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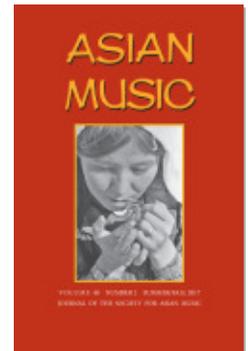
Bali 1928, Volumes 1-5 (review)

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Recording Review Essay

Bali 1928, Volumes 1–5. World Arbiter Records, nos. 2011, 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017, produced between 2010 and 2015. 5 discs: 335 minutes of recorded sound on 111 tracks; 4 hours of video (embedded in the discs and/or available on YouTube); 400 pages of notes, downloadable from the discs and online; and a blog at <http://bali1928.net/>.

The Bali 1928 Project, directed by Edward Herbst, is a monumental repatriation effort involving the remastering and republication of many hours of music and film produced in Bali, Indonesia, between 1928 and 1938.¹ It is the most important publication of media from Indonesia since the release by Smithsonian Folkways of the 18-volume *Music in Indonesia* series (1992–99) recorded and annotated by Philip Yampolsky. Herbst's research is informed by fieldwork in Bali beginning in 1972, and his dedication to this decade-long project is inspiring. In addition to multiple extended trips to Indonesia during this time, Herbst worked for eight years to obtain permissions from archives around the world to rerelease the recordings, most originally recorded and released by the long-defunct Odeon and Beka labels. The project includes five CDs comprising 111 tracks, liner notes equivalent to a four hundred–page monograph, reprints of images from Colin McPhee's archive, and more than four hours of film shot by McPhee and Miguel Covarrubias (Herbst 2010–15). Herbst and his many collaborators in Indonesia have presented their research in public events in Bali, Yogyakarta, and Jakarta and have given approximately three hundred copies of the media free to descendants of the recorded artists, local schools, museums, and arts clubs.

The recordings represent a wide variety of Balinese genres of the era, including solo vocal music, dance and drama accompaniment, and instrumental music. It appears that the original sessions were a collaborative and intercultural encounter between local musicians and Western scholars and recording engineers. The Balinese musician Ida Boda (who appears in several recordings) helped curate the recordings released by Beka, while the German artist Walter Spies facilitated the Odeon recordings. The Bali 1928 Project is more thoroughly intercultural, emerging from the close and long-term collaboration between Herbst and many Balinese colleagues, principally the

scholar/performers I Madé Bandem, Ni Ketut Arini, I Ketut Kodi, I Wayan Dibia, Ni Ketut Suryatini, and I Madé Arnawa, among many others. In this spirit of dialogue this review essay was coauthored by Andy McGraw and the Balinese scholar/performer I Gusti Putu Sudarta, who also served as an occasional informant for the Bali 1928 Project.

While the recordings included in this corpus cover a wide range of genres, it is unclear how representative they are of overall Balinese performance practice of the era. Members of the Brahman caste from the south of the island are strongly represented in the CDs, images, and films, reflecting their greater access to both Balinese traditional manuscripts (*lontar*, the source of many vocal texts) and Western interlocutors. This bias may skew our understanding of the corpus as a comprehensive image of the Balinese past.

In an era in which liner notes have become increasingly scarce and difficult to track down, it is hoped that audiences do not overlook the important notes, embedded as PDF files on the CDs themselves and as digital download. Herbst's notes are enriched by interview excerpts with many contemporary Balinese authorities and elderly performers, some of whom appeared on the original recordings. The notes are most interesting when these authorities provide alternative or contradictory interpretations and explanations. Many of Herbst's elderly informants passed away during and shortly following the republication of the CDs, making this project all the more valuable and timely. The notes are somewhat uneven between the CDs, some tracks receiving extensive commentary and others far less. The text is a bit breathless at points and would have benefited from closer copyediting. There are some sudden shifts in organization—the reader encounters a basic introduction to gamelan only after a highly detailed discussion of the minutia of *kebyar* techniques—and Herbst occasionally assumes some detailed knowledge on the part of the reader (e.g., the location of the Mangkunegaran, the identity of Dang Hyang Nirartha). But the energy, detail, and evident love Herbst brings to this project overwhelm such nitpicking.

It is a testament to Colin McPhee's meticulous research, conducted in the 1930s, that his 1966 monograph remains Herbst's principal organological reference. Herbst reprints many photographs from both McPhee's text and his archive at UCLA. While Herbst discusses the sonic consequences of the smaller metallophone (*gangsá*) mallets and post (versus suspended) key mounting pictured in McPhee's images, we also wonder about the sonic and aesthetic consequences of the different drum (*kendang*) and case (*plawah*) construction and differently shaped (and generally smaller) mallets for other instruments seen in McPhee's images and films. What aesthetic and material influences have encouraged the general enlargement of instruments, mallets, and orchestras since McPhee's research?

The Bali 1928 Project naturally focuses on the original recordings, film, and images. However, we want to know more about the project itself. Audiences would benefit from the inclusion of contemporary images, audio, and video of Herbst's interviews with informants. Many would be interested to learn more about the remastering process; how did Herbst and Allen Evans of Arbiter records pick the best recordings, and how were they edited? Some of the film sequences are included as embedded files on the CDs. More are available on the Bali 1928 Project YouTube channel. The complete collection, including higher-resolution files, is distributed on a DVD associated with the project. The films are fascinating, especially in combination with the audio, but require further annotation for English speakers and non-Indonesianists to make sense of them. As published, they appear to be primarily for a Balinese audience. As with the audio, audiences would benefit from learning more about their republication as part of this project. As they are presented here, it is unclear if any of the films have been edited or restored.

Review of Audio and Notes by CD

Volume 1: Gamelan Gong Kebyar (20 tracks)

The recordings on this CD are important because they document *gong kebyar*, the dominant style on the island for most of the twentieth century, shortly after it emerged and long before it had become codified and documented by local conservatories and foreign researchers. Herbst's notes include important new information on the evolution of the form, outlining links between artists and villages. His discussion of the tight connection between vocal genres and early *kebyar* and the playful combination of male and female dance styles (as pioneered by the dancer Marya) expands on prior research. The extremely detailed track-by-track analysis in Herbst's notes outlines the amazing evolution in Bali of the conception of the composition and composer over the last century. Whereas pieces had been named only by their first few notes (e.g., "Jung Jung-Tejung"), Balinese artists eventually began using titles evoking topics, characters, and moods, and compositions gradually became associated with singular composers with distinct profiles and rights over their works. It remains unclear what role the Dutch, who sponsored many of the early *kebyar* competitions and festivals, might have played in introducing the "work concept" to Bali.

Sudarta's response: The three *kebyar* ensembles heard on these recordings were at their peak when these recordings were made. Many of the melodies, techniques, and styles pioneered by them remain in use today. The motives and melodies heard in the *kebyar* recordings from Belaluan are familiar to

most contemporary Balinese musicians. However, the dynamic contrasts and shifts feel different to me. They are very sudden, tight, and dramatic. The second melody heard in “Curik Ngara” (track 7) is essentially the same as a *bebarongan* piece performed today in the village of Jumpai in Klungkung. How it got there, and where it originated, is unclear to me. The *gending longgor* tracks (12–15) are interesting for the way in which the *reyong* (gong chimes) often play in relative independence from the melody, aiming their phrasing for the ends of melodic lines rather than being tightly coordinated to it, beat by beat. The *kebyar* heard in track 18 seems to me iconic of the northern style, for its speed, staccato articulations, and “hard” (*keras*) *angsels* (pauses in ornamentation). I wish we could hear the drum (or drums) in the second *bapang* section of this track, which uses a simple interlocking style rarely heard today. “Penyelah” (track 19) is interesting because it appears, unless I am mistaken, that the eight musicians playing the interlocking parts (*polos* and *sangsih*) are playing slightly different patterns, resulting in interesting clashes and a more through-composed sound. I think this was purposeful, representing a more variegated and open approach to interlocking than that in practice today.

Volume 2: Tembang Kuna: Songs from an Earlier Time (22 tracks)

Herbst’s notes for this CD are informed by his decades-long study of Balinese vocal music (Herbst 1997). Here he expands on that work with extremely detailed ethnographic accounts of traditional vocal training. One elderly informant describes his effort to achieve an appropriately “shattered” (*encak*) voice by singing submerged up to the neck in a river with his mouth stuffed with red peppers. This is an intonationally complex Balinese musical world in which the now-stable, if not reified, concepts of *pélog* and *slendro* barely hold. If listeners knew of Bali only through these tracks, they might find it surprising that a primarily pentatonic percussion system coexisted with them.

Herbst identifies Sasak (East Lombok Muslim) influence in several of the tracks, primarily those sung by Ida Bagus Oka Kerebuak. However, it remains unclear exactly which musical elements evoke such influence and what their cultural resonances may have been in 1920s Bali. Herbst describes the fascinating lives of professional performing women heard on the CD, including Ni Lemon, featured on tracks 17 and 18. Her voice is strikingly powerful, especially her almost violent glottal pulsations, rarely heard in contemporary styles.

The *kakawin* singing included here only irregularly adhere to the contemporary rules of *guru-laghu*, or the adherence to long and short vowels as represented in the Balinese *aksara* script. Today such rules are often slavishly

observed. In the recorded examples the relationship between the singer and the translator seems tighter and more spontaneous than in contemporary practice. Today it is not uncommon for translators, often reading texts rather than spontaneously translating sung passages, to lose their alignment with the sung phrases.

Sudarta's response: The use of non-scalar (*pomero*) tones in these recordings is fascinating for their complexity. Today singers too often constrain their performances within a narrow conception of *pélog* or *slendro*. Oka Kerubak's use of such tones is very distinctive, a style lost today. In several tracks (such as "Sinom Salya") the singers perform beautiful, high-pitched melodic ornamentations (*ngelik*) at the end of phrases that few include today. The very expressive, improvisatory, and dramatic mode of translation heard in tracks such as "Mas Kumambang" is amazing, partly because styles today are comparatively rigid and didactic. I have the overwhelming sense that the more open, improvisatory approach heard in these tracks allowed the singers to better capture the essence of the texts. Some of the texts (such as "Pucung") that are performed in a loosely *pélog* tonality on the recordings are typically performed in a restricted *slendro* tonality today. The singers heard on the CDs rarely use the very long, virtuosic melisma often heard today. It seems this is to prioritize the meaning and feeling of the text over the individual performer's skill.

Volume 3: Lotring and the Sources of Gamelan Tradition (23 tracks)

I Wayan Lotring was one of the most virtuosic and versatile composers and performers of the 1920s, famous for his *pelegongan* compositions. In his notes Herbst fleshes out the complex flow of inspiration and influence between Lotring's home village of Kuta and the village of Sukawati. It appears that the complex puppetry associated with Sukawati's shadow play (*wayang kulit*) style was influenced by *legong* choreography and accompaniment introduced by Lotring. The recordings of his ensemble are very clear, allowing us to appreciate the virtuosity of his drumming. The extremely sudden and sharp dynamic and temporal cues he leads in both his *pelegongan* and *gender wayang* ensembles is almost shocking in comparison to current performance practice. The subtleties of the *deccelerandos* in his "Sekar Ginotan" are gorgeous in their cohesiveness. This is an ensemble performing as one, a sound hard earned over decades of performing together. The contemporary tendency to form more temporary "pickup" groups of performers trained in different regional styles makes such cohesiveness rare today.

The recordings of Lotring's "Gambangan" and "Gengenggonan" are interesting for the complexity of their elaboration and the clarity of their drumming.

In his notes Herbst provides new organological information on the *genggong* mouth harp—Lotring’s ostensible inspiration for “Genggongonan”—and its herpetological origins, suggesting that much of the subtlety of its performance techniques may now be lost. Herbst’s suggestion that *genggong* technique and repertoire were previously more elaborate, coherent, and integrated is a particularly nostalgic view of Balinese musical history, one that may or may not be accurate.

In these recordings Lotring emerges as an expert interlocutor, deftly managing tempos and transitions to artfully accommodate the recording technology’s constraints. For instance, the track labeled “Alas Harum,” a section of the overture for the shadow play, actually begins in the previous section, “Kayonan,” and continues to the subsequent “Panyacah Parwa” (nearly identical with current versions in Sukawati). Together they appear as a compositionally unified suite elegantly fitting the three-minute time limit.

Although Herbst focuses on contemporary Balinese interpretations of Lotring’s work “Solo,” named after the court town in central Java where his ensemble was sometimes invited to perform, we wonder what Javanese ears might make of it. While Herbst plays down the possibility of references to or inspirations from central Javanese gamelan, the section around 1:00 strongly evokes the Javanese *sampak* style.

The recordings of *pelegongan* and *gambang* on this CD are less satisfying. The *rebab* spike fiddle was placed too close to the microphone in the *pelegongan* session, and the two *gambang* recordings are so sloppy that their inclusion in this project is problematic. The latter tracks are of unclear provenance (they were never released commercially), and one wonders how audiences benefit from their inclusion here. The recordings of the gamelan *pajogédan* are clear and evocative of what must have been playful cross-pollination between this esoteric ensemble and the now dominant *kebyar*. The complexity of the elaboration in track 23, “Ganderangan,” is reminiscent of the style heard in *kreasi baru* (new compositions) of the 1980s and 1990s. Herbst provides fascinating new information regarding the Japanese influence on the historical shift from male *gandrung* dance (originally accompanied by gamelan *pajogédan*) to female *jogéd* dance in which non-Balinese ideas of beauty, sensuality, and secular performance appear to have been assimilated. Herbst uncovers new information regarding the depiction in McPhee’s films of ritual *jogéd bumbung* in Tabanan, problematizing an understanding of the origin of *jogéd* as primarily secular.

Sudarta’s response: The feeling of “Lasem” (track 2) here is gorgeous because it is slightly different from that heard today and associated with the *legong* dance. The reason might be that the tuning appears to be different. The lack

of *kotekan* interlocking in the *pelegongan* gives it an altogether archaic feeling. The “Sisia” recordings are very elaborate, including three sections rather than the single motive often used today. The tracks from Lotring’s ensemble are beautiful, and it is wonderful that this style—the pieces themselves, the expressive interpretations, and drumming styles—are still largely preserved in Binoh village. The *gender wayang* recordings are incredibly expressive and formally interesting when compared to practice today. While we often hear the first section of “Sekar Ginotan” as recorded here, the second and third sections are largely lost. The piece titled “Selendro” is similar to a piece by a different name performed in Kayu Mas today but totally unlike the “Sulendro” now performed in Sukawati. The second of the three sections of “Tulang Lindung” on this CD were eventually lost in Denpasar, because it is famously difficult. The “Angkat-angkatan” is essentially the same as the piece called “Gerebeg,” which is presently performed in Sukawati. It is unclear why track 16 is titled “Lagu Cupak” when it is actually used to accompany the Mong Muka puppet used in Ramayana performances. The recordings of the *pajogedan* ensemble are amazing, and it is a shame we cannot clearly hear the drum and its cues.

Volume 4: Music for Temple Festivals and Death Rituals (22 tracks)

As in the *kakawin* singing heard on volume 2, the rules of vowel stress so carefully observed today are often ignored (or not yet conceptualized?) in these recordings. Today this is often described as *guru lamuk* (deviation from *guru-laghu*). In his notes Herbst reiterates early dates for the emergence of gamelan, suggesting that the tracks on this CD may represent practice “over two millennia” (Herbst 2010–15). However, there is no direct evidence for this claim, and Indonesianists too infrequently critically examine why they are attracted to very early dates for almost everything in Balinese history. This is an old—but not yet dead!—horse McGraw has beaten elsewhere (McGraw 2013).

Herbst provides new information regarding Balinese tuning systems gleaned from ethnographic interviews. Especially fascinating is Wayan Beratha’s suggestion that the beating rate of paired tuning in *gamelan angklung* should be slower (as compared to *kebyar*) in order to “resemble a person weeping” (Herbst 2015, 79).

When listening to the recordings of the ancient *gambuh* ensemble, one is struck by the extent to which the repertoire on this CD is largely preserved in contemporary Bali. While styles may have changed, one can, without too much trouble, encounter all the musics heard on these CDs in Bali today. This is remarkable considering the profound social and technological transformations that have occurred in Bali since the recordings were made.

The *angklung* recordings from Sidan are especially interesting as they can be directly compared with recordings made by King Records ([1990] 1997; KICC 5197). “Sekar Jepun” (track 17) from Pamogan is a highlight for the beauty and subtlety of the composition and the delicate dynamics of the ensemble playing. That ensemble’s recording of “Semaradana” stands out for the intonational flexibility between the *suling* (flutes), deeply evocative of the vocal recordings heard on CDs 2 and 5. The final track, “Lagu Tangis” (Weeping song), performed by Pamogan, is remarkable for the virtuosic solo *suling* performance, including an expanded pitch range, complex tempo treatments, and what appear to be snippets of *kebyar*. The track ends with a charming pianissimo toot on a *pomero* (non-scalar) tone.

Sudarta’s response: The recording of “Sinom Surakarta” (track 1) is very special partly because it is so rare (“Dandang Surakarta” is much more common today) and because the impressive singer appears to be employing many elements of the Sasak style. The singer’s voice is extremely *mengad* (sharp), and the gamelan accompaniment is very appropriate, although I do not know if it was composed specifically for this song. Regarding the *kakawin* and *palawakia* recordings (tracks 2–8), I am consistently impressed by how appropriate the singing is to the text. At times the singing is reduced to formal tones without elaboration in order to enliven the text. That is, the singers are evidently not *restricted* by stiff interpretations of *guru-laghu* structures. The translations of the texts (by I Gejor Gunaska) are also unique for their concision and clarity. His exclamations (“Behhhh . . . !, Ahhhhh . . . !”) are wonderful and are no longer employed today. These are not simple exclamations but, like his stylized laughter, evoke *topeng* and *arja* practice and add a unique atmosphere to the translations.

The tuning, compositional forms, and interpretations heard in the recordings of the *angklung* from Pamogan and Sidan are still employed today in those villages. What is rather different in the Pamogan recordings is the active, continuous, and playful interlocking performed on the *suling* flutes. The florid *suling* playing heard on “Lagu Tangis” is astounding. I have a different interpretation of the “Bérong” recordings (tracks 18–19) from that proposed in Herbst’s notes. Rather than refer to “bero” (non-scalar) tones, I think the reference is likely to the *calonarang* repertoire, specifically to the “Gending Pengecet Terong” that accompanies the Matah Gede character, which these tracks strongly evoke. If this is the case, it would provide another very early example (along with Lotring’s “Gengenggongan” and “Gambangan”) of composers transferring repertoires between ensembles. The *gambuh* styles performed today are more or less the same as those heard on tracks 9–11.

Volume 5: Vocal Music in Dance Dramas (24 Tracks)

The *janger* tracks are the highlight of this CD. Herbst's notes are enriched by interviews with Ni Wayan Pempen, 91 years old when she was interviewed by Herbst, and 10 or 11 when she sang with the *janger* ensemble from Kedaton, Denpasar. Many of the performers heard on this CD participated in the annual, pre-national Pasar Gambir festivals held in Jakarta. It seems from these recordings that this was a lively scene of intercultural influence. The piercing modernity of *janger* in 1920s Bali, wonderfully captured in this volume, demands further research. The form was influenced by *komedie stamboel* theater (see Matthew Isaac Cohen 2006) and incorporated various foreign influences, including Sufi ritual movements (*sama*), drums of Arabic origin (*rebana*, *tambur*), Lombok Muslim vocal styles (*cepung*), Dutch-inspired costuming, and American-inspired makeup (including the *caplin* moustache, named after Charlie Chaplin) and staging (including moving panorama). Both *janger* and *arja* (tracks 1–8) were very new when the recordings were made. The *janger* tracks include snippets of the *kecak* male chorus, recorded before that form was assimilated into the now iconic *kecak* (monkey dance) tourist performance.

Herbst presents more details in his notes to this volume on Sasak Muslim musical influence in Bali, so distinctive in these recordings yet often downplayed in contemporary Bali. “Tembang Semaradana” (track 22), the sole track listed as recorded in Lombok (although Herbst suspects it to be a recording of a Sasak singer in Bali), is fascinating as an example of the source of such influence. That this track sounds so much like Javanese *dolanan* (children's songs), especially reminiscent of the tune “Onde-Onde,” only deepens the mystery of aesthetic interactions of the era. The recordings of *arja* are less clear, and we miss much of the subtlety of the virtuosic and improvisational drumming style associated with that genre. More descriptions on the tracks accompanying *topeng* (mask dance) performance would have been welcome, as these seem strangely static when compared to contemporary practice.

Sudarta's response: As when listening to volume 2, I am astounded by the ways in which the singers heard here adapt their voices, elaborations, and intonation to best represent the essence of their texts. The vocal techniques are incredibly sophisticated (*canggih*) but only in the service of meaning. I am also impressed by how *different* the singers are from each other; each has a distinct individual style. Much of the repertoire and stylistic features heard in the *janger* recordings are maintained in Kedaton today. Although certain tracks, especially “Ngoreng Jaja” (track 10) and “Jaya Warsa” (track 13) are unique, and I have never heard anything like them in Kedaton, the latter sounds very

foreign. I have heard friends from Karangasem sing many of the *cakepung* melodies found in these *janger* performances. Track 19, “Pusuh Biu,” is beautiful, and I have heard versions of it performed both for *sanghyang dedari* and *telek* dances, although I do not know with which form it originated. I especially enjoy hearing the forceful voice of the *dag* singer, calling sections to a close in the *janger* recordings. Today this role is often left out. The *topeng* music and singing heard in tracks 23–24 are essentially extinct. The *cecantungan* singing, laughing, and crying style used by the dancer heard here is no longer employed today.

Bali 1928 Films

Silent films shot by McPhee and Covarrubias are included as .mpeg4 files on the CDs, on an additional DVD (including more and higher-resolution files), and on the Bali 1928 YouTube channel. Some films include minimal subtitles in Indonesian. Films associated with the first volume include mesmerizing shots of the dancer Marya performing with *kebyar* ensembles and teaching students. Ida Boda (who sings on many of the tracks) is seen teaching students *legong* dancing. According to Sudarta,

Ida Boda was a famously demanding (one might say mean) teacher, as were many master artists of the era. He would strike and yell at his students if they fell short. He would publicly deride prospective students if they showed little potential. This authoritarian mode, in which the teacher directly and sometimes roughly shaped the students’ bodies and motions, is no longer tolerated. I wonder if some of the quality and discipline seen and heard in the Bali 1928 documents is lost today due partly to our more “civilized” pedagogies.

The films associated with volume 1 also include clips of performers who would later tour the United States, including the dancer I Sampih and the musician Gdé Manik. The YouTube channel includes additional films of *baris gedé* dances, close-up shots of *kebyar* musicians, the famous *gong gedé* ensemble of Suluhan (Bangli), and shots of women doing *ngoncang* interlocking rice pounding, often cited by Balinese musicians as a source for some of the interlocking patterns (*kotekan*) used in gamelan.

The nine films associated with volume 2 include sequences capturing daily life, industry, agriculture, and ceremonial practice. McPhee’s sense of humor and aesthetic form are evident in these films. We are treated to humorous close shots of animals wagging their tails and long still shots of youthful beauty. The dramatic play of light and shadow in these films gives us the sense that Walter Spies’s famous paintings of this world were as realistic as they were impressionistic.

The 24 films associated with volume 3 are better annotated and focus on *legong* ensembles from Saba, Kelandis, Bedelu, and Belaluan, many shot by Covarrubias, whose camera work is much more elaborate than McPhee's. The films of individual performers are clear enough to be compared to those using current techniques, which often seem more heavy-handed and forceful than older drumming, *reyong* and *gangsra* technique. The sequences of Lotring and his *gender wayang* ensemble are interesting for their subtle and elegant technique. Several sequences feature the young male *pajogédan* dancer I Madé Sarin. Herbst interviewed the elderly Sarin, presenting a fascinating life history in his notes. These sequences are interesting partly because they predate contemporary discourses of gender, sexuality, and prostitution, the view from which the genre is highly problematic. Gamelan *pajogédan* from the 78 recording has been dubbed over some of these sequences. We find this slightly problematic, as the dance motions clearly do not align with the musical accompaniment, although the genre is appropriate.

The 11 films associated with volume 4 contain sequences of ceremonial gamelan, including *gambuh*, *luang*, and *angklung*. Films of the *gambuh* ensemble from Tabanan are especially interesting for the inclusion of now-archaic instruments (such as *rincik* cymbals). The *angklung* sequences include shots of archaic *reyong* mounting and technique (*reyong klentangan*) and the *cungklik* xylophone. We also see clips of the children's *angklung* ensemble from Sayan, the ensemble McPhee famously patronized, as chronicled in *A House in Bali* (1947).

The films associated with volume 5 are more of a hodgepodge. One includes scenes from Surabaya with shots of Javanese gamelan. Two others feature Westerners. In one of these we see fascinating shots of Spies and the choreographer Katherine Mershon performing ballroom dancing in full formal dress in front of a Balinese temple to the accompaniment of a *kebyar* ensemble and before an audience of hundreds of Balinese. In another film we see Rosa Covarrubias done up in traditional Balinese dress. This shot is surreal for appearing as the prototype of an image to be repeated ad infinitum within the context of the mass tourism that would shortly take Bali by storm. The *janger* ensemble from Kedaton is beautifully captured by Covarrubias, who focuses as much on behind-the-scenes preparation and audience reaction as on the performance itself. The shots of *gamelan geguntangan* from Batuan and Peliatan villages are fascinating for the shockingly elaborate and virtuosic drumming styles they depict. The short films of the *barong landung* performances are incredible for their contrast to current practice. These sequences depict extremely active and elaborate motions of the *landung* figures, some with apparently mechanical limbs and heads. Today, these large figures

are often simply treated as statues carried during a ceremony rather than the enormous dancing marionettes pictured in these sequences.

Repatriation

Anthony Seeger reminds us of the crucial social role historic recordings and archives play in national imaginaries: “When the former Yugoslavia broke up, the Serbs purposefully bombarded the library and archive of Sarajevo in an effort to erase the memory of the past when Muslims and Christians lived peaceably as neighbors” (2015, 22). When we consider the recent inroads made in Indonesia by forms of Wahhabism, with its highly negative attitudes toward both music and non-Wahhabi Muslims, the example of positive aesthetic and social interaction between Sasak Muslim communities and Balinese Hindu communities, as heard on these CDs, becomes of vital historical and contemporary importance.

The Bali 1928 Project is a model for future repatriation efforts, and we anxiously await the publication of Herbst’s forthcoming monograph on repatriation in ethnomusicology. Repatriation is crucial today in the face of the “coming preservation disaster” described by Seeger and others: “Our (surviving) analog media has about 20 more years before they cannot be played any longer” (2015, 9). The surviving 78s, cassettes, LPs, and digital formats (especially DAT and MiniDisc) are deteriorating rapidly. Recordings of Balinese music (lessons and performances) held in private collections on and off the island would take years to properly archive, and much of it is dissolving quickly in the tropical heat and humidity. We have created an archive more fragile and with a shorter life span than the average human mind. As our elderly Balinese teachers have often warned, we have allowed our memories to atrophy by relying too heavily on these fragile media to ensure the intergenerational transmission of cultural expressions. As the original machines and recording formats become obsolete, the probability of this archive surviving becomes increasingly unlikely.

Repatriation projects often represent a form of Western penance for the deleterious impacts of colonialism and modernity. Although overt colonialism has ended, “reversing its cultural impacts . . . is not a simple task” (Seeger 2015, 4). The Bali 1928 Project is rather unique in comparison to earlier repatriation efforts involving colonial archives in that nearly all of its recordings were retrieved from the commercial recording industry. That is, they were produced through the circuits of global media industries, not via the colonial knowledge-creation machine. It is interesting to compare this to the current situation in which vast archives are being produced apparently independent

of both (neo)colonial epistemologies and commercial mass-mediated structures. To paraphrase Carolyn Landau and Janet Topp-Fargion, we are all archivists now (2012, 125). Indonesians themselves are contributing every minute to a vast archive on YouTube and social media, posting films and audio of their own culture captured on smartphones.

Herbst's is not the first repatriation project in Bali. In 1975 Andrew Toth and I Madé Bandem brought back a dubbed cassette from McPhee's archive at UCLA. This resulted in the reconstruction at that time of "Kebyar Ding" (also heard on volume 1). In many cases the works heard on the Bali 1928 volumes were not lost altogether but continued to evolve much as they likely had before the introduction of recording technology and establishment of the conservatory system in Indonesia. We have heard many Balinese describe the 1928 recordings as the "original" (*asli*) forms of the various styles represented. This has sometimes encouraged perceptions of "correct" and "corrupted" versions among young musicians we know, not unlike the problematic impulse behind many religious reformist movements. These attitudes emerge from an investment in a particular ontology of art, one that suggests that what we hear on these old recordings is a stable thing called "the music." As the liner notes carefully describe, Balinese concepts of music, sound, art, composer, composition, and performance have changed significantly since these recordings were made. We should not assume that our experience of the sounds on the discs is identical to the experiences of those who first created and experienced them. The artists heard on these CDs may have imagined their performances to represent something much more fluid, dynamic, and tenuous (the singular product of particular times, places, and contexts) than the comparatively stable "works" many of us may hear today.

Some academic disquiet may result from the image of Herbst scouring the globe for the remaining evidence of a bygone Bali. There is something romantic and neocolonial about a hunt (for its own sake) for lost sounds in an era in which all living traditions have apparently been identified. This is clearly not Herbst's *modus operandi*, although it is of many an audiophile. But Herbst does appear concerned about the intersection of modernity and loss. He notes the incursion into Balinese performance practice of logocentric learning, conservatory taxonomy, explicit pedagogy, theorization, and the perceived homogenization of practice. This is contrasted to the 1928 recordings in which we hear, for instance, a relaxed approach toward *guru-laghu* structures in vocal music, very fluid structuring of tempos and dynamics in many of the ensemble recordings, and an open and improvisatory relationship between music and dance, especially in the case of *kebyar*. It is rather ironic that many of Herbst's informants, as faculty at the conservatories, have played a

part in the shift from a primarily “bottom-up,” implicit, and embodied form of transmission and stylistic evolution to a more institutional, “top-down,” controlled, and explicit system (cf. Perlman 2004). Herbst’s notes suggest that this is a negative consequence of a Western-derived modernity that seeks to reduce overall diversity (in arts, ecologies, economies, etc.), a logic that, if followed to its end, would result in a dangerously fragile (and boring) monoculture. To the extent that repatriated expressions help communities reimagine ways of organizing and expressing their own culture, they are radical documents, charged with ethical potential and political possibility.

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Note

¹ An extended review of volume 1 in this series by Lisa Gold was published in *Asian Music* 47(2):179–87.