

# Bali 1928 – Volume IV

## *Music for Temple Festivals and Death Rituals*

*Gamelan Gong Kebyar with Kakawin & Palawakia, Gambuh & Angklung  
Kléntangan from Belaluan, Sésétan, Sidan & Pemogan*



EDWARD HERBST

Arbiter of Cultural Traditions

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### Archival Films Online

Silent film excerpts specific to *Bali 1928 – Volume IV* hosted on [www.arbiterrecords.org](http://www.arbiterrecords.org) & YouTube Channel Bali1928.net:

#### **Filmed by Colin McPhee circa 1931–38:**

*Gamelan gambuh* at the Puri Tabanan

*Gamelan angklung kléntangan* musicians with antique *réyong*

Children's *gamelan angklung* in Sayan, Ubud

*Gamelan angklung (kocok)* of Culik, Karangasem, with bronze and bamboo

*Gamelan bebonangan (balaganjur)* procession

*Gamelan gong luang* of Banjar Apuan, Singapadu with musicians Mangku Reteg, Wayan Karba, Wayan Cedit, Kak Rinab, Ketut Regeg, Wayan Lebut.

#### **Filmed by Miguel Covarrubias circa 1930–34:**

*Ida Pedanda* 'high priest' performing *surya séwana* 'daily prayers to the Sun God' rites;  
*Piodalan pura* 'temple festival'; *Plebon* 'cremation ceremony'.



Original 78 rpm record from the historical recordings of 1928-29 with information on the label printed in Balinese script. This particular record contains *Pupuh Adri* and is the only existing disc in the world. Record courtesy of Jaap Kunst Archives, University of Amsterdam.

Visit [www.arbiterrecords.org](http://www.arbiterrecords.org) or [www.bali1928.net](http://www.bali1928.net) for more information

## Introduction

These historic recordings were made in 1928 (and possibly 1929) as part of a collection of the first and only commercially-released recordings of music in Bali prior to World War II. This diverse sampling of new and older Balinese styles appeared on 78 rpm discs in 1929 with subsequent releases for international distribution. The records were sold worldwide (or not sold, as it happened) and quickly went out of print. It was a crucial time in the island's musical history as Bali was in the midst of an artistic revolution with *kebyar* as the new dominant style of music. *Gamelan* groups were having their older ceremonial orchestras melted down and re-forged in the new style. Intense competition between villages and regions stimulated young composers to develop impressive innovations and techniques.

Andrew Toth has written of these landmark recordings:

Representatives from these companies [Odeon & Beka] were sent in August of 1928 to extend their coverage to Bali. Five of the ninety-eight existing matrices (sides) made at that time were included by the well-known scholar Erich M. von Hornbostel in an early anthology of non-Western traditions, *Music of the Orient*; this collection was the first exposure to Indonesian music for many people, the public as well as potential ethnomusicologists.

A third of the Odeon/Beka recordings eventually appeared in Europe and America, but the majority had been intended originally for local sale in Bali. For this reason the information on the labels was printed in Malay, the lingua franca of the archipelago, and in some cases even in Balinese script. The ambitious plan to develop an indigenous market was a complete failure, however, since few Balinese were interested in this new and expensive technology—especially when there was a world of live performances happening daily in the thousands of temples and households throughout the island. McPhee was the only customer to purchase these 78 rpm discs in an entire year from one frustrated dealer; his collection contains most of the copies that are still preserved to this day, for the agent later smashed the remaining stock in a fit of rage (McPhee 1946: 72).

Fortunately the recordings were made under the guidance of Walter Spies, the painter, musician and long-time resident whose intimate knowledge of Balinese culture was so freely given and so often benefited the work of others (Rhodius 1964: 265; Kunst 1974: 24). Although limited by the medium to being three-minute excerpts, they consequently are remarkable examples of a broad range of musical genres—vocal as well as instrumental—and many outstanding composers, performers and ensembles of the period who are now famous teachers of legendary clubs—I Wayan Lotring, I Nyoman Kalér, and the gamelan gong of Pangkung, Belaluan, and Busungbiu. These invaluable sound documents of the musical and family heritage of the Balinese include styles of vocal chant rarely heard today; Kebyar Ding, a historically important composition that has been relearned from the recordings by the present generation of musicians, whose fathers and grandfathers made the original discs; and records of renowned singers that are considered even sacred by their descendants, who keep tape copies in the family shrine.

No new material was released in the West during the ensuing depression and war, while only reprints of the old 78's were issued on different labels and in several anthologies.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Toth 1980: 16–17

Much has come to light in the way of discs and information since Toth's account. In fact, a Chinese shopkeeper by the name of Ang Ban Siong continued to keep the Beka records in stock at his general store, Toko Surabaya, selling household merchandise in Denpasar up until the Japanese occupation in 1942, when he moved his family to Sayan, Ubud.<sup>2</sup> A young lady named Nancy Dean from Rochester, New York, sent by her parents on the proverbial "South Sea Island cruise" in 1936 to separate her from a sweetheart, bought a number of the records from "two nice German gentlemen" in Bali,<sup>3</sup> which luckily for us, were still in mint condition in 2003 as they had hardly ever been played. During the 1980s and 1990s Philip Yampolsky was able to locate 101 matrices (sides of the 78 rpm discs) at various archives in Indonesia, the U.S. and the Netherlands. Yampolsky shared this information with Arbiter's director Allan Evans and myself, facilitating our worldwide effort to access and reissue each and every 78 disc. The process of gaining permission from each archive and visiting most of the collections has taken us eight years. While seeking out private collections we found another Odeon disc from the original set, unlisted by both Toth and Yampolsky, on an auction list from a rural Texas town. And a search through the shelves of the UCLA collection yielded an unpublished disc listed by Toth. More recently we discovered four more sides in Bali. These and other finds bring our collection to 111 sides of three minutes each to be released on five CDs and an anthology. Although it seems clear, judging from a Beka catalogue, that they recorded a considerable amount of music in addition to these, a decision may have been made not to publish many more once they realized the lack of a market. The recording masters were aluminum plates, most likely stored at the Carl Lindstrom factory in Berlin (the parent company), which was bombed during World War II. However, another perspective precedes the war. In 1937 Béla Bartók wrote:

"It is well known that these companies are also busy recording the folk music of exotic countries; these records are bought by the natives, hence the expected profit is there. However, as soon as sales diminish for any reasons, the companies withdraw the records from circulation and the matrices are most likely melted down. This happened with one of the highly valuable Javanese record series of Odeon, as quoted in the bibliography of *Musique et chansons populaires* of the League of Nations. If matrices of this kind actually are destroyed, it represents vandalism of such nature that the different countries ought to enact laws to prevent it, just as there are laws in certain countries prohibiting destruction or marring of historic monuments."<sup>4</sup>

Eighty years after the recording sessions, as we acquired the records and transferred them to CD, our research team visited the oldest knowledgeable artists—many in their 80s or 90s and three at the age of 100—in villages whose musicians and singers were recorded in 1928—and often the children of those artists, now in their 70s and 80s. We would

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<sup>2</sup> Conversation with Ang Bang Siong's daughter (2009)

<sup>3</sup> According to her friend, ethnomusicologist Ellen Koskoff (email 2003)

<sup>4</sup> Bartók 1992: 294. Bartók's interest extended into his concert repertoire: he and his wife performed McPhee's transcriptions for two pianos, "Balinese Ceremonial Music," at Amherst College in 1942 (Oja 1990: 153, 179). One of those pieces is *Buaya Mangap (Tabuh Telu)* on *Bali 1928: CD #1*.

bring a boombox and play a CD of music that no one had heard for eighty years. While some of the repertoire has endured, much of the style and aesthetic has changed and many compositions have been forgotten. Some families would give us photographs of the artists of 1928. Another photo, acquired at the New York Public Library, led to our discovery of one of the two living artists known to have participated in the 1928 sessions. Our team visited this ninety-one year-old woman, Mémén Redia (formerly Ni Wayan Pempen), who was a solo singer at the age of ten or eleven for Kedaton's *jangér* group (CD #5). Mémén Redia described the recording session in detail and still remembered all the lyrics, correcting our earlier transcriptions. She recalled the recording taking place in the open air, on the ground and under a *tataring* 'temporary structure of bamboo' and *kelangsah* 'woven coconut leaves' near the village center. She suggested that some of the other recording sessions might have been at a *balé banjar* 'central hamlet building' open on three sides with brick or mud wall and floor, and a roof of woven coconut leaves or thatch with bamboo and coconut wood beams. Many older-generation Balinese we visited refer to the old records and record players collectively as *orgel* rather than the Indonesian *piringan hitam* 'black plates', perhaps because the record players might have been thought of as related to Dutch orgel pipe organs, being a machine that produces music.

According to Philip Yampolsky, a Beka Music Company catalogue apparently printed in 1932 indicates that all of their recordings were made in Denpasar, Bali, except for four songs recorded in Lombok.<sup>5</sup> The catalogue also mentions that thirty-four discs were recorded in 1929, all of which, except for four sides, were vocal music. Twenty-five percent of our collection is listed in this group. However, little information regarding a second Beka recording tour has come to light as of yet, although according to Spies biographer John Stowell, in a letter to Jaap Kunst dated November 16, 1929, Spies refers to "the new Bekas." In a letter to his mother, Martha Spies, dated July 1, 1928, he mentioned having entered a contract with Odeon for fifty records to be made over three years."<sup>6</sup> David Sandberg, Spies's grandnephew and head of the Leo-und-Walter-Spies Archiv in Berlin, confirms that Spies's letters home only mention Odeon and remuneration that would finally allow him to build his first house in Ubud. Spies wrote, "It is better than many little percents. Now I have a new contract for Balinese records, also Fl. 1,000 (one thousand guilders) per annum...In August the records will be produced. The players (njogos) get 1,000 guilders, too, I prevailed, for fifty records." And in April 1929, Spies wrote again to his mother with regard to the records, promising, "I will send the best of it to you, if I have the money."<sup>7</sup> Although Odeon and Beka were subsidiary labels under the Lindstrom conglomerate, Spies's letters indicate competition and distinctly different operations between the two labels,<sup>8</sup> and we are still exploring the possibility that Spies might not have been involved with the Beka recordings. This topic will be discussed further in a forthcoming publication of our *Bali 1928* series.

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<sup>5</sup> Personal communication with Philip Yampolsky (2002)

<sup>6</sup> Personal email correspondence with John Stowell (2014)

<sup>7</sup> Personal email correspondence with David Sandberg (2009 and 2014)

<sup>8</sup> As just one example, David Sandberg writes, "In Badung, Bali (Den Pasar) was a shop, Behn & Meyer, that only sold Bekas." Personal email correspondence (2014). However, McPhee implies that the enraged dealer who destroyed his own inventory had been selling both Odeons and Bekas (1946: 71).



A missing link in previous discussions of the recordings is Ida Boda (a.k.a. Ida Bagus Boda<sup>9</sup>), surely an invaluable advisor to Beka—and possibly Odeon and Walter Spies—in choosing the artists and *gamelan* ensembles. From our research we can make this assumption based on the fact that so many of the *gamelan* groups and singers had close relations with Ida Boda, either being his students or fellow performers. Ida Boda was a renowned *légong* teacher and *topéng panasar*<sup>10</sup> ‘mask dance vocalist, comic and narrator’, performing with Ida Bagus Oka Kerebuak of Geria Pidada, Klungkung (featured on CD #2) and more frequently with Ida Bagus Rai Purya and I Madé Nyarikan Sariada (heard on CD #5). Innovator and networker, Ida Boda was the *légong* master for the *gamelan kebyar* of Belaluan (CD #1 and #4), taught *légong* to the *gong Kebyar* and dancers of Busungbiu (Bali 1928: CD #1), played *suling* and sang *mabebasan* with Ni Dayu Madé Rai (CD #2),<sup>11</sup> performed *jangér* with the ensemble of Kedaton (CD #5) after which he became teacher for their rival group from the neighboring village of Bengkel in the 1930s. While these two *jangér* groups battled each other as artistic competitors<sup>12</sup> Ida Boda clearly transcended the rivalries,<sup>13</sup> as evidenced by Arthur Fleischmann’s photographs from the period between 1937–39, in which he is seen performing as *panasar* with the *jangér* group of Kedaton.<sup>14</sup> He danced *topéng* with the *gamelan angklung* of Banjar Bun (CD #4) and performed *Cupak* with the *gendér wayang batél* ensemble of Kaliungu (CD #3) as well as with Ida Bagus Oka Kerebuak. His student Nyoman Kalér (1892–1969), composer-choreographer-theorist-educator, taught the *gamelan jogéd* of Pagan (CD #3) as well as the *angklung* of Pemogan (heard on this CD), and led the *gamelan palégongan* of Kelandis (CD #3). And Ida Boda surely knew the *Sasak cepung* group recorded in Lombok (CD #5) from his many musical excursions there.

Among the discs on this CD series are several that the young Canadian composer and pianist Colin McPhee (1900–1964) heard in New York soon after their release.<sup>15</sup> Upon

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<sup>9</sup> The inclusion of ‘Bagus’ was an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century development, and many Brahmana in East Bali still choose to go without it. After hearing so many of his peers referring to him as Ida Boda, we asked his descendants how he liked to be called, and they confirmed we could do without the ‘Bagus’.

<sup>10</sup> The spellings in this article follow modernized Balinese orthography of dictionaries such as *Kamus Bali-Indonesia* by I Nengah Medera et.al. (1990) and *Kamus Bali-Indonesia* by Yayasan Pustaka Nisantama, I Nengah Sukayana, editor (2008). Although this system was proposed as early as 1972 it has been applied irregularly in writings on the arts, but we have mostly chosen to adhere to it so as to reflect a closer relationship to actual Balinese *aksara* ‘letters, syllables’. For instance, many words with prefixes frequently spelled pe or peng are spelled here with the prefixes pa and pang. It should still be noted that Latinized spellings of Balinese words vary in publications, reflecting different ways of adapting from Balinese script. It should be noted that the letter *c* in Balinese and Indonesia is pronounced ‘ch’ as in choice.

<sup>11</sup> According to both Ida Wayan Padang (1913–2012) and I Wayan Rugeh (1929–2014)

<sup>12</sup> According to I Madé Monog, member of *jangér* Kedaton since the 1930s

<sup>13</sup> According to Ida Bagus Pujiarsa (1947–)

<sup>14</sup> Fleischmann 2007

<sup>15</sup> “Then in 1929, I think it was, we were given in New York City the opportunity to hear the first recordings of Balinese music, which had been made by Odeon under the direction of Walter Spies. The records we heard were brought to us by Claire Holt and Gela Archipenko (wife of the sculptor) who had just returned from a visit to Java and Bali...We decided to go the following winter...That was in 1930–1...”  
Belo: Traditional Balinese Culture: 1970: xviii. But according to the New York Public Library’s Guide to

listening to the 1928 Odeon recordings, McPhee and his wife, anthropologist Jane Belo, were inspired to embark on a visit to Bali in 1931 which grew into a research expedition to consume them over the course of eight years and lead to his major work of scholarship, *Music in Bali* and her work with Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson as well as her own books including *Trance in Bali*.

After four years in Bali, McPhee wrote an article, “The Absolute Music of Bali,” for the journal *Modern Music*, positing: “what inspires the musician with wonder and envy, is the satisfactory *raison d’être* of music in the community. The musicians are an integral part of the social group, fitting in among ironsmiths and goldsmiths, architects and scribes, dancers and actors, as constituents of each village complex. Modest and unassuming, they nevertheless take great pride in their art, an art which, however, is so impersonal that the composer himself has lost his identity.”<sup>16</sup>

While McPhee’s ideal of Balinese music was “impersonal” in the sense that compositions were unattributed to specific composers, this became less the case beginning in the 1920s and throughout the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>17</sup>

### A Sketch of the Time Period of these Recordings

In 1928 Bali was part of the Netherlands East Indies (now the Republic of Indonesia) but Bali’s rajas had not been entirely conquered until 1908. *Kebyar* emerged around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in North Bali’s Buléléng region, which came under Dutch control beginning in 1849 after forces loyal to the Balinese king of Lombok and allied with the Dutch killed the celebrated military leader and chief minister of Buléléng, Gusti Ktut Jlantik, along with the king of Buléléng and the king of Karangasem, East Bali. At the time Bali had eight kings and their own internecine struggles for power allowed the Dutch to play one kingdom against another. Economic control was the goal but Dutch efforts to morally justify their conquest centered on the Balinese slave trade (which Holland had long benefited from) and widow sacrifice associated with royal cremations. One by one the kingdoms collapsed under Dutch attack: Lombok in 1894, Badung (Denpasar) in 1906 and Klungkung in 1908.

Each fell in “a traditional way to signal the ‘ending’ of a kingdom, and indeed the word *puputan* means ‘ending’. The *puputan* was both a sign to other kings of an end, and a way to achieve liberation of the soul by death in battle.”<sup>18</sup> Adrian Vickers continues, “...the Dutch moved on the capital of Denpasar. On the morning of 20 September the king, his family and thousands of armed followers all dressed in white and ready to meet

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the Holt, Claire, 1901–1970. Papers, ca 1928–1970,

(<http://www.nypl.org/research/manuscripts/dance/danholt.xml>), Holt’s first trip to Indonesia was in 1930.

<sup>16</sup> McPhee 1935: 163

<sup>17</sup> Hildred Geertz (2004) challenges the idea of anonymity by showing how individual sculptors in Batuan were known and appreciated during their lifetimes for the art they created for the *Pura Désa* ‘community temple’, but that because written records were not kept, their identities could be forgotten over time.

<sup>18</sup> Vickers 1989: 34

death in battle, marched out to meet the Dutch. Each of the leading warriors ran amuk in turn, marching on as if bullets would bounce off their bodies. The Dutch opened fire on ‘women with weapons in their hands, lance or kris, and children in their arms’ who ‘advanced fearlessly upon the troops and sought death’...surrender was impossible: ‘where an attempt was made to disarm them this only led to an increase in our losses. The survivors were repeatedly called on to surrender, but in vain’. The king, his family and followers advanced relentlessly, killing themselves and any Dutch troops who came within range as they went. The Dutch later tried to cover up the death toll, but while it was fairly light on the Dutch side, well over 1000 Balinese were killed.”<sup>19</sup>

We can speculate about all of the factors that fed an artistic explosion in the period following the collapse of the kingdoms. I Nyoman Catra has suggested that the profusion of creative experimentation was akin to medicine helping heal the trauma of social upheaval and colonial occupation.<sup>20</sup> The dismantling of the power and wealth of the many regional kingdoms led to a kind of decentralization/democratization of the arts as they spread out to the *banjar* ‘hamlets’. *Puput* ‘the end’ also implies the beginning of something new. And along with the fashions and technology associated with modernity brought in by the Dutch came the small but steady stream of European and American travelers on cruise ships to this island paradise beginning in the 1920s. The Bali Hotel was built in 1927 by the Dutch colonial government as a stopover accommodation for the crew of KPM (Royal Packet Navigation Company) while their ships were anchored off the coast, and officially began operations as a hotel in 1928 after the Dutch government handed ownership over to KPM.<sup>21</sup> Within hearing distance of Gong Belaluan’s rehearsals at their *balé banjar*, the hotel soon became a hub of artistic accommodations to the tastes of international audiences. At the same time Balinese innovations continued to be driven by indigenous tastes and passions—both of artists and their local audiences.

Interestingly, during this same period of time on the other side of the planet, post-war marching bands were inspiring a revolutionary music genre incorporating new dimensions of rhythmic and melodic complexity, improvisation, mixing and experimentation with earlier genres. Musical instruments discarded after the Civil War were taken up by former slaves whose newly-won freedom led to the invention of jazz which, like *kebyar*, became a musical force for the next century.

Various manifestations of Balinese modernism are exemplified by the emergence—most likely in the teens—of *jangér* (heard on Bali 1928: CD #5).<sup>22</sup> One clear influence on *jangér* was *Komedie Stamboel*, the Malay-language European-influenced theater which first appeared in Surabaya, Java in 1891.<sup>23</sup> Seemingly innocuous and lightweight to

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<sup>19</sup> Vickers 1989: 35, and within single quotes, a participant’s report from the chief of staff of the expedition, from Nordholt 1986: 5

<sup>20</sup> Conversation (2006)

<sup>21</sup> Mardika 2011: 28

<sup>22</sup> According to I Madé Kredek of Singapadu, *jangér* first emerged at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Menyali, North Bali (Bandem 2004: 148-52), a view also confirmed by I Gdé Budasi from Menyali (conversation 2013).

<sup>23</sup> See Achmad, 2006: 31 and Cohen 2006: 21

foreigners<sup>24</sup> but well-loved by most Balinese to this day, *jangér* humorously blended traditional dramatic themes with catchy songs performed by girls in traditional costumes along with a *kécak* chorus of boys in western costume including short trousers, epaulettes and silly moustaches. *Jangér* fused the *kécak* chorus and other elements from *Sang Hyang* trance ritual, Malay *pantun* sung poetry, and *cakepung* palm-liquor drinking songs with *gamelan geguntangan*, most commonly used to accompany *arja* dance opera, as well as *gamelan tambour* which included a *rebana* drum of Arabic origin;<sup>25</sup> their adaptation of the *saman* and *saudati* style of hand and arm movements and postures performed in Muslim Sufi rituals and other dances in Aceh, North Sumatra, became a signature element of *jangér*'s male *kécak* dancers. All this came together in *jangér* with elements of classical *légong* dance and *wayang wong* dance drama based on the *Ramayana* epic, as well as circus acrobatics inspired by visiting troupes. And following Charlie Chaplin's visit to Bali in 1932 the painted moustaches worn by the *kécak* boys' chorus took the name *caplin*. Curiously, revivals of *jangér* over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have recurred in times of political and social turmoil.

*Cak* (*kécak*) would only appear as a distinct dance drama in 1932, evolving into the *Ramayana* "monkey chant," as it is known to international audiences. Although its chorus traditionally accompanied *Sang Hyang* trance rituals throughout Bali, and *jangér*, its sister genre with *kécak* chorus, was already popular, *cak* as a dance-drama genre in itself developed in two particular villages, Bedulu and Bona, in the district of Gianyar, and gradually spread to other villages as a tourist entertainment.

In the 1920s *gamelan gong kebyar* and related dances were starting to be seen and heard across both North and South; the compositions recorded in 1928 from Belaluan, Pangkung, Busungbiu and Kuta represent a revolutionary shift in musical and choreographic aesthetics. I Ketut Marya (1897 or 1898–1968), spelled Mario by Covarrubias and other westerners, had just recently created his *Igel Trompong* (*Tari Trompong*) and *Igel Jongkok*, the dance later known as *Kebyar Duduk*. Of the first written account of *kebyar* McPhee relates, "According to the Regent of *Buléléng*, Anak Agung Gdé Gusti Djelantik, who told me in 1937 that he noted the date in his diary at the time, the first *kebyar* music was publicly heard in December 1915, when several leading North Balinese gamelans held a gamelan competition in Jagaraga..."<sup>26</sup>

As far back as history recalls, there has been great competition in Balinese arts, reflecting a cultural attitude of *jengah*, a strong instinct of "not wanting to lose," which motivates the accepted practice of taking the accomplishment of a rival and changing it in one's own way while improving on it. In *kebyar*'s early days, groups might send a spy to climb a tree within hearing and hopefully sight-range of a rival village's rehearsal in order to memorize their latest innovations in preparation for an upcoming competition. Very serious adversarial relationships existed between rival *jangér* ensembles as well, such as

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<sup>24</sup> Covarrubias 1937: 251–255

<sup>25</sup> Conversation with I Madé Monog in Kedaton. (2007)

<sup>26</sup> McPhee 1966: 328

those of neighboring Kedaton and Bengkel, where conflicts were expressed politically, aesthetically, and by employing spiritual magic against one another.<sup>27</sup>

While competition has fueled creativity, Balinese arts have also flourished as a result of generous cooperation between artists of different villages and regions. For example, during *kebyar*'s early developmental phase, musical leaders from the northern village of Ringdikit came to Belaluan, South Bali, to exchange repertoires. As a result, Belaluan's *kebyar* was infused with the North's revolutionary style and Ringdikit acquired knowledge of *légong* music and dance.<sup>28</sup> Even earlier, notable *légong* masters from more southern regions taught in the North, such as I Gentih from Kediri, Tabanan, who taught the female *leko* (*nandir* is the male version and both were accompanied by bamboo *rindik*) dance in Jagaraga,<sup>29</sup> and whose student Pan Wandres is generally credited with turning it into *kebyar leko* and later into a genre called *kebyar légong*, subsequently adapted into *Teruna Jaya* by his student, Gdé Manik of Jagaraga. Ni Nengah Musti (1934–) from Bubunan and later Kedis learned *kebyar légong* from Pak Gentih and tells us she did not hear that term used even around 1940. Instead it was referred to simply as *Légong Lasem* or *Légong Kapi Raja* 'Monkey King' (a version of the *Subali–Sugriwa* story within the *Ramayana*<sup>30</sup>) depending on the narrative enacted.

### Sung Poetry and the Emergence of *Gong Kebyar* in the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century

*Kebyar* came into being around the turn of the century and innovations were brewing between 1910 and 1915 in North Bali's Buléléng region, the Dutch colonial administration center. Elders in Bungkulan have said that the musical dynamics of Dutch military marching bands influenced the nascent *kebyar* aesthetic.<sup>31</sup> (Admittedly, the influence seems to have been limited to the element of explosive energy).

The late 19<sup>th</sup> century, throughout the island, witnessed a creative era of Balinese–language (or a mix of *Kawi* 'Old Javanese' and Balinese) *geguritan* poetic literature and its song genre (*pupuh*) taking on historical, mystical and romantic themes as well as sociopolitical topics. At the turn of the century, a revival of interest in classical *kakawin* texts led to a plethora of *sekaa papaosan* 'literary clubs' emphasizing the skills of recitation in *Kawi* and translation into the Balinese language. Another popular form, *palawakia*, refers to non–metric prose texts from the *Mahabharata* (*Parwa*) or *Ramayana*, recited in broad melodic contours. Literary clubs from different villages would compete against one another before ever–increasing audiences at ceremonial religious events and at night markets.

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<sup>27</sup> Conversation with I Madé Monog (2007)

<sup>28</sup> Covarrubias 1937: 210

<sup>29</sup> Conversation with Pandé Madé Sukerta (2006)

<sup>30</sup> The *légong* versions of the *Subali–Sugriwa* story are usually called *Kutir* or *Jobog*

<sup>31</sup> "Menurut beberapa penuturan tetua dahulu, dinamika gong kebyar seperti itu tercipta antara lain akibat pengaruh dinamika marching band Belanda, yang kemudian dipadankan dalam musik gong yang membuahkannya gong kebyar seperti kita warisi." Sudhyatmaka *Sugriwa* 2008: 72

Sometimes the *juru baca* (*pangwacen*) ‘singer’/‘reader’ and *juru basa* (*paneges*) translator would sit amidst a *gamelan* ensemble intoning, for instance, *kakawin* verses from the *Bharatayuddha* section of the *Mahabharata*, or individual musicians in the *gamelan* might sing a verse of impromptu *kakawin*. (It was expected of musicians to be familiar with *kakawin* in order to respond musically to the sung texts). The surrounding *gamelan gong* would play short instrumental interludes from the classical repertoire and increasingly in the flashier musical phrasing that became *kebyar*.

Most significantly, a solo singer would alternate his vocalizing by playfully rendering melodies on the solo *trompong*, a row of tuned, knobbed gongs, performed with some *gaya* ‘style’ or ‘flourish’. It is uncertain at which point this *trompong* playing began to resemble baton–twirling in a marching band or *main sulap* ‘sleight of hand’. The *Palawakia* dance performed today derives from this practice, generally credited to I Marya’s *Igel Trompong* although alternative origins have come to light.<sup>32</sup> However, it should be noted that Marya always insisted that *trompong*–playing did not become a dance until he originated the idea.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, two approaches to *Igel Trompong* developed over time: Marya’s style prioritizing the dance (and improvisation) in contrast with a style exemplified by I Nyoman Nyongnyong of Belaluan (seen in photo on page 22) in which the dancer would play specific melodies with *trompong* technique meeting the musical expectations of *gamelan* leader Madé Regog.

Noted scholar I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa of Bungkulan credited musician I Gusti Nyoman Pandji Beloh as a major creative force in that village.<sup>34</sup> And the new dance *kebyar légong* was witnessed as early as 1914 in Jagaraga.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, one may assume that such innovations had been brewing for some time in many northern villages previous to the event described by the Regent of Buléléng.

For instance, another account offered by Wayan Simpen is strikingly detailed:

In 1913 approximately, geria Banjar Tegeha in Kecamatan Banjar, Kabupaten Buleleng, held a religious ceremony to ordain a brahmana as a priest. Because this was to be a large affair, followers (*sisia*) of the geria who owned a *gamelan* offered them to enliven the ceremony. Those who offered them were the *gamelan* club of desa Banjar Tegeha and the *gamelan* club of desa Bubunan in Kecamatan Seririt. The ceremony was enlivened with these two *gamelan*. As a result a *gamelan* competition (*gong mapadu*) took place, that is, the Banjar Tegeha *gamelan* against the Bubunan *gamelan*. Because this was the first occurrence of a *gamelan* competition, the spectators were, accordingly, very numerous. The competition lasted for three days, day and night. It seems that it was not the *gamelan* melodies that were the focus of the competition at this time

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<sup>32</sup> Simpen 1979 and Herbst 2009

<sup>33</sup> Conversation with I Madé Bandem (2009)

<sup>34</sup> Sudhyatmaka Sugriwa 2008: 72

<sup>35</sup> I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa conversation with I Madé Bandem (1973)

but, rather, the skill of the people at reading and interpreting kakawin (mabebasan/makekawin). Whoever sang kekawin making use of various meters (wirama) and provided correct translations [and performed] parwa, tutur and kidung (other types of traditional literature) was considered the victor. The Bubunan gamelan executed all sorts of tricks (*permainan*) including sleight of hand. The Banjar Tegeha gamelan performed a seated dance. The dance commenced in the midst of the gamelan and initially resembled the movements of a person displaying expertise in performing with the trompong mallets...with arms extended in front, accompanied by kekawin or kidung, while at the same time striking the trompong slowly, following the kakawin melody. Upon completion of one stanza of the kekawin, it was rejoined for one stanza with a melodic interlude performed by the gamelan, that is, a classic melody (*tabuh lelawasan*). When each side had completed ten rounds, they switched. Thus the gamelan took turns to compete. (...) From that time on there were gamelan-pepaosan (mabebasan) competitions and they exerted a very great influence on the people of Buleleng in the literary sphere...<sup>36</sup>

Walter Spies and Beryl de Zoete describe a *kebyar légong* dance in Menyali, North Bali in the 1930s, “interspersed with recitations of *kakawin* (Old Javanese texts), which as far south as Tabanan are the regular accompaniment of *kebyar*.”<sup>37</sup>

McPhee also evokes a Buléléng event in detail:

But the *kebyar* can also be extended into a long entertainment that includes not only dance and instrumental interludes but the chanting and recitation of classical literature as well...as noted in 1938, during a gamelan performance at a popular night fair (*pasar malam*) at Singaradja, in north Bali. Admission was charged to enter the grounds, crowded with food stalls, naive freak shows, novelty booths, and little gambling tables. Around the large gamelan a silent audience sat enthralled for nearly two hours. Here the performance did not open with the usual crashing *kebyar*. Instead, a quiet prelude by the gamelan was followed by unaccompanied chanting by a finely trained male singer of a passage from the *Mahabharata*. A brief interlude by the gamelan introduced a recited passage, and only after this did the customary *kebyar* outburst take place.<sup>38</sup>

As the new compositional style was bursting upon the scene, creating heated competition between *gamelan* clubs in different villages and regions, a new form of *gamelan* instrumentation developed to accommodate the nascent ideas. The *gangsra* began to be

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<sup>36</sup> Simpen 1979: 1f; translation by Raechelle Rubinstein 1992: 92

<sup>37</sup> De Zoete and Spies 1938: 238

<sup>38</sup> McPhee 1966: 343

suspended over their bamboo resonators following in the style of *gendér palégongan* ‘melodic metallophone used for *légong* dance repertoire’ and *gangsang* *angklung*, rather than *jongkok*<sup>39</sup> (‘resting’ directly on the wood frame, cushioned by rubber pads now and *jerami* ‘woven straw’ then)—allowing for more sustained tones and new techniques of rhythmic phrasing. Some *kebyar* ensembles, especially in *Buléléng*, North Bali, have continued to play on the old-style *gangsang jongkok* (*pacek*) differentiating their more percussive performance style from other regions (as can be heard in the music of Busungbiu on CD #1).

Whether *pacek* or *gantung* ‘hanging’, the increased number of keys on the principle melodic *gangsang pepadé* ‘mid-range’ and *kantilan* ‘upper-octave’ brought a greater melodic range to *kebyar*. The *trompong* row of bronze kettles played by one musician was eliminated as an integral member of the *gamelan*, the *réyong* section was expanded from four to twelve, played by a row of four musicians, the number and size of *céngcéng* cymbals was reduced and the number of melodic *gangsang* metallophones was eventually increased. It should be noted that on these recordings of the Belaluan, they seem to be playing on only two *gangsang pepadé* and two *kantilan*. Either a decision was made to scale down the ensemble size for the sake of audio clarity or an expansion of the *gangsang* section (which includes four *padé* and four *kantilan*) did not occur until after 1928. The new *kebyar* genre derived much from two traditional styles, *gamelan gong gedé* and *palégongan*, with additional rhythmic and melodic influence coming from *gendér wayang*, *gambang* and *angklung*.

According to I Wayan Begeg (1919–2012), the term *kebyar* was first being used in Pangkung in 1920, with its meaning as *krébék* which refers, in Balinese, to both the sound of a ‘thunderclap’ and the light in a ‘flash of lightning’. From our discussions it seems that *krébék* and *kilat* (Indonesian for ‘lightning’) remain the most common interpretations of the onomatopoeic word *byar*.<sup>40</sup> It has also been interpreted as “a flash of light from a match or an electrical light switch.”<sup>41</sup> McPhee wrote, “It has been explained to me as meaning a sudden outburst, ‘like the bursting open of a flower’.”<sup>42</sup> But in the context of his actual conversation, he writes, “As for Chokorda Rahi, he said it was like the sudden bursting open of a flower...” – more a personal impression than an opinion about the original meaning of the word *kebyar*. To differentiate *kebyar* from previous musical styles, Begeg defines it as playing *keras dan bersama* ‘loud and

<sup>39</sup> An interchangeable term for *gangsang jongkok* is *gangsang pacek* ‘nail’ describing the fact that a nail goes through each of two holes keeping the bronze key in place.

<sup>40</sup> While *byar* refers to the explosive sonority in the broadest sense, it is also the term for a specific sonority described by Tenzer (2000:25): “...*byar* is actually a tutti sforzando in which all of the bronze-keyed metallophones play the same scale tone, each in its special register, so that together the more than four octaves of the *gamelan*’s tuned gamut is spanned. Additionally, the *reyong*, a set of twelve horizontally mounted knobbed gong–chimes played by four musicians, strikes a set of eight tones spanning over two octaves in the mid-to-upper register. The largest hanging gong, the cymbals, and a deep-pitched drum are sounded too, blending with the *reyong* and metallophones to produce a sonority that can extend for more than five octaves—from the deepest gong to the smallest, highest metallophone, and farther if the prominent upper partials are counted in.”

<sup>41</sup> Simpen 1979: 2

<sup>42</sup> McPhee 1966: 328. He heard this in *Peliatan* (1946:159), which came to *kebyar* later.



together'. In the South, before the term *kebyar*, it was often called *babantiran*, generally taken to mean "in the style of Bantiran," a prolific village in the Northwest. Bandem suggests that the verb *mabantir* refers rather to *bantir* 'youthful' implying the music is played with a youthful spirit.<sup>43</sup>

Jaap Kunst, who conducted research in Bali in 1921 and 1924 (publishing his *De Toonkunst von Bali* in 1925), never mentions the word *kebyar* but does report on music performances called *mabantir*. Bandem asserts that until the 1950s in the districts of Gianyar and Tabanan the word *kebyar* was less commonly used than was *kebyang*. He remembers that in 1958 when he was studying the dance *Kebyar Duduk* in Peliatan, Marya and Anak Agung Gedé Mandra each referred to it as *pangeléban gong kebyang*, *pangléban* being an introductory dance preceding a performance of *légong*.<sup>44</sup>

According to I Nyoman Rembang<sup>45</sup> it was in 1919 at a *plebon* 'cremation' ceremony that a *gamelan gong kebyar* was performed for the first time at Puri Subamia, Tabanan by musicians from the village of Ringdikit, North Bali. Some confusion has often arisen over the years in such narratives because any *gamelan* playing in the new *kebyar* or *kebyang* style might be referred to as "*gong Bantiran*," really meaning "in the style of Bantiran," or from the region of Bantiran,<sup>46</sup> but interpreted as the actual musicians from Bantiran. Rembang's chronology suggests that soon after this *plebon* Marya began to develop his improvisational dances with *kebyar* music while teaching dance in Busungbiu and Pangkung. As various accounts (including that of Wayan Begeg) tell it, Marya was walking past a group of musicians rehearsing the bamboo *gamelan jogéd* in which the female *jogéd* dancer is joined one by one by individual male members of the audience. The musicians called out to Marya to join their rehearsal and he began to dance spontaneously, combining the female and male roles of the flirtatious *ngibing* sequence. It was these informal, playful encounters that led to such interactions with the *gamelan kebyar*.

Competing chronologies and historical narratives abound, and it should be noted that Wayan Simpen (b. 1907) proposed numerous alternative attributions in the manuscript quoted above, which was an unpublished article submitted to the Bali Post newspaper in 1979. The fact that renowned musician–dancer Gdé Manik (b. 1906) confirmed at least some of Simpen's claims to Raechelle Rubinstein in 1980 gives them some credibility since Manik was from Jagaraga and would be expected to support an origin theory based there. Gdé Manik actually performed in many *kakawin* competitions as primary dancer and credited Bubunan as having the first *kebyar légong*. Rubinstein paraphrases: "At first he mentioned that it had originated in Busungbiu but reflected on this and then changed his mind to Bubunan. He was certain that it had begun in Bubunan."<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Bandem 2006: 3

<sup>44</sup> Personal communication 2009

<sup>45</sup> Bandem 2002: 6

<sup>46</sup> Bandem 2006: 5

<sup>47</sup> Raechelle Rubinstein, personal e-mail correspondence 2008

Simpen wrote that Bubunan was the first village to create or *mencetuskan* ‘ignite’ a *kebyar* composition. Ida Bagus Surya is credited as being the leader of the Bubunan *gamelan*, assisted by I Nengah Daging, an expert in *kakawin* literature, translation and dance. Simpen goes on to describe the Bubunan dance at the same 1913 event in greater detail, including “*tari lepas, sambil duduk*” with circling movements performed while in sitting position and using a fan, performed in the middle of the *gamelan*.<sup>48</sup> He describes the music including *océt–océtan* and *cecandétan*, syncopated interlocking techniques characteristic of the new *kebyar* aesthetic. Simpen credits Busungbiu as the next *kebyar* innovator of the *dauh enjung* ‘region west’ of Singaraja, followed by Ringdikit, Kedis, Bantiran and east ‘*dangin enjung*’ to Jagaraga and Sudaji.<sup>49</sup> He credits Ringdikit dancers as the first to switch from squatting to standing position “like *légong*,” with two dancers performing together.

An additional perspective is provided in the article by Sudhyadmaka Sugriwa, quoted above. The author’s father, scholar I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa wrote in 1914 of a dancer in North Bali named Ngakan Kuta who experimented with dancing improvisationally along with the music of *gong kebyar* following his own intuition. “And this was how *gong kebyar* began to be performed along with dance” (my paraphrased translation).<sup>50</sup>

Pandé Madé Sukerta conducted numerous interviews in the North and describes the process of shaping the *gong kebyar* ensemble as initially taking place in Ringdikit, Bubunan and Busungbiu, then Gobleg, Bungkulan, Sawan, Kalianget and Seririt. Soon after, Bantiran, Tabanan became the vehicle for spreading *kebyar* to Pangkung and South Bali.<sup>51</sup> Arthanegara places Bantiran’s *gong kebyar* at Puri Subamia in 1908 but does not mention a *plebon* ‘cremation’ (could this have been an earlier event?), adding that the *gamelan* group in Pangkung had already brought in a *kebyar* teacher from Pujungan by 1910. He also credits I Wayan Sukra (from Mel Kangin, Tabanan) with composing the music for *Igel Trompong* and *Igel Jongkok* (later called *Kebyar Duduk*) in 1915.<sup>52</sup> In our discussions with Wayan Begeg of Pangkung, he agreed with two of these earlier dates (and was most likely one original source of Arthanegara’s chronology)<sup>53</sup>, but places *Gong Bantiran* at the Puri Subamia cremation in 1913 or 1915. Begeg also believes that Marya was dancing *Igel Trompong* in 1915 (creating the dance in tandem with Sukra’s

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<sup>48</sup> Tari lepas ‘free dance’ is a term referring to 20th century dances outside of dramatic performance.

<sup>49</sup> Simpen 1979: 3 (my paraphrased translation)

<sup>50</sup> “Ada catatan yang menunjukkan bahwa di Bali Utara sajian *gong kebyar* dimainkan untuk mengiringi tarian telah terjadi sekitar tahun 1914. Eksperimen ini dicatat oleh ayah penulis di mana (tahun 1914) seorang penari bernama Ngakan Kuta secara improvisasi menari diatas tabuh–tabuh *gong kebyar*. Begitu tabuh dimulai, Ngakan Kuta pun mulai menari dengan intuisi sendiri. Bukan main. Itulah awal dari *gong kebyar* yang disertai oleh peragaan tari.” (Sudhyatmaka Sugriwa: 2008: 74)

<sup>51</sup> Sukerta 2004: 513

<sup>52</sup> Arthanegara 1980: 73

<sup>53</sup> It should be mentioned that many published *Riwayat Hidup* compilations of artists’ biographies are inconsistent and unreliable in that dates of birth for that generation and specific years that events occurred are most often guesswork. We have included dates of birth when available and tried to confirm lifespans as much as possible with families and by cross–checking with multiple sources since this information sheds light on the historical narrative and sequence of creative innovations.

music) and *Igel Jongkok* by 1919 or 1920 with music composed by Sukra (1894–1960) and Wayan Gejir.

*Kebyar* enjoyed abrupt bursts of sound, shifts in tempo, rapid stops and a style of fast successions of themes within a single piece, in contrast with the more evenly colotomic and structured traditional repertoire of *gamelan gong gedé*. *Buléléng*'s *gamelan* clubs excelled at dynamics and contrast and as *kebyar* spread throughout Bali, a *Bali tengah* 'central Bali' style emerged, with Belaluan (Denpasar district<sup>54</sup>) and Pangkung as the most influential, with Peliatan ascending to mutual prominence in 1929. Wayan Beratha recently observed that as they evolved Belaluan's *cara pukul* 'style of playing' was faster than that of Pangkung, while Peliatan's was even faster.<sup>55</sup>

Gender roles were breaking down as women portrayed refined male characters in *arja* dance opera and *jangér*, both of which had been all-male at their inception (males continued to dominate female roles in the classical *gambuh* until the 1960s). Marya had been trained in the male dances *jauk* and *baris*, in addition to *gandrung*—the male version of a female *jogéd* dance—as well as the female role of *sisia* for the *Calonarang* magic drama. In creating *Igel Trompong* and *Kebyar (Igel Jongkok)*, he created a *banci* (androgynous) style incorporating male and female qualities. This contrasted with *gandrung* in which the dancing boy—often arousing erotic feelings amongst the male audience—looked convincingly like a girl (included as a video file on CD #3) or even *gambuh*, *jangér* and *arja*, where the male was playing a female character. So Marya's *banci* idea was not at all alien, but rather an innovative way of melding male and female characteristics in a new way.

Interestingly, *gendér wayang* was also influenced during this period by *kebyar*'s energetic starts and stops, creating a 20<sup>th</sup>-century style for that genre as well, according to I Wayan Konolan (1923–2008) of the village Kayumas as well as I Wayan Locéng (1926–2006) of Sukawati. The same mutual influence was felt as *kebyar* influenced *gamelan angklung*.<sup>56</sup>

According to composer I Wayan Beratha, one particularly important aspect of *Kebyar Ding* lies in its innovation with *ngucek* (with the 'c' pronounced as 'ch'), a technique of playing 'ucek–ucekan', a variety of rapid unison melodic–rhythmic figurations. "*Ngucek* derives from the movement of rubbing back and forth, like putting out a cigarette, rubbing your eyes when they come in contact with dust, rubbing smoldering pieces of wood together to put out a fire. *Ngucek* technique is used as a transition to a new melody in *kebyar*. *Kebyar Ding* is characterized by patterns of *ngucek* technique, which became an identifying characteristic of *kebyar*."<sup>57</sup> As thematic transitions, *ucek–ucekan* interrupt the steady pulse and melody of the preceding theme with their irregular rhythmic phrasings. While the verb *ngucek* really refers to the motion of playing the rapid

<sup>54</sup> At that time the names Denpasar and Badung were used interchangeably. Now they are two separate districts.

<sup>55</sup> Wayan Beratha, personal conversation (2009)

<sup>56</sup> Ornstein 1971: 360

<sup>57</sup> Wayan Beratha, personal conversation (2003)

figurations, musicians also refer more generally to phrases or extended themes that contain a series and variety of the figurations as *ngucek* or *ucek–ucekan*.

Such a compelling entity, this *ucek* that helped define a revolutionary expression with such a subtle gesture—wiping, erasing, shaking up, clearing one’s eyes from what smoke? – and then musically interrupting, upstaging, reinvigorating, accelerating, pushing forward.

Bandem (2006: 2) reflects a general consensus in characterizing *kebyar* style as syncopated *ucek–ucekan* rhythms, cadenzas and unison passages as well as specific techniques played by the *réyong* such as interlocking *ubit–ubitan*<sup>58</sup> and new sonorities of the *byong* chord, *byok* or *byot* dampened stroke, and *kécék–kécek* non-pitched sound produced on the rim of the instrument.

The following passage of a *Gong Belaluan* rehearsal was found amongst Colin McPhee’s notes at the UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive:

I find among my notes the following account of a music–club rehearsal I witnessed during my first week in Bali. The club was the Kebyar club of Badung, one of the leading organizations of the island.

When I arrived, the musicians were playing at top speed. Suddenly they stop. The first drum, who seems to be leader, is not satisfied. The four boys at the *reyong* play an intricate section by themselves, rather experimentally. The *gangsas* join in. Drum number one stops them again. He wishes to hear the first row of *gangsas* alone.

Ah! Someone is playing a wrong note! Who is it? Each must play the passage alone. The wrong note is finally located in the third player, who has a wrong idea of the melody. A discussion and a clarification. The third *gangsas* plays alone. Is this it? The second player joins in, to show him. Yes! says the leader, all right. Let’s get on. The orchestra begins again.

A vigorous rhythm now sounds on the three sets of cymbals, violent and syncopated. Suddenly the orchestra is call[ed] to stop again. The cymbals have played the rhythm once too often. Drum number one explains. He would now like to hear the *reyong* players once again, each boy separately. They play a complicated passage, first slowly and carefully, then at breakneck speed. Good! Go on! The orchestra joins in once more.

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<sup>58</sup> Tenzer 2000:455 defines *ubit–ubitan* as, “Kotekan type in which *polos* and *sangsih* are syncopated and coincide at irregular temporal intervals.” He defines *kotekan* as, “Melodic interlocking parts, especially as played by *kantilan* and *pemadé*; their composite rhythm characteristically subdivides the beat into four parts.” *Polos* is, “Of the two complementary elaboration parts, the one that most closely follows the underlying melody.” And *sangsih* is described as, “(Different, complementary). Of the two complementary elaboration parts, the one that adds second–order vertical relations to, and/or interlocks with, the *polos*.”

Stop! Those gangsas again! Play alone! No, it is wrong! Each player separately. Number three is wrong again (he seems to be new). The drummer goes over to the instrument, and sitting across from the player, plays the melody for him. He is doing this in reverse, since seated on this side, the low notes are to his right.

The second drummer now goes over to the leader of the gangsas and shows him a new part. (This seems to be new, judging from the expression on the boy's face.) The two practice this difficult part some ten minutes, teaching it to the rest of the gangsa group. At last it is learned, and the orchestra begins playing again.

Later, I asked the drummer, who turned out to be Regog, famous for his *kebyar* compositions, the name of the piece they were practicing. He answered that it had no name, as it was in the process of being composed. When it was finished they would give it a name. (In one place Regog conducted with his right arm. I never saw this done again.)<sup>59</sup>

In 21<sup>st</sup>-century Bali we find an inquisitiveness toward reclaiming the past, wondering what is important in Balinese culture. The unprecedented interest in these old recordings amongst musicians, dancers and singers young and old has encouraged our persistence in implementing, over many years and continents, a repatriation project, searching far-flung archives to assist contemporary Balinese in reclaiming their aural history.

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<sup>59</sup> Courtesy of the UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive and the Colin McPhee Estate.



*Gong Belaluan*

*Igel Jongkok* by I Nyoman Nyongnyong; *kendang* players I Madé Regog (right) & I Gusti Alit Oka (left); *réyong* players (right to left) I Nyoman Kantor, I Wayan Windha, I Gusti Madé Bekul, & I Wayan Rentiung; sitting right to the *réyong* is I Madé Retog & *céngcéng* player Ida Bagus Madé Mbelan; standing far right is Gusti Mangku, the *klian banjar* (hamlet official)

Photo by Colin McPhee circa 1931-38

Courtesy of UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive & Colin McPhee Estate

### The Balinese *Gamelan*

*Gamelan*, the term for Bali's dozen or so instrumental music ensembles, derives from *gambel*, to handle. The Balinese spelling is *gambelan* (denoting Balinese pronunciation of the word) but most writers defer to the better-known, dominant Indonesian spelling. Balinese differentiate between *gamelan krawang*, bronze instruments manufactured by *pandé krawang* 'bronze smiths', and those ensembles utilizing bamboo. Additionally there is the more ancient and less-common iron-keyed *gamelan slonding*. The distinctive features of Bali's major styles highlight shimmering resonances of gongs, knobbed, kettle-shaped gong-chimes, and metallophones with flat—or more accurately, bevelled—bronze keys suspended over bamboo resonators), collectively ranging four or five octaves. *Gamelan* in Bali differs from neighboring Java in its explosive sonorities, fast speed and dynamic phrasing.

One feature unique to Bali is a precise tuning system of *ombak* 'waves' (acoustical beats), also referred to as *getaran* 'vibrations', responsible for the signature shimmering

sound of Balinese *gamelan*. Instruments are arranged in pairs with each pitch of the *pangumbang* ‘hummer’ (*ngumbang* is a word for bee) tuned between five and eight cycles per second lower than its corresponding *pangisep* ‘sucker’ mate (from *ngisep*, to suck), not coincidentally borrowing from words associated with the activities of honeybees.<sup>60</sup> According to *pandé krawang* Pan Santra (Pandé Madé Sebeng, son of Pandé Aseman) of Tihingan and Pandé Madé Gablérán of Blahbatu,<sup>61</sup> *kebyar* is generally tuned to an eight cycles per second differential, creating a consistently rapid pulse of vibrations even within slow, lyrical melodies. *Gendér wayang* is tuned to five or six *ombak* per second and *palégongan* six or seven.

*Gamelan* repertoires and varying instrumentation are associated with specific ceremonies, dance and drama repertoires, or recreational activities. *Gamelan* most commonly utilize a five–tone octave, whether it be in the tuning of *saih gendér wayang* tuning (related to the Javanese *sléndro*), its four–tone relative *saih angklung* specific to *gamelan angklung*, or the *saih selisir* or *pagongan* tuning (related to the Javanese *pélog*) of most other genres such as *kebyar*, *palégongan* and *gong gedé*. *Selisir* is actually one of five tunings derived from a *saih pitu* ‘row of seven’ system still used in a quasi–modal manner by older and more rarely–heard ensembles such as *gamelan gambuh*, some *semar pagulingan*, and *gambang*, *slonding*, *luang*, *gamelan saron*, as well as a recent resurgence of *saih pitu* in numerous innovative manifestations.<sup>62</sup> Compositions in each of these derived tunings may be limited to a specific set of five tones per octave (*kebyar* or *palégongan*, for instance) or include six or seven tones.

The *suling* (bamboo flute) provides additional pitches and tonal shadings, as do singers, who may join with the *gamelan*. In fact, within the diverse range of vocal music are a great many unnamed tunings often utilizing many more tones per octave including a rich sampling of microtones. Although the Javanese terms *sléndro* and *pélog* are mentioned in the Balinese *Prakempa* and *Aji Gurnita*, commonly believed to be 19<sup>th</sup>-century texts,<sup>63</sup> they only came into common usage in the 1960s after being introduced by I Nyoman Rembang, I Gusti Putu Madé Geria and I Nyoman Kalér, theorists and faculty at the KOKAR conservatory, all of whom had taught at KOKAR Surakarta, Java.

Previously, Balinese musicians would refer to “*sléndro*” as *saih gendér* (*wayang*) or *saih angklung* and use the specific *saih*, *patutan*, or *tekep* ‘mode’ name such as *selisir* to describe the tuning of *gamelan gong* and *palégongan*.<sup>64</sup> Partly because of a perception that the *gong kebyar* tuning of *selisir* has come to dominate the Balinese public’s sense of intonation—and in general parlance *pélog* has become synonymous with this particular tuning—there is currently a trend underway amongst many artists and educators to steer away altogether from the terms *pélog* and *sléndro* so as to avoid generalization and recognize the great variety of tonalities. In fact, up until the 1970s it was generally said

<sup>60</sup> An alternative and very common meaning within the activity of making music is *ngumbang* ‘loud’ and *ngisep* ‘quiet’, ‘soft’.

<sup>61</sup> Both personal conversations (1972 and 1980)

<sup>62</sup> See Vitale: 2002 and McPhee 1966: 36–55

<sup>63</sup> Bandem: 1986

<sup>64</sup> Conversations with I Madé Lebah and I Nyoman Sumandhi (1980); I Wayan Sinti (1974 and 2008)

that no two Balinese *gamelan* sets were identical. And although a loss of local distinctiveness has resulted from the trend toward standardization enveloping *gamelan kebyar* and other genres – due to the island-wide influence of the arts academies and the annual Bali Arts Festival – there is still a distinct tonal character to a great many *gamelan*.

The unique collection of tuned gongs, gong–chimes, two-headed, cylinder-shaped drums, and flat metallophones associated with the *gamelan* styles of Bali and Java, is generally believed to have developed between the construction of the 9<sup>th</sup>-century Borobudur Buddhist temple and the arrival of the first Dutch expedition in 1595. Nyoman Rembang (1973: 42) classified the *tua* ‘old’ period as comprising *gambang*, *luang*, *slonding*, *gendér wayang*, *angklung*, *saron* (*caruk*) and others. The historical era following the conquest of Bali by the Javanese kingdom of Majapahit in 1343 is described by Rembang as the *madya* ‘middle’ period, which reached its height during the “golden age of Gélgél” lasting from 1500–1651. The mid-16<sup>th</sup> century reign of King Watuenggong (Baturénggong) flourished in partnership with the seminal priest Nirartha. Musical genres associated with this cultural flowering included *gambuh*, *Semar Pagulingan*, *palégongan*, *bebarongan*, *bebonangan*, *gong gedé*, and *gandrung* (*jogéd pingitan*). Rembang’s *baru* ‘new’ category includes *gong kebyar*, *jangér*, *jogéd bumbung*, *gong suling*, and five-tone (six or seven-key) *angklung*. In its most expanded form, Balinese *gamelan* is organized into instrumental stratification spanning over five octaves:

- a. Basic statement of the melody within a one or one and a half octave range.
- b. Articulation at regular time intervals of the basic melody, generally every four tones.
- c. Full melodic expression, ranging from two to three octaves.
- d. Doubling and paraphrasing in the octave above.
- e. Ornamental figuration of the melody.
- f. Punctuation of larger time intervals (the general function of the gongs).
- g. Drumming, with one or two musicians playing two-headed, cylinder-shaped drums, using their hands or a single mallet, which conducts the group and provides a propulsive and contrapuntal rhythmic undercurrent.

Evan Ziporyn comments on the categories above: “*b*, *d*, *e* and *f* are aspects of a central organizing principle, i.e., the stratification/punctuation of melody at every level of the operation. The music is essentially one melody, which is then either distilled or elaborated in different registers. That is, it cannot really be described as either homophonic or polyphonic—it is one melody that takes on differing forms depending on the register and instrument.”<sup>65</sup> “An applicable term for this kind of stratification is ‘heterophony’, although one which functions quite differently than other forms found in the Middle East and Java.”<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Email correspondence (2009)

<sup>66</sup> Subsequent email correspondence (2015)





*Caruk* ensemble in Selat, Karangasem played for temple festivals & death rituals:  
*saron gedé*, *saron cenik*, & *caruk* (producing 7-tone scale plus the octave)

Photo by Colin McPhee circa 1931-38

Courtesy of UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive & Colin McPhee Estate

Given the prominence of *céngcéng* and *kempli* (a knobbed kettle-shaped horizontal-positioned *gong* which functions as beat-keeper as does *kajar* in other ensembles) in modern *kebyar*, it is striking that these instruments are rarely heard on the 1928 recordings, possibly on the advice of the recording sessions' producers.<sup>67</sup> But the recently-discovered McPhee and Covarrubias films from the 1930s show *kebyar* ensembles with *kempli* as well as two or three musicians playing *céngcéng angkep* (also called *rincik* or *rincik gedé*), for which each has two cymbals resting on the cymbal stand—facing up— while the musician plays them with another two. This is another of *kebyar*'s innovations for new compositions as well as traditional *lelambatan*—a cross between the smaller *rincik* of *gamelan palégongan* and the much larger and dominating *céngcéng kopyak* of *gong gedé* played by a larger group of musicians each of whom has two big face-up, free-lying cymbals each of which is hit by a matching cymbal.

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<sup>67</sup> Two exceptions are the opening phrase of Lotring's *Gambangan* (*Bali 1928–Vol. III*) and in a more subdued fashion by the *angklung* of Sidan on this CD.

Colin McPhee observed in the 1930s that musical notations were not used in teaching or rehearsing but rather as a means of preserving compositions for posterity or as a reference when the music has been forgotten.<sup>68</sup> Traditionally, and even most often today in the arts institutes, musicians learn their parts by rote. Melodies are sung using variants on the names of each pitch of the scale: *nding, ndong, ndéng, ndung, ndang*<sup>69</sup>. As the music is highly structured, improvisation is reserved for the leading drum, the flute, or solo instruments in specific contexts. However, *gendér wayang* musicians, at least in the village of Sukawati, have a highly evolved practice of structured improvisation<sup>70</sup>. Schools and many contemporary composers use a notation system combining Javanese *kepatihan* for rhythmic dynamics and Balinese *aksara* ‘letters’ for vowels indicating pitch as described above.

*Istilah* ‘terminology’ can vary from village to village and region to region or even reflect an individual musician’s vocabulary. Our goal in these CD notes is to include a variety of local terminologies from Belaluan, Pangkung and Busungbiu in hopes that some light may be shed on their particular musical concepts and ethnopoetics. But although musicians may be very specific at times, many terms such as *norot, notol–noltol–neteg, ngucek–norét–norék, oncangan* and *nyogcag* can be interchangeable in different contexts and personal vocabularies. The terms are often used more to describe the kinetics of a physical action of playing than an abstract musical concept or prescribed pedagogy.

#### **Volume IV: a very brief perspective on the historical span of these recordings**

The twenty-two tracks on this volume represent three musical styles that emerged over the course of a millennium and conceivably two full millenia, all of which were performed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century for *odalan* ‘temple festivals’ and death rituals. The practice of singing classical *kakawin* and *palawakia* accompanied by the radical and modern *gamelan gong kebyar* originated in North Bali and soon spread throughout the island. The *kebyar* interludes on this CD are in the style of Gong Belaluan’s seminal *Kebyar Ding* (heard in its entirety on *Bali 1928* CD #1). *Gambuh* dance drama, enacting stories from the *Malat* literature depicting court life and romance of ancient *Majapahit* times, was performed on the occasion of royal death rituals as well as entertainment in the *puri* ‘royal residences’. The horizontal *réyong* instruments still used in Sidan’s *gamelan angklung kléntangan* are depicted in stone reliefs from *Candi Panataran* (constructed during the period between the 11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries in East Java), but the *réyong* and other gong-chimes and gongs likely have their origins as far back as 896 AD and very conceivably to the Bronze Age.<sup>71</sup> During this prehistorical period around 150 BC, Bali already had skilled bronze-casting techniques that archaeologists presume were

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<sup>68</sup> McPhee 1966: 56

<sup>69</sup> Often written *ding-dong-déng-dung-dang* and vocalized in the teaching process as *ning-nong-néng-nung-nang* or *nir-nor-nér-nur-nar* or as *nyir-nyor-nyér-nyur-nyar*.

<sup>70</sup> Nicholas Gray (2011) devotes an entire book to the subject.

<sup>71</sup> Kempers 1988: 240. Ardika refers to the *Prasasti Bebetin* copper plate manuscript dated 896 AD, which mentions copper, gold and iron smiths (unpublished manuscript and conversation, 2015).

used to produce the huge *Bulan Péjéng* ‘Moon of Péjéng’ and other “bronze drums.”<sup>72</sup> *Gamelan angklung* (and *kléntangan*, its older form) continue to be performed for *odalan* and death rituals throughout Bali.



*Gong Belaluan* at 1929 Festival Pasar Gambir in Betawi (Jakarta)

I Marya (sitting in middle), Ni Gusti Madé Rai (*légong* dancer on right), Ni Gusti Putu Adi (*légong* dancer on left), I Gusti Alit Oka (standing, outer right), I Madé Regog (sitting, second row, third from left), & I Gejor Kelambu (singer, standing in back, fourth from left)

Photo courtesy of I Nyoman Yudha

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<sup>72</sup> According to archaeologist I Wayan Ardika, who has been engaged in scientific excavations in Sembiran, North Bali (conversation, 2015). See also Calo 2014: 279.

***Kakawin, Palawakia and Tembang with the Gamelan Gong Kebyar of Belaluan***

Track #1      *Sinom Surakarta*      Sung by I Renteg  
 Language: *Basa Bali Alus* (Refined, High Balinese)

*Sinom cara Karta Sura,*  
 The song *Sinom* in the style of Surakarta,

*anggén masalipang né,*  
 used as an interlude,

*sambungan sané punika,*  
 to connect with the story,

*né mungguh wawu ring gurit,*  
 that is just being told,

*tingkahing ngamong budi,*  
 about keeping up one's spirit,

*yén wénten magatra tumbuh,*  
 if news emerges,

*mangdé dasarin tegak,*  
 that is based on reality,

*tarkala kluruh kapti,*  
 when you find what you are pursuing,

*saking aluh,*  
 easily,

*terurut mecahang petungan.*  
 to fulfill your intentions.

*Sinom* is a *tembang* 'sung poem' of a genre often called *pupuh* 'melody', also referred to as *sekar alit* 'the small flower' or by the Javanese term *sekar macapat* 'flower read in groups of four syllables'. This rendition by I Renteg is sung in a melodic style similar to *Sinom Uwug Payangan*, which is taken to be evocative of *Sasak* singing, with a playful shifting between tunings. Beginning with *saih gong* tuning (also played by the *gamelan* and more commonly known today as *pélog*) the singing changes, at 00:36, to *saih gendér* (now called *sléndro*) with the lyrics *anggén masalipang né*.<sup>73</sup> While I Renteg may occasionally *kena* 'hit' or approximate pitches of the *gamelan*, the song and *gamelan* are

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<sup>73</sup> According to singers Ni Désak Madé Suarti Laksmi and Ni Nyoman Candri (conversations, 2009)

each in different tunings for the rest of the verse (and even for the opening words, *Sinom cara Karta Sura*, the pitches are not meant to correspond, even though they are both in *saih gong*).

Ida Bagus Pidada Kaut relates one of several different stories regarding the possible origin of *Sinom Surakarta*<sup>74</sup>. Pak Karta was a servant in the kingdom of Gianyar who was found to have transgressed in some way, and was *disélong* ‘exiled’ to the neighboring island of Lombok.<sup>75</sup> There he studied *tembang* singing and produced this version of *Sinom* which he called Surakarta, referring to himself rather than the city and kingdom in Java, *sura* meaning ‘brave’. I Wayan Pamit told us that Cokorde Ngurah Madé, the *raja* during the *puputan* of Badung, knew *Sinom Surakarta* and had it in his diverse repertoire of songs.<sup>76</sup>

### ***Kakawin***

*Kakawin*, also referred to as *wirama* or *sekar agung* ‘the great flower’, is sung in *Basa Kawi* ‘Old Javanese’. These recordings demonstrate the freedom *kakawin* singers had to emphasize musical elements or the meaning of the words rather than a codified and fixed rule of *guru laghu* ‘long and short vowels’ prevalent since the 1960s. While *mawirama* means ‘to sing or read *kakawin*’, the particular *wirama* of each selection refers to its poetic meter. *Reng* is defined in varied ways amongst singers but mostly as a quality of *getaran* ‘vibrations’ often called *kumbang* ‘buzzing of bees’, or as *ilegan tembang* ‘melody’. A feature of *kakawin* is coordination between the *juru baca* (*pangwacen*) ‘singer’/‘reader’ and *juru basa* (*paneges*) ‘translator’. I Gejor Gunaksa’s interpretations and translations into *Basa Bali Alus* ‘Refined Balinese’ are delineated within brackets.

Many *kakawin* scholars and aficionados occupy themselves with the literary, philosophical and religious content of texts and pay less attention to the aesthetics of sonic manifestation of the *wirama*. The terms *guru-laghu* and their notation system that was introduced at Universitas Udayana (UNUD) beginning in the late 1950s complemented printed Latin script texts of the *Kawi* ‘Old Javanese’. When the *kakawin* is written in *askara Bali* ‘Balinese script’, long and short *aksara* (*aksara* translates as ‘letters, syllables’ but the long and short refer to vowels) are embedded within the written form as *busana aksara* ‘the clothing of the vowels’. There are eight such *busana aksara* that are read as *guru* ‘long syllables’<sup>77</sup>. The *guru* ‘long/heavy’ syllables are notated as ‘-’ and *laghu* ‘short/light’ as ‘u’.

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<sup>74</sup> Conversation at Geria Pidada, Klungkung (2007)

<sup>75</sup> There is in fact a town in Lombok named Sélong. Which preceded the other – the act of being exiled or the fact of being sent “to Sélong” – is a matter of conjecture. Literary scholar Nyoman Suarka adds that another euphemism for being exiled to Lombok was *melancaran ke Sasak* ‘embarking to Sasak’ (conversation 2015).

<sup>76</sup> Conversation (2003)

<sup>77</sup> Conversation with Sugi Lanus, scholar and writer from Seririt (2013)

Raechelle Rubinstein paraphrases Ida Pedanda Madé Sidemen's reference to "the *kekawin* melodies employed, the total lack of observance of syllable length when vocalizing *kekawin*, and the style of interpretation popular during his youth," having undergone no change from his childhood in the late nineteenth century until after the Japanese occupation (1945).<sup>78</sup> Evidence from the four *kakawin* on *Bali 1928* CD #2 suggests that a style of vocal phrasing based on the *busana aksara* inherent in the written Balinese script corresponds irregularly to today's strict observance of long and short syllables. All informed listeners notice how the practice was inconsistent and conceivably even coincidental, more a characteristic of Balinese language than as a literary practice. But as Sugi Lanus points out, we cannot assume categorically that the four selections from Geria Pidada (or the six additional *kakawin* from Belaluan with *gong kebyar* on this CD) were representative of Balinese *kakawin* circa 1928. Still, Geria Pidada, Klungung was the center of literary activity since at least the nineteenth century and we can be sure that as an advisor to Beka, Ida Boda was choosing respected performers whom he knew well.

Along with scholars such as I Gust Bagus Sugriwa, linguists at Udayana University led by Professor Raden Mas Ngabehi Poerbatjaraka developed a fixed system of phrasing based on the *Canda*, a fifteenth-century East Javanese manuscript,<sup>79</sup> replacing the freer Balinese oral tradition that prioritized *guru basa* (the meaning of the words) along with musical phrasing. Rubinstein writes:

The *Canda* appears to be a treatise written primarily for poets rather than performers of *kekawin*, although an early stanza that mentions its purpose is addressed to 'sakweh sang sujana' (all fine people)...Indeed, the theory of *kekawin* prosody explicated in the *Canda* barely raises the issue of *kekawin* performance. Rather this text appears inclined towards the needs of poets who compose *kekawin*, although it is possible that in former times performers of *kekawin* also had to master prosody. Certainly, Balinese poets must be consummate performers of *kekawin*. Moreover, the vocalization of *kekawin* is only possible when the metres have been constructed correctly, as *kekawin* are always sung from lontar texts. Inherent in the written text is crucial information that enables their vocal realization. It is the words of the text written in *Kawi* that determine pitch, melodic contour and the rhythm that is employed.<sup>80</sup>

As an aspect of what Rubinstein calls "Guided Pepaosan," the rules of *guru-laghu* were further inculcated by *Listibiya*, 'The Council for Development and Promotion of Balinese Culture', beginning in 1969 in contests and festivals<sup>81</sup> that continue to this day with *Utsawa Dharma Gita*, held during the annual *Pesta Kesenian Bali* 'Balinese Arts

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<sup>78</sup> Rubinstein 1992: 89

<sup>79</sup> Rubinstein 2000: 133

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*: 135

<sup>81</sup> Rubinstein 1992: 102

Festival'.<sup>82</sup> These events have served to popularize *kakawin* while at the same time instilling an aesthetic that prioritize the regulation of long and short vowels with a precision that has been developed further to measure fractions of each beat.

*Mawirama kakawin* has thrived in Bali for six hundred years as an oral tradition intertwined with poetic texts—kept alive and cultivated in a particularly Balinese style of improvisation and subtle acoustical phenomena interpenetrating with kinesthetic experience. Ida I Déwa Gdé Catra of Sideman and Amlapura, Ida Bagus Madé Gandem of Cakranegara, Lombok and others have commented that these recordings exemplify how during this era the *juru mabasan* ‘interpreter’ would not be reading his interpretation from a written text in *Basa Bali* as is done today, but would rather be replying spontaneously, often from memory, to the words of the *kakawin* as it is sung line by line. Even *juru baca* ‘readers, singers’ would often be performing from memory, relying on the oral tradition and not always a written source. Nyoman Sukartha has pointed out that in today’s ritual performances of *kakawin*, most often amplified over loudspeakers, one may occasionally notice a *juru basa* lose his place in the book from which he is reading and then give interpretations that do not match the sung text. This reflects the loss of a certain immediacy of emotional resonance between the singer and interpreter and shows how an aspect of personal creativity is no longer as common as it once was.<sup>83</sup>

The *juru baca* ‘singer’ on six of these recordings, I Gejor Kelambu (±1899–1976), was a goldsmith from Wangaya, Denpasar, and can<sup>84</sup> be seen in the group photograph on page 26. He can also be heard on CD #5 singing *kidung Wilet Mayura*. The striking difference in vocal range between his lower-range *kidung* and the high-pitched *kakawin* on this volume led us to question whether it was indeed the same singer, even though the Odeon labels indicate thus. But I Wayan Sinti (1941–) of Binoh, who studied *kidung* singing with Gejor Kelambu in 1962 and remembers his voice and style, confirmed that both recordings are of his teacher.<sup>85</sup>

*Guru* can emphasize “weight” rather than length, and Ida Déwa Gdé Catra asserts that although one cannot vary or deviate from *guru-laghu* in theory, one certainly may “in the field.” He adds that the *nada pokok* ‘core tones’ of *wirama* also exist in theory but vary in practice. He offers the example of a well-respected singer of *wirama kakawin* whose prioritization of *reng* over *basa* ‘language’ or ‘meaning’ can render the words of his *wirama* difficult to hear clearly.<sup>86</sup> Wayan Pamit and many others have cautioned that listeners today will describe the *kakawin* of 1928 as *guru lamuk* (deviating from the rules of *guru-lagu*) while at the same time appreciating the *reng* ‘melody and quality of sound’. Ida Déwa Gdé Catra describes the contemporary East Balinese process of *guru pungsaka* stretching in order to *mengurukan laghu* ‘make the *laghu* into *guru*’. Often still, as in the *kakawin* recordings on CD #2, each *carik* is divided into many shorter

<sup>82</sup> While organized by Utsawa Dharma Gita and not the PKB festival itself, both take place simultaneously at the *Taman Budaya* ‘Bali Arts Center’ each summer.

<sup>83</sup> Conversation (2013)

<sup>84</sup> Identified by I Nyoman Yudha of Belaluan (2006) and confirmed by Wayan Sinti (2015).

<sup>85</sup> Conversation (2015)

<sup>86</sup> Conversation (2013)

phrases, to allow listeners a more direct understanding of content, rather than singing an entire line. The singing on this CD is evidence of an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century style that even more so emphasized the *tembang* ‘song and melody’.

Track #2 *Sang Dasaratha* sung by I Gejor ‘Earthquake’ Kelambu with translator I Gejor ‘Earthquake’ Gunaksa and *gamelan* interludes by the *gong kebyar* of Belaluan *Kakawin Ramayana, Wirama Sronca, Reng Sronca*

*Hana sira ratu dibya rěngön,*  
There is a noble king, listen,

[*Méh wiakti wénten sang bupati luwih utama*]  
Once upon a time there was an exalted king

*preśāsta ring rāt musuhira prannata,*  
famous throughout the world, his enemies bowing to him,

[*Kalangkung pageh ida ring jagat, béh satrunida sami atwang*]  
So strong His Highness was in the world, all enemies obeyed him

*jaya pandita ringngaji kabéh,*  
clever in all aspects of knowledge,

[*Ngasorang ida kasadon ring wiakta*]  
His Highness mastered all the sciences

*Sang Daśaratha nāma tāmoli.*  
His Highness was named Sang Dasaratha, and was without equals.

[*Oh mapeséngan reké ida sang Dasaratha ratu sampun nyaya.*]  
His Highness was named Sang Dasaratha, a mighty king.

As this *kakawin* recording reflects an oral tradition allowing for a degree of freedom from the literary source, encouraging diverse ways of rendering and interpret the *kakawin*, Nyoman Suarka provides us with the original text in Latin script as a reference:<sup>87</sup>

*Hana sira ratu dibya rěngön,*  
*Praśāsta ring rāt musuhira prannata,*  
*jaya pandita ring aji kabéh,*  
*Sang Daśaratha nāma tāmoli.*

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<sup>87</sup> For the *kakawin* texts in this volume, we are following the approach of Ida I Déwa Gdé Catra, using the diacritical *é* as used in *basa Bali* for the vowel sound as in ‘day’.



In the Indian epic *Ramayana*, Dasaratha was the king of Ayodya and father of Rama, Laksmāna and Bharata, whose mothers were the queen-consorts Kausalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi.

Track #3 *Nahan Tangguh (Kakawin Ramayana)* Sung by I Gejor Kelambu with translator I Gejor Gunaksa and *gamelan* interludes by the *gong kebyar* of Belaluan  
*Wirama Anustup Wisama Matra, Reng Sronca*

*Tatkālān panusup kālih,*  
As these two brothers are entering (the forest),

*[Arah ri tatkala masusupan sareng kalih ida Sang Rama Déwa]*  
As Rama is going into the jungle with his companion (Laksmāna)

*Nton Jatāyu manuk magöng,*  
Thereupon they see the great bird Jatayu,

*[Nuli kakanten ipun i kedis geruda punika ageng]*  
A truly great eagle is visible

*Tan biakta téka déning doh,*  
But not very clear because of the distance,

*[Ha-ha-ha-ha, nénten terang kanten antuk dohé]*  
But not very clear because he is so far away

*Katon kadi gunung magöng.*  
He comes into sight like a great mountain.

*[Béh kanten wiakti ten bina kadi giri ageng ipuné.]*  
Oh, look, truly just like a great mountain.

Prince Rama and his brother Laksmāna are in search of Rama's wife Sita who has been abducted by the monstrous King Rawana of Alengka. The brave and loyal eagle Jatayu tries to rescue Sita, but Rawana prevails in their fight, and Jatayu lays wounded, dying on the ground.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> This sung text matches that contained in Sugriwa 1977: 30.

#4 *Sang Rama Déwa* sung by I Gejor Kelambu with translator I Gejor Gunaksa and *gamelan* interludes by the *gong kebyar* of Belaluan  
(*Kakawin Ramayana, Wirama Anustub Wisama Matra, Reng Sronca*)

*Hé Rāma hé Raghu suta,*  
Alas, Rama, descendant of Raghu,

[*Arah déwa ratu Betara Rama*]  
Alas, my lord Rama

*Haywa sāhasa ring hulun,*  
Do not, my lord, misunderstand me (your servant),

[*Ha-ha-ha, sampunang cokor i déwa wirosa ring titiang*]  
Do not, my lord, be worried about me (this servant)

*Jatayu tāku tan kālén,*  
There is no other servant like Jatayu,

[*Arah titiang i geruda nénten tiosan aratu déwagung*]  
This eagle servant is unlike any other, my lord

*wruh tākun Jānaki pinét.*  
This servant understands my lord is searching for Déwi Sita.

[*Uning titiang ring cokor i déwa ngrereh ring i dyah rabi.*]  
This servant knows my lord aims to find his wife.

Again, Nyoman Suarka provides us with the original text in Latin script as a reference:

*Hé Rāma hé Raghusuta,*  
*Haywa sāhasa ring hulun,*  
*Jatayu tāku tan kālén,*  
*wruh tākun Jānakin pinét.*

This verse from the *Ramayana* epic is spoken by the eagle Jatayu during the same encounter with Rama and Laksmana.

Track #5      *Lahirnya Subali Sugriwa*      ‘The Birth of Subali and Sugriwa’  
Recited by I Gejor Kelambu with translator I Gejor Gunaksa, accompanied by the  
*gamelan gong kebyar* of Belaluan  
*Palawakia (Kapi Parwa)* from the *Ramayana*

*Hana pwakang kawi waksa.*  
There is a story.

[*Inggih mangkin wénten kang kacarita.*]  
Yes, now there is a story.

*Bhagawan Pawatama mwanng istri maotama*  
The blessed Pawatama along with his most precious wife

[*Parawiryman ring Ida Bagawan Pawatama kateka tekéng patnin ida*]  
A noble priest named Bhagawan Pawatama together with his wife

*ri tatkalaning nira*  
when they...

[*Béh ri sedek kala ida*]  
Yes, while they...

*anangun semadi marwantening udyana*  
were performing meditation in the garden

[*Ha-ha-ha, kala ngwangun tapa maringkanang taman*]  
As they were meditating in a garden

*pwanghana pinakatmaja nira loro*  
as their two children

[*arah wénten maka tenayan ida kakalih*]  
while their two children

*angaran si Bali Sugriwa*  
named Bali and Sugriwa

[*wrarian ri kabisékan dané sang kalih Sang Bali Sugriwa.*]  
the two were named Bali and Sugriwa.

*Ri tatkalaning nira Bhagawan Pawatama*  
While Bhagawan Pawatama...

[*Inggih ri tadatkala ida Bhagawan utama*]  
Once upon a time when the revered priest

*marwantening pasraman*  
was in the place of meditation

*[asasanjan irika marikanang taman tapa-tapa]*  
chatting in the meditation garden

*istri Pawatama rakwa*  
they say the wife of Bhagawan Pawatama

*[Ha-ha-ha... tan doh patnin ida sang istri utama]*  
His noble wife was not far away

*anglila-lila cita marwantening udyana.*  
playing in the garden.

*[ah tan mari béh maseneng-seneng irika.]*  
endlessly enjoying herself there.

*Ri tatkalaning anira adyus*  
As she was bathing

*[Ri tatkala ida masuci]*  
While she was bathing

*adulu de Sanghyang Surya.*  
she was seen by the Sun God.

*[Arah apa kadén kaki, aduh, ha-ha-ha-ha-ha!]*  
Oh!, is what was said, Oh, my!

*Dadi ta kajamah ira istri Pawatama dé Sanghyang Surya.*  
Then Bhagawan Pawatama's wife was raped by the Sun God.

*[Ri tatkala punika kajamah ida antuk Sanghyang Surya.]*  
At that moment she was raped by the Sun God.

*Dadi mawastu bobot rakwa istri Pawatama.*  
Ultimately, Bhagawan Pawatama's wife was pregnant.

*[Anuli aglis...]*  
And then...

(text cut off at end of track)

The twin brothers Subali (Bali) and Sugriwa are the great monkey kings in the *Ramayana* epic, faithful to Rama, Sita and Hanuman. Their tragic conflict occurs when Subali abducts Sugriwa's wife, Tara. In the course of the fight between the brothers, Rama himself shoots the arrow that kills Subali, who "dies repentant and receives a royal burial."<sup>89</sup> *Palawakia* is a stylized, contoured prose style used in many contexts including recitation from the *Mahabharata* (*Bharatayuddha*) and *Ramayana* as well as by *panasar* 'narrators' in *topéng* 'mask dance drama' and since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, as a vocal component performed by a *kebyar* dancer. This text is found in between the *kanda* 'sections' of the actual *Ramayana* in the *Kapi Parwa*, a companion series of narratives concerning the lives various monkeys, including Anoman (Hanuman), who are also major characters in the story of Rama.

This recorded section excerpted from the story of Subali and Sugriwa is actually about the birth of Anjani, mother of Anoman (Hanuman).

As accompaniment, Gong Belaluan plays a musical arrangement identical to one heard toward the end of the *Oncang-oncangan* section of their *Kebyar Ding* (CD #1, track #3).

Track #6 *Menangis Prabu Yudhistira* 'The Sorrow of King Yudhistira'  
Sung by I Gejor Kelambu with translator I Gejor Gunaksa and *gamelan* interludes by the *gong kebyar* of Belaluan  
*Kakawin Bharatayuddha, Wirama Puspitagra, Reng Sronca*

*Kalalu lara Sang Pāndu putraséna,*  
How sad at heart is Lord Yudisthira, son of King Pandu,

[*Béh, déwa ratu, karangkung-rangkung kasungkunan ida prabu Yudhistira*]  
(Oh, God, how never-ending is the sorrow of His Lordship Yudhistira)

*tinutning luwar aprang asrang angdoh,*  
accompanied by his scattered troops out in the distance,

[*awinan ida katinggal antuk sameton anak masiat joh aratu*]  
so that His Lordship is left by his kinsmen and brothers, fighting far away, Your Highness

*Padha mulih angungsir kuwunga sowang,*  
All have returned to their homes, each and every one,

[*Bih, sané mangkin sampun budal reké ngungsi pondok ida kang adiri*]  
And now they go home, each and every one

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<sup>89</sup> Zoetmulder 1974: 220

*Tuwi wěngi ludinawa*

And again evening falls in the darkness of the ninth night after the full moon

*[Béh, nuju kala tanggal ping sia kala punika]*

And certainly coinciding with the darkness on the ninth night

*mīngkulēm kamantyan.*

so that the night is growing darker and darker.

*[Punika makahawinan peteng pisan-pisan kala punika.]*

That's the reason it was so dark then.

Once again, Nyoman Suarka provides us with the original text in Latin script as a reference:

*Kalalu lara sapāuputra séna,*

*tinuti luwar nikang-aprang-asrang-angdoh,*

*padha mulih angusir kuwunya sowang,*

*tuwi wěngi ludnawa mīngkulēm kamantyan.*

In the *Mahabharata* epic, Yudhistira is the son of King Pandu and Queen Kunti, and led the Pandawa army in the war against their Korawa cousins. This quoted text is from the Bhisma Parwa, after the death of Bhisma.

#7 *Ri Pati Sang Abhimanyu* 'The Death of Abhimanyu'

Sung by I Renteg with translator I Gejor Gunaksa and *gamelan* interludes by the *gong kebyar* of Belaluan

*Kakawin Bharatayuddha, Wirama Puspitagra, Reng Sronca*

*Ri pati sang Abhimanyu*

As the exalted Abhimanyu was slain

*[Inggih sané mangkin kalengkarayang ring linan ida sang nararya kirtya temaja]*

Once upon a time, it is told about his death, the son of a huntsman (Arjuna)

*ring ranāngga,*

on the battlefield,

*[Ha-ha-ha, noralian irika ri kala ning anak rakryané]*

while in the midst of war the son of Arjuna

*těnyuh angraras*

smashed but still handsome

*[Bih dekdek remuk sawiakti kebagusan idané]*  
Destroyed was his handsomeness

*kadi séwaléng*  
like moss

*[Béh, rencem tan bina kadi surat]*  
smashed flat beyond recognition

*tahas mās, [tanghas mas is sung]*  
like gold flakes,

*[surat luh mawasta mas punika]*  
flattened but still beautiful like gold

*hanan angaraga*  
still captivating,

*[Arahapa kadén kanin idané]*  
How grave his wounds

*kālaning pajang lek,*  
under the moonlight,

*[tur katarung antuk sunar sanghyang pretangga]*  
exposed to the light of the moon

*cinacah alindih*  
cut into pieces (but) still beautiful

*[wiakti rencem sumangkin bangkit ida]*  
truly shriveled (yet) all the more arousing love

*sahanti... [sahan timun]*  
like a sliced cucumber

*[Inggih osah wiakti manah ida sami]*  
Yes, how chaotic all of their thoughts

*...mun ginenten.*  
those who see him.

*[sami sang ngamangguhin ida.]*  
all those who see him.

Nyoman Suarka provides us with the original text in Latin script as a reference:

*Ri pati sang-abhimanyu ring ranāngga,  
těnyuh-araras kadi śewaléng tahas mās,  
hanan-angaraga kālaning pajang lek,  
cinacah-alindi timun digenten.*

In the *Mahabharata*, Abhimanyu is the son of Prince Arjuna and Subhadra, who is the sister of Kresna and Baladéwa.

#8 *Atur Sang Kresna* ‘Kresna’s Advice’

Sung by I Gejor Kelambu with translator I Gejor Gunaksa and *gamelan* interludes by the *gong kebyar* of Belaluan

*Metrum Malabharani, Reng Sronca*

*Hé Prabhu naranatha Dharma Putra,  
Alas, King Dharma Putra,*

*[Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha, aratu sang Prabu Yudhistira cokor i déwa]*  
Oh, King Yudhistira

*lihata tiki bhuwana wasana sirnna,  
Look at this world, finally destroyed,*

*[Durus cokor i déwa nyingakin kaula druwené becek]*  
Take a look at this world, finally destroyed

*Nrpa Salya musuh Naréndra sakti,  
Your enemy Salia is so very magically powerful,*

*[Satrun cokor i déwa sang Salya punika mawisésa]*  
Your enemy Salia is so very magically powerful

*Syapa wanyamapaga ranangga mangko.  
Who is brave enough to face him on the field of battle?*

*[Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha, nénten wénten purun anak nandingin ida ring tengah payudan.]*  
No one is brave enough to face him on the field of battle.

Nyoman Suarka provides us with the original text in Latin script as a reference:

*Hé Prabhu naranatha Dharma Putra,  
Lihatiking bhuwanawasana sirnna,*



*Nrpa Salya musuh naréndra sakti,  
syapa wanyamapageng ranangga mangko.*

Lord Kresna speaks to Yudhistira, also known as Prabu Dharmaputra and Dharmawangsa, concerning the power of King Salia, cousin to the Pandawa clan but obliged to fight on behalf of their enemy cousins. Kresna means to inspire Yudhistira to defeat Salia by telling him to take stock of all the multitudes on the Pandawa side killed by Salia.



*Gamelan gambuh* of Sésétan  
Four sets of *rincik*, *kelenang*, *kenyer*, two *suling*, *kendang*, *rebab* & *kempur*  
Photo by Colin McPhee circa 1931-38  
Courtesy of UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive & Colin McPhee Estate



*Gamelan gambuh* of Sésétan  
Four sets of *rincik*, *kelenang*, & two *suling*  
Photo by Colin McPhee circa 1931-38  
Courtesy of UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive & Colin McPhee Estate



*Kangsi and gumanak in the gamelan gambuh of Puri Tabanan*  
Photo by Colin McPhee circa 1931-38  
Courtesy of UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive & Colin McPhee Estate



*Kelenang and kenyer in the gamelan gambuh of Puri Tabanan*  
 Photo by Colin McPhee circa 1931-38  
 Courtesy of UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive & Colin McPhee Estate

### ***Gambuh of Sésétan***

*Gambuh* is considered Bali's classical performance genre, combining music, dance and drama, and was a source for the development of many subsequent forms including *légong*, *Calonarang*, *arja*, and *kebyar*. *Gambuh*'s musical repertoire and tunings are the basis for the *gamelan* genres *Semar Pagulingan* and *palégongan*.

*Gambuh*'s narrative elements come from the *Malat* literature depicting East Javanese characters and court life. "Java's most famous kingdom, Majapahit, is the unmentioned centre of the *Malat*, it is the cultural world and focus of the text" (Vickers 2005: 266). Majapahit was an empire that extended across Southeast Asia during the period from 1293 until the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, conquering the Balinese kingdom of Bedulu in 1343.

Vickers writes: "The earliest colophon [clearly identified manuscript] of the *Malat* is dated 1725...How long before 1725 the *Malat* developed its own identity among Panji

texts is a matter of conjecture, but it must have been formed by the events prior to the early eighteenth century” (2005: 264–65).

The stories revolve around the adventures and romance of Prince Panji (and in the course of events, king) and involve a great many intrigues, false identities, deceptions and offenses. The entire collection of narratives explore the nature of love and sensuality as well as the manners of the royal courts of a legendary Daha, East Java. Panji is often in search of his betrothed, Princess Rangkesari (named Ratnajuwita earlier in the story). The best-known episode from *gambuh* enacts, in an abstract way, the abduction of Rangkesari by the King of Lasem. This was adapted in 1880 as a theme for *légong* and subsequently, amongst a variety of other *légong* stories and choreographies, called *Légong Lasem*.

In the most exhaustive study of *légong* history to date, Ni Nyoman Sudéwi (2011: 138) quotes from a lontar dated Çaka 1802 (1880 CE) that describes I Déwa Manggis Sukawati, seated in Gianyar, urging a group of eight dance masters, *gambuh* dancers, and musicians to develop a new genre that, unlike *Sang Hyang légong tapel*, would not use masks, and is also different from the male dance *nandir*. I Déwa (Anak Agung) Rai Perit made the proposal they use the *Malat* story, specifically the *pangipuk Lasem* (the wooing scene between the King of Lasem and his captive Rangkesari as he prepares to leave, into *angkatan–batél maya* ‘his departure for battle’ and ending with the king being struck by the *goak* ‘crow’).<sup>90</sup> With permission from the Déwa Manggis, the artists exchanged ideas on how to develop this dance, after which rehearsals at the Puri Gianyar resulted in *Légong Lasem*.<sup>91</sup> This historical confluence of artists and artistically inclined rulers would mark the beginning of the very substantive choreographic, structural and dramaturgical influences of classical *gambuh* dance drama on *Légong Lasem* and all subsequent *légong* stories.

Up until the 1920s and 30s most female dramatic roles in all genres were performed by males. *Gambuh*, in the village Batuan, did not introduce female performers into the ensemble until around 1960.<sup>92</sup> McPhee writes:

The actors, resplendent in elaborate crowns and brocade costumes, move with deliberation. Their lines are delivered in *kawi*, which few in the audience understand, and are declaimed in a highly artificial style. Noble characters of the *alus* type use the high upper voice, reciting each line in a thin falsetto that falls in a prolonged and gentle wail at the end of each sentence. *Kras* characters use heavy chest tones. Music continues throughout, the *gendings* changing with the entrance of each new character.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> *Dalang* Ketut Kodi explains the beautiful ambiguity of the *pangipuk* in which Rangkesari refuses Prabu Lasem’s advances—but at the same time the creators of *légong Lasem* wanted a love scene, so the dancers and *juru tandak* ‘narrator’ also conjure an abstract picture of Rangkesari with Panji, her true lover.

<sup>91</sup> Sudéwi (2011: 138) quotes from a manuscript provided by I Wayan Turun, *lontar* specialist from Sumerta, Denpasar. The text derives from the *Babad Dalem* collection.

<sup>92</sup> Conversation with I Nyoman Kakul (1972)

<sup>93</sup> 1966: 113

During pre-colonial times there were a variety of *gambuh* traditions supported by the *raja* and *puri* ‘royal residences’ in many areas of Bali. By the 1930s, the only large groups were in Batuan, Sésétan and at the Puri Tabanan.<sup>94</sup> At present there is *gambuh* in Batuan, Pedungan, Kedisan (Tegallalang), Tumbak Bayuh, Budakeling, and elsewhere, but in earlier times there were ensembles at the Puri Pemecutan, (Badung now Denpasar), Puri Klungkung, Puri Gianyar, Sukawati, Kaba-Kaba, and Singapadu.

Today, any of a number of the *gambuh* groups in Batuan will perform for *odalan* at the *Pura Désa* temple, a *Déwa Yadnya* ‘ceremony for deities’. They are also invited to perform during *ngabén* or *plebon* ‘cremations’ of people associated with a *puri* as well as other royal rituals such as weddings. Vickers writes:

One *gambuh* performer, I Ktut Kantor, considered that the function of *gambuh* for the rulers in the past was as an ‘entertainment’ (Indonesian *hiburan*) when they were *susah* or *pusing* (Indonesian), worried, overworked, in difficulty or experiencing some kind of anxiety. They would sit in the viewing pavilions, the *balé bengong*, of the palace, a raised pavilion for ‘watching’, and look at the *gambuh* performed in the *balé pagambuhan*, a long pavilion in the forecourt of the palace designed especially for *gambuh*. The artist Ida Bagus Togog gave as the main entertainment function of Malat singing the easing of people’s minds when they were *payah*, *dukita* or *gedeg*, ‘fatigued’, ‘regretful’ or ‘angry’ or generally experiencing some kind of psychological or emotional difficulty, *pakèweh*.<sup>95</sup>

The instrumentation of the *gambuh* ensemble varied to some extent even in the 1930s, but consists of between four and six *suling* ‘meter-long bamboo flutes’, a *rebab* ‘upright bowed fiddle’, two *kendang* ‘drums’, *rincik* ‘cymbals’, *kajar*, *kelenang* (bronze gong-chimes’, *kenyir* (3-keyed metallophone), *kempur* ‘small gong’ and, in Batuan, a *gentorak* (small tree of bells that is shaken). One other instrument, almost completely unknown today, is the *lupita*, a wood clapper made from three flat pieces of wood fastened together.

A 1930s photograph by Colin McPhee was discovered at the UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive, with the word ‘Loepita’ written in McPhee’s handwriting. No one in Bali was ever been able to recognize this object until we showed it to I Ketut Wirtawan of Batuan, who knew what it was immediately. When his father, Ketut Kantor, was performing in Japan in the mid-1980s with his *gambuh* group, *Maya Sari*, he was asked to list the instruments of the *gamelan gambuh*. Pak Kantor reached the end of the list when he remembered one more instrument from his childhood – the *lupita*. When he returned home to Batuan, Kantor made a few *lupita* that were used at rehearsals for a while but never added to the core ensemble.

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<sup>94</sup> McPhee 1966: 113

<sup>95</sup> 2005: 171–72



*Lupita in the gamelan gambuh of Puri Tabanan*  
 Photo by Colin McPhee circa 1931-38  
 Courtesy of UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive & Colin McPhee Estate

During a subsequent visit, I Déwa Putu Sérong (±1918–), *kendang gambuh* musician from Batuan and Ketut Kantor’s uncle (I Nyoman Kakul’s brother-in-law), told us he had actually played the *lupita* in the *gamelan gambuh*, gesturing for us how it was played and vocally imitating its sound.

While *gambuh* tuning – as played by the *suling*, *rebab*, and *juru tandak* vocalists – is referred to as ‘*saih pitu*’, a seven-tone system, the Balinese *Catur Muni-muni* text describes a ten-tone *gamelan amladprana* or *simladprana*: “As to the sounds of the *simladprana* they are songs of the *gambuh* repertoire, the *patut* [tuning] includes ten sounds being *dang*, *ding*, *deng*, *ndung*, *dong*, called *pelog*, *ndang*, *nding*, *ndeng*, *ndung*, *ndong*, called *slendro*. Thus *pelog* sounded with *slendro* becomes a melody such as *ding*, *nding* as it is played, those are the sounds of the *simladprana* tuning of *pelog* combined with *slendro*.”<sup>96</sup>

<sup>96</sup> Bandem, I Madé. (1986: 94-95). “Kunang gagambelan *simladprana* ika gendingnya pagambuhan, *patutanya* hana sapuluh swara lwirnya, *dang*, *ding*, *deng*, *dung*, *dong* ngaran *pelog*, *ndang*, *nding*, *ndeng*, *ndung*, *ndong* ngaran *salendro*. Dadinya *pelog* tinabeh *mwang salendro* marmanya *gending*, *ding*, *nding*, *kenskang* *tatabuhan*. I kang gagambelan *simladprana* ika *patut pelog kasalendroan*.” Excerpt of the *Catur Muni-muni* section of the *Prakempa* (my translation from Indonesian).

However historically accurate this text may or may not be, there is evidence that *suling gambuh* players in Batuan village still use ten tones, according to Karl Richter's documentation with the aid of frequency analysis.<sup>97</sup>

On Track #11 we hear the *juru tandak* singers who are sitting amongst the musicians and contributing to the story and dramatic mood in a vocal style that follows and alternatively, plays off of the tones and musical phrasing of the 80 cm. to meter-long *suling*.

The *gambuh* ensemble of Sésétan recorded by Odeon in 1928 ceased to exist by around 1942, during the Japanese occupation in World War II. Musicologist I Nyoman Rembang from Sésétan (1930–2005) remembered the *gambuh* group being active until that time and speculated that the instruments were buried underground to keep them from being appropriated and shipped abroad, as was done with many *gamelan* throughout Bali.<sup>98</sup>

For the three recordings of the *gambuh* from Sésétan, the characters to be aware of include the refined Panji, speaking in a lilted, high-pitched voice. His *parekan* 'servant, attendant, advisor' is named Semar and his horse's groom is Balantatit. Prabangsa, Panji's stepbrother, is a frequent antagonist in the dramas. Even so, his role as a stylized dramatic character is that of *Prabu Manis*, refined king. His *parekan* 'attendants', advisors' are Jebuh (addressed as Buh) and Jodeh, alternatively called Jerodeh or Jrudeh (Deh)<sup>99</sup>. He is often accompanied by an entourage of several comic *rakyat* 'commoners' called Potet, addressed by Prabangsa with a loud, *Tet!* and answering with a meek, *Tiang* 'It is I'. This can be compared with his *parekan*, who generally respond with a more formal, strident and deferential *Inggih, titiang!* 'Yes, your humble attendant!'

Vickers writes:

Prabangsa is the ultimate disturbance of the courtly ideal, but a disturbance from within, a parody showing that the ideal can be quickly brought back to a mundane level, just as the raucous actions of people in the marketplace coexist with the courtly business of princes.<sup>100</sup>

A *gambuh* performance with a complete cast can involve as many as twenty-nine to thirty-seven characters.<sup>101</sup> The higher status characters speak in Middle Javanese, generally referred to by performers as *Kawi*. The *parekan* speak in *Bali Alus* 'refined Balinese' and *basa Bali lumrah (kapara)* 'common Balinese'. Although *basa kidung* 'the language of *kidung*' is generally *Jawa Tengahan* 'Middle Javanese', linguist I Nengah Medera also refers to this *Kawi-Bali* text as *basa kidung*.<sup>102</sup> Vickers describes the difficulties of clearly differentiating the two languages historically (2010: 110).

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<sup>97</sup> Richter 1992

<sup>98</sup> Conversation in Sésétan (1999)

<sup>99</sup> In Batuan, the *parekan* for Prabangsa are named Togog and Turas.

<sup>100</sup> 2005: 64

<sup>101</sup> Suasthi Bandem 2007: 299

<sup>102</sup> Conversation (2009)





*Prabu Manis* (refined prince on right) & *Rangga/Patih Tua* (old minister on left)  
and *gamelan gambuh* of Sésétan

Photo by Colin McPhee circa 1931-38

Courtesy of UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive & Colin McPhee Estate



*Gambuh* of Sésétan

From left to right: *Rangga/Patih Tua* (old minister), *Prabu Manis* (refined king),  
*Putri* (princess) & *Condong* (maidservant)

Photo by Colin McPhee circa 1931-38

Courtesy of UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive & Colin McPhee Estate

For comparison, one can listen to an adaptation of *Biakalang* by Nyoman Kalér, performed by the *Gamelan Palégongan* of Kelandis and included on CD #3.

Track #9      *Biakalang Prabangsa*              *Gambuh of Sésétan*

Prabangsa:    *Hm-hm-hm-ha-ha-ha, Buh!*

Buh:            *Inggih, titiang parekan cokor i déwa!*  
Yes, I am your attendant, sire!

Prabangsa:    *Aja doh! Aja nunaning parayatna!*  
Don't you keep at a distance! Don't be lax!

Buh:            *Nénten doh, ha-ha-ha-ha...mamarga-mamarga!*  
Your attendant is not far away, please go forward, sire!

Prabangsa:    *Deh!*

Deh:            *Titiang!*  
Your attendant, sire!

Prabangsa:    *Aja doh, Deh, aja doh!*  
Don't go far, Deh, don't go far!

Deh:            *Inggih, raris cokor i déwa mamarga!*  
Yes, please proceed, sire!

Prabangsa:    *Aja nunaning parayatna!*  
Don't you be lax!

Deh:            *Nggih!*  
Yes!

Prabangsa:    *Hm-hm-hm-hm-hm, Buh!*  
*Hm-hm-hm-hm-hm, Buh!*

Buh:            *Titiang!*  
Your attendant, sire!

Prabangsa:    *Aja doh, aja doh, aja doh!*  
Don't go far! Don't go far! Don't go far!

- Buh: *Inggih, mase doh parekan cokor i déwa!*<sup>103</sup>  
All right, sire. Your attendant is not far away, sire!
- Prabangsa: *Deh! Aja doh, aja doh, aja doh!*  
Don't go far! Don't go far! Don't go far!
- Deh: *Inggih masa doh parekan cokor i déwa!*  
All right, your attendant is not far away, sire!
- Prabangsa: *Deh!*
- Deh: *Tiang!*  
Your attendant, sire!
- Prabangsa: *Aja nunaning parayatna!*  
Don't be lax!
- Deh: *Inggih!*  
All right!
- Prabangsa: *Wara-wiré... Antian ri kesahira marwantening ajajudén. Hm-hm-hm-hm-hm... Buh!*  
(You're going in) all directions! For certain, we are coming from a place of gambling. Ha-ha-ha-ha... Buh!
- Buh: *Inggih, titiang!*  
Yes, at your service!
- Prabangsa: *Aja nunaning parayatna!*  
Don't be lax!
- Buh: *Inggih, masa doh parekan cokor i déwa!*  
Yes, your attendant is not far away, my lord!
- Prabangsa: *Tet!*
- Potet: *Tiang...*  
It is I...
- Prabangsa: *Aja doh, Tet, aja doh!*  
Don't go far, Tet, don't go far!

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<sup>103</sup> *Mase doh* is translated here as it is used in *bahasa pertunjukan* 'language of performance' and can also mean 'I am with you' and 'I am close by' (conversations with Ketut Wirtawan and Ketut Kodi, 2015). Alternatively, *masedoh* incorporates *sandhi suara* 'assimilation' or 'blending of words, syllables or vowels'.

- Potet: *Inggih.*  
Yes.
- Prabangsa: *Angapa rakwa marmitanira arihinan, ri rehira reko, bipraya jumujug marwantening umah, hm-hm-hm-hm-hm...Buh!*  
Why do you have to be ahead of me? Because I want to get home.  
Hm-hm-hm-hm-hm...Buh!
- Buh: *Inggih, titiang!*  
Yes, your attendant!
- Prabangsa: *Aja doh! Aja doh! Aja doh!*  
Don't be far. Don't be far! Don't be far!
- Buh: *Mase doh parekan cokor i déwa!*  
Your attendant is not far, sire!
- Prabangsa: *Tet!*
- Potet: *Tiang...*  
It is I...
- Prabangsa: *Aja nunaning parayatna!*  
Don't be lax!
- Deh: *Inggih...*  
Yes...
- Prabangsa: *Irika tan sumanangsaya ri tindakira. Tansah iniring lan para Potet ira parasama. Ndatan Doh! Ya, Buh! Buh!*  
Not afraid of my steps forward. Forever accompanied by all my Potet 'entourage'. (They sit down together.)
- Buh: *Inggih, titiang!*  
Yes, sire!
- Prabangsa: *Aja doh, aja doh!*  
Don't go far! Don't go far!
- Buh: *Mase doh parekan cokor i déwa!*  
Your attendant is not far away, sire!
- Prabangsa: *Irika... aglis raris tindakira, apti jumujug marwantening Singhasari. Hm-hm-hm-hm-hm...Buh!*  
With speed we stride toward our intended destination, Singhasari. Hm-hm-hm-hm-hm...Buh!

Buh: *Ha-ha-ha-ha! Inggih, titiang!*  
Ha-ha-ha-ha! Your attendant, sire!

Prabangsa: *Aja doh, aja doh, aja doh!*  
Don't be far away! Don't be far away!

Buh: *Mase doh parekan cokor i déwa!*  
Your attendant is not far away, sire!

Prabangsa: *Tet!*

Potet *Tiang...*  
I am close by...

Prabangsa: *Tet!*

Potet *Ay...*



*Gambuh* of Sésétan; *Prabu Manis* (refined king), *Putri* (princess) & *Togog* (servant) on far left  
Photo by Colin McPhee circa 1931-38  
Courtesy of UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive & Colin McPhee Estate

- Track #10      *Bapang Selisir*      *Gambuh* of Sésétan
- Panji:      *Pih ratu, linangkara kawiharanya, lingnira, rakryana prabu, nayaka hulun. Kang ngarasmin pranaraga, yan a tekani sira Panji Malatrasmi, sira yuwaka.*  
Oh, how restless, said His Majesty raja (to himself). Hail, my attendant. I am handsome, I have arrived, I am Panji Malatrasmi. Respects to you all!
- Semar:      *Bih, déwa ratu, mase doh titiang, ngraris cokor i déwa mamarga!*  
Hail, sire. I am close by. Please, sire, proceed!
- Panji:      *Mijil, aja kurang parayatna!*  
I have come out, don't be lax!
- Balantatit:      *Inggih, mase déwék, ngraris cokor i déwa mamarga!* (in background)  
Ya, baiklah, Tuanku, silakan Tuanku berjalan!  
Yes, all right, sire, please, sire, proceed!
- Panji:      *Angapa kramanikang ira linangkara. Ariaris ira, bipraya alunga marwantening Singhasari, sira yuwaka, krian!*  
(To himself) Why are you talking? I must go toward Singhasari.  
(To Semar) Follow me, oh, my attendant!
- Semar:      *Béh, déwa ratu, mase doh titiang, raris cokor i ratu mamarga!*  
Hail, Your Lordship, please, master, proceed!
- Panji:      *Yan hudakakena sang sikaning Singhasari!*  
I wish to visit the heavenly nymph, Princess Singhasari!
- Semar:      *Ainggih, durusang pisan déwa ratu mangdé gelis, déwa ratu.*  
Yes, please, sire, so that you can quickly meet, sire.
- Panji:      *Tansah iniring kadian-kadian nira prasama. Hanan ipun arangga sisianira, Kebo Tan Mundur, Angun-Angun, Banyak Taluwarsa.<sup>104</sup> Irika prasama lumiring. Sira haywa doh.*  
(Speaking to himself) Accompanied by my attendants, among others, Kebo Tan Mundur, Angun-angun, Banyak Taluwarsa. (Speaking to them) Prepare yourselves to join me on my journey. Don't keep yourselves at a distance.
- Semar:      *Bih, déwa ratu, mase doh titiang, ngararis cokor i déwa mamarga!*  
Hail, Your Lordship. Please, sire, set out!

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<sup>104</sup> Also called Talawarsa and Tarawarsa.



Panji: *Riwus saturan samangkana, laju denira lumakwa. Sira haywa doh.*  
 (To himself) After these servants' comments, he speedily departs.  
 (To his attendants) Don't be far away!

Semar: *Mase déwék titiang déwa ratu, raris cokor i déwa mamarga!*  
 All right, Your Lordship. Please, sire, proceed!

Vickers (2006: 211-13) discusses these characters as *kanda*, extensions of Panji's self-identity, also as older siblings, and within the stories as his *kadéan* 'companions'. Ketut Wirtawan explains that one of these, Kebo Tan Mundur, Panji's Patih 'minister', can also disguise himself as Punta, his 'attendant-advisor'.



*Gambuh* of Puri Tabanan

From left to right: *suling*, *rebab*, *gumanak* and *kangsi*

Photo by Colin McPhee circa 1931-38

Courtesy of UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive & Colin McPhee Estate



*Suling gambuh* of Puri Tabanan  
Photo by Colin McPhee circa 1931-38  
Courtesy of UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive & Colin McPhee Estate

#11 *Peperangan Sira Panji dengan Prabangsa* *Gambuh* of Sésétan

Prabangsa: *Laju rakwa denira bipraya jumujug marwantening Singhasari, yan anguwah-huwahakena punang nira Panji Malatrasmi. Buh!*  
With speed he [referring to himself] moves toward Singhasari to assault Panji Malatrasmi. Buh!

Buh: *Titiang!*  
It is I!

Prabangsa: *Aja nunaning parayatna!*  
Don't be lax!

Buh: *Inggih! Mase doh!*  
All right! I'm with you!

Prabangsa: *Aja doh, aja doh, aja doh!*  
Don't go far! Don't go far! Don't go far!

- Buh: *Inggih, ngraris mamarga!*  
All right, please go forward!
- Prabangsa: *Irika... kadulu punang Jaran Anteban.*  
There...the Horse of Anteban is seen.
- Buh: *Inggih, sayuwakti angob titiang!*  
Yes, this attendant can surely see it!
- Prabangsa: *Siapa adruwé kuda iki?*  
Who owns this horse?<sup>105</sup>
- Buh: *Ih, nyén ngelah jarané né? Nyen?*<sup>106</sup>  
Hey, who owns this horse? Who?
- Deh: *Anak lén, Déwagung*  
Someone else, My Lord
- Prabangsa: *Yan pejahakena punang jaran iki, kadiang punapa?*  
So, if this horse was killed, what would happen?
- Buh: *Yén matiang né kénkén?*  
If it was killed, what would happen?
- Deh: *Nguda matiang jaran anaké?*  
Why would you want to kill someone's horse?
- Prabangsa: *Laju rakwa denira bipraya amejahakena punang jaran Anteban. Mundur! Ih! Irika katon sampun pinejahakena.*  
With force someone is killing the horse of Anteban.  
Back away! Oh, look! The Horse of Anteban is dead!
- (Panji arrives)
- Semar: *Men kénkén?*  
Well, what's this?
- Panji *Ih!*  
Oh!

<sup>105</sup> In Batuan performances, Prabangsa is really not aware since he inebriated (conversation with Ketut Wirtawan (2014)

<sup>106</sup> According to Nyoman Suarka, *ih* in Balinese is like 'hai' in Indonesian and 'hey' in English, but angry (conversation, 2015).

- Prabangsa: *Sira Panji jumujug jumujug jumujug!*  
Hey! Prince Panji is coming!
- Buh: *Ingih, ngeraris medal aratu medal!*  
Yes, come out, My Lord, come out!
- Prabangsa *Satata kita ngéres-ngérés kéwala!*  
Always stealing the ladies's attention!
- Balantatit: *Duén cokor i déwa kapademang aratu, ipun kamatiang antuk I Prabangsa.*  
That which was owned by Your Lordship is already killed by Master Prabangsa!
- Prabangsa: *Uh, Ino Panji!*  
Hey, Ino Panji!<sup>107</sup>
- Panji: *Duh, ari wawu mangkana. Atur ipun Ki Balantatit. Antian, tan sipi asebet rasaning twasira. Ndah reko denira. Mangké bipraya amalesi. Kadulu pun I Jaran Anteban ngemasaken antaka palatra.*  
If that's the case, report to me, Ki Balantatit. Oh, there's no limit to this heart's grief! Thus, this situation now calls for killing! The Horse of Anteban was killed!
- Semar: *Ingih, sayuwakti.*  
Yes, truly.
- Panji: *Ih, kita Prabangsa!*  
Oh, you, Prabangsa!
- Semar: *Ih, kita Prabangsa, i ratu!*  
Hey, you, Prabangsa!
- Panji: *Punapa marmaning kita amejahakena pun I Jaran Anteban?*  
Why did you kill the Horse of Anteban?
- Balantatit: *Kénkén kranané awanan i ratu ngamatiang I Jaran Anteban?*  
What is the reason you killed the Horse of Anteban?
- Panji: *Aparan ta hana singsalira?*  
What did it do wrong?

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<sup>107</sup> Referring to Panji's other name, Radén Ino Nusapati, *ino* being a title of *mantri* 'prince'.

- Semar: *Kénkén pelihné?*  
What did it do wrong?
- Panji: *Pun I Jaran Anteban?*  
The Horse of Anteban?
- Semar: *I Jaran Antebané?*  
The Horse of Anteban?
- Panji: *Dadi kita?*  
Why did you?
- Semar: *Dadi i ratu?*  
Why did you?
- Panji: *Amejahakena pun Jaran Anteban.*  
Kill the Horse of Anteban?
- Balantatit: *Sahasa ngamatiang druén ida ring i ratu.*  
Killing My Lordship's own favorite.
- Panji: *Warah...warah!*  
Speak!
- Prabangsa: *Ih, I Panji Malatrasmi. Akwéh kita ujar.*  
Hey, Panji Malatrasmi. Too much talking!
- Buh: *Liu pandikan i ratuné, liu.*  
You're talking too much!
- Prabangsa: *Tan wurung kita.*  
You better make sure.
- Buh: *I ratu sing ja nawang.*  
You don't know.
- Prabangsa: *Kita singsal sama inghulun. Satata kita angéres-érésa kéwala jinek wong pawestri.*  
You always wrong me when it comes to women! There's no end to your stealing women's attention!
- Buh: *Sing suwud-suwud i ratu ngérés-érésin anak luh, nggih!*  
There's no end to your stealing women's attention!
- Prabangsa: *Dudu kuda iki adruwé singsal. Kita kéwala amawa singsal.*  
Indeed, this horse did nothing wrong. It's you who have brought bad

fortune.

Panji: *Ih apa-apa kita Prabangsa!*  
Hey, what are you talking about, Prabangsa?

Semar: *Ih kénkén!*  
Oh, how is that?

Panji: *Haywa akweh ujar. Yan ajati kita wani!*  
Don't talk so much! If you are really bold against me!

Semar: *Yan sujati ratu wanén!*  
If you're truly brave!

Prabangsa: *Énak-énak pukulun, énak!*  
All right, Your Honor, all right!



*Suling gambuh & rebab in Batuan*  
Photo by Colin McPhee circa 1931-38  
Courtesy of UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive & Colin McPhee Estate



*Gambuh* of Sésétan; *Condong* (maidservant)  
Photo by Colin McPhee circa 1931-38  
Courtesy of UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive & Colin McPhee Estate



*Gambuh* of Sésétan; *Rangga/Patih Tua* (old minister)

Photo by Colin McPhee circa 1931-38

Courtesy of UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive & Colin McPhee Estate





Early form of *réyong* depicted in stone reliefs at the East Javanese temple Candi Panataran (11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century)  
Photo by Colin McPhee circa 1931-38  
Courtesy of UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive & Colin McPhee Estate



*Gamelan angklung kocok* of Culik, Karangasem  
Photo by Colin McPhee circa 1931-38  
Courtesy of UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive & Colin McPhee Estate



*Réyong klénténg in gamelan angklung kléntangan*

Photo by Colin McPhee circa 1931-38

Courtesy of UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive & Colin McPhee Estate

### **A Brief Perspective on *Gamelan Angklung***

Colin McPhee writes:

The *gamelan angklung* has always been a ceremonial orchestra of the village and was never employed, I have been told many times, at the court. Heard at temple anniversaries and called upon to play at all village festivals, this essentially folk orchestra is perhaps the most useful ensemble to the smaller community, supplying bright ceremonial music of a lighter character than that of the *gamelan gong*. In smaller villages, especially in the Karangasem district, the *gamelan angklung* often replaces altogether the *gamelan gong* for ceremonial occasions, and is brought out only at the time of temple anniversaries and village cremation rites.

While the name of this gamelan would seem to indicate an orchestra composed of, or at least including, a number of *angklungs*, these ancient instruments have long since been abandoned in most of Bali. We may thus speak of two forms of this orchestra, one in current use throughout the

island, and an older form including *angklungs*, which is found chiefly in a few scattered villages of Karangasem.<sup>108</sup>

Each *angklung* instrument McPhee was referring to consists of three to four large, shaken (*kocok*) bamboo tubes, and is now specifically called *angklung kocok*.

Again, McPhee describes:

The *angklung* included in this orchestra is found in two forms. The one most generally employed is furnished with three bamboo tubes of different lengths which are hung within a light wooden frame and tuned to sound a single tone in three octaves when the frame is shaken (Fig 62). The other form is supplied with four tubes; two larger tubes of equal length produce the basic tone, while two smaller tubes sound the tone an octave higher...

...In Java the *angklung* is generally shaken back and forth to produce a tremelo tone. In Bali a single or quickly repeated double tone is preferred. The frame can be given a single jerk, causing each tube to knock against one end of its slot only, producing a sharp staccato tone; or it can be shaken so that the tubes or it can be shaken so that the tubes knock once against each end of the slots, giving an accented tone with a fainter echo. The tone produced is hollow and musical, amplified by the doubling in octaves. Four instruments, each tuned to a different scale tone, complete the set. Each is operated by a single player. The instruments are sounded in close succession, creating figuration patterns that continue without a break throughout the composition...<sup>109</sup>

McPhee researched the genre in eastern villages including Culik, Abang, Prasi, and Mega Tiga. The other bamboo instruments included in these ensembles were *cungklik* (now most often called *tingklik*), “a xylophone with a two-octave range, and the *grantang*, similar in range but having for keys a series of bamboo tubes.” In addition to the bamboo instruments was a more typical four-tone *gamelan angklung* consisting of between ten and fourteen bronze-keyed metallophones, a set of four *réyong*, *kempur*, and two *kendang*.

McPhee wrote:

The main body of the ensemble is composed of four-keyed metallophones—two *jegogans*, four or six large *gendérs* or *gangsa gantung*, and a corresponding number of small *gendérs* an octave higher in pitch. There are no pokok tones to be melodically developed. Instead, the complete melody is played in octaves by the *gangsa gantung* group

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<sup>108</sup> 1966: 234

<sup>109</sup> 1966: 235

and stressed at regular intervals by the *jegogans*. An ornamental paraphrase of the melody is performed by the *chungklik*, a xylophone with a two-octave range, and the *grantang*, similar in range but having for keys a series of bamboo tubes. Figuration accompaniment is furnished by a set of four *angklungs* and a set of four *réongs*. The *kempur* supplies the key punctuation, while secondary accentuation is sounded by the *kempli* or omitted altogether. To very small drums are included, the *kendang angklung*, which are beaten with sticks. In the more remote Karangasem villages where this form of gamelan generally substitutes for the more powerful *gamelan gong*, several pairs of large cymbals are added to the ensemble.

Occasionally, a two-octave *trompong* is included in the gamelan, on which florid solos are improvised against the unison melody of the *gangsas*. In the village of Abang, far up in the hills, I discovered an unusual instrument, described as “*trompong misi bruk*,” *trompong* supplied with “*bruk*” or open coconut shells. Here thick slabs of sugarpalm (*jaka*) wood substituted for gongs, and the coconut shells, hung in a row beneath the keys, acted as resonator...A solo instrument in the two-octave range, however, is unusual in the *gamelan angklung*, which is essentially an ensemble that is melodically confined to the limits of the basic four-tone scale (1966: 235).<sup>110</sup>

Emotions associated with hearing *angklung* music vary (in addition to differences amongst individuals) according to its function, which in turn varies by region. In the Badung (Denpasar) district as well as Buléléng, North Bali, and most of Gianyar, *angklung* is mostly played for *Pitra Yadnya* death rituals. Many people we have discussed this with have said that hearing *angklung* reminds them of someone’s death and therefore brings out sad feelings. Certain villages in Denpasar, including Krobokan and Kayumas Kelod, in Karangasem, and in the district of Gianyar, including Ubud and Sidan, play *angklung* for *odalan* ‘temple festivals’ as well as *Pitra Yadnya*; so one cannot generalize about emotional impact.<sup>111</sup>

While some people say that *angklung* makes them sad, thinking of a departed family member, many others say that the intent with *angklung* is to fill the feeling of emptiness, liminality or loss with the bright and light resonance of music. Various stages of death rituals that can be accompanied by *angklung* or *kléntangan* are *penyiraman* ‘collective washing of the body’ that can include extended family and *banjar* members; *ngabén* ‘cremation’, *ngrorasin* (releasing the soul back to nature within twelve days following the cremation). As we have observed, when the *kléntangan* (*angklung*) of Sidan plays for a death-related ritual such as *ngrorasin*, the sounds and energy of the *gamelan* serve to

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<sup>110</sup> 1966: 234-235

<sup>111</sup> Wayan Suwéca points out that in most villages that use *angklung* for *Déwa Yadnya*, the *kempur* is replaced with a large *gong* and a ‘middle-sized’ *kendang nyelah* is used (conversation 2015).

brighten the mood. Some musical pieces are used specifically for any one of these given rituals, and might be known to musicians simply as, for instance, *tabuh penyiraman*.<sup>112</sup>

The *angklung kléntangan* of Sidan is also plays in association with *buta yadnya* ‘rituals associated with dissolving destructive energies back into the earth’, also described as ‘to appease and calm destructive, elemental forces’.<sup>113</sup>

McPhee (1966: 255) writes that *génggong* forms a large part of the traditional repertory of the *gamelan angklung*.<sup>114</sup> Just some of the names of *angklung* compositions he mentions are: *capung manyus* ‘bathing dragonfly’, *capung ngumbang* ‘circling dragonfly’, *dongkang menék biyu* ‘treefrog climbs coco palm’,<sup>115</sup> *dongkang menék gedang*, treefrog climbs papaya, *katak nongkék* ‘croaking frog’, *kupu-kupu metarum* ‘playful butterflies’, *lelasan megat yéh* ‘lizard parts water (to swim)’, *lindung pesu* ‘eel comes out’, *lutung megalut* ‘embracing apes’, *ombakan* ‘waves, and *tumisi kuning* ‘yellow snail’.

We might speculate that *angklung* and some other tunings could have to some extent derived from *génggong* (jew’s harp, jaw harp) and its intervals based on natural acoustical phenomena (overtone harmonics) within in the human mouth. (See the notes for *Bali 1928– Volume III*: 54 that include a discussion of *génggong*.)

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<sup>112</sup> Conversation with Nyoman Rata and Wayan Su in Sidan (2015)

<sup>113</sup> Ketut Kodi (conversation, 2013)

<sup>114</sup> This was before *kebyar*’s substantial influence on *angklung* style.

<sup>115</sup> As discussed in the notes for *Bali 1928: vol. III*, amphibians going by the name *dongkang* today are toads that are not real tree climbers, but can climb a short distance if attracted to something. *Emplégan* is the contemporary term for tree frog.



*Réyong klénténg in gamelan angklung kléntangan*

Photo by Colin McPhee circa 1931-38

Courtesy of UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive & Colin McPhee Estate

### **Gamelan Angklung of Sidan, Gianyar**

I Nyoman Rata (±1930–) remembers the musicians who would have played in 1928, and these very names and age ranges were confirmed later by other members of the *sekaa*. The musicians were Kak (grandfather) Rukin, Kak Rukén, Ketut Sekar, Kak Selér, Kak Rauh, Kak Getén, Kak Cedor, Kak Repan, Kak Repin, Kak Repun, Kak Neré, Kak Noro, Ngakan Madé Raka, Ngakan Teken, Kak Kicen, Sangging Dartá, Ngakan Ongsag, Mangku Pasek, and Kak Kebek. Listed such one gets a picture of the older linguistic style of Balinese names, which has been largely replaced by more Hindu-oriented and Sanskrit-derived names. The *sekaa* can number from seventeen to twenty four, including two who help carry the *jégogan*, and are generally drawn from three genealogical groups in Sidan.

The *gamelan angklung* of Sidan is one of the last of its kind to include a *réyong* ‘small gong-chime’ of ancient origin.<sup>116</sup> This early form of *réyong* is depicted in stone reliefs at two East Javanese temples – Candi Panataran (constructed during the period between the 11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries) and Candi Ngrimbi.

McPhee also writes:

Most interesting of these reliefs are those of Chandi Panataran, especially for their documentary representations of instruments long obsolete in Java, but found in identical form in Bali today. The strange dumbbell-shaped *réyong*, long mistaken by archaeologists for a kind of drum but actually a pair of small gongs mounted at the ends of a connecting crosspiece, appears four times on one panel. Four musicians are seated on the ground, the *réyongs* lying across their laps. From the position of the striking sticks in relation to the gongs we know that the men are engaged in performing interlocking polyrhythmic parts, as Balinese *réyong* players continue to do today.<sup>117</sup>

McPhee continues several pages later:

“A simple form of gong-chime or set of tuned gongs is found in the curious *réyong angklung* or *klénténg(an)* still used in the Balinese *gamelan angklung* of today. This small orchestra is employed for processions, and the instruments were probably developed in order that the gongs could be easily played while carried. At each end of a transverse, dumbbell shaped piece of wood a small gong is strung in vertical position. When carried, the *réyong* is suspended horizontally before the player by means of a cord passed round the neck. The player strikes sideways on the gongs with a light stick held in each hand, as though striking the ends of a transverse drum.”<sup>118</sup>

McPhee refers to *réyong angklung* as “*klénténg*, as they are often called,” (or as ‘antique *réyong*’) and remarks that, “The *gamelan* itself is occasionally referred to as *klénténg(an)*” (1966: 244). Today people of Sidan (especially when talking amongst themselves) still generally refer to the *gamelan* as *kléntangan* ‘to strike or hit’, and the instrumentation is unusual – or even unique – in many respects. *Klentang* (without the accent) often refers to the sound of something being hit energetically (making the sound *tang*).<sup>119</sup> It consists of two pairs of *réyong* (each consisting of two tones), usually played

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<sup>116</sup> According to Wayan Suwéca, the *angklung/kléntangan* ensembles of Titih, Kayumas Kelod, Banjar Bun and Panjer still use the antique *réyong klénténg*, but only for *maped* ‘ritual processions’ (conversation 2015).

<sup>117</sup> 1966: 25

<sup>118</sup> 1966: 29

<sup>119</sup> Despite regional differences that render divergent meanings based on pronunciation, the *Kamus Bali-Indonesia* (1990) dictionary defines *kléntangan* as ‘another name for *angklung*’; *klentang* as ‘a loud sound produced by striking an object’; *klénteng* as having the same meaning as *kléntang*; *klenting* as ‘the sound of



by two different musicians, two small *kendang*, four *gendér* (elsewhere often called *pemadé* or *gangsa*), two *jégog* (*jégogan*), played with a soft mallet creating a less percussive sound; four *kantilan*, two *cururing* (alternately called *curing* and *ceriring*), three pairs of *céngcéng cakep* ‘to close’ (elsewhere called *céngcéng kopyak*) played by three musicians, and one *kempur*. The small 12 ½ cm. in diameter *céngcéng* of Sidan are just one unusual feature of the *kléntangan* ensemble, larger than the *rincik* for *palégongan* but much smaller than the *céngcéng* played in a related style by processional *gamelan bebonangan* or *balaganjur*.

Both the *curing* and *gendér* use a single *panggul* ‘mallet’ in the style of those for *gendér wayang* (*gamelan* for shadow puppet theater). While the method of holding the mallet and striking the keys is the same as for *gendér wayang*, *matekep* ‘damping’ of each key is done with the left hand, whereas with *gendér wayang* each hand strikes and dampens independently. The two *cururing* also play the same part as the *gendér* but an octave higher. Their interlocking figuration technique of *molos* (*polos*) ‘basic’ and *sangsih* ‘filling in’ is referred to by various terms including *candétan* ‘sounds that match or answer each other’ or *kotékan*, in other Balinese genres and *angklung* styles. In Sidan the technique is called *panandan* ‘ornamentation’.

The four *kantilan* play in the upper-octave range as the *curing*, but use a mallet with a curved head made from the tip of a bull’s horn. This creates a *nyaring*, *merdu* ‘brighter, mellifluous’, metallic timbre for their interlocking technique called *ngoncang* (*oncangan*), with *polos* and *sangsih* alternating back and forth, often in straight melodic lines including all four tones. This *ngoncang* technique is found in a variety of *gamelan* genres including *gamelan gong* and *gambang*, and originally derives from the (mostly women’s) rhythmic activity of husking rice with bamboo or coconut wood pestles.

One unique feature of the *angklung kléntangan* of Sidan is the prominence of their *réyong klénténg*, which sometimes begin pieces, providing the *pangalihan*, but also can serve as *ugal*, leading the other instruments through the melodic phrasings. Nyoman Rata suggests – because of the fluid melodic phrasing – the *réyong* on these recordings was played by one very adept musician.

The most unusual melodic figuration technique played frequently by the *gendér*, *curing* and *kantilan* is the use of *noltol* ‘which derives from the way birds peck over and over again at bits of grain with their beaks bobbing up and down’. *Noltol* is often synonymous with *neteg* (*paneteg*) ‘consistent’ as in ‘hitting something repeatedly’, but *noltol* is the term we have heard amongst musicians in Sidan. This repetition of a single tone is found in other archaic genres such as *Semar Pagulingan* (as played by the *gamelan* of Titih on CD #3). When the *gamelan* of Sidan is heard live (and outdoors, without amplification, which it almost invariably is), the *noltol* repetition of single tones allows for a fuller experience of the *ombak* ‘acoustical waves’—and the sustained resonance creates a nuance of song, as the sound of a human voice can be sustained.

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an metal object falling with great impact’; *klentung* as the sound of a *kentong*. Another *Kamus Bali-Indonesia* (2008) has *kléntangan* as ‘*angklung*’ and *kléntang* as the same as *klentang*.

There is no *kempli* or *kelenang* and, to some degree in their place, one function of the drums is to keep the pulse. The drumming style of Sidan at present is considered a *kuna* ‘ancient style’ of *lanang* and *wadon* answering each other back and forth in a fashion called *gegulet* ‘wrestling’ with an implication of revolving and turning between two bodies. This contrasts with other *kendang* styles showing more variation without the responsibility of helping to keep the pulse.

There is also no *suling*. The instruments are so small and light that the *gamelan* can play in processional activities without extra helpers to carry the *gendér*, *kantilan*, etc. Normally, with processional *angklung*, the instrument is hung from a bamboo pole and the helper lodges the front end on his shoulder while the musician has the back end resting on his as he strikes the instrument. Perhaps the most unique instrument of the Sidan ensemble is the *réyong*, which can function as *ugal*, leading the ensemble.

The ensemble now goes by the name Sekaa Sida Arsa Budaya Sidan and is housed at the Puri Sidan. A fine recording of the *angklung* of Sidan has been released commercially but the spirit and intense, sweet feeling and *ombak* ‘vibrations, acoustical waves’ of the *gamelan* make the live listening experience vastly more affecting. In earlier times the *kléntangan* was stored at an individual family dwelling but for ages no one has been bold enough to house the instruments due to their sacred and powerful spiritual nature. The group is invited to play throughout Bali for a range of ceremonies. In Sidan it has always been played for the three days of the *odalan* at the Pura Bukit Camplung which is a *Pura Kahyangan* comprising worship to the Rice Goddess Déwi Sri and Déwi Uma – and as such a *pura subak* ‘agricultural temple’ – as well as to the mountains Gunung Agung and Batur (represented by *Betara Siwa* and his consort, Déwi Parwati and wife, Giri Putri).

Déwa Mangku Manggis of Pura Masceti, the specifically subak-related component of Pura Bukit Camplung<sup>120</sup> in Sidan, describes the oral history of the *kléntangan* going back to the bronze age. Ramseyer wrote:

“Among the most striking elements of the Metal Age culture in Southeast Asia are the deep-rimmed kettle gongs, often misleadingly described as ‘bronze drums’,<sup>121</sup> various types of which may be found from Inner Mongolia through Indochina and Indonesia up to the Kai Islands. Archaeologically they can be dated back to 300 B.C. on the basis of the finds in the tombs of Dong s’ou. The Balinese kettle gong of Péjéng—186.5 cm long and with a sounding surface 160 cm in diameter—is the largest known specimen of its kind. Typologically, this hourglass-shaped gong is an exception (Heger 1902) and has on various occasions been associated with the small kettle gongs of Alor (mocco). These small Alor gongs may still be in use as ritual ‘currency’ today.”<sup>122</sup>

<sup>120</sup> ‘Temple on the Hill of Camplung Trees’, which bear fruit shaped like marbles.

<sup>121</sup> Ramseyer 1977: 252 explains, “The kettle gong is not a membranophone (an instrument, like a drum, in which the sound is produced by a membrane stretched over a frame); it is an idiophone (an instrument made from a solid, naturally sonorous material),” with the entire instrument vibrating.

<sup>122</sup> Ramseyer *ibid*: 26-27

Indeed, *moko* are still used in Alor as a wedding dowry from the bride's family to the groom's. This and other *nekara* 'bronze drums' may be seen at the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Pura Panataran Sasih and at the Museum Purbakala, both in Pégéng. Motifs of the extant *nekara* include along with human faces, depictions of frogs. There is some speculation that these bronze drums (or gongs of a sort) could have been played to induce rain for agricultural needs.<sup>123</sup>

Interestingly, the *klénténg* (*réyong*) that McPhee describes as dumbbell-shaped bear a resemblance to bronze, "hourglass-shaped" *moko*.

In *The Kettledrums of Southeast Asia: A Bronze Age World and its Aftermath*, A.J. Bernet Kempers writes that "Indonesia stands out for the Pejeng type drums, headed by the Pejeng 'Moon'... but the main centre of products that to all appearances are of local creation, is indisputably on the island of Bali."<sup>124</sup> Earlier in the book, he speculates:

For the time being, it is virtually impossible to prove that individual gongs and gong-sets already existed prior to the invention of the kettledrum as a species of metallophones... On the other hand it can be proven that gong-sets were contemporaneous with at least some of the more elaborate kettledrums, such as the Tonkin drums and the Sangeang drum... And why should they not? At that time metalworkers who created kettledrums of that type were skilled technicians, certainly capable of casting or forging things like gongs.<sup>125</sup>

The oral history that I Gusti Lanang Artika heard in Sidan<sup>126</sup> traces back to sometime during the kingdom of Gélgél, when the threat of enemies inspired villagers in Sidan to find a bronze-smith to make instruments that would frighten intruders who had ill intent. The combination of *réyong* and *kempur* was called *kléntangan*. It was not merely the raucous sound of these bronze instruments that caused intruders to be wary, but rather the *kléntangan*'s *niskala* 'unseen' force that was extremely *tenget* 'spiritually charged' and felt by any ill-willed outsiders. This quality was endowed to a large extent by prayers for *pasupati* 'spiritual power' to the deity Ida Bhatara Bukit Camplung, and the *kléntangan* was then stored in the Pura Bukit Camplung.

The instruments were played regularly for temple ceremonies and for the purpose of healing through their sound, most specifically for healing children who were mute or had been poisoned (and this practice continues to the present). The Sidan chronology related by Gusti Lanang Artika<sup>127</sup> continues around the 17<sup>th</sup> century when the idea arose to add other instruments that would constitute a *gamelan*: seventeen people were appointed as

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<sup>123</sup> Conversation with I Nyoman Adi Suryadarma, Museum Purbakala, Pégéng (2015).

<sup>124</sup> 1988: 240

<sup>125</sup> 1988: 60

<sup>126</sup> 1982: 10–16. His principal source of historical perspective was Anak Agung Oka Arya Putra of Sidan, who was born in 1917 (Conversation with Gusti Lanang Artika, 2015).

<sup>127</sup> 1982: 13–14

founders of the ensemble, and this core number of members continues to the present. The metal mixture to be cast and forged consisted of a bronze with gold.

Recent archaeological excavations (since Kempers's 1988 book) conducted by Wayan Ardika, Peter Bellwood and others – aided by new technologies for more accurately dating objects – lead them to place the bronze culture of Bali and the rest of Indo-Malaysian archipelago around 150 BC.<sup>128</sup> “This suggests strong links with the Indian subcontinent and Mainland Southeast Asia from the late first millennium BC, some 200 years earlier than previously thought.”<sup>129</sup> Bronze Age artifacts from the Dong Son ‘East Mountain’ culture of Vietnam dating between 500 BC–200 AD are seen as contemporaneous with bronzes found in Bali and elsewhere in island Southeast Asia.<sup>130</sup>

By wide-ranging accounts, the *pandé krawang* ‘bronze smith’ who forged the *gamelan angklung kléntangan* of Sidan was considered to be endowed with *sakti* ‘spiritual power’<sup>131</sup> and great skill, as evidenced by the *tenget* ‘spiritually-charged’ character of this *gamelan*. Also, keys of the metallophones are comparatively thin (especially compared with today's *kebyar*-influenced keys), and have a unique resonance and ambience.

Today, the *kléntangan*'s healing function involves *réyong*, *kempur* and *céngcéng* (the three of which collectively comprise *wewangsuhan*). *Wangsuh* ‘wash’ refers to the process in which a flower (of any kind) is dipped into water and rubbed over the *gamelan* instruments rendering the water as *tirta* ‘holy water’ for prayer and healing. The water is collected in a glass which an afflicted person can later drink at home. People still come from other regions of Bali for such treatment if there are medical problems such as with a child with a disability, especially those who are not able to speak. Or they may just have the *réyong*, *kempur*, and *céngcéng* strike a tone (not to play a melody), which is thought to have a healing affect<sup>132</sup>.

Déwa Mangku Manggis of Sidan recently expressed the idea that the earliest instruments during the Stone Age were four-tone flat-keyed bamboo xylophone, *cungklik* or *tungklik* (nowadays called *tingklik*), which eventually gave way to the flat-keyed bronze *gangsra*, followed by the shaped gong-chimes.<sup>133</sup> It is worth noting that the *pamangku*'s attribution of Bali's bronze instruments dating back to the Bronze Age is in keeping with that of Kempers and contemporary archaeologists.

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<sup>128</sup> “In Classical times, the Indian continent was central to a trading network that ran west to the Mediterranean world revolving around Rome: despite its name, the Mediterranean was not the centre of the known world. Another world opened eastwards from India, and there are many obscure references to its eastern fringes. Now a series of finds from Bali, in the Indonesian archipelago, gives the elusive direct connection of Indian traders to that farther east.” Ardika and Bellwood 1991: 221.

<sup>129</sup> Calo et al. 2015: 378

<sup>130</sup> Calo et al. 2015: 389

<sup>131</sup> Weiner 1995: 58 writes: “Power, *kasaktian*, results from the generation or maintenance of connections between a person and the invisible world, especially (though not exclusively) the gods.”

<sup>132</sup> Conversation with Nyoman Rata (2015)

<sup>133</sup> Conversation (2015)

As in many other villages, a considerable number of the compositions do not have names. In Sidan, names of musical tones are not standardized amongst ensemble members. Some adept musicians gave the four tones as *néng-nong-nang-ning*, when asked, while others offered a variety of versions. This is just one of endless examples of how Balinese terminologies vary (if applied at all), especially amongst especially unique local traditions (as the “normal” pitch names for *angklung* are *néng-nung-nang-ning*). Musicians explained that the melodies are not taught vocally (using pitch names) as in a great many other *gamelan* genres, but are rather learned through the direct action of *pukulan* or *gegebug* ‘hitting the keys’. Some musical terms seem to be unique to Sidan. Rather than *kawitan* for the first section, musicians use the term *pamungkah* ‘opening’ (played by two *gendér*, *molos* and *sangsih*), followed by a *pangawak* ‘body’ of a composition. Some musicians in Sidan use the term *pangécét* while others do not, although many pieces do indeed have a fast concluding section.

McPhee writes:

Shorter compositions may be based on the simple ostinato unit or consist of a single melodic period repeated at will. Longer compositions follow the traditional *pengawak-pengecét* plan. All forms show, however, a surprising freedom in metric structure. Ostinato units contain not only the usual eight or sixteen *pokok* tones, but often consist of ten, eleven, or twelve. Extended periods show a similar irregularity” (1966: 247).

He subsequently adds:

The group of compositions in which figuration is replaced by clearly defined and fluid melody are more loosely constructed...While some of the gendings of this class have contrasting *pengawak* and *pengecét* movements, the great majority are completely free in form. Each has its own individual shape, not too different from the others, but organized in its own special way. Chains of short melodic sections are interwoven with syncopated linking passages; ostinatos with figuration accompaniment are introduced for contrast. Like the *gending pewayangan*, which they greatly resemble in their elasticity, these compositions can be extended or shortened during performance through prolonged or limited repetition of the various episodes (1966: 252).



*Angklung* procession

Photo by Colin McPhee circa 1931-38

Courtesy of UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive & Colin McPhee Estate

### Recordings of the *Gamelan Angklung* of Sidan

#### Track #12 *Tabuh Merdah*

According to several musicians including Nyoman Rata and his son Wayan Su, this *tabuh* is still in the repertoire but without the name. Merdah is one of the four *parekan* (*panasar*) in *wayang* shadow puppet theater, *wayang wong* (*Ramayana*) and *Parwa* (*Mahabharata*) dance dramas. While there is no known direct connection between the musical piece and the character, Pak Rata suggests that the *tabuh* might have been given the name to evoke a certain late-night association with *wayang*.

However, McPhee did write:

“Indeed, many *angklung* gamelans include in their repertory compositions said to be “drawn” (*ditarik*) from the *gending pewayangan*. *Angklung*

compositions such as “*pemungkah*” and *lagu gendér wayang*” are based on four-tone ostinatos and melodic episodes taken directly from the *wayang* repertory – a practice showing how closely related the two scale systems are considered to be by the Balinese” (1966: 246).

At the very opening (described by Wayan Suwéca of Kayumas as *pangalihan* ‘searching’)<sup>134</sup> is repeated beginning after each *kempur*. In *angklung* this *pangalihan* can be outside or within the main body of the *tabuh* ‘composition’. It is played by one *gendér* (*pemadé* ‘middle-range’ as with the birth-order name for people Madé ‘second born’).

One notices throughout all four of the Sidan pieces an uneven or inconsistent phrasing of the lower *jégogan* melody, unlike traditional *gamelan gong* and *pelégongan* compositions that punctuate according to regular phrases of 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, and so on. As Wayan Suwéca suggests, the twists and turns of melody – rather than the structural form – constitute the essential style of the composition.

However, it may be of interest to observe how the *tabuh* was fit into the three minutes limit. The phrase of eight *jégogan* beats (call it ‘section A’) is repeated three times, followed by a ‘section B’ of eight *jégogan* beats which leads into the first *kempur* at 01:14. Then ‘section A’ is repeated only twice before the eight beats of ‘section B’ ending with the second *kempur* at 02:12. Then, the eight beats of ‘section A’ is repeated twice, leading into ‘section B’ at 02:52 which needed to be concluded suddenly.

### Track #13 *Ngisep Dublag*

This is the one track that Nyoman Rata identified by name upon hearing the recording. *Ngisep* refers to the higher-pitched of a pair of *gamelan* tones creating *ombak* ‘waves’ or ‘acoustical beats’. Both refer to activity of bumblebees: *pangumbang* ‘hummer’ and *pangisep* ‘sucker’ (as in sucking the nectar from a flower). The waves move through the air, and American composer Alvin Lucier has experimented and confirmed with scientists that the acoustical beats actually traverse space from the lower (in Bali, *pangumbang*) to the higher (*pangisep*), confirming the veracity of what since ancient times has likely been a Balinese observation of sound phenomena.<sup>135</sup>

*Dublag* (*jublág*) is similar to a *jégogan* but an octave higher. Composer Wayan Beratha, also a *gamelan* maker and tuner, concurred with these numbers, adding that he preferred *angklung* – most commonly associated with music for death rituals such as cremation – to be in the slower six *ombak* per second range so it resembles a person weeping.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Suwéca suggests *pangalihan* rather than *kawitan* ‘origin, beginning’ which could be as long as a full *kempur* phrase. Nyoman Rata agrees that Sidan’s *pamungkah* can often be that long (2015 conversations). McPhee uses another common term: “each movement begins with the usual solo introduction or *pengawit*” (same as *kawitan*).

<sup>135</sup> Conversation with Alvin Lucier (1983)

<sup>136</sup> Conversation in Abian Kapas (2009)

McPhee writes of *angklung*:

...the *gendings* of the standard *gamelan* show great variety in structure and melodic line. Free of the basic metric forms and elaborate punctuation systems found in the *gending gong* and *pegambuhan*, they reveal a flexibility of form similar to the compositions of *gendér wayang* repertory. Like these, the *gending angklung* are not preserved in notation of any kind, but survive entirely through oral tradition (1966: 246).

The ten-count *pangalihan* ‘seaching’ begins the track and is also heard following each *kempur*. Although *céngcéng* and *rincik* cymbals are mostly kept quiet through the 1928 recordings, one can hear them sporadically in these Sidan tracks. The *cakep* closing clap of *céngcéng* right at six seconds (00:06), to signal the end of the *pangalihan* and beginning of the body of the *tabuh* ‘composition’. Again, the *pangalihan* is heard after each *kempur*.

McPhee writes:

“Like those played in Karangasem, the *gendings* of the standard *gamelan* show great variety in structure and melodic line. Free of the basic metric forms and elaborate punctuation systems found in the *gending gong* and *pegambuhan*, they reveal a flexibility of form similar to the compositions of *gendér wayang* repertory. Like these, the *gending angklung* are not preserved in notation of any kind, but survive entirely through oral tradition (1966: 246).

In *Ngisep Dublag*, one could, if one chose to, count the phrases in various ways, one being the number of *kelenang* beats (if Sidan used a *kelenang* to keep pulse, which it does not) would total 60 (not the colotomic norm of 64) to each *kempur*. (There are just under two and a half of these *kempur* phrases – at 01:11 and 02:23 – before the music had to stop.) If one included the *pangalihan* introduction as part of the *kempur* phrase count, one would have 65 beats. Or one could refrain altogether from counting and listen to the shape-shifting melody and rhythms on their own.

Track #14     *Tabuh Nandir*

Wayan Pogog of Banjar Lebah suggested there is no connection with the dance genre *nandir* (or *andir*), and Nyoman Rata agrees. Again, according to several musicians including Pak Rata and Wayan Su, this *tabuh* is still in the repertoire. Three seconds into the *pangalihan* beginning the piece is an odd phrasing not altogether unusual in *angklung* but striking in the propulsion it provides for an initial energetic impact. From the start is an even six count (what would be three *kelenang* beats if *kelenang* were playing) followed by seven beats at double-time, and then an even count of eight beats (what would be four *kelenang* beats). This leads right into a relatively explosive *céngcéng cakep* entrance at 00:08.

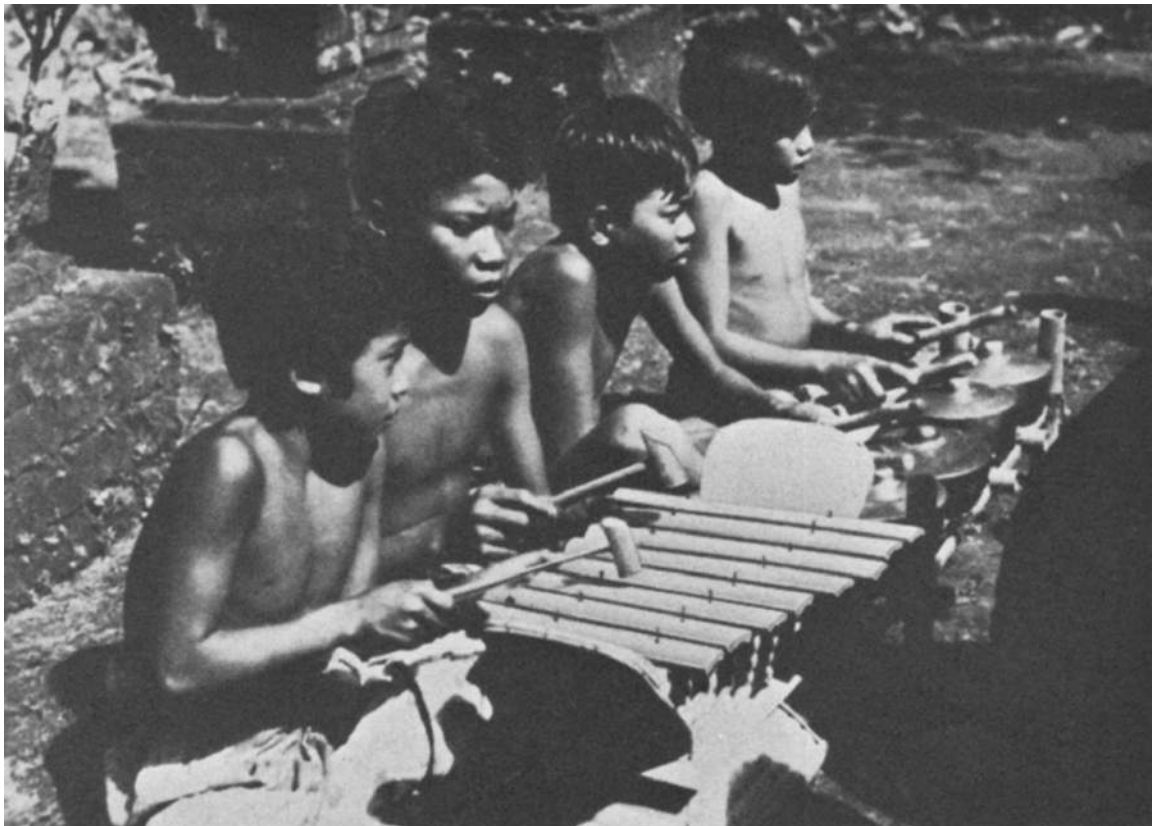


At 02:22 one clearly hears musicians' indecision with an early transition (to accommodate the three-minute time limit) into a phrase that leads toward the *kempur*.

Track #15 *Tabuh Lantang*

*Lantang* 'long' does not have any specific connotation to Nyoman Rata, and while the piece is still performed in Sidan, it does not go by this or any name. Musicians in Sidan find the *kendang* playing from 1928 as being much simpler than that of today – not intertwined with the other instruments and functioning more as a sonic presence than a rhythmic entity. But they regard other aspects of phrasing by the *gamelan* as more complex, which they find stimulating and ripe for a revival.

Again, the *jégogan* playing the lower melodic tones plays in irregular patterns, enhancing the flow of melody rather than providing a consistent phrase structure as with other genres. As the *pangalihan* 'lead-in' repeats at 01:10 and again at 02:25, it is clearly outside the phrase structure of the *tabuh* 'composition' and without a steady pulse, truly evoking the intended feeling of *alih-alih* 'searching'.



*Cungklik (tingklik) and réyong*  
 Photo by Colin McPhee circa 1931-38  
 Courtesy of UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive & Colin McPhee Estate



*Gamelan angklung* of Sayan  
Kayun playing the *pemadé* with *gendér* mallet  
Photo by Colin McPhee circa 1931-38  
Courtesy of UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive & Colin McPhee Estate



Children's *angklung* of Sayan, Ubud with bamboo *angklung kocok*  
 Photo by Colin McPhee circa 1931-38  
 Courtesy of UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive & Colin McPhee Estate

### ***Gamelan Angklung* of Pemogan, Denpasar**

Nyoman Kalér (1892–1969) – musician, composer, dance master, and academic from Pemogan – was associated with this ensemble, according to his son, I Nyoman Wisura, and members of the *sekaa angklung* of Pemogan. The custom-designed structure of each of these next four *tabuh angklung* fit neatly into three-minute arrangements, shows the hand of Nyoman Kalér as composer.

Their *gamelan* was tuned to a lower range (by scraping the bottom of each bronze key to make it thinner) in the 1950s so as to be more suitable for accompanying *légong* and *topéng* performances. It always had *prada* ‘gold paint’ on the frames, and the instruments are the same as in 1928. But upon listening to the recordings they discussed having a new *gamelan* made with the old, sweeter sound, and to some of play the older repertoire. Nowadays, the *angklung* is played only for *Pitra Yadnya* ceremonies. Generally, the *pangécét* is played over and over when the musicians are walking from the home of the deceased to the cemetery and then they switch to the *pangawak* of a new *lagu*.

The ensemble of Pemogan has the standard *angklung* instrumentation consisting of four *pemadé* (*gangsa*), four *kantilan* and two *jégogan*, *rincik* played by one musician, a *kelenang* playing consistently on the off-beat, two small *kendang*, *kempur* and *suling*.

Track #16 *Pis Satus Selaka Loyang* ‘One Hundred Coins in a Silver Bowl’

The musicians of Pemogan still play this *tabuh*. Listeners might notice that the *kelenang* plays on the beat beginning at 00:08, switching to the characteristic off-beat at 00:30 which continues to the end. The *jégogan* play a regular pulse (joining the tempo acceleration) with only one exception at 00:50 (and again for the next refrain at 02:30). This one instance has the *jégogan* playing the highest tone, *ding*, at once with the melody of the *pemadé*, and the repeated striking of the high *ding* by the smaller metallophones is subtly highlighted by the *jégogan*’s *ombak* or *getaran* ‘waves’ or ‘vibrations’ suspended in time for two extra beats.

Track #17 *Sekar Jepun* ‘Frangipani Flower’

Wayan Konolan suggested that this *tabuh* – still played by the musicians of Pamogan – is especially appropriate for rituals in the graveyard. McPhee transcribed and notated this melody based on the 1928 Odeon recording and commented: “So far, the *pokok* tones are all seen to have the same time value. In many *gendings*, however, the *jégogan* melody becomes more fluid, with certain tones extended to two, three, or even more times their normal value” (1966: 248). The effect of this irregularity within *Sekar Jepun* is that of a more lyrical role for the *jégogan*.

Track #18 *Pangawak Bérong*

*Bérong* might possibly have had a different connotation in 1928 than it does now, but among the many meanings of *béro*, perhaps the most common is a tone that is “off.” Wayan Konolan suggested the name could be humorous, and possibly reflecting the sound of the *kempur* which he described as *poh* rather than the sweeter *pur-r-r-r-r*. The musicians of Pamogan still play this *lagu*. The small *kempur* of *angklung* ensembles is often dissonant in relation to the rest of the instruments and is meant to cut through the integrated sound of the *gamelan*. According to McPhee, in the 1930s it was “generally pitched a little below the lowest tone of the *jégogan*” (1966: 245).

Track #19 *Pangécét Bérong*

In contemporary Bali, *suling* ‘bamboo flutes’ are almost always included in *angklung* ensembles (Sidan and Banjar Batur, Kamasan, Klungkung being two exceptions), but McPhee illuminates past practice with regard to this rendition of *Bérong Pangécét*: “Variety may also be given to the movement through a change of instrumentation. In the Odeon recording of the Mogan gamelan a *suling* is included in the ensemble—an unusual practice today” (1966: 251). Referring specifically to these two tracks, McPhee wrote:

*Pengechét* and *pengawak* are usually played without a pause in between, and are frequently linked together by a transitional passage which leads

from the *pengawak* to the main section of the *pengeché*... The *pengeché* is often thematically related to the *pengawak*. [In Tracks #18 and #19] the main part of the *pengeché* consists of a sixteen-tone ostinato deriving from the first sixteen *pokok* tones of the *pengawak*...

The transitional passage that introduces the *pengeché* is sounded in unison by the metallophones. Starting at the tempo of the preceding *pengawak*, whose *pokok* tones move at M. 48, it gradually increases in speed to approximately twice as fast, when the basic melody of the *pengeché* is heard for the first time (1966: 249-250).

The recording actually begins during the *pangawak* and at 00:26 transitions into the *pangécét*. McPhee comments that *suling* was an unusual component of *gamelan angklung* in the 1930s and that:

Twice during the *pengeché* the main body of the *gamelan* stops playing; the figuration is continued by the *suling* alone, sounding against the *jegogan* melody, which now moves at double speed (ibid: 261).

This *lagu* has disappeared from the Pemogan repertoire and the musicians were fascinated by the repeated section featuring *jégog* and *suling* and discussed reviving it. Even today, this kind of solo flute melody within a composition is rare or possibly unknown. The oldest member of the *sekaa*, I Ketut Konolan, remembered this *lagu*. When they brought out two *gangs* he and a younger musician played along with the 1928 recording.

Track #20      *Lagu Sésétan*                      *Gamelan Angklung* of Banjar Bun

Banjar Bun still has the antique *réyong* (*klénténg*) which it uses for *maped* ‘processionals’. It does not have the *curing* (*cururing*) as does the Sidan *angklung kléntangan*, or the small *céngcéng cakep* (*kopyak*). Wayan Suwéca adds that they still bear a little similarity with Sidan in that they play *oncangan* figurations, but only for some compositions.

According to Ida Boda’s friend and partner on the staff of Radio Republic Indonesia, musician Wayan Konolan (1923–2008), Ida Boda’s voice lowered in pitch as he grew older, and that is the sound most associated by the Balinese public. Pak Konolan described how Boda enjoyed singing in the high range that we hear in the recordings we can hear on CD #2 and the forthcoming CD #5, and made a point of performing *topéng* (generally accompanied by *gamelan gong*), with the high-pitched *gamelan angklung* of the Banjar Bun. But Boda sometimes arranged for the *gamelan* to be borrowed and played by the more virtuosic musicians from Belaluan on ceremonial occasions such as *Tumpek Landep*, *Tumpek Wayang* or *odalan* ‘temple anniversaries’.

With such precision that goes into the bronze-smithing and tuning of Balinese *gamelan*, it

is interesting how *suling* are given freedom to deviate from fixed pitches. However, the *suling* on this rendition goes beyond the norm into the realm of *béro*, which in vocal music is often prized and appreciated as a display of subtlety when performed with that intention. It is more likely the *suling* player did not bring his regular flute to the recording session and took a while to adjust to the tuning of the *gamelan*.



Bamboo *angklung kocok* of Culik, Karangasem

Photo by Colin McPhee circa 1931-38

Courtesy of UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive & Colin McPhee Estate

Track #21 *Semarandana*

*Suling* duet by I Klingéng Buta & Ida Bagus Pegug of Ubud

Like *Sinom* (on Track #1) *Semarandana* is a *tembang* ‘song’ of a genre called *pupuh* or, more formally, *sekar macapat* ‘flower read in groups of four syllables’ or *sekar alit* ‘small flower’.

According to Ida Boda’s friend and musical colleague I Wayan Rugeh (1929–2014) as well as Boda’s nephew, Ida Wayan Padang (1913–2012), *mabebasan* ‘literary sessions’ in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century often involved a solo vocalist (and translator) accompanied simply by a *suling*. They would perform *mabebasan*, now more often called *pasantian*, associated with one event or another such as a temple or a family ceremony. Wayan Rugeh, who also attended such events, said they would often perform outdoors at a temporary performance site on the road, with a bamboo fence to demarcate the audience area.

In contemporary Bali solo singers of *tembang*, *kidung* and *kakawin* perform at *pasantian* events accompanied by *gamelan gaguntangan*, traditionally associated with *arja* ‘dance opera’ and also featuring *suling*.

Ida Pedanda Gdé Manuaba (±1920–) of Geria Peling, Padang Tegal, Ubud, remembers one of these two musicians, I Klingéng Buta, who was a friend of his father’s, as having moved to Ubud from Keramas, a village famous for its *arja* dance opera which features *suling*. The *pedanda* explained that Klingéng Buta played *suling* in a variety of genres and was not in fact *buta* ‘blind’, but was nicknamed thus just because of his extreme age.<sup>137</sup>

Track #22 *Lagu Tangis* ‘Weeping Song’

*Suling* solo played by I Klingéng Buta

This virtuoso performance leads one to ask the reason for the title ‘Weeping Song’ since it does sound to all listeners as extremely upbeat. I Wayan Pogog (circa 1920–2009) of Banjar Lebah, a *suling* player at Radio Republik Indonesia, commented that this certainly does not sound like sad music. He described it as being similar in to a *pangécét* section of in *gamelan angklung* but that the *suling* is particularly interesting in its filling in all of what would be the *kotékan* ‘interlocking’ (or what Wayan Suwéca also refers to as *ubit-ubitan*) of various *gamelan* instruments.

The first answer that comes to mind with regard to “happy or sad” is an ironic sense of humor as evidenced by Ida Boda as *panasar* ‘comic narrator’. For instance, on *Bali* CD #2, track #5 (*Mas Kumambang*), Boda translates the despondent lovelorn lyrics sung by Ida Bagus Oka with intermittent gleeful laughter. And in a different way this *Lagu Tangis* illuminates a range of emotions also associated with *gamelan angklung*.

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<sup>137</sup> Conversation in Padang Tegal (2014)

Ni Nyoman Candri, *arja* performer from Singapadu, observed the occasional puffs on the *suling* as imitating *sigsigan* ‘weeping sniffles’ and suggested Klingéng Buta’s intent might have been to evoke both emotions of a death ceremony – the light sound of *angklung* – along with the weeping of the individual family members. This just might have been Klingéng Buta’s way of delivering a nuanced narrative simply through a bamboo tube.



*Bebonangan (balanganjur)*

Photo by Colin McPhee circa 1931-38

Courtesy of UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive & Colin McPhee Estate



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**Edward Herbst** made his first visit to Bali in 1972 while working toward his B.A. at Bennington College and sponsored by the Indonesian Insitute of Sciences (LIPI), spending one year studying *gendér wayang* and *palégongan* with I Madé Gerindem in Teges Kanginan, gong-smithing practices and acoustics in Tihingan, Klungkung, and the inter-relationship between *gamelan* and dance-theater. He and Beth Skinner studied with I Nyoman Kakul, master of *gambuh*, *baris*, and *topéng*, while living with his family in Batuan. In 1980–81, Herbst spent fifteen months on a Fulbright-Hays grant in Bali focusing on vocal music performance with *gamelan* and dance-theater, studying with I Madé Pasek Tempo of Tampaksiring, Ni Nyoman Candri, I Wayan Rangkus and Pandé Madé Kenyir of Singapadu, I Ketut Rinda of Blahbatuh, and I Madé Sija of Bona among others. He was commissioned by Sardono Kusumo's experimental Indonesian dance theater company to collaborate as composer and solo vocalist on *Maha Buta* in Switzerland and Mexico as well as Sardono's film, *The Sorceress of Dirah*, in Indonesia. After receiving a Ph.D. in Ethnomusicology from Wesleyan University he returned to Bali for four months in 1992 (funded by the Asian Cultural Council) to complete research for a book, *Voices in Bali: Energies and Perceptions in Vocal Music and Dance Theater*. He continues to balance research, lecturing and creative projects in Indonesia with his role in the U.S. as co-artistic director and composer for the performance company Triple Shadow. He is currently a Research Associate in the Department of Anthropology at Hunter College–City University of New York.

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