group think all the topeng legong performances are done by centuries old masks. Those of the second group tend to think that it is a sacred original when they see a mask dancing in a temple, given many offerings, and treated in respectful manner. Here we can see people’s tendency to judge the sacredness of an object not so much from how it looks but from how it is treated.
Performance in Bali Art Festival 2007

In 2007, topeng legong was again invited to the art festival. They were asked to join an event called parade topeng, in which each regency sent one mask dance drama. Topeng legong was used as a part of the performance from Gianyar regency. Tu dari junior and dancers from PA Temple performed with other dancers and musicians from Gianyar.

The play was titled “Kawit Legong”, which means “the Origin of Legong”. The story was about PA Temple in the time of Prince DAK, and his meditation that became the source of topeng legong. On the day of the performance, the cast and all musicians gathered in PA Temple and prayed for blessings and the success of their play. Topeng legong was inserted in the middle of a drama. Just before the dance, a pre-performance ritual was held on stage, like the one in temple ceremony, and therefore became a part of the performance. The dance itself was the same as the one done in the temple festival. However there were some newly attached arrangements or directions for this performance. For example, four girls danced together, while in a temple always only two girls dance at one time. A more notable example was the ending. As we can see in the second photo, two tu dari sitting on chairs were carried on men’s shoulders. This kind of scene is never included as a part of conventional topeng legong performance in temple festivals.

The attractiveness of the replica or tu dari junior on that day was more than people expected. A month later, the priest of PA Temple at that time told me this:

On that day, the replica looked almost the same as the original and we were very surprised (Windia interview 23 Aug 2007).

Even after the passing of a few years, the new priest of PA Temple, who had also attended the art festival in 2007, still looked back at that event very enthusiastically. He said “at that time, we all cried. I received many SMS and telephone calls from cultural figures [...] watching that aura. It was an incredible aura (Widiana interview 4 Nov. 2011).”
The Effect of the Replicas (or *tu dari* junior) on *Topeng Legong* and Local Communities

There are several influences the replica/*tu dari* junior brought about.

1. New creation
   The mask maker Ida Bagus Anom, who made the replicas in 1988, was inspired by that experience, and later he created several masks that show some characteristics of *tu dari*’s face.

2. Expansion of performance opportunity
   These new masks made performance in secular festivals possible. Using different masks for different purposes, people can plan the level of sacredness of *topeng legong*. Through the art festival in 2007, Ketewel people could display PA Temple’s historical legacy and cultural or artistic importance in front of a large audience. Without the replicas, such performance might be impossible. However it must be noted that this is happening only on limited occasions because of their sacredness. After the art festival in 2007, the drama *Kawit Legong* was replayed as an entertainment for a temple festival held in another temple. At that time, the scene of *topeng legong* was omitted. I Ketut Kodi, who was the director and main cast of *Kawit Legong* did not ask *topeng legong* dancers to join the show as he thought staging the replica masks would require too many offerings and labor. The replicas are now too sacred to be used freely.

3. Emphasis on the importance and sacredness of the originals or *tu dari*
   *Tu dari* now have “children”. The existence of a replica indicates the special value of *tu dari* (senior). It reflects social need for *topeng legong*. It also indicates that the original is too sacred to be used for secular purpose. In addition, it implies that the original’s sacredness or purity is secured because performance outside ritual is avoided. As we have seen, there are people who do not know that the replicas exist, and those who mistakenly perceive the replicas to be originals. Watching the replica in the art festival, they might underestimate the sacredness and value of *tu dari* masks. However, at least in the case of the art festival in 2007, this is not likely to happen. Even though the masks were replicas, the elaborate ritual and people’s respectful attitude toward the masks impressed the audience on the sacredness of *tu dari*. The atmosphere of the art festival became something similar to that of temple festival. In this case, one might say that replicated masks changed the context of performance.

Conclusion

What has been shown is the process of adjusting ritual dance to modern contexts, which is almost impossible to reduce to a simple linear model. The process involves misunderstanding and ambiguity. There are mutual interactions between humans, masks, and the deities within them. The ambiguous and ambivalent characters of the replicas allow people to bring *topeng legong* outside ritual, and add a mysterious and divine atmosphere to such performances.

*This research was supported by a grant from Shibusawa Fund for Ethnological Studies during 2011--2012.*

References


THEME III – NEW RESEARCH: REVITALIZING AND CONSERVING TRADITIONS

The theme New Research spans the topics of music and healing, arts education, Thai music, and revitalizing and conserving traditions. Several reports (in the form of short ‘lightning’ papers) on activity and progress of on-going field research projects by graduate students as well as full-length papers by other scholars are presented to inform the membership of the continuing research efforts by the members of this study group.

An early session in the Symposium opened with a paper and a lightning report on new research. Made Mantle Hood presented a paper entitled ‘Towards the Applicability of Musical Terrior to the Context of Dwindling Sonic Structures’. The lightning report was given by Elizabeth Clendinning (Emory University, USA) on ‘Innocents Abroad: Edutourism and the Balinese Performing Arts’, while a report on Thai music was presented by Bussakorn Binson (Chulalongkorn University, Thailand) on ‘The Folk Music of Southern Thailand’.

Additional New Research examined the performing arts and traditional healing. Sarah Anais Andrieu (IRASEC, Thailand) spoke on ‘Where is Kala? Few remarks on a contemporary ritual performance’. and by Wei Xin-Yi (Thunghai University, Taiwan) speaking on ‘Is this Real? The Performing Mechanism of the Healing Ritual “Kisaize” of Kavalan tribe in Taiwan’.

BUSSAKORN BINSON
(Chulalongkorn University, Thailand)

THE FOLK MUSICS OF SOUTHERN THAILAND
(Lightning Paper)

For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
Listen, Listen, Listen: Phenomenon and Parody

On 14 January 2013, a video depicting a public forum in a Malaysian national university unexpectedly went viral over social media, turning two protagonists, namely Sharifah Zohra Jabeen and Bawani KS, into an overnight sensation. The most memorable speech was Sharifah’s lines, ‘Listen! Listen! Listen!’ and ‘Let me speak!’ that repeat for a number of times. Within days, the ‘Listen, Listen, Listen’ phenomenon escalated with netizens’ participation in producing numerous graphical internet memes, parodies as well as parodies of other existing parodied works. One of these creative works was a musical parody by Yuri Wong that features an electronic dance beat accompanying a catchphrase, “Listen! Listen! When I speak, listen!” Other features are prominent visual loops that depict Sharifah seizing Bawani’s microphone, ‘dancing’ with exaggerated body movements and commenting on animal problems.

Definition and Framework

A parody refers to ‘the process of recontextualising a target or source text through the transformation of its textual (and contextual) elements (Harries, 2000: 6) while ‘a critical distance is implied between the backgrounded text being parodied and the new incorporating work, a distance usually signalled by irony’ (Hutcheon 1985: 32). French literary theorist Gérard Genette distinguishes a parody as a form of hypertextuality when hypertext is alluded, derived or related to an earlier work or hypotext (Martin & Ringham, 2006: 99).

This paper exploits the YouTube online commentary on Yuri Wong Music’s parody video “Dance Remix: Listen! Listen! When I Speak, Listen!” as the framework of a hermeneutic study on a musical parody in the Internet. The online commentary by netizens serves as the main studied data, while an observation of popularity measurement is drawn as well.

The Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Video title</th>
<th>Dance Remix: Listen! Listen! When I Speak, Listen!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uniform resource locator</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xL25dpv_cg0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xL25dpv_cg0</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td>Yuri Wong Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date published</td>
<td>14 January 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date analysed</td>
<td>24 January 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time span</td>
<td>376 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>122 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View accumulated</td>
<td>1,384,312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscription accumulated</td>
<td>5,271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like accumulated</td>
<td>12,719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislike accumulated</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment accumulated</td>
<td>3,402</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Basic facts and figures (as of GMT+8 15:26, 24 January 2014)
Table 2: Comment distribution according to netizen’s reactions from 14 January 2014 to 24 January 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Netizen’s Reactions</th>
<th>Comment Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation and amazement over musical or visual creativity, overall presentation, view hits and media hype</td>
<td>1,613</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislike of the video or the producer</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrutiny of Sharifah, BN, UMNO or the government; defence or sympathy for Bawani</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrutiny of Bawani; defence or sympathy for Sharifah BN, UMNO or the government</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrutiny of UUM or students appearing at the forum</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satirical speculation or parody of Sharifah BN, UMNO, the government or netizens who dislike the video</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination of race, religion, gender or nationality</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviours of describing audiovisual features without commenting, asking questions, giving suggestions, responding to other netizens or giving opinions in other contexts</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercials, irrelevant comments or comments not shown</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,402</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Counts of selected keywords related to music and dance appearing in the online commentary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keywords on Music and Dance</th>
<th>Keyword Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“remix”</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“song”, “lagu”</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Gangnam”, “Psy”, “Listen Style”</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“ringtone”</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“download”</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“dance”, “dancing”, “joget”</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“music”, “muzik”</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“dubstep”</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“lyrics”, “lirik”</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“FM”</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“DJ”</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“MP3”</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“parody”</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Beyoncé”</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Skrillex”</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“autotune”</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“rhythm”, “rentak”</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“rhyme”</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“chords”</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“melody”</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“lullaby”</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some interesting comments:
- Yayy, 1 million in 4 days. (lovetmama house, 1 year ago)
- This song is so freaking good it gives me eargasms. (Joseph Voo, 1 year ago)
- Paling best: Number 1 ark Number 2 ark Number 3 ark ark ark (Fizz Zoule, 1 year ago)
- Chords Cm Bb Ab (Glosnon123, 1 year ago)
- Yuri Wong don't stop making music, “kangkung” and “listen” so fun to hear all the times, thanks. (Muhammad Ibrahim, 5 days ago)
- Compared to the original, this video makes sense! (Huda Diaz, 1 year ago)
- Seriously this would be 2013 top song. Boleh kalah oppa gangnam style xD (cikcarol, 1 year ago)
• Malaysia’s Gangnam Style lol (Lavindra J. Gudy, 1 year ago)
• Waaoooh, nice remix...Well done...very creative!! But u got to be careful, our country don't like creative ppl like you... they will halau you keluar... “Pergi....Pergi.... Pergi ke negara lain…!!!” (C Jasmin, 1 year ago)
• Imagine if u ever watch circus… when d clown appear there’s applause… that explains why they clap. (Yuki Liow, 1 year ago)
• Mempersiasukan UUM. (KL Tan, 1 year ago)
• Only in Malaysia!!! Malaysia boleh (Kiro Sstar, 1 year ago)
• Song of the year 2013 <3 but, shame to be Malaysian -.-" (Ken94225, 1 year ago)
• Kalau tak suka kerajaan malaysia, boleh keluar dari Malaysia. (lol) Kalau tak suka hukum Allah, boleh keluar dari bumi milik Allah ni. (said that to our gov.)(hasell usiby, 1 year ago)
• Hey mr. uploader, i enjoyed listening to yr video sound remix. It's truly an artistic ability from u. no disrespect to u o people, plse stop the ad hominem arguments among yrself. just listen to the rhythm of the remix, doesn’t it make yr life more enjoyable? (Alcompono S, 1 year ago)

**Interpretation**

The following statements are the result of data interpretation:

1. 47.7% of the comments show that netizens who responded to the hypertext appreciated this musical parody and felt amazed by the creativity of the producer, the overall video presentation, the views it received and the media hype it has henceforth created.
2. 28.8% % of comments are referring to the hypotext.
3. 23.5% of the comments show mixed and irrelevant reactions towards the hypertext or the hypotext.
4. In comparison with the excessive use of sound expression (such as “hahaha” or “wakakaka”), emoticons, internet slangs (such as “LOL” and “OMG”), the considerably low counts of keyword related to music and dance reflects netizens’ relatively low interest in the discussion of music and dance.
5. Only 13,024 (or 0.94%) netizens indicated publicly whether they liked or disliked the video, assuming that 1,384,312 netizens have viewed the video once. Among them, 97.7% liked the video.
6. Only 3,402 (or 0.24%) netizens joined the online commentary and posted their opinions, feelings, concerns or simply nonsense on the YouTube page, assuming that each netizen did not write multiple comments.

**Deriving Questions as Conclusion**

Probing the supposed huge number of netizens visiting YouTube daily to access many video feeds and make commentary, the attention earned online by this 122-second musical parody has been overwhelming. Based on the interpretation, more questions can be derived for further consideration:

1. Do netizens appreciate a musical parody more when it has socio-political content?
2. Do netizens appreciate a musical parody more when it gains the status of popularity or fame?
3. Do netizens appreciate a parody more when it is made musically?
4. In the digital era, how would the Internet help to multiply the impact of a musical parody?
5. Do netizens care for the music or dance elements in a musical parody, despite expressing their amusement?
6. How would a musical parody intensify the socio-political engagement of netizens if a participatory approach is rendered (despite the apparent commercial values a parody can bring)?
7. Do netizens from Malaysia tend to address their obsession on race, religion, gender and nationalities on seeing an event, even though it is out of these contexts?
8. How possible a musical parody is banned or musicians are persecuted for the ethical reason of ‘national security concerns’?

These questions are yet to be answered in this study. Netizens may become more radical and fearless to question or tell every truth behind issues surrounding them. Their reactions cannot absolutely reflect the reality, just as a netizen cannot represent an individual within a community or an institution. Therefore, even though the musical parody is well-received, it is still not possible to see if everybody within a community or an institution could receive the idea of a musical parody. However, in the
hermeneutics of the YouTube comments, crossing over a variety of languages and mindsets between netizens unavoidably takes place. If we see the Internet media as a mediasphere of collective ideas, we could further explore a society for its openness in receiving questions and opinions, and discover new possibilities to intellectually interpret music as humanly organised sound in the digital age without restraint.

Endnotes

1 The video was a live recording of Forum Suara Mahasiswa (Forum of the graduates’ voices) entitled “Seiringkah Mahasiswa dan Politik?” (Are graduates and politics aligned?), which took place on 8 December 2012 at Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), Sintok, Kedah. The video was split and uploaded in four parts.

2 At least 20 parody videos were produced. The most prominent examples, being satirical and humorous, are Namewee’s “Tokok 009: Listen”, Mat Lufti’s “Parodi Forum Suara Mahasiswa”, which have both rocketed over 600,000 views as reported on 18 January 2013 (Netto, 2013), and also a so-called ‘memetic video’ (Shifman, 2011: 189–190) that shows Adolf Hitler ranting in the Austrian–German dialect juxtaposed with reworked subtitles in the Malay language narrating an imagined state of mind of Sharifah’s political leader (N .N., 2013).

References


Videography


INNOCENTS ABROAD: EDUTOURISM AND THE BALINESE PERFORMING ARTS
(Lightning Paper)

Since the 1970s, a mode of tourism—educational tourism, or edutourism—has emerged in Bali, Indonesia, catering specifically to foreign students who wish to come learn the Balinese performing arts, primarily gamelan music and dance. Generally more structured than the itineraries of study pursued by individual foreign arts researchers, these programs allow students to both immerse themselves in the Balinese arts as well as gain a perceived “insider’s” view on Balinese culture.

This preliminary research report investigates the development and structure of performing arts edutourism in Bali. It draws on in-depth observation and interviews with individuals involved with some Balinese arts edutourism organizations as well as published statements from others and represents a small facet of my ongoing research on transnational pedagogical gamelan communities constructed between Indonesia and other nations. Here, following a brief history of Balinese performing arts interest abroad, the report contextualizes the history and present diversity of performing arts edutourism in Bali with a focus on organized study programs, primarily those oriented towards Western students. Initial conclusions suggest that through their studies within Balinese communities, which may include performing within those communities, foreign students of the Balinese performing arts are not only able to provide economic stimulus but also to contribute culturally both within Balinese communities and upon returning home. This research provides a foundation for further analytical studies of musical-pedagogical choices in teaching the Balinese performing arts and ethnographic studies of individuals who work within these edutourism scenes.

The recent development of formal Balinese performing arts study programs has largely been directed towards Western, English-speaking audiences. Although formal Balinese performing arts study programs for foreigners are a phenomenon of the last fifty years, artists and scholars have come to the island to study for nearly a century. In large part following growing international awareness of Balinese culture due to Dutch colonial touristic literature in the 1920s and 1930s, the island became home to researchers, artists, and composers such as Jane Belo, Walter Spies, Margaret Mead, Jaap Kunst, and Colin McPhee, among many others, whose academic and artistic work inspired subsequent generations of Western students.

Interest in traveling to Indonesia to study gamelan was fueled further by the foundation of actively playing gamelan groups around the world. Each country has its own history with gamelan, with strong traditions in some nations of Western Europe, in Australia, in Japan, and in North America. In the United States, which is currently home to the most gamelans outside of Indonesia, ethnomusicologist Mantle Hood who established the first active, performing gamelan ensembles in the United States—Javanese, Sundanese, and Balinese—at the University of Los Angeles in 1958 and 1959, tying the history of gamelan in that country directly to education from the start (Conner, 2011). Similar ensembles were founded in academic and non-academic communities across the world, often in partnership with or taught by musicians from Indonesia. Today, there are approximately 450 active gamelans in the world outside of Indonesia, some 190 of which are Balinese (American Gamelan Institute, 2014).

Although not all who visit Indonesia to study the performing arts have studied previously in their home countries, foreign gamelans frequently provide musicians’ first exposure to this music and influence their future pursuit of Indonesian arts study. Hardja Susilo, emeritus professor and distinguished instructor of Central Javanese gamelan at the University of Hawaii at Manoa since 1971, has described his role in teaching as a “bridge to Java,” his pedagogy and connections preparing American students to study further in Indonesia (Harnish, Solís, & Witzleben, 2004). If resident gamelan teachers abroad are the “bridge,” then what is it that students find on the other side of this bridge? In Bali, where cultural tourism is highly emphasized, it is a diverse set of study opportunities tailored to different groups of students’ needs.

Across Indonesia, non-Indonesian students enrolled at institutions of higher education can pursue study of Indonesian performing arts through the Darmasiswa Scholarship. Established in 1974 by the Indonesian ministries of Education and Culture and Foreign Affairs, Darmasiswa enrolls students directly at institutions of higher education (including ISI-Denpasar), giving them the same classroom
experiences as regular Indonesian students for a half or full-year term (Darmasiswa Secretariat, 2013). However, many people interested in studying the Balinese performing arts cannot devote months or a year abroad to their studies. Personal communications with some students as well as written scholarly accounts (Bakan 1999) reveal that many students independently arrange private lessons with music and dance teachers across the island. They may stay at instructors’ houses, study according to a mutually-agreed upon schedule, and pay an agreed-upon amount that might include a monetary fee and also, in more established relationships, reciprocal favors over an extended period of time. While this model allows students to form close connections with their teachers’ communities and work on their own performing skills, it is also limiting: the Balinese performing arts are primarily group endeavors, and most single teachers cannot host an entire group themselves, nor can they always place students within local groups. Balinese arts group study programs have emerged to fulfill this need.

The first of these large-scale programs began at Giri Kusuma (Flower Mountain) in Payangan, Gianyar, in 1971, coinciding with a general resurgence in tourism following political reformations in Bali in the late 1960s. The program was sponsored by the Center for World Music, a San Francisco-based institution founded by Dr. Robert E. Brown in 1963, and continues to this day. Students in this program reside for two or three weeks in housing specially built for them in the village, and take group lessons from teachers from across Indonesia, focusing variously on traditional Javanese, Balinese, and Sundanese gamelan and dance as well as lessons in theatrical forms and Indonesian language (Center for World Music 2014; Flower Mountain 2014).

Ethnographic observation of other groups and personal communications with their proprietors and students yielded similar but distinctive learning configurations. In a program offered by Gamelan Çudamani, an internationally renowned performing sanggar (performing arts organization) in Pengosekan, Gianyar, students live in a hotel between Pengosekan and Ubud and travel to the Çudamani compound each day to study Balinese gamelan or dance, supplemented by study of other Balinese arts and field trips to local sites of interest. Other groups, such as Mekar Bhuana and the ISI-Denpasar and University of Essex-affiliated Bali Module for the World, offer more custom-tailored and flexible programs for individuals and groups focusing on a variety of Balinese performing arts traditions. Finally, programs such as Sanggar Manik Galih, founded by I Made Lasmawan in Bangah, Tabanan, integrate aspects of all the approaches described above. Lasmawan and his family host individuals and college study abroad groups on a flexible schedule, integrating beginners and experienced gamelan players and dancers in a variety of individual and group lessons, and performs at local events such as temple ceremonies.

Benjamin Brinner and Lisa Gold have posited an ecosystemic model for gamelan interactions; drawing on the biological definition of “ecosystem,” they argue that gamelan communities comprise a complex interrelated set of organisms—ensembles—inhabiting different musical habitats and filling different musical niches (Gold 2013). One could look at study abroad programs in general as fulfilling a certain niche within both Balinese and transnational gamelan communities. Additionally, in terms of approach, these programs individually provide a wide range of opportunities for foreign students in terms of setting,
length and intensity of study, approachability for novice and experienced players, and repertoire taught. These different programs thus fulfill different ecological niches based on the needs of their students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Program</th>
<th>Setting (Urban/rural, hotel/nomestay, independent/group study)</th>
<th>Length of time, intensity of study</th>
<th>Novice, experienced, either/both together</th>
<th>Repertoire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Darmasiswa</td>
<td>Urban, various, both</td>
<td>6-9 months, college course schedule</td>
<td>Experienced (generally)</td>
<td>Each program focuses on different repertoires from each other, and repertoires may be different depending on students in attendance and current resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private lessons</td>
<td>Various, various, independent</td>
<td>Flexible, flexible</td>
<td>Novice or experienced (alone)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giri Kusuma</td>
<td>Rural, homestay, both</td>
<td>2-3 weeks, all day almost every day</td>
<td>Both together</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Çudamani</td>
<td>Urban, hotel, both</td>
<td>2-3 weeks, all day almost every day</td>
<td>Separate programs for novice and experienced</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mekar Bhuana</td>
<td>Urban, various, either</td>
<td>Flexible, several hours per day</td>
<td>Either</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bali Module for the</td>
<td>Various (mostly urban), various, either</td>
<td>Flexible, several hours per day</td>
<td>Either</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manik Galih</td>
<td>Rural, homestay, both</td>
<td>Flexible, several hours per day</td>
<td>Both together</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Plate 2. Balinese Arts Edutourism Program Comparison

Those who come to study in Bali leave better able to appreciate the Balinese performing arts and equipped with new skills to bring to their own artistic communities. In addition, many of these Balinese teaching groups have a stated mission to use funds from these study programs to financially support their local communities—some examples include Mekar Bhuana’s commitment to preserving historic gamelan repertoires and Çudamani’s free lessons for children in Pengosekan.

Study in some of these programs also affords non-Balinese students the chance to perform their new skills within Balinese communities. Once choice venue is at local village temple ceremonies where performing serves as an important devotional offering—ngayah. In a practical sense, this situation is ideal for such a performance because intention, not perfection, is valued. Beyond giving the students the experience of a lifetime, however, these performances also allow them to do something meaningful for their Balinese communities. For some students, that final performance in the host community may be their last, but for others, it is one more step in their continued study of the Balinese performing arts, a development of lifelong musical kinship that positions both foreign students and Balinese locals as a part of a larger global village.

A “tourist” is often defined as “a person who travels or visits a place for pleasure.” Although edutourists certainly fit within this description, performing arts edutourism in Bali allows for much more: increased foreign literacy in and patronage of the Balinese performing arts; financial support (not only of teachers but also their local communities); and opportunities for students to contribute directly to daily life in host communities. As such, these connections through arts education have the potential to continue to strengthen the Balinese arts, both in Bali and abroad.

References


WEI, XIN-YI
(Thunghai University, Taiwan)

IS THIS REAL? THE PERFORMING MECHANISM OF THE HEALING RITUAL “KISAIIZ”
OF KAVALAN TRIBE IN TAIWAN
(Lightning Paper)

For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
For article see published Proceedings
MADE MANTLE HOOD
(Universiti Putra Malaysia)

TOWARDS THE APPLICABILITY OF MUSICAL TERROIR TO THE CONTEXT OF DWINDLING SONIC STRUCTURES

Introduction

Within the discourse of music ecology and sustainability there are arguments for the dynamic maintenance of potentially threatened or endangered musical traditions (Titon 2009). Related to this discourse are earlier theories on soundscape design (Schaffer 1977) and more recent re-examinations of the importance of musical experience within the traditions of indigenous peoples (Simonett 2014). This discourse often combines music terminology with loan words and concepts from the sciences such as 'sustainable soundscapes, 'sonic environment' and 'musical bio-diversity' among others. While there are limitations to the analogy of ecology (Keogh 2009), this interdisciplinary approach to music studies continues to develop with such platforms for debate as Jeff Todd Titon's online music and sustainability blog.¹

In 2009, I conducted my own debate with my three brothers in a rugged four-wheel drive jeep as we toured Tasmanian wine country. We were in search of small boutique wineries for their distinct flavours and fine bouquet that 'taste of place'. During our trip we had lengthy conversations over glasses of red and white with boutique vineyard wine growers. Repeatedly in our conversations, wine makers referred to the term terroir, a French word that refers to the distinct ecological characteristics, the subtle but significant variations in location-specific climate, soil, and sunlight, that have a direct affect on vineyard production.

In Plate 1, each label on these bottles of wine represents a specific region and place. The bamboo and PVC tubes in the photo below also have labels. These tubes belong to gamelan instrument makers and contain xylophone-like bamboo tuning sticks. Because Balinese gamelan tunings are not standardized, the tuning sticks help instrument makers uphold and maintain the distinct tuning characteristics of regional gamelan orchestras. Both the wine bottles and the bamboo tuning sticks are products of artisans who make conscious articulations of difference through clear reference to place and origin.

Plate 1.
While tasting fine Australian wines, my brothers and I learned the term *terroir* is as much an ecological and agricultural approach to growing grapes as it is a wine grower's philosophy. Terroir means 'a sense of place' where a wine's bouquet, body and taste reflect the specific environmental conditions where the grapes have grown. As an 'Old World' philosophy, small vineyard wine growers tend to use terroir to position themselves in opposition to 'New World', large-scale industrial wine companies. These companies often bypass the risky, single vineyard approach and source their grapes from numerous vineyards. The result is that regardless of changing environmental or ecological conditions, they produce wines that taste the same year after year because they must satisfy the demands of the market. By contrast, terroir wines may not produce as much and vary from year to year, but they are valued because they 'taste of place'.

I found this concept immediately applicable to describe the specific musical environments that have nurtured the great diversity of tuning systems in Bali. Like small vineyards, tuned bronze gongs and metallophones are the product of place and that is evident in the bamboo tubes containing the tuning pegs. Specific environmental conditions in the musical evolution of Balinese gamelan, together with an unwavering local and inter-regional competitiveness, have yielded a bounty of gamelan orchestras tuned to reflect the tastes of diverse communities, regions and even the individual artistry of a long standing professional troupe. For example, right down the street from us now at the National Radio Station is 'Gamelan RRI'. Its tuning has been broadcast over the airwaves for decades and is immediately recognizable to both connoisseur and lay musician alike. However, like changing aesthetic tastes, preferences seem to be shifting and changing. The overly used trope, "No two gamelan are tuned the same" may have been true decades ago but today requires a bit of unpacking for it really glosses the current ecology of Balinese orchestral tunings. The conversations I have had with gamelan makers, tuners and composers indicate the diversity of Balinese tunings seems to be dwindling.

In this paper, I explore the applicability of the term *terroir* to Balinese tuning systems. I do this by first examining previous studies of gamelan tunings. Then I will provide a more in depth ecological analogy of the *terroir* concept by discussing its processes and approaches. Finally, I will introduce three individuals: a gamelan maker, a freelance tuner, and a composer. Each, in this ethnography of individuals who are close to the topic of fine tuning instruments, are concerned about gamelan consumer's tendency to abandon their existing tunings or worse, are indifferent to the topic of tunings altogether. I am particularly interested in this 'sense of place' in the *terroir* concept and whether or not gamelan troupes are as concerned with how their gamelan is tuned, or more interested in having their gamelan conform to mainstream aesthetic tastes, and even diatonically tuned gamelan.

**Early Tuning Studies**

Early European researchers established the comparative approach to studying musics of the 'Other' largely through the measurement of intervallic structures and tonal systems. Deemed 'vergleichende Musikwissenschaft' or 'comparative musicology', it was led by pioneers such as Eric Von Hornbostel, Curt Sachs and A. J. Ellis among others (Vetter 1989). In this early form of 'world music' studies, researchers often favoured going into the field, recording exotic instruments, only to return to their laboratories in isolation to analyse scales, melodies and tuning systems. This approach to cross-cultural research would eventually be enlightened by, and merge with related disciplines such as anthropology and sociology to form the interdisciplinary field of ethnomusicology.

Some of the earliest tuning system 'species' captured by early ethnomusicologists on wax cylinder recordings were the vibrant diversity of tuned bronze gongs and metallophones from Indonesia. Field recordings were analyzed, tested and dissected for their potential clues to solve musical evolutionary theories (Hornbostel 1911; Kunst 1936). These recordings complemented the 'live specimen' gamelan orchestras held in captivity in museums such as the Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam. Whether recorded or real gamelan instruments, early ethnomusicologists were obsessed with the diversity of gamelan tunings. In subsequent decades there have been studies of the evolution of tone systems, such as Roger Vetter's 'Retrospect on a Century of Gamelan Tone Measurements', and Andy Toth's acoustic and aesthetic study of more than 46 Balinese gamelan orchestras (see Table 1). For decades the pursuit of documenting different tuning systems was justified in the literature through
TOWARDS THE APPLICABILITY OF MUSICAL TERROIR TO THE CONTEXT OF DWINDLING SONIC STRUCTURES

the following trope: "no two gamelan are tuned the same". This may have been true decades ago but generalizing about gamelan tunings as 'not the same' begs to be critiqued because glossing gamelan tunings as diverse and varied through the above trope does not take into account degrees of similarity or 'sameness'. In ethnographic terms 'no two gamelan are tuned the same' does not tell us in ethnographic terms what degrees of difference exist and more importantly, the culture-specific meanings ascribed to a multiplicity of gamelan tunings.

My aim in this article is neither to remeasure scales (Toth 1993) nor to further 'redefine' slendro or pelog (Hood 1966). Instead I examine ethnographic data on perceptions of difference as articulated by gamelan makers, tuners, practicing musicians and innovative composers. Each contributes to the narrative of diversity that may or may not actually exist when it comes to local, regional and national variants of gamelan tunings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>Hornbostel, E. M.</td>
<td>Musical Tone Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Bukofzer, M.</td>
<td>The Evolution of Javanese Tone-systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Jones A. M.</td>
<td>Towards an Assessment of the Javanese Pelog Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Hood, M.</td>
<td>Selendro and Pelog Redefined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Vetter, R.</td>
<td>A Retrospect on a Century of Gamelan Tone Measurements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Toth, A.</td>
<td>Selera Yang Selaras: Papatutan Gong Ditinjau dari Segi Akustika dan Estetika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Kartawan, M.</td>
<td>Tuning in Gender Wayang: Voices, Concepts and Analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Partial summary of principal research on Indonesian tuning systems based on Vetter, 1989 p.220.

Terroir and Tuning Diversity

Balinese approaches to tuning have evolved to reflect this 'sense of place' inherent in the term terroir. Bronze gong and metallophone tuners in Bali do not employ a single standardized intervallic system. Rather there is a diversity of individually tuned gamelan orchestras according to instrument makers, individual musicians and specific groups all identified, differentiated and located according to place. And in line with the definition of terroir, and similar to the Australian vineyards I visited, tuning identities are formed through association to groups or regions. For example, some orchestras are immediately recognizable from their overall sonority and specific tuning. Those familiar with Balinese gamelan who hear a recording of the famous Peliatan semar pagulingan associate it with its village of origin.

But has the association of place in tunings diminished in recent decades? The usual Spector of expanding modernity may be implicated (Stokes 2004; Appadurai 1996). Trans-national and locally produced popular musics have proliferated since post-New Order media privatization and expansion. But modernity alone and popular diatonic musics have not necessarily supplanted the association of place in tunings. As will be revealed in this paper, popular gamelan tunings seem to be dominating aesthetic preferences as 'musical invasives' and as David Harnish has observed, "...unique tunings have consequently disappeared over recent decades" (2005:114).

Jeff Todd Titon makes the analogy that, "Music cultures behave as ecosystems". If tunings are disappearing from Bali's ecosystems, is this a step towards the "cultural greyout" Alan Lomax warned us about or a natural part of changing aesthetics and preferences in Balinese gamelan evolution? The disappearance of tunings does draw our attention to imbalances in the soundscape. In order to address these imbalances, I interviewed several key informants to get their views on tuning.
Three Tuners

The first interview I conducted was with Juniartha, a son of Pak Sukarta of Banjar Tubuh, one of the more prolific gamelan forgers from the village of Blahbatu in the district of Gianyar. In our interview, Juniartha implicated both the power relations and culture politics of the Bali Arts Festival as one of the contributing factors towards the increasing dominance of saih Badung, a tuning style associated with the regency of Badung. Perhaps not coincidentally, Badung is the seat of Balinese government and is the largest benefactor of taxes yielded from tourism. The popularity of the tuning called saih Badung, according to him, standardizes regional tuning variation, and puts pressure on the multiplicity of periphery styles to conform to the popularity of a single, dominant tuning. It's important to point out that within the Badung regency itself there exists a diversity of tunings further specified through place (Geladag, Pemecutan, Belaluan, etc.):

Whether it's a gamelan from Karangasem, Klungkung or Tabanan, the Bali Arts Festival is a measurement of popular tunings. Most of the gamelan that appear during the Festival's gong kebyar competition are moving towards using a Badung style tuning. Most groups have retuned their instruments to saih Badung. That said, it is normal to have some that are tuned a bit lower and with minor variations. But the preference for almost all festival entrants is Badung tuning (Juniartha pers comm. 2013).

Carrying the topic of tuning diversity further, I speculated on a future scenario where all Balinese gamelan gong kebyar were tuned the same. Juniartha immediately rejected my menacing but not too far fetched proposition that someday all gamelan would share the same generic intervallic pattern glossed as Badung style and said, "'kan...hilang jadinya ya?" meaning the diversity of tunings would 'vanish and disappear' implying the eventual extinction of tuning diversity. Juniartha continued, "If all gamelan were tuned to saih Badung, people would forget what they have. Where would that leave Klungkung's tuning style or Singaraja's style...they would simply be extinct" (Juniartha pers. comm. 2013). The hypothetical scenario entertained during our casual conversation about the current state of tuning in Bali where tuning all gamelan the same would result in a loss of diversity, echoes the reality of terroir arguments for a sustainability of musical structures.

While Juniartha forges gamelan and tunes bronze metal keys, his principal experience draws from the art of making instruments, not playing them. In my next interview, I sought out a professional musician who composes and trains musicians in his village of Mengwi. With years of practical experience as a tuner, Wayan Widia runs and operates his boutique tuning and instrument manufacture centre from his home office in Br. Guming, Penarungan - Mengwi, Badung. Unlike Juniartha, Widia performs and teaches gamelan but also has a penchant for fine-tuning instruments, both in house, but more frequently as a freelance tuner who travels to villages to retune orchestras. As expected, Widia specializes in tuning gamelan in the popular saih Badung style because he comes from the district of Badung.

However, not everyone appreciates his work. He related to me a telling anecdote about his first encounter with the often tense territorial negotiations that surround many gamelan practitioners who debate about how best to safeguard the identity and tonal character of their gamelan. With almost a terroir-like consciousness, Widia related to me how he gained a sense of place in the early 1990s while tuning a gamelan in Legian, Kuta in the southern part of the island. Of particular note in our interview was Widia encountering difference and the rejection and resistance he was subjected to while trying to impose his saih Bandung style upon a technologically informed customer.

I remember I was tuning gamelan in Legian, Central Kuta for Anak Agung Raka, a talented gender player and musician. After I had retuned much of his gamelan, Mr. Agung commented, "Why does this not sound like I remember it? When we have someone like this comment, its called a complaint. I asked him, "Gung do you remember exactly how the gamelan sounded?" He answered, "I won't be able to answer your question with words". He went away and quickly returned with an audio recording of his gamelan. I learned a great
lesson that day. I began retuning and carefully produced 'reference keys' (petuding) by tuning a single metallophone. Mr. Agung had a machine for measuring frequencies. He said stop...stop after I had tuned a few pitches on a metallophone he said, "Stop"! After that, he said, "Its a match" and I proceeded to tune the entire orchestra based on the reference keys derived from his audio recording. As tuners, we must consider whether to bring our own tuning, or use the existing gamelan as a reference for creating what our client desires (Widia pers. comm. 2013).

There were lessons learned for Widia through the rejection of his initial attempts at tuning the Kuta gamelan. These include gaining an awareness of styles beyond his own to include the myriad of regional variations. Widia's customer inadvertently also taught him the importance of referencing the tuning of existing instruments and any available sound recordings as a resource for maintaining an orchestra's deretan nada or particular intervallic tuning structure. Through this experience Widia has become extremely conscious of how to uphold, maintain and preserve regional tuning styles should this be the desire of his customers. Often customers of gamelan tuning are more or less indifferent to the fine details and subtle nuances surrounding their gamelan's particular deretan nada. In these instances Widia attempts to replicate an orchestra's tuning to the best of his ability.

But within the generic 'saih Badung' designation there are multiple permutations that also contribute to tuning diversity. Both Belaluan and Geladag are easily distinguishable for their orchestra's tuning and overall sonority, which includes timbre, tone colour, unique bronze metal mixture which add to the complexity of individual gamelan 'vocality'. Both these gamelan have been active for the better part of the 20th century and have undergone several tuning phases in the history of their orchestras.

Do well known tunings stay the same or change over the years? According to Widia, they most certainly change subtly with each phase of tuning. Widia is of the opinion that generational tastes differ and this allows for tunings to be modified suiting the differing tastes of generations. He mentions few musicians can maintain the integrity of an entire orchestra and all its intervallic relations by ear alone. Therefore the 'deretan nada' or intervallic structure may change over time. Therefore it is important to note the degree to which the identity of deretan nada can be preserved over the years.

Not all musicians are interested in the discourse of sustainability and preservation when it comes to tuning systems. In my last interview I talked with Dewa Alit from Pengosekan village, a composer in demand as much in his native island as he is abroad. Teaching and performing gamelan in Japan, the USA, Australia and Malaysia among other countries, he advocates for gamelan groups to make an informed choice when considering the manufacturing, construction and tuning of an orchestra. He feels creativity is an important part of the planning stages in gamelan creation. As Dewa Alit explains, it is important not to just limit choice to standard examples of tunings that already exist and carry sonic associations to groups, places and regions:

If we talk about selecting tuning systems, How do we choose one? We cannot just say, "This is my choice...that's his preference". The reality today is most gamelan groups choose to emulate existing tunings and inturn replicated tunings from prominent gamelan such as Cudamani or Kaliugu. There is also a sense of limited choice of instrument tuner and maker because its either Sukerta or Pak Beratha that makes the gamelan. This in itself may be considered a kind of standardization. This is certainly the case with earlier kebyar tunings where people would differentiate between gamelan tunings according to place and say this is Geladag's tuning, this is Peliatan or Belaluan among others. Its for this reason I took on the challenge to innovate new tunings for my gamelan compositions. Not only to enrich the sound pallette...but indeed to seek out a gamelan's essence. What is its essence? Its Sonority!! (Dewa Alit pers. comm. 2013).

According Dewa Alit, when considering tuning diversity, it is just as important to consider creative innovation, as it is dynamic preservation. His own private orchestra named Salukat represents innovations with new sonorities, new scales, that even challenge the paired tuning system called ngumbang/ngisep that creates the shimmering, vibrato-like sonority of Balinese gamelan. By
acknowledging innovation in tuning, Dewa Alit resists saih Badung as a totalizing form and problematizes the binary between centre and periphery tuning styles.

Conclusion

Bali's diversity of tuning systems constitutes an articulation of difference among today's increasingly homogenized urban soundscapes. Because gamelan orchestras evoke their terroir 'sense of place' through orchestral specific tunings, those groups with tuning systems endangered by the popularity of more dominant forms may benefit from cultivating an awareness of their sonic individuality and consequently nurture what they have and contribute towards musical sustainability. The bamboo tubes in Figure 1 above are labelled with place names such as Br. Puseh, Geladag, Intaran and Mas. The tubes contain tuning sticks that help gamelan makers remember specific intervallic relationships in the fine-tuning of gongs and metallophones. In this way, each tube symbolizes a system within itself, just as viable and relevant as its neighbour, who employs its own intervallic arrangement. As gamelan tuners continue to employ tuning pegs they contribute to the dynamic preservation and innovation of tunings by referencing the particular musical terroir of Balinese soundscapes.

Endnotes


References


SARAH ANAÏS ANDRIEU  
(Centre Asie du Sud Est - CASE, France)

WHERE IS KALA?  
FEW REMARKS ON A CONTEMPORARY RITUAL PERFORMANCE

During the most intensive period on my fieldwork about wayang golek in Sunda (2006-2009), I was never able to observe ruatan. Only once, in the regency of Subang, a Cirebonese puppeteer performed a ruatan with wayang kulit Cirebon. And suddenly, back on the fieldwork in 2010, I was able to follow six of these rituals… So what happened? And where was Kala?

Wayang golek is a rod puppet theater, deriving from javanese wayang kulit (shadow puppets made of leather). Wayang golek is mainly played in the Western part of Java island, known as Sunda. It is performed by a single dalang (puppeteer) playing the wayang (puppets). He is accompanied by sinden (female singers) and nayaga (musicians), playing on a gamelan (mainly percussive collective instrument). The group is completed by peralatan (technicians) who carry and set the gamelan and the sound system. The audience participates actively and is large, never limited in age, sex or social status. A wayang golek performance usually starts at 8.00 in the evening and lasts until 3.00 or 4.00 in the morning (it used to last until dawn). The classical repertoire borrows episodes (lakon) from the great Indian epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata (more or less derived) as well as from the local cycle of Babad Lokapala. They are performed in Sundanese and Kawi (old Javanese). Wayang golek is generally played for life-cycle events celebrations (wedding, circumcision), large scale public and political events as well as for rituals such as propitiatory events and… ruatan.

What is Ruatan?

Ruatan is thus a particular wayang golek performance. It is shorter in duration (four hours in general) and starts usually at 1.00 in the morning, at the hour when Batara Kala is supposed to be hunting. Ruatan is generally performed after a regular wayang golek performance (that lasts between 8.00 pm – 01.00 am). The lakon Murwa Kala tells the story of Batara Guru’s (Shiva) son Batara Kala, who was born from the spilt seed of the god that fell in the ocean. Discovering his appetite for human flesh, Batara Kala comes to his father in order to ask for his permission to eat humans. Batara Kala receives a list of allowed victims and a weapon to kill them, the machete Simantawa. Nonetheless, Batara Guru sends god Vishnu down to earth as dalang (puppeteer) Kanda Buana in order to protect and “ngaruat” the people threatened by Batara Kala through a wayang performance. Disarming the malevolent god and giving him food and the means to produce more of it through the multiples offerings present on the stage, Vishnu is one more time re-balancing the world.

A performance of wayang golek ruatan is thus a ritual in itself, aimed at purifying or strengthening a person or a place that would otherwise fall under one of the five following configurations and hence become threatened or potential victims by Kala (mapag Kala) (Foley, 1984):

1. Configuration of children in a family
2. Conditions surrounding the individual’s birth
3. Conditions resulting from breaking taboo (pamali)
4. Conditions establishing a new endeavor
5. Individual’s misconduct

Nowadays, it is more often performed in a preventive way, and it is still supposed to protect every person present in the audience. There were times when leaving a ruatan performance before the end would be considered as extremely dangerous since Batara Kala is prowling around the stage.

Ruatan performance is particularly focused on the specific role of the dalang, along with the story within the story about God Vishnu becoming dalang Kanda Buana. The genealogy of the dalang is essential: the puppeteer has to be from a dalang descent. In certain areas of Java, he has to prove seven generations of dalang at least (Headley, 2000). He uses a sacred keris (dagger) and turns the water form seven different sources into holy water that will be used for bathing or even drinking by the person
concerned by the ruatan. For this, the dalang must pronounce four or five (depending on the dalang) specific invocations or mantras (Kidung) he reads from a book handed down from his master puppeteer.

The dalang is seen as a mediator between the seen and the unseen world, and as such, his prestige is on top as well as is the risk of accident if something goes wrong during the performance. The price for such a ritual performance is out of value, as rich entrepreneurs would pay until half a billion rupiahs for it in 2012 (about 50,000 USD at that time). Sponsors include individuals and communities, families who want to protect their children before marriage or circumcision, businessmen and head of religious communities.

A ruatan performance requires complex offerings, including a complete set of food, clothes, cooking and farming tools for the final “domestication” of Batara Kala by the dalang. As for non-ritual wayang golek, the important thing is not only the story performed or the textual message delivered by the puppeteer, but the way it is performed is also expressing and addressing the participants in their outer and inner selves (lahir batin), according to Sundanese definition of the human being and worldly perception (Zanten, 1997).

Water, everywhere: Rebutan or not Rebutan?

Water is the physical center of ruatan as it concentrates the power expressed by the different Kidung or mantras. The ritual assumes that this water has to be from seven different sources. A jajambaran (clay pot) of water is situated close to the dalang on the stage, under the banana logs where the dalang fixes wayang during the performance. This water, mixed with seven different flowers, is going to be used by the person for whom the ritual is performed and eventually his/her family. It is the closest to incense too, and the dalang puts the keris inside when it is not on the wayang stage. A big barrel is set in front of the stage with the same water. This is meant for public use and the audience will
get closer and try to get few drops or a full bottle as soon as the performance is over. This water used to be used for drinking and bathing, but nowadays dalang advise the population not to drink it anymore, for health reason. In 2012, one of the seven sources’ water smelled so bad and the dalang decided to look for another one rather than adding it to the general container. Finally, people from the audience as well as from the wayang group like to put mineral water bottles on the stage next to the dalang. They put their names on it and open the cap in order to let sacredness fill them through the mediation of the dalang invocations and incense that burns continually.

Rebutan is an act of struggle and dissemination, where one tries to grab some of the benefit of the event. It echoes fertility rituals and seems to constitute the dark side of the coin of the polite and ordered slametan ritual (also called syukuran in Sunda). Rebutan was ritually repressed during New Order era (1967-1998) (Pemberton, 1994).

On 3 December 2010, in Purwakarta regency, I witnessed a ruatan performed during the day for a bride who was about to get married the same day. During the last Kidung (Kidung Panundung), as Batara Kala is satisfied and ready to leave the stage by getting wrapped in a white cloth, the audience was ready for the rebutan that consists in getting some holy water and grabbing some of the offerings hanging around the stage. However, there are strict rules concerning the very moment the rebutan is allowed and members of the wayang group had to retain people from the audience from climbing onto the stage. As the tension increased while the dalang was finishing the last mantra, musicians gathered around him. People from the audience asked for water from under the banana log, as the bride was installed in front of the big container, dressed in red. Finally, as the audience jumped on the stage and literally ripped of the hanging offering, the bride was given the holy water. After she was bathed with it by an elder woman, everyone else could access the barrel freely. Members of the audience then tried to wash their face or get a glass or a bottle of the precious liquid, in a loud atmosphere.

Two years after, I observed two other ruatan, one held for a successful entrepreneur in Jakarta, the other for the leader of a marginal religious community in Sukabumi regency. For both of these occasions, offerings were displayed on the stage, next and in front of the banana log. On the end, no one tried to get the offerings except the family of the dalang. In Jakarta, the participants queued politely with empty bottles in order next to the big container where the sister of the dalang would fill them one by one. In Sukabumi, the holy water was guarded by watchers in combat trousers and again, participants would queue in order to get some water. The ritual seemed to have been domesticated, just as Batara Kala did few minutes before.
Interpretations and Contemporary Interrogations

When asked about ruatan, dalang tend to give three complementary interpretations:

- Ruatan is a mean to distinguish what is right (benar) from what is bad (salah) and doing so, to distinguish humans from jinns (according to Muslim vocabulary).

- People, and especially leaders, have to be conscious of their own place and role in the world (and in regards to God) and in the society. For this reason, they should refrain to be pretentious (sombong), as ruatan reminds us that Batara Kala will come anyway. The terrible god is actually embodying the time threatening everyone. (Basset, 2011)

- Ruatan is the essence of wayang golek, the oldest practice. For this reason it should remain fixed, the same as “dulu” (before). In this sense, ruatan provides a perspective on tradition and cultural heritage in a changing context, or how to bring the past into the present.

Although many political, religious and aesthetics interrogations revolve around wayang golek ruatan in Sunda, no one actually seems to be questioning its efficacy for the participating people. Indeed, the general setting of the performance is changing, as ruatan can be played during day time or in the early evening (as observed between 2010 and 2014). Some dalang also like to introduce the performance by the Maktal character scene that is emblematic of the regular wayang golek performance but used to be absent from ruatan. Maktal is a dancing character that represents the dalang himself and introduces him as well as displays his manipulation skills.

Islam is predominant in the Sundanese region since the 17th century, but ruatan has been questioned in its relation only in recent years. Kidung are nowadays pronounced in Arabic, in addition to traditional Jangjawokan and Kawi. Usually understood as a mantra or invocation, many dalang speak nowadays about Kidung in terms of prayers (do’a) or in pronouncing the ninety-nine names of God (Allah). The use of the ritual keris as such is questioned, as religious ustad (religion masters) are afraid that the population will believe in the keris’ power rather in God’s power. Finally, ruatan displays new techniques of power, as a new meta-discourse is now also legitimating the practice in terms of heritage and cultural identity.

Ruatan as the Source: from Social Adaptation to Innovation

I have argued somewhere else that wayang golek can be considered as the missing link between the Hindu Pajajaran kingdom and the Islamized Sundanese society while recovering from Javanese domination during Dutch colonisation (Andrieu 2014). Following a similar search for continuity, wayang golek ruatan as such was part of the modernization process in Indonesia during the 1960s and 1970s, as it was performed frequently before the opening of new factories in the industrial suburbs of Bandung (Foley, K., Abah Sunarya, & Gamelan Giri Harja I, 2001 and Andrieu, 2014). In the 2010s, ruatan can be seen as a way to answer and deal with globalization, facing world crises such as the 2008 financial etc. In October 2013, an article in Kabar Priangan, a local newspaper, mentions a ruatan performance held for the new office of the Regent of Tasikmalaya (West Java), in order to protect the local civil servants from magic and evil forces that would drive them into corruption, collusion and nepotism.

Always, the emphasis is put on continuity and doing so, on the renewed valorization of “Sundanity”. The latter can be seen as parallel to the decentralization process at stake in Indonesia since 1998 and the development of regional television and radio channels. The valorization of Sundanity can also be considered as a cultural revival: indeed, in the past four years you can find traditional clothes (pangsih), headress (iket), symbolic weapons (kujang) and bamboo objects considered as authentically Sundanese everywhere in the street of Bandung and its periphery. I also argue that the different taboos and adventures told in Murwa Kala actually represent a description as well as a prescription of social Sundanese rules as well as everyday life guidelines in a historically dominantly agricultural society such as ways of growing rice, building houses etc.

Finally, ruatan is regarded as a source for inspiration for the creation of new plots and as increasing efficacy and power. In Batara Kala Gugat (Batara Kala complains), a lakon created in the 2000s and commercialized in 2007 as a set of four audio cassette tapes by Panama Production in Bandung, superstar dalang Asep Sunandar Sunarya depicts the Gods as worried and upset for the mankind, as humans are the cause for natural disasters, corruption and individualism. Batara Guru is looking for a solution, when his son Batara Kala arrives and suggests:
« Kumaha upami ijinan ayeuna mah Ala ngahakan jalema? Moal anu saroleh, moal nu jaryjur, menta nu baredegong wae... arek dihakan ku Ala... »

“And what if you allow me to eat people now? Not the good ones, not the honest ones, I just ask for the naughty ones… I will eat them…”

Referring explicitly to the lakon Murwa Kala and the ruatan at an earlier time, be it in Batara Kala’s life or in social Sundanese life, Batara Guru declines Batara Kala’s offer, since only God (Allah) has the right to judge humans. One more time, ruatan and wayang golek performers prove their ability to adapt to changing contexts and keep control over their practice, which allows them to remain efficient and powerful, within the Sundanese context at least.

B. Guru: Cing ingat. Ama geus nurunkeun dalang Kandabuana baheula nyarimateun pagelaran wayang.

Kala: Ya!

B. Guru: Dina eta jero pawayangan teh aya jelma nu pangjehatna Dasamuka [another name for Rahwana in the Ramayana epics].

Kala: Ya.


B. Guru: Remember. I, your father, already asked dalang Kanda Buana to go down to Earth a long time ago for telling the wayang performance.

B. Kala: Yes!

B. Guru: Within the art of wayang, the most evil character is Dasamuka.

B. Kala: Yes.

B. Guru: He abducted Batara Rama’s wife. The people watching are so irritated to see Dasamuka’s behavior... until the audience want to burn Rahwana. But nevertheless, as dalang, I paint it anew sometimes. [...] Whatever is the wayang [the puppet], the dalang is not angry. Thus the Lord (God) has already anticipated, good and evil already exist. We don’t need to hate, but it becomes a mirror for everyone, so that we don’t behave like this.

So where was Kala all this time? Is Batara Kala back in Sunda now? I would rather think that he never left.

References


1. Chiara Formichi  “Performing Religion: Commemorating the Family of the Prophet in Java and Sumatra”

The presentation will illustrate different forms of Islamic ritual performances dedicated to Ṭāhūrā, the commemoration of the martyrdom of Husayn (grandson of Prophet Muhammad), in Java and Sumatra. Identifying three different waves of transnational influence, the paper will investigate how performers/religious practitioners have first embodied and now explained these multiple trends. Yemenis and Persians were amongst the first and most assiduous traders to reach Sumatra and Java in the 9-13th centuries (and beyond); it is well established that what started as commercial connections rapidly evolved into religious and cultural exchanges, also affecting ritual practices. I here focus on one specific aspect of this transmission, that which helped the diffusion of pre-sectarian devotion towards the ahl al-bayt - i.e. the immediate family of Prophet Muhammad - and its subsequent transformations. We see evidence of this in prayers, manuscripts, and local traditions across the archipelago, paintings, batik motives, keraton culture in Java, etc. In the 18th century piety for the “people of the house”, and more specifically ritual performances marking the period of Ṭāhūrā, were imported to Sumatra (Aceh, Pariaman, Bengkulu) by South Asian sepoy soldiers and convicts, under the brief era of British rule there. The drums, hymns, and performative structure that is still today revived in Pariaman and Bengkulu as tabot or tabuik find in fact their roots in North India. Lastly, in the past decade, the archipelago has experienced a rise in commemorative events for Ṭāhūrā inspired by rituals developed in the greater middle eastern region, and more specifically Iran; we see this emerging, for example, under the form of the tazieh, a Farsi musical and theatrical act re-enacting the martyrdom of Husayn. The presentation will include audio-visual material, and will conclude with a reflection on the relation between “local traditions” and religion, as well as the process of re-inventing traditions.


During the time the Malay gamelan was in the purview of the royal court in Terengganu, it has been reported that at least 95 compositions for the gamelan was produced (Harun & Siti Zainon, 1986). It is difficult, if not impossible though, to determine the actual composers for each one of the music, and the origins of those that may be derivatives from the Indonesian repertoire. In addition, as the gamelan is, by nature, an oral tradition whereby the transfer of skills and knowledge was carried out orally within the community of musicians, the possibility of there being different stylistic interpretations of the repertoire would be expected. Today, there seem to be a general consensus on how Malay gamelan repertoire is played, not only in how each instrument functions within the ensemble but also in terms of stylistic interpretation. However, based on selected writings, documents, audio visual recordings of gamelan performances obtained, alternative interpretations of playing the Malay gamelan which is not widely known appears to exist. This is further supported by the personal experience of one of the researchers who learned to play the Malay gamelan from the elder generation who were part of the royal court musicians, the late Abdul Jabar bin Abdullah (Pak Bor) as well as the late H.E. Tengku Hilmi Tengku Abdul Halim, grandson of Sultan Sulaiman Badrul Alam Shah and Tengku Ampuan Mariam, two prominent patrons of the Malay gamelan in Terengganu. This study will discuss the alternative interpretations of playing the Malay gamelan according to the different sources by comparing them with the interpretation that is commonly heard today.

3. Andrew Terwilliger  “Case Studies in Political Re-tunings: Negotiating Nationality and Ethnicity in Performances Abroad”

This paper analyzes the ways in which traditional musicians choose to represent themselves as they perform abroad. I first examine the problematic issues of nationalism and ethnicity. I develop a situation-dependent framework for negotiating identity using my data collected from my fieldwork with Taiwanese musicians in Europe. I propose that identity is an ever-shifting concept, which is chosen to adapt to one’s environment. More specifically, I posit that musicians navigate their politically
complicated positions by expanding and contracting the scope of their identities to accord with their situations. I then present three case studies: (1) a Chinese orchestra touring Europe, (2) a zhongruan (a Chinese lute) player sharing the stage with a sitar player in the UK, and (3) a dizi (bamboo flute) player in a rock band in Germany. I will then expand this theory to performances by traditional Indonesian musicians in the United States, exploring the ways that Indonesia’s more complex political and cultural divides were negotiated and manipulated. The diversity of these case studies allows me to vividly illustrate the applications of the ways musicians in all diasporas choose to shift the scope of their identities in accordance with the pressures of their performance environments.

4. Thaneerat Jatuthasri “Keris Dances in Inao, the Thai Panji Story: The Transformation of Javanese and Malay Tradition Into Thai Court Dance Drama”

Thai court dance drama or Lakhon Nai was developed around the eighteenth century. The popular repertoire for Lakhon Nai is the story of Inao derived from Javanese and Malay Panji stories. Inao, composed by King Rama II (1809-1824), is the most well-known version that has been used to perform Lakhon Nai to this day. In composing Inao and producing the performance, King Rama II uses many techniques to transform the Panji stories including Javanese and Malay culture so that they are appropriate to be performed in Lakhon Nai. The keris dances in Inao are outstanding examples of the transformation of Javanese and Malay tradition into Thai context. The use of keris and the keris dances are from Javanese and Malay traditions which are generally presented in the Panji stories. Inao preserves the tradition and presents the keris dances in various scenes. This paper aims to examine how the keris dances in Inao are presented and transformed from Javanese and Malay tradition. The paper suggests that the choreography, music, and scenes of the keris dances in Inao are transformed to serve Lakhon Nai’s tradition. The choreography of the dances combines Thai court dance style and Javanese and Malay dance techniques. The dances are accompanied by the classical Thai ensemble mixed with Javanese and Malay music instruments. Some scenes of the keris dances in Inao are unique from those in Javanese and Malay tradition, such as the scene that the hero radiates his keris to attract the heroine and the scene that the hero uses his keris to cut a flower for the heroine. The romanticization of these keris dance scenes might be Thai creations. The keris dances in Inao indicate the influence of Javanese and Malay culture on Thai court arts as well as the ability of Thai poets and artists in transforming foreign culture to suit Thai tradition.

5. I Made Lasmanwan “Sanggar Manik Galih”

With a multi-purpose goal of positively contributing to the village and community of Bangah di Baturiti while developing a community of international musicians and dancers with intercultural perspectives in the United States, SanggarManikGalih houses a transnational community of musicians and dancers. This paper traces the creation, development, founding, and philosophy of SanggarManikGalih, examining the reasoning behind its creation and the realization of the sanggar in its varied forms. From its localized influence in a small Balinese village, to the sanggar’s representation of Balinese culture and community in the US, this paper addresses the immediate and important impact on Bangah di Baturiti, the development of a Balinese community group in the United States, and the impact of Interculturalism on the Children of Bangah.


Building on the formation of SanggarManiGalih, this paper examines how transnational identities are experienced through second-generation Balinese musicians in the United States. Drawing closely on my personal experiences, as well as those of my brothers and the second-generation diasporic gamelan community at large, I relate the practice of lineage, the creation of community, and the impact of heritage to the meaning and impact of the sanggar. In doing so, I will examine the role of the children’s gamelan in Bangah and the establishment of next-generation village identities for the developing gamelan community. While analyzing the hierarchy already set among the village children in Bangah, I will address the role of Balinese children who grew up in diasporic communities, thereby elaborating on the notion of cross cultural exchange in similar traditions. Furthermore, this paper looks at the way village children in Bangah perceive and relate to second-generation diasporic Balinese children, and the way
both groups interpret and adapt to different learning devices.

7. Elizabeth Mclean Macy “Communitas, Kinship, and Lineage in SanggarManikGalih”

In summer 2011, with Pak I Made Lasmawan, I team-taught a course on the arts and culture of Bali, on location in Bali, Indonesia. Our eleven students from Colorado College were thrust into a community of musicians and dancers from the village of Bangah di Baturiti, alongside students and scholars from around the US and the UK. Mirroring my own experience from summer 1997 (when I, too, was first immersed into Balinese music, culture, religion, and village life as a student of Pak Lasmawan), my students’ first-hand experiences of Balinese life were highlighted by the simultaneous founding of SanggarManikGalih. Through rehearsals, performances, temple ceremonies, and informal evening gatherings, a sense of communitas was created. This paper traces the development of an intercultural and transnational community of musicians and dancers fostered by the formation of SanggarManikGalih. Addressing how students, scholars, and cultural tourists from the US and the UK embrace and adapt to Balinese culture both in Bali and at home as members of the sanggar, I examine the formation of kinship and lineage for non-Balinese performers of gamelan and dance. Moreover, I explore the importance of a “Balinese” identity for Western practitioners associated with both Pak Lasmawan and SanggarManikGalih.


Lanna state - including the Kingdom of Chiang Mai, Principalities of Lampang, Lampoon, Nan, and Prae - was an old kingdom centered in Chiang Mai, a province in present-day northern Thailand, from the 13th to 18th centuries. Although the state has been part of the Kingdom of Thailand, Lanna people still maintain their unique culture including Lanna music today. Many research papers concerning Lanna music such as historical studies, biographies of masters and musicians, musical performances and so on, have been written. The aim of this paper is to analyze Lanna musical knowledge from these research studies. The analysis can reveal an overview of Lanna musical knowledge, show the current understanding of Lanna music, and assist researchers to explore differences and similarities across settings, and identify gaps and areas of ambiguity regarding specific issues (Hannes & Lockwood, 2012). Thirty-four selected qualitative research papers studied in Thailand have been chosen. After reviewing those research studies, five issues relating to Lanna music will be analyzed: a history of Lanna music; characters and categories (musical instruments, ensembles, practice, beliefs); existence and functions (musicians, functions in traditional ceremonies, and functions as cultural identification); transition of Lanna music; and changes in Lanna music. Content analysis approach will be employed to study the content of Lanna music.

9. Fredeliza Campos “The Organology of Early Philippine Musical Instruments from the Collections of the Field Museum of Natural History”

This paper presents the preliminary results on the study of over 340 musical instruments from the Philippines stored at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, USA. The assemblage is among the earliest and largest collection of Philippine musical instruments available for detailed study and analysis. A comprehensive survey of museum materials from this period has never before been undertaken. The paper compares this collection with the distributional maps of Maceda and others, as well as the literature on performance, to demonstrate how analytic conclusions from organology can feed into the broader cultural history of the Philippines.
PASEA chair, 3rd Symposium Program Chair, and Local Arrangements Co-Chairs

3rd Symposium Helpers — the team from event organiser Maitri Enterprise of Bali, Indonesia

Participants of the 3rd Symposium
General meeting of the Study Group on Performing Arts of Southeast Asia

The ICTM Secretary General, Svanibor Pettan of University of Ljubljana (Slovenia), informs the members about the ICTM world conference to be held at Astana, Kazakhstan in July 2015.

Presentation for the 2016 PASEA Symposium by Bussakorn Binson for Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok
Presenters of the theme Interculturalism and the Mobility of Performing Arts: Regional Flows and Traveling Arts, chaired by Gisa Jaehnichen

Discussant Ricardo Trimillos, Session Chair Kendra Stepputat and Presenter David Harnish

Panel on Sanggar ManikGalih: A Project in Interculturalism, chaired by Ako Mashino

Presenters on the theme Sound, Movement, Place – Articulating Meanings and Change, chaired by Sarah Weiss.