

Wesleyan University

Cosmopolitan, Nativist, Eclectic:
Cultural Dynamics in Indonesian Musik Kontemporer

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Abstract

Indonesian *musik kontemporer* corresponds to what in anglophone contexts is called contemporary music, or more precisely contemporary art music. But while its name derives from European-language terms, and some of its practitioners are aptly characterized as Western-oriented, *musik kontemporer* is not simply the Indonesian instance of “the internationalization of twentieth-century avant-gardes” (Born 2000). No less prominent are traditionally-based composers, who with foundations in gamelan and other regional traditions have followed a different path to musical modernism and becoming cosmopolitan. Nearly all Western-oriented composers have “gone nativist,” writing also for traditional Indonesian instruments and the musicians that play them. The most exemplary work is single-mindedly modernist or experimentalist, but there is also work by those who, in drawing upon more conventional idioms, including those from the realm of pop, take a more eclectic approach. This dissertation presents an overview of *musik kontemporer* as a whole, and accounts for how it came by its distinctive profile. It documents its emergence in the 1970s in two Western-oriented scenes in Jogjakarta and Jakarta, and one traditionally-based scene in Surakarta. It also reviews its prehistory, to clarify the connections or lack thereof between *musik kontemporer* and its precursors, and more importantly to identify the roots of the cultural dynamics that shaped the field as it emerged. Case studies in the final three chapters examine how these cultural dynamics have also shaped the experiences, outlooks, and

aspirations of individuals involved in the field. In place of the trope of influence, I instead examine the more relational phenomenon of aesthetic authority, charting its patterns of distribution. I examine both the absence of authority on *musik kontemporer*'s Western-oriented side, as a consequence of the underdeveloped state of Western art music performance in Indonesia, and how the prevalence among Indonesia's cultural elite of what I characterize as a cosmopolitan nativist outlook has bolstered the aesthetic authority of that which relates in various ways to indigenous traditions. Finally, I examine the waning of authority, and blurring of boundaries, as composers have sought to connect with a broader socio-aesthetic base.

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Acknowledgements

It was more than twenty years ago that I first contemplated doing research on *musik kontemporer*, the topic of this study. Much time has passed since then, and so there are many people whose support and input I must acknowledge—though owing to my tendency to hole up, perhaps not as many as I ideally should. Before expressing my gratitude to others, however, I should start by describing my initial relationship to my topic, both to acknowledge how where I have come from has shaped my approach and perspective, and to elucidate the dimensions of my indebtedness.

I first encountered *musik kontemporer* in 1991 as an undergraduate studying music composition in Vancouver, when I heard the work of a group of composers from the performing arts academy in Solo who were passing through on a North American tour. My immediate enthusiasm for their music was fueled by the opportunity to collaborate with one of the members of that group, A. L. Suwardi, who returned to Vancouver after the tour for a month-long residency. A year and a half later, after completing my BA, I set off for Indonesia, and around my primary goal of gaining proficiency in the performance practice of traditional Javanese *karawitan*, I found opportunities to collaborate further with Indonesian composers.

Though my engagement with *musik kontemporer*, and also traditional *karawitan*, was, up

to this point, mostly on the level of practice, it had also sparked my curiosity intellectually. How did these composers with foundations in traditional Indonesian musics come to create such boldly innovative music? How did they and their music fit into their social and cultural context? I had, in transferring to School for the Contemporary Arts at Simon Fraser University from the School of Music at the University of Victoria, switched from a very focused Bachelor of Music program to a Bachelor of Arts program that placed greater emphasis on artistic interdisciplinarity, as well as breadth on the liberal arts model. This academic environment gave me tools for beginning to think about the kinds of questions I was asking about *musik kontemporer*. I am grateful to those teachers who introduced me to critical scholarly perspectives on contemporary art and contemporary culture more generally—Donna Zapf was particularly helpful in this respect. Two other figures made an especially strong impression: George Lewis, whom I feel very fortunate to have met at SFU's Contemporary Arts Summer Institute; and the late Martin Bartlett, whom I similarly feel privileged to have gotten to know before his untimely death in 1993. Both were inspiring models of creative musicians who thought broadly, deeply, and critically about what music means, what it is for, and why it matters, far beyond narrowly aesthetic concerns, but without leaving those concerns behind entirely.

This reorientation toward critical thought, if not yet scholarly discipline, along with the appeal of gamelan as an alternative mode of music making, contributed to my growing sense that I was less interested in, and less suited to, becoming a capital-C-Composer—which in Canada would have meant chasing after commissions from ensembles with rather different artistic priorities, in a musical culture that increasingly struck me as socially compromised. Still, when I returned to academia several years later, as an MA student in Wesleyan's World

Music program, it was with a focus on composition. My intention was also to become a scholar, but I had a limited sense of what that entailed. I am grateful to Mark Slobin for matter-of-factly pointing that out; for nudging me to reflect on the fact that my experience in Indonesia, valuable as it was, did not yet constitute fieldwork; and for pushing me to appreciate that if I wanted to become an ethnomusicologist, I needed to understand better what the field was about. He has continued to nudge me, in the seminars I took with him, and as a member of my dissertation committee, with comments whose brevity has been no predictor of the extent of their implications.

My introduction to ethnomusicology as a discipline came from seminars with Eric Charry, to whom I am grateful for instilling in me, despite my initial resistance, a more skeptical attitude toward high-flown theory and a respect for well-grounded inquiry. I thank also my other teachers at Wesleyan, but in particular: Ron Kuivila, for advising my MA thesis and project, and more generally for always having such interesting things to say; Jon Barlow, with whom I had the privilege of taking an individual tutorial; Alvin Lucier and Anthony Braxton, for their stories and perspectives; I. M. Harjito, for all that he has taught and continues to teach me about *karawitan*, and about musicianship.

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In 2003-2004, between completing my coursework and embarking on my formal field research, I benefited from a fellowship at Wesleyan's Center for the Humanities. I thank the faculty in the music department who recommended me, as well as my fellow fellows for their intellectual stimulation.

In our first year at Wesleyan, my friend Scott Wilson suggested that the real learning happened outside of the classroom. His intention was not to belittle our teachers, but rather to recognize the importance of working through and reflecting on learning in the company of colleagues. In addition to Scott, I thank all of those who enriched my time at Wesleyan. In terms of the development of this project, my development as a scholar, and for their friendship, I must especially thank Franya Berkman, Sathya Burchmann, Jennifer Caputo, Andrew Raffo Dewar, Judy Dunaway, Emily Ferrigno, Joseph Getter, Nicholas Hockin, I Nyoman Catra, Yoonjah Choi, Ian Eagleson, Mel Mercier, Sam Miller, Mark Nelson, Marzanna Poplawska, Sarah-Jane Ripa, Julie Strand, Molly Sturges, and Matthew Welch.

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Of particular relevance to this project, of course, are such collaborations with Indonesian musicians. I am especially grateful to, A. L. Suwardi, for my initial hands-on introduction to *musik kontemporer*, and to the late I Wayan Sadra, Pande Made Sukerta, Sutrisno Hartana, and Michael Asmara, for inviting me to work with them as a composer, performer, and improviser. I am also grateful for their friendship.

Most of all, I wish to express my gratitude to all the composers and musicians with whom I interacted in conducting research for this study, for their generosity and openness in sharing their work, and for so warmly engaging in the exchange of ideas. I hope I have done some

semblance of justice to the stories I have been able to tell; I apologize for any shortcomings and indiscretions, for which I am solely responsible, and also for not being able to tell more of them. *Semoga semangat dan sukses selalu.*

Technical Notes

Orthography

Indonesian, from early on in its history as a written language, has used the Roman alphabet. Initially its orthography followed Dutch, but in 1972 was reformed in the interest of greater harmonization with its close cousin, Malaysian. The most significant changes were the substitution of *j* for *dj*, *c* for *tj*, *y* for *j*, and *u* for *oe*.

Javanese, though it has its own script used by literati, is now also typically written with the Roman alphabet, and generally follows the orthography of Indonesian. One significant difference is that *dh* and *th* are used in addition to *d* and *t* to represent distinct consonants. There is also some variation in spelling that follows the pronunciation of *a*. In most cases, *a* is pronounced similarly to *a* in “father,” but in a final open syllable, and in a penultimate syllable preceding a final open syllable, the pronunciation changes to *o* as in “law.” It is, as a result, sometimes spelled with *o* rather than *a*.

For both Indonesian and Javanese, I generally use the 1972 orthography, using older and alternate orthographies only in quoted material, for names of individuals who prefer to retain an alternate spelling, and in following the most common spellings of the names of others. Examples include Suka Hardjana (who, though Javanese, reportedly prefers his name to be pronounced as it would be in Indonesian, that is with all *a*'s as in “father”); and Nartosabdho,

for whom the *dh* is inaccurate, though common in Indonesian and almost invariably used in English language scholarship.

Nouns in Indonesian and Javanese have no plural form, plurals being indicated by reduplication (e.g. *orang-orang* = people) only when not implied by context. I follow this usage.

Names

Indonesian names, of both people and institutions, are challenging to scholarship for two reasons. Javanese and most other Indonesians do not have family names. Some have only one name, others have more than one. Following standard practice in English language Indonesianist scholarship, in most cases I treat the last given name as if it were a surname—referring, for example, to Suka Hardjana as “Hardjana” in the text, and listing his writings under “Hardjana, Suka” in the list of references cited. I make exceptions for those who are invariably referred to by their first given name, such as Sapto Raharjo, Suprpto Suryodarmo, and Sardono W. Kusuma.

The other and more vexing issue is that names tend to change, and in some cases multiple names are used for the same person or thing. There are minor differences that have to do with the change in orthography in 1972, noted above. In a particularly confusing case, the Central Javanese city of Jogjakarta, which had already made the shift from “dj” to “j,” was shifted once more—“with bureaucratic thoroughness”—to become Yogyakarta. After explaining this redundant shift, which changed the way it was pronounced in official contexts, Ward Keeler further notes: “That this corresponds to no actual usage seems to bother no one, perhaps because the Javanese are already accustomed to alternative names for a single thing” (Keeler 1984: 16). I have elected to refer to the city as Jogjakarta or Jogja, except in cases where it is

the current official name of Yogyakarta that is used. For a similar case with a different history, I generally use Solo for the city formally known as Surakarta, except where it is the formal name that is used.

Other more thorough name changes are even more confusing. It is not uncommon for prominent court musicians to have modified or altogether new names bestowed on them along with promotions of rank. The musician whose given name at birth was Wasi Jolodoro, upon becoming a servant of the Paku Alam, was given the title Raden Bekel and the name Tjokrowasito. With subsequent promotions, his title and name changed to Raden Ngabehi Tjokrowarsito, then Kanjeng Raden Tumenggung Wasitodipuro, then Kanjeng Raden Tumenggung Wasitodiningrat, and finally Kanjeng Pangeran Haryo Notoprojo. To further confuse matters, he was known familiarly as Pak Cokro (Cokro being the equivalent of Tjokro in the new orthography).

Educational institutions also change their names, as they are officially upgraded to offer higher degrees. Akademi Seni Karawitan Indonesia Surakarta became Seni Tinggi Seni Indonesia Surakarta and then Institut Seni Indonesia Surakarta. This institution, like others, is also very commonly known by its acronym, in this case combining with the more common name for the city where it is located, resulting in “ASKI Solo.”

To minimize confusion, I generally use throughout the text those names—or for institutions, those acronyms—that were in use during the period I am most concerned with, using or parenthetically acknowledging other names, or indicating the existence of multiple names for institutions with a slash, only when insisting on consistency would lead to glaring anachronisms. I have also tried to avoid the need to disambiguate. Thus, I use ASKI Solo, or simply ASKI, the name that institution held until 1988, through most of the text, even though

it is currently called ISI Solo. I reserve ISI for ISI Jogja (which though it is officially named Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta uses that moniker on its website, <http://isi.ac.id/>, accessed 11 June 2014). For that institution I also use its earlier name, Akademi Musik Indonesia Yogyakarta, or AMI Jogja, or simply AMI.

I use Wasitodipuro, both because that was his name in the period I am most concerned with, and because that is the name most commonly used in English language scholarship.

One special case is Franki Raden, who has elected to use his noble title as a second name. That is the name he goes by as a composer and critic in Indonesia, but as a scholar writing in English he goes by Franki S. Notosudirdjo. (In a recent publication [2014], he has added R., an abbreviation for Raden, at the beginning.) I refer to him in the text as Franki Raden, or, following standard practice, Raden—though the latter strikes my Indonesian teacher, who knows Raden personally, as humorous.

Translations

I have elected to present quotations from my interviews, most of which were conducted in Indonesian, in English translation. Translations of materials written in Indonesian are also my own, unless otherwise noted. When they might be of particular interest to Indonesianists, I note original Indonesian, and occasionally Javanese, words and phrases in parentheses.

Non-English Words

Indonesian and Javanese musical terms and other common words are italicized throughout. Proper nouns and titles are not italicized.

Documentation for articles by Suka Hardjana

Two anthologies of newspaper and magazine articles by Suka Hardjana have proved very valuable in tracing shifts in his opinions and perspectives. I have thus endeavored to identify the original dates of publication of these articles to the extent that I have been able to determine them. One (2004b), an anthology of articles originally published in Indonesia's most respected daily newspaper, *Kompas*, identifies the original publication date for most, though not all, articles. The other (2004a), an anthology of articles from the daily newspapers *Kompas*, *Sinar Harapan*, *Suara Pembaruan*, *Merdeka*, *Berita Buana*, *Berita Yudha*, *Republika*, *Media Indonesia*, *Jakarta Jakarta*, *Singgalang*, *Bernas*, *Suara Surabaya*, *Kedaulatan Rakyat* and the weekly news magazines *Tempo*, *Gatra*, *Vista*, *D&R*, *Detik*, *Tiras*, *Zaman*, *Forum*, *Dewi*, and *Mitra*, identifies neither the original sources (beyond the listing of sources in the preface), nor the dates of publication. For the articles that I cite, I include in the reference list original publication information as provided by the anthologies, or as ascertained from photocopies of the originals obtained from the archives of the DKJ. In cases where the original publication information is unknown, but the text of an article points to a probable date of publication, I include a guessed-at date in brackets, e.g. [1988?]. I have indicated n.d. (no date) for two cases where a reasonable guess cannot be made. The parenthetical references for these articles include both the date, confirmed or guessed-at, of the original publication and the date of the anthology in which they are reproduced.

In memory of I Wayan Sadra

Introduction

Kontemporer is not a genre, but a phenomenon. It's an adjective, not a noun.
(I Wayan Sadra, p.c., 5 August 2005)

I Wayan Sadra (1954–2011), a Balinese composer with a foundation in traditional Balinese music who taught at the arts institute in Solo, Central Java, made this statement when I asked him when the term *musik kontemporer* had become commonplace. At the time of my first trip to Indonesia in 1993–1995, the term I heard most often for the kind of music Sadra composed—music which, involving gestures as conspicuously iconoclastic as dragging gongs on the floor, invites the label experimental—was *komposisi baru* (new composition). When I returned in 2004 to conduct research for this study, it had largely been replaced by *musik kontemporer* (contemporary music), a formulation initially introduced by Slamet Abdul Sjukur (1935–) in 1976, when he returned to Indonesia after fourteen years studying and working in Paris with some of the leading figures of the European avant-garde. I learned from Sadra that *musik kontemporer* had become the preferred umbrella term for the varied field of creative musical activity in Indonesia to which it refers sometime in the late 1990s.

This terminological consolidation represented some measure of unity among composers of quite disparate backgrounds. The agreement to use a single term, *musik kontemporer*, was not, however, accompanied by any consensus regarding how to define or delimit it. The question of what is and what is not *musik kontemporer* instead became the crux of a lively—

or to many, tiresome—debate. Driving this debate was *musik kontemporer*'s impossibly eclectic profile, exemplified well by the inaugural 2004 Yogyakarta Contemporary Music Festival (YCMF). Over two evening programs, the festival presented a bewildering array of musical styles. Instrumental works included a neo-classical wind quintet (“Dance for Drunker” by Joko Lemas); a piece for clarinet and strings which mixed references to *kroncong*¹ with modernist string techniques such as bowing on the bridge and exaggerated vibrato (“Mosaik 11” by Budhi Ngurah); and a rather austere and atonal piece for trombone and percussion (“Malam Itu Tidur dengan Nyenyaknya” by Michael Asmara). There were pieces involving electroacoustics and computers, including a jingle-length MIDI-sequenced fanfare (“Bintang Iklan” by Sapto Raharjo); a piece that combined sequenced computer generated parts with Javanese gamelan (“Nyanyian Merdeka” by Hadi Susanto); and a brooding piece more typical of Western festivals of electroacoustic music by a composer visiting from New Zealand (“It Will Fly” by Leon de Lorenzo). The last of these was preceded by an accidental squeal of feedback that elicited the comment “now that’s *kontemporer*” from two college-aged audience members. There was also a piece for an ensemble including *kacapi* (a Sundanese zither), *jembe*, and a female dancer wearing a buckskin outfit with fringes that I think was meant to make her look like a cave-dweller (“Cakra Manggilingan” by Haryanto); and a loosely structured duet between a student playing *gambus* (the Indonesian equivalent to the Arabic *‘ūd*) and a farmer playing an

1. *Kroncong* is a hybrid Euro-American-Indonesian genre, believed to have roots in music brought to what is now Indonesia by the Portuguese in the 16th and 17th centuries. Its “standard” form, which developed in the early twentieth century, is European in its instrumentation, typically consisting of “voice, violin, flute, two small plucked lutes . . . guitar, and cello,” and basis in functional harmony; Euro-American in its use of popular song form; but distinctly Indonesian in texture, with the figuration of the instrumental parts resembling traditional Javanese and Sundanese music (Yampolsky 2011: 9-10).

amplified *kawongan*, a portable rain shelter made from rattan and bamboo with bamboo “strings” that can be plucked to amuse oneself while waiting out a squall (“Sama-Sama Berteduh” by Agus Muhammad).² The farmer had brought along a duck, on a leash.³

Within this mix were pieces typical of the realm of music-making that the YCMF’s English-language name references. This is a realm whose reach has long been international, but that nevertheless remains for the most part grounded aesthetically, technically, philosophically, and socially in the Western art music tradition—the *Eurological* mode of new music, to borrow a term from George Lewis (1995).⁴ In subsequent years, it is this mode that the YCMF has emphasized. While works involving Indonesian and other “ethnic” instruments (as they are now commonly identified) have not been completely excluded, the balance has shifted decidedly toward works for the European classical instrumentarium—for chamber ensembles of orchestral strings, winds, piano, and so on. The shift is equally apparent in the inclusion of works by established new music composers from the international new music scene, a strategy that draws upon sources of aesthetic authority located outside Indonesia. More specifically, by featuring Asian composers such as Toru Takemitsu and Isang Yun—both deceased, which only adds to their authority—the festival points to the fact that the Eurological mode has established itself in other parts of Asia, and might still in Indonesia as well.

2. See Kunst (1973: 430-431) for photographs of a *kawongan*.

3. In the interest of full disclosure, I should acknowledge my own participation in the festival. I presented two pieces, performed simultaneously: “follow (1),” for two *rebab*; and “walk,” for *kenong* and *kethuk* (two gong chimes) and two pairs of finger-cymbals.

4. Lewis uses “Eurological” along with “Afrological” as “two complementary connotative adjectives” in his analysis of the rise of improvised music in the United States after 1950. I have coined a parallel term, *Indological*. See below for further discussion of his usage, and mine.

To what extent the Eurological mode manages to take root in Indonesia remains to be seen. What interests me more is that so far, despite the best efforts of several generations of Indonesian composers, it has not—at least not to the extent that its proponents have hoped it would, or anywhere near the extent it has in countries like Japan or South Korea. *Musik kontemporer* as a whole cannot be understood simply as the Indonesian iteration of a predominantly Eurological international avant-garde. Part of it is that. There are composers who identify with that sphere of contemporary music, whom I describe, and who in at least one case describes himself, as *Western-oriented*. But no less central to the field are composers like I Wayan Sadra, whom I designate as *traditionally-based*. While their work involves sometimes radical departures from the Indonesian traditions in which they gained their foundations, it does not involve an embrace of the Eurological. Their work, for the most part, has instead remained distinctly *Indological*. Further complicating the picture, Western-oriented composers nearly without exception have composed for traditional Indonesian instruments and the musicians that play them, and in the process have also adapted to Indological modes of music making. And then there is the even more eclectic mixing of a broader range of existing styles exemplified by the works from the YCMF, described above.

Two primary goals of this study are to document *musik kontemporer*'s distinctive profile, and to account for how it came by it. How did it come to encompass the work of both traditionally-based and Western-oriented composers, with neither side fully dominant? How did traditionally-based composers become as prominent within the field as we will see they have? What led them, in the first place, to engage in their sometimes radical departures from traditional practice? Why, looking at the other side, are Western-oriented composers in Indonesia so less prominent than Western-oriented composers are in other parts of Asia? Why

are there practically none (I know of just one) who have focused exclusively on composing in the Eurological mode? What was their motivation to engage with traditional Indonesian musics? Looking beyond what must be considered the most exemplary aspects of *musik kontemporer*, what was behind the unruly eclecticism that had become so common by the time of the first YCMF?

Approaching these questions historiographically, I look beyond the history of *musik kontemporer* proper—which is recent, with a critical mass of individuals and activity emerging only in the late 1970s—to also examine its prehistory. I do so not to identify *musik kontemporer*'s roots in prior similar activity, for as we will see, there is more discontinuity than continuity on that account. Rather, my goal is to better understand the cultural dynamics that, in their intersection with particular historical circumstances, led to those discontinuities, and that did so much to shape *musik kontemporer* as it eventually emerged and developed.

It is these cultural dynamics that my study is more broadly concerned with. I am concerned with charting the complex of forces that act on individuals, and on and through groups of individuals, to impel them to act in the ways that they do. The dimensions of the cultural dynamics most at play in *musik kontemporer* may be defined by all too familiar binaries that, though blunt and imprecise, are nevertheless deeply resonant in Indonesia: Western/Indonesian, modern/traditional, art/pop. What is more surprising, and noteworthy, is how these dimensions intersect. It is these intersections, along with different shades and ambiguities within given dimensions, that I seek to convey through my study.

The way I do so is to ground my inquiry not just in historiography, but also ethnography, biography, and, last but not least, scrutiny of the discourse surrounding *musik kontemporer*. With these approaches, I go beyond documenting what *musik kontemporer* encompasses, and

how it came to do so, to examine what this has meant for those involved in it. How do the different individuals involved with *musik kontemporer*, with their divergent backgrounds, foundations, and orientations, relate to and regard the field, and each another? How have the cultural dynamics that have shaped the field as a whole also shaped those individuals' experiences, outlooks, and aspirations as creative musicians? I seek to answer these questions through a number of case studies that together provide a fuller picture of *musik kontemporer*.

Examining cultural dynamics that are in some cases quite particular to *musik kontemporer* and its Indonesian context, in other cases less so, has led me to other questions with broader methodological and theoretical implications. What are the limitations, in studying what is commonly understood to be a Western form in a non-Western setting, of thinking in the conventional terms of Western influence? How can one be more precise, recognize other contributing factors, and be open to other explanations that provide different sorts of insight? Are there other more productive ways of thinking about the relationship of *musik kontemporer*, and other forms of Indonesian music, to their Western analogs? Getting past a preoccupation with differences of context, how might examining the specific case of *musik kontemporer* inform how we approach parallel cases? If, as I argue it should be, *musik kontemporer* is understood to be an instance of contemporary art music, how does it relate to its putatively popular and traditional others? Beyond the specific contributions of my dissertation in documenting a lesser-known facet of music in contemporary Indonesia, and a lesser-known instance of contemporary art music, it is through my answers to these questions that my study makes its broadest contribution: by presenting an approach to the study of contemporary art making in non-Western contexts, and in general, grounded in the overlapping but not entirely coextensive perspectives of ethnomusicology and emerging

cross-disciplinary paradigms for the cultural study of music (Clayton et al. 2003).

Terminology

Before proceeding, I should comment on some of the terms I use in this study. Some, especially those that I have coined myself, I discuss more extensively in sections below on my theoretical contributions. The way I use a number of other more common terms, while conforming to typical usage, nevertheless bears clarification. There is also one case where my usage diverges from what for many is its most common sense.

Contemporary Music and Related Terms

Following its widespread adoption in Indonesia, I have chosen to use *musik kontemporer* consistently, rather than related but more specific terms such as *komposisi baru* or *gamelan kontemporer*, even in cases where those terms would have been preferred. I feel justified in using this one term because of the terminological consolidation I point to above, which was uncontroversial. The exception is when I directly discuss writings by other scholars, in which I follow their usage.

There are a few instances where *musik kontemporer* has been used by Indonesians to refer to contemporary music not just in Indonesia, but as an international phenomenon. An example is Slamet Abdul Sjukur's 1977 lecture entitled "Anatomi Musik Kontemporer," which I discuss in chapter 3, a lecture that was important in establishing the adoption of the term in Indonesia. I have chosen to consistently use the English translation, "contemporary music," in such cases, reserving *musik kontemporer* for music by Indonesian composers.

"Contemporary music" is perhaps the most frequently encountered term for what, as I

argue further below, should more precisely be identified as “contemporary art music.” “Contemporary music” is, indeed, a term that Indonesians have used—in both English-language contexts, such as Franki Raden’s dissertation (Notosudirdjo 2001),⁵ and in Indonesian-language contexts, such as the name of the Yogyakarta Contemporary Music Festival.⁶ In this study, I use “contemporary music” with this narrow meaning, rather than as a general term for all musics that currently exist, or that have developed in recent times, only where the context makes this sense clear—for example, in speaking of “the European contemporary music scene.” I also use it to translate synonymous Indonesian formulations such as *musik masa kini* (*masa* = “time,” *kini* = “now”). I use it interchangeably with the roughly synonymous term “new music.”

Other terms such as “experimental” and “avant-garde” are also often used interchangeably with “contemporary music” and “new music,” especially when a different part of speech is required—for example, “experimental” and “avant-garde” as adjectives, or “the avant-garde” and “the international avant-garde” as nouns to refer collectively to composers, composers and performers, or even to the realm of contemporary or new music as a whole. Such formulations show up in writings that I quote, and when they seem most fitting I use them myself. In both cases, they can be applied to either Western-oriented or traditionally-based *musik kontemporer*.

In some instances, however, “experimental” and “avant-garde” imply more specific

5. As explained in the Technical Notes, Franki Raden uses his full legal name, Franki S. Notosudirdjo, as a scholar writing in English.

6. While Indonesians borrow English words extensively, sometimes Indonesianizing them—for example, by substituting the Dutch-derived suffix *-si* for the English “-tion,” as in *modernisasi*—and other times using them unaltered, relatively few Indonesians speak English fluently.

points of reference—for example, in Michael Nyman’s influential distinction between “the experimental,” which he uses for the work of certain American and English composers, and “the avant-garde,” which he reserves for certain continental European composers (Nyman 1999: 1). I use “avant-garde” and “avant-gardism,” and “experimental” and “experimentalism” more or less interchangeably. I do so not so much for the reason Benjamin Piekut does—“because doing otherwise would naturalize a distinction that has been discursively produced,” as he argues in reference to the “achievement” of proponents of a specific understanding of “the experimental” such as Nyman (Piekut 2011: 5–14)—but more simply because this distinction, for the most part, carries little weight in Indonesia. Again, these terms are applicable to both Western-oriented and traditionally-based *musik kontemporer*.

My use of “modernist” varies, according to the object it qualifies: I use “modernist approach” and “modernist impulse” to point to a tendency toward conspicuous innovation exhibited by traditionally-based and Western-oriented Indonesian composers alike. I typically speak of “modernist aspects” or “modernist strains” within a more or less specific frame of reference, such as the “Western art music canon” or “of Western new music”—the latter being a shorthand for what I elsewhere refer to somewhat more precisely as a “predominantly Western international avant-garde.” Much more specifically, I reserve “high modernism” and “the mid–twentieth century avant-garde” to refer to the musical style pioneered by the “Second Viennese School” of Arnold Schoenberg, Anton Webern, and Alban Berg, and further developed post-World War II by composers such as Pierre Boulez. This style, most readily distinguished by its atonality, which was frequently but not invariably achieved

through the use of serialism,⁷ was most enthusiastically embraced in Indonesia by two younger composers, Tony Prabowo and Michael Asmara, both of whom I profile in chapter 6.

Eurological and Indological

The high-modernist musical style that Prabowo and Asmara are so attracted to is a prime example of what I refer to as the “Eurological mode” of new music. Eurological, as I note above, is a term that I have adapted from George Lewis to specify that aspect of new or contemporary music, in Indonesia or elsewhere, that is grounded in the aesthetics and techniques of the Western art music tradition (a term I discuss further below). Lewis uses “Eurological,” along with “Afrological,” as “two complementary connotative adjectives” in his analysis of the rise of improvised music in the United States after 1950, in both the “Western or ‘pan-European’ tradition” and “jazz.” Lewis uses the terms to refer to “musical belief systems and behavior” which in his view “exemplify particular kinds of musical ‘logic’;” they also serve to “historicize the particularity of perspective characteristic of two systems that have evolved in . . . divergent cultural environments” (Lewis 1995: 91-93).

On the most basic level, I use Eurological, or “the Eurological mode,” to refer to a practice of composition based in the use of notation, criteria that Lewis also identifies through a summary of Carl Dahlhaus’s definition of composition as something particularly European (ibid.:96). I have coined an analogous term, Indological, to refer the common basis of most traditional Indonesian musics in rote learning, collaboration, and highly idiomatic

7. The distinctions I discuss here are ones that I learned in the course of studying music composition as an undergraduate at the University of Victoria—though unlike many young composers I knew who had studied elsewhere, I was never required to compose or analyze a twelve-tone piece. For a discussion of “Atonality,” “Serialism,” the “Second Viennese School,” and the members thereof, see those entries in *Grove Music Online* (accessed 29 May 2014).

improvisation. There are, of course, other more subtle, but no less fundamental dimensions of the musical systems that these terms reference. Lewis's sophisticated argument identifies the ways in which the indeterminate music of John Cage and others remains Eurological even as it moved away from conventional Western notation. I likewise contend in chapter 4 that the experimentalist work of traditionally-based composers from the arts institute in Solo retains a similarly strong connection to the "logic" and "musical belief systems and behavior" of traditional Indonesian musics. The distinction between Eurological and Indological is also useful in my discussion of the engagement with traditional musics and musicians on the part of Western-oriented composers in chapters 5 and 6.

Classical Music and Related Terms, and the term Karawitan

In contrast to the panoply of terms I use alongside "contemporary music," the situation with the term "classical music" is much simpler, at least as far as the number of terminological variations is concerned. I use "classical music" as it is used colloquially in Anglophone contexts, interchangeably with the more technical and precise term "Western art music." I use both, as necessary, as the basis for more specific formulations such as the "Western art music tradition," the "international realm of classical music performance," and "Indonesia's classical music scene."

There are some instances where I quote others who use the term "Western music" to refer not to all music from the West, but specifically to "Western art music." I clarify this usage when necessary. I myself only use "Western music" in the more general and inclusive sense.

What is no less complicated is the matter of delimiting Western classical music, and defining what sets it apart from other forms of Western music. Although most readers of this

dissertation will have no problem intuiting what is meant by the term, in the context of this study it bears clarification, as the relationship of the practice of Western art music in Indonesia to the mainstream of the Western art music tradition, in its contemporary international existence, is, as we will see, sometimes tenuous. The crux of the matter, as I argue further in a section below where I explain *periclassical* and *paraclassical*, two other terms of my own coining, has to do with the concept of “the classical” or “Western art music canon”—two other formulations I use interchangeably. The issue also has to do with the notion of art, or “Art,” which I take up in my further discussion of “contemporary art music.”

I should emphasize that I use “classical music” exclusively to refer to “Western art music.” This conforms with the use in Indonesian of *musik klasik*. While *musik kontemporer* has come to refer not just to work that is Western-oriented, but also that which is traditionally-based, in general usage *musik* by itself persistently “refers specifically to Western music,” as Sumarsam (2013:43) and many others have pointed out. *Musik klasik* similarly refers specifically to Western art music, as a term derived from the Dutch *muziek klassiek*—even though the adjective *klasik* is applied more broadly, as in the distinction between “*gendhing klasik*” and “*gendhing populer*” (Perlman 1999:4),⁸ or in referring to Javanese court arts as “*kesenian klasik*” (Lindsay 1985: 44-50).

Following common Indonesian practice, I refer to traditional Indonesian musics either by their regionally specific names, such as gamelan, or by the term *karawitan*. This term is not an exact parallel to “classical music,” though it can carry similar connotations. Derived from the Javanese root *rawit*, “best translated as ‘intricate’” (Sutton 1991: 5), the term was initially coined by Javanese courtiers (Sumarsam 1995: 124-125). It came into more widespread use

8. *Gendhing* is a general term for gamelan composition.

after being incorporated into the names of Konservatori Karawitan (KOKAR) and Akademi Seni Karawitan Indonesia (ASKI) (ibid.), two institutions in Solo that share as their primary mission the teaching of Central Javanese performing arts, with an emphasis on forms and practices associated with the Central Javanese courts.⁹ As other institutions were founded in other parts of Indonesia, they followed KOKAR and ASKI as models, even borrowing their names. Consequently, *karawitan* became, as Sutton observes, “a general word for any indigenous music in any part of Indonesia” (Sutton 1991:5). First and foremost, however, especially in Javanese contexts, it is a somewhat formal term for gamelan music, one that accordingly privileges its more “classical” aspect.

Indonesian Art Music and National Music

Two terms of much more limited application, even though they would seem in their generality to be more encompassing, are *Indonesian art music* and *national music*. Both have been used more to point to something potential than something actual. Two critics from the 1950s whom I discuss in chapter 2 spoke of *seni musik Indonesia*, which could be translated as “Indonesian art music” or “the art of music in Indonesia.” In either case, they were concerned with promoting the development of what can be called art music in Indonesia, but they readily acknowledged that such a music existed only in a nascent form. As we will see, the initial flowering they heralded failed to survive. I use “art music composition,” rather than *musik kontemporer* or “contemporary art music,” to refer to this movement, in support of my contention that it is a distinct development.

9. As noted at various points in this study, the courtly aspect of Javanese gamelan is not strongly distinct from other other aspects, but instead lies at one end of a spectrum of degrees of refinement and status.

National music has been used somewhat more broadly, but mostly in discussions about what it should be. It has no definite, but only contested, points of reference, and mostly the debate about it has taken place outside of official cultural policy.

The two terms have been used most emphatically by Franki Raden, who seized upon them in his dissertation (Notosudirdjo 2001) and subsequent scholarly writing (Notosudirdjo 2003; 2014). He substitutes them for *musik kontemporer*, the term he used when he first proposed the argument he later developed in his dissertation, most notably in his 1994 article in the Indonesian journal *Kalam* (Raden 1994). Raden is alone in using these terms this way, as I discuss in a following section.

Nativism

My use of the term *nativism* relates to the way it has been used in cultural anthropology: “Return to or emphasis on indigenous customs and traditions, esp. in opposition to those introduced from elsewhere” (*Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “nativism”). I am aware that the more immediate sense, at least for Americans, is this political one—“The attitude, practice, or policy of protecting the interests of native-born or existing inhabitants against those of immigrants” (ibid.)—and that it carries connotations of intolerance and bigotry. I chalk the ease with which I ignore this sense up to having grown up in Canada. I was certainly aware, at least by the time I was an undergraduate student, of Canada’s own ugly history of xenophobia, from having been assigned the novel *Obasan* about the internment of Canadian citizens of Japanese descent during World War II (Kogawa 1981), and more generally from encountering the critical work of Asian-Canadian artists made increasingly visible through initiatives like the exhibition and publication *Yellow Peril: Reconsidered* (Wong 1990). This

work, at least, did not, in drawing attention to anti-immigrant and anti-minority practices and sentiment, use the term nativism.

I use the term, by itself, and in the formulations *cosmopolitan nativism*, which I discuss in the section on “Question and Theories” below, and *nativist turn*, to refer to a mostly positive attitude toward indigenous traditions. The initial emergence of cosmopolitan nativism, which I examine in chapter 1, occurring as it did in the late colonial period, was in part a reaction against the influence of the Dutch. The more recent nativist turns of Western-oriented artists and musicians that I examine in later chapters have much more to do, as we will see, with an attraction to the relative vitality of the traditional Indonesian performing arts.

Topic, Scope, and Methods

Defining the Object of Research, and the Question of Influence

My eventual decision to examine *musik kontemporer* as a whole represents a significant expansion of my topic from the concerns that first motivated me to undertake this study. Initially, I had intended to focus specifically on traditionally-based *musik kontemporer*, which I first encountered through a program of compositions by I Wayan Sadra and a group of his colleagues from the arts institute in Solo—which I refer to in this study by its original name, ASKI—who performed in Vancouver in 1991 on a North American tour. Excited by what struck me as very conspicuous experimentation, I wanted to know how these musicians, who were obviously steeped in traditional Indonesian musics, came to create such music. Only a few sections in a few pieces were for traditional ensemble configurations. For the most part,

pieces explored unusual combinations of instruments. One piece featured a chorus of *rebab*,¹⁰ while another was composed for a large group of various plucked zithers from different regional traditions—instruments which would be present singly in gamelan and other traditional ensembles. Another piece had instruments in *slendro* and *pelog*, the two different tuning systems of Javanese music, playing at the same time. Yet another made extensive use of sound-making objects such as marbles, fans, blankets, plastic cups, and sheets of plywood; it ended with a blast of several motorcycle horns. There were passages that included instruments and voices performing material in traditional idioms, but in most cases they were superimposed—either with each other, or with instruments and objects used to create novel textures, or both. Almost every piece included sections that were entirely textural, with no clear melodic or rhythmic focus, but instead focused on masses of sounds that shifted in timbre, density, and dynamic.

Many observers assume that this music is the result of Western influence. I was convinced at the time that this was not the case—at least not in terms of my understanding of what was meant by Western influence. Though their music bore an unmistakable resemblance to the international avant-garde in certain respects, there were also significant differences: the inclusion of traditional Indonesian material, and more importantly, a mode of performance that even in those sections that departed entirely from tradition nevertheless seemed to maintain something of the spirit of traditional Indonesian music—a mode of performance that was, as I would now put it, Indological. Perhaps the most obvious difference was that they performed the entire program without a scrap of notation in sight, switching fluently between, and sometimes combining, material that in its tight coordination

10. A two string bowed lute, considered a leading melodic instrument.

of parts was clearly memorized, and material that was apparently improvised. Their music struck me as embodying an impulse no less modernist than that exemplified by the international avant-garde. Yet they did not seem to be imitating Eurological models. They certainly had not adopted them wholesale.

My growing familiarity with the music of coming out of ASKI Solo reinforced this hunch—a hunch that my formal research would eventually confirm. Through participating in a collaboration with A. L. Suwardi (1951–), who returned to Vancouver after the conclusion of the 1991 tour for a month-long residency, I experienced a distinctive compositional process based on collaboration and the exploration of sound—a process I learned from the 1987 dissertation of the English composer Alec Roth, and from my subsequent experience in further collaborations in Indonesia,¹¹ was in fact representative of the ASKI approach. During my first trip to Indonesia—from October of 1993 through May of 1995, most of which I spent in Solo—the latest hits of Ace of Base and Air Supply were inescapable. I found no evidence, however, of the presence of Western new music at ASKI, where I was studying. There were no scores or recordings in the library, and the curriculum was solidly focused on traditional Indonesian musics. I did, from attending a concert of new compositions at ASKI’s sister institution in Bandung, see a piece for which the composer conducted a gamelan ensemble, leading it through changes in tempo and dynamics reminiscent of a hyper-expressive Romantic era symphony. The composer, Dody Satya Ekagustdiman (1961–), who is ten years Suwardi’s junior, explicitly acknowledged the Western art music tradition as his model, and it was clear that the German composer Dieter Mack, who had been teaching in Bandung since 1992 and was present at the concert, was the primary conduit of this influence. But as a recent

11. See Appendix II, “Participation in Creative Projects,” for details.

development, it seemed to be an exception that proved the rule.

My conviction that Western influence was not a major factor in the emergence of traditionally based *musik kontemporer* was, however, based on a specific and limited idea of what constitutes Western influence. It was not that I was blind to other forms of Western influence in Indonesia, which were abundant and obvious. Besides the current influx of Western pop music, the ubiquity of art deco architecture in Indonesian cities, and the chandeliers and marble floors that graced the grand *pendhapa*¹² of the palaces in Solo, were two of many unmistakable aesthetic manifestations of the impact of several centuries of European presence. I was aware that Indonesia's very existence, as a nation state roughly coterminous with the territory of the Dutch East Indies, and even its name, from the Greek words for India and island, were inextricably bound up with the history of European imperialism.

None of these, however, were the kind of influence that I thought mattered. Neither chandeliers nor geometric detailing on the facades of buildings would by themselves inspire composers to turn instruments upside down or to make music using sheets of tin. The drive to modernize—a drive that because of Indonesia's colonial history, and postcolonial present in an age of increasing global flows of information, commerce, and culture, involved a good deal of looking to the West as a model—is undeniably significant as a general backdrop. But the adoption of experimentalist practices by students at a traditional music conservatory was not an inevitable nor even a predictable outcome of the kinds of Western influence that were readily apparent, in the way that the appearance of Indonesian-produced pop songs like

12. A pavillion-like structure, with a pyramid-shaped roof supported by columns, a high ceiling, and no walls.

“Denpasar Moon,” which was also inescapable in 1994, was.

Eventually, as I began to read more, and especially as I started my research proper in 2004, I realized that the kind of influence that mattered most was not stylistic but conceptual. Suwardi and other composers at ASKI were pushed to experiment most of all by ASKI’s director, Gendhon Humardani, who sought to establish a contemporary existence for traditional Indonesian performing arts. His ideas for how best to do this were informed by his enthusiasm for modern Indonesian arts—especially literature and visual arts, which did follow Western models—and his own experience studying modern dance in the United States. Both led him to familiarize himself with Western aesthetic philosophy. Humardani pushed his students to experiment, and worked to instill in them an attitude toward the arts that reflected the values he himself had adopted—values he presented as universal rather than Western. The extent to which students at ASKI engaged directly with Western forms of art was, however, quite limited. This was especially the case in music, which Humardani had less command of.

To the extremely limited extent that Western influence of the sort presumed by casual observers to have been key to the experimentalism coming out of ASKI did play a role in that scene’s formation, it was mostly through interaction with Western-oriented Indonesian composers for whom such influence was centrally important. Exposure to the international avant-garde played a key role in the emergence of the two Western-oriented scenes I examine in this study. These scenes formed around two figures: Slamet Abdul Sjukur, mentioned above, who taught at the Institut Kesenian Jakarta after his return to Indonesia from Paris in 1976; and Jack Body, who in that same year began a two-year stint as a guest lecturer at the Akademi Musik Indonesia in Jogja. I had some awareness of this other side of *musik*

kontemporer from my first visit to Indonesia, and had learned of one particular instance of interaction. When I met the composer, critic, and scholar Franki Raden in Jakarta 1994—a student of Sjukur—he told me about collaborating on a film score with students at ASKI in the 1970s, and how he had given Suwardi a cassette recording of pieces by Pierre Boulez and György Ligeti. Raden subsequently expanded on this story in his own dissertation (Notosudirdjo 2001), portraying himself as the crucial agent who instigated the compositional direction developed at ASKI Solo—a controversial claim that I scrutinize in chapter 4.

As I learned more about the Western-oriented scenes, it became increasingly clear that there was at least as much influence flowing in the other direction. In 1994, I saw Slamet Abdul Sjukur perform two pieces at an interdisciplinary arts festival in Solo, one for flute and piano, another for Javanese *gender*.¹³ In 1993 I attended an evening length dance performance with music for multiple Javanese *rebab* and *gender* by Tony Prabowo, another of Sjukur's students. While completing my MA at Wesleyan, I attended the premiere of Prabowo's first opera, for three singers and chamber orchestra, at Lincoln Center.¹⁴ This was in 2000, two years after attending the premiere of a collaborative project for which Prabowo worked with an ensemble consisting primarily of traditional Minangkabau musicians.¹⁵ Indonesia's two leading Western-oriented composers do not, then, compose exclusively for

13. A metallophone with thin keys suspended by cords over a rack with tuned resonators, considered one of the most important instruments in Javanese gamelan.

14. "The King's Witch" was premiered in a concert presentation at Alice Tully Hall on 22 November 2000. It was presented as a fully staged production at Taman Ismail Marzuki in Jakarta on 1 and 2 December 2006 (<http://www.thejakartapost.com/Archives/ArchivesDet2.asp?FileID=20061201.B10>, accessed 1 July 2007).

15. *Empty Tradition: City of Peonies*, with choreography by Yin Mei, was commissioned by and presented at the Asia Society in New York City 28 October through 1 November 1998. Prabowo's music was played by the New Jakarta Ensemble, which I discuss in chapter 6.

Western forces, but also for traditional Indonesian instruments and musicians. My research revealed that they are far from exceptional in doing so. I learned from Stephanie Griffin's 2003 D.M.A. thesis on Prabowo that such work represented the better part of his output, largely because of "the lack of competent Western-style ensembles in Indonesia" (Griffin 2003:xvi). The standard narrative of non-Western new music as the internationalization of a still predominantly Western avant-garde, building on a prior adoption of the Western art music tradition, while part of the story of Western-oriented *musik kontemporer*, was not the whole story. Western-oriented *musik kontemporer* is reasonably characterized as such in its foundation, but not in all of its manifestations.

The question of Western influence—or more specifically, of its adequacy as an explanation for how *musik kontemporer* gained its distinctive profile—thus became even more of a question, even for the side of *musik kontemporer* where one might have assumed it was a given. I realized that to best address the question it made sense to examine both *musik kontemporer*'s Western-oriented and traditionally-based sides. These two sides formed in local scenes that to a large extent developed independently of one another, but that early on were brought together to form a single field. Looking at the field as a whole put into perspective not only particular instances of interaction, such as that between Raden and composers at ASKI, but also how individual scenes related to that whole. It facilitated understanding *musik kontemporer* within the broader cultural ecology of contemporary Indonesia, and understanding Western influence alongside a host of factors that have done no less to give it its shape.

Finding a Method to Define Scope

Having decided to look at Western-oriented as well as traditionally-based *musik kontemporer*, I had to find some other way to limit the extent of my study, to keep it manageable and to allow for some depth. I settled on defining my scope geographically, to cover what I understood to be the three sites where scenes of *musik kontemporer* first emerged: the old central Javanese court cities of Surakarta (also known as Solo) and Yogyakarta (also known as Jogja), and the national capital, the megalopolis of Jakarta.

I further needed to decide what activity and which individuals to focus my attention on. I was concerned to a certain extent to situate *musik kontemporer* within its broader context, which entailed understanding something of its relationships with other forms of music in Indonesia. But at the same time, I knew that I would need to prioritize speaking with those musicians who were involved with *musik kontemporer*, which meant determining somehow who they were. I could not do this with the operative criteria in the majority of scholarship on contemporary art music composition in Asia—criteria identified quite explicitly by Richard Feliciano in his study of *Four Asian Contemporary Composers*, who stated flatly that “when one speaks of an Asian composer, the implication is that he or she is trained in Western compositional techniques” (Feliciano 1983: 1). Such criteria would exclude the composers at ASKI Solo who had inspired me to research *musik kontemporer* in the first place.

With my initial focus on traditionally-based *musik kontemporer*, I had been more concerned with rejecting and challenging existing definitions of contemporary art music that could not account for such work than I had been with coming up with new ones that would. There were, however, distinctions that I needed to recognize explicitly, not the least of which were those I was taking as a given. The term *musik kontemporer*, in the sense that those I am

concerned with in this study use it, was, as noted above, first introduced by Slamet Abdul Sjukur, as a direct translation of European language terms such as *Zeitgenössische Musik*, contemporary music, and—most directly, coming from Paris—*musique contemporaine*.¹⁶ In this usage, it refers not to all forms of contemporary musical expression, but specifically to those which are avant-garde and experimentalist in character and intent. The compositional practice exemplified by Sadra and Suwardi was similarly experimentalist, though it had a different lineage. Though it represented the dominant tendency in composition at ASKI Solo, there were other creative practices such as *penataan*, new arrangements of traditional repertoire. Outside of ASKI, there was no shortage of popularly-oriented contemporary forms of gamelan which I was quite certain would not be regarded as *musik kontemporer*.

The term *musik kontemporer* thus had implications, but I was still wary of imposing my own a priori definition. I was more interested in how Indonesians defined it. I decided that rather than a preliminary matter to settle in advance of my research, it was a question that should instead be central to it. My approach was to start not by defining limiting criteria, but instead to identify centers and work outward from them to discover *musik kontemporer*'s scope. I first interviewed individuals whom I knew to be central to the different scenes of *musik kontemporer* I had chosen to focus on. Many were participants in the Pekan Komponis

16. Sumarsam suggests that the term *musik kontemporer* was formed by joining together *musik*, from the Dutch *muziek*, and *kontemporer* from the English “contemporary.” Asking “why was it necessary for Indonesians to coin this foreign term?”, he points to Andrew McGraw’s argument, from his dissertation (2005), that “the term represents a new Indonesian geopolitical or regional perspective that transcends ethnically specific terms such as ‘gamelan’.” Sumarsam also discusses other relatively early uses of the term *kontemporer* on its own from the 1970s, concluding that “the term ‘kontemporer’ was frequently used in the late 1970s, but its usage was limited to categorical and general terms” (Sumarsam 2013:43). My contention that *musik kontemporer* was effectively a borrowed term with a clear point of reference, while at odds with Sumarsam’s and McGraw’s perspectives, is not intended to invalidate them. Terms need not have singular points of entry, and they can mean different things to different parties—McGraw’s explanation, for example, making sense from a Balinese perspective.

Muda (PKM), a more or less annual festival held eight times between 1979 and 1988 that more than any other event established the field that came to be called *musik kontemporer*. I also interviewed senior figures, such as Slamet Abdul Sjukur, and the PKM's director, Suka Hardjana. From them I learned of other composers, whom I then sought out.

Eventually, after hearing certain names mentioned repeatedly, the extent of the different circles and their overlap became clear. A consistent set of criteria for what counted as *musik kontemporer*, on the other hand, did not. Some practices were especially exemplary—those that were conspicuously experimental or innovative, such as the exploration of unconventional sounds from gamelan instruments, or that conformed to models from the international avant-garde, such as those employing a “post-tonal” language. The notion that work should be more *idealis* (idealistic) than its opposite, *realis*—which seemed to refer mostly to a pragmatic concern with reaching a non-specialized, and thus larger, audience, or with conforming to the expectations of contexts considered more mainstream—was widely shared, but a sense of what precisely that meant in terms of style was not. As the first Yogyakarta Contemporary Music Festival amply demonstrated, *musik kontemporer*'s eclecticism defies tidy definitions.

Existing Literature and the Turn toward Historiography

My study has benefitted from what by now is a considerable amount of scholarship on *musik kontemporer*, in both English and Indonesian. Some briefer and more focused studies have corroborated what I learned from my own interviews and fieldwork, and complemented it with additional information, and different perspectives and emphases (Burchman 2000; Mack 2005; Perlman 1998; Raharja 2001). Of these, Stephanie Griffin's profile of Tony Prabowo

(Griffin 2003) was, as noted above, especially valuable in alerting me to the actual nature of his work, and of the conditions faced by Western-oriented composers.

Three more extensive studies have had a greater impact on the scope and focus of my own. Alec Roth's dissertation on new composition for gamelan at ASKI Solo (1987), with its very thorough account of the distinctive compositional process practiced there, but rather cursory examination of how that practice was developed and how the scene there related to activity occurring elsewhere, pushed me away from musical analysis of work coming out of the scene I knew best, and toward historiography and looking at other scenes. I have been able to leave the very active and important scene that developed in Bali to my colleague Andrew Clay McGraw, who made it the focus of his own dissertation (2004) and his first monograph (McGraw 2013a).

The third and most influential study on my own is the 2001 dissertation of Franki Raden (Notosudirdjo 2001). Entitled "Music, Politics, and the Problems of National Identity in Indonesia," the study is a historiography with sweeping scope of what Raden calls "Indonesian art music." He locates the roots of Indonesian art music in "the meeting between indigenous and Western music cultures" (ibid.:11) that was the legacy of several centuries of European presence, and then identifies its "genesis" in a single musical act: the 1916 arrangement of the Javanese gamelan piece *ketawang* "Kinanthi Sandung" for voice and piano by Ki Hadjar Dewantara, a nationalist-agitator turned educator turned politician who was Indonesia's first minister of education (ibid.:115-118). He documents the development of art music and thinking about national culture in Indonesia through the remainder of the twentieth century, leading up to his final chapter on the "Era of Creativity and Production," the period in which what is more commonly called *musik kontemporer* emerged. The bulk of

that chapter is taken up by descriptions of compositions that exemplify what Raden presents as Dewantara's idea of Indonesian national music: "the peaks of regional music plus selective foreign musical elements" (ibid.:6).¹⁷

Raden's study is notable as the first attempt at a comprehensive historiography of art music composition in Indonesia, one that takes into account both the work of Western-oriented (or as he describes them, "Western-model") and traditionally-based composers—though it is mostly focused on the former. It demands attention as well because it is written by an insider. But as valuable as it is for the research and chronology it presents, many of its claims are problematic. The study amplifies conclusions he made in earlier writings, conclusions that prompted his critics to "point out—at times harshly—that Raden makes too many generalizations and sometimes treats his topic haphazardly" (Sumarsam 2013). I discuss some of the particular problems—such as the claim that Ki Hadjar Dewantara's "Kinanthi Sandung," a piece that seemingly was never played in Indonesia, represents the "genesis" of Indonesian art music, and Raden's controversial claim to have instigated the compositional direction taken at ASKI Solo—in the chapters that follow. A more fundamental problem is the notion of Indonesian art music itself, a notion based on a term, *musik seni*, that Raden admits at the outset of his study "is rarely used to identify Indonesian art music as a genre" (Notosudirdjo 2001: 2). Raden's grand historical account of a form that

17. This definition of national music derives from Dewantara's ideas, but it is not in fact his own. It was a subsequent minister of education, Bahder Djohan, who "converted" the "peaks" of regional culture idea "into a musical context" (Notosudirdjo 2001:243). And it was Raden himself who added "selective foreign musical elements," based on his observation that Dewantara "did not reject the possibility of incorporating Western culture as an ingredient of an Indonesian national culture" (ibid.:5). True as this is, as we will see in chapter 1, Dewantara was more centrally concerned with promoting the value of regional cultures, countering those who advocated abandoning them in favor of a new Western-oriented culture.

is not generally recognized is thus less an accurate reflection of how things are than a hopeful projection of how he hopes they might be, an assessment suggested by his own characterization of his study as “an authoritative narrative within the context of the struggle to gain people’s acceptance of art music as national music” (ibid.:445). As Suka Hardjana put it, quite simply, “what Franki says is too much” (Suka Hardjana, p.c., 14 September 2004).¹⁸

The criticism of Hardjana and others reinforced my sense that Raden’s study called for a corrective. It was this, in large part, that prompted me toward my own historiographic research. Looking into the evidence and perspectives of other sources, including some that Raden himself drew upon, confirmed my sense that Raden’s own presentation of evidence could support rather different conclusions. Key among those other sources are writings by some of the central figures in the first notable attempt to establish art music composition in Indonesia in the 1940s and 50s, which were collected and published at the time (Dungga and Manik 1952; Pasaribu 1955). The writings of Suka Hardjana—who as director of the PKM played a central role in shaping the profile of *musik kontemporer*—were also important. These include dozens of newspaper articles—two collections of which were, conveniently, published at the time I did my fieldwork (Hardjana 2004b)(Hardjana 2004a)—and a book on *musik kontemporer* (Hardjana 2003). Most influential was a substantial article for the

18. Raden’s concern with bolstering the status of Indonesian art music by endowing it with a more substantial history—with demonstrating that “Indonesian art music has been in existence for many decades” and “that it is deeply rooted within the context of Indonesian politics and culture”—and with arguing for its relevance, that it “is indeed the Indonesian national music that has been sought for decades” (Notosudirdjo 2001:xxiv), is understandable. As he admits, when he himself was studying composition in the mid-1970s, he “did not have the slightest idea whose [sic] composers had lived before me and my teachers’ generations, and what kind of music they wrote” (ibid.:xix). His hope is that, provided with his study, “future composers will no longer feel lost” (ibid.:xxiv). His concern with asserting the importance of Western-oriented composers such as himself—for example, by arguing that “Ki Hadjar Dewantara’s concept of national music is best pursued by collaboration between Western-model and traditional academic musicians” (ibid.:343-344)—is best understood as a symptom of the absence of authority that Western-oriented composers suffered, a predicament I introduce below.

Indonesian arts journal *Kalam* that offered a history and critique of Western-oriented Indonesian musics (Hardjana 1995). This article appeared a year after *Kalam* published the essay in which Raden presented the kernel of his historiographic project, along with three critical responses, by Slamet Abdul Sjukur, Dieter Mack, and the writer and critic Yapi Tambayong (Mack 1994; Raden 1994; Sjukur 1994; Tambayong 1994)¹⁹—all of whom have written about music in contemporary Indonesia on other occasions as well.²⁰

The picture that emerges from these other perspectives—most of them also the perspectives of insiders—is not one of Western-oriented *musik kontemporer* emerging in the 1970s out of a base of compositional activity from the mid-twentieth century—and certainly not from activity earlier in the century. Rather, it is a picture of frustration and ultimately failure on the part of that earlier generation to gain acceptance and support for their efforts, and to establish a practice of composition that they and others after them would recognize as art music. Underlying that failure, and a condition persisting to the present, is the

19. Raden's essay was an expanded version of a 1989 article written for *Kompas*, Indonesia's most respected daily newspaper, and an essay in the program booklet for *Suita 92*, a concert of *musik kontemporer* at the Gedung Kesenian Jakarta, 12-13 October 1992. Raden's essay, and the responses by Sjukur, Mack, and Tambayong, were presented as a special feature with the title "Polemik Musik Indonesia."

20. Dieter Mack contributed the fourth volume in a four-volume history of music published by Pusat Musik Liturgi (Center for Liturgical Music) in Yogyakarta, reprinted with corrections (but not designated as a second edition) in 2004. Covering music since the end of the Second World War, the volume conforms to the pattern typical of such historiographies of focusing on the Western art music tradition, but includes chapters on "Music in Other Countries—Intercultural Composition—'World Music'—'New Age'," "Jazz—Pop/Rock—and 'Avantgarde'," as well as two chapters on music in Indonesia since 1945. Other publications include a collection of essays (Mack 2001) and a chapter on Slamet Abdul Sjukur (Mack 2005), both published in Indonesia, and a monograph on contemporary music in Indonesia published in Germany (Mack 2004). Slamet Abdul Sjukur has written numerous newspaper articles, as well as a short essay on his compositional philosophy (Sjukur 1991). Yapi Tambayong is a novelist, poet, and respected music critic, mostly of popular music, who mostly publishes under his pen name, Remy Sylado. He was the editor in the 1970s of the then-influential music magazine *Aktuil*. He also, seemingly single-handedly, wrote the two volume *Ensiklopedi Musik* (1992), though his name appears only in the forward.

underdeveloped state of Indonesia's Western art music performance scene. The history of art music composition in Indonesia is thus not one of continuous development, but instead one marked by considerable discontinuity.

Meanwhile, a quite different picture emerges from other writings that focus on the traditionally-based side of *musik kontemporer*, and that document the forums that established *musik kontemporer* as a field of activity that from the outset encompassed both traditionally-based and Western-oriented composers. Key among these writings are those by and about ASKI Solo's director, Gendhon Humardani, in particular a biography by Rustopo (1990), who subsequently wrote a history of the formation and development of "gamelan *kontemporer*" in Solo (1991). Illuminating also is documentation published by the Jakarta Arts Council (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta, DKJ) of the conferences held in 1974 and 1975 that led to the founding of the Pekan Komponis Muda in 1979 (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta 1975, 1976). These sources point to the high esteem and enthusiasm for traditional music and its potential as a foundation for contemporary forms of creative expression—attitudes evident also in studies of contemporary dance by Sal Murgiyanto (1991) and contemporary theater by Cobina Gillet (2001).

Other Indonesian publications convey the perspectives of the younger composers who, like Franki Raden and Rustopo, got their start in the 1970s and became the key figures in the various scenes of *musik kontemporer*. The composer statements and essays presented at the first six PKM were compiled by Suka Hardjana and published by the DKJ (Hardjana 1986). A number of composers have been active as writers beyond the demands of the PKM. I Wayan Sadra presented a working paper at the eighth PKM in 1988, based on a report written for ASKI in 1986, which was subsequently translated by Jody Diamond and published in

Leonardo Music Journal (Sadra 1991). Among Rahayu Supanggah's numerous articles on various topics are several about the traditionally-based scene at ASKI Solo, and *musik kontemporer* more generally (Supanggah 1980; 1992; 1995; 1996; 2003b). Two composers from Jogja have published books: Sutanto, a collection of essays (Sutanto 2002); and Sapto Raharjo, an auto-biography (Raharjo 2005).

Taken together, this literature has complemented my interviews and fieldwork²¹ in understanding the various aspects of the history of *musik kontemporer* proper. It has also been invaluable in gaining a well-rounded sense of what should be considered its prehistory. Raden's dissertation and its problematic claims prompted me to look beyond the immediate circumstances surrounding the emergence of *musik kontemporer*. But examining the broader record of earlier activity reinforced my sense that *musik kontemporer* should be regarded as a relatively recent development, with a critical mass of composers and continuous activity forming only in the late 1970s. It became clear that earlier developments in the direction of art music were too limited in extent and found insufficient support to provide a basis for continued growth. Compounding the problem were significant and prevalent discontinuities, in individual careers, particular traditions, and the cultural ecology as a whole, that resulted from the political turmoil of the 1960s. Those earlier developments were thus like seeds that

21. See Appendix I for a list of the sixty-one interviews with forty-seven individuals, totalling roughly eighty-eight hours, that I conducted during two trips to Indonesia of about two-and-a-half months each in 2004 and 2005. I also spent time during my 2005 trip collecting materials from the archives of the Dewan Kesenian Jakarta (Jakarta Arts Council, DKJ), Institut Seni Indonesia Surakarta (Indonesian Arts Institute Surakarta, which I refer to by its original name, ASKI), and the Taman Budaya Jawa Tengah di Surakarta (Cultural Center of Central Java in Surakarta, known as TBS). I was able to conduct my formal research in a relatively short amount of time due to my prior experience in Indonesia over longer trips in 1993-95 and 2000, in which my focus was on learning to play Javanese gamelan. I also participated in several projects as a composer, improviser, and performer, activity that I continued in my 2004 and 2005 trips, as detailed in Appendix II, "Participation in Creative Projects."

didn't take, seedlings that failed to weather a rather inhospitable climate, or growth that turned into or turned out to be something other than art music. The key developments in the 1970s were not offspring of these, but rather new growth from new seeds. Nevertheless, it was also clear that examining that earlier growth, and especially what became of it and why, would shed much light on understanding how the balance of ecological factors went from inhibiting to enabling the growth of particular directions in art music composition, and how they gave *musik kontemporer* its distinctive profile. Far from being mere background to my study, this literature, especially that by key contributors to *musik kontemporer*'s intellectual history and pre-history, is integral to my own historiographical project.

Questions and Theories

Dimensions of the Question of Influence

I have not, in this study, adopted any single major theoretical framework. I have, however, in venturing to theorize certain aspects of my topic, introduced a number of terms and developed perspectives on certain concepts and phenomena. Most of these relate in some way to the question of Western influence, some specific aspects of which I have noted above. Further dimensions of the question bear sounding out in advance of introducing my own theoretical interventions.

Most generally, the problem with the concept of Western influence is twofold: that it is vague, and that it is loaded. The term's blunt but far-reaching explanatory power derives in part from the word influence, especially the sense active in the notion of being under the influence of an intoxicating substance or a charismatic individual. When "influence" is paired

with “Western,” there is an appeal to, if not Western superiority, at least some sense of the West’s dominance, and/or the pervasiveness of its influence throughout the world. The impact of European and American imperialism, and of neocolonial domination in the increased flow of people, information, technology, commerce, and ideas recognized by the term globalization (Appadurai 1996), cannot be denied. But the dominance is not absolute.

Intersecting with this general tendency is the strong focus in discourse about the fine and performing arts, especially in humanistic scholarship, on influence as it pertains to stylistic development. Scholarship on Western art music has tended to focus on those influences that shape an individual composer’s work, most notably the influences of other individual composers. Influence in this specifically artistic sense has been theorized most cogently by Harold Bloom, who in *The Anxiety of Influence* sorts out the different ways in which poets create themselves in relationship to their precursors. Influence, in Bloom’s view, is not benign and empowering, but like “influenza,” an “astral disease” from which poets must protect themselves through strategies of creative misreading (Bloom 1997). Influence in this sense, whether inspiring or threatening, relates to the notion of canon, not just as a scholarly construct but as a product of a broader discourse involving artists, critics, and audiences. So although the persistent focus of historical musicology and related sub-disciplines on the canon of Western art music can be criticized as being myopically Eurocentric, it does reflect a more widely held perspective, in that this focus is shared by many artists and devotees.

The scholarly literature on non-Western contemporary art music, most of it coming out of those sub-disciplines of music scholarship that are focused on the Western art music canon, is shaped by that focus. To the extent that non-Western topics are considered, it is large scale adoptions of the Western art music tradition that have been studied most. While rarely

making unqualified assertions of Western influence, neither has it offered much to counter them. The greatest amount of attention has been given to Japanese composers, and especially Toru Takemitsu, effectively making him paradigmatic of the Asian composer. Addressing the question of influence, Takemitsu himself spoke of “the West” as “a single enormous mirror,” whose “strong reflected light” initially “overwhelmed the light of other cultures.” As he “became aware of Japanese traditions” he “became interested in the reflections of other mirrors,” and declared, “to replace the great shattered mirror of Western music, to include the reflections of other mirrors—that is our task today” (Takemitsu 1995: 92-94).²² For historical musicology, music theory, and composition, the mirror of the Western art music canon remains quite intact, and scholars in those sub-disciplines have, by and large, remained intent on focusing on those mirrors in other parts of the world that reflect back its bright light. A foundation in the Western art music tradition has been taken as a given, and it is other musics which are regarded as secondary influences.

In cases such as Japan, this specifically artistic form of influence accompanied influence in other areas. Surveys of contemporary art music in Japan quite rightly acknowledge the broad trend of modernization brought about by the Meiji Restoration, which involved not only industrialization and political reform but also changes in education and cultural orientation that laid the groundwork for Japanese society’s spectacular adoption of Western art music. Several centuries of European presence in what is now Indonesia, and especially

22. One more recent study of Takemitsu’s work (Koh 1998) at least glances in some of those other mirrors—traditional Japanese music and film music being two of the more significant. But most focus squarely on his concert music. Peter Burt, at the outset of the introduction to his monograph on Takemitsu, acknowledges that Takemitsu “produced a vast amount of music for film, theatre, television and radio as well as a number of pieces of more ‘populist’ character,” but also admits that “such works lie beyond the remit of the present study, which for the most part deals only with the compser’s ‘classical’ scores for the concert platform” (Burt 2001: 1).

the establishment of a colonial state by the Dutch in the early nineteenth century, undeniably had a similarly profound impact on Indonesian societies. But as I discuss in chapter 1, there was nothing comparable in terms of the adoption of Western art music. Influence in one sphere does not automatically imply influence in another, and the forms that influence take in different contexts vary greatly.

Many of the problems with unqualified appeals to Western influence, whether explicit or implicit, are easily avoided through taking a broader perspective and through greater specificity. Bruno Nettl makes a strong claim in calling the “intensive imposition of Western music and musical thought upon the rest of the world” the “most significant phenomenon in the global history of music,” but his broad survey presents a more complex picture by examining the full range of responses, from maintenance and preservation to modification or virtual abandonment of musical traditions in the face of Western influence (Nettl 1985: 3). In the literature on Indonesian music, scholars have identified less obvious instances of Western influence. Judith Becker countered the assumption, common when she was writing in 1972, that there was no Western influence in Javanese gamelan music—an assumption that is the opposite, but no less problematic, of unqualified assertions of Western influence as a key factor in contemporary art music. Arguing that “influence cannot be limited in interpretations to mean only simplistic adoption,” Becker pointed to “the impact of technology and Western concepts” (Becker 1972). Along this line, Becker has been joined by R. Anderson Sutton and Sumarsam in drawing attention to particular borrowings and impositions. Some of these are concrete, like notation (Becker 1980, chapter 2), or electronic sound technologies (Sutton 1996). Others are more abstract, like the increase in individual creativity, as Becker observes in the work of Wasitodipuro (Becker 1980: chapter 4), or the impact of certain ideas, such as

the notion that Javanese *karawitan* is an instance of high culture, which I explore in chapter 1.

In the case of traditionally-based *musik kontemporer*, the most significant influence, as noted above, and elaborated in chapter 4, has similarly been conceptual. But in the case of Western-oriented *musik kontemporer*, Western influence of the Bloomian sort has played a key role. Slamet Abdul Sjukur went to France to fulfill a dream that started from hearing the music of Maurice Ravel as a teenager. “Spiral,” the piece for flute and piano noted above, interpolates music based on Erik Satie’s “Three Gymnopédies” with the *gymnopédies* themselves. Tony Prabowo, as we will see in chapter 6, is just as direct in acknowledging his forbears, both Europeans like Pierre Boulez, and the paradigmatic Asian composer, Toru Takemitsu.

Indonesia is not, of course, Japan. And *musik kontemporer* is not like contemporary Japanese art music, not in its Western-oriented aspect, and certainly not in its overall profile. This is, of course, to state the obvious. But when no less exacting a scholar as Georgina Born speaks of the “internationalization of twentieth-century avant-gardes” and of “the now-global Cageian experimental movement” (Born and Hesmondhalgh 2000: 20), in reference to the sole chapter to examine non-Western new music in the influential co-edited volume she was introducing—a chapter whose otherwise insightful exploration reinstates East Asia as its exemplar (Corbett 2000)—it is a point that needs to be asserted. Or more importantly, demonstrated.

To look beyond the parallels—which, to be sure, do exist—and recognize what is distinctive calls for even greater specificity, and a shift in focus from identifying the sources of influence to examining what happens when they reach their destination. One needs to ask

not only “what kind of influence?”, but also how much, when, and for how long? What role does influence play? What other factors shape its impact? What paths does influence follow, what is the context in which it is received, and how is it thus filtered and interpreted? I consider all these dimensions in examining the emergence of the different scenes of *musik kontemporer* covered in this study. Going further still, to qualify the notion of Western influence in the different dimensions demanded by different scenes, I have found it necessary to make several theoretical interventions. I will introduce them now.

Ethnological Valence

A more theoretical dimension of the notion of Western influence is the sense in which it, or rather its various forms, are Western. The question is somewhat pertinent in the case of the Bloomian type of influence from the international avant-garde—the type of influence operative when Prabowo looks to either Boulez or Takemitsu. This is less because influence is not only coming directly from the West, but also, in the case of Takemitsu, via Japan, but more because through its internationalization the avant-garde itself becomes less strongly Western. The question is centrally important with the kind of conceptual influence channeled by the director of ASKI Solo, Gendhon Humardani, which was key to the emergence of the traditionally-based scene of *musik kontemporer* there.

In questioning the extent to which these particular forms of influence are Western I am not advocating a counterfactual denial of the origins of certain ideas and practices in the West, or of the continued dominance of the West in many spheres. Rather, I am suggesting that in at least some cases the fact of Western origin may not be so important, and that Western dominance might not be quite such an overwhelming force. As a way of theorizing

this suggestion, I propose the concept of ethnological valence. I use the term ethnological not in its standard academic sense, but as one uses psychological in speaking of “psychological well-being.” By ethnological valence I mean the logic through which ethnicity is perceived in or attributed to things—for example, the idea that chocolate is Swiss, or that the violin is Indian (to Indians), or that the *rebab* is Javanese. As these examples suggest, ethnological valence is not determined simply by the fact of origin. Cocoa beans do not grow in Switzerland or, for that matter, anywhere in Europe. Just as with people, to whom ethnicity is more conventionally ascribed,²³ the ethnicity of things is not inherent to them. Rather, it is relative to particular perspectives that can shift over time.

The sense of something having ethnicity also varies by degree, hence the idea of valence. Sound amplification and the symphony orchestra are both Western inventions, introduced fairly recently to other parts of the world, but sound amplification is arguably the more ethnologically neutral. “The global adoption of electronic sound technology from the West,” Sutton notes, represents “a pervasive form of Western influence in the musics of the world.” But as he acknowledges this, he also argues, with reference to its use in Indonesia, it “does not in itself ‘Westernize’ the musical culture into which it is adopted.” Rather, it “opens a range of possibilities and may instead reinforce indigenous values” (Sutton 1996: 249). The symphony orchestra, by contrast, is quintessentially emblematic of Western art music, and in East Asian countries such as Japan and South Korea it has played a key role in the ascendance of that music to a position of dominance in elite spheres (Galliano 2002)(Hwang

23. The other theoretical move here is to consider Western an ethnicity. Reserving the term ethnicity as it more conventionally used to refer to smaller, more intensive group identities (Hutchinson and Smith 1996), and recognizing the more diffuse nature of Western as an identity or identifier, it is perhaps more appropriate to speak of it as a meta-ethnicity.

2001). It is a centrally important facet of the Westernization of those musical cultures.

Aesthetic Authority and Cosmopolitan Nativism

The things whose ethnological valence I am most concerned with are artistic modernism and experimentalism, aesthetic tendencies that have been central to *musik kontemporer*. The question of whether modernism and experimentalism should be considered Western, or Westernizing, cannot be answered absolutely. Its ethnological valence is instead a function of perspective. More specifically, it has, I argue, to do with how or from where a given scene and the individuals within it derive their sense of aesthetic authority. What makes the Western-oriented composers of *musik kontemporer* such is the fact that they identify primarily with an international avant-garde that remains predominantly Western, and aesthetically Eurological. This is the case despite that avant-garde's conceit of breaking from the Western art music tradition. Pierre Boulez was at the forefront of efforts to reinvent the basis for musical composition through systems such as total serialism. John Cage turned to chance procedures as a way to let sounds be themselves, free from memory and tradition. These stances, as much as the avant-garde's internationalization, have served to attenuate its ethnological valence as Western.²⁴ But at the same time, the canon of Western art music remains a primary point of reference, even in its refusal, and the cultural milieu that sees to that tradition's perpetuation is by and large the same one that sustains the existence of the avant-garde. As we will see, in the Western-oriented scenes of *musik kontemporer*, the extent

24. This kind of stance can, as George Lewis argues in reference to improvised music after 1950, itself be considered Eurological (Lewis 1995). But see also Michael Tenzer (Tenzer 2003) for an account of the appeal to the Philippine composer José Maceda of the "higher form of universality" achieved by Edgar Varèse and Iannis Xenakis.

to which one has a foundation in Western art music—a knowledge of its history and familiarity with its underlying theory—remains a primary determinant of one's individual aesthetic authority. It remains key to being taken seriously, and to being confident as an artist.

In the traditionally-based scenes of *musik kontemporer*, aesthetic authority has derived first and foremost from a foundation in *karawitan* and other traditional Indonesian performing arts. That these traditions were able to function as sources of aesthetic authority for those involved with *musik kontemporer* owed much to their vitality and strength, but more specifically had to do with the high esteem in which they were held by Indonesia's cultural elite. This, in turn, was the result of the prevalence among that elite of those who I term *cosmopolitan nativists*: intellectuals educated in the West and invested to a significant extent in Western ideas of modernity, but who were committed, often deeply, to indigenous traditions, especially in the arts. The roots of cosmopolitan nativism extend back to the first stirrings of nationalism in Indonesia, as I examine in chapter 1. It prevailed through the debates concerning the direction that Indonesian culture should take that began in the decade before the declaration of independence in 1945. After independence, cosmopolitan nativism found a particularly forceful advocate in, and bolstered the authority of, Gendhon Humardani, the director of ASKI Solo. In a somewhat different form, it was taken up by Suka Hardjana, who earlier in his career was very strongly oriented toward the Western art music tradition, but through his work as director of the PKM became one of traditionally-based *musik kontemporer*'s most enthusiastic champions.

At ASKI Solo, because the push to experiment came most of all from Humardani, it was couched in cosmopolitan nativist terms. Both the imperative to innovate and more general notions about music as art were abstracted from their origins in Western and Western-

oriented aesthetic philosophy and practice. Their ethnological valence as Western was, for students at ASKI, almost fully attenuated, while Indonesian traditions were validated as basis from which to create contemporary forms of art.

Aesthetic Authority and its Absence, and the Predominance of the Periclassical and Paraclassical

Western-oriented composers have looked to the international avant-garde as a primary point of reference for their creative practice. That avant-garde is for them, in that sense, authoritative. But just as that avant-garde understands itself first and foremost in relation to the larger Western art music tradition, so too have Western-oriented composers in Indonesia found their aesthetic authority contingent on the strength of their foundation in that tradition.

What became clear from my research on the Western-oriented side of *musik kontemporer* was just how formidable a challenge Western-oriented composers have faced in gaining aesthetic authority. They faced a widespread absence of aesthetic authority around them, and a lack of locally available means to gain authority themselves by gaining a foundation in the history and theory of Western art music. The authority of the small number of educational and cultural institutions that supported their work, aesthetic and otherwise, was limited, there was a lack of a larger community of authoritative figures beyond a handful of teachers, and a lack of meaningful wider recognition of what aesthetic authority was present.

This absence of authority is a function of the state of Western art music performance in Indonesia, which in many respects, and especially in comparison to the standards of the now also international realm of classical music performance, is justifiably regarded as underdeveloped. What also became clear from my historiographical research was that Western art music in what is now Indonesia has never been especially strong. There were a

few high points in the decades immediately before and after independence, when there was a more sizable presence of musicians from Europe. But even then, the state of the local Western art music scene was felt to be less than satisfactory by its more serious minded proponents. As important as limitations in size and level of performance is its focus in terms of repertoire, which throughout its history has been less than squarely centered on Western art music's classical canon. From the ensembles at the nineteenth century courts of Central Java that played waltzes and other music for social dance, through the bands at the Dutch clubs in the late colonial period that played light classics, the radio orchestras that backed popular singers in the 1950s, and the "pops" focus of orchestras in the 1990s, the musical realm that in certain respects appears to be classical has actually been something else.

In the search for language to describe that something else, I have coined two neologisms: *periclassical* and *paraclassical*. These terms aim to capture the relationship of Western music in Indonesia to the evolving mainstream of the Western art music tradition in its now international contemporary existence, while also drawing attention to how that tradition, and especially the idea of classical music as the more commonplace term for what is taken to be its core, are culturally specific and historically contingent.

The term classical music "became standard in almost all European countries to designate the canon of great works" only in the 1830s (Weber 1986: 371). This and related developments, both conceptual and practical, had parallels in other fields as part of a larger pattern that Larry Shiner, in his "cultural history" of "the invention of art," calls the "apotheosis of art," in which "Art" became "an independent and privileged realm of spirit, truth, and creativity" (Shiner 2001: 187). The classical canon formed at first around the compositions of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, and then grew to include both living

composers and those from earlier eras, such as J.S. Bach. As the canon evolved, and the idea of “Art” grew stronger and more pervasive, the notion of absolute music as an ideal became increasingly important (Dahlhaus 1989).

The ideal of absolute music was best represented by abstract instrumental compositions, such as the symphonies of Beethoven. It also, however, entailed shifts in presentation and reception through which pieces that were originally functional and occasional—for example, the cantatas of Bach—were recast as “Art.” Classical music, as Robert Walser has noted, thus became

the sort of thing Eric Hobsbawm calls an ‘invented tradition’, whereby present interests construct a cohesive past to establish or legitimize present-day institutions or social relations. The hodgepodge of the classical canon—aristocratic and bourgeois music; academic, sacred and secular; music for public concerts, private soirées and dancing—achieves its coherence through its function as the most prestigious musical culture of the twentieth century. (Walser 1992: 265)

At the same time as certain parts of the musical culture of the European aristocracy and bourgeoisie became enshrined as classical music, other parts that were too overtly functional, too commercial, insufficiently substantial, or too firmly embedded in social life in ways that undermined their potential as Art, became peripheral. As we will see, these sorts of music, which I term periclassical, were far more prevalent than classical music proper in the musical life of colonialist society in what would become Indonesia.

Even more abundant in colonialist circles, especially in the twentieth century as the advent of radio and film accelerated the growth of commercialized popular culture, was music that had little concern with being “Art” or classical. Some of this music, in particular the constellation of popular styles that included the hybrid European-Indonesian genre *kroncong*, was arranged and performed by orchestra and band leaders who followed

American models that John Howland has pithily characterized as “jazz with strings” (Howland 2012). These colonial-era musicians, the Americans they emulated, and their Indonesian successors alike, partook of the urbane sophistication signified by the sound of the symphony orchestra, without fully submitting to an aesthetic hierarchy that would impel them toward the repertoire of the classical canon and its particular variety of formal complexity. They borrowed as much or more from “film music, musical theater, and certain popular symphonic literature” as they did from classical music proper (ibid., 111).

Rather than making popular music more classical, this kind of selective use of aspects of classical music is better characterized, I suggest, as paraclassical. Like the more common terms semiclassical and light classical, paraclassical recognizes the existence and force of an aesthetic hierarchy that regards European classical music as the pinnacle of musical achievement. Within the frame of this hierarchy, the qualifying prefixes semi- and light capture a sense of being second rank, in some sense subsidiary. In certain fields, the prefix para- carries something of this connotation. Paramedic and paralegal refer to functions within the field of medicine and law filled by those who are less fully qualified relative to physicians and lawyers—though they may develop particular skills to a higher level. But para- is also used to designate that which is analogous but distinct, and often not fully sanctioned, as with paramilitary forces. It is this combination of senses that makes the term paraclassical useful, in capturing musical tendencies which are conditioned by the authority held by classical music, or the idea of classical music, but that can and often do challenge or defy that authority.

Indonesia’s classical music scene, with its predominantly paraclassical constitution, draws incompletely from the ideology of classical music. Like classical music scenes in other

parts of the world, it is supported and consumed most of all by an urban and social elite—though in Indonesia, it is a niche interest if compared to the other more widely popular Western and Western-oriented musics that appeal to the xenocentric tendencies of that class (Wallach 2002). It has perhaps a slight edge over jazz—which in parallel to the paraclassical character of the classical music scene consists mostly of light jazz-pop fusion—in conferring cultural capital and reinforcing social stratification (Bourdieu 1984). In this sense, it occupies a position in the contemporary Indonesian music world analogous to that of art music traditions in other places and other times (Powers 1980)(Qureshi 2000). It is not, however, especially invested in the aesthetic hierarchy internal to the Western art music tradition. The symphony orchestra registers as that tradition’s most exalted vehicle, but abstract instrumental music is not at all prioritized over vocal music. The classical canon is no better represented in programming than themes from film soundtracks, numbers from Broadway musicals, or arrangements of pop songs. Indonesia classical music scene is part of the musical culture of Indonesia’s social elite, but it has little to do with the ideology of “Art,” in the sense examined by Shiner (Shiner 2001).

My point in discussing Indonesia’s classical music scene, here and in the pages that follow, is not to critically examine it in its own right—though to the extent I do, I contribute to that project. Rather, it is to underscore how much of a disconnect there is between that scene and *musik kontemporer*. This is not to say that they are completely separate. There are a few composers who have moved between the two, and orchestral musicians have been contracted to perform *kontemporer* works—though it is extremely rare for Indonesian orchestras to include *kontemporer* works in their own programming. The most important educational institution for classical music performance, the Akademi Musik Indonesia in

Jogja, is also the base for one of the two significant Western-oriented scenes of *musik kontemporer*—though, as we will see, problematically so. But the larger pattern is one of a self-reinforcing gap resulting from the lack of classically-oriented contingents on either side. While the “classical” scene has been dominated by the paraclassical, Western-oriented *musik kontemporer* has tended toward experimentalism, and, looking to traditional Indonesian music as an alternative source of authority, nativism.

Musik Kontemporer as Contemporary Art Music

Musik kontemporer thus has a tangential relationship to the Western art music tradition, and not only because it encompasses more than just the work of Western-oriented composers. To the limited extent that the Western art music canon, and its modernist aspects, have been represented by a classical scene dominated by the paraclassical, that scene has been an important source of stimulus to those Western-oriented composers. But because of its predominantly paraclassical constitution, it has not been a source of sustained support. *Musik kontemporer* should not, not even in its Western-oriented side, be regarded simply as the Indonesian instance of the contemporary extension of the Western art music tradition.

This brings us back to the question of definition. How, then, should *musik kontemporer* be understood? I Wayan Sadra asserted that it is not a genre, but a phenomenon. The concept of genre and the practice of defining genres is itself a phenomenon, but Sadra’s point is well taken. The current eclecticism of *musik kontemporer*’s profile confounds stylistic definition, and its basis in disparate traditions makes it inappropriate to define it in terms of a singular artistic lineage. It lacks a singular “essence,” and there is no clear “collection of traits”—two ways in which genre has tended to be conceived (Toynbee 2000: 106). Nevertheless, *musik*

kontemporer is reasonably regarded as the Indonesian instance of contemporary art music, as long as contemporary art music is also understood not simply as a genre, or “metagenre” (Drott 2013: 8), but as a different kind of phenomenon. *Musik kontemporer* is best understood, I suggest, as the field of musical activity in Indonesia that is motivated by and realizes the set of concerns, concepts, and values signaled by the term art, in the sense that it is used in contemporary artworlds in Indonesia and elsewhere. To conclude this section on questions and theories, I will clarify what I understand those concerns, concepts, and values to be, and introduce my take on how they have been taken up by Indonesian musicians.

Inserting “art” into my translation of *musik kontemporer*—or rather, my retranslation of a term that is itself a translation and localization of European language analogs—makes explicit the basis of the distinction between *musik kontemporer* and other forms of musical expression that are no less contemporary. When precision is called for, I thus prefer “contemporary art music” to “contemporary music,” or other more or less synonymous terms such as “serious music,” “creative music,” or “new music,” which in similarly attempting to distinguish imply that other musics are less serious, creative, or new (which in some cases and respects may be fair, but in others not). For while all music is art in the broadest sense of the term—defined by Richard L. Anderson in a comparative study of philosophies of art and aesthetic systems as “*culturally significant meaning, skillfully encoded in an affecting, sensuous medium*” (R. Anderson 1990:238)—not all music is equally bound up with the notion of “Art” specific to the “modern system of art” that is the subject of Larry Shiner’s study (2001).

Shiner traces the “invention of art” in the sense of “an independent and privileged realm of spirit, truth, and creativity” (Shiner 2001: 187)—a sense that in Anderson’s estimation is

“unprecedented in comparative aesthetics” (R. Anderson 1990:286)—through “social, institutional, and intellectual changes” that occurred in Europe between around 1680 and 1830, focusing on the increasingly definitive distinction between fine art and craft (Shiner 2001: 75). More relevant for music and other performing arts was the connection between art and social status. In so far as the fine arts were defined as “Polite Arts for the Polite Classes” (ibid.:79), they shared the association between refinement and connoisseurship and socioeconomic hierarchy with traditional art musics (Powers 1980). What distinguished the modern system of art, as it developed through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, is the extent to which art came to be understood as an independent realm (Shiner 2001: 187-189)—when the arts became “an abstract, capitalized Art, with its own internal, but general principles” (Williams 1983: 41). The “concept of the artist” was “sanctified as one of humanity’s highest spiritual callings,” and the “‘aesthetic’ . . . became for parts of the cultured elite a kind of experience superior to both science and morality,” conceptual shifts that were the basis for and were reinforced by the spread of “institutions like the museum, the secular concert, and vernacular literary curricula” (Shiner 2001: 187).

The patronage of art by the middle and upper classes—now mostly indirect, channeled through institutions—remained important in supporting artistic activity. And for patrons and other consumers it was a key source of cultural capital. But art, and especially contemporary art, cannot be reduced to its connection to socioeconomic elites. While its status as an independent realm is not absolute, in many important respects it does function as such. In the twentieth century, it became the purview first of all of a specialized intellectual/cultural elite, and developed its own economy of prestige—in extreme cases, such as avant-garde music, falling prey to what Susan McClary calls “terminal prestige” (McClary 1989). The most

prestigious Art became less concerned with being polite, and more intent on the notion of artistic progress, on being modern, which often entailed being critical of established aesthetic orders. In music especially, more than the distinction between art and craft that is the overarching frame of Shiner's analysis, the key distinction became that between music as Art and music as entertainment. Avant-garde music retreated "from the public ear" (ibid.:66), preferring obscurity over compromise on its particular notions of seriousness, creativity, and novelty. Commercialized popular music was largely regarded as an absolute other.

The notion of fine art, the related notion of high culture, and the subsequent distinction between art and pop, have all been important to the emergence of *musik kontemporer*. The notion of fine art, or "Art," like other products of the Enlightenment, was assumed within its European context to be universal. Like liberal democracy, the scientific method, the idea of reason, and the concept of modernity, it is in fact culturally and historically specific. But also like those other phenomenon, as the concept and system of art has spread widely around the globe, there too it has been taken as universal. Its ethnological valence thus tends to be neutral. In Indonesia, it was applied to many forms of the performing arts, especially those associated with the elite classes. Thus, gamelan music came to be regarded as high culture, came to be taught in government-run conservatories, and was regarded as a viable basis for the creation of new music, leading the way to the emergence of traditionally-based *musik kontemporer* alongside Western-oriented composer's emulations of the international avant-garde.

For the mid-twentieth century precursors of *musik kontemporer*, and for key senior figures who oversaw *musik kontemporer*'s emergence in the 1970s and 1980s such as Suka Hardjana and Gendhon Humardani, the distinction between Art and entertainment was

paradigmatic. Their critiques of popular culture echo those of Theodor Adorno or Clement Greenberg, as does their championing of the avant-garde. But for the young composers who are *musik kontemporer*'s rank and file, it has been somewhat less salient, and much less clear cut.

On the traditionally-based side, the distinction has lacked salience because it is relatively new and has only recently been more broadly recognized. In Javanese society, although social hierarchy is pronounced, with an exceptionally elaborate system of speech levels that “keeps a concern with social status close to the surface” (Keeler 1987: 19-20),²⁵ there is no clear boundary between high and low culture, but rather a spectrum. There are some performing art forms that are specific either to villages (such as *jathilan*, a trance dance using hobbyhorses) or to courts (such as the hyper-refined dance forms *bedhaya* and *srimpi*). Others, such as *wayang* and gamelan, have been broadly shared, with much exchange between village and court. While certain traditional artists participated in, competed with, and/or drew from emerging forms of commercialized popular culture, newly founded conservatories emphasized the courtly end of the spectrum in their teaching. The distinction between art and entertainment came to be drawn more sharply in the circles centered around those conservatories, and was an important aspect of the conceptual background to the emergence of *musik kontemporer*. To some extent it was taken up also by circles of traditional musicians who were not affiliated with the conservatories but who also identified with the *klasik* side of gamelan. In society at large, however, it had limited currency. Far more salient than the

25. “The Javanese language exhibits the most highly elaborated speech levels of any language in the world. Many high-frequency words in the language have two, three, occasionally as many as five or more variant forms, each of them denotatively equivalent but expressive of a particular estimation of the relative status of speaker, interlocutor, and/or a third party” (Keeler 1987: 19).

distinction between high and low within the traditional performing arts was the distinction between traditional forms and those influenced by foreign models, most of which were Western,²⁶ and practically all of which were the products of the entertainment industry—a distinction that is complicated, but not erased, by the emergence of hybrid forms such as *campursari* (Supanggih 2003a; Laronga 2008).

On the Western-oriented side, the art/pop divide was complicated by the predominance of the paraclassical in Indonesia's classical scene, and also by the existence by the 1970s of a well-developed prestige economy for Western popular musics (Gendron 2002) that were no less important as sources of inspiration. More than a few Western-oriented composers started out, and remain, progressive rock enthusiasts, while Indonesian orchestras were mired in commercialism. The status of music as Art, or as *musik kontemporer*, was to some extent decoupled from idiom, style, and genre. This is not to suggest that these attributes were irrelevant; certain experimentalist approaches and the language of high modernism remain more unambiguously *kontemporer* than other styles. But the sound of orchestral instruments was no guarantee of artistic merit, nor did the use of Western band instruments, or traditional instruments, automatically mark music as pop or traditional.

In the late 1970s and 80s, experimentalism and modernism prevailed at the schools where the initial scenes of *musik kontemporer* emerged, but it never became an orthodoxy. Specialized forums such as the PKM, and the institutional support offered by schools such as ASKI Solo are in some sense comparable to Schoenberg's Society for Private Musical Performances, or the institutionalization of modernist music composition in American

26. A very notable exception is *dangdut*, arguably Indonesia's most popular music, which draws from popular musics of India and the Middle East as well as those of the West (Weintraub 2010).

academia as proposed by Milton Babbitt in his essay “The Composer as Specialist” (1996), infamously retitled “Who Cares if You Listen?” by *High Fidelity Magazine*. But *musik kontemporer* has never been as comfortably sequestered as certain modernist strains of Western new music. Interventions such as those overseen by Hardjana and Humardani came too late, and only went so far.

The PKM ceased to be a regular annual event after the 1988 meeting. This and other changes undermined much of *musik kontemporer*'s basis of institutional support, which along with other shifts have prompted an increasing concern among many with establishing a broader socio-aesthetic base. This has led to a flowering of alternative populisms, which I explore in the final chapter of my study, in a parallel to postmodern developments in the arts internationally as artists “have lived and worked after the Great Divide” between high art and popular culture (Huyssen 1986: ix). The divide has never been quite so great in Indonesia, but it nonetheless remains conceptually central to *musik kontemporer*, even as the question of what is and is not *musik kontemporer* has become increasingly contested.

Organization of the Dissertation

The seven chapters of this dissertation are organized into three parts. The first two, “Prehistory” and “History,” are mostly historiographical, while the third, “Predicaments,” examines key issues facing musicians involved in *musik kontemporer*, and how those musicians have responded to them.

The first two parts, divided between *musik kontemporer*'s prehistory and its history proper, are roughly chronological, but do not present a strictly linear historiography. The chapters and sections within them instead focus on various topics. Chapter 1 examines in

broad terms those legacies of Indonesia's colonial past and initial decades as an independent nation that have done the most to shape the cultural ecology out of which *musik kontemporer's* precursors, and *musik kontemporer* itself, emerged. No less important than the musical legacies of the European presence, and their elaboration by all those involved in colonial and newly postcolonial musical life, are the intellectual legacies of the period, in particular the introduction of ideas of art, and the roots of the worldview that I call cosmopolitan nativism.

Chapter 2 focuses in on particularly notable figures from *musik kontemporer's* prehistory. These figures did not establish the foundation upon which *musik kontemporer* grew. On the Western-oriented side, a flowering of art music composition failed to weather adverse conditions. On the traditionally-based side, the most significant innovations led in directions other than those *musik kontemporer* would take. An examination of the activity and ideas of these figures serves to clarify the relationship of *musik kontemporer* to its precursors. As importantly, it reveals how some of the dynamics identified in chapter 1 played out and continued to shape the cultural ecology of musical scenes in newly independent Indonesia. Particular attention is given to the impact of the increasing prevalence of commercialized popular culture, and the dominance in elite circles of the paraclassical.

The two chapters in the second part, concerned with the history proper of *musik kontemporer*, trace the emergence of its three most significant initial scenes. Chapter 3 examines the Western-oriented scenes that emerged in Jakarta and Jogja. It takes into account the institutional context and artistic atmosphere, both for what they contributed to the two scenes, and for how they hampered their further growth. The major focus, however, is on the impact of Slamet Abdul Sjukur and Jack Body, the two influential teachers around whom the

scenes formed, whose approaches to composition and to teaching did much to encourage experimentalist tendencies.

Chapter 4 examines the emergence of the traditionally-based scene at ASKI Solo. It scrutinizes in detail the question of Western influence, which as noted above has been presumed to have been of key importance by casual observers, and more directly asserted to be so by the Western-oriented composer Franki Raden. It puts Raden's claims into perspective, by comparing his account of his interactions with composers at ASKI with theirs, by highlighting the more centrally important role played by ASKI's director, Gendhon Humardani, and by identifying other more formative artistic experiences and interactions. Throughout, I apply the theories of ethnological valence and aesthetic authority that the question of influence has impelled me to develop.

The third and final part of the dissertation shifts from historiography to a focus more squarely on two specific cultural dynamics, which I characterize as predicaments. Chapters 5 and 6 examine the impact of the absence of authority that is a consequence of the underdeveloped state of Western art music in Indonesia. This is a predicament that has, as one would expect, affected Western-oriented figures most directly. But it has also done much to shape the overall profile of *musik kontemporer*. Chapter 5 examines first how the absence of authority on the Western-oriented side intersected with cosmopolitan nativism in the discussions that led to the establishment of the PKM and its inclusion of traditionally-based and Western-oriented participants. It continues to chart the remarkable nativist turn of the PKM's director, Suka Hardjana, which came about largely as a result of his stewardship of that festival.

Chapter 6 focuses on the predicament of the absence of authority on the Western-oriented

side itself. It begins by bringing the survey of Indonesia's classical music scene up to date, with a focus on developments in orchestral music. The bulk of the chapter is taken up by case studies of three younger composers who have persevered in pursuing the Eurological mode of new music composition as a major focus, even while, for two of them, composing for traditional instruments and musicians has become a significant part of their practice.

Chapter 7 examines the response to a predicament that is felt less acutely, but that cuts across the Western-oriented/traditionally-based. It identifies a concern with connecting to a broader socio-aesthetic base, as a reaction to *musik kontemporer*'s obscurity, as the principal force behind *musik kontemporer*'s increasingly eclectic profile. The search for broader relevance has taken different forms: a renewed commitment to traditional music, an engagement with various aspects of popular culture that has led to a blossoming of alternative populisms, and the truly alternative populism represented by collaborations with those at further remove from the elite urban milieu in which *musik kontemporer* first developed. The resulting more unruly eclecticism has led to a blurring of boundaries, feeding the debate over the definition of *musik kontemporer*.

Finally, in my conclusion, I reflect on the broader contributions of my study, to Indonesian music studies, ethnomusicology, and the study of culture more generally, through both its particular findings and its suggestion of an alternative approach to the study of contemporary art making in non-Western contexts and in general.

Prehistory

1 Legacies

The word legacy most often conjures up that which would be regarded positively: an inheritance, endowment, or bequest, something of value that one can build upon, or that puts one in a better position. But it can also refer to that which has undesirable or troubling consequences or repercussions—perhaps the more common sense invoked in speaking of the legacy of colonialism in postcolonies such as Indonesia.

While I touch on the lingering negative effects of the exploitation and interference wrought by the Dutch in establishing first a trade monopoly and then a full-blown colonial state, this is not the primary concern of this chapter. Nor is it a broad accounting that weighs the negative against that which has been beneficial, at least in so far as it has helped Indonesia find its place in a global order marked by enduring disparities of economy and power. My purpose is more modest and specific: to assess those musical and intellectual legacies of Indonesia's colonial past that have more directly shaped the cultural ecology from which *musik kontemporer* emerged in the 1970s. But in doing this, I endeavor to avoid the insufficiently critical and narrowly focused perspective that is all too common in historiographies of non-Western adoptions of the Western art music tradition—the instance for Indonesia is Franki Raden's dissertation (Notosudirdjo 2001). For while this tradition had enough of a presence in colonial and newly postcolonial Indonesia to inspire both *musik kontemporer*'s precursors (the subject of the next chapter) as well as those involved in *musik*

kontemporer proper, the classical music scene it has produced has been underdeveloped, and has not given rise to a strong classically-based practice of art music composition. This has been just as important in giving *musik kontemporer* its distinctive profile.

The stimulus from the Western art music tradition must be acknowledged. But it is not in need of further elaboration. Instead, what is required is a clear-eyed account of the limitations of Western art music's presence in Indonesia, identification of the structural and cultural factors that worked against a more substantial adoption, and recognition of the dominance of what I characterize as the periclassical and paraclassical among the musical elite. This is what I seek to do in the first major section of this chapter.

At least as important as musical influence from the West has been the impact of Western thought. In the second section I examine the introduction of Western notions of art, and in particular the elevation of Javanese court culture that laid the groundwork for the establishment of the kind of educational and cultural institutions that would eventually foster the emergence of traditionally-based *musik kontemporer*. In the third and final section, I identify the roots of what I call cosmopolitan nativism, an outlook that is very much informed by currents of thought that originated in the West and have circulated internationally, but that also holds traditional culture in high esteem, and sees it as offering much for distinctively Indonesian contemporary creative expression.

Musical Legacies

The Limited Presence and Impact of Western Art Music

The lack of a well-developed classical music scene in Indonesia might seem surprising, given

more than four centuries of European presence in the region. But a quick glance across the globe reveals that the adoption of Western art music has little to do with the duration of European presence, and much more to do with the kind of relationship a society has to that part of European culture in which Western art music is important. There are, of course, “world class” classical music scenes in the United States and other countries where there was extensive settlement by European immigrants. But there is an equally “world class” scene in Japan, not because it was ever settled or colonized by Europeans, but because it adopted classical music as part of a larger effort to modernize and bolster its standing in a world where Western powers were dominant (Galliano 2002). Elsewhere, the adoption of Western art music has been based on the musical conversion that followed religious conversion, as occurred through the Spanish colonization of the Philippines.¹ Where the prevailing pattern of colonialism was instead one of exploitation, the impact on society and culture overall was often great, but uneven when it comes to artistic expression. Indian novelists writing in English, such as Salman Rushdie and Arundathi Roy, loom large in the field of postcolonial literature, but the presence of European classical music in India is, relatively speaking, negligible.²

1. For an overview, see *Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Phillipines. III. Western Art Music,” by Lucrecia R. Kasilag (accessed 31 January 2013).

2. European Classical Music has, however, had more of a presence in India than the almost complete lack of scholarly attention to it would suggest. The best known Indian musician in the international classical music scene is Zubin Mehta, who has held appointments with numerous symphony orchestras, including the Los Angeles Symphony Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic (with which he toured to Indonesia in 1984—see chapter 5), and was also director of the Bavarian Staatsoper in Munich. (*Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Mehta, Zubin,” by Noël Goodwin). His father, Mehli Mehta, was “the founder-conductor of the Bombay SO” (ibid.), an institution that otherwise goes unmentioned in both *Grove Music Online* and the *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music* volume on South Asia. The website of the Mehli Mehta Music Foundation, “established in 1995,” notes that Mehta “mentored a whole generation of aspiring musicians in Bombay” from 1930 until 1954, when he emigrated to the UK and then the US. It does not discuss the fate of either the Bombay Symphony Orchestra, or the Bombay String Quartet, which he also founded (<http://www.mmmfindia.org/>

Western music in the Dutch East Indies, before it became the independent nation of Indonesia in the middle of the twentieth century, had a presence in three contexts. It was of course present in the urban centers such as the capital city Batavia (which was renamed Jakarta after independence, and remains Indonesia's capital) where the majority of the European colonialists lived—though as I discuss below, little of it was really classical. Amidst an abundance of popular music, music of higher status instead had a periclassical and then paraclassical character. That is, it was music that became peripheral to the classical canon as it was defined in Europe in the nineteenth century, or that was more fundamentally based on popular traditions but partook of the prestige of classical music through the adoption of its orchestral instrumentation.³

Western music also had a presence in and around the courts of Central Java, but there too it was mostly periclassical. As well as military marching music, which continues to be played on ceremonial occasions, there was music to accompany the “close social intercourse” between the upper-class Dutch and Javanese aristocrats. Citing nineteenth century accounts, Sumarsam notes that European social dancing was a common feature of court events, and

aboutus.php?page=aboutus, accessed 31 January 2013). Websites for the Bombay Chamber Orchestra, an amateur orchestra founded in 1962 (<http://www.bcoindia.co.in/>, accessed 31 January 2013), and the Symphony Orchestra of India, founded in 2006 by the National Centre for the Performing Arts and claiming to be “the country's first fully professional symphony orchestra” (<http://www.soimumbai.com/About/TheOrchestra.aspx>, accessed 31 January 2013), give the impression that the position Western Art Music occupies in the public culture of India is similar to the one it holds in Indonesia, as discussed at various point in this study. The one brief mention of Western art music in the South Asia volume of the *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music* is in the article on Goa, whose “musical life” is “in large part a result of the activities of the Roman Catholic church during colonization.” “Western art music, brought to Goa in the sixteenth century with the Catholic liturgy, is nowadays the exclusive domain of Christians. It is taught in academies (in most cases as supplementary education), is often associated with religious activities, and is performed in concert halls” (*Garland Encyclopedia of World Music, Volume 5, South Asia, the Indian Subcontinent*, “Goa,” by Susana Sardo, 736-737).

3. See the introduction for more on my terms “periclassical” and “paraclassical.”

comments that “waltzes, polkas, quadrilles, and other such popular dance songs were familiar” (Sumarsam 1995: 68). Strikingly, the same kind of music was used in certain court rituals. Sumarsam cites an account from 1913 of “Quadrille, Schottische, Polka,/ March, Pasodoble dance,/ Fantasia, Galop, Kris Polka, and the Canter Mazurka” being played in the “Songga Buwana,” a meditation tower in the Surakarta palace and the “place for the Goddess of the South Ocean (the spirit guardian of the kingdom) to visit the kingdom or to have spiritual and sexual union with the king.” This took place “every Thursday night,” which as Sumarsam notes is “a religiously auspicious time, an evening that is most effective for acquiring ancestors’ and gods’ blessings” (ibid.:78-80).

Of the few attempts to integrate aspects of Western music into Javanese music, the most notable is *gendhing mares*. This genre of gamelan compositions (*gendhing*), which developed at the court of Yogyakarta in the mid-nineteenth century, incorporated instruments and formal features of European military marches (*mares*, from the Dutch *mars*) (Sutton 2010: 184-186). But as Sumarsam argues, “except in a limited way, such as *gendhing mares* . . . syncretism between European music and Javanese gamelan did not really occur.” Instead, there was a pattern of “competing” and “coinciding” with Western and Javanese music “played together,” but with each keeping “its own identity and repertoire” (Sumarsam 1995: 75-76).

In the early twentieth century, there were further experiments that drew from Javanese and Western traditions. There was Ki Hadjar Dewantara’s arrangement for voice and piano of the Javanese gamelan piece *ketawang* “Kinanthi Sandung” from 1916—the piece that Franki Raden points to as the “genesis of a new musical tradition in Indonesia” (Notosudirdjo 2001:115). Dewantara’s colleague Soerjo Poetro created a “Javanese cello (an improved *rebab*)” (Dewantara 2003: 342), and devised a modified notation system for Javanese music

using a four- rather than a five-line staff. (Notosudirdjo 2001: 119-122). The German artist Walter Spies, while director of Western music at the main court in Yogyakarta in the 1920s, arranged gamelan music for multiple pianos.⁴ In 1914 the Surakartan court musician Wreksadiningrat created a gamelan which attempted to unite Javanese and European scales (Sindoesawarno 1984: 402).

As intriguing as these examples are, they had no lasting impact on the practice of Javanese music. It is not clear how “Kinanti Sandung” functioned as the “genesis” of Indonesian art music, as the piece itself was never performed in Indonesia, and Dewantara did not go on to become a composer, of art music or of any kind of music.⁵ European instruments did not take the place of gamelan in the Javanese courts, staff notation—either four- or five-lined—was not adopted,⁶ and the tuning and instrumentation of Javanese

4. Raden cites Wasitodipuro, who in an interview told him about Spies’s arrangement (Notosudirdjo 2001: 239). Rhodius and Darling provide a more detailed account of a “concert . . . held in the Prince’s palace with a piece scored for gamelan, singers, and pianos tuned to the Javanese scale” in which two pianos alternated with gamelan (Rhodius and Darling 1980: 27).

5. Dewantara arranged and presented the piece at a conference on education in the Netherlands. As discussed below, following this conference Dewantara’s focus shifted to education. Raden provides no evidence of Dewantara composing (or arranging) other pieces, or seeking other performances of his arrangement, in Indonesia or otherwise. Only one person I interviewed—Sapto Raharjo, whom I profile in chapter 7—spoke of Dewantara’s arrangement, which he learned about from Ki Ngayono, a teacher at Taman Siswa, the school that Dewantara founded. The story that circulated around Taman Siswa was that Dewantara performed the piece “in Holland.” Raharjo did not know whether the piece was ever played in Indonesia (p.c., 29 July 2004). Jaap Kunst includes “Kinanthie Sandoong” in the bibliography of *Music in Java* (under Soewardi Soerjaningrat, Dewantara’s given name and the name he used before adopting Ki Hadjar Dewantara in 1928 [McVey 1967:133]) as a “Javanese Romance composed in *pelog*; an example of an adaptation for voice and piano, freely after the playing of Javanese court instruments.” Presumably this refers to the musical score, though neither the format nor a publisher is listed, only the place and date, “Den Haag-Semarang/Amsterdam 1918” (Kunst 1973: 472). I am grateful to Erin Oliver for assistance in translation.

6. Sumarsam describes the various efforts devise a notation system for gamelan, beginning in the late nineteenth century with systems modeled after European staff notation (Sumarsam 1995: 106-110). The system that has prevailed, invented sometime around 1890, is a form of cipher notation now called *Kepatihan* (ibid.:111-113). Notation was initially developed out of a concern for preserving the sizable repertoire of a tradition which was, and in many respects still is, oral. The use of notation remains limited. It is used routinely only in educational contexts or by amateur musicians. Accomplished

gamelan remained unchanged.⁷ These experiments did not lead to the Westernization of Javanese music and musical culture, but are instead best understood in connection with the elevation of Javanese court culture that I discuss further below.

It is through the third context, the Christian church, that certain key aesthetic aspects and formal features of Western art music have been most deeply adopted by Indonesians. *Musik kontemporer*'s Western-oriented precursors from the mid-twentieth century, whom I discuss at greater length in the following chapter, were all brought up musically in the Christian choral music tradition. The hymns they sung, with their basis in tonal polyphony and their more solemn character, had more in common with the core of the classical canon than the Western musics predominant in other contexts. But as a minor and functional form, they too can be regarded as periclassical, and it was only after encountering a broader range of classical repertoire that these figures were motivated to begin composing.

The regions from which most of these Western-oriented precursors came are not, however, representative of Indonesia as a whole. Most of them are Batak, from the interior of northern Sumatra, an area that experienced much more extensive missionary activity and, as a result, was much more musically Westernized than most of Indonesia. It was certainly more Westernized than Java, which was where those precursors encountered classical music

musicians use it to remember pieces that have become obscure, to refresh their memory for pieces that are less often played, and to learn new compositions, but not for the core of the repertoire.

7. Sindusawarno also notes two other attempts to unite “sléndro, pélog, and the European diatonic scale” at cultural congresses in 1948 and 1952, but comments that they “did not meet with lasting approval, possibly because of the shortcomings in the quality of the instruments” (Sindoesawarno 1984: 402). A somewhat more successful case is that of a diatonic gamelan designed by a Dutch priest, named gamelan “Soepra” by President Sukarno in 1965, which continues to be used at a Catholic high school in Semarang (Poplawska 2007: 76). Despite Sukarno’s endorsement, similar sets have not been constructed. Only in recent decades has there been a more widespread change in tuning and instrumentation with the emergence of *campursari*, a hybrid genre, discussed briefly in the next chapter, that mixes gamelan with Western-style popular forms.

proper. The Dutch colonial government in the nineteenth century, and the United East Indies Company⁸ before them, “maintained a policy of proscribing missionary activity in the areas where it was considered possibly threatening to their commercial interests” (Poplawska 2007: 47). Java was one of those areas. The Christian communities in Java, while not insignificant, grew out of the efforts of lay people and teachers at certain teacher training colleges, and remain minorities to this day. For most natives of the Dutch East Indies, music in a classical style evoked Christianity. Thus, the music of these Western-oriented Batak composers received a sometimes cool reception, as in the case of critics who complained that their music had “too strong a church flavor” (Notosudirdjo 2001: 253).

The limited influence of European church music on the broader musical culture of Java is evident also in the efforts of Christian Javanese musicians to adopt aspects of the Christian choral tradition. Hardjasoebrata, while a student in the mid-1920s at St. Xavarius—the teacher training college most noted for its musical activity, where many of *musik kontemporer*'s Batak precursors would study a decade later—began arranging Javanese melodies for multi-part choirs (Notosudirdjo 2001: 122-126). Continuing along these lines, he composed choral music with melodies in a Javanese idiom intended for use in church services. Initially these were sung without gamelan accompaniment, until 1956, when for the first time they were played in church with gamelan (Poplawska 2007: 159). This led to a more widespread employment of Javanese gamelan music in both Catholic and Protestant churches in Java, including continued creative activity and the formation of a new genre known as *langen sekar* (124-125). The most distinctive feature of *langen sekar*, and the one

8. The United East Indies Company is frequently referred to as the VOC, the initials for its Dutch name, *Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*.

that most obviously distinguishes the genre from mainstream gamelan practice, is the use of multiple vocal lines sung by a divided chorus, which according to Darsono Wignyosaputro, one of the genre's primary composers, makes it sound more like church music (Marzanna Poplawska, p.c., 10 August 2008).⁹

Langen sekar is the only sub-genre of gamelan distinguished by an explicit reference to a classical (or more precisely, a periclassical) European model. But that reference is token, on a completely different scale than other examples of Westernized or modernized non-Western musics. The modern Chinese orchestra, for example, drawing upon the instrumentation of *Jiangnan sizhu*—which is flexible but typically has each musician playing a different instrument—emulated the European orchestra by having sections of instruments, often in modified form, and by adding bass instruments. All of this served to make the modern Chinese orchestra's sound closer to that of its European model, as well as facilitating a shift in musical idiom toward functional harmony (Han 1979). In contrast, *langen sekar* involves merely replacing one part sung by a chorus with two, or very occasionally three, otherwise leaving the instrumentation of the gamelan unchanged. The vocal parts themselves allude to the kind of coordinated counterpoint of European polyphony, but remain fundamentally Javanese in their melodic idiom, preserving the logic of *pathet*, the Javanese system of mode. This balance of musical languages is in keeping with the larger pattern represented by Hardjasoebrata's efforts, and by *langen sekar*: not the Europeanization of Javanese music, but rather the Javanization of music for the Christian church (Poplawska 2007).¹⁰ The extent of

9. Most of the other distinguishing features of *langen sekar* have to do with its limited breadth. Nearly all *langen sekar* use the shorter formal structures, *ladrang* and *ketawang*, and most are in the *pelog* scale. One other innovative feature is the use in a few pieces of triple meter (Poplawska 2007:130-131).

10. Poplawska's discusses *langen sekar* extensively as an instance of the use of traditional elements in

Christianization in Java was far too limited to result in a widespread cultural conversion of the sort that in other regions, such as the Batak heartland of North Sumatra, produced significant communities of more thoroughly Western-oriented musicians.

Restrictions, Opportunity, and Disruption at the End of the Colonial Era

Another factor that limited the transfer of European classical music to the native population of the Dutch East Indies was the racially segmented nature of colonial era society. The British civil servant J.S. Furnivall characterized the Indies, and more specifically Java, as “a plural society . . . comprising two or more elements or social orders which live side by side, yet without mingling, in one political unit” (Furnivall 1939: 446). Once taken for granted, the idea that “the Natives, the Chinese and the Europeans, living side by side, but separately, and rarely meeting save in the material and economic sphere” (ibid. 239) has been questioned by more recent scholars. Sumarsam, noting the interaction between Dutch colonialists and Javanese courtiers, points out that in the “Javanese version of the plural society”—as distinct from the Burmese version that Furnivall knew best—the “different ethnic groups had known each other for two centuries” (1995:78). Charles Coppel (1997) and Jean Gelman Taylor (2009) have drawn attention to the deeply mestizo character of society in the colonialists’ urban enclaves through most of the colonial period, Coppel focusing on the intermediate status of the Chinese,¹¹ Taylor focusing on the high rate of intermarriage in the absence of European women.

music for the Christian church, and as an example of the phenomenon of inculturation. As the example of *langen sekar* demonstrates, this phenomenon, theorized by Catholic theologians in the latter part of the twentieth century, was evident in the practices of certain missionary churches considerably earlier.

11. Coppel notes that “outside these urban centers” the “Europeans and Chinese were but drops in an indigenous ocean” (1997:572).

Both Coppel and Taylor note how the significant number of people of mixed ancestry complicated the legal and cultural division of society, first distinguishing between Europeans and Natives, and later adding the category of Foreign Orientals. But they also acknowledge that the situation changed as colonialist activity intensified over the later part of the nineteenth century, and especially into the twentieth century. Taylor notes that with the influx of pure-blooded and better educated European men, who assumed a “monopoly of high-level positions,” as well as more European women, which led to a decline in intermarriage, “the means to power and wealth and the moral reference point were wrenched from local Mestizo society and anchored firmly in the Netherlands” (Taylor 2009:157). Coppel cites J. A. A. van Doorn’s analysis of the “historical process of racial and cultural separating out” (Doorn 1983: 20), driven in part by the increase in European and also Chinese immigrants, but also by legal reforms and government policy. As will be discussed below, Dutch education was made available to non-Europeans, to train them as civil servants, but as Coppel notes, this “opening up of Dutch schools . . . also embodied an element of segregation, in that Dutch-language primary schools were designated formally by race” (Coppel 1997:574).

The “sharpening of the lines” between different segments of the population also “coincided with the growth of national consciousness among Indonesians, Chinese and Europeans” (ibid.). Thus, Ernst Heins explains that Jaap Kunst, the pioneering scholar of Javanese music (and also of the academic discipline of ethnomusicology), did not play gamelan while he was in Java in the 1920s and 30s. To have done so would have required transgressing an “insurmountable” social barrier which made it “unthinkable for a European to play in a gamelan and thus become one of a group of Javanese musicians, or even to take

private lessons with a tutor” (Heins 1976: 99-100). But while racial boundaries were pervasive, they were not completely rigid. Certain natives, such as the children of the nobility of different regions, or of those who were made civil servants of the Dutch colonial state, were permitted to attend Dutch schools for Europeans. One of those was Amir Pasaribu, the most notable of *musik kontemporer*'s Western-oriented precursors, who figures prominently in the next chapter. Pasaribu's status also allowed him to join an orchestra that operated in and for colonialist society, and to study privately with European musicians.

The restrictions on interaction between population groups were lifted when the Japanese occupation of the Dutch East Indies abruptly ended Dutch colonial rule in 1942. This allowed a number of younger Indonesians to study with European musicians who stayed on, among them those who in the the 1970s and 80s would oversee the emergence of the Western-oriented side of *musik kontemporer*. But while the Japanese occupation created opportunities, it was also disruptive. The Japanese closed St. Xavarius, the institution that had the greatest potential to give rise to a localized practice of Western art music. They interned nearly all Europeans other than nationals of their allies, such as Germans, and by doing so colonialist society and its musical life ceased to exist.

Classical music did not entirely disappear as a result of the series of historical events that was initiated by the Japanese occupation and that culminated in Indonesian independence. It retained a presence, albeit one that was diminished. The Japanese also spared from internment individuals whose “skills were needed to keep industries running” (Ricklefs 2001: 248). This category included certain musicians, such as those who played in the radio orchestra taken over from the Dutch. Despite generally harsh conditions, especially toward the end of the occupation as Japan struggled to defend its conquests in other parts of Asia and

the Pacific, there was still some concert activity (Notosudirdjo 2001: 194-205).

Indonesia declared independence on 17 August 1945, shortly after Japan surrendered to the Allied Forces, ending the Second World War. Independence was only fully achieved, however, after four-and-a-half years of revolution as the Dutch attempted to reinstate colonial rule. Among the musical efforts in support of the Dutch cause was what Pasaribu characterized as “the last, largest, and most expensive” of the various waves of foreign musicians to enter Indonesia. In 1948, the Dutch government brought to Jakarta a group of sixty-five musicians, led by conductor Ivon Baarspul, “not for a pseudo-orchestra (*orkes-orkesan*), but to form a symphony orchestra” (Pasaribu 1955:73-74). The initiative was, however, short-lived. After less than two years, when the Dutch finally recognized Indonesian sovereignty, the orchestra was dissolved, and most of its members were sent home to the Netherlands.

While the stimulus to the growth of classical music was less than it might have been had this full-fledged symphony orchestra continued to exist, at least some of its musicians stayed on and helped to develop institutions that were now supported by the new republic. After independence was achieved they taught at the newly founded Sekolah Musik Indonesia (SMIND), Indonesia’s first conservatory of Western music. The national radio network Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI)—which itself was founded “less than a month after the declaration of independence” when Indonesians took control of the “Japanese-installed centralized broadcasting system” (Lindsay 1997: 110-111)—formed the Orkes Radio Djakarta by bringing together musicians from several defunct colonialist orchestras, most of which were less focused on symphonic repertoire than the one led by Baarspul. The sense that it was cobbled together from the stragglers who for one reason or another decided to remain in

Indonesia was reflected by its nickname, “Orkes Restan Djakarta” (*restan* = remnant) (Pasaribu 1955:74). Toward the end of the 1950s, however, as Indonesian politics became radicalized and anti-Western sentiment and action increased, most of the remaining Europeans left. In 1957 Dutch businesses were seized, and in 1959 Dutch nationals were forced to either become Indonesian citizens or leave the country (Taylor 2009: 175). The fledgling classical music scene that Indonesia inherited was not completely wiped out, but with the dissolution of colonialist society that provided its base of social support, and then the loss of its key teachers, who had not yet been replaced by Indonesians of comparable skill, it was seriously enfeebled, as we will see in the next chapter.

The Relative Prevalence of the Periclassical

The most fundamental reason for the weakness of Indonesia’s classical music scene is the weakness of the colonial-era classical scene from which it grew. Indonesians did not adopt classical music to an appreciable extent because there wasn’t that much to adopt in the first place. More precisely, the majority of music that accompanied the European presence in the Dutch East Indies was peripheral to if not entirely distinct from what by the turn of the twentieth century had become canonized as the classical tradition. The music of highest status was not classical, but periclassical. As importantly, the idea of the classical tradition, and the related idea that that tradition was artistically superior, had limited currency in Indonesia, even by the middle of the twentieth century.

The Europeans who came to work for the United East Indies Company in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were, as Sumarsam notes, “practical people with minimal education” (Sumarsam 1995: 102), and so would have had little if anything to do with the elite aspects of

European musical culture that came to be regarded as belonging to the core of the classical canon. The society that developed in the urban enclaves they inhabited had, as Taylor's study cited above demonstrates, a mestizo character, incorporating both Asian and European elements, and indeed much of the population was of mixed ancestry.

The influx of pure-blooded and better educated Europeans that began in the latter part of the nineteenth century tipped the balance of moral authority in their favor. There was something of a similar reorientation toward the metropole with regard to the arts and entertainment, a shift facilitated by steamships, telegraphs, and other advances in transportation and communication that reduced the sense of isolation. Yet this cultural reorientation only went so far. As Matthew Cohen has argued, "the public culture of nineteenth-century Indonesia cannot be said to have been genuinely colonized by the Netherlands." In contrast to France, which established "state-subsidized opera companies in residence in major French colonial cities . . . Urban Indonesia was a transit zone for itinerant performers, a stopover between mainland Asia and Australia" (Cohen 2006: 9). Government financial support for European-style theaters was limited (*ibid.*), and "there was little resembling coherent cultural policy" (*ibid.*:17). The Dutch East Indies thus had "its own independent cultural dynamics and momentum, only indirectly indebted to the culture of the colonizing country" (*ibid.*:9). It should also be noted that the Dutch metropole itself was in certain respects, though by no means all, on the margins of a developing pan-European culture of art music.¹²

12. For example, the entry on the Netherlands in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera* notes that "for social and religious reasons, the country was slow to develop an operatic tradition, in spite of the fact that Amsterdam was an important commercial centre, with a strong music publishing industry which handled much Italian music." As a result, "only since the late 19th century has there been a strong operatic life there." While The Hague had a theater that "presented French opera as early as 1681 . . .

So even while the character of colonialist society, especially that of its elite, became more European, little of the music that came to the Dutch East Indies around the turn of the twentieth century was from the classical canon. The repertoire of the string orchestras and other seemingly “classical” ensembles, as well as ensembles considered only marginally classical such as wind bands, consisted instead of “marches, waltzes, operetta tunes and light classical music” (Yampolsky 2001:[1]). There is evidence of one attempt to follow the trend of orchestras in Europe to focus on properly classical repertoire. In a recollection of “the good old days” (*tempo doeloe*) in the Dutch East Indies, Hein Buitenweg recounts how “up to 1904, there were not many works being performed except for dance music pieces, opera fantasies and airs.” In 1905, Nico J. Gerharz, the newly arrived conductor for the orchestra associated with De Concordia Soldiers’ Club in Batavia, “had the courage to break this convention and performed music specifically written for symphony orchestra.” These included works by Berlioz, Charpentier, Tchaikowsky, Dvorak, and Rimsky Korsakoff. Buitenweg heralds Gerharz’s efforts as “a fundamental change in the musical life in the capital.” It was not, however, a change that lasted. Gerharz departed for Europe in 1916, and his successors were “apparently unable to sustain the level to which he had brought the orchestra.” This, along with other unspecified circumstances, led to the discontinuation of the orchestra in 1931 (Buitenweg 1965: 106).¹³

Overall, classical repertoire remained a small part of colonialist musical culture right to

Amsterdam and other cities . . . were largely dependent on visiting Italian and German companies” (*Grove Music Online—The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, s.v. “Netherlands, The”, accessed 12 April 2014).

13. Raden points to the first part of Buitenweg’s account as evidence of how immigrant musicians enhanced musical life in the Dutch East Indies (Notosudirdjo 2001: 91), but neglects to discuss decline of the orchestra at De Concordia after Gerharz’s departure. I am indebted to Stella Rodrigues for assistance with translation of Buitenweg’s account.

the end of the colonial period. The musical scene of the late 1940s was “dominated by genres of light entertaining music,” as Raden notes in discussing the use of the Dutch term *serieuze muziek* for a program of such music on NIROM, the official Dutch broadcasting channel (Notosudirdjo 2001: 213). This is confirmed by Jennifer Lindsay, who citing Rudolf Mrázek’s summary of statistics of NIROM’s broadcasting in 1939 notes that eighty-one percent of the music played, mostly from gramophone records, was in the “light classical” or “light music and cabaret” category (Lindsay 1997: 107).

The Greater Dominance of Popular Culture

Whereas the classical canon was not so well represented in the Dutch East Indies, and almost entirely limited to elite European social circles, there was, in the twentieth century, no shortage of Western popular music, and it was far more accessible to all inhabitants of the cities and towns that were the center of colonialist society. Consequently, while the classical scene in post-independence Indonesia has had a rather tenuous existence, commercialized popular music has thrived. In the absence of a strong classical scene, popular forms have been embraced not only by the Indonesian music industry, but by more official cultural institutions as well.

Popular music was identified by Hildred Geertz as one facet of what she termed the “metropolitan superculture.” Along with literature, film, and other forms using the Indonesian language, it acted as the “connective tissue” in “the network of cities and towns” that tied together the various regions of Indonesia (Geertz and McVey 1963: 35-36). For the most part that network and its infrastructure of transportation and communication was inherited from the Dutch. However, at least initially, the dominant cultural expressions were more hybrid

than European in character, as is well demonstrated by the first major commercialized form: the Komedi Stamboel, or Istanbul-style theater, which started around the turn of the twentieth century. As Matthew Cohen notes in his social history of the form, the actors were mostly Eurasian—people of mixed European and Asian descent—but also included Chinese, Dutch, Arabs, Javanese, and Indians (Cohen 2006: 17-18), while its “diverse audiences” included “drunken European men, middle-income Muslim families, Chinese store owners, prostitutes, sailors and soldiers, Eurasian clerks, and nearly everyone else” (ibid.:1). The theater featured “scaled-down versions” of plays such as *Ali Baba* and *Snow White* (ibid.:2), presented on “proscenium stages” with “focused stage lighting and wing-and-drop sets” (ibid.:21). They even presented adaptations of operas such as Gounod’s *Faust*—though as Cohen notes, “while Europeans often expressed curiosity in seeing how the Komedi Stamboel handled operas . . . stambul adaptations were not accepted by Europeans as the genuine articles” (ibid.175). Musical numbers were an integral part of performances, giving rise to a genre of songs known as “*lagu stambul*” (*stambul* melodies) which “were sung on the streets, issued as cylinders for music boxes, and incorporated into diverse musical genres including *kroncong*, *gambang kromong*¹⁴ and *gamelan*” (ibid.:2).

The growth of commercialized popular culture accelerated in the early decades of the twentieth century with the advent of new media technologies such as radio, phonograph recording, and film, which spread to the Dutch East Indies very soon after they had come into use in the West.¹⁵ As Philip Yampolsky notes in an overview of popular music in Indonesia,

14. *Gambang kromong* is a hybrid musical genre incorporating Indonesian, European, and Chinese instruments that developed among Peranakan Chinese (those of mixed Chinese and Indonesian ancestry) and Betawi, Indonesians in the vicinity of Batavia. Volume 3 in Philip Yampolsky’s *Music of Indonesia* series features recorded examples, as well as further information about the genre.

15. For a cultural history of radio in colonial era Indonesia, see the fifth chapter of Rudolf Mrázek’s

with these technologies newer genres, predominantly though not exclusively American, eclipsed older European popular forms. Dance-bands emerged, again consisting primarily of Eurasian musicians, playing “tangos, foxtrots, rumbas, blues and swing.”¹⁶ There was also a craze for the “‘Hawaiian’ song genre, which was sung in English.” Alongside mimicry of foreign models, there was also hybridization. New forms emerged that were related to *kroncong*, which by the late nineteenth century had become an “urban folk music associated primarily with Eurasians in Batavia and other large cities.” As popular entertainment became commercialized and professionalized, *kroncong* ceased to be a specifically “Eurasian music” and instead became “the principal entertainment music of Batavia as a whole, and to some extent of other cities and towns as well.” It became part of a constellation of styles that urban musicians versed themselves in, and eventually mixed, leading to labels for recorded songs such as “krontjong tango” and “krontjong rumba” (Yampolsky 2001:[ii]).

The most enduring new hybrid to emerge from this constellation of styles was *langgam kroncong*. This form maintained the instrumentation, instrumental idiom, and crooning vocal style of *kroncong*, but in place of the typical *kroncong* chord sequence used “the AABA melodic form and chord sequences typical of ordinary Euro-American popular songs” (ibid.). In contrast to the handful of Indonesian composers who took European classical music as their model, there were numerous songwriters among many more musicians who took up the *langgam kroncong* form as their primary mode of expression. Very few received any sort of formal training, and indeed the form was simple and ubiquitous enough to allow musicians of

Engineers of Happy Land: Technology and Nationalism in a Colony (Mrázek 2002).

16. See Möller’s *Batavia, a swinging town!: Dansorkesten en Jazzbands in Batavia, 1922-1949* (Möller 1987) for an enthusiast’s survey of this aspect of the musical scene.

a considerable range of skill and experience to contribute to the repertoire. Among those who authored the best known songs were figures like Gesang Martohartono (1917–2010), a singer with only limited facility with cipher notation¹⁷ who relied on band leaders to arrange instrumental accompaniments, and whose output was limited to a total of nine songs. Much more prolific was Ismail Marzuki (1914–1958), who dropped out of school to pursue music. Marzuki learned several instruments, including guitar, ukulele, violin, piano, and saxophone. He joined a musical association at the age of seventeen, when he also began writing songs. At twenty-one he became the director of the “orchestra” (*orkes*) associated with the Federation of Eastern Radio Societies (Perhimpunan Perkumpulan Radio Ketimuran) (*Ensiklopedi Tokoh Kebudayaan*, 1:110-114)—an ensemble that in 1941 sparked a notable debate, discussed below, by performing and broadcasting *kroncong* in the relatively highbrow setting of the Schouwberg Betawi¹⁸ (Notosudirdjo 2001: 175-177).

Postcolonial Outcomes

Whereas classical music activity, dependent as it was on the presence of Europeans, declined as a result of the historical events which resulted in Indonesian independence, *langgam kroncong* experienced a boom and was invested with a nationalist sense of purpose. The Japanese banned all Western music which was associated with its enemies. Classical repertoire by German composers, as long as they weren't Jewish, was fine, but anything

17. This form of notation, derived from systems developed in Europe for teaching sight-singing (*Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Galín-Paris-Chevé method,” accessed 22 Oct 2009), was commonly used in Indonesia not only in modified forms for traditional Javanese and Sundanese gamelan, but also for diatonic Western-style music.

18. Now known as the Gedung Kesenian, this remains one of the most important venues in Jakarta for *musik kontemporer*, classical music recitals, and contemporary theater and dance.

associated with the Allied Forces, and especially the United States, was forbidden. As Yampolsky notes, “suddenly the whole repertory of tangos, foxtrots, jazz, Hawaiian music and the like was off-limits,” leading to “intensive composition in the *kroncong* and *langgam kroncong* forms.” Songwriting in these forms, as well as of “marches and military songs,” continued through the revolution. After independence was achieved in 1949, these songs “became imbued with nostalgia for the heroism, excitement and dedication of the revolution” and came to “constitute a distinct repertory known as *lagu perjuangan* (‘songs of the struggle’)” (Yampolsky 2001).

By virtue of this new set of meanings, this repertoire of songs, representing a cluster of musical styles that developed as popular entertainment—or even, in the case of *kroncong*, that derived from music of the urban underclass—gained considerable prestige. These songs and styles came to occupy a more official position in the emerging “metropolitan superculture”—or more simply, the public culture—of newly independent Indonesia. As Judith Becker has observed, it was these songs that became “the Indonesian equivalents of *The Star-spangled Banner* or *America the Beautiful*” (Becker 1975: 16). Speaking specifically about Gesang’s best known song, *Bengawan Solo*, Kartomi notes that in the 1950s President Sukarno encouraged ambassadors to sing and promote it “in all their overseas postings” (Kartomi 1998: 86). By the 1990s, their iconic status was reflected and reinforced by their use in official if quotidian settings. An electronic version of the melody from *Bengawan Solo* was played at regular intervals in the Balapan train station in Solo; a similar rendition of the chorus of Marzuki’s *Sepasang Mata Bola* graced the soundscape of Tugu station in Jogja; and the chorus of Marzuki’s *Rayuan Pulau Kelapa*, in a bizarrely distorted instrumental version that played before the national news, served as a sort of station

identification for Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI). On another level, Marzuki was venerated as a national hero in 1968 when Jakarta's new arts center, Taman Ismail Marzuki, was named after him.¹⁹

Lagu perjuangan's semi-official status as a national music was secured in large part through becoming the core repertoire of new choirs and ensembles founded during the revolution or in the years that followed. Perhaps most important were those affiliated with RRI, such as the Orkes Studio Djakarta, which existed alongside the Orkes Radio Djakarta at RRI's central office. Suka Hardjana speaks of the radio orchestra having “evolved into two groups” in the 1950s: the Orkes Radio Djakarta, formed largely out of the remaining musicians from colonialist orchestras and led by the (presumably) Dutch conductor Hen Te Strate, “played Western classical works,” while the Orkes Studio Djakarta, led by the Indonesian conductor Syaiful Bachri “played serious Indonesian music and entertainment songs” (Suka Hardjana, paraphrased by Jakarta Post 1992).²⁰ The relationship between the two groups—whether they shared any members, and their relative standing in terms of administrative support, broadcast time, level of activity, and prestige in the eyes of their members and their audiences—is not at all clear from the sources I have consulted, but a passing comment by Amir Pasaribu suggests that they remained fairly separate. Pasaribu, who if he did not play in Orkes Radio Djakarta was certainly qualified to do so, complained that Indonesian musicians paid no attention to “the ‘white skin’ orchestras,” regarding them

19. In a very modest attempt to gauge the public perception of Marzuki, I feigned ignorance and asked a cab driver who was taking me to TIM just who Ismail Marzuki was. He told me he was a patriot, a hero (*pahlawan*).

20. “Serious Indonesian music” presumably refers to *lagu seriosa*, also called *musik seriosa*, a genre discussed in the next chapter.

as “none of their business.” Moreover, they regarded themselves as inferior to “the ‘white skinned’,” an attitude that he believed could only be addressed through education (Pasaribu 1955:74).

Underlying Pasaribu’s comments is his belief that Indonesian musicians *should* consider the “white skin” orchestras, or at least the music they play, their business, and that if they were properly educated they would. Pasaribu was invested in the hierarchy of artistic value at the core of the notion of classical music, as were a number of like-minded colleagues, whose perspectives I examine more fully in the following chapter. They were rather exceptional in this regard. This is not to suggest that other urban Indonesian musicians were immune from thinking hierarchically about music, and much less to suggest that they were immune from the generalized sense of inferiority that persisted as part of the legacy of Dutch colonial rule. But in the more prevalent order of musical genre and style, the canon of European classical music was a less significant force than aspects of orchestration and sensibility that distinguished music as current and cosmopolitan—aspects that derived partially but not exclusively from classical music. In certain very particular circles, Pasaribu would have been regarded as the pinnacle of Indonesian achievement in musical art. But for many more Indonesians, it was Marzuki who, William Frederick notes, “represented Indonesian music’s best effort yet at being up-to-date and ‘international’” (Frederick 1982: 106).

The primary point of reference for urban musicians such as Marzuki, for the Orkes Studio Djakarta, and for other orchestras affiliated with RRI stations in other cities, was not classical music proper, nor the light classical music that had dominated the repertoire of colonial-era orchestras, but rather current styles of Western popular music. Especially relevant were “middlebrow” trends from the 1940s that “merged standard big band instrumentation with

lush, urbane, string-based backgrounds” (Howland 2012: 111). Such trends, which partook of the prestige of the sound of classical music through adopting aspects of its orchestration, but otherwise operated independently of it, can be characterized as paraclassical. In its instrumentation, the Orkes Studio Djakarta more closely resembled a Paul Whiteman-style dance band than a symphony orchestra, mixing saxophones, brass, and a rhythm section of piano, guitar, and drums, with strings and orchestral woodwinds (*Ensiklopedi Musik*, s.v. “Hiburan”).²¹ The most immediate source for this model was Jos Cleber, a conductor and arranger described in Wikipedia as “a musician in the style of Mantovani,”²² whose ensemble, Cosmopolitan Orkest, as Pasaribu put it, “played foxtrot with the apparatus of a string-dance-band” (Pasaribu 1955:74). Cleber contributed to the post-independence scene as a mentor and teacher to several Indonesian musicians.²³ Perhaps the most prominent was Iskandar, who came to music through his involvement in popular theater. His first formal study of music, through which he learned staff notation, was with Cleber and another Dutch musician, Tom Dissevelt, after which he directed several orchestras with musicians from the

21. Paul Whiteman represents that end of the spectrum of paraclassical music more explicitly concerned with artistic seriousness. As a band leader, Whiteman pioneered what he and others called “symphonic jazz,” the best known example of which is George Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue*. Whiteman commissioned and premiered this piece for a concert billed as “‘An Experiment in Modern Music’” that “purported to demonstrate that the new, rhythmically vivacious dance music called jazz, which most concert musicians and critics considered beneath them, was elevated by the ‘symphonic’ arrangements in which Whiteman’s band specialized” (*Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Gershwin, George,” by Richard Crawford, accessed 11 November 2008). Whiteman also commissioned musicians as diverse as Duke Ellington and Igor Stravinsky.

22. *Wikipedia*, s.v. “Jozef Cleber,” accessed 25 May 2009, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jozef_Cleber. Mantovani—a classically trained violinist based in England who “led orchestras for radio broadcasts, hotel engagements, and West End musicals” (*Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Mantovani,” accessed 22 November 2011)—represents the other end of the spectrum of paraclassical music than Whiteman. Mantovani had considerable influence as an orchestrator on easy listening, muzak, and other paraclassical genres and practices, as described by Lanza in his *Elevator Music* (Lanza 2004).

23. Cleber contributed more directly to Indonesian music by writing the first orchestral arrangement of the national anthem, *Indonesia Raya* (Winarno 2000).

Orkes Studio Djakarta (Usman 1979: 43). Orkes Telerama, which he founded in 1978 shortly before dying from a heart attack, and which went on to make monthly appearances on the national television network TVRI (*Ensiklopedi Tokoh Kebudayaan*, 1:107), was cited by Joseph Praba, a composer of *musik kontemporer* who got his start in the 1970s, as the precursor of the pops orchestras which have dominated Indonesia's "classical" scene ever since (Joseph Praba, p.c., 14 August 2005).

The Introduction of Ideas of "Art"

No less important a legacy from the colonial era to the development of *musik kontemporer* were Western notions of art and high culture. The conceptions of art and aesthetics central to the modern system of art were first manifest in Indonesia by Western-oriented movements in literature and the visual arts. Before Amir Pasaribu and other Batak composers had even begun to compose in Western forms at the end of the 1930s, these movements had gained sufficient momentum to form organizations and launch journals. The literary magazine *Pudjangga Baru* was started in 1933 by a group of writers, many of whom were also Batak from North Sumatra. In 1937, a group of painters formed the organization *Persagi* (*Persatuan Ahli Gambar Indonesia*, Union of Indonesian Picture Experts).

Both of these groups saw themselves as bearing a new and dynamic spirit, as forging new and distinctly Indonesian forms of art. They were committed to and derived energy from the growing nationalist cause, but at the same time were resolutely Western-oriented in their ideas about how Indonesian society and its arts should develop. Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana, a founder of *Pudjangga Baru*, declared unequivocally that "The time has come for us to direct our eyes toward the West" (quoted in Mohamad 1994: 51-52), convinced that "only by

following in the steps of the West will Indonesia be able to play an adequate role in the modern world” (quoted in Teeuw 1967: 36). More specifically in reference to the development of a distinctly contemporary Indonesian style of painting, Sudjojono recommended that Indonesian artists should undertake the study of Western art “from Leonardo da Vinci . . . to Picasso,” studying not only “Western techniques” but also “the Western philosophy of art.” He further reasoned that this “would lead to the study of primitive art in different lands which, in turn, would open the eyes of Indonesian artists to the spirit and styles of their country’s different regional arts” (Sudjojono, quoted and paraphrased in Holt 1967: 196-197).

The writers and painters associated with *Pujangga Baru* and *Persagi* looked to Western models in which the modern idea of art as “an independent and privileged realm of spirit, truth, and creativity” (Shiner 2001: 187) was fully formed. The same was true of Western-oriented composers such as Pasaribu. The adoption and development of analogous ideas and commensurately modernist practices in circles focused on the traditional arts, by contrast, occurred in several stages. The final leap, in which traditionally-based artists stepped away from tradition and created new work, did not begin until the 1960s, and will be discussed in later chapters. That leap was, however, supported by an institutional base of high-level support for the traditional performing arts which built upon colonial-era precedents. The intellectual and cultural roots for these were laid even further back, as a result of a general tendency in Dutch colonial policy to encourage the maintenance of native traditions, combined with the transplantation of the European notion of “high culture” and its application to Javanese court culture. The remainder of this chapter examines these earlier developments.

The Elevation of Javanese Court Culture

Economically and politically, the impact of Dutch colonialism on the Dutch East Indies was enormous. In 1830, after the end of the Java War—the “last stand of the Javanese aristocratic elite” (Ricklefs 2001: 153)—the Dutch instituted what was called the cultivation system, in which villages were to set aside land for export crops such as coffee and sugar (ibid.:155-160). They later allowed private companies to establish plantations. The Central Javanese courts, divested of most of their territories, became “ritual establishments and generally docile clients of the Dutch” (ibid.:153). At the same time, the Dutch had compelling reasons to minimize the cultural impact of colonialism. The Java War, which was seen as arising out of conditions fostered by the “anti-feudal instincts” of colonial rulers prior to that war, had demonstrated “the dangers of tampering with institutions which were perceived as traditional.” Thereafter, Dutch rule was “based upon an alliance with the indigenous aristocracy” (ibid.:154).

The expansion of Dutch control and the development of a full-fledged colonial state did over time take the form of refashioning members of the Javanese aristocracy as Dutch civil servants, resulting in the emergence of a new elite class. But the shift was gradual. The new Dutch-educated Javanese officials, whom Ricklefs refers to as “the ‘new’ or ‘lesser *priyayi*,’” were distinct from the traditional *priyayi*, the “Javanese administrative upper classes,” in that their status was earned rather inherited. But as *priyayi* they were “accorded titles and forms of display associated with that class” (ibid.:168). It was only in 1904 that “official Dutch encouragement of ‘outmoded’ displays, such as parasols, large groups of retainers, regalia, and so on” was ended (ibid.:167).

Over the course of the nineteenth century, the Central Javanese courts adopted certain

aspects of European culture. Besides the use of European music described above, they adorned their courts with trappings of splendor such as “European-style gilt chairs, Italian marble, crystal chandeliers and Dutch military uniforms” (ibid. 166). Sumarsam, with reference to Ashis Nandy (1983) and Terrence Ranger (1975), identifies this as an instance of “the familiar phenomenon whereby the oppressed identifies himself with the oppressor.” But he also notes that “the Javanese ruler also considered it important to maintain traditional court rituals essential to him and his Javanese subjects (Sumarsam 1995: 4). Court ceremonies thus consisted of “the ‘coinciding’ or ‘competing’ of two traditions, Javanese and European” (ibid.:74).

Competition also spurred the development of Javanese forms of cultural expression, such as larger and louder gamelan (ibid.:62-63) and the dance-opera genre *langendriya*—a form which “almost certainly took some inspiration from European opera” (Sutton 1997: 85). But as Sutton argues, noting its basis in Javanese performance conventions, *langendriya* represents not “mimicry” but rather a matching accomplishment (ibid.:112). The investment of Javanese courts in developing their artistic heritage continued well into the twentieth century, with the reign of the Sultan of Yogyakarta Hamengkubuwana VIII (1921-1939) acclaimed as the “golden age” of *wayang wong*, another form of dance drama (Lindsay 1985: 81).

At the same time as the Javanese began adopting aspects of European culture, Dutch colonialists were encouraged to increase their knowledge of Javanese culture. In 1819, the colonial government began to train its officials in indigenous languages so that they could better communicate with native officials. As that need increased, new schools were created, and the scope of study expanded to include Javanese arts and culture. From this training

emerged Dutch and Eurasian scholar-officials who “engaged in intellectual discourse with learned aristocrats, court poets, and leading artists on more or less equal terms.” This led to the “scientific study of Javanese culture” as an instance of high culture, by both European and Eurasian scholar-officials and the growing number of Dutch-educated Javanese from the elite classes (Sumarsam 1995: 102-103).

This intellectual activity focused on the culture of the Javanese courts counterbalanced the tendency toward Westernization that accompanied the increase in European-style education for natives—an increase driven both by the need to fill the ranks of an expanding colonial bureaucracy, and by the greater concern for the welfare of natives reflected in the “Ethical policy” officially endorsed by the Netherlands at the turn of the twentieth-century.²⁴ This is particularly clear in the case of the *priyayi* organization Budi Utomo. Budi Utomo was founded in 1908 by students and graduates of STOVIA, a school in Batavia for training native doctors and “one of the most important institutions in producing the lesser *priyayi* of Java” (Ricklefs 2001: 199). Its members viewed Western education as offering “a key to a new synthesis which they saw as the basis for a rejuvenation of their culture, class and people” (ibid.:207). Budi Utomo grew into “a party of the Javanese lesser *priyayi* in general,” and as such gave rise to the Indonesian national movement. But it was “primarily a body with cultural and educational interests” (ibid.:208). “Copying Western learned societies,” it “held congresses, opened branch offices, and published a newsletter” (Sumarsam 1995: 113-114).

The activities of Budi Utomo were reinforced and complemented by the formation of other learned societies, such as the Java Institut. Founded in 1921 as a organization for Dutch

24. The expansion of education is a major theme in Ricklefs chapter on the “new colonial age” ushered in with the adoption of the Ethical policy (Ricklefs 2001: 193-194).

scholars of Javanese culture (Lindsay 1985: 9), it was also open to members of the Javanese elite. Like Budi Utomo, the Java Institut “held congresses and study groups and sponsored publications, lectures, and music and dance performances.” These and other organizations “brought about a characteristic intellectual outlook among the Javanese elite, resulting from viewing Javanese arts in Western terms—Javanese arts as the product of high culture, of the Classic tradition” (Sumarsam 1995: 120). They gave rise to what Nancy Florida describes as the “myth” and “cult” of *adi luhung* (Florida 1987), referring to the Javanese term meaning “the beautiful sublime” which came into use around this time, and continues to be used today.²⁵

Institutional Realizations of the High Culture Idea

The view of Javanese arts as high culture on the part of the Javanese elite, and the corresponding outlook of sympathetic European scholars, constituted the intellectual context for the musical experiments noted earlier in this chapter: the arrangements of Javanese gamelan pieces for Western instruments, the “improvement” of Javanese instruments, and attempts to devise new systems of notation. While most of those experiments had no significant lasting impact on the practices of Javanese music, the impact of other implementations of the idea of Javanese arts as high culture, most notably the institutionalization of the teaching of Javanese performing arts, has been profound.

In 1918, two sons of the sultan of Yogyakarta, Tejokusumo and Suryodiningrat, founded the dance school Kridha Beksa Wirama. By offering instruction in court style dance, it

25. See Lindsay (1985: 36-50) for an extensive discussion of *adi luhung* and other terms used in the discourse around Javanese arts.

amplified the idea promoted by learned societies such as Budi Utomo and the Java Institut—to which Tejokusumo belonged—that Javanese performing arts were high culture and thus worthy of attention. The school was seen by its founders and its supporters as, as Jennifer Lindsay notes, “an important step in modernising the court arts, and modernising not in a way which involved exposing the arts to the threat of Western infiltration, but through making the dance and music of the court more generally accessible, hence less ‘feudal’ and more ‘democratic’” (Lindsay 1985: 15-20).

Kridha Beksa Wirama’s students were drawn from Jong Java, the youth branch of Budi Utomo that was also established in 1918, and were thus members of the *priyayi* class. Another institution went further in democratizing the court arts: the school system Taman Siswa, founded by Ki Hadjar Dewantara in 1922 (Lindsay 1985: 20), which by 1932 “had 166 schools and 11 000 pupils” (Ricklefs 2001: 222). Javanese dance and music, or corresponding traditions at branches in other regions, were made an integral part of a general education, with classes offered in all grades. One of the “unalterable principles” of Taman Siswa was that “education should be for all, not just the upper stratum of society” (Tsuchiya 1987: 56-57), and indeed its clientele, while including some children of members of the “established elite” who held “anticolonial or culturally conservative convictions,” mostly consisted of “upwardly mobile commoners, clerks and petty bureaucrats” (McVey 1967: 146).

Kridha Beksa Wirama and Taman Siswa represent an important step in the development of a modernized existence for traditional Javanese performing arts. This was not, however, because they established an existence independent of the courts. The traditional performing arts already had such an existence. There were and still are certain aspects of Javanese

performing arts that are particular to the courts. Certain dances, for example, were considered the exclusive property of one or another court. There are also certain forms practiced only in villages. But there is much more which is shared. Speaking of the court and village practices of gamelan, Sumarsam notes that “It is only in the degree of refinement of musical practice and the size of the repertory that the two gamelan practices differ; basically they are the same” (Sumarsam 1995: 125-126). The cultural exchange between the court and the village, which is a common pattern in many parts of the world, is perhaps especially abundant in Java as a result of the mobility of artists. As Sarah Weiss comments, “The Central Javanese courts have long maintained an old Javanese habit of inviting outsiders to the court,” a practice recalled by the fathers and grandfathers of the village *dhalang* (shadow puppeteers) she worked with in the 1990s. The court traditions thus “grew and developed as people from outside travelled into the courts and then out again bringing with them styles and ideas from other places in Central Java and beyond” (Weiss 2006: 11-12).

Neither Kridha Beksa Wirama nor Taman Siswa disrupted this pattern of exchange and mobility. Their aim in providing instruction in dance and gamelan was not to produce professional performers, but to “encourage a sense of pride, and a sense of sharing, in the highest forms of Javanese art.” Their impact was thus more widespread. The students at Kridha Beksa Wirama did not and could not aspire to become performers because of the relationship of dance and other performing arts to social hierarchy. To become a dancer at the court still entailed becoming an *abdi-dalem* (servant, retainer). As Lindsay notes, “a future as a performer of kraton-style dance outside the kraton was not yet imaginable,” and “a career as a performer was otherwise unthinkable for those of aristocratic background” (Lindsay 1985: 16-17). At Taman Siswa, instruction in the performing arts was included as part of a general

education in order “to develop in its students the spiritual and moral strength needed to resist indiscriminate adoption of Western customs” (ibid.:21). Lessons in dance and music were part of a curriculum that in other respects prepared students for administrative careers, with classes in arithmetic, bookkeeping, commerce, and civics, as well as a considerable focus on fluency in Dutch language.

Taman Siswa was the site of a somewhat more influential instance of applying aspects of European music to Javanese music. In his book *Serat Sari Swara* (Dewantara 1930), Dewantara presented a theory which explained the Javanese system of *pathet*, or mode, “using the analogy of the Western concept of key (or the concept of movable *do*),” and a corresponding system of notation based on that developed by the French educator Emile Chevé (Sumarsam 1995:135-137). Dewantara adopted this system as he felt that the existing Javanese systems were inadequate. He drew heavy criticism from Poerbatjaraka, a fellow Dutch-educated courtier, who defended the existing Kapatihan system—the system which has since become standard through its widespread use.²⁶ In that the Sari Swara system was implemented in the Taman Siswa curriculum, it had a more significant practical application than other notational experiments. But ultimately its use was limited to Taman Siswa, pointing to a certain amount of disconnect between the amateur involvement in the arts it fostered and the actual practices of professional artists. As Sumarsam observes, Dewantara and other early theorists of gamelan “were not active musicians” but rather “court intellectuals whose musical experience was limited” (Sumarsam 1995: 140-141).

26. The two systems are similar in that they use numbers to represent pitch, but differ in how numbers are assigned. In Dewantara’s Sari Swara system, the numbers 12345 are used for the slendro scale, and are movable, with 1 assigned to what Dewantara theorized as the tonic of each mode. In Kapatihan, 12356 are used for slendro, and are fixed. For a more extensive explanation, see Sumarsam (1995: 135-136).

To an extent this disconnect between the formally educated and those who gain their knowledge through practical experience has persisted. It has been replicated by the conservatories and academies for the traditional performing arts which built on the precedent set by institutions such as Taman Siswa and Kridha Beksa Wirama. At the same time, the gap between formal education and practical knowledge has been narrowed by drawing upon the expertise of outsiders, in a pattern somewhat parallel to that previously practiced by the Central Javanese courts. One example is Ki Sindusawarno, who helped found Konservatori Karawitan (KOKAR) in 1950 (after having served on the advisory committee for Taman Siswa on the basis of his interest in Javanese art and culture). In his capacity as head of KOKAR's research department, he developed theories of Javanese music in consultation with practicing musicians on staff (Sumarsam 1995: 141-143). One of those musicians, Martopangrawit, a leading gamelan player from the court of Surakarta, was encouraged by his relationship with Sindusawarno to write on gamelan theory and practice (ibid.), an endeavor he became quite committed to and that he gained considerable distinction in.²⁷ The combination of his status as a practicing musician and his articulation of his knowledge in written form led to him being "widely recognized as the supreme authority on the gamelan music of Surakarta."²⁸

The significance of organizations like Kridha Beksa Wirama and Taman Siswa to the later development of traditionally-based contemporary performing arts lies not so much in the

27. Martopangrawit's "Catatan-Catatan Pengetahuan Karawitan" (Notes on Knowledge of Gamelan Music), first published by the student council of ASKI Solo in 1972, is the first item, in an English translation by Martin F. Hatch, in *Karawitan: Source Readings in Javanese Gamelan and Vocal Music* (Martopangrawit 1984).

28. *Grove Music Online*, s.v. "Martopangrawit, Radèn Ngabéi [Radèn Lurah]," by R. Anderson Sutton, accessed 10 June 2005.

particular legacies of their pedagogical approaches or theoretical perspectives.²⁹ More importantly, they represent an institutional manifestation of the idea of high culture promoted by Budi Utomo and the Java Institut. In establishing a high-level institutional base for the teaching of courtly arts independent of the courts, they contributed to the abstraction and dispersion of the high culture idea. In these institutions, cultural expressions served not to glorify any particular court or ruler, but instead were given a more generalized value—one that made them compatible with the values of a post-colonial and post-feudal Indonesian state. It is in this way that they most significantly served as a precedent for the conservatories and academies which opened in the 1950s and 60s.

Kridha Beksa Wirama and Taman Siswa also contributed to securing a respected position for the traditional performing arts in contemporary Indonesian culture through its alumni and affiliates. These institutions instilled in several generations of teachers, students, and/or participants a deep respect and pride in traditional culture as high culture. Among those who were involved with these organizations are a number of artists, educators, cultural figures, and politicians who were either directly involved in the emergence of *musik kontemporer*, or whose contributions otherwise shaped the cultural ecology out of which *musik kontemporer* emerged. These include Gendhon Humardani, director of ASKI Surakarta, who studied dance at the Jakarta branch of Kridha Beksa Wirama (Rustopo 1990: 54-56); the dancers Sardono W. Kusuma and Bagong Kussudiardjo, both of whom were educated at Taman Siswa; and even Indonesia's first president, Sukarno, who was a member of the Surabaya branch of Jong Java and head of the Taman Siswa school in Bandung (Lindsay 1985: 28-29).

29. Though some of these, such as the system of counting out dance movements verbally developed at Kridha Beksa Wirama (Lindsay 1985: 15-20), were more widely adopted than Dewantara's Sari Swara theory and notation system.

The Roots of Cosmopolitan Nativism

The Intellectual Development of Ki Hadjar Dewantara

The extent of the impact of organizations like Kridha Beksa Wirama and Taman Siswa, in terms of its breadth, should not be overstated. The traditional performing arts do not dominate contemporary Indonesian culture. That they remained dominant until relatively recently in rural areas in certain regions, including Central Java, had mostly to do with the history of the media. It was only in the mid 1970s that the availability of transistor radios and audio cassette players facilitated the spread of the mostly Western-oriented commercialized popular culture that was dominant in urban centers since the late colonial period.³⁰

Kridha Beksa Wirama, and especially Taman Siswa, can, however, be credited with contributing to the depth and robustness of the commitment to the traditional performing arts demonstrated by a significant contingent of Indonesia's cultural and intellectual elite. They did so by promoting traditional forms not just as heritage to be preserved, and not only as emblems of Indonesian identity to counterbalance involvement in a modernity increasingly defined by the West, but as practices embodying values that were themselves regarded as inherently relevant to the present and future. Gamelan and other forms did not represent a retreat into local tradition, but were instead integrated into an engagement with modern ideas that were circulating internationally. This pattern, which I characterize as cosmopolitan

30. The Balinese composer Pande Made Sukerta (1953–), who grew up in Tejakula on the north coast of Bali, claimed that the first non-Balinese music he heard was Javanese gamelan, while studying at the high school level conservatory in Denpasar (p.c., 7 September 2004). When I asked Sukamso (1958–), who grew up in a village about 20 kilometers east of Solo, whether growing up he liked music other than gamelan, he stated that “there wasn’t any,” not even *kroncong*. In 1971, “only one person, the richest in the village,” owned a radio. According to Sukamso, the situation was the same in most of rural Central Java until around 1977 (p.c., 4 August 2004).

nativism, is exemplified by the career path and intellectual development of Taman Siswa's founder, Ki Hadjar Dewantara.

Throughout his life, Dewantara maintained a deep commitment to his Javanese cultural heritage as a member of the Paku Alaman, Yogyakarta's junior court. He was a grandson of Paku Alam III, but as his father did not become Paku Alam, his status was that of a lesser royal. As a result, he did not, as Jennifer Lindsay argues, have "the full opportunity to demonstrate his cultural leadership" within that court (Lindsay 1985: 20). Compelled to pursue a career outside the court, he also embraced other concerns. As a student at STOVIA, Dewantara helped to found Budi Utomo in 1908. After only a few years, he turned his focus to the anti-colonial activities of a rather different group of people present at STOVIA: the Eurasian Douwes Dekker, a journalist ten years Dewantara's senior, whose ideas were "grounded in strong anti-Western sentiments" (Tsuchiya 1987: 17); and the Javanese Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo, who coming from a commoner background "harbored a burning hostility toward both the colonial government and Javanese nobility" (ibid.:19). Dewantara and Mangoenkoesoemo were involved in Dekker's efforts to form the Indische Partij (ibid.:18), a political party that was short-lived but significant as the first to "think in Indonesian nationalist terms rather than in Islamic, Marxist or narrowly ethnic categories" (Ricklefs 2001: 228). Their political ideas were also expressed through publishing. The most notorious instance was Dewantara's "If I were a Netherlander," a sarcastic critique of the Dutch colonial government's attempt to involve its subjects in commemorating the centennial anniversary of Dutch independence from Napoleon's empire. It was this publication which resulted in the three figures being exiled to the Netherlands in 1913 (Tsuchiya 1987: 20-25).³¹

31. See also Siegel (1997) for an extended interpretation of the significance of Dewantara's

Once in the Netherlands, Dewantara's path diverged from that of Dekker and Mangoenkoesoemo. While they remained active in politics, Dewantara shifted his focus to education. He studied for teaching qualification, joined the board of Holland's first Montessori school, and participated in the First Colonial Education Congress in 1916—the occasion for which he arranged the Javanese gamelan piece “Kinanthi Sandung” for voice and piano (Tsuchiya 1987: 30-35). As noted above, Dewantara's creative involvement with music did not extend beyond this isolated instance. Instead, his career would from this point on be focused on educational reform and its relationship to culture and nationalism.³²

A key question which arose at the Education Congress was that of the language of instruction. Dewantara strongly advocated the use of Javanese. He “expounded the inseparability of culture (in this case Javanese culture) and language in terms of the unity of language and nation, and extolled the beauty of the Javanese language itself” (Tsuchiya 1987: 34-35). His position would seem to be basically similar to the nativism espoused by Budi Utomo, but in fact his views on language were more complex—or, as Tsuchiya characterizes them, “contradictory.” The contradictions are not arbitrary, but rather stem from Dewantara's responsiveness to different concerns. He had previously “called for a shift in the political stance of the Indische Partij toward the systematic introduction of the Malay (Indonesian)

intervention.

32. Tsuchiya mentions neither Dewantara's arrangement of “Kinanthi Sandung” nor his direct participation in the “various exhibitions and performances” staged by the Indonesian Press Bureau, which Dewantara founded, to counter the belief among the Dutch “that neither civilization nor culture existed in this backward and barbaric land.” The omission is perhaps mostly a function of his focus on other aspects of Dewantara's development as an intellectual and leader. His summary of Dewantara's articles from the period does, however, suggest fairly clearly that Dewantara was becoming concerned less with music and other performing arts specifically, and more with culture conceived more broadly. Tsuchiya notes that while only two of the thirty articles written during the six years he was in the Netherlands are directly concerned with cultural sphere, they are “longest and the most accomplished.” Specifically, they dealt with language and education (Tsuchiya 1987: 30-35).

language as a means to unite the community of the Indies (Indonesia)” (ibid.). In doing so, he anticipated the *Sumpah Pemuda*, the “Youth Pledge” of 1928, in which participants at a Youth Congress in Batavia announced their allegiance to “one fatherland, Indonesia; one nation, Indonesia; and one language, Bahasa Indonesia, the language of unity” (Ricklefs 2001: 233). The position he took at the Education Congress was in response to Mangoenkoesoemo, who forced the issue with his radical suggestion that Javanese culture be destroyed and the Javanese language abolished in the interest of building a new Indies culture (Tsuchiya 1987: 44-45).

In practice, Dewantara’s approach to language after founding Taman Siswa accommodated both idealistic and practical concerns. The general language of instruction was Javanese—or, as branches opened in other parts of the Dutch East Indies, the corresponding regional language—in accordance with the “cardinal principle that the child should learn in his own language” (McVey 1967: 143-144). At the Education Congress, Dewantara suggested that knowledge of Dutch was “necessary only as the means to educate intellectuals who could translate the fruits of [Western] science and technology” (Tsuchiya 1987: 34-35). But at Taman Siswa the study of Dutch—and also Malay/Indonesian and English—was a core component of the curriculum. In fact, lessons in Dutch accounted for “almost half of all classroom hours” in sixth and seventh grades, as part of a “heavy stress on practical education” that also included classes in arithmetic, bookkeeping, commerce, and civics (Tsuchiya 1987: 67).

As discussed above, the practical side of the Taman Siswa curriculum was counterbalanced by instruction in the performing arts in order “to develop in its students the spiritual and moral strength needed to resist indiscriminate adoption of Western customs”

(Lindsay 1985: 21). The study of music and dance was the most explicit aspect of the “abangan spirit” that “was made to pervade the entire program of study, the organization of the school, and the method of teaching” (McVey 1967: 134).³³ The basis for Taman Siswa’s educational philosophy was, however, considerably broader. It was, as McVey notes, “a reaction to disappointment in the fruits of western-style education as much as it was an attempt to make that schooling available to the Indonesian public” (McVey 1967: 133). But rather than retreat into traditional Javanese models of education, Dewantara selectively drew elements from those models and fused them with the progressive educational methods he encountered as a teacher at Holland’s first Montessori school. Dewantara

was able to take advantage of criticisms of educational methods then being made in western countries to help define his discontent at the colonial approach to teaching and to develop a style that could be considered progressive in international terms as well as characteristically Indonesian. (McVey 1967: 133)

In addition to the ideas of Montessori, Dewantara was influenced by the ideas of Fröbel, and the Dalton school system in the United States, with their “stress on self-expression, the adjustment of teaching to the terms of the child’s world, and the techniques of indirect guidance and control.” He was also inspired by the efforts of Rabindranath Tagore in India (McVey 1967: 133). Taman Siswa was thus, in its intellectual foundations, cosmopolitan, even while its cultural orientation was nativist and its ideological spirit nationalist.

Taman Siswa drew more generally upon a broader current of thought flowing back and

33. *Abangan* refers to the religious and cultural orientation of the majority of Javanese, which is nominally Muslim but fundamentally syncretic, incorporating both indigenous mysticism and animism, and Hindu-Buddhist pantheism. As McVey observes, Taman Siswa fell “on the abangan side of Java’s great cultural cleavage” (McVey 1967: 131), rather than the side of the pious Muslims, or *santri*. In many respects, including its aim of cultivating respect for high Javanese culture, Taman Siswa’s cultural orientation might better be characterized as *priyayi*. The standard reference on these distinctions remains Clifford Geertz’s *The Religion of Java* (1976).

forth between Europe and its Asian colonies. As Tsuchiya notes, Dewantara and his supporters were animated by “the rebirth of Javanism,” which in turn was bolstered by a critique of Western materialism within the West itself. Dewantara encountered in Europe not only the “rationalistic ethos that supported colonial administration”—the ethos he sought to counter through Taman Siswa—but also a “criticism of that modern society.” This criticism was informed by a “‘rediscovery’ of the Orient, which set against the European view of modern man the philosophy of the East, especially India, and the oriental image of mankind, and therein sought man’s salvation in the modern age” (Tsuchiya 1987: 41-42). It was further complemented by universalist perspectives on spirituality and humanity such as that promoted by the Theosophical Society, which “emphasized the mystical elements common to all religions” (but whose core was “Indian mysticism”) and aimed “to serve the universal brotherhood of man” (ibid.:42-43).

The Theosophical Society was active in Java by the early twentieth century,³⁴ and is credited by Tsuchiya as contributing significantly to the “self-confidence” of Javanese intellectuals “to champion the revival of Javanese culture” (Tsuchiya 1987: 41-42). This is clearly evident in the position of Soetatmo Soeryokoesomo, another noble from the Paku Alaman. Soeryokoesomo was the leader of “the ‘radical’ faction” Budi Utomo and of Taman Siswa’s immediate forerunner, the mystical association Selasa Kliwon, and subsequently the first chairman of Taman Siswa’s governing board” (McVey 1967: 131, note 2). In a dialogue published in 1918, Soeryokoesomo had opposed Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo’s call to destroy Javanese culture in support of Indies nationalism, arguing instead that the path to follow was

34. The Theosophical Society was founded in New York in 1875. A branch was established in Amsterdam in 1887, and from there spread to the Dutch East Indies by 1901 (Tsuchiya 1987: 42-43).

“the Indian world, the womb of Javanese culture, as advocated by Tagore and Theosophy.” Theosophy encouraged Soetatmo, Dewantara, and others to see “in traditional Javanese culture” the “potential to overcome” the “crisis of the modern age,” and strengthened their belief that “adhering to Javanese culture and rebuilding its ideal type would not be escapism or regression; it would be to place themselves in the vanguard of the age” (Tsuchiya 1987: 44-45).

Polemik Kebudayaan: *Debating Indonesian Culture*

The primary basis for the difference in position between Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo and Soetatmo Soeryokoesomo was that of class. Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo’s call for an Indies nationalism was motivated by a concern with “the improvement of the lot of ordinary people who had no title, rank, or wealth” (Shiraishi 1981: 95). Equally critical of the Javanese aristocracy as he was of the Dutch colonizers, he envisioned a future for the whole of the Dutch East Indies, with a perspective informed by European socialist ideas of historical progress.

As the nationalist movement gathered momentum, the Javanist position faced a new challenge. An increasing number of non-Javanese, especially from various parts of Sumatra, became involved. They “feared Javanese domination of a unified republic, were suspicious of traditional Javanese conservatism, and resented the assumed superiority of many Javanese toward the peoples of the outer islands” (Becker 1980: 31-32). With their presence, the debate over the form that Indonesian culture should take intensified. Particularly significant was the protracted series of exchanges which came to be known as the *Polemik Kebudayaan* (Polemic of Culture).

The “opening salvo” of the *Polemik Kebudayaan* was launched by the Sumatran writer Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana, a founding member of *Pudjangga Baru* (Holt 1967: 211). It took the form of a critique published in *Pudjangga Baru* of the views of Dewantara, Soetomo, and others associated with Taman Siswa forwarded at the First Congress of National Education in Surakarta in 1935. Alisjahbana objected to “the tendencies for anti-intellectual, anti-individualism, anti-egocentricism, and anti-materialism found in most of speeches of the speakers” (Alisjahbana, quoted in and translated by Notosudirdjo 2001: 162). He called for a transformation of Indonesia’s “static” society into a “dynamic” one “by adopting Western attitudes and techniques.” He further

took the position that everything that preceded the development of a national consciousness was not actually *Indonesian*, but “pre-Indonesian”—that there was a vast difference between the localism of ancient cultures and the modern aspiration for an all-Indonesian national culture. (Alisjahbana, quoted and paraphrased in Holt 1967: 211)

Pointing to “foreign cultural influences in the past,” from India and the Arab world, which had “enriched rather than impoverished the culture of the Indonesian islands,” Alisjahbana declared “And now the time has arrived . . . when we turn our eyes to the West” (ibid.).

The first response to Alisjahbana came not from a Javanese, but from Sanusi Pané, a fellow founding member of *Pudjangga Baru* also from Sumatra. Pané objected that “it was not possible to create a new culture suddenly,” and echoing the Theosophical perspective, which he had perhaps acquired from a visit to India in 1929–1930 (*Ensiklopedi Tokoh Kebudayaan*, 1:236), he likened the materialist and individualist West to Faust, and the spiritual and mystical East to “Ardjuna meditating on Mt. Indrakila” (Sanusi Pané, quoted and paraphrased in Holt 1967:212).

The sides of the debate were not, then, divided neatly along lines of ethnicity. Nor can

they be characterized as absolutely pro- or anti-Western. Instead, as William Frederick has observed, underlying the “vigorous exchange of opinions” were “several topics on which there was substantial agreement.” These included a commitment to social and intellectual freedom, to the nationalist cause, and the idea that modern Indonesian culture “must represent society as a whole”—the participants in the debate being “painfully aware of the fact that they were a tiny minority in their own society,” as members of the educated elite. They also agreed in broad terms that Indonesian culture must arise out of synthesis:

Whether to a greater or lesser degree, synthesis was necessary to resolve the contradictions which had to be faced in the process of becoming modern. The dichotomies of East and West, village and city, region and nation, masses and elite, no less than that of tradition and modernity itself, provided the framework for the process, which was not to be haphazard. (Frederick 1997: 56)

The participants in the debate, pushed by Alisjahbana’s persistence in pushing them to think beyond stereotypes of “imitating the West” and “traditions of the East” (Holt 1967: 211), came to agree that there should be selective synthesis, “marrying the best of the East with the best of the West, the best of tradition with the best of the modern world, and so on” (Frederick 1997: 56). What remained a point of contention was the balance to be struck, with Alisjahbana tirelessly advocating a greater openness to Western-style modernity, and most others cautioning against abandoning what was valuable from traditional culture.

Conflicting Priorities in the Debate Concerning National Music

Another exchange focused specifically on music more clearly demonstrates the anti-Java-centric dimension of the debates concerning Indonesian culture. At the same time, it reveals other concerns and pressures. In 1941, a Javanese writer, Boediardjo, wrote an article for *Pudjangga Baru* critiquing the choice of the Federation of Eastern Radio Societies (Perikatan

Perhimpunan Radio Ketimoeran) to present and broadcast *kroncong* for their first “folk concert” (*Volksconcert*). Boediardjo objected that *kroncong*, which he denigrated as “falsely romantic and shallow,” was thus implicitly endorsed as a general Indonesian music, while gamelan—which he insisted was enjoyed by the majority of Indonesians—was categorized as very exclusive and exceptional. Recognizing the need to identify a national music to parallel the adoption of Melayu, renamed bahasa Indonesia, as the national language, Boediardjo argued that gamelan deserved that designation, because “it is the music of the majority of the people” and because “it is music of quality as well.” Boediardjo’s position was seconded by the Dutch historian G. J. Resink, who comparing gamelan with European classical music considered it suitable for “the unitary music of Indonesians.” Resink also suggested European classical music as a “possible basis of Indonesian national music” (Notosudirdjo 2001: 175-178).

In response to Boediardjo and Resink, Armijn Pané—the younger brother of Sanusi Pané, and another founding member of *Pudjangga Baru* (Frederick 1997: 59)—wrote a defense of *kroncong* as “the most suitable indigenous musical genre for the basis of *musik kesatuan* (music of unification)” (Notosudirdjo 2001: 178-181). Frederick has summarized Pané’s argument:

Armijn dismissed the criticism of fellow intellectuals by pointing out that *keroncong* was not only not backward, as its detractors claimed, but was in fact markedly progressive. The music was modern and forward-looking because it clearly assimilated many styles, unified them into a seamless whole, and was still capable of accommodating new influences. The people, the musicians as well as audience, were also progressive, for they represented a blending of many different groups, and their voice was that of ordinary people, not a handful of aesthetes or aristocrats. This, he said, was much more satisfactory as a potential base for a new Indonesian culture than gamelan, which was after all a court art of the Javanese, rooted in a regional ruling elite and its traditions, and, he thought, unaccustomed to change and synthesis.

(Frederick 1997: 60-61)

Kroncong's reputation as backward had to do with its past as the music of lower-class Eurasians, but by the 1930s it had developed into a more variegated popular genre, incorporating influences from a wide range of foreign and regional musics. As discussed above, it had developed a positively cosmopolitan aspect in the hands of musicians like Ismail Marzuki, the director of the orchestra that performed on the concert in question.

Again, there were certain points of agreement underlying the differences of opinion. The participants in this exchange spoke not in terms of which music should be taken as national music, but which music should be taken as the *basis* of a new national music. In arguing against *kroncong* and in favor of gamelan, Boediardjo acknowledged the need to create something new. He suggested that this “might involve imitating Western music or not,” but ultimately advocated that it is “in their own world, with their own language, with their own melodies” that “Indonesians can realize their sensibility better and more perfectly” (Notosudirdjo 2001: 175-177). He pointed to more dynamic forms of gamelan, such as those in Bali, in response to complaints such as those of another Sumatran nationalist, Tan Malaka, that gamelan was not suitable for awakening “the spiritual need of the masses for a struggle for independence” (Sumarsam 1995: 118-119). Pané echoed Tan Malaka’s concerns in championing a music that appealed to ordinary people, but he did so on the basis of its potential. He did not propose *kroncong* itself as “the final product of *musik kesatuan*” but rather as “the starting point toward the final form of *musik kesatuan*,” observing that “European classical music also took many elements from genres of street music of the Middle Ages, such as *canzonella*, *napolitana*, *frottale*, *vilanelle*, *strambotti*, *moresco*, etc” (Notosudirdjo 2001: 185). He also made it clear that he was able to appreciate gamelan as

high-culture. Pané did not challenge the validity of the distinction between high and low culture, but merely subordinated it to the demands of national unification. For this same reason, he rejected European classical music as a possible basis (ibid.:180-181).

Practicing musicians involved in popular forms would, during the Japanese occupation and the war for independence, draw upon *kroncong* in creating a new repertory of songs known as *lagu perjuangan* (songs of the struggle). As discussed above, this repertory acquired a special status after independence because of its patriotism and association with the revolutionary struggle, though due to the historical circumstances they were written “with no official sanction or support” (Becker 1975: 16). The development was welcomed by at least one other intellectual in a renewed debate on the topic of national music.³⁵ But for the most part, the cultural elite were concerned with creating institutions and promoting other developments in support of their respective aesthetic priorities—priorities which, as will be discussed in the following chapter, would find varying degrees of official support.

These developments enhanced the status of *kroncong*, but only to a certain extent. Intellectuals continued to view *kroncong* players, “who often plied their trade in the streets and near open-air restaurants,” as “shiftless, low-brow, generally immoral, and definitively lower-class (*kampung*).” They “scorned” the music itself “as mongrel and melodramatic.”

35. Notosudirdjo discusses this debate, which started with a 1948 article by M.R. Dajoh, an intellectual from Makassar associated with *Pudjangga Baru*. Dajoh professed his respect for gamelan and lamented the fact that youth find it to be “a lullaby music,” but then acknowledged the validity of their creativity, with its basis in *kroncong* and Ambonese songs, as part of creating a new and more dynamic Indonesian culture. Other participants in the debate included Amir Pasaribu and J.A. Dunga (who will be discussed at some length in the following chapter), Armijn Pané, and Abu Hanifah, a leader of the Islamic party Masyumi and a Minister of Education and Culture. Pasaribu, as a Batak, noted that Sumatrans do not especially like *kroncong*. It was in this context that Pané and Hanifah countered that *lagu seriosa*, a genre pioneered by other Batak composers, also to be discussed in the following chapter, had “too strong a church flavor” (Notosudirdjo 2001: 253).

They were “for the most part scandalized” by Pané’s suggestion that it be taken as “a suitable foundation on which to build a modern, unified, and dynamic Indonesian culture” (Frederick 1997: 60-61). For Pané, what mattered most was that *kroncong*, in his view, had greater potential to appeal to Indonesians of any ethnic background, in contrast to gamelan—which, as he noted, Sumatrans, Menadonese, and Ambonese “could not find agreement (*tidak dapat tjojtjog*)” (Sumarsam 1995: 118-119). Pané acknowledged his agreement with Boediardjo and others that *kroncong* “could not be called an art music” (Notosudirdjo 2001: 187), but this did not cause him undue concern. Nor, as “the most Europeanized of a circle already mesmerized by the West and modernism”—whose “fondness for many aspects of Western culture” such as “natty suits and elegant neckties” led his friends “to see him as a man who had quite simply abandoned Indonesian culture altogether and opted instead to live a present and fashion a future unrelated to the idea of reality of Indonesia” (Frederick 1997: 58)—was he bothered by *kroncong*’s affront to traditional sensibilities. Boediardjo was aware that “a modern Indonesian man had a different biorhythm than an old Javanese man” and could no longer experience the varied emotional states of different gamelan pieces, and saw this as a symptom of a deeper problem. He linked the impairment of their ability to “sense the intricacy and complexity of drumming in gamelan” that resulted from “listening to the ‘rough’ sound of drum set and double bass in jazz” (Notosudirdjo 2001: 175-177) to a loss of moral bearings, complaining that they were “dazzled by the glory of the West.” *Kroncong*’s “shallow romanticism” appealed to modern Indonesians because it matched their “shallow lifestyle” (Sumarsam 1995: 118-119).

Institutional Outcomes with Independence

A definitive, if rather open-ended, answer to the question of what Indonesian culture was, or should be, was provided by the article in the 1945 constitution, which, building upon a formulation associated with Dewantara, defined Indonesian culture as consisting of the “peaks” of regional cultures. The actual wording of the article is as follows:

The culture of the nation is culture that arises as the product of the thought and character of the entire people of Indonesia. Old and authentic culture is found in high cultural achievements [lit.: peaks of culture] in regions throughout Indonesia [and is] considered the culture of the nation. Cultural effort must be directed to the advancement of civilization, cultivation, and unification, and should not reject new materials from foreign culture that can develop and enrich the culture of the [Indonesian] people and raise the level of humanity of the Indonesian people. (Yampolsky 1995: 700-703).³⁶

As Yampolsky has commented, the clarification includes statements which are “remarkably obscure” and which contradict each other. But generally, it is the nativist perspective which prevails, with some accommodation of the Western-oriented perspective. It gives considerable weight to the “peaks” of “old and authentic culture.” “New materials from foreign culture,” while not to be rejected, are relegated to the secondary role of developing and enriching, rather than forming a basis for Indonesian culture themselves. The statement

36. Strictly speaking, this is the clarification of the clause in the constitution itself. The clause concerning national culture in the initial draft of the constitution, submitted 13 July 1945, states “The government must advance the national culture of Indonesia, and to that end [it must] advance the culture of each region, as pillars of that national culture.” The final version, announced on 18 August 1945, removed the reference to regional cultures, stating simply “The government shall advance [lit.: advances] the national culture of Indonesia.” The clarification, which restated the relationship of national culture to regional cultures in somewhat different terms, was announced on 23 November 1945 and made law on 15 February 1946. See Yampolsky (1995: 700-705) for a very detailed discussion and analysis of the clause and the clarification, of the process by which they were drafted, and their relationship to the broader discourse on Indonesian culture, the terms of which were established in the 1930s.

thus reflects the priorities of Dewantara, who was named Minister of Education and Culture in Sukarno's first cabinet. These priorities were shared by two others who subsequently filled that post, as is evident from the positions they took regarding music.

In 1950, after the Dutch conceded defeat and independence was established, two government institutions for music education were founded: Konservatori Karawitan (KOKAR) for traditional Indonesian musics in Surakarta, and Sekolah Musik Indonesia (SMIND) for Western music in Yogyakarta. SMIND was allowed to open only after overcoming initial opposition. The Ministry of Education and Culture, headed by S. Mangoensarkoro, who was a leader of Taman Siswa, "did not agree with the idea of founding a Western music conservatory in Indonesia." The cultural bureaucrat and violinist Soemaryo L.E.—who would later become a proponent of traditional music³⁷—received permission to found SMIND by arguing that "*Indonesia Raya*, the Indonesian national anthem, was modeled upon Western national anthems" (Notosudirdjo 2001: 243-244).

KOKAR, by contrast, was opened with the full support of the government. In proclaiming its mission, at least, it embraced the vision of national music announced by another Minister of Education and Culture. Bahder Djohan, at the second national cultural congress in Bandung in 1951, drew upon the constitutional definition of Indonesian culture by defining national music as "the fusion of regional musical peaks" (Notosudirdjo 2001: 243). A 1953 article on KOKAR—referring to it as "Konservatori Karawitan dan Kebudayaan Nasional" (Conservatory of *Karawitan* and National Culture)—articulated its ambitions to

37. Nyak Ina Raseuki, a student at Institut Kesenian Jakarta in the 1980s, when Soemaryo was head of its music department, described him as "the one who was most concerned with traditional music," a teacher of a survey course on traditional music, and the person who introduced her to ethnomusicology (p.c., 18 August 2005).

realize this fusion:

Thus later will come to pass results from all the Indonesian artists of the new generation, because there (at the conservatory) all the above mentioned artists have the opportunity to organize a thousand and one varieties, experiments, until finally, with contented hearts, they will meet that which they are always seeking, that is Indonesian music that is truly based upon the foundation of national culture. (Soekanto, quoted in and translated by Becker 1980: 34)

In practice, as Judith Becker argued some twenty-five years later, “this high hope must be termed a failure,” further commenting that “the closest thing to a pan-Indonesian musical expression is *kroncong*” (Becker 1980: 34). The reason, as Sumarsam has noted, is that

...from its beginning to the present, the focus of the curriculum of the KOKAR has been Javanese gamelan. Except for a few courses in Sundanese and Balinese gamelan, and rudimentary theory of Western music, no music from other parts of Indonesia has been included. (Sumarsam 1995: 123-124)

The teachers at KOKAR were “mostly court musicians and dancers” and “the atmosphere of the school did not provide any impetus to search for an Indonesianized curriculum” (ibid.), so that “far from becoming the fountainhead of experimentation and synthesis as was originally hoped,” it became “one of the few viable institutions sustaining court traditions” (Becker 1980: 34).

The disparity in the attitudes of officials toward the two forms of high art music supported by SMIND and KOKAR did not persist to the extent that it undermined subsequent institutional developments. These happened on both sides more or less in parallel. In 1964, the college level Akademi Seni Karawitan Indonesia (ASKI) opened alongside KOKAR, initially sharing the same facilities. Two years later, in 1966, SMIND was upgraded to a tertiary level institution and renamed Akademi Musik Indonesia (AMI). Similar upgradings

have occurred periodically since.³⁸

What the initial resistance to the founding of SMIND and the greater consonance between KOKAR's stated mission and official cultural policy points to is a difference in the source of authority for the two sides. The status of Western art music rests on a quite particular xenocentrism. For the most part, there have been enough figures with enough investment in the idea that Western art music is important, and enough influence, to maintain the support that is needed to sustain something of a local scene—though at points where anti-Western sentiment was strong, as in the late 1950s, the tenuousness of that scene's existence became evident, as noted above and as will be elaborated in the next chapter. At least as great a challenge, and a more significant focus of the next chapter, is the one that came from those whose allegiance was to more popular Western and Western-influenced forms that had laid stronger local roots. Those who championed the traditional performing arts were by no means without their challengers, as the Polemik Kebudayaan and the debate concerning *kroncong* as national music demonstrated. That gamelan and other traditional forms still attracted the attention of much of the population, especially outside the more Westernized urban centers, helped their cause. More important in countering the idea that prevailed in those centers, and that would spread from them along with the commercialized popular culture produced in them—that the traditional performing arts represented the values of a feudal past, or more simply that they were old-fashioned—was the cosmopolitan nativist outlook developed by Dewantara and others. As we will see in subsequent chapters, this outlook provided the

38. In 1984 AMI merged with Akademi Seni Tari Indonesia (Indonesian Dance Arts Academy) and the Akademi Seni Rupa Indonesia (Indonesia Academy of Visual Arts) to become Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta (Indonesian Arts Institute, ISI Jogja). ASKI became Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia Surakarta (STSI Solo) in 1988 and Institut Seni Indonesia Surakarta (ISI Solo) in 2006. Both schools now offer graduate degrees.

means to convince a significant contingent within Indonesia's cultural and intellectual elite that the traditional performing arts in fact held much potential as the basis for new contemporary expressions.

2 Precursors

Just as the word legacy can refer either to a beneficial inheritance or an undesirable consequence, the word precursor and its various synonyms—predecessor, forerunner, antecedent, ancestor, herald, portent and omen—have varying shades of meaning. Some of these imply negative outcomes, while others are either neutral or positive. But more importantly, the variations have to do with the nature of the relationship between the thing that existed before, and the thing that followed.

Although I contend that *musik kontemporer* is a recent development, with its history proper beginning only in the 1970s, I do not mean to suggest that it was entirely unprecedented. There were, around the time of the turbulent transition from colony to independent nation, a number of figures on the Western-oriented side who strove to initiate an Indonesian practice of art music composition. But as I show in the first major section of this chapter, they did not succeed. Their efforts did not establish the foundation upon which *musik kontemporer* grew. The premature death of one of the two most notable composers, Cornel Simanjuntak, and the emigration of the other, Amir Pasaribu, were obvious setbacks. Pasaribu and others had been marginalized by the major political shifts that occurred in the mid 1960s, which were generally disruptive. There were also more fundamental and endemic obstacles. The advocates for art music composition failed to secure a place for themselves and their work in the elite realms of Indonesia's emerging public culture, dominated as it was

by the popular and paraclassical. Their ideas failed to gain broader currency. It is this aspect of their failure that I am most concerned with, as it reveals the most about the corner of Indonesia's cultural ecology that *musik kontemporer* would come to occupy. And so, after introducing the first blossoming of art music composition, and outlining how it failed to weather the inhospitable political climate of the 1960s—a failure that underlies the almost complete disconnect between this blossoming and that of *musik kontemporer* in the 1970s—I examine in more detail the unrealized efforts of these precursors to shape musical opinion. Their written discourse documents their struggle, while the fate of their most enduring legacy in musical practice, the genre *lagu seriosa*, is a testament to their limited impact on Indonesian music.

The second, and shorter, major section turns to the more ambiguous relationship of traditionally-based *musik kontemporer* to its precursors. There were three notable figures of particular relevance to the scenes I examine in this study. Their innovations provided a certain amount of inspiration to later composers, but were not what set traditionally-based *musik kontemporer* in motion. Instead, as I argue, they represented either the tradition that *musik kontemporer* was impelled to break free from, or a populist direction to avoid.

Western-Oriented Figures

The First Blooms Appear

Around the middle of the twentieth century, a handful of musicians from North Sumatra who had come to Java to pursue higher education started composing music based on classical European models. Their works, though not especially numerous, represent the first true, if

modest, flowering of art music composition in Indonesia. Also part of this flowering, and what helps distinguish it as art music, was a written discourse that clearly expressed modern notions of music as art, and that claimed that the direction in music composition they called for and had begun to realize in their work was more artistically serious than other music of the time.

The most impressive blooms, by the standards of Western art music, were the compositions of Amir Pasaribu (1915–2010). Pasaribu was the one figure from this era to focus on instrumental music. He was also the only one to draw substantially upon modern currents of art music composition. Most of his works were for piano and chamber ensembles, though he wrote at least one piece for string orchestra (Notosudirdjo 2001: 222). Within a fundamentally Romantic style he used melodies from traditional Indonesian musics as well as more generic markers of Indonesianness such as the diatonic approximation of the *pelog* scale.¹ His *Variasi Sriwidjaja*, for solo piano, uses techniques characteristic of impressionism and other early twentieth century movements, such as whole tone scales, parallelism, and coloristic chromatic harmony.²

More limited in artistic scope, but ultimately more significant as a primary point of reference for a new musical genre that came to be known as *lagu seriosa*, were the songs of Cornel Simanjuntak (1920–1946). Simanjuntak took as his primary model European art song, especially the *lieder* of Schubert. In 1944, two years before dying from tuberculosis at the

1. *Pelog* is a five-tone scale, or a seven-tone tuning system that accommodates several five-tone modal scales of similar interval composition. The most common diatonic approximation of this five-tone modal scale, expressed in Western solmization syllables, is *mi-fa-sol-ti-do*.

2. See Notosudirdjo (2001: 217-235) for a discussion of Pasaribu's work and examples of his scores. The full score of *Variasi Sriwidjaja* and a recording made in Jakarta in 1968 were temporarily available from <http://www.pasaribu.com/> (accessed 3 August 2007).

young age of twenty-six, he presented selections from an opera based on a book by Armijn Pane, a leading member of the *Pujangga Baru* (a notable literary magazine discussed in the previous chapter). Simanjuntak might have gone on, had his life not been cut short, to become a leading figure, together with Pasaribu, of a new tradition of Indonesian art music.

This first flowering of art music composition came about as a result of increased opportunities to engage in European classical music for those who were predisposed to do so through their musical upbringing. Pasaribu and Simanjuntak were, like the poets who started *Pujangga Baru*, Batak, from North Sumatra, an area that experienced intensive missionary activity starting in the late 1860s, much of it by Lutherans. Brought up with the Christian choral music tradition, Pasaribu, Simanjuntak, and a number of others, internalized that tradition's musical syntax of functional harmony. As Simanjuntak's cousin put it, they were "educated in the chord structures that has weight [sic]" (Alfred Simanjuntak, quoted in Rasmindarya 1999: 223-224).

These Batak composers came to Java for the greater educational opportunities afforded by the teacher-training colleges there. Most of them attended St. Xavarius, in Muntilan, a small town northwest of Yogyakarta, where they became involved with European classical music through its extensive extra-curricular activities. By the 1930s, St. Xavarius boasted a symphony orchestra consisting entirely of students that had in its repertoire works by Beethoven and Schubert. From the account of Simanjuntak's colleague Binsar Sitompul, Simanjuntak was the star musician at the school. He was the orchestra's concert master, he played a concerto by Edouard Lalo as the solo violinist (Sitompul 1987: 11-12), and with a voice "like a *heldentenor*" he took the lead role in a performance of fragments of Wagner's *Lohengrin* (ibid.:29). As composers, Simanjuntak and his classmates drew the most

inspiration from their interactions with Pastor Schouten, the driving force behind the musical activities at St. Xavarius. Schouten gave lecture-demonstrations of the songs of Schubert, drawing attention to the tight connection between text and melody (ibid.:16-19). He did not, however, actively encourage them as composers. Simanjuntak wrote his first songs while at St. Xavarius, but was not allowed to perform them (ibid.:32-33). Instead he was told to be patient, as he still had much to learn (ibid.:24).

As impressive as the activities at St. Xavarius were, they were self-contained. They took place at a campus specifically for native students that was at some remove from major urban centers, and that would have been unconnected to the music making of colonialist society. By contrast, Pasaribu came to be involved in classical music through studying with musicians in colonialist circles, and himself joined a colonialist orchestra. Pasaribu was first exposed to classical music by the Dutch friars at the high school he attended in Sibolga, North Sumatra, from whom he learned violin and piano. He continued his studies at a teacher-training college in West Java, with the intention of becoming a piano teacher.³ From there, he moved to Jakarta and became a student of the Russian cellist Nicolai Varvolomeyev (Notosudirdjo 2001: 219). In 1936 he enrolled in the Musashino School of Music in Tokyo where he studied for three years,⁴ making him the first Indonesian to go abroad specifically to study classical music.⁵ Upon his return to the Dutch East Indies in 1940, he joined the Dutch-run Radio

3. <http://www.pasaribu.com>, accessed 5 July 2005.

4. *Grove Music Online*, s.v. "Pasaribu, Amir," by Franki Raden, accessed 10 June 2005.

5. Pasaribu may have been preceded in studying abroad by the organist, composer, and conductor R. A. J. Soedjasmin, who after graduating from St. Xavarius studied church music in Utrecht, the Netherlands (Notosudirdjo 2001: 190). Notosudirdjo does not give a date, but it seems to have been before Soedjasmin filled in for Pastor Schouten at St. Xavarius when the latter was on leave, during the time that Sitompul and Simanjuntak were students there in the late 1930s (Sitompul 1987: 13-14). Ed Van Ness, who knew Soedjasmin as director of Akademi Musik Indonesia in the 1970s (see below), described him as a "composer of national songs" who "was totally unresponsive to anything except his

Orchestra in Batavia as a cellist, continuing when the orchestra was taken over by the occupying Japanese forces in 1942. 1942 was also the year that Pasaribu began studying piano and composition with the Dutch composer James Zwart (Notosudirdjo 2001: 220). Pasaribu's involvement in European classical music was thus exceptionally extensive. It accounts for his unique position as a composer of instrumental music employing twentieth-century compositional techniques,⁶ and also for the encyclopedic knowledge of both classical and popular Western music he displayed in his writings.

Subsequent Growth and Withering

As seen in the previous chapter, the historical events that followed the Japanese occupation and that culminated in Indonesian independence had a mixed effect on the transfer of European classical music to Indonesians. On the one hand, the disappearance of colonialist society meant that classical music lost its core social base of support. On the other hand, the colonial-era legal restrictions on interaction between members of different racially defined groups also disappeared. This allowed at least the possibility for Indonesians to more freely learn from those European musicians who stayed on, even if relatively few Indonesians were inclined to do so.

St. Xavarius's potential to give rise to a localized practice of classical music performance was dashed after it was closed by the Japanese. And with the internment of Europeans other

own music" (p.c., 14 June 2005).

6. Pasaribu presumably encountered these techniques in Japan, which was, by the 1930s, well on its way to becoming a major node in an internationalized contemporary art music scene. Beyond the interest on an individual level in avant-garde trends emanating from Europe, such as dodecaphony, Japanese composers were participating in meetings of the International Society for Contemporary Music, and mounting festivals dedicated to new music (Galliano 2002: 65-89).

than nationals of Japan's Axis allies and those needed for their skills, colonialist society ceased to exist. But despite this disruption, and despite increasingly harsh conditions, especially toward the end of the occupation as Japan struggled to defend its conquests in Asia and the Pacific, there was still some classical music activity, involving those European musicians who were spared from internment because they were deemed useful. Concerts were led not only by the Japanese conductor Nobuo Iida, but also by Pasaribu's teacher, Varvolomeyev (Pasaribu 1955:68). It was during the Japanese occupation that Pasaribu started studying composition with James Zwart, and that Simanjuntak presented excerpts from his opera. Simanjuntak composed propaganda songs as an employee of the Japanese Cultural Center, and while he did not regard these as "artistic creations" (*karya seni*) (*Ensiklopedi Tokoh Kebudayaan*, 5:37), they did provide him with a certain amount of experience.

The ensuing revolution presumably complicated relationships between Indonesians and Europeans, especially those involved with institutions siding with either the revolutionary forces or those wishing to reinstate some form of government under Dutch rule.⁷ After the Dutch conceded defeat, however, the European musicians who stayed on were free to contribute to developing the infrastructure for classical music in the newly independent Indonesian republic. A number of them, including Varvolomeyev, became instructors at Sekolah Musik Indonesia (SMIND), which as noted in the previous chapter was founded in Yogyakarta in 1950 to provide instruction in Western music. The level of instruction,

7. Notosudirdjo notes that Pasaribu was the director of "the music department at the National Radio headquarters, RRI Jakarta (1945–52)" (Notosudirdjo 2001: 225), but Lindsay notes that "the central studio moved to Solo in 1946" (Lindsay 1997: 110-111). I have found nothing in biographies of Pasaribu or his own writings to clarify where he lived or what he did during the revolution, and no information at all concerning Varvolomeyev or Zwart.

however, was apparently limited. Pasaribu, who served as director of SMIND from 1953 until 1955 (Notosudirdjo 2001: 226), found SMIND to be “too low,” and longed to establish a true conservatory of music—a dream he failed to realize (*Ensiklopedi Musik*, s.v. “Pasaribu, Amir”). Slamet Abdul Sjukur, a student in the first class at SMIND—who as we will see in the following chapter would become a primary role model for the *musik kontemporer* scene that emerged in Jakarta in the 1970s—also found the artistic quality “still rather low” (Mack 2005: 101). Having studied theory and harmony with the Swiss pianist Josef Bodmer, whom he followed to SMIND, Sjukur was at a more advanced level than what the school required (Slamet Abdul Sjukur, p.c., 9 September 2004).

Despite its limitations, SMIND represents a significant milestone in the development of European classical music in Indonesia. Through it passed those who would become leading figures in Indonesian music. SMIND cannot be fully credited with producing them, as most, like Sjukur, became leading figures because of knowledge and skill acquired prior and subsequent to their studies at SMIND. Nevertheless, SMIND brought Indonesian students of varying levels and Indonesian and European teachers together in one place. It afforded Sjukur, for example, the opportunity to meet Pasaribu, whose works he had come to admire from encountering them the magazine *Zenith* (Mack 2005: 101-102)—though as Sjukur himself noted, he did not have the opportunity to formally study with Pasaribu (p.c., 9 September 2004).

SMIND is thus best regarded as a promising start. Unfortunately, circumstantial factors again interfered, this time very seriously undermining SMIND’s capacity to foster the careers of younger Indonesian musicians. As noted in the previous chapter, SMIND was founded despite opposition to the idea of a Western music conservatory from strongly nativist figures

in the Indonesian government. SMIND survived this blanket anti-Westernism, and by 1966 was elevated to post-secondary status, becoming Akademi Musik Indonesia (AMI) (Mack 2004: 157-158). In other respects, however, it fared less well as a result of the more targeted and politically motivated anti-Westernism that accompanied the increasingly radical trends in Indonesian politics that started in the late 1950s. Dutch businesses were seized in 1957, and in 1959 Dutch nationals were forced to either become Indonesian citizens or leave the country (Taylor 2009: 175). In the case of SMIND, “the Western faculty was not fired, but were meant to feel unwelcome in the current political/cultural climate and many returned to Europe” (Suka Hardjana, paraphrased in McGraw 2004: 156). The conductor Ed Van Ness, who was asked when visiting Jogja in 1974 “to stay around and help rebuild what had been once apparently a pretty active scene” reported that AMI was, at that, point “at a very low period in its history” (Edward Van Ness, p.c., 14 June 2005). AMI would, from the efforts of Van Ness and others, recover to a certain extent, as we will see in subsequent chapters. But as we will also see, it never truly flourished, and it has been inconsistent in supporting compositional activity.

The increasingly tense political atmosphere of the 1960s had an even greater impact on music, as it did on all aspects of Indonesian society. Many aspects of Indonesian life, including the arts, were explicitly politicized as the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI, Partai Komunis Indonesia) became a more powerful force. Lekra (Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat, Institute of People's Culture), an organization founded in 1950 by artists ideologically and politically aligned with the PKI, became more active (Notosudirdjo 2001: 290-291). The turmoil of the period culminated in the attempted coup of 1965, and the bloodbath that ensued as those associated with PKI, which was blamed for the coup attempt, were

slaughtered. Some 14,000 political prisoners, among them prominent artists associated with Lekra, were sent to the penal colony on Buru island (Ricklefs 2001: 359).

Pasaribu, reputedly a “shadow member” of the PKI,⁸ managed to avoid imprisonment, but in 1968 left Indonesia for Suriname. According to an unnamed informant of Raden, he fled because he was “afraid of being caught for his association with the PKI and LEKRA.” Pasaribu himself, when interviewed by Raden, explained that he went to Suriname because “he got a contract from the Dutch government to join Paramirabo Symphony Orchestra as a cellist” (Notosudirdjo 2001: 326-327). A biography prepared by his granddaughter notes that a ban on the public performance of his music was imposed in 1968. Whether or not fear of persecution was a factor, it is clear that conditions in Indonesia were sufficiently unfavorable that he was compelled to leave his homeland to pursue opportunities as a musician elsewhere. Reportedly disillusioned, and further affected by the deaths of two sons and his wife, he remained “active as piano/cello teacher, conductor, translator and writer” but “was never really able to take up composing again while in Surinam.”⁹

The political turmoil of the mid-1960s also affected the careers of others who might have contributed to the development of a Western-oriented practice of art music composition. Subronto K. Atmodjo, a composer more directly involved with Lekra than Pasaribu, was sent to Buru. Another Lekra composer, Sudharnoto, escaped arrest; he remained in Jakarta but kept a low profile until the 1980s, at which point he became a composer of film music

8. Notosudirdjo notes that according to Jusuf Isak, a musician, journalist, and former PKI member, Pasaribu was a “very close friend” of Njoto—the “third most powerful man in the PKI” and the “most crucial person in foundation of LEKRA”—and was himself involved in the founding of LEKRA (Notosudirdjo 2001: 295).

9. <http://www.pasaribu.com>, accessed 5 July 2005.

(Notosudirdjo 2001: 326-327). But perhaps the even greater setback came from the absence of other figures who were demonstrably committed to contemporary art music. These figures, who had left Indonesia to study abroad, may well have decided to stay abroad longer, or for good, because of the unfavorable conditions at home. Among the older generation, Liberty Manik, who as we will see below was a strong champion of Simanjuntak's and especially Pasaribu's music, left Indonesia in 1954 and didn't return until 1976 (*Ensiklopedi Tokoh Kebudayaan*, 5:110-111). Among the generation who went through SMIND were those who would be instrumental in overseeing the development of *musik kontemporer*: Frans Haryadi, who left in 1952 and returned in 1969 (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta 1990); Slamet Abdul Sjukur, who left in 1962 and returned in 1976 (p.c., 9 September 2004); and Suka Hardjana, who left in 1964 and returned in 1971. Another figure, Paul Gautama Soegijo, left in 1957 and never returned to Indonesia, developing his career as a composer in Germany (Mack 2004: 337-344).

The absence of these figures compounded the generally chilling effect of the turmoil of the 1960s. Together these factors go a long way in explaining the gap between the initial blooming of art music activity in the 1940s and 1950s, and the emergence of *musik kontemporer* in the latter half of 1970s—the subject of the following chapter. But more than simply a gap, there was a disconnect. Slamet Abdul Sjukur represents the most substantial link, having drawn inspiration from Pasaribu's music in the 1950s and then becoming the principal teacher of a group of prominent Western-oriented composers of *musik kontemporer* who got their start at Institut Kesenian Jakarta (Jakarta Arts Institute, IKJ) between 1974 and 1980. However, what Sjukur transmitted to his students was not a sense of their place in a lineage of Indonesian composers but rather an enthusiasm for more recent currents in the

international avant-garde. Other prominent teachers at IKJ, such as Frans Haryadi, were more concerned with instilling in students a respect for fundamentals, but this meant understanding the theory and history of European classical music. Indonesian precursors similarly had little if any place in his instruction.

More than simply the result of a decline in activity, or the absence of particular individuals, the disconnect between the emergence of *musik kontemporer* and its mid-century precursor is a matter of intellectual and aesthetic discontinuity. Sjukur, Haryadi, and Hardjana, whose outlooks were most immediately shaped by their experiences in Europe, upon returning to Indonesia found little in the Western-oriented music scene that they considered worth building upon. They recognized Pasaribu as a valuable precursor, at least in passing,¹⁰ but this was not enough to overcome the fact of his absence or his effective erasure from the official historical record, a fate which befell other artists associated with Lekra and the PKI.¹¹ Had Pasaribu and his supporters had more success in their attempt to steer the development of creative Indonesian music in a classically-oriented direction, the situation might have been different. As it happened, despite their best efforts as educators, cultural administrators, and critics—efforts which I will now examine in more detail—their impact was, in the long run, negligible.

Efforts to Shape Musical Opinion

Despite their ultimate failure to realize their vision of an Indonesian art music, Pasaribu and

10. A pamphlet of IKKI, a composers organization founded in 1977, spoke of “carrying on the course pioneered by Cornel Simanjuntak and Amir Pasaribu” (IKKI 1978).

11. For example, Pasaribu is absent from an *Encyclopedia of Cultural Figures* published by the Indonesian Department of Education and Culture, as are the painter Sudjojono and the novelist Pramoedya Anata Toer (DEPDIKBUD 1995–2000).

his supporters had, in the early 1950s, when independence had been achieved and the work of nation building could begin in earnest, some grounds to believe they might be able to shape the musical life of the new republic. Pasaribu held leadership roles in institutions that promised to provide a basis for the growth of art music composition. Before assuming the post of director of SMIND in 1953, as noted above, Pasaribu was director of the music department at the national headquarters of Radio Republik Indonesia, and afterward he opened and led the music department at a teacher training college in Jakarta using facilities from St. Xavarius (Notosudirdjo 2001: 225-226).

In addition to his work through institutions, Pasaribu also contributed to the discourse about the direction that Indonesian music should take. Pasaribu was editor of the cultural journal *Zenith*, through which he published the scores of his smaller pieces. He also used *Zenith* and several other similar journals as an outlet for his writings on music, and as a platform to promote his ideas. He was joined in these efforts by two other like-minded critics: Liberty Manik, another graduate of St. Xavarius, and J.A. Dunga.¹² Their standing as authoritative critics was further bolstered by the publication of collections of their essays (Dunga and Manik 1952)(Pasaribu 1955).

Much of Pasaribu's and Dunga and Manik's writing consisted of assessments of the state of music in Indonesia, which were most often critical and even at times despairing. They were at their most confident when speaking in more general terms about the value of European classical music. Countering the rejection of this music as foreign by nativist

12. I have been unable to find biographical information about Dunga. Yapi Tambayong's entry for him in his *Ensiklopedi Musik* gives an overview of his writings and translations, but nothing about his background. Another of Tambayong's single-authored reference works, a dictionary of Manadoese language and culture, includes him in a list of figures from Gorontalo, a city and province in the northern part of Sulawesi (Tambayong 2007).

nationalists, they asserted that European classical music was “already commonly called universal-international” (Pasaribu 1955:27). Their writings on classical music were typically aimed at educating Indonesian audiences. Pasaribu’s essays include profiles of notable European composers, both canonical figures like Bach and Beethoven and pioneers of modernism such as Debussy and Prokofiev.¹³ Other essays were more explicitly didactic. In “Music and Its Meaning” and “Understanding and Appreciation,” Pasaribu argued against too much reliance on “feeling” (*perasaan*) or intuition (ibid.:9-10), and exhorted listeners “to listen with intelligence” (ibid.:16).

In “Toward an Understanding of Music,” Dunga and Manik similarly argued for the importance of “thinking” and “intellect,” without which music “will constitute a heap of feeling” whose “beginning and end” and “arrangement” is unknowable and incomprehensible. They maintained that is necessary to understand “sonata-form,” “song-form” (*bentuk-lagu*), and “rondo-form” in order “to follow the course of feelings, the vibration of spirit etc. of the composer.” Understanding music is thus taken to mean understanding European classical music, an assumption further demonstrated in their assertions that listeners needed to “comprehend the arrangement of a large orchestra and know its instruments” (1952:12-14), and that they should know something about the era in which a musical work was composed—that if one listened to “a work of Bach with the same

13. In a similar vein, Pasaribu wrote a history of music and musicians, published in 1953, that differs little from standard Western texts. Pasaribu’s book is organized first by era, moving quickly through sections on the ancient world, the middle-ages, and the renaissance; and then by individual composers within sections on the baroque, classical, romantic era, the “transition to the modern era,” and the “modern generation.” Only two sections reflect a specifically Southeast Asian perspective: four short paragraphs on “Java, Sunda, Bali, Batak and other regions in Indonesia” in a section on Asian music that comes between brief accounts of primitive musics and of ancient Greece; and the inclusion of Philippine composers among a list of figures of the “modern generation” from various Western countries (Pasaribu 1953).

spiritual condition with which we listen to a work of Beethoven or Schönberg,” one “would be unable to grasp that composition’s expressive power” (ibid.:22).

In one of their essays on music in Indonesia, “The Present Situation of Indonesian Music,” Dunga and Manik managed to maintain a similarly positive stance by offering themselves as representative of the modern Indonesian. Having “come face to face with the international world,” and more importantly, being influenced by “our own revolution,” not only have “modern musical forms and scales . . . penetrated our souls,” but “all of our thinking is already *modern*, already contemporary.”

We have studied how to think quickly and how to feel no fear, as is demanded by our situation and world nowadays, which is full of dynamism, turbulence, conflict, etc. We are familiar with the problems of life and their solutions, familiar with technical progress, scientific knowledge, etc. In music this spirit is no longer accommodated by any kind of native music, from Javanese gamelan to that from Sumatra or other islands . . . This spirit demands music that can portray the turbulence of the soul, the contrasts of life and thought, feelings of ecstasy, etc., not only relaxation [*verpozing*], entertainment [*hiburan*] while chatting and snacking on fried peanuts, as is common with our native music. If Jaap Kunst says that most of our music has a magic/religious character that is loved and praised, we say that we are no longer fond of primitive magical music, and that our religious feelings have also changed. (Dunga and Manik 1952:83)

Rejecting traditional music, Dunga and Manik identified European classical music as the music which satisfies the modern spirit.

We should not be amazed and, indeed it is not strange at all if music appreciation of today’s generation is aimed at European classicism, to Bach, Handel, Beethoven, Mozart, Schubert, etc. Things such as an intimate praise to God by Bach, life struggle by Beethoven, agility and playfulness by Mozart, deep yearning by Schubert can be understood and felt by the young; and they can also imagine pure affection and religious feeling embodied in European classical music as a form of art music. (ibid.)

Neither are “modern Indonesians” satisfied with “*kroncong*, which is extremely impoverished

as site of expression.” “Modern Indonesians,” they claim “are searching for new forms suitable for their current expressions” (ibid.:85).

Yet as Dunga and Manik admitted in other essays, the actual achievements of Indonesian composers in creating new music in new forms were slight. In profiling the life and work of Cornel Simanjuntak they credit him with having created a musical art with an Indonesian character. But they also admit that what he managed to leave behind before his untimely death was little. His compositions were “valuable jewels” that would be used by a new generation in striving toward a new Indonesian art of music (*menudju seni musik Indonesia baru*) (ibid.:73), but as they note at the opening of their profile, “there is still much that must be done in the field of Indonesian musical art” (ibid.:69). In “About Indonesian Music”—the essay in which they deal most directly with the situation of music in Indonesia, discussed further below—they characterized Simanjuntak and Pasaribu as best representing a “conscious group” (*golongan sadar*) of composers, with Simanjuntak as “the initiator of a new Indonesian art of music” and Pasaribu as having taken “further steps in his technique and spirit.” This group promised to raise the level of musical creativity through having a substantial foundation in Western music, in contrast to the superficial knowledge of the “popular group.” However, Dunga and Manik identified only two other composers, Harry Singgih and Kusbini, and possibly a third, Tjok Sinsu, as worthy of inclusion in this group, intentionally omitting “younger personnel (among them some who are studying abroad) who have yet to prove themselves.” The group had yet to create “large works that we can compare to Western works,” and neither had they created enough works to “press upon the old ‘popular’ repertoire of Indonesian music.” But this, they assert, is “no matter!”, adding, in English, that ““Rome is not built in one day”” (ibid.:51-52).

Pasaribu similarly remained mostly positive when speaking in general or hypothetical terms about the development of classical music. But whenever he confronted the reality of the state of music in Indonesia—which he did more often than Dunga and Manik—his tone turned critical. For example, he believed in the power of “good music” to win people over, even if their “brows might furrow” on listening to music they find “too ‘heavy’” (Pasaribu 1955:15). The problem was how to turn youth away from “guitar, Hawaiian [music], or ukulele, which is noise” and to “value art music” (ibid.:14). Indonesians needed “guidance” in developing their appreciation for “good music.” Pasaribu believed that “among the public there are those with a sincere desire to know more about music,” who do seek “guidance” in order to better understand “musical artworks from the world of eternal quality.” But unfortunately, while the Indonesian schools were providing instruction in the appreciation of literature, such instruction was lacking for music. In the absence of “good music,” people fill their need for music with what is available, and as a result are “plunged into bad music!” They sink to the level of “imitation jazz, swing and bands with Hawaiian guitar and ukulele,” and “crooning singers who are stuck to a microphone + amplifier + loudspeaker” (ibid.:13).

Such dismissive remarks pepper many of Pasaribu’s essays on particular aspects of music in modern society, such as radio broadcasting, music for film, the distinction between professional and amateur musicians, and copyright. He gave a more extensive commentary on the dominance of popular idioms in two essays: “American Off-Beat Dance-Band” (Pasaribu 1955:69-75), discussed below; and “A Half-Century à la ‘Pretty Indies’” (ibid.:51-68), which provided a “rough sketch of the growth and development in the realm of music” in Jakarta in the late colonial period.

This second article begins somewhat analytically, with general observations on music's place in sociopolitical changes such as the rise of nationalism and the growth of cities, but quickly turns to an extensive rant against the "decline" that has occurred alongside "development." As a result of the inability of the urban population to keep up with rapid "technical advances,"

the material has become god, and the spiritual is no longer recognized. What one sees is shallowness, and the absence of character. When there is consensus, it's directed toward the need for the sensational and the love of entertaining oneself. There is no standard or style. Depravity of taste. 'Kitsch' . . . is given the value of art. (Pasaribu 1955:51)

Pasaribu continues, aiming his criticism at multiple targets. He discusses different genres in some detail—quite remarkable detail, given his contempt for nearly all of the music he discusses. There are lengthy lists of ensembles, instrumentalists, and singers, whom he repeatedly calls "crooners." There are also more extensive profiles of musicians who represent particular trends. The first of these is the violinist and orchestra leader Belloni, who recorded the song "Pretty Indies" (*Lief Indië*) referenced in the article's title. The song is included in a list of gramophone recordings made by Belloni in Bandung in the 1920s.¹⁴ With titles such as "Sweet Kroncong," "Sumatra Serenade," "Old Indonesian Song," and "Fantasie Stambul," the songs recorded by Belloni are "all in the idyl of the 'Pretty Indies'." Pasaribu notes that this "demeanor" is "these days unconditionally rejected" by those involved in literature, painting and music.¹⁵ It was rejected not only because of its sentimentality, but

14. Pasaribu also notes Belloni's involvement in the orchestra associated with Concordia Respavae Crescunt (1955:57-59), which is presumably the same orchestra that, as discussed in the previous chapter, fleetingly pursued more serious repertoire between 1905 and 1916. Belloni himself apparently preferred more popular repertoire.

15. Claire Holt has discussed this attitude with respect to the "naturalistic landscape painting" by Indonesian painters from the first decades of the twentieth century, noting how "rebellious Indonesian

because it represented the nostalgia of the colonizers for the Indies—a position similarly invoked in the article’s subtitle, “Acculturation = The Syncretism of *Nyai*²,” and the section heading “The Taste of *Nyai-Nyai*,” (ibid.:51-68). Pasaribu does not expand on this reference to *nyai*—the female Indonesian partners of Dutch men—though more than simply a gendered put-down of a naive aesthetic sensibility, it is undoubtedly intended to conjure up the rather compromised relationship to European colonizers embodied by women with the legal status of a concubine.¹⁶

However objectionable the ‘Pretty Indies’ style had become, “compared to the current rage for American off-beat,” Pasaribu continues, “the situation in the Belloni era was still not as stifling as now” (Pasaribu 1955:59). Pasaribu complains of rampant amateurism among urban youth, again turning to the theme of guidance, or the lack thereof. Without “a milieu of good music” and “advice about appreciation” youth “are plunged into . . . *Schlager*, Jazz and Ragtime from American ‘Broadway Tin Pan Alley’ through gramophone recordings, film, bands, etc.” He praises their ability to play by ear, but calls them “‘blind mice’ who cannot read notation.” They readily imitate the recordings of jazz and Hawaiian music they hear, but they are “completely bereft of compositional production and creation, music from the strength of their ‘individual genius’” (*eigen geesteskracht*) (ibid.:63).

art leaders sarcastically alluded to these landscape painters and their Dutch preceptors as ‘the painters of the beautiful Indies.’” More than merely decorative, the paintings were “catalysts” for the “nostalgia” of the Dutch residents who purchased them, who as Holt notes, were aware that “sooner or later they would return to their flat northern homeland” (Holt 1967: 194).

16. For a discussion of the place of and attitudes toward *nyai* in colonial era society, see Taylor (2009: .21-xxi).

Longing for a Revolution, Despairing at Reality

In the final section of “A Half-Century à la ‘Pretty Indies’,” Pasaribu spoke of the hope that there would be a “revolution . . . in musical spirit” corresponding to the revolution that followed the declaration of independence in 1945. By the early 1950s, when he wrote the article, independence had been achieved. In the field of music, however, he saw “no meaningful progress” (Pasaribu 1955:68).

The taste of *nyai* and of youth functioned for Pasaribu as a barometer of the general climate of Indonesian music. Change, however, depended on the lead of other people more actively involved in cultural production and policy, such as composers, orchestra leaders, directors of cultural institutions, and critics. Change was not forthcoming because most of these people did not feel any need for change—at least not the kind of change that Pasaribu, Dunga, and Manik desired. As Dunga and Manik lamented, the number of people who recognized “that the situation of Indonesian music today is depressing” could be counted on “one hand.” “Most of us, especially those who dominate the practice of music in society, apparently feel satisfied with the current level of music, and there have been no meaningful efforts to elevate it” (Dunga and Manik 1952:38). Pasaribu asserted that it was not only regular people who were deficient in their understanding of music, but also intellectuals. While there were those who listened to music “with the attention with which they read novels, short stories or poetry,” for most “music is nothing more than a diversion” (Pasaribu 1955:9).

Pasaribu neatly summarized the situation among practicing musicians in his article “American Off-Beat Dance-Band”, which had the subtitle “Overwhelms Indonesian Orchestras” (Pasaribu 1955:69-75). In it, he surveyed the successive waves of foreign

musicians who brought various styles of Western music to Indonesia: Italian street musicians; Russian conservatory professors fleeing the Bolshevik revolution; Hungarian, Czech, and Dutch classical musicians, including, among a “special” wave of teachers, Pasaribu’s composition teacher, James Zwart. The “largest and most influential wave” was that of “Filipino dance-band groups”—they were the most influential because they were “held in awe by amateurs who have started following and imitating jazz bands” (ibid.:70–72). Out of these waves emerged two types of ensembles. The first type, made up of strings, piano, a few winds, and timpani, had “a classical and concert style,” though most were inclined toward the “salon.” The second type was the “American Dance-band around a leader playing sax, clarinet, trumpet, trombone, and then an off-beat rhythm [section of] string bass and drum, while the piano is used as a percussive instrument . . . with jazz syncopation” (ibid.:72).

After discussing the formation of RRI’s Orkes Radio Djakarta out of the remnants of various colonial- and revolutionary-era orchestras—of which only the one led by conductor Ivon Baarspul, discussed in the previous chapter, focused specifically on symphonic repertoire—Pasaribu offered an assessment of the composition of Indonesian orchestras in reference to three “giants of orchestration”: “Berlioz, Rimsky Korsakof, and Ferde Grofe.” Berlioz, Pasaribu notes, was responsible for standardizing the symphony orchestra based on of the model of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. Rimsky-Korsakov is taken as the apogee of colorful, creative, and expressive use of this standard, especially in terms of his use of string sections. “Ferde Grofe and his ilk”, on the other hand, “are merely charlatans in the hands of the moguls of music, of musical wares, like chocolates, candies or sweets.” He identifies Grofe as the arranger for Paul Whiteman, the “King of Jazz,” and the orchestrator of George Gershwin’s “Rhapsody in Blue.” Grofe “discarded the thinking of Rimsky,” and used “only

saxophone, and other winds.” “True, there are one or two strings,” but these are merely “embellishment,” “adornment,” “decoration.” Of the same mind as Grofe were various figures of the “Broadway” type, including American composers, arrangers, and conductors such as André Kostelanetz, Morton Gould, Mark Warnow, Al Goodman, and Raymond Scott, who in using orchestral resources in their arrangements for radio, film, and musicals epitomize musical tendencies I characterize as paraclassical.¹⁷ Also in this mold were “Dolf van Der Linden in Hilversum”¹⁸ and, most key to the state of orchestral music in Indonesia, “Jos Cleber in Jakarta (only more shallow).” Cleber represented a strong tendency in Indonesian orchestras, to “play popular music (sometimes banal!) in a concert style.” Indonesian orchestras were thus, Pasaribu concluded, “on the wrong track” (Pasaribu 1955:74-75).

Pasaribu would seem to have been in a position to steer at least some music making onto what he believed to be the right track in his capacity as director of the music department at

17. These figures and the realm of “middlebrow” music they represent have, until recently with the work of John Howland (2002; 2012), received little in the way of scholarly attention. Only three have received entries in *Grove Music Online*. Kostelanetz, a conductor who trained in Russia but made his career in the United States, working for CBS radio and as the principal conductor of the New York Philharmonic’s promenade concerts, is known for “the popularizing of classical music” and for his “successful arrangements of light music, using densely concentrated instrumental sonorities and rich, saturated harmonies” that “influenced film music of the time” (*Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Kostelanetz, André,” by Bernard Jacobson, accessed 27 July 2009). Gould, who studied at “the Institute of Musical Art (later Juilliard School) in New York,” similarly worked in radio, and also composed symphonic pieces performed by leading American orchestras (*Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Gould, Morton,” by Ed Matthew, accessed 27 July 2009). Scott was a bandleader, who also worked for CBS “as a staff pianist and composer”; he made recordings “which became well known as the music accompanying such classic Warner Bros. cartoon characters as Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Porky Pig, and Roadrunner” (*Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Scott, Raymond,” by Barry Kernfeld, accessed 27 July 2009). Warnow, Scott’s older brother (Scott was born Harry Warnow), also worked for CBS, conducting the orchestra “on the long-running CBS radio program Your Hit Parade” (*Wikipedia*, s.v. “Mark Warnow,” accessed 27 July 2009). Goodman studied at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, worked for CBS, NBC, and in musical theater on Broadway (*Wikipedia*, s.v. “Al Goodman,” accessed 27 July 2009).

18. Hilversum was the base for Radio Netherlands, and remains an important media center.

the national headquarters of RRI. However, his capacity to imprint his aesthetic priorities on music broadcasting and to structure RRI's operations according to his values was curtailed by Maladi, the head of RRI, who after a conflict dismissed Pasaribu. As Pasaribu recounted to Raden, the conflict arose when he suggested to Maladi that composers should receive royalties when their songs were broadcast. Maladi rejected this idea, citing RRI's limited budget. Pasaribu was fired after the press made the debate public (Notosudirdjo 2001: 225).

Pasaribu's writings from the time reveal other ways in which he and Maladi disagreed. His article on "The Need for Contrast" (Pasaribu 1955:96-102) includes bitter and at times personal attacks on those responsible for the problems he perceived in radio broadcasting. Pasaribu's caustic tone suggests that he wrote the article either in the midst of his conflict with Maladi, or in the wake of his dismissal. In an especially scathing section, Pasaribu complained about the meddling of the "planning section" in radio programming. The planning section ought to be "Objective! Able to stand above its own preferences," but instead was "egocentric." As a result,

. . . there is never a single serious broadcast, only American dance music because he himself used to be fond of plucking on a bass or blowing a tenor sax. He's not fond of serious [music], because he does not understand that which is serious, does not understand where art is found. And so he forces every day, from morning until night, American foxtrot. The farce is that he forces this on the public throughout the archipelago, with the mask of a national broadcast and hiding behind talk of easternness and authentic culture. (Pasaribu 1955:99)

In outlining the broad experience with various kinds of music, "serious as well as popular, symphonic as well as dramatic," that makes for a qualified radio programmer, Pasaribu again turns personal, scoffing that "a 'correspondence' diploma" and "experience as soccer goalkeeper" are irrelevant. That radio programming ought to be done by "professional

musicians” who are “educated” will “sooner or later be beyond doubt,” but this “cannot be expected of amateur ukulele or soccer players” (ibid.:100).

Maladi became best known as a politician who held posts as the Minister of Information and the Minister of Sports. But he was also recognized for songs he wrote during the Japanese occupation, in no small part because some of those songs were frequently broadcast on national radio and television. His song “Nylur Hijau” was broadcast almost daily for many years at the end of programming on TVRI (Usman 1979: 90). Maladi was also credited as the composer of *Jaya Wijaya*, a “rhapsody” that tied together works by other composers. Pasaribu disparaged *Jaya Wijaya* in offhand remarks, including one in which he calls it an act of “piracy” (Pasaribu 1955:101), and another in which he derides it as an instance where “kitsch and counterfeit are touted as art” (ibid.:68).

The work received a more thorough examination by Dunga and Manik, which earned them Pasaribu’s praise as “competent and honest music critics” willing to address “the disaster that threatens the growth of the art of music,” a “tragedy” and “horrible drama” committed by one particular composer (ibid.). *Jaya Wijaya*, Dunga and Manik note, was originally created as a radio play that recounted the history of Indonesia from the pre-colonial kingdoms of Sriwijaya and Majapahit up to the present. It was subsequently adapted to the concert stage, in which form it was presented with considerable fanfare to a packed audience including VIPs and the press. In that format, a “potpourri arrangement” for chorus and orchestra by none other than Jos Cleber, which seemingly included Johann Strauss’s “An der schönen, blauen Donau” and Rouget de Lisle’s “La Marseillaise” “nationalized by an Indonesian composer,” initially intended as background music, was made into the main attraction. Narration took the place of dialogue. The original author (Maladi, whose name

Dungga and Manik omit) was thus reduced in his role to that of an “announcer.” Yet he was still given credit as composer when the work was promoted as a “creation by one of Indonesia’s sons,” and more than that, as the “largest composition to be produced by our nation in Indonesian music.” Dungga and Manik countered that if examined from a compositional perspective, it was “a soap bubble that would burst at the slightest touch.” The creator of *Jaya Wijaya* could be justified in being happy with his success, but only, Dungga and Manik sarcastically note, if he were to say “how foolish is my nation, that I can so easily deceive them” (Dungga and Manik 1952:42-44).

Dungga and Manik lambasted *Jaya Wijaya* in the context of a broader critique of the state of Indonesian music in which they raised a number of interconnected issues. Behind the matter of giving appropriate credit for creative work was the importance of the distinction between composition and performance, and further what counts as a substantial composition. The “confusion in understanding about Indonesian music” stemmed from the failure to distinguish between “creative artists” and “performing artists” and their separate roles. Dungga and Manik believed “the high or low level of Indonesian music” to be “in the hands” of “creative artists.”

Theoretically, as long as Indonesian composers are capable of creating works of value, Indonesian music will reach a high level even if we lack meaningful orchestras and performers. Conversely, although we have orchestras and performers of Indonesian music of an international caliber, if our composers are only capable of creating street songs [*straatliedjes*], Indonesian music will be categorized as music of the lowest class¹⁹. (Dungga and Manik 1952:47-48)

Advancing a perspective that conformed to a division of labor that had become increasingly

19. “Kelas kambing,” literally “goat-class,” a designation for the least expensive cars or cabins on trains or ships.

distinct in European classical music, Dunga and Manik assert that the one contribution that performers can make to raising the level of Indonesian music is “to play compositions by Indonesian composers as well as possible, so that these compositions will receive the proper appreciation” (ibid.).

Dunga and Manik were quick to note, however, that “as it happens, there are few works of Indonesian composers at present that have value as art.” “Our composers,” they continue, “in general are only just active in the field of song (vocal music)” and within that “still at a simple level.” Their songs are at “the level of popular song (not art song!) parallel to the foreign popular songs that flood our homeland through shallow films, phonographs and . . . Indonesian radio itself” (Dunga and Manik 1952:48-50). Dunga and Manik were particularly alarmed at the tendency of radio orchestras to present orchestrated or even instrumental versions of these songs, and strenuously objected to the critical acclaim received by such efforts. There were critics who praised the treatment “with modern orchestration” of Indonesian songs, including those by Maladi, by figures such as Jos Cleber, suggesting that they “could be said to be perfect according to international standards.” Dunga and Manik refuted these claims, which they saw as contradicting another claim, that orchestras were “defending the character of national music.” In their view, national character was “not situated in the orchestration, but already implied in the song itself”—and on that count, the musical character of these songs was indistinguishable from that of other *kroncong* songs, or even popular Western songs like “*La Paloma*, *Amor* and *You belong to my heart*” (ibid.:39-41).

Orchestrating music in itself, Dunga and Manik argued, did not constitute a valuable contribution—especially when, as in the case of “our radio orchestras,” the “character of

orchestration (besides not having artistic value) is primarily directed toward beautifying (dressing up) Indonesian songs that are still at a simple level.” Radio orchestras might often play instrumental versions of Indonesian songs,

but this absolutely does not mean that Indonesian music has already risen to the field of instrumental music. It’s not as easy as that! (Dungga and Manik 1952:49)

To bring Indonesian music up to a higher level, in the opinion of Dungga and Manik, and Pasaribu, required more than simply relying on “feeling.” “A composition with value today” must also involve “thinking (intellect),” and in this respect Indonesian composers were, on the whole, deficient.

The principle of “variations on a theme” for example, an important characteristic in composition, is unknown by the larger part of our composers. Certainly there is the assembling of motifs in an unconscious fashion in the songs of our composers, but exploiting a motive intensively is not something they ever do. (Dungga and Manik 1952:50-51)

Instead of this more substantial engagement with the compositional technique of motivic development characteristic of European classical music, and in particular of sonata form as employed in symphonies and other instrumental genres, the connection to classical music is, in their estimation, superficial, consisting merely of the practice of orchestrating songs “to make them more interesting to hear” (ibid.:48). Orchestration appealed to listeners, earned the praise of critics, and contributed to the development of a national culture as envisioned by certain intellectual and cultural figures—such as Armijn Pane, the member of *Pudjangga Baru* who, as noted in the previous chapter, promoted the idea of taking *kroncong* as the basis for a music of unification. But it could not hide the fact that, from Dungga and Manik’s perspective, Indonesian music remained at an early stage of development.

The discrepancy between Dungga and Manik’s aspirations and the reality of Indonesian

music is particularly apparent in their argument that creating a “high form of art” was more important and should take priority over developing music with a national character. They asked, rhetorically,

Can we be proud of the work of Indonesian composers that embody national characteristics 100% but are only good to be sung on the street? On the contrary, who is there among us of sound mind who would not be proud if an Indonesian composer managed to create a high quality symphony, although (in practice this rarely happens) that symphony did not embody national characteristics? (Dungga and Manik 1952:41-42)

In a country that had only recently won its independence through revolution, the idea that the songs that supported that struggle were “only good to be sung on the street” would have made little sense. It was, after all, *lagu perjuangan* (‘songs of the struggle’, discussed in the previous chapter) that came closest to having the status of a national music. The emergence of the category of *lagu seriosa* (serious songs), which I will turn to next, did embody in part an estimation of artistic value that derived from the prestige of European classical music. Through this category some of the aesthetics of classical music gained a broader appeal, but not to the exclusion of other attributes that made a song serious, such as the expression of patriotic sentiment. Meanwhile, Dungga and Manik’s second question remained hypothetical. There were plenty of composers writing songs—in fact, that is almost exclusively what Indonesian composers wrote—but none creating symphonies, of high quality or otherwise.²⁰

The Emergence and Submergence of Lagu Seriosa

The direction in songwriting that grew out of the work of their ally Cornel Simanjuntak

20. The closest to a symphony was Pasaribu’s “Hikajat Mas Klujur,” and “Essay for String Orchestra,” composed in 1952. An excerpt of the score is reproduced in Notosudirdjo (2001: 235).

represented something closer to Pasaribu and Dungga and Manik's vision for Indonesian music, but it still fell short of fully realizing their aspirations. This was especially the case for Pasaribu, whose ideas about musical style were exacting. Pasaribu was invested in the teleological narrative of musical modernism, in which the increase in harmonic complexity in the Western art music tradition is understood as the manifestation of an inexorable historical force. This is most evident in his articles "Debussy the Bulldozer" (Pasaribu 1955:131-133) and "The Emancipation of Modern Harmony" (ibid.:27-31). The second article includes a concise account of the successive contributions of composers, starting with Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Wagner, and Liszt as "scoundrels who redefined the rules," moving through Debussy as "a true champion of harmony," the twelve-tone system of Schoenberg, the polytonality of Scriabin and Stravinsky, and concluding with the use of quarter-tones by "Aloys Haba and other ultra-modernists" (ibid.:29-31). Its primary concern, however, is with the relatively backward state of musical style in Indonesia. The "development and growth of harmonic principles in world music" have, in Indonesia, "been passed by," leaving Indonesia behind by "nearly 150 years." "Our music which is still inundated with 19th century harmony, [or] not even that advanced, is still at the harmonic level of Protestant chorale" (ibid.:27).

From this perspective, Pasaribu was inclined to lump together Cornel Simanjuntak with Tjok Sinsu, whom he discusses as the foremost proponent of the dreaded Hawaiian music craze that began to flood Indonesia in the 1930s (Pasaribu 1955:63-64). He did so in a rather different way than Dungga and Manik, who tentatively suggested that Tjok Sinsu might merit inclusion in the "conscious group" of Indonesian composers best represented by Simanjuntak and Pasaribu himself (Dungga and Manik 1952:51-52). For Pasaribu, Simanjuntak and Sinsu both represented the limited stage of development reached by Indonesian music. "Cornel and

Tjo [sic],” Pasaribu wrote, “are still primitive” in their use of harmony. Their songs are confined to “monotonicity” rather than reaching “the overthrow of monotonicity as with the advent of impressionism, bitonicity, poly or pluritonicity, or atonicity” or “giving birth to tonality of their own” (Pasaribu 1955:66-67).

In Pasaribu’s estimation, Simanjuntak’s most significant contribution “in the prepuberty of music in Indonesia” was to set poems by Indonesian poets. This was, Pasaribu recognized, a “major advance,” but still, Simanjuntak’s field was “vocal music” (ibid.:66-67)—that is, merely vocal music. As Pasaribu commented in a later interview with Franki Raden, summarizing the situation in the mid-twentieth century, “Indonesia at that time was still in the stage of singing (*berdendang*)” (Notosudirdjo 2001: 220).

The “revolution in musical spirit” in Indonesian music that Pasaribu hoped for, and that he himself attempted to realize in his own compositions, had as its ultimate goal the kind of abstract, primarily instrumental, and stylistically modern music favored by the international avant-garde. Dunga and Manik similarly promoted instrumental music, posing the symphony as an ideal. They did not, however, insist that Indonesian composers should follow current modernist trends. They acknowledged the different sides of the debate over modernism in Europe, between those who claimed that the “Schönberg with his twelve-tone technique and Aloys Haba with his quarter-tone system . . . represent a crisis in European music” and those who claimed that this constituted “a normal reaction,” that it is “often the case that music is ahead of its time” (Dunga and Manik 1952:85). They were less concerned with resolving that debate than identifying what was best for Indonesia. In their opinion, it was the “Classical Current”—the music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven—that was “the most suitable and can be used as a foundation by our contemporary composers (*komponis-*

komponis kita sekarang)." If Indonesian composers were to "take classical forms as an example" and "make them the basis of our music," this could be called a "modern current, modern in its form as well as its means of expressing feeling and thought" (ibid.:84).

In practice, the "Classical Current" was scarcely more suitable than dodecaphony or microtones. The only "classical" form to take root in the 1950s, and to survive the inhospitable climate of the 1960s, was the genre known as *seriosa*. *Seriosa*, sometimes called *musik seriosa* (serious music) or, more accurately, *lagu seriosa* (serious song), referred to songs in a "classical" style. As Suka Hardjana remarked, the term *seriosa* itself is "a bit too much" (*agak berlebihan*) for what was actually a simple form. He commented on its "rather peculiar" history, noting that it was inspired by a musical development from the "Romantic era which had flowered in Europe 150 to 200 years earlier." *Seriosa* composers took as their point of reference songs by "Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Brahms, Wolf" and short arias by "Puccini, Gounod, Mascagni, Bizet, and Strauss," seemingly deriving no inspiration at all from either "more fundamental composers, like Bach, Mozart, Beethoven" or "composers closer to their own period such as Debussy, Bartók, Stravinsky and others." Hardjana suggests this is understandable given that "short and rumbling-sweet-seductive songs" are closer to the "dilettantish appreciation of Indonesian composers from then till now" (Hardjana [1986?e], in 2004a:342).

The most exemplary *lagu seriosa*, at least from the perspective of later scholars and advocates, were those of Cornel Simanjuntak. Raden describes *musik seriosa* as an "art song genre" developed by Cornel Simanjuntak (Notosudirdjo 2001: 213), following the model of Schubert (ibid.:208). Richard Rasmindarya, in a dissertation focused specifically on *lagu seriosa*, defines the form as "an extension of the western tradition of song composition,

primarily German lieder, as adapted by Indonesian composers and set to Indonesian lyrics” (Rasmindarya 1999: 192). His historiographical narrative identifies the group of composers who studied at St. Xavarius—the most prominent member being Simanjuntak—as “the originators of the *Lagu Seriosa*” (ibid.:47).

The term *seriosa*, however, only came into use seven years after Simanjuntak died, as the name of one of three categories in RRI’s annual Bintang Radio (Radio Star) competition. First held in 1951, the competition highlighted the talent of Indonesian performers, in particular vocalists. By identifying them as “stars,” the competition helped launch, or boost, the careers of many of Indonesia’s best known popular singers. As the singers were required to sing Indonesian repertoire, it also promoted music—more specifically, songs—by Indonesian composers. The term *seriosa* served to distinguish “songs of a classical standard” from both *hiburan* (entertainment), songs with “the characteristics of popular songs of the 30s and 40s,” and *kroncong* (*Ensiklopedi Musik*, s.v. “Bintang Radio”).

Although *seriosa* fell far short of realizing Pasaribu’s “revolution in musical spirit,” Pasaribu was apparently responsible for instituting the term—or, as Suka Hardjana puts it, for having “imported” it (Hardjana [1986?e], in 2004a:341). He would have done so during his short tenure as director of music at RRI. Pasaribu did not literally import the term so much as adopt it—as Raden notes, the Dutch term *muziek serieuze* was used in the Indies as a program title on Dutch government radio in the early 1940s and possibly earlier (Notosudirdjo 2001: 213). Yet it does seem fair to credit Pasaribu with promoting a distinction that was more widely recognized in the West than in Indonesia. As Hardjana observed in discussing *seriosa*, Americans differentiate “Serious Music” from “Entertainment Music,” while Germans speak of “(U)nterhaltung Musik and (E)rnst Musik” (Hardjana [1986?e], in 2004a:341). Through its

categories, the Bintang Radio competition succeeded in giving this distinction—between that which was serious and that which, by implication, was less so—a concrete existence and relevance within Indonesia’s Western-oriented music scene. It imported into this scene a distinction which previously coincided with the distinction between Indonesian music and the classical European music played by the “‘white skin’ orchestras”—orchestras which, as Pasaribu observed, were regarded by most Indonesian musicians as “none of their business” (Pasaribu 1955:74). Somewhat ironically, out of all of Pasaribu’s various efforts to guide the development of Indonesian music, instituting the term *seriosa* is the one which had the most enduring impact—though he lost whatever control he might have wielded over the use and thus the meaning of the term when he was fired from RRI.

As well as giving the serious/non-serious distinction greater currency, the term *seriosa* allowed songs that were so designated to be regarded as a distinct repertoire, or even as a distinct genre. In reality, however, *seriosa* had a rather meager existence. The catalogue of *lagu seriosa* in Rasmindarya’s study, based primarily on scores he acquired from Sunarto Sunaryo, the piano accompanist for the *Bintang Radio* competition from the 1960s through the 1980s (Rasmindarya 1999: 59-60), lists a mere eighty-seven songs by thirty composers. Only nine of those composers wrote more than one or two songs (ibid.:318-342). And while Rasmindarya’s historiographical narrative emphasizes the contributions of classically trained composers, his catalogue and his analysis of representative songs reveal a far more eclectic profile and a more heterogeneous pedigree. His list of “first generation” composers included not only Simanjuntak, Binsar Sitompul, and R. A. J. Soedjasmin, all of whom were affiliated with St. Xavarius. It also included two musicians, introduced in the previous chapter, who represent the more prominent paraclassical tendency in the elite and state-supported aspects

of Indonesia's Western-oriented music scene: Ismail Marzuki, a leading composer of *langgam kroncong* and *lagu perjuangan*, and the songwriter and pioneering pops orchestra director Iskandar. Rasmindarya's list further included none other than Pasaribu's nemesis, Maladi.

For nearly all of these musicians, composing *lagu seriosa* represented a small part of their musical activity. The more staunchly classically oriented composers of *lagu seriosa* seemingly composed little else, devoting the greater part of their time to other pursuits. Binsar Sitompul, who wrote eight *lagu seriosa*, conducted the RRI Choir (IKKI 1978), while Soedjasmin, who wrote only two, conducted orchestras, including those associated with the Indonesian military and the Istana Negara, the State Palace in Jakarta (Joseph Praba, p.c., 11 August 2005; *Ensiklopedi Musik*, s.v. "Sudjasmin, R. A. J."). Iskandar and Marzuki were considerably more prolific as songwriters, but *lagu seriosa* represent a very small proportion of their output. Iskandar wrote "around 300 songs" (Usman 1979: 44), only twelve of which are included in Rasmindarya's catalog; Ismail Marzuki wrote 193 songs (*Ensiklopedi Tokoh Kebudayaan*, 1:113), only six of which are included. Even so, Iskandar and Marzuki are as well represented as Cornel Simanjuntak and Binsar Sitompul, who have only eight songs each.

Maladi, when asked by Rasmindarya to define *lagu seriosa*, commented on the fact that "it is named classics." This, he felt, was "not right."

. . . it is not in the category of classics, but it is not light weight. . . heavy . . . deep
. . . it depends on the meaning of the lyrics, so that the up and downs of the song also
is determined by . . . , the value of the weight of the song. (Maladi, quoted in
Rasmindarya 1999: 276)

Maladi's conclusion is effectively the same as Hardjana's, though from the rather different

vantage point of someone much less invested in and even perhaps opposed to an aesthetic hierarchy that privileges European classical music above all else. Other songwriters may have given this hierarchy somewhat more credence, but the breadth of their involvement in music and of their compositional output suggests that they were not so concerned with becoming classical composers. Rather, they found it appropriate when setting more serious texts to use certain stylistic features of European classical music. Far from displaying the full range of mood found in European art song, *lagu seriosa* demonstrate a preponderance of slow to medium tempi, and subdued dynamics—traits which, true to the label *seriosa*, marked these songs as “a little more severe and a little more prestigious than others” (Hardjana [1986?e], in 2004a:342). *Seriosa*, then, is less a full fledged genre than one of several styles that some Indonesian songwriters chose to employ some of the time.

The identity of a song as a *lagu seriosa* had as much to do with the style of its performance—by such markers as a relatively spare piano accompaniment, and a “classical” rather than a popular or crooning singing style. It also had to do with when and where songs were presented. Rasmindarya thus notes while Maladi’s “Nyiur Hijau’ is the most popular song from this era, for it is still broadcast almost every day and sung by the younger generation,” that generation is “completely unaware of its status as an art song”; instead, “they only think of it as a popular national song” (Rasmindarya 1999: 68). Rasmindarya also notes how “Gugur Bunga” by Marzuki “was performed by a popular band and was a hit on the pop charts for a while,” yet “it is still categorized as an art song in annual song competitions” (ibid.:64). Cornell Simanjuntak’s cousin Alfred, who served for many years on the *Bintang Radio* jury, primarily for *seriosa* but also for *hiburan* and *kroncong*, reflected that there was “a truth” for him in the distinction, but added that “it has to be questioned whether

there is a sharp line differentiating the three categories” (Alfred Simanjuntak, quoted in Rasmindarya 1999: 213). The distinction seemingly faded, at least in the context of the *Bintang Radio* as it expanded in the 1980s to become the “TV and Radio Star” contest. The categories were increasingly ignored as *seriosa* competitors sang *lagu hiburan*. The competition had grown “routine,” giving the impression, as Suka Hardjana observed, that “*Seriosa, hiburan, keroncong*, they’re all the same!” (Hardjana [1986f?], in 2004b). *Lagu Seriosa* had been overtaken by the ocean of Indonesia’s Western-oriented musical mainstream. It had not completely submerged, but rather, like a deadhead, it bobbed along with one end occasionally poking up above the surface.

Lagu Seriosa’s Status as “Classical,” Theorized and Perceived

Despite the blurring of categories that occurred in the *Bintang Radio*—the forum that had in a real sense invented and supported the growth of *lagu seriosa*—the idea that *lagu seriosa* adhered to a “classical standard” remained for many an important part of its identity. *Lagu seriosa* was the most—really, the only—widely recognized outgrowth of the first true flowering of art music composition in Indonesia. But whereas Pasaribu’s music and thought was shaped by his substantial engagement with the Western art music tradition, *seriosa*—which ironically owes its existence, at least as a term, to Pasaribu’s intervention—has as much to do with the relative predominance of peri- and paraclassicism in the Western-oriented Indonesian music scene.

European art song genres such as *lied*, the genre which Simanjuntak and his peers emulated, are themselves bound up with the phenomenon of periclassicism. Their emergence as a distinct genre was largely a function of the emergence of boundaries between them and

other types of song, and more broadly the formation of the classical canon. As Geoffrey Chew notes in his entry on “Song” in *Grove Music Online*,

A far-reaching division occurred in the early 19th-century song repertory between a very large 'popular' category (i.e. including recreational song for a mass middle-class amateur market, song for edifying the lower and poorer classes, as well as folksong) and a much smaller 'serious' category (i.e. of songs written for connoisseurs and regarded as avoiding the vulgarity of the mass market). The two categories overlap in all European countries (the same composers contributing to both) but are distinct. (*Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Song” [9. 1815–1910], by Geoffrey Chew, accessed 19 March 2006)

The *lied* of Schubert and other German composers are now unambiguously part of the classical music canon, in part because these composers also wrote music in solidly classical genres such as the symphony, but mostly because the boundary between serious and popular was made within the realm of song. Popular song was increasingly shut out of elite musical culture as the concept of the classical canon, which had emerged roughly contemporaneously in the context of orchestral concerts, came in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to encompass other genres, including art song.²¹

The instructors at St. Xavarius instilled these distinctions in their students by imposing an exclusive focus on classical music in the musical activities they encouraged, and prohibiting involvement in other musics. Sitompul recounted how instruction was offered in many different orchestral instruments while “other musical instruments” such as “guitar and ukulele” were “taboo.” The students were exposed to classical music, including art song, while “opportunities to hear *kroncong*, Hawaiian music, jazz, and music of a light character didn’t exist” (Sitompul 1987). The distinction between serious and popular was impressed

21. For an account of the emergence of the classical canon, see Weber (1986).

upon Simanjuntak, Sitompul, and their peers. But while they were given the opportunity to perform symphonies and other music from the core of the classical canon, when they started creating their own music what they wrote were songs. This is understandable, given that songs were all that any Indonesian musician in any of the Western or hybrid forms that existed in Indonesia composed—with the notable but mostly unrecognized exception of Pasaribu.

Composition in Western-oriented musics in Indonesia thus meant, for all intents and purposes, songwriting. The distinction between *seriosa* on the one hand, and *hiburan* and *kroncong* on the other, replicated the kinds of distinctions made in nineteenth century Europe, but with less force—in part because it was made within the limited realm of songwriting, but more importantly because of the participation of songwriters who were not as invested in such distinctions. While Simanjuntak’s primary point of reference was Schubert *lied*, other songwriters such as Iskandar and Marzuki were inspired by a much broader range of song, including short arias by popular opera composers such as Puccini and the panoply of popular Euro-American song styles that flooded the urban circles they inhabited through radio, phonographs, and film. *Lagu seriosa*’s identity was thus ambiguous. It was not fully periclassical in the sense of military bands or hymns, but it was nonetheless closer to the periphery of the classical canon than to its center. The idea that it adhered to a “classical standard” was important, but at the same time it was not entirely distinct from the popular and paraclassical mainstream of Indonesia’s Western-oriented music scene.

Over the course of the initial decades of independence—through the 1950s and 60s—that scene had, to a significant extent, become self-sufficient. *Seriosa* played the role of the serious genre in contrast to lighter, more popular genres. Songwriters, singers, and

instrumentalists wrote *lagu seriosa*, or used orchestral accompaniment, when an aura of greater prestige and seriousness was called for. These musicians came to operate mostly, though not entirely, independently of the greater aesthetic authority of the international classical music scene. This caused little problem for these musicians themselves. *Lagu seriosa* started to decline in the 1970s, both in terms of the composition of new songs and the performance of existing repertoire (Rasmindarya 1999: 50-57), but most musicians continued to find work in television and pops orchestras. They continued to employ string sections and other markers of “seriousness,” while at the same time responding to the increasing popularity of rock and other Western and hybrid popular genres.

The lack of connection to the international classical music scene was, however, an issue for those figures who had studied and established careers in Europe—which remained the center of aesthetic authority for that scene—and then returned to Indonesia. The first such figure to return, in 1967, was Trisutji Kamal. Kamal identified with *seriosa* to a greater extent than the other returning figures, only to face a rather mixed reception by those who had remained in Indonesia. Kamal wrote at least one *lagu seriosa* in 1973, and suggested at a conference on the arts in 1974 that although the term *seriosa* was associated primarily with vocal music, it could and ought to be applied to instrumental music as well (Kamal 1975: 28-29). Some in the Indonesian music scene regarded Kamal as showing a way forward, while many others were less enthusiastic. Rasmindarya characterizes Kamal as “controversial” for having expanded *lagu seriosa* “in a more contemporary direction.” “Musicians (composers)” believed this would “enhance the recognition and prestige of Indonesian music on the international scene,” but she was “not a favourite among singers because her songs are technically difficult,” using “dissonance and awkward intervals

characteristic of twentieth century music” (Rasmindarya 1999: 53-54, 70-71).

Seriosa and other aspects of the Indonesian music scene sat rather lower in the estimation of other returning figures who played a more central role in creating a niche for art music. Slamet Abdul Sjukur had composed one *lagu seriosa* earlier in his career, but after fourteen years in Paris had adopted a decidedly experimentalist aesthetic.²² A year after his return to Indonesia in 1976, he echoed Amir Pasaribu in complaining that besides traditional music, the composers “who are bold enough to make music exclusively for instruments can be counted on one hand.” He further stated that “our music . . . does not yet constitute music that can stand alone,” that it “still mostly depends on poems, literature, literary thinking or the stamp of classifications that have absolutely no connection with the music itself” (Sjukur 1977).

Other returning figures tended less to disparage than to express concern about what they perceived as limitations in the practice of Western and Western-oriented art music in Indonesia. Frans Haryadi asked why singers of *seriosa* always repeat the same programs, and why performances of music do not include “larger forms such as oratorios,” as well as asking why pop groups produce “only music fit for commercial consumption” and why “the total number of players in the only symphony orchestra in our country, the Orkes Simfoni Jakarta, is not increasing and perhaps decreasing” (Haryadi 1975: 85). The most poetic remarks were those made by Suka Hardjana, who before becoming director of the Pekan Komponis Muda focused on developing Indonesia’s classical music scene as a performer. His concern with the lack of art music composition in Indonesia seems to have been sparked by questions from

22. Dieter Mack notes that Sjukur himself considers “Mais Ces Oiseaux,” a setting of a poem by Vincent Muselli for contra-alto, baritone, B-flat clarinet and string trio he composed in Paris in 1967, to represent the real start of his career as a composer (Mack 2005: 145).

other musicians, perhaps especially those from the West, about his choice of repertoire as a performer and conductor. In an interview from 1975, Hardjana recounted being asked why the ensemble he directed, Ensemble Jakarta, so far had presented “foreign numbers, especially Western,” and very few works by Indonesian composers. Hardjana replied that it wasn’t that he didn’t want to play Indonesian compositions, but simply that there were so few of them (Sinar Harapan 1975)—the tacit understanding being that songs, serious or not, did not count. Several years later he was asked by two German string quartets and the Japanese Broadcasting Orchestra for a score by an Indonesian composers. Hardjana was able to offer an arrangement by R. A. J. Soedjasmin of Ismail Marzuki’s song “Rayuan Pulau Kelapa” (The Charm of the Isle of Coconuts). Playing on the title of the song, Hardjana asked, with pointed irony, whether “coconuts and charms” was all they had to offer (Berita Buana 1980). It was only with the return of composers like Slamet Abdul Sjukur, the presence of other composers as guest teachers, and the determination of other figures like Haryadi and Hardjana to create forums to support art music composition that the situation changed. That is the story of the next chapter.

Traditionally-Based Figures

Western-oriented *musik kontemporer*’s clearest precursor was Amir Pasaribu, who as we have seen sought, but ultimately failed, to establish a practice of art music composition that had an aesthetic basis in the Western art music tradition. Pasaribu left Indonesia in 1968, following the political turbulence of the mid-1960s, leaving him even more marginalized than he was before Suharto’s rise to power and the blacklisting of anyone associated with the PKI. He became effectively a non-entity. Another sort of precursor, *lagu seriosa*, which from the

outset was a genre of limited scope, survived the 1960s but became even less clearly identifiable as art music. Most importantly, it was not taken seriously by those who oversaw the emergence of *musik kontemporer* proper in the 1970s and 1980s.

The situation for the traditionally-based side of *musik kontemporer* is also complex, but for different reasons. There were notable figures in the various regional traditions of *karawitan* who had established themselves in the 1950s, emerged relatively unscathed from the turmoil of the 1960s, and remained influential to varying degrees in the 1970s and 80s. They were creative and innovative, and associated with highly esteemed traditions. Of particular relevance to the scenes I examine in this study are Wasitodipuro, Nartosabdho, and Martopangrawit, whom Waridi has characterized, in a study that profiles their life and work, as three “pillars for the life of *karawitan*” (Waridi 2008).²³ But as important as their contributions are, they did not establish the primary basis for the emergence of traditionally-based *musik kontemporer*. As I will argue, some of them even stood as negative examples, examples of what *musik kontemporer* should not be.

An “Impressive Herald . . .”

Wasitodipuro was one of the leading court gamelan musicians of his generation. Born in

23. Waridi, whose book was based on his dissertation, had intended to include Hardjosubroto—whose role in the emergence of the Christian gamelan genre *langen sekar* I discussed in chapter 1—as a fourth pillar. As well as pioneering the use of coordinated vocal polyphony (the distinguishing feature of *langen sekar*), Hardjosubroto has also been acknowledged as the first to compose gamelan pieces in triple meter. He was not, however, a gamelan musician; according to Hardjo Susilo he “didn't even play *saron*” (p.c., 16 July 2005). For this reason Waridi’s advisor did not regard him as an “artist” (*seniman*) of the same caliber as the other three, and he was omitted from the study (Rustopo, p.c., 21 July 2005). Hardjosubroto is more widely known in gamelan circles for his *gendhing dolanan*, songs based on or in the style of children’s game songs (*dolanan* is the Javanese word for game). Two of these, “Kupu Kuwi” and “Ménthog-Ménthog,” have become classics of the genre—a genre which as I discuss here represents an orientation toward commercialized popular culture that was a cause of concern for those who oversaw the development of *musik kontemporer*.

1909, he grew up in the Pakualaman palace in Jogjakarta. He was actively involved in the palace's musical life, succeeding his father as director of musical activities in 1962.²⁴ At the same time, he became involved in new contexts for gamelan performance, most notably radio. He became musical director of MAVRO, the Dutch run radio station in Yogyakarta, in 1934, continuing in that role when the station was taken over by the Japanese during their occupation, and subsequently when it became the Yogyakarta station of RRI after independence (Becker 1980: 149).

Wasitodipuro had composed a few pieces in traditional forms in the 1930s, but it was through his position with RRI that he became especially prolific and innovative. A particularly significant work is *Jaya Manggala Gita*, (Song to the victory of happiness and welfare), which he composed for a celebration of the seventh anniversary of the proclamation of independence, on 17 August 1952.²⁵ The work was an “hour-long suite” that portrayed “the history of Java from the eleventh century up to the moment of the proclamation of independence in 1945” (Becker 1980: 39). It did so through narration, but also through music, combining archaic gamelan such as *monggang* and *kodhok ngorek*, standard pieces from the repertoire such as *gendhing* “Gambirsawit,” and originally composed pieces. Some of those had decidedly non-Javanese features, such as triple meter; another was based on a Japanese march.²⁶ *Jaya Manggala Gita* also made use of a conductor—Sumarsam reports having seen

24. *Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Wasitodiningrat [Tjokrowasito, Wasitodipuro, Wasitolodoro], Kanjeng Radèn Tumenggung [Ki]” by R. Anderson Sutton, accessed 18 June 2005.

25. The live performance of the work was broadcast by RRI stations in Yogyakarta, Surakarta, Semarang, and Jakarta (Becker 1980: 39).

26. See Becker (1980:39-49) for an extended account and discussion of *Jaya Manggala Gita*. The piece would seem to be an attempt to remake Maladi's 1946 *Jaya Wijaya* (discussed earlier in this chapter) with Javanese musical resources. It is probable that the director of RRI Jogjakarta, who commissioned the work (Salim et al. 2004: 23-24), was aware of Maladi's earlier effort, but I have found no specific evidence to confirm this, nor any indication of the extent to which Wasitodipuro was

Wasitodipuro himself conduct when the work was performed in 1970—and a chorus with multiple parts (Sumarsam 2013:52).²⁷

Judith Becker makes very strong claims regarding the significance of *Jaya Manggala Gita*. The “self-conscious use of archaic gamelan styles for mood and effect” and the use of non-Javanese elements represent specific innovations. As important is the conceptual basis for the piece and Wasitodipuro’s approach to its overall form. Becker argues that *Jaya Manggala Gita* “is presented as a work of art composed before, not during, the performance,” in contrast to traditional dramatic forms such as *wayang* that involve a significant degree of real-time combining of elements within a conventional framework.²⁸ It “compels the focus of the listener in a way traditional Javanese music never does” through a “Western use of time.” It “vividly illustrates the beginnings of a new approach toward gamelan composition, with the composer/performer no longer only a medium of transmission of traditional materials, but a self-conscious creator who organizes and focuses the musical materials of his tradition and expresses, if not uniquely himself, at least his interpretation of the events about him.” In short, the piece is taken as evidence that Wasitodipuro, “while remaining one of Java’s finest traditional musicians, thinks like a Western composer” (Becker 1980: 48-49)—that is, like a composer in the Western art music tradition.

Becker also notes, however, that *Jaya Manggala Gita* is quite exceptional in

familiar with the earlier piece.

27. Neither of these two features are noted by Becker. It is possible that they were additions to the 1970 performance.

28. There was, however, ample precedent in dance drama for more fixed arrangements of pieces, both from the existing repertoire and newly composed. See Sutton (1997) for a discussion of the dance-opera genre *langendriya*, mentioned briefly in the previous chapter. But see also Brinner (1992) for the implications on performance practice of the shift toward greater pre-planning in a new form of *wayang*.

Wasitodipuro's output as a composer. As she puts it, the piece was "the impressive herald of a great number of songs . . . written in support of the various programs and slogans of the free Indonesian state" (ibid.). As another biographer observes, Wasitodipuro had, in working in radio, "entered what Theodor Adorno has called the *culture industry*," and most of his creative output for RRI reflects how he "had to adapt to media" (Salim et al. 2004: 22-23). His songs were "written in the style of *dolanan*, children's songs" (Becker 1980: 49). As Salim further comments, the distinction between "gending *dolanan*" and "gending ageng," the "great" *gendhing* that were taken to epitomize the refinement of court-style *karawitan* "resembles the distinction made by Theodor Adorno between pop music and high-art music" (Salim et al. 2004: 22-23).

There was thus something of a disconnect between the different aspects of Wasitodipuro's work as a musician. He earned his post as director of music at the Pakualaman on the basis of his mastery of the court-style repertoire of several hundred large scale pieces—pieces Salim identifies as *gendhing ageng*, which are more commonly simply termed *gendhing*. By contrast, in leading the gamelan at RRI he focused on the performance of more popular pieces, especially for the program Uyon-Uyon Mana Suka (Salim 2004:22), and the composition of ditties to relay the slogan's of President Sukarno, and later President Suharto. Wasitodipuro himself recognized a hierarchy in categories of repertoire in stating that he was only good enough to compose *ladrang* and *ketawang* (Barry Drummond, p.c., 29 October 2006), a statement that in severely understating his capabilities as one of the most accomplished and respected musicians of his generation reflects the perception that *karawitan*'s golden age was in the past. While *ladrang* and *ketawang* are smaller, more modest forms than the lengthy *gendhing* that Wasitodipuro had complete command of as a

performer, they are still far more substantial, by *karawitan*'s own standards, than *lagu dolanan*.

Jaya Manggala Gita may, as Becker argues, most clearly link Wasitodipuro to his role as a modern-day *pujangga*—as an artist working not to glorify a Javanese court but in the service of the Indonesian state (Becker 1980:39). But in practice, in creating music as part of his responsibilities as music director of RRI Jogjakarta, he mostly worked as a songwriter. *Jaya Manggala Gita* did not usher in a new era of gamelan composition, at least not immediately. The work was neither released as a recording, nor given repeat performances until much later.²⁹ Specific innovations such as the use of a conductor were not taken up more broadly, but isolated experiments like those from earlier in the century (chapter 1), if somewhat higher profile. Wasitodipuro did, in 1961, have occasion to engage in larger scale composition and arrangement as one of the two principal composers for the Ramayana Ballet, the initial production of a new form of dance drama known as *sendratari*. *Sendratari* would become a significant field for musical creativity, though as I argue below, the kind of creativity it supported remained mostly distinct from that most valued within the sphere of *musik kontemporer*. Meanwhile, it was song that became a more significant focus within the gamelan world, mostly through the work of another notable musician: the renowned *dhalang* Nartosabdho.

29. The 1970 performance that Sumarsam witnessed (2013:52) was, he believes, the second time the piece was mounted (p.c. via e-mail, 10 July 2014). The only other performance of that I am aware of was in 1993, when Djoko Waluyo directed a performance for an event organized by Sapto Raharjo (Raharjo, p.c., 29 July 2004).

“. . . of a Great Number of Songs”

Becker notes that although Wasitodipuro was “the principal songwriter for the Sukarno era,” most of his songs were “undistinguished” and “forgotten as quickly as they were written” (Becker 1980: 49). There are some notable exceptions, but it is also true that Wasitodipuro was overshadowed as a songwriter by a figure of humbler origins whose music came to be known far more widely. Nartosabdho was far and away the most popular *dhalang* (shadow-puppeteer) in the Javanese tradition of *wayang kulit* in the later part of the twentieth century, but also the most controversial (Keeler 1987: 173). His success was due “beyond all else on his antawacana”—his “dazzling skill and accuracy” in depicting different characters through vocal timbre and manner of speaking (ibid.:196-197). His fame and notoriety were significantly boosted, however, by his many innovations in the performance of *wayang*, his exploitation of media, and his voluminous musical output.

Nartosabdho was born in 1925 in Wedhi, a small town between Solo and Jogja. He came from a poor family. He was only able to complete his formal education up to fifth grade, as he was forced to work after his father died when he was in second grade. He developed an interest in the performing arts in his youth, studying “classical” dance with a teacher from Solo, and later picking up several *kroncong* instruments. Then, as a teenager, he left home to follow a number of performing groups, in particular those that performed *wayang orang* and *kethoprak*—theatrical forms that like the urban Komedi Stamboel discussed in chapter 1 developed as commercial entertainment (Sutton 2002a: 307-311).³⁰

30. *Wayang orang* is a theatrical form related to *wayang kulit* in which dancers take the place of puppets. The first commercial *wayang orang* company, drawing upon a form that had developed in the courts, was founded in 1895 (Brandon 1967: 47)

It was in this context—and with the very troupe whose difficulties in the 1980s prompted the writer and cultural critic Umar Kayam to speak of these art forms as “kitsch” (Kayam 1983)³¹—that Nartosabdho began writing songs. Nartosabdho was invited to join the *wayang orang* company Ngesti Pandowo after its manager heard him playing *kendhang* in 1945,³² just before independence was proclaimed. Initially scorned by other members of the troupe, he quickly gained their confidence and became its musical director, a position he held for twenty-five years. In this role, he began writing “light gamelan pieces, often with humorous content” for the clown scenes.³³ Incorporating familiar elements such as “village tunes” as well as innovative features like “waltz-time” and vocal polyphony, they were “very popular with the public, with the audience” (Sutton 2002a: 309).³⁴

Nartosabdho continued to write songs as he moved into *wayang kulit* starting in the late 1950s. This was the field in which he attained superstar status, in large part through the broadcast of his performances, and also the release of cassette recordings. As a *dhalang* he gave greater emphasis to those aspects which appealed to audiences increasingly conditioned

31. Kayam used the label “kitsch” as a mostly neutral designation—certainly more neutrally than the term was used by the American art critic Clement Greenberg in contrasting “kitsch” with the “avant-garde” (Greenberg 1961). Kayam was concerned less with evaluating the artistic merit of commercial *wayang orang* than with arguing against government subsidy to shore up Ngesti Pandowo. Rather than financial support, he recommended providing the troupe with young creative artists to help it discover new ways to remain popular with urban audiences, and stay true to its nature as a commercial form.

32. *Kendhang* is the general term for the double-headed drums played in gamelan ensembles. It is considered one of the most important instruments, the *kendhang* player being responsible for leading ensembles through beginnings, endings, and other transitions, all of which involve changes in tempo. It is especially important in dramatic contexts, where its patterns correspond closely to the movements of dancers and puppets.

33. Grove Music Online, s.v. “Nartosabdho [Sunarto], Ki” by R. Anderson Sutton, accessed 10 June 2005.

34. Hardja Susilo likened the musical interludes featuring these songs to “a commercial that’s not selling anything” (Hardja Susilo, p.c., 21 November 2006).

by commercialized popular culture, much of it emanating via media from Jakarta. He “transformed what used to be a short conversation between two female palace servants into a new clown scene, the *limbukan*” (Mrázek 1999: 75).³⁵ As well as increasing the time devoted to comedy, both this scene and the *gara-gara*, the older clown scene, became opportunities to feature the *pesindhen*, the solo female vocalists, who were now greater in number—“at least four” rather than the previously typical two (Sumanto 2002: 89-90)—and seated more prominently near the screen to the right of the *dhalang*. On radio broadcasts and recordings, and eventually more broadly in performance, the voices of both the *dhalang* and the *pesindhen* were amplified to a far greater extent than instruments. Nartosabdho began inviting his radio listeners to write in and request songs (Mrázek 1999: 75). Increasingly, those songs were stylistically related to popular non-gamelan genres. Wasitodipuro had borrowed certain non-gamelan elements in some of his songs—Becker discusses his adaptation of syncopated rhythms from rumba to the *kempul* part (1980:61-62)—but Nartosabdho took the practice much further. He began performing and composing in the form of *langgam*, songs from the *kroncong* repertoire that themselves imitated gamelan in their figuration and diatonic approximation of the *pelog* scale, bringing this influence around full circle. He later inverted the direction of imitation, composing melodies that used *pelog* to imitate the diatonic scale, and developing a performance style that evoked the explosively popular popular music genre *dangdut*, a genre that had nothing at all to do with gamelan. The primary marker of *dangdut*, as the style was called, was the especially dynamic drumming, and a variation on the rumba-inspired syncopated *kempul-gong* rhythm, reinterpreted as a reference to the

35. The name of the scene derives from Limbuk, the stout daughter of the thin and diminutive Cangik.

dangdut's signature rhythmic pattern, known as *chalte*.³⁶

Mixed Attitudes toward Precursors

Several composers involved with *musik kontemporer* expressed their admiration for Nartosabdho when I interviewed them. Purwanto identified Nartosabdho as his “idol” growing up in the 1970s and 80s (p.c., 14 August 2005). Sukamso regarded Nartosabdho as “extremely courageous” and “the most creative” among the older generation (p.c., 4 August 2004). He even made an impression on the Balinese composer I Wayan Sadra, who credited Nartosabdho with opening his mind, loosening his singular focus on *gamelan gong kebyar*, and thus allowing him to develop “bimusicality.” When he was little, in Denpasar, he overheard the radio broadcasts of Nartosabdho’s wayang performances that a Javanese civil servant who rented a room in his house would listen to while sleeping in the yard. He was impressed by “Suara Suling,” and hearing drum playing that was “bursting with energy” convinced him that Javanese music was not just “sleepy.” His music was “a small door to appreciate more broadly” (I Wayan Sadra, p.c., 23 July 2004). Other *musik kontemporer* composers have themselves written songs. Suwardi, as Sutton notes, composed *lancaran*

36. In *dangdutan*, the gamelan style that imitates *dangdut*, there is one stroke of *kempul* leading into a stroke of *gong suwukan*, or, at the end of a large cycle, *gong ageng*. This imitates, in *dangdut* proper, the principal strokes of the *chalte* pattern as played on *gendang*, a set of two small drums similar in form to Cuban bongos. Though the sound of the *gendang* most strongly evokes that of the *tabla* as used in Indian film music, as Weintraub notes “the origin of the *chalte* pattern cannot be determined with any certainty,” as it resembles drum patterns in a number of musics in circulation in Indonesia, including rumba (Weintraub 2010: 60-66). Such similarities in pattern would have facilitated the shifting point of reference in the context of gamelan, from rumba to *dangdut*, as the latter became in the 1970s and 80s, as Weintraub puts it, “Indonesia’s Most Popular Music.” Thus, even songs that Nartosabdho wrote before the ascendancy of *dangdut*, such as “Suara Suling”—which Becker points to as an example of the use of *pelog* to approximate the diatonic scale (Becker 1980: 94-95)—would later be played, and understood, as examples of *dangdutan*. I thank Kathryn Emerson (p.c. via e-mail, 7 June 2014) for confirming what defines *dangdutan*.

“Bendungan,” a “light dolanan (à la Nartosabdho) . . . in the early 1980s for the opening of a government-funded dam” (Sutton 1993: 61-64). In doing so, he was also carrying on the tradition of supporting government projects pioneered by Wasitodipuro.

The larger legacy initiated by Wasitodipuro’s and Nartosabdho’s forays into songwriting, however, is an orientation in the gamelan world toward a populism most fundamentally driven by increased competition from commercialized popular culture. As Marc Perlman notes in a brief overview of this trend, the “new *gendhing dolanan*” that Nartosabdho had done so much to popularize were “eclipsed” soon after his death in 1985 by *Sragenan*, an “even more accessible style” that makes no use of *rebab* and that features especially coarse drumming. The decade that followed witnessed the spectacular rise of *campursari*, a loosely defined genre that mixes gamelan and Western band instruments that Perlman identifies as “a symptom of the emergence of a broad musical borderland, where the lightest parts of the *gamelan* repertory mingle with *kroncong*, *langgam Jawa*, *dangdut*, and even Indonesian pop songs” (Perlman 1999: 5-8). The ascendancy of *campursari* has been at the expense of the traditional repertoire and practice of Central Javanese gamelan which, while by no means static, is more deeply rooted in at least two centuries of continuous development.

Against this backdrop, Nartosabdho has been held up by the same younger gamelan musicians who “sneer at *Sragenan*” as “a model of artistry.” But *Sragenan*, as Perlman convincingly argues, is, in important respects “a logical development of the Nartosabdho style” (Perlman 1999: 6). *Campursari* too can be understood as an extension of a logic of hybridity active in both Wasitodipuro’s and Nartosabdho’s music, but taken to the point where gamelan is no longer necessarily the primary framework. As often, gamelan instruments merely add color to music which is more fundamentally based in popular non-

gamelan genres.

Nartosabdho was a significant source of inspiration for many of the younger gamelan musicians who became involved in *musik kontemporer*. Yet at the same time, he was seen as embodying a less than desirable direction from the perspective of many senior figures. The court musicians who taught gamelan at institutions such as KOKAR and ASKI in Surakarta “derided Nartosabdho's compositions as shallow and incompetent” (Perlman 1999: 5). Most significantly, ASKI’s director, Gendhon Humardani—who was we will see in chapter 4 played a critical role in overseeing the formation of a key scene of *musik kontemporer*—considered the populist tendency represented by Nartosabdho to be a diversion from the true nature of art. The experimentation he encouraged, and that led to the development of a radically new approach to composition, was intended as a corrective. Nartosabdho thus equally served as a negative example.

Wasitodipuro’s significance to *musik kontemporer* is similarly complex, but for different reasons. His direct influence on younger composers was limited by the fact that he was almost entirely absent from Indonesia from when he began to teach in the United States in 1971 until his retirement in 1992 (Wenten 1996: 215-230). He came to be known most, as I Wayan Sadra put it, as “a hero who developed gamelan outside Indonesia” (p.c., 23 July 2004). His reputation as a songwriter was overshadowed by Nartosabdho to the extent that some his songs are occasionally mistaken as those of the latter.

Wasitodipuro’s contributions to the field of dance accompaniment—which included his work on the pioneering *sendratari* production of the Ramayana Ballet as well as collaborations with the choreographer Bagong Kussudiardjo— were somewhat more distinctive, but here too his innovations, though significant, blended with those of others. The

aesthetic direction represented by *sendratari* has been influential on a number of younger composers, especially those based in Jogja, some of whom have engaged in *musik kontemporer*. But while it was not regarded as anathema, as was the direction represented by Nartosabdho's songs, neither was it fully embraced by those who oversaw the initial development of *musik kontemporer* in the 1970s and 80s. Humardani decried the widely influential style of the Ramayana Ballet as "idiotic, 'kitsch'." He considered its musical choices, such as using *gangsaran* rather than *sampak* to distinguish it from *wayang wong*, an older form of dance drama, and avoiding forms such as *pathetan*, *ada-ada*, and *macapat* because "the accompaniment must flow without stopping," to be "dubious." Most of all he objected to its overly literal use of pantomime; as a production intended for tourists, it did not use dialogue, but instead relied on movement—and music—to convey the narrative.³⁷

More generally, Humardani and other key arbiters sought a different kind of innovation than that demonstrated in the field of musical creativity that developed around the form *sendratari*, that would prevail in Jogja. In the discussions that led to the founding of the Pekan Komponis Muda (PKM), which I examine more closely in chapter 5, Humardani distinguished between "creativity in the present age" and that which conformed to established conventions, which in his view was "the result of creativity of past ages" (Humardani 1976: 38). Suka Hardjana, the director of the PKM, praised the work that emerged from ASKI Solo, in large part as a result of Humardani's spurring. He was rather lukewarm about that by the one traditionally-based composer from Jogja he invited to participate in the PKM's first six

37. For a discussion of *sendratari*—an initialism from the words *seni* (art), *drama*, and *tari* (dance)—and the role that the Ramayana Ballet played in its development, see Lim (1997). For an analysis of *Sendratari Ramayana* and a second work by Wasitodipuro, *Sendratari Kelahiran dan Kebangkitan Isa Almasih*, see Wenten (1996:283-313)

iterations. Djoko Walujo, who succeeded Wasitodipuro as an instructor at the California Institute of the Arts, created a piece for the second PKM in 1981 that was “neat and tidy,” but “rather sterile” and “not spontaneous enough.” The piece included what Walujo termed “‘non’ *karawitan* . . . sound elements and techniques,” a designation Hardjana questioned, but these felt “tacked on” and had a “whiff of the experimental” (Hardjana 1981c, in 2004b:64-65). Walujo was on the one hand “rather reluctant to stray too far from tradition” but also “felt it somewhat necessary to make eyes with experiments” (Hardjana 1981b, in 2004a:59), presumably because he perceived the PKM as demanding this. Hardjana remained, however, unconvinced.

It was not until the seventh meeting of the PKM in 1987 that Jogja would again be represented, by Djaduk Ferianto and Otok Bima Sidharta, two sons of the choreographer Bagong Kussudiardjo (with whom Wasitodipuro had collaborated [Wenten 1996:198-202]). Their musical depiction of traveling down Jalan Malioboro, a thoroughfare in the center of Jogja, shared with *Jaya Manggala Gita* a basis in narrative, with non-gamelan elements such as trumpets and cowbells representing iconic sounds of that iconic street. Its playful irony was different in tone (Hardjana 1987, in 2004b:212-213), but motivated by a populist impulse not entirely unrelated to that behind Wasitodipuro’s forays into songwriting—an impulse whose later manifestations in Djaduk’s works would be somewhat at odds with *musik kontemporer*’s emphasis on modernism and experimentalism, as will be examined in the chapter 7. Meanwhile, the aesthetic direction pioneered by Wasitodipuro in *Jaya Manggala Gita* and his work for dance, and developed by Djoko Walujo—a direction that featured less conspicuous forms of innovation and a heightened dynamism, but that otherwise maintained the basic syntax of *karawitan*—was most fully taken up by younger composers such as

Trustho who have remained largely outside *musik kontemporer* circles.³⁸

A Senior Figure Responds

The final senior figure of note is Martopangrawit (1914-1986), another highly respected court musician who became one of the principal teachers of *karawitan* at ASKI Surakarta. He did not achieve anywhere near the fame of Nartosabdho or even Wasitodipuro, engaging neither with radio, recordings, nor the extroverted sphere of wayang. But as a key figure at ASKI he was more directly influential at the institution where the first significant traditionally-based scene of *musik kontemporer* emerged. His influence did not, however, stem primarily from his work as a composer, but instead as a teacher and a pioneering theorist. Though also prolific, most of his work was squarely traditional in idiom, albeit with twists that would be of interest to those well-versed in *karawitan*. His more innovative pieces were more a response to the innovations of others, including, in the case of his most conspicuously innovative compositions, the experimentation undertaken by students at ASKI.

In 1975, Martopangrawit created *Janji Allah*, a “drama *karawitan*” commissioned by the largest Catholic church in Solo. An hour long, and involving a mixed chorus of forty singers and thirty instrumentalists playing a full gamelan augmented by the archaic *carabalen* and *monggang* (Waridi 2001: 201-204), the work was comparable in scale to Wasitodipuro’s *Jaya Manggala Gita*.³⁹ Rusdiyantoro, then a young student, described the work as “extremely *kontemporer* for the time,” an assessment that at once recognizes the piece’s innovations, but

38. See Burchman (2000) for a profile of Trustho.

39. Rustopo drew a comparison between *Jaya Manggala Gita* and another “colossal” work by Martopangrawit, “Seneng,” that used multiple gamelan. The work was rehearsed sometime in the late 1970s, but was never performed (Rustopo, p.c., 21 July 2005).

also distinguishes them from the experimentalism that would follow.

Martopangrawit also participated in some of earlier forays in this more experimentalist direction. His most memorable contribution seems to be the piece “Parita.” Martopangrawit composed “Parita” for the multimedia work *Wayang Budha* around 1978, after Humardani took what had started as informal experiments by a number of younger artists, which they had presented independently of the aegis of ASKI in 1975, and organized them into an official ASKI production (see chapter 4 for further details). Both Suprpto Suryodarmo, who had originally conceived of the project, and the composer Pande Made Sukerta, who had been involved since its inception, sang part of the melody of “Parita” played on *gender*—in Sukerta’s case, to make the point that the music for *Wayang Budha* was “still in the scope or realm of tradition” (Suprpto Suryodarmo, p.c., 31 July 2004; Pande Made Sukerta, p.c., 8 July 2005).⁴⁰

Two other pieces more vividly indicate Martopangrawit’s incidental relationship to the development of *musik kontemporer* at ASKI. “Ra Ngandel,” Martopangrawit’s “last ‘experimental’ composition,” as Marc Perlman (Martopangrawit et al. 1998) describes it, was intended as a model for student composers, but it was composed only after several years of students presenting compositions as graduating projects. The piece was commissioned by ASKI in 1986 to address the concern that “the emphasis on creativity” during Humardani’s time as director—he had passed away in 1983—“could too easily be exploited to mask poor achievement in traditional musical skills.” It did not, apparently, end up playing a prominent role as a model; Rustopo, a prominent figure at ASKI who wrote a history of the development

40. I recognized the melody as it was used as the basis of a piece titled “Cuplikan” (“Quotation”) by I. M. Harjito—who had also participated in *Wayang Budha*—which I played as a member of the Wesleyan University Gamelan Ensemble.

of “Gamelan Kontemporer” there, does not mention the piece, and told me that he did not know of it (Rustopo 1991; Rustopo, p.c., 21 July 2005). “Ra Ngandel” was regarded as “below the standard of his earlier pieces,” and Martopangrawit himself “expressed doubts” about its worth, while also making it clear that he had composed the piece not “to please himself” but to respond to ASKI’s needs. The piece made use of the sort of “‘modern’ devices” that had become staples in the new compositional style at ASKI, but in a “comparatively restrained” fashion (Martopangrawit et al. 1998: 13). Far from the full expression of an original artistic vision that inspired a new aesthetic direction, “Ra Ngandel” should instead be seen as a somewhat compromised corrective to perceived deficiencies in the work of less qualified students who turned to composition as an easier way out of fulfilling academic requirements.

“Perjalanan,” a composition for solo *gender* that Martopangrawit composed in 1981, was much more successful, and involved much more personal investment. Marc Perlman describes it as “Pak Marto improvising with traditional *genderan*, with some novel techniques (a hanging pattern played with all the tones simultaneously struck and damped),”⁴¹ and notes that “supposedly it had an autobiographical narrative” (p.c. via e-mail, 6 June 2005). Rustopo reported that Martopangrawit also intended the piece as a comment on his attitude toward innovation, that he was “able to accept innovations such as those carried out by kids” (*anak-anak*) but that he himself “could not let go of the musical tradition” that was inside him (Rustopo, p.c., 21 July 2005). The piece was performed twice, once at ASKI, and again in 1982 at a joint concert with I Wayan Sadra in Jogja. It was thus presented in the emerging

41. Hanging patterns are used when the underlying melody of a piece holds on a single tone. Simultaneously striking and damping is not itself a novel technique, but applying it to a whole pattern rather than a few strokes within a pattern is.

context of concert presentations of *musik kontemporer*. But while younger composers in the scene at ASKI Solo have acknowledged the piece, the direction it represents is not one they picked up on. Nobody learned to play “Perjalanan” other than Martopangrawit, and nobody has composed other works for solo gamelan instruments—not even Sukamso, who recounted how he studied Martopangrawit’s *gender* playing intensely, learning to imitate it precisely, and indeed succeeded Martopangrawit as the foremost *gender* specialist at ASKI (Sukamso, p.c., 16 June 2005). Speaking of his *kontemporer* compositions, such as *Vokal*, the work he presented at the Pekan Komponis Muda in 1985, Sukamso stated that he “did not have references from anywhere,” and described being caught up in the exploration of sound that was the major focus of creative experimentation at ASKI in the 1980s (Sukamso, p.c., 4 August 2004).

Martopangrawit’s individuality inspired some of his students at ASKI. Waridi notes that almost all of the works of Subono, another more traditionally-inclined composer who has composed extensively for *wayang*, whom Suka Hardjana characterized as “still within the *gendhing besar*”⁴² (p.c. 14 September 2004), were inspired by “Parita” (Waridi 2001: 205). He was not, however, the primary source of stimulus for their wider-ranging experiments. Martopangrawit was thus less a precursor of *musik kontemporer* than a senior and more occasional contributor to a creative movement initiated by his students, who, as we will see in chapter 4, were impelled most of all by the spurring of ASKI’s director, Gendhon Humardani. More importantly, Martopangrawit was the foremost representative at ASKI of tradition,

42. Literally, “the big piece.” This is not a common term or concept in Javanese *karawitan*—there is no parallel, for example, to the Persian *radif*. It does, however, describes well the sense that individual *gendhing* are, in their extensive use of conventional material, sometimes understood as formulae, instantiations of a larger system. In any case, I take Hardjana’s use of the phrase to point to the more conventional character of most of Subono’s compositions.

which remained essential as a base for experimentation, even as that experimentation would seek to escape tradition's conventions.

History

3 Emergence: Of Western-Oriented *Musik Kontemporer*

With the failure of *musik kontemporer*'s Western-oriented precursors to establish a practice of art music composition, and the lack of concern of its traditionally-based precursors in doing so, *musik kontemporer* emerged not as growth in an existing field but rather as a distinct development. The history of *musik kontemporer* proper can thus be said to begin in the 1970s. More specifically, it emerged as a distinct field only by the very end of the 1970s, with the first Pekan Komponis Muda (PKM) in late December of 1979. The four day festival was held in Jakarta at what is effectively Indonesia's national arts center, Taman Ismail Marzuki (TIM), which from its opening in 1968 was witnessing bold and vital developments in contemporary theater and dance. *Musik kontemporer* thus lagged behind comparable movements in other performing arts.

The first section of this chapter provides a brief sketch of the artistic atmosphere at TIM, focusing on the contrast between the vitality of the theater and dance scenes and the tentativeness of the first steps to stimulate similar creative activity in music.

The bulk of the chapter examines the beginnings of *musik kontemporer*'s two Western-oriented scenes, which began to form around two charismatic composer/teachers who coincidentally both arrived in 1976. The scene in Jakarta formed around Slamet Abdul Sjukur, a composer from Surabaya who had studied at SMIND in the 1950s, but who

developed his avant-gardist approach during his fourteen years studying and working in Paris. The scene in Jogja formed around Jack Body, a composer from New Zealand who brought similarly experimentalist ideas gained from his studies in Germany and the Netherlands. The experimentalist character of their students' work at the first few PKM had much to do with Sjukur's and Body's influence. No less important were the conditions at the schools where Sjukur and Body taught, which, as this chapter also demonstrates, had serious shortcomings.

The Institutional Context and Artistic Atmosphere

The Founding of Indonesia's National Arts Center, TIM

As a field that developed in the 1970s, *musik kontemporer* was a product of the New Order regime, as the regime of Indonesia's second president, Suharto, is known. It was not that it resulted from state-directed initiatives,¹ but more in that its emergence was made possible by the economic and political conditions that followed Suharto's rise to power. Although Suharto's regime is, for good reason, now remembered for its abuses of power, its repression

1. There was, to be sure, an abundance of top-down policies during the New Order—articles by Weintraub(2001) and Harnish (2007) are just two examples of critical examinations of the impact specific directives on traditional performing art forms. The New Order regime affected *musik kontemporer* as well, but as my discussion in the pages that follow shows, the shape that it took has mostly to do with the interests of certain influential individuals. Some, like Gendhon Humardani, the director of ASKI Surakarta whose views I discuss in chapters 4 and 5, drew actively upon the support and favor they received from high-level officials, including Suharto himself. Others, like the composer and teacher Slamet Abdul Sjukur whom I discuss in this chapter, were staunchly independent. In all cases, they enjoyed considerable autonomy; their artistic visions cannot be reduced to an expression of the will of the New Order—a notion that, in any case, oversimplifies. Mary Steedly, criticizing a tendency in anthropological scholarship on Southeast Asia “to think of states as transcendent agents, guided as if by a single will, either Oz-like, in the person of the head of government . . . or by a kind of uniform animating spirit,” usefully argues that “state programs are not necessarily of a piece; they are also heterogeneous, fractured, contentious, contradictory, some times unsuccessful, often transient, and open to subversion both from within and without” (Steedly 1999: 436).

of free speech, its corruption, and its brutality, Suharto also, to an appreciable extent, fulfilled his self-assigned role as the “*Bapak Pembangunan* or ‘Father of Development’” (Rigg et al. 1999: 588). After the turmoil that marked much of Sukarno’s rule, the New Order brought much needed political stability, allowing for economic growth, significant advances in agriculture, education, and health, and the emergence of a middle class (Ricklefs 2001: 370-371). One of the most important and concrete developments for the realm of art of which *musik kontemporer* was a part was the founding in 1968 of what is effectively, if not officially, Indonesia’s national arts center, Taman Ismail Marzuki (TIM). The Jakarta Arts Council (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta, or DKJ) that was formed in conjunction with the center, and which oversaw its operations, was granted considerable artistic freedom by the Governor of Jakarta, Ali Sadikin, who promised that the regional government would provide facilities without interfering in artistic activities. “‘Art is for art,’ he said, urging them to ‘discard the old ways, when art was used for political interests’” (press reports paraphrased by Hill 1993: 246)—a clear allusion to the situation leading up the attempted coup of 1965 and the dominance of Lekra.

TIM was the venue for the event that more than any other established *musik kontemporer* as a recognizable field of creative music activity: the Pekan Komponis Muda. The DKJ first produced the festival in 1979, more than a decade after the TIM was founded. *Musik kontemporer* was, then, relatively late to bloom, especially in comparison with parallel movements in theater and dance, which made TIM their home quite literally from its very founding. TIM’s opening ceremony in 1968 was interrupted by “an apparent guerilla takeover,” staged by Arifin C. Noer and members of his Teater Ketjil company. A “procession of 27 brightly-clad people . . . accompanied by deafening drumbeats” and a

“*barong*-type creature complete with a mask and elaborate costume”² diverted attention from “the typical run of official speeches and music played by the local police and fire departments.” Then, on a temporary stage, Arifin, “whose identity was disguised by a mask,” launched “histrionically” into his declaration, a “baptizing of all events that will take place in this Arts Complex.” The intervention concluded with Arifin presenting Governor Ali Sadikin with three gifts: “a ‘self-portrait,’ consisting of an empty frame which the governor held in front of his face; a shattered mirror; and a personal letter addressed to the Governor and written in white ink on white paper” (Gillitt 2001: 213-215).

Cobina Gillit has interpreted this “enacted manifesto” as “a celebration of a theatre yet to be defined,” and as “a call to artists and others to avoid limiting the future of their creativity by abandoning the practices that mirrored their past” (ibid.:215). Arifin was one of several directors involved in the *tradisi baru* (new tradition) movement, who sought a practice of theater that was contemporary and also distinctively Indonesian, free from the Western-derived conventions and standards of the naturalistic modern theater in which they had trained. In part they found this in experimentalist practices, such as those that the poet and director Rendra encountered in New York from 1965 to 1967. They also drew upon traditional Indonesian performing arts, in ways that were more or less obvious. At times they would use traditional costumes and masks, or incorporate music and/or dance. They would mingle “the fantastic with the ordinary” or create plays with “archetypal characters who did not ‘develop’.” At other times

the distinguishing ‘traditional’ characteristic was even more fundamental, stemming from a traditional spirit that guided how the performance was created from start to

2. A *barong* is a lion-like creature in Balinese mythology, which like the lion in a Chinese lion dance involves two performers.

finish, how the cast members interacted with their director, and how the performers interacted with the audience, even when the script was a Western play in translation. (ibid.:10)

Alongside this nativist turn in theater, there were also “native” artists involved in developing performing arts practices that were distinctively contemporary and Indonesian. Among the most notable was the dancer and choreographer Sardono, who at 23 was the youngest member of the newly formed Jakarta Arts Council, and who in the mid-1970s would become an important figure for traditionally-based composers in Solo, the city where he was born. In his youth, Sardono received a solid foundation in the dance style of the Surakarta court, but early on he became involved in endeavors that would lead him to focus on contemporary forms of expression. In 1961, he was assigned the role of Hanoman for the Ramayana Ballet, a condensed dance presentation of the Hindu epic, without dialogue, created for tourists visiting the ancient temple complex at Prambanan, near Jogja. In creating larger and bolder movements to fit the oversized stage built with the temple complex as its backdrop, Sardono drew upon the Tarzan comic books he read as a child (Murgiyanto 1991: 341-342).

A few years later, in 1964, Sardono abandoned his studies at Universitas Gadjah Mada³ to join the cultural mission to the World’s Fair in New York. He stayed on after to take classes with the modern dance choreographer Jean Erdmann. Through Erdmann, Sardono “was introduced to the world of the avant-garde.” This did not, however, lead him to adopt the movement vocabulary of modern dance. As Murgiyanto observes, Erdmann’s influence on Sardono “is found not in his dance form or style but in his creative approach and artistic attitude” (Murgiyanto 1991: 344-345). Countering the emphasis on codified movement in

3. Universitas Gadjah Mada, founded in Jogjakarta in 1949, is Indonesia’s oldest university.

traditional dance training, Sardono instead emphasized improvisation and exploration of a variety of dance traditions. In 1968, he organized a dance workshop at TIM that brought together dancers from diverse backgrounds: I Wayan Diya from Bali, Huriah Adam from West Sumatra, and the ballet dancers Farida Feisol and Yulianti Parani from Jakarta. Sardono “didn’t act as an instructor or teach any particular composition, dance technique, or movement style,” but rather “helped the participants open themselves up and be sensitive to others” by leading them in improvisations (Sardono, quoted in Murgiyanto 1991: 348).

Sardono also led a group of Javanese dancers to dance outdoors and “to do breathing exercises and explore new movements” at “abandoned Hindu and Buddhist temples.” Drawing upon these explorations, Sardono choreographed *Samgita Pancasona*, a work that was “received well by a Jakarta audience who longed for modernity” but that in Solo was met by protests that involved rotten eggs being thrown at the stage (Murgiyanto 1991: 352-353). In the mid 1970s, Sardono worked with a community in Bali, producing works that were toured to Europe and taken to a festival in Shiraz, Iran (ibid.:356-365). In the late 1970s, Sardono visited the Dayak in Kalimantan, which initiated a concern with environmental issues that found its first creative expression in the 1979 piece *Meta Ecology*, performed in a pool of mud constructed in a field behind TIM (ibid.:355).

Musical Activity at TIM

While *musik kontemporer*, as an analogous movement in music, did not begin to form until the late 1970s, there was, of course, plenty of other music activity at TIM. The photographs accompanying an essay on music in a volume commemorating the 25th anniversary of TIM give a sense of the variety of performers and events presented (much more than the essay

itself, which focuses on *kontemporer* activity): an early music ensemble from Amsterdam; Karnatak musicians from India; the Orkes Simfoni Jakarta, including a performer on drum kit, accompanying two singers standing behind microphones; chamber music by Indonesian performers such as the pianists Irvati Soediarso and Rudy Laban; Indonesian choruses, comprised either of children or adults, as with the RRI Chorus led by Binsar Sitompul; and performances of *kroncong* and *hiburan*, including a *kroncong* competition co-produced by the Jakarta Arts Council and HAMKRI, an organization founded by Maladi (Mulyadi 1994: 128-140).⁴

This activity did not constitute a parallel to the new directions in theater and dance. That which was considered art music did not, for the most part, involve the creativity of Indonesians as composers, while that which did was not considered art music, and in neither case was the music deemed sufficiently original. Key members of the Jakarta Arts Council, perceiving a lack of creativity in music, launched several initiatives to address the problem. These included two conferences, the *Pertemuan Musik* (Music Meeting) in 1974, and the *Simposium Musik Tradisi* (Traditional Music Symposium) in 1975, whose contribution to the establishment of the *Pekan Komponis Muda* will be discussed further in chapter 5.

More immediately, the Jakarta Arts Council instituted composition competitions. These did not involve performances of the works submitted, limiting their contribution to the emergence of the *musik kontemporer* (Otto Sidharta, p.c., 6 June 2005). Nevertheless, they provide a barometer of the progress of that field's growth. The first competition, the *Sayembara Komposisi Remaja* held in 1974, was intended to add to the available repertoire

4. Sitompul, a composer of *lagu seriosa* who wrote a biography of his colleague Cornel Simanjuntak, and Maladi, the head of RRI, are discussed in the previous chapter.

for musicians in their teens (*remaja* = adolescent) and in turn to stimulate their creativity. Due to a lack of publicity, only five manuscripts were submitted; one of these was awarded third prize, while three others received honorable mentions (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta 1975: 499-504). The second Sayembara Komposisi Remaja and competitions for chamber and choral music held in 1975 were somewhat more successful in terms of the number of submissions, with between thirteen and fifteen manuscripts evaluated for each. But again, the juries did not award any first prizes.

If there was a lack of enthusiasm for the pieces submitted to these competitions, it almost certainly stemmed from the gap between the aesthetic priorities of the juries, which were comprised of musicians such as Frans Haryadi, Trisutji Kamal, and Binsar Sitompul, all of whom had recently returned from having studied and worked in Europe, and the state of music composition in Indonesia—the same gap that led Suka Hardjana to disparage Indonesian composers as “dilettantish” (chapter 2). For the most part, the participants in these competitions are not people I have come across elsewhere in my research, indicating a disconnect with later developments. The two names I do recognize are of two older composers, both listed in Rasmindarya’s catalog of *lagu seriosa* (1999: 318-342). Ibenzani Usman, from West Sumatra, is described in a pamphlet of IKKI, the League of Indonesian Composers, as a composer of “choral music, songs based on West Sumatra folk-idioms and children songs” (IKKI 1978). A resume of F.A. Warsono’s career in the same pamphlet indicates his experience as a conductor, first of the orchestra in the palace of the Sultan of Yogyakarta in 1945, and subsequently of orchestras associated with the Indonesian military.

The situation began to change in 1976, as a new generation of composers began to emerge from music schools in Jakarta and Jogja. First place prizes were awarded to Yoesbar

Djaelani, a student at AMI Jogja, in 1976 and 1977;⁵ to Franki Raden, a student at the Institut Kesenian Jakarta (IKJ), in 1978; and to Sutanto, another student from AMI Jogja, in 1979. The shift was the result of the presence in those schools of two key teachers, Slamet Abdul Sjukur and Jack Body, whose respective impacts will be examined in the following sections.

Slamet Abdul Sjukur and the Jakarta Scene

An Indonesian Composer from Paris

Slamet Abdul Sjukur, born in Surabaya in 1935, became involved in art music composition during its first blooming in Indonesia in the 1950s. He was, as he put it, one of the first “guinea pigs” (*kelinci percobaan*, literally “test rabbit”) at the Sekolah Musik Indonesia, having followed his teacher, the Swiss pianist Josef Bodmer, there in 1952 (p.c., 9 September 2004). Sjukur met Amir Pasaribu, who was impressed with Sjukur’s compositions. Sjukur did not, however, have the opportunity to study composition formally with him. Nonetheless, Sjukur represents the most substantial link between Pasaribu—who, as noted in the previous chapter, left Indonesia in the wake of the political turmoil of the mid 1960s—and the generation of composers that studied with Sjukur at the Institut Kesenian Jakarta (IKJ),⁶ the arts institute located adjacent to TIM, in the 1970s. More importantly, Sjukur was the figure who did the most to introduce those younger composers to the international avant-garde, a realm in which Sjukur had established himself during his fourteen years in Paris.

Sjukur “dreamed continuously” about France after “falling in love” with the music of

5. *Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Djaelani, Yoesbar,” by Franki Raden, accessed 5 June 2005.

6. IKJ, founded in 1970, was named the Jakarta Institute of Arts Education (Lembaga Pendidikan Kesenian Jakarta, LPKJ) until 1980.

Maurice Ravel—in particular, with his piano music, which he learned from Bodmer as a teenager. He first attempted to study in Paris in 1956, traveling to Europe by ship with his father and arriving in June just as vacations were starting. Before the school-year started they returned hastily to Indonesia by plane during the Suez crisis, worried at the prospect of a more widespread war. He settled back in Surabaya, marrying and running a book store while continuing to be involved in music. He founded the Pertemuan Musik Surabaya, which filled the role previously played by the Dutch Kunstring in presenting touring musicians from the West (Mack 2005: 106). But as Sjukur put it, it was “too late”—he was “sick, still dreaming of Paris continuously.” In 1960 Sjukur helped to found the first Indonesian branch of the Alliance Française in Surabaya. This contribution helped earn him a scholarship from the Roussel Foundation, and in October of 1962 again set off for Paris, not to return until 1976.

Sjukur studied piano at the École Normale de Musique de Paris with Jules Gentil, and analysis at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique with Olivier Messiaen. He had difficulty at first with Messiaen’s classes, only beginning to understand analysis and only appreciating how eminent a composer Messiaen was by the end of the course. He ended up studying composition with Henri Dutilleux, who was more understanding of Sjukur’s situation. After receiving licenses in piano and composition from the École Normale, Sjukur supported himself as a pianist accompanying ballet classes. He also worked for some time at the Groupe de Recherches Musicales, the organization founded by Pierre Schaeffer, the inventor of *musique concrète*, to support the production of electroacoustic music. There he became friends with the Russian microtonal composer Ivan Vyschnegradsky. Sjukur remained active as a composer for the duration of his time in Europe. He worked primarily in Paris, though one short biography (IKKI 1978) notes that he was invited to the

Elektronmusikstudion in Stockholm in 1968. That same year he attended the International Summer Courses for New Music in Darmstadt in 1968. Through these activities, Sjukur became well acquainted with and engaged in the aesthetics of the European avant-garde.

Sjukur was not the first of his generation to return to Indonesia after having studied in Europe. Trisutji Kamal returned nearly ten years earlier, in 1967, while Frans Haryadi returned in 1969. Sjukur was, however, the most celebrated as a composer, while also generating controversy, and had far and away the most direct influence on the next generation of Western-oriented composers. Haryadi was less active, at least in composing concert music; references to his work tend to focus on the music he composed for film (*Ensiklopedi Musik*, s.v. “Haryadi, Frans”) or dance and theater (Ferianto, p.c., 2 August 2005; , 1977 #92021; Notosudirdjo 2001: 344-345). As a member of the Jakarta Arts Council, he initiated the composition competitions discussed above, and was a prominent voice at the discussions of music at the conferences held in 1974 and 1975, to be discussed in chapter 5, that led to the establishment of the Pekan Komponis Muda. The role he played in the emergence of *musik kontemporer* was thus crucial, but it was mostly behind the scenes.

In contrast to Frans Haryadi, Trisutji Kamal has been identified as “one of the most prolific of Indonesian composers,”⁷ with most of her music consisting of concert works. She is by no means an insignificant figure: she sat on the juries of the composition competitions in the 1970s and represented Indonesia at meetings of the Asian Composers League, beginning with the second meeting in Kyoto in 1974 (IKKI 1978), and was a founding member of IKKI, the League of Indonesian Composers (Ikatan Komponis-Komponis

7. *Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Kamal, Trisutji [Djuliati],” by Franki Raden, accessed 10 June 2005.

Indonesia) (Kamal 1975: 29-30).⁸ But with a compositional style that was strongly based in the European classical tradition and her practice as pianist, yet too modern for most Indonesian performers,⁹ she has occupied an even smaller niche than the one that *musik kontemporer* carved for itself. In Raden's estimation, with later works inspired by the Islamic call to prayer Kamal "transcends her preoccupation with sophisticated playing technique."¹⁰ Her work has failed, however, to impress those most concerned by the lack of art music repertoire by Indonesian composers. She was all but overlooked by Suka Hardjana in his comments on this lack, also to be discussed in chapter 5, and his reviews of her music are decidedly lukewarm (Hardjana [1980?], in 2004b:55-56; 1992, in 2004b:329-330).

By contrast, Hardjana was effusive in his praise for Sjukur's music and unequivocal about his value as a model for the Indonesian music scene, even while mocking the excesses of the kind of experimentalism that Sjukur was widely taken to represent. Within a year of his return to Indonesia, the first two pieces in Sjukur's *Parentheses* cycle, for amplified prepared piano and choreography for a solo dancer, were performed at TIM, in connection with celebrations of Jakarta's 450th anniversary (Angkatan Bersenjata 1977). Reviews of the performance dutifully explained that the music was not intended to accompany the dance, nor was the dance intended to illustrate the music, but rather that the two were meant to coexist. One reported approvingly of the enthusiastic reception for the broadly publicized concert by the capacity audience, taking this as an encouraging sign of the developing appreciation for art in Jakarta (Arsani 1977). Another likened the response of the audience to "tourists that are

8. According to Kamal, IKKI was founded in 1977 and active for only about four years (Trisutji Kamal, p.c., 27 June 2005).

9. See, for example, the discussion of the reception of Kamal's *lagu seriosa* in chapter 2.

10. *Grove Music Online*, s.v. "Kamal, Trisutji."

struck by a beautiful view that they have met for the first time in their life,” but then also noted that for “ears that are fanatical about melodious notes” Sjukur’s music “would never enter their dictionary of music,” and recounted how audience members seated by the loudspeakers cursed and moved after the first exceedingly loud clang from the prepared piano that shattered the long silence that opened the piece (Winarno 1977b).

Hardjana, for his part, took the reception of Sjukur’s *Parentheses I* and *II* as an opportunity to scrutinize Indonesian attitudes toward artistic modernism. He poked fun at the tendency to regard the “*avant garde* modern” as a person that heroically “rejects the past” and has “no need” for the “norms of the present,” representing his own era and also anticipating the future. He listed examples of “strange” and “absurd” artistic practices resulting from the “illness” of scrambling to absorb the onslaught of modernization—which in Indonesia consisted mostly of consuming technology produced elsewhere. “Reading poetry while drunk on beer,” “sticking cat shit onto a canvas,” and, in an allusion to the vogue of using of traditional forms in *tradisi baru* theater productions, “staging Hamlet in the style of Betawi *lenong*”:¹¹ these are all “modern.” The list culminated with the statement that “making music without there needing to be a single note is, of course, super modern.” Hardjana likely had John Cage’s infamous silent piece, “4’33’,” in mind here, but the more immediate reference was to the silence that opened Sjukur’s *Parentheses*. Far from simply dismissing this as absurd, however, he praised the “silent episode” as “the most exquisite” section of Sjukur’s work—something that is at once abstract and real, and something that people in the East and West have long valued. Instead, he mocked the “modern” Jakarta audience, who were

11. *Lenong* is a traditional form of Betawi theater—that is, of the ethnic group from the Jakarta area. Music is an integral part of this form, as it is in most forms of traditional theater in Indonesia.

“disappointed” with Sjukur’s work because they “didn’t get it” and found it “too abstract.” Indeed, many didn’t entirely get it, thinking that the music for the piece only started with the loud sound that broke the silence (Hardjana 1977, in 2004b:27-28).

The idea that Sjukur’s music was too difficult for Indonesian audiences became a recurring theme in reviews. Winarno reported that some audience members left the 1978 performance of *Parentheses IV*—another multimedia work for a mixed instrumental ensemble of electric guitar, electric bass, organ, percussion, prepared piano, flute, viola, and cello; choreography for three dancers; and the thirteen-year old girl Lini, a darling of the Indonesian visual art scene, painting on a plexiglass panel. He commented that “for the ears of Indonesians that haven’t yet had an opportunity to hear Mozart or Beethoven” the piece was “something strange” and “difficult to digest.” It was difficult for them to distinguish between “the music in the piece” and “noises like sirens, the knock of a hammer, thunder, or a chicken eating leftover rice on a bamboo tray.” He further commented that the audience would not find “beautiful poses in the dance” or “melodious sections of music,” that at most the audience could be “entertained,” either by sections that still had “melody” even if it “wasn’t sweet,” or by watching Lini paint (Winarno 1978).

Despite these comments, Winarno himself was reasonably appreciative of the performance, noting that by the third section, in which elements first presented on their own were now repeated together, the music and dance which previously “felt strange” now “became familiar” (Winarno 1978). By 1981, when *Parentheses V*, a setting of a poem by the renowned Indonesian poet Chairil Anwar for mezzo-soprano and four cellos, was performed, critical opinion had become more sharply polarized. One reviewer commented on the unconventional techniques used, such as bowing on the bridge of the cello to produce a sound

“like a water buffalo being slaughtered”—a resemblance which Sjukur himself acknowledged—and charged that the piece “would not be understood by a general audience” without the explanation in the discussion that followed the performance. He further commented that the discussion was the more interesting part (Widodo 1981). Another was even more dismissive, stating that “general ears already accustomed to listening to and taking in commonplace music,” to music that conformed to “normal standards,” would be “at a loss to say” that Sjukur’s music “was good” (Minggu Merdeka 1981).

Hardjana similarly recognized that “for the logic of ears accustomed to polite harmonies and orderly rhythms as well as sweet garlands of melody” *Parentheses V* would “feel strange and difficult to digest.” But far from dismissing the work, he praised it highly. He defended it, comparing it favorably with a more conventional setting of another poem by Chairil by R. A. J. Soedjasmin. Although the sounds in Sjukur’s setting were not arranged in the “regular rhythmic, melodic, harmonic and other patterns” that we have become accustomed to from “receiving them every day,” Sjukur’s music was not without “logic.” Hardjana argued instead that Sjukur’s music was built on “conventional laws” that were “extremely classic and very basic,” such as “form, balance, contrast, the start and end of a substance,” and even used “strategies” similar to those of composers from decades or centuries earlier. Sjukur was building on a tradition of taking timbre (*warna*) as a fundamental element that had started with “Ravel.” This approach is often regarded as an “experiment,” but Sjukur’s work is “no longer an experiment but a work with integrity that must be accepted as a fact (however difficult).”

Sjukur’s work was, Hardjana noted, “nothing new in the music world”—meaning the international realm of classical music performance, and more specifically of mostly

Eurological contemporary art music composition—“but in this country must be noted as a musical phenomenon that offers dimensions and insights that provide unlimited possibilities for the writing of Indonesian music henceforth.” He expressed his hope that others would create more “original works like this.” “Parentheses V,” he concluded, “is extremely valuable for the development and conception of music in Indonesia” (Hardjana 1981a, in 2004b:74).

Slamet Abdul Sjukur as Teacher: The Experimental Swimming Coach

Whereas in the early 1950s, Dunga and Manik had to admit that there had only been limited progress toward a new Indonesian art music based on classical principles, with few in the “conscious group” of composers, few works to “press upon the old ‘popular’ repertoire of Indonesian music,” and no works comparable in size to those of their Western peers (chapter 2), in 1981 Suka Hardjana could point to Slamet Abdul Sjukur as a fully vested member of “the music world” and more realistically hope that there would soon be others creating equally “original works.” In fact, there already was a group of young composers that was following Sjukur’s lead, and some of their work was being presented in a public forum—the Pekan Komponis Muda (PKM)—directed by Hardjana himself.

There are many factors that account for the more promising prospects for the formation of an art music scene in 1980s. Indonesia in the first half of the twentieth century was by no means isolated from cultural flows from the West, or elsewhere, as is clear from the preceding discussion of *musik kontemporer*’s prehistory. But with the colonial constraints on association between different groups long gone, the relative prosperity and stability of the New Order, and the greater ubiquity of broadcast and recording media with new and more affordable technologies such as the transistor radio and the audio cassette, the reemergence of

private radio stations, and a parallel liberalization of the recording industry (Hatch 1989: 51-52; Sen and Hill 2000), the volume, strength, and reach of those flows had increased significantly over the 1970s. Most of what arrived was popular music, but alongside and mixed in with this mainstream were counter currents and odd bits of flotsam and jetsam available to the curious.¹²

More specifically supporting the emergence of the *musik kontemporer* scene were better established institutions, such as IKJ, and the presence in the scenes centered around these institutions of artists who had spent significant periods of time abroad. Sjukur was foremost among those artists. According to Raden, who began his studies at IKJ in 1974,

the return of Slamet A. Sjukur during the vacuum of contemporary art music activity in the mid-1970s was perceived by composers of my generation and after as the return of a hero. With his presence on the contemporary musical scene we, the ‘young’ generation of composers, felt that we had a perfect model for an Indonesian composer. (Notosudirdjo 2001: xxiii)

Sjukur’s “avant-gardism” was taken as “a symbol of progress and erudition,” and by associating themselves with him, Raden and his peers “felt that we, too, belonged to the European avant-garde music culture” (ibid.).

Sjukur quickly became the primary teacher of composition at IKJ. Indeed, Marusya Nainggolan, who like Raden started her studies at IKJ before Sjukur returned in 1976, insisted that he was the only composition teacher at IKJ (p.c., 20 August 2005). This opinion was also shared by a later student, Fahmi Alattas (1958–), who dropped out after Sjukur was

12. As discussed below, young composers in Jakarta found a significant number of LPs of avant-garde music sold by European embassies at a flea market. Royke Koapaha also reported finding a cassettes of music by Alois Haba, Isang Yun, and Iannis Xenakis (p.c., 14 August 2005). Less randomly, Sapto Raharjo recounted how he would read about “the latest developments in music in Europe and America” in “a magazine put out by USIS, the United States Information Service” (p.c., 29 July 2004).

fired in 1987 (p.c., 18 August 2005). Alattas described Frans Haryadi as “quite good” as a teacher of harmony, and from several accounts, the role that Haryadi took on was that of trying to instill in the students some knowledge of basics. Stephanie Griffin, in her biography of Tony Prabowo, commented that “Haryadi emphasized tradition, firmly believing that composers needed to master the classical craft before creating their own language and style” (Griffin 2003: 4). Michael Asmara similarly described Haryadi as believing that students needed a “foundation” (p.c., 3 June 2005). Yasudah, who reported that Haryadi taught music history as well as harmony, characterized him as having “a very strong classical orientation,” and reported him stating that “music is classical! If it’s not classical, it’s not music!” (p.c., 31 July 2004).

By contrast, Yasudah noted that for Sjukur, music could be “anything at all.” Sjukur did, in fact, explicitly promote the idea that music could be made out of anything at all. As part of a 1977 lecture entitled “Anatomy of Contemporary Music” he interjected recordings of “a motor running, a car crash, a bird chirping, a woman speaking French,” and declared that “*angklung*, a viola, an orchestra, an iron saw, or the knocking of a *bakso* vendor constitute sources of sound” (Sjukur, quoted in Sedyawati et al. 1997: 77).¹³ Of course, this perspective—that everyday sounds are valid material for musical composition, and that conventional instruments are also just sources of sound—is decidedly experimentalist, a perspective pioneered in different but related ways by figures such as Pierre Schaefer, with whom Sjukur worked, and John Cage. In important respects it involved a radical redefinition of music. But in other ways it maintained and worked within the broader framework of music

13. *Bakso* are Indonesian meatballs, typically served in soup. *Bakso* vendors, like other food vendors who push carts around neighborhoods, advertise their wares using distinctive sounds—in the case of *bakso*, by knocking on a woodblock.

as art—as an autonomous realm of aesthetic and spiritual experience. This was the frame in which Sjukur worked, and with which his students were expected and encouraged to engage. Music could be “anything at all” as long as it contributed to this larger project of contemporary art music.

The most important way in which Sjukur impressed upon his students that music could be “anything at all” was to avoid absolutely privileging any particular lineage, tradition, or approach within the international avant-garde. Suka Hardjana credits Sjukur with introducing “serial music, *musique concrète* and electroacoustic music” that “had been developed by Schoenberg, Webern, Cage, Varese, Stockhausen”—the “world of contemporary music” that “had been developing since the 1930s” but that prior to Sjukur’s introduction “was unknown in Indonesia” (Hardjana 1979b, in 2004b:22).¹⁴ But while Sjukur made sure that his students learned about developments that were considered most important in the contemporary music world, he did not insist that they adopt them. He was wary of placing too much importance on what he regarded as trends. He himself identified with composers such as Ligeti and Xenakis who looked beyond serialism—which had set out to liberate dissonance from the rules of functional harmony only to establish an new orthodoxy—and also with his teacher, Dutilleux, who admired “the rigour of dodecaphonic writing” but was “at heart, not a serial composer,”¹⁵ leading some to regard him as old-fashioned.

In teaching analysis, Sjukur was as likely to use earlier twentieth century pieces as more

14. This was not strictly true; Notosudirdjo started to compose a piece for gamelan “in the pointilist style of European post-serialism” (Notosudirdjo 2001: 340-342) in 1975, the year before Sjukur returned. He presumably became familiar with this style through Frans Haryadi, or perhaps Hardjana himself. Sjukur was, however, undoubtedly the strongest proponent of avant-gardism.

15. *Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Dutilleux, Henri,” by Caroline Potter, accessed 12 May 2010.

recent works to make particular points. Yasudah recounted Sjukur having students listen to Ravel's *Bolero* as an example of how musical development was not dependent on melodic and rhythmic invention, while they also examined Bartók's *Mikrokosmos* as an example of what could be done with simple motivic material. I asked Yasudah whether Sjukur imparted a sense that if one was to be a composer one had to know particular composers and their music. "This is necessary and not necessary," he responded. What was important was to have a sufficiently "broad and varied" knowledge "of all the music that has come to exist on the face of the earth" in order to know "what contribution needs to be made" (Yasudah, p.c., 31 July 2004). Sjukur's was less concerned with ensuring that his students be acquainted with a canon than he was with stimulating their curiosity through exposing them to different compositional possibilities. He did not present contemporary music as the latest phase in the evolution of the Western art music tradition, as if it could only be properly understood if one was knowledgeable about that tradition's history, but instead dealt with it directly in more elemental terms.

Nyak Ina Raseuki thus recounted being "given Bartók" on the first day of an analysis class, confusing students who from other teachers expected to start "with classical, or baroque, or Bach" (p.c., 18 August 2005). This is an example of Sjukur's very deliberate strategy of throwing students "in the deep end," as Michael Asmara described it (p.c., 3 June 2005). As Sjukur himself explained, he approached teaching music like a "swimming instructor" who would "push students directly into the pool, and be alert and ready on the edge watching if they needed help" (Sjukur, paraphrased by Winarno 1977a). Tony Prabowo relayed to me Sjukur's characterization of the situation of Indonesian composers as unsafe. Sjukur noted how safe is normal to those who live in safe surroundings, while those in a

“situation that was not safe” are unable to thrive, presumably because they are so preoccupied with survival (Tony Prabowo, p.c., 7 August 2005). While it was not entirely clear from Prabowo’s account what the source of danger was in Sjukur’s analogy, it seems to be less the threat of drowning than a debilitating fear of water. The Indonesian music scene, Sjukur would frequently comment, had been left behind—one hundred years behind as Prabowo remembered, two hundred as quoted by the press (Winarno 1978). Sjukur believed it futile to try and catch up starting from the beginning. Indonesian composers should not preoccupy themselves studying harmony, counterpoint, music history. Rather, he exhorted them to “anticipate”—to do “whatever you want” with some knowledge of contemporary music. Sjukur did not want to teach students how to swim, believing that they could only learn to survive if pushed directly into the pool (Tony Prabowo, p.c., 7 August 2005).

In a sense, Sjukur was as uncompromising with his students as he was with the Jakarta audiences to whom he presented his pieces. His pedagogical approach apparently did cause problems for a number of students. Prabowo recounted a “bad story” related to a workshop Sjukur had organized in 1982 with the visiting Dutch composer Ton de Leeuw. Worried about having only a handful of composition students, Sjukur appealed to others to register for courses at IKJ—indiscriminately, in Prabowo’s opinion. Faced with applicants who had limited or no knowledge of staff notation, he let them audition by singing pop songs with guitar. The month long workshop went ahead with twenty students, but most of them were ill-prepared for the lectures on twentieth century music that included analyses of pieces by Bartók, Stravinsky, and Webern. After a few semesters, many of them dropped out. “They couldn’t survive. Couldn’t understand analysis of Webern ‘Opus 22,’ Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring*, Beethoven string quartets” (Tony Prabowo, p.c., 7 August 2005). This incident bears

out Trisutji Kamal's criticism of Sjukur's pedagogical approach, that it was fine for a few exceptional students who were ready for his ideas, but other students were like "someone who's illiterate," who "wants to write, but can't" (p.c., 27 June 2005).

In Kamal's opinion, "here"—that is, in Indonesia—"we are still beginning." But from Sjukur's perspective, it was precisely this idea that would prevent Indonesian music from moving forward, that would doom it to an endless struggle to catch up. There may have been fewer casualties—fewer drownings—among students who studied with other instructors such as Kamal, who taught at IKJ for several years in the 1980s after Sjukur had left. But as Dieter Mack observes, nearly all of the contemporary composers who are most active are former students of Sjukur, while those who studied with Sjukur's colleagues are not particularly active (Mack 2005: 111). The philosophy that Sjukur imparted was undoubtedly a significant factor, and indeed seems to be a source of confidence for those exceptional students who did learn to survive as composers—including Yasudah, who according to Prabowo was among those who at the time of Ton de Leeuw's workshop was not yet able to read staff notation.¹⁶

Learning from Amateurs: The Angklung Production

In focusing on what it took to survive, Sjukur was uncompromising, but not in the sense of being insensitive to the challenges that young Indonesian composers faced. He did not inflexibly demand that his students take up the complex compositional methods current in the West. While he did much to expose them to those methods and their musical results, his primary aim in his analysis classes was to stimulate their thinking about music. At the same

16. Yasudah himself recounted being introduced to staff notation, "just a little bit . . . enough for an impression," while in middle and high school, but admitted to not having had the patience to learn how to sight-read (p.c., 31 July 2004).

time, he devised practical exercises that accommodated his students varied skill levels and experience. He was well-prepared to do so by an experience he regards as a “key event,” a pivotal moment, in the direction he took in his own career.

In 1975, in what would be his last year in Paris, Sjukur was commissioned by the Indonesian embassy to create a production for the Jeux d’Automne des Fêtes Internationales de la Vigne, a folklore festival in Dijon. Not having the budget “to bring in regular artists from Indonesia,” they asked Sjukur to make do with the resources that were readily available. The people he had to work with were members of the small Indonesian community connected to the embassy: “the officials,” including “the cultural attaché,” and “students on scholarship” (Slamet Abdul Sjukur, p.c., 9 September 2004). There were also their family members, resulting in “a random mix” of people “between nine and forty-one years old.” Most significantly, “not one of whom had a background in music” (Sjukur 1991: 130-131).

The instruments available were “also random.” Among them, however, were “185 *angklung* from Bandung, ordered from Pak Daeng” (Sjukur 1976). Daeng Sutigna, a teacher in the Dutch school system in the 1930s and 40s, introduced a diatonically tuned set of *angklung*—tuned bamboo rattles played by a group in the manner of a bell choir, with each performer responsible for one or two pitches—to his Boy Scout troop. It was broadly taken up by educators, so much so that groups of hundreds of students playing *angklung* became a common feature of special events—Perris cites the example of a group of “one thousand children” conducted by Sutigna for the opening of the Fifth National Sports Week in 1961 (Perris 1971: 405).

Angklung was regarded as a folk instrument—or, in urban settings, as “a crude instrument played by beggars to attract the attention of passersby.” In adapting it for music education,

teachers such as Sutigna drew upon the mix of paraclassical and more serious popular music that, as we saw in chapter 1, had come to dominate the emerging public culture of Indonesia as it moved toward independence. As Perris notes, “the range of melodies includes contemporary folk songs, as ‘Hello, Bandung,’”—a march officially though erroneously attributed to Ismail Marzuki¹⁷—“and the listing, Polynesian-styled tunes from the Malukkas, as ‘Sarinade,’ and Indonesian popular songs, the *krontjong*” (ibid.:404). “Western folk and popular songs are of equal standing,” he adds—indeed, Strauss’s “The Blue Danube” seems to be a perennial favorite (ibid.:404).¹⁸

Sjukur’s production for the festival in Dijon did not include “The Blue Danube,” but it did include “Hallo-Hallo Bandung,” as well as “Hela-Hela Rotan,” a folk-song from Maluku. This was no doubt to please the embassy, who as Mack notes would have wanted “popular songs” that were “patriotic” and that praised Indonesia’s heroes (Mack 2005: 168-169). The larger, overarching requirement, however, was that the production satisfy the expectations of the French audience for non-Western folklore. Apparently, it did so admirably. The festival in Dijon awarded the production first place (Sjukur 1976), while a recording released the following year on the Arion label (under the name *Groupe Angklung*) was awarded a “Gold Disc” by the Académie Charles Cros, the rough equivalent of a Grammy. From Jean Thévenot’s introduction in the notes to the recording, which comment on how the Dijon

17. Tambajong, in his entry on Hallo-Hallo Bandung, notes that the song was attributed to Marzuki by none other than President Sukarno, who recognized Marzuki’s contributions with the Piagam Wijdjakusuma award in 1960, two years after Marzuki’s death. The song was actually composed by Lumban Tobing (Ensiklopedi Musik, s.v. “Hallo-Hallo Bandung”).

18. During my first trip to Indonesia, when my focus was learning to play gamelan, I spent a month in Bandung. I heard from Andrew Weintraub (p.c. 2005) about preparations for a colossal performance by middle and high school students as part of a celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the Asian-African Conference held in Bandung in 1955. A featured item in the performance was “The Blue Danube.”

festival “repeatedly provides examples” of traditions that change due to “reciprocal influences” as “our planet is shrinking,” it does not seem that absolute authenticity was demanded from the production. Sjukur could thus present “a form of folk music which evolves and is not heading for the museums.” Sjukur told me that in actuality he had composed all of the music, except for two selections: “Hallo-Hallo Bandung,” and “Hela-Hela Rotan,” which his notes identify as a “Song from the Molluca archipelago.”¹⁹ Yet the notes also identify two other tracks as songs “from Sumatra,” and Sjukur is credited not as composer, but as “performance leader.”

To be sure, most of the tracks are largely (quasi-)traditional in character, albeit with subtle compositional twists and heightened attention to details of articulation and arrangement. “Hallo-Hallo Bandung,” for example, opens with the ensemble speaking the words in rhythm, first in exaggeratedly clipped and energetic syllables, then abruptly switching to a sustained and hushed declamation, and then a whisper. The *angklung* come in, playing the melody without accompaniment, mostly straightforwardly but with elongated tones and pauses that play with one’s sense of expectation. In “Tetabeuhan Sungut”—the piece which seems to have been most widely presented beyond the initial production, probably because as a vocal composition it doesn’t require the availability of *angklung* instruments—“the voice is inspired, imitating in a very free manner, by the drum orchestras of the western part of Java, by the *pencak* or Madura martial art and by the *gerongan*, a chorala [sic] from Central Java.”²⁰ The piece resembles, as Raden observes, a genre known as

19. The Malukkas, the Moluccas, and the Molluca archipelago are different orthographic variations for what are now called the Maluku islands, located in Eastern Indonesia.

20. See the journal *Balungan* (Sjukur 2004) for a reproduction of the score.

jemblung from the Banyumas region of Java, “in which vocalists imitate the sounds of gamelan instruments” (Notosudirdjo 2001: 346). But whereas in *jemblung* the burlesque spectacle of a small group attempting to approximate the sound of a gamelan supports dramatic presentations of *wayang kulit* stories—presentations that are at once earnest and mocking of a form that idealizes a feudal order, and that thus have particular resonance for performers and audiences in a region that is quite peripheral to the courtly centers of high culture and power (Lysloff 1990)—Sjukur’s “Tetabeuhan Sungut” is a concert piece whose seamless transitions between allusions to disparate traditional forms is more of a private joke,²¹ one that would have been lost on a French audience for whom all of the music was equally unfamiliar.

The bigger joke was that of Sjukur passing off his compositions as folk music. He delighted in recalling that the French committee for the festival commented on how “folkloric Indonesian music” was “like contemporary music.” At the same time, Sjukur felt that he wasn’t entirely lying. He taught the pieces without using notation, so the process was “in the oral tradition” (p.c., 20 August 2005). The *angklung* production was clearly pivotal in Sjukur’s own nativist turn, a turn that he took enthusiastically, but that at the same time was complicated and qualified as he kept one foot firmly planted in the stance of an avant-garde composer. He became something of a spokesperson and advocate for traditional Indonesian

21. An especially striking example is a section in the middle of the piece that starts with a single female voice quietly singing a repeating pattern that alternates between two notes, punctuated by a group of men imitating the stroke of gong, evoking the austere atmosphere of *gendhing kemanak*, pieces named after the pair of bronze banana-shaped bells that provide a metric frame for soaring vocal lines to accompany *bedhaya* and *srimpi* dances. With the entrance of a second voice imitating a syncopated pattern of strokes on a single drum, the reference shifts to the archaic *gamelan kodhok ngorek*. Through a series of shifts in volume, busier patterns, and the entrance of more singers, the refinement of the court transforms into the more dynamic sensibility of folk forms such as *ketuk tilu*.

music, with respect to what it had to offer to composition, talking about the *angklung* production in various lectures and symposium in Europe and in Indonesia. This included his participation in the 1978 World Composers Forum “Multicultura” in the Netherlands (*Sinar Harapan*, 13 October 1978), a workshop that had previously been attended by such modernist-turned-nativists as Chou Wen-Chung (Chang 2001: 112). Sjukur used the opportunity to “convey examples of traditional music that endeavored to approach contemporary aesthetic concepts” (*Sinar Harapan*, 13 October 1978). He similarly discussed his *angklung* production in his lecture on the “Anatomy of Contemporary Music,” in which he also advanced his argument against “following in the footsteps” of the Europeans—who, he noted, have “drawn material extensively from non-European musics.” “We are already more contemporary than them,” he opined. He agreed with a comment made at the lecture by Liberty Manik—who by this point had himself taken a nativist turn²²—that modern developments such as electroacoustic music would not lead to the disappearance of traditional music. Sjukur added that he had heard Batak *gondang* music at Manik’s house, found it “extraordinarily good,” and thought that Europeans would “find a path to obtain inspiration” from this kind of music.

Teaching Resourcefulness

Sjukur also found “Tetabeuhan Sungut” useful pedagogically, using it in workshops in

22. For his first five years in Europe, starting in 1954, Manik studied composition, choral conducting, and organ in the Netherlands. Then, in 1959, he turned to scholarship, completing a dissertation on Arabic tonal systems in the Middle Ages in 1968, published as a textbook in 1969. He subsequently completed a study of Batak ritual *gondang* music—the term *gondang*, meaning “ceremony,” is also “a central musical term, meaning drum, ensemble and musical composition” (Grove Music Online, s.v. “Indonesia, §VI: Sumatra,” by Marc Perlman). This music was generally frowned upon by the Christian missionaries who had introduced the choral traditions that, as discussed in chapter 2, provided Manik and his Batak peers with their musical foundations.

Indonesia. This would suggest that he encouraged students to consider the relevance of traditional Indonesian musics to their compositional practice. Sjukur's students would take their own nativist turns, but for the most part they did so in an equally complicated and qualified fashion that I examine in chapter 5. More immediately and more obviously, they picked up on a different aspect of Sjukur's *angklung* project: how to create with whatever resources are available.

Writing about the *angklung* production many years after the fact, in a 1991 article on his aesthetic philosophy, Sjukur noted how with "only three months" to prepare, it was unreasonable "to hope that hoarse voices would become smooth" or that those "out of tune" could be trained to sing "in tune."

There was no time to play around like that. All that was left was to figure out how best to use these flaws so that they would no longer be viewed as flaws. It turned out they could be made to produce sound like a swarm of a thousand mosquitos, or a gentle breeze, or like frogs whose sound from afar evokes an eery stillness, and so on. (Sjukur 1991: 130-131)

The one piece in the *angklung* production which made use of the ensemble in this fashion is "Sepur Mendem," translated in the notes to the recording as "The Train which has drunk" ("*mendem*" is the Javanese word for "intoxicated"). Whereas the avant-gardist twists in the other pieces are quite subtle, and may well have passed as mere quirks, it is hard to imagine "Sepur Mendem" being presented or accepted as folk music, even folk music that "evolves and is not heading for the museums." The piece is effectively a *musique concrète*-style depiction of a train using the acoustic means of voices and *angklung*, in which conventional melodic and rhythmic patterns are completely absent. The piece begins with several layers of voices repeating different syllables, with the effect of the rattling of a train moving at a good clip; other voices then enter making sibilant sounds, and the rattles are replaced with puffs

sounding like bursts of steam. The *angklung* enter quietly, producing a cloud of sound, with random accents from individual instruments preceding a regular series of bursts from the lower pitched instruments.

Back in Indonesia, teaching at IKJ, Sjukur again found himself “facing a group that can’t read notation, but that has much potential to make music.” As well as having them perform “Tetabeuhan Sungut,” he had them create music using readily available objects, such as “children’s toys that cost less than 100 rupiah.”²³ Through his workshops, the students “took them seriously,” as “no longer merely toys” (Sjukur quoted in Winarno 1977a). Observing a workshop, the reporter who interviewed Sjukur commented on students arriving “carrying strange instruments in terms of conventional music . . . There were tin cans, pieces of iron struck with nails, there was the whistling of neighborhood kids, toy tambourines.”

Sjukur spoke of this work, of producing music with the cheapest of materials, as countering what he regarded as a detrimental fixation on new technology in Indonesia, represented most clearly in music by the widespread popularity of Yamaha’s Electone electric organ. With this instrument, “people could play just by plunking out the melody, while the harmony, instrumentation, and rhythm would come out by themselves.” With the turn of a knob, “we can get the sound of an orchestra, *bossa nova* rhythm, blues or whatever we like.” The Electone “aroused the interest of lazy people,” at once responding to their laziness and “pushing” them “to become even more lazy” (Sjukur quoted in Winarno 1977a).²⁴ Finding value in everyday objects contrasted just as dramatically with the

23. In 1977, the equivalent of about twenty-five US cents.

24. The popularity of the Electone was largely a result of Yamaha’s considerable investment in music education in Indonesia. Yamaha opened its flagship Indonesian music school, the Yayasan Musik Indonesia (Yayasan = Foundation), in Jakarta in 1972. It currently licenses 105 schools throughout Indonesia, which offer courses on the Electone to children and adults, and continues to run an Electone

considerable investment in technology on the part of the new music establishment and their government supporters in France, manifest most strikingly by the computer music research and production institute IRCAM that opened in 1977.²⁵ This can be taken as another instance of Sjukur's philosophical differences with the orthodoxies of the European contemporary music scene.

Sjukur did not, however, completely abandon his interest in the possibilities afforded by technology—an interest that he pursued during his years in Europe at the Groupe de Recherches Musicales, which in some respects was a precursor to IRCAM, and at the Elektronmusikstudion in Stockholm—or in music that required substantial technical resources. He recounted, for example, his unsuccessful efforts in 1980 to secure funding to present *Polytopes* in Indonesia (Slamet Abdul Sjukur, p.c., 9 September 2004), a multimedia work by Iannis Xenakis that involved “organized ‘clouds’ of light sources, the movement of laser-beams in space and the rhythm of electronic lightning flashes.”²⁶ He did manage in 1978 to arrange a performance of “Shânti,” an electroacoustic composition by Jean-Claude Eloy that required a quadraphonic system. But even that was “difficult,” only happening after his “friends,” after “looking everywhere,” managed to locate a machine to play “four inch tape” (Slamet Abdul Sjukur, p.c., 9 September 2004).

festival (<http://yamaha.co.id/about-yamaha>, accessed 27 September 2010). While the Electone and electric organs of its type may have been primarily the province of amateurs, the national recording company Lokananta saw fit to release one recording of “Instrumental Organ” (*Gambang Suling*. ACI 062, 1978); the recording featured arrangements of a mix of popular national songs by songwriters such as Ismail Marzuki and popular melodies from different regional traditions, including Ki Nartosabdho's “Gambang Suling” as the title track.

25. For an extensive and insightful ethnography and analysis of IRCAM (Institut de Recherche et de Coordination Acoustique/Musique), and the tendencies in contemporary music that it embodied, see Born (1995).

26. *Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Xenakis, Iannis,” by Peter Hoffmann, accessed 30 September 2010.

Sjukur's friends included his students, who demonstrated equal resourcefulness in realizing their own work, and furthering their education. Sjukur had instilled in them a sense that they needed to learn about as much music as possible, and inspired an interest in music which used new technologies. But as the facilities at IKJ were very basic, they had to take it upon themselves to gather the necessary resources. Tony Prabowo described the frustration he and his peers felt trying to get access to LP recordings, including one of Anton Webern's music, that were kept in a locked cabinet. When they finally gained access, they found that the collection had been damaged by termites.²⁷ Sjukur assisted his students in creating and managing their own collection, paying a "salary" of 25,000 Rupiah per month.²⁸ They used the money to buy records at the flea market on Jalan Surabaya (Surabaya Street).²⁹ Prabowo recounted buying "a hundred records from Czechoslovakia, from Hungary," sold by "their embassies" (Tony Prabowo, p.c., 7 August 2005). Otto Sidharta described how they "worked continuously to gather recordings," making cassette copies of LPs held by the "Erasmus Huis" and the "Goethe Institut."³⁰ Sidharta also recounted making an electronic music studio

27. A double bass suffered the same fate.

28. Approximately US \$40.00 in 1979. Comparing this to 1978 data quoted in an analysis of civil service compensation by Clive Gray (1979: 113), 25,000 Rupiah is at the higher end of the 16,000–27,000 range of salaries for first grade (the lowest of four) civil servants. Salaries of those in the second grade range from 38,000 to 48,000 Rupiah, while those in the fourth grade (representing only 0.5 percent of civil servants) of earn salaries between 103,000 and 133,000 Rupiah. As Gray observes, however, salaries constitute only part—in some cases "a small fraction"—of civil servants' compensation, much of which is not legally sanctioned.

29. This market, still standing in 2005, runs for several blocks along one side of the street, offering a mix of antiques, LP and cassette recordings, cameras, and electronic equipment.

30. The Erasmus Huis, a center to promote Dutch culture and to support cultural exchange between the Netherlands and Indonesia, was opened in Jakarta in 1970 (http://www.mfa.nl/erasmushuis/en/the_erasmushuis/history, accessed 4 October 2010). The Goethe Institut, a similar but larger organization with centers around the globe, operates in Jakarta, Bandung, and Surabaya (<http://www.goethe.de/ins/id/lp/idindex.htm>, accessed 4 October 2010).

at IKJ with secondhand equipment. As they worked there “all the time,” they often slept there. This was not regarded favorably by security. When the rector saw the room, however, he said, according to Sidharta, “wah, I can't order you to leave. This is good” (p.c., 6 June 2005).

While electroacoustic music did not become a major aspect of *musik kontemporer*, this was what the composers coming out of IKJ presented at the first two PKM. At the second, in 1981, Franki Raden presented a quadrophonic piece of “MUSIK-KONGKRIT” entitled “Dilarang Bertepuk Tangan dalam Toilet” (It is forbidden to clap your hands in the toilet”). The piece used both recordings of everyday sounds and “pure sounds (sine tones) produced by sound equipment in the studio.” But unlike the “tape” pieces by then common in the international new music world, which typically involved little or no performance aspect—pieces were completed in the studio such that they could simply be played back in concert, or broadcast, or produced as a commercially available recording—Raden’s piece involved six players, each operating a separate mixer. The use of several mixers may well have been a workaround to the unavailability of multi-channel recording and playback equipment.³¹

The creative use of what was available was even more evident in Otto Sidharta’s “Kemelut” (Crisis), presented at the first PKM in 1979. The piece involved three performers who “regulate the dripping and flow of water” and one who “processes” the sound captured through microphones “with a filter and mixer” (Sidharta’s notes, in Hardjana 1986: 7-10). Sidharta explained that the performers working directly with water were positioned in the

31. Raden’s notes for the piece give no indication of the extent to which the work was fixed, or of the tasks of the players—who included “Otto” (presumably Sidharta) and “Tony” (presumably Prabowo); the mixers are evident in a photograph, presumably taken at or around the time of the performance (Hardjana 1986: 83-87).

bathroom backstage, adjusting the speed of the taps and sometimes splashing with the water scooper,³² while he himself was “in front, mixing,” gradually adding delay and flange effects to make the sound “more metallic” (Otto Sidharta, p.c., 6 June 2005). The piece thus combined aesthetic and technical aspects of electroacoustic music with the low-tech approach represented by Sjukur’s work with non-musicians.

Iconoclasm as Boon and Downfall

Dieter Mack has called Slamet Abdul Sjukur the “‘father’ of the contemporary scene” (2004: 197-198). Although there were many other younger composers who emerged in other scenes who cannot be considered Sjukur’s artistic progeny, and although one might object to the great man approach to historiography—objections that Mack seems to have acknowledged by placing ‘father’ in scare-quotes—the characterization does fairly recognize Sjukur’s singular importance to the Jakarta scene, which located as it was in Indonesia’s capital was in many respects the central scene of *musik kontemporer*.

At the same time, Sjukur’s success in raising the scene that developed at IKJ had much to do with how unlike a father he was. To be sure, Sjukur commanded authority with his considerable experience and his intellectual and artistic confidence. But he bucked the social and institutional conventions of authority, which only increased his appeal to those who were also drawn to less conventional modes of musical creativity. At the outset of my first interview with him, he explained that he disliked being called “Pak”—the usual term of address for one’s superiors, also used in formal situations.³³ This was not because he didn’t

32. Basins and water scoopers are ubiquitous in Indonesian bathrooms, used both for bathing and for flushing squat toilets.

33. Terms of address are almost always used in Indonesian, either alone or prefacing someone’s name.

like to be reminded of his age—he was 69 at the time—but because it made him feel like a “functionary” (*pejabat*), a type toward whom he had “an allergy” (Slamet Abdul Sjukur, p.c., 9 September 2004).

As a teacher, Sjukur was concerned with teaching his students “how they must think” rather than “what they must think.” He thus encouraged them to “always be suspicious” toward him, “and especially toward themselves” (Winarno 1977a). Sjukur thus fostered an environment at IKJ where he and his students had what Yasudah described as a “dialectic connection.” Such a connection was lacking elsewhere, where the more common attitude that one should follow the “doctrine from those that were older” prevailed (Yasudah, p.c., 31 July 2004). Most teachers, Sjukur suggested, would take the position that they were the teacher, and that they were right, “like functionaries.” Sjukur admitted that he “didn’t have an aptitude for that” (p.c., 9 September 2004). Nevertheless, he had enough stature to hold the position of dean of the music department.

The strikingly different atmosphere at IKJ helped Yasudah to overcome a reticence to follow his interest in music that had held him back since middle school, and that was exacerbated by the more formal atmosphere at other schools. He described visiting ASKI Surakarta, the academy of traditional performing arts which at the time was located just around the corner from his house, and feeling paralyzed—he indicated this not by speaking, but by mumbling and gesturing. Similarly, when he visited AMI Jogja, he felt like “his mouth was locked shut.” In retrospect, he understood his difficulty as a “gap” between his desire to

Pak is an abbreviation of *bapak* (father); the equivalent term for women is *bu* or *ibu* (mother). *Mas* (brother) and *mbak* (sister) are used, most commonly by Javanese Indonesians, in informal situations with those of equal or lesser status, determined by age and socio-economic position. The use of these terms carries into Indonesian some of the negotiation of relative status that is unavoidable in Javanese, with its elaborate system of language levels.

make music and the opportunities he had to do so—which consisted of playing in either a gamelan or a rock band. This gap that stemmed from not having a clear “orientation”—in other words, he was unable to fully relate to the musics around him. He finally found a clear orientation in the contemporary music he encountered at IKJ. Equally important was the fact that “even as a newcomer I could talk freely,” unlike the situation elsewhere where “people have to be old, only then can they talk.” According to Yasudah, “many friends felt similarly.” At IKJ, “everyone could talk freely until discovering the route of their choice” (Yasudah, p.c., 31 July 2004).

As well as being allergic to functionaries, Sjukur showed little regard for the policies and regulations that were their province. He happily accepted students from other departments, who “wanted to switch to music” because “they liked my teaching.” Otto Sidharta was one such student, having entered IKJ as a visual art student after failing AMI Jogja’s entrance exam.³⁴ The fact that these students “didn’t know music” caused the administration concern, but for Sjukur “it was not a problem.” Sjukur pointed them toward “electroacoustic music,” which they made with the secondhand equipment they bought themselves from the flea market on Jalan Surabaya. The music they made “was good . . . very new” (Slamet Abdul Sjukur, p.c., 9 September 2004).³⁵

Sjukur was “reprimanded” for disregarding due process for accepting students in one discipline or another. It was not the last time he would run afoul of the IKJ administration. In

34. Sidharta had learned to read staff notation through the private lessons in guitar and piano he had taken while he was in high school, but these lessons left him unprepared for part of the exam concerned with music theory (p.c., 6 June 2005).

35. Sidharta noted, however, that he was also interested in instrumental music, but “made more electronic music because it was easier to present” and also less expensive (p.c., 6 June 2005).

another incident involving Otto Sidharta, Sjukur again bypassed official channels when he helped him to continue his studies in the Netherlands. Ton de Leeuw, who heard Sidharta's music when he was at IKJ in 1982, was reportedly "amazed" at what Sidharta had produced using equipment that in the Netherlands "would already have been thrown out." He invited Sidharta to study at the Sweelinck Conservatory in Amsterdam, and as director arranged for him to receive a scholarship (Slamet Abdul Sjukur, p.c., 9 September 2004). The IKJ faculty opposed this, as Sidharta had not yet graduated; allowing him to study at the Sweelinck Conservatory was, in their view, "not consistent with the 'steps of a student's career'" (Mack 2005: 109). Arguing that it was de Leeuw's idea, not his own, Sjukur pushed the arrangement through. He also assisted Sidharta financially, paying for private English language lessons, and in 1984 Sidharta set off for Amsterdam. But then, after he was already two years into his studies, the Minister of Culture protested against the Dutch embassy. Sidharta had received his scholarship directly, contravening an agreement between the Netherlands and Indonesia that all scholarships were to go through the Indonesian government (Slamet Abdul Sjukur, p.c., 9 September 2004).

There were other incidents that strained Sjukur's relationship with others at IKJ. He recounted to Dieter Mack how he once broke a window to get in his office to retrieve his belongings. He realized he had left them there following an after-hours screening of a film from Poland—an activity that itself would have been frowned upon given the "suspicion toward anything that had a whiff of communism"—and was tired of waiting for the security guard to show up to let him in (Mack 2005: 108-109). More generally, Sjukur alluded to the fact that "many teachers were envious of me," because of his popularity. In particular, there was "a crazy teacher, a teacher from a past age," whom Sjukur did not identify by name, who

blamed Sjukur for the lack of discipline he perceived in students (Slamet Abdul Sjukur, p.c., 9 September 2004).

Finally, in 1987, the strain reached the breaking point and Sjukur was fired—an occurrence he referred to as “the greatest thing.” His students followed, dropping out without graduating—a point made by several individuals I spoke with (Yasudah, p.c., 31 July 2004; Fahmi Alattas, p.c., 18 August 2005), but relayed most emphatically by Prabowo, who declared that “There was not a single . . . there wasn’t anyone who graduated . . . [Not] even Franki [Raden]” (p.c., 7 August 2005). The one exception was Marusya Nainggolan, who studied only briefly with Sjukur before graduating in 1976 (Hardjana 1986). While she viewed the fact that others didn’t graduate as a failure to complete their studies (Marusya Nainggolan, p.c., 20 August 2005), the others were decidedly nonchalant. This perhaps reflected the extent to which they had adopted Sjukur’s indifference to formalities such as a completed degree. But more centrally it had to do with their lack of faith that IKJ could provide what they needed to advance their careers. In the estimation of Dalles Sinaga, a colleague of Prabowo and Sidharta, students learned 70% from each other, and only 30% from their instructors (Griffin 2003: 5). Yasudah described students leaving also “because of problems with the curriculum,” that what they felt they needed was “not accessible enough” (Yasudah, p.c., 31 July 2004).

IKJ had, then, serious shortcomings. It contributed to the formation of one of the key *musik kontemporer* scenes most of all by providing an institutional setting, by bringing a group of musicians together in one place. It allowed Prabowo, Sidharta, Alattas, Yasudah, and others—including Sjukur—to form relationships which they continued even after they abandoned or were banished from IKJ. With Sjukur’s departure, IKJ itself ceased to play a

significant role in the ongoing development of *musik kontemporer*. It can only be said to have indirectly produced musicians who would become key figures in *musik kontemporer*. With Sjukur gone, it stopped producing any.

The Jogja Scene

The Arrival of Jack Body

In 1976, the very same year that Slamet Abdul Sjukur returned to Indonesia from Paris and began inspiring younger composers in Jakarta to create new music informed by developments in the international new music world, a similarly inspiring figure arrived in Jogja to teach at the Akademi Musik Indonesia (AMI). That figure was Jack Body (1944–), an energetic and somewhat younger composer from New Zealand.

Body was part of a small circle of students surrounding the senior New Zealand composer Douglas Lilburn (1915–2001), who in the mid 1960s, at the height of a distinguished career, gave up composing “conventional music” to devote himself to “electronic music.”³⁶ Body went to Europe to continue his studies, as did most of his peers. In Cologne he worked with Mauricio Kagel (1931–2008), an Argentinian composer who had established himself as a leading figure of the European avant-garde. He also studied at the Institute of Sonology in Utrecht. Body composed in various genres of Western art music, including solo, chamber, and choral music, but gained particular distinction for his

36. Lilburn’s turn to electroacoustic music came after having “traversed Bartók, Stravinsky, the Second Viennese School and contemporary Americans” in the “metamorphosis” of his style from an initial “rhapsodic and astringently Romantic” orientation influenced by “Sibelius and Vaughn Williams” (Grove Music Online, s.v. “Lilburn, Douglas [Gordon],” by J. M. Thomson, accessed 1 November 2010).

electroacoustic work. In 1976, he was awarded first place at the annual competition of the Institut International de Musique électroacoustique in Bourges, France, for his “Musik dari Jalan” (Music from the street). The piece, which presented “the evocative vocal and instrumental sounds of street hawkers,” was “the first of a series of six electroacoustic works based on Indonesian field recordings,”³⁷ recordings that Body made during his first trip to Indonesia in 1975.

While in Indonesia, Body passed through Jogja and visited AMI. He met Ed Van Ness, an American musician whom AMI had convinced to stay and help rebuild their program when he visited in early 1974.³⁸ Interested in spending more time in Indonesia, Body suggested to Van Ness that “he might like to be a lecturer.” With an invitation to teach from AMI, arranged by Van Ness, Body was able to convince New Zealand’s ministry of foreign affairs to sponsor him, and he returned to Jogja in the beginning of 1976.

One of the first things Body did was to give a series of “ten or twelve lectures” on contemporary music. The lectures were intended primarily for the “staff,” with the idea that they should be better informed about recent musical developments. AMI seemed less interested in having Body guide students in actually employing contemporary compositional approaches. Indeed, as far as Body could tell, instruction in composition was not part of the curriculum. For his official duties, he was only asked to teach piano (p.c., 29 May 2005

37. http://www.jackbody.com/works_by_date.htm, accessed 1 November 2010.

38. Van Ness, a graduate student in ethnomusicology at Wesleyan University, had gone to Jogja to meet his in-laws after completing two years of fieldwork in Chennai—he had met his wife Sita Laksmi Prawiroharjo at Wesleyan. When he first agreed to teach at AMI he thought he would stay “for six months.” He ended up staying “for eleven years.” After that he taught at Universitas Sumatra Utara in Medan, from 1984 through 2004. He then accepted an invitation to help rebuild another institution, and became principal conductor of the Nusantara Symphony Orchestra (Edward Van Ness, p.c., 14 June 2005).

0529).

Body did teach composition, setting up an “informal group” that met “once or twice a week.” According to Joseph Praba, one of Body’s students, they met off campus at Body’s house (p.c., 14 August 2005). The group was open to anyone who was interested, as long as they were prepared to “submit a composition that they had written.” This presumably meant submitting a score of a piece. The activities the group engaged in, however, were by no means limited to the standard means and resources of concert music. Body recalled taking students to perform in places around Jogja, including the home and studio of poet and theater director Rendra. He also mentioned playing at one of the train stations (Jack Body, p.c., 29 May 2005). There, Praba recounted, Body attempted to match the sound of the train with instruments. In another piece, which Praba and friends played after Body sent them the score, Body revisited his interest in the calls of street vendors. Praba described a bassoon imitating the sound of “Rokok, rokok!” (cigarettes). Praba also recounted an occasion when they “made a composition on the street.” They played the utility line poles, which at that time were made of iron, and also used sounds from bicycles and *becak* (pedicabs) (Joseph Praba, p.c., 14 August 2005).

Reflecting on his former students, Body seemed pleased that none of them “developed into convention-bound composers.” But he also admitted that he was “in some sense disappointed” that they had all but completely abandoned “writing notes.” This implies that he gave at least some attention to compositional technique as more conventionally conceived in the Western art music tradition, instruction that would have connected with AMI’s curricular focus on that tradition. Two of Body’s students did in fact gain some distinction “writing notes.” Yoesbar Djaelani and Sutanto both received first place in composition

competitions held by the Jakarta Arts Council—competitions which, as noted above, did not involve performances of works but only evaluation of submitted scores.

Yet even Sutanto’s instrumental compositions involved challenging or at least playing with conventions, not so much in their use of modernist instrumental or compositional techniques, but in more comic interventions. Body described a string quartet by Sutanto that started out “very optimistic and bright” and “cheerful.” As the piece went on, the players “were to loosen the strings, one by one,” and “become depressed.” In another piece for orchestra, Sutanto handed a note to the timpani player that he should play “pianissimo” in rehearsals, but “triple forte” in performance; when it came to the concert, the “orchestra jumped” in reaction (Jack Body, p.c., 29 May 2005). Van Ness described another instance in which Sutanto saved a sly intervention until the performance. Body, wanting Sutanto to hear a piece he had written for orchestra, asked Van Ness if he would play it. Van Ness found the piece “very amorphous,” changing tempo and density at various points, but without any discernible “grand plan.” Finally, during the performance in Jakarta, the logic behind the design of the piece, and the reason why Sutanto insisted on sitting in the middle of the orchestra during rehearsals, became clear. Sutanto “stood up on a chair, and gave a political speech,” criticizing the government, the education system, and telling his Jakarta audience that they “were all snooties” (Edward Van Ness, p.c., 14 June 2005).³⁹

Other work by Sutanto, Djaelani, and Praba was decidedly more experimental in

39. Van Ness had good reason to have worried about the consequences of such overt criticism of those in power. In that year, 1978, both dangdut superstar Rhoma Irama and theater director Rendra had been jailed, as had many political activists. In the end nothing happened. Van Ness at first thought that the performance was, like *wayang orang*, treated as an “escape valve”—as a forum where criticism was allowed because the audience for it was sufficiently small. In retrospect, Van Ness reflected that “we weren’t an escape valve, we were just small fish” (Edward Van Ness, p.c., 14 June 2005).

approach. For the first meeting of the PKM in Jakarta in 1979, Sutanto organized what essentially amounted to a “happening.” “Sketsa Ide” (Sketch of an Idea) made use of a variety of “cottage industry” objects such as cowbells and horse-cart jingles, saws for cutting metal and wood, machetes, bamboo whips, wooden clogs, log drums, and a *lesung*—a large hollowed out log for hulling rice, by pounding it with heavy poles, that had long been used musically.⁴⁰ Also used were bamboo whistles, slide whistles, toy windmills, and a large number of humming tops⁴¹—objects usually referred to as “children’s toys,” but as this “gives the connotation” that they are “not serious, light, or shallow” Sutanto prefers to call them “sound devices” (*alat bunyi*). “As an addition” the piece made use of “conventional instruments” such as flute, violins, and cello. In the final section, intended as “mere entertainment” following the “SERIOUS (?????)” music of the prior sections, these instruments played “various styles POP, JAZZ, CLASSICAL” (Sutanto’s notes, in Hardjana 1986: 47-53). Sutanto described the core of the piece as a “sound composition,” commenting that he was “bored using the term music” (Hardjana 1979b, in 2004b:42). Hardjana, in his review, was inclined to call it “sound without composition.” Indeed, the piece was organized less around sound itself than the movement of performers throughout the space, turning the lights on and off, and the distribution of “sound devices” among audience members. As Sutanto intended, the audience went from reacting to the seemingly chaotic proceedings to actively participating in them, resulting in, as Hardjana characterized it, a “hell of sound,” a “commotion that has yet to be equalled” in the history of Taman Ismail Marzuki, where the

40. The interlocking rhythms of (usually) women pounding rice in a *lesung* was the inspiration for the theatrical genre *kethoprak* (Brandon 1967: 47-48), and also depicted in “Lesung Jumengglung,” a *lagu dolanan* by Nartosabdho.

41. See (Kunst 1973: 434) for a photograph of these tops, known as *gangsingan*.

PKM was held (Hardjana 1979b, in 2004b:42).

At the third PKM in 1982, Yoesbar Djaelani presented “Tanya Yang Tak Terjawab” (The unanswered question), a piece concerned with the experience of “emotional contact.” Memet Chairul Slamet, a younger colleague of Djaelani who participated in the piece’s performance, described it as being “musik konkret” (*musique concrète*) in concept, but using vocals. Twenty-one performers were arranged in three groups positioned around the audience, producing a “quadraphonic” effect (Memet Chairul Slamet, p.c., 6 August 2005). The material for the piece included both techniques “customary in music” such as humming and glissando, and those which were “not yet customary” such as “laughing, crying, and screaming” (Hardjana 1986: 169-170). The character of the piece, according to Slamet, was “very theatrical” (p.c., 6 August 2005). This theatricality led some commentators in the discussion session on the fourth and final day of the festival to question whether it was fair to consider the piece music (Hardjana 1986: 197-208).

In the two years that Body was at AMI, he had about 20 composition students. Many of them “managed one composition, maybe the one and only that they ever did” (Jack Body, p.c., 29 May 2005). But a handful of others, including Sutanto and Djaelani, became committed to composition as their primary focus, and particularly attracted to experimentalist practices. These students clearly credited Body as their primary source for information about experimentalism in contemporary music. Sutanto included in a collection of writing published in 2002 a short piece titled “Experimental Music according to Jack Body” (Sutanto 2002: 56-58), and acknowledged in the beginning of a profile of Fluxus that he first heard of the movement from Body around 1975 (*ibid.*:80). At the outset of Sutanto’s essay, however, Sutanto clearly relays Body’s aversion to the term experimental music. Body told Sutanto

that he just does what he likes rather than deliberately trying to be “strange or eccentric,” and if society calls him experimental, that’s their choice (ibid.:56-57). Praba similarly reported that Body would never call his student’s work avant-garde or modern, even though he pushed them to consider new ideas (Joseph Praba, p.c., 11 August 2005). Body himself, in a statement on his work from 1975, declared “Musically I am certain of almost nothing.”⁴² Rather than an attempt to convert his Indonesian students to experimentalism, the activities that Body organized are better understood as an effort to get them to consider different possibilities for what music could be. Along similar lines, Body and Ed Van Ness engaged students in the production of a television documentary which asked the question “What is Indonesian Music?” The documentary included clips of jazz and *kroncong* as well as gamelan and other traditional music (Jack Body, p.c., 29 May 2005). Nevertheless, experimentalism was prominent among those students who did continue as composers.

Subsequent Developments

The leadership of AMI showed considerably less enthusiasm for experimentalism, and little interest in considering alternatives to its focus on the European classical tradition. In 1981 the director of the school, A. P. Suhascarya, went so far as to eliminate contemporary music from its curriculum. In Suhascarya’s estimation, such music “absolutely does not speak to [our] circle and can cause a school to become an organization which ostracizes students and its society” (Suhastjara as paraphrased by Kompas, quoted in Lindsay 1985: 68-footnote 43). This decision was presumably what led to what Raden described as a “violent protest” of

42. Liner notes to *New Zealand Electronic Music*, Wellington: Kiwi SLD-44/46, 1975. 3 LP box set.

composition students against AMI.⁴³ The protest was led by Sutanto, who was subsequently expelled (Notosudirdjo 2001: 349). In addition to eliminating contemporary music from the curriculum, Suhascarya effectively discouraged students from studying composition by instituting prerequisites that few could meet, presumably in an attempt to uphold standards. Budi Ngurah mentioned needing a certain grade in harmony as well as “a very strong foundation” (p.c., 9 July 2005). According to Hadi Susanto, who entered AMI in 1984, the prerequisite was having already completed “two symphonies,” something that only one or two students he knew of had accomplished (p.c., 6 August 2005).⁴⁴

Despite AMI’s official rejection of contemporary music, and its effective discouragement of composition, there was continued if limited growth of the nascent *musik kontemporer* scene in Jogja. A handful of students who entered AMI in the early 1980s formed a “study group” in which recent graduates acted as facilitators and mentors. Royke Koapaha, who entered in 1981—and who presented a work at the fourth PKM in 1983—credited Yoesbar Djaelani with starting the group (Royke Koapaha, p.c., 14 August 2005). Michael Asmara, who entered in 1980, explained that the group had no teacher per se, but described Djaelani as a “figure” for the younger students, leading the group in listening and analyzing pieces, and in discussing their own compositions. Starting in 1986, Djaelani helped the group organize what they called, using English, “home concerts” of their compositions at AMI.

43. According to Joseph Praba, the protest consisted of posters that Sutanto put up by himself, with text that Praba helped to write, and “screaming” (p.c., 14 August 2005). Budi Ngurah, also a student at that time, did not remember the protest, suggesting that the event had a more limited profile (p.c., 9 July 2005). Notosudirdjo presented the issue as one of aesthetic conservatism, noting that Suhascarya “went as far as prohibiting AMI composition students from employing concepts of 20th century harmony” (Notosudirdjo 2001: 349). According to Michael Asmara, however, Suhascarya had no problem with “atonal” music, but objected instead to “performance art” (p.c., 10 July 2005).

44. The one student Susanto could think of by name was Linda Aprilia. I had not heard of her from any of my other contacts, and Susanto himself had lost track of her.

These were continued by Haryo “Yose” Suyoto, another AMI student who had worked with Jack Body (Michael Asmara, p.c., 7 August 2005).

Not all of Suhascarya’s initiatives were detrimental to composition at AMI. In Joseph Praba’s opinion, AMI “progressed once it was under Pak Suhas” and his efforts to bring in guest teachers from abroad (p.c., 11 August 2005). Michael Asmara acknowledged a number of teachers who were helpful. His guitar teacher Jos Brady exposed him to a wide repertoire, “from baroque to extremely modern.” Aaron Soltark, a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, “knew modern harmony” and was willing to teach “serial counterpoint” when Asmara demonstrated an interest. More generally, Asmara credits him with helping him to better understand the stylistic character of different periods in Western art music (Michael Asmara, p.c., 29 July 2004). Koapaha received what he regarded as useful feedback on his compositions from American composer Dan Beaty (Royke Koapaha, p.c., 14 August 2005).

At the same time, in more specific and directed ways, Suhascarya deliberately obstructed the aspirations of AMI’s student composers. Koapaha entered AMI on the recommendation of his guitar teacher, a Dutch guitarist from the Sweelinck Conservatory who was another foreign instructor at AMI. His teacher saw that Koapaha was interested in composition, and promised to help him go to the Netherlands to study at the Sweelinck Conservatory with Ton de Leeuw—the same composer who had accepted Otto Sidharta after hearing his music in Jakarta. But whereas Sidharta managed to get to the Netherlands thanks to his teacher Slamet Abdul Sjukur’s assistance and willingness to bypass formalities, Suhascarya effectively thwarted Koapaha’s chances by not responding to letters of invitation from the Sweelinck Conservatory’s director. Suhascarya similarly prevented Koapaha from studying in the United States. While teaching at AMI, Dan Beaty had students take an entrance test for

admission to the Stephen F. Austin State University in Texas, where he was on faculty. Koapaha earned the highest grade on the test, but was passed over by Suhascarya, who had the final say in who would go (Royke Koapaha, p.c., 14 August 2005).⁴⁵

Koapaha also described a general aversion to anything that was too conspicuously modern. Whereas Jack Body spoke of the students in his composition group seeing themselves as “a kind of special club,” which apparently “everybody wanted to join” (Jack Body, p.c., 29 May 2005), Koapaha related being ostracized by others at AMI. While a student, his classmates would mockingly greet him by saying “Halo komponis modern!” (Hello modern composer!). Later, as a faculty member teaching guitar, he composed a theatrical piece for AMI’s anniversary ceremony, *Dies Natalis*, that became the butt of jokes for several years after. The piece, entitled “Stigma,” involved performers pretending to strangle one another and smashing a bottle of whisky. Koapaha’s colleagues brought up the piece at faculty meetings, especially those leading up to subsequent anniversaries, warning each other in Koapaha’s presence not to “create a mess [*kebocoran*] like when Royke [Koapaha] did his piece.” They did so jokingly, but still it “was extremely hurtful.” The message, as Koapaha understood it, was that one “must [create] classical works. That is, they must be normal—not avant-garde” (Royke Koapaha, p.c., 14 August 2005).

The four most notable figures from the first blooming of the *musik kontemporer* scene at AMI Jogja under Jack Body all eventually detached themselves from that scene. After he was expelled, Sutanto moved to Magelang, a small city some forty kilometers north of Jogja, and for a time had no involvement in music. When he resumed working in the performing arts, it

45. Asmara, who was the grandson of Suhascarya’s older sister, also spoke of Suhascarya being angry when he enrolled at AMI, but as Asmara was accepted by other teachers Suhascarya “couldn’t say anything” (p.c., 29 July 2004).

was with members of the various communities in the Magelang area—a move that will be examined further in chapter 7. Joseph Praba spent several years in Jakarta, studying for two years at IKJ and working as a freelance arranger and double-bassist. He also started a music school in Bandung with Elfa Secoria, a jazz pianist and orchestra leader. Since the early 1990s he has based himself in Jogja, but has remained somewhat independent of other composers, associating instead a range of artists in various disciplines, most notably the painter and performance artist Heri Dono (Joseph Praba, p.c., 11 August 2005). Yoesbar Djaelani, as noted above, acted as something of a mentor for younger composers through the 1980s, but in 1993 returned to West Sumatra, where he was born and grew up, to teach at the music academy in Padang Panjang.⁴⁶ Haryo “Yose” Suyoto, after brief stints studying in New Zealand and at IKJ in Jakarta, returned to AMI in the mid 1980s to complete his degree.⁴⁷ He subsequently taught there for a few years, and joined Djaelani in providing guidance for younger composers. But then by 1992 he moved away again, splitting his time between Jakarta and Bandung (Royke Koapaha, p.c., 14 August 2005). Eventually, it seems he stopped composing altogether.⁴⁸

The handful of composers who got their start after Jack Body had returned to New Zealand—the most notable being Michael Asmara, Royke Koapaha, and Memet Chairul Slamet—have maintained connections with AMI Jogja (which in 1984 became part of Institut

46. *Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Djaelani, Yoesbar,” by Franki Raden, accessed 5 June 2005.

47. *Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Suyoto, Haryo ‘Yose’,” by Franki Raden, accessed 9 June 2005.

48. Asmara told me how Suyoto had declined his invitation to participate in a concert, saying that “he was no longer a composer,” but instead was working as a music critic concerned with “determining which music was worthwhile” (p.c., 6 July 2005). Asmara, who is particularly diligent about maintaining connections with other artists, had not heard anything about him when I spoke with him in 2004 (p.c., 29 July 2004). Suyoto did not respond to my requests for an interview.

Seni Indonesia, ISI), despite its lack of support for composition, and a general aversion to musical modernism. They have done so in large part out of necessity, depending, as composers who have mostly continued to “write notes,” on ISI for players and other resources—and, in the case of Koapaha and Susanto, for employment. For whatever its shortcomings, ISI remains the one institution in Jogja that supports Western art music. They have therefore had to contend with ISI as a source of aesthetic authority, a situation which given the disjuncture between the predominant aesthetic priorities at ISI and their own is source of tension and anxiety—a subject I explore further in chapter 6 as part of a broader examination of the predicaments specific to Western-oriented composers.

4 Emergence: Of Traditionally-Based *Musik Kontemporer*

Having examined the formation of *musik kontemporer*'s two Western-oriented scenes, I turn now to its traditionally-based side. Specifically, this chapter is concerned with the parallel formation at ASKI Solo of the first traditionally-based scene to form around a *kontemporer* focus. The work coming out of this scene did not pick up on international currents of experimentalism as explicitly as Sutanto's "happening" or Franki Raden's "MUSIK-KONGKRIT." Nevertheless, their distinctive compositional approach, with its basis in the exploration of sound, its resulting emphasis on novel sonic gestures and textures, and its deemphasis, recasting, or even complete avoidance of traditional melodic and rhythmic material, represented a bold departure from the conventions of traditional *karawitan*, and thus seemed to embody the ethos of the international avant-garde.

The experimentalism of the ASKI Solo style raises questions about the extent to which Western influence was a factor in that scene's emergence. This chapter examines different dimensions and aspects of this question, from various angles. I scrutinize Franki Raden's claims to have acted as the crucial conduit of information about the still predominantly Western international avant-garde, putting them in perspective by taking into account other more formative experiences and influences. Examining the centrally important role of ASKI's director, Gendhon Humardani, I argue that his cosmopolitan nativist outlook,

combined with the fact that he was not a musician, did much to attenuate the ethnological valence of ideas concerning artistic modernism. His thinking was very much shaped by his own engagement with Western and Western-oriented modern arts, but his primary commitment was to Javanese and other Indonesian artistic traditions, and so it was those that remained the primary point of reference and framework for the experimentation that took place at ASKI. Accordingly, their focus on the exploration of sound derived not from a foreign model, but was instead based on indigenous attitudes and relationships to sound, and was realized through Indological rather than Eurological means.

A Bold Debut, and the Question of Western Influence

ASKI Solo at the Pekan Komponis Muda

At the first Pekan Komponis Muda in 1979, alongside three pieces by Western-oriented composers, including Sutanto's "happening," Otto Sidharta's live electroacoustic manipulation of water sounds, there were four pieces by traditionally-based composers. Not one, but two of those were by composers from the Akademi Seni Karawitan Indonesia in Surakarta, or ASKI Solo, the site of the first traditionally-based scene to be focused specifically on *musik kontemporer*.¹

1. The third Western-oriented composer, Kristiyanto Christinus, from AMI Jogja, presented a more conventional chamber piece. The other two traditionally-based composers came from centers where distinct scenes focused on *musik kontemporer* would eventually develop. But at the time, the production of pieces with the kind of experimentation demanded by the PKM was an occasional pursuit amidst a considerable amount of creative musical activity based on rather different motivations. Komang Astita's "Gema Eka Dasa Rudra," as Andrew McGraw notes, "represented the first of a series of new theatrical Balinese experimental works" by composers based at ASTI Denpasar (McGraw 2004: 145). Astita himself was, by 1979, already well established as a composer in other more traditional forms, as were those that followed him in subsequent PKM. Nano Suratno, from Bandung, had "achieved phenomenal success among popular audiences during the 1970s and 80s in conjunction

Sri Hastanto's "Dandanggula" and Supanggih's "Gambuh" both made extensive use of elements from traditional Javanese music.² As their titles indicated, both pieces were based on *macapat*, a major category of Javanese sung poetry.³ At the same time, they represented a bold departure from traditional practice. Neither piece set *macapat* in the conventional formal structures of Javanese *karawitan*, with their inviolable cyclical patterns marked by gongs and gong chimes⁴—though both feature an occasional punctuating stroke of a gong, if sometimes with "a whiff of parody in the execution," such as one with "wildly exaggerated *alok*" (vocal glissando) in "Gambuh" (Roth 1987: 169). Nor was a more straightforward presentation of *macapat* a major focus. Instead, traditional material was set in episodic explorations of mostly novel sonic gestures and textures.

In so far as their overall form was episodic, the pieces resembled the dramatic and dance

with a very active Sundanese cassette industry." His piece for the Pekan Komponis Muda, along with later "non-commercial commissions," represent a small part of his output (*Grove Music Online*, s.v. "S[uratno], Nano," by Andrew Weintraub, accessed 9 July 2005). They are entirely omitted from an extensive list of his work in a tribute recently published in Indonesia (Setiawan 2004: 155). For documentation of the pieces presented at the first six PKM, see (Hardjana 1986).

2. My discussion of these pieces is based on recordings of the premiere performances, reproduced on a cassette accompanying the dissertation of Alec Roth (1986), as well as Roth's discussion and "outline sketches," which take the form of single-page graphic representations of the different elements in the pieces and their sequence (*ibid.*:169-173).

3. *Dandanggula* and *gambuh* are the names of two *macapat* meters. On a technical level, *macapat* meters are defined by the number of lines, the number of syllables per line, and the final vowel sound of each line. They are more readily distinguished by their associated melodies.

4. As Sumarsam has demonstrated (1995: chapter 4), a good number of gamelan compositions are based on *macapat* and other sung poetry. In some cases, the process involves extensive "recomposition," and the *macapat* is not sung. In others, the *macapat* is set as a melody sung by a *pesindhen* (solo female singer) or the *gerongan* (male chorus). As Sutton and Vetter argue in their insightful analysis of a performance of one such piece, *ladrang* "Pangkur," the "frame" of such compositions—its cyclical or colotomic formal structure, articulated by strokes of gongs and gong chimes—may be "flexed" and "stretched to the limits of perception" (Sutton and Vetter 2006: 237), but it is never broken. In *palaran*, the other common way of performing *macapat* with gamelan, *macapat* are sung by solo vocalists almost as they would be without accompaniment, with some adjustments in the timing of phrase endings to coordinate with the pulsing but flexible accompaniment. See Brinner (1995: 234-244) for a discussion of this form.

genres which were their most immediate compositional precedents at ASKI. However, in those traditional genres most of the episodes are themselves set in shorter cyclical formal structures, with conventional configurations of either the full gamelan ensemble or a subset of louder bronze instruments. Both Sri Hastanto's and Supanggih's pieces include such sections, with the kind of rhythmically regular and loud *balungan* melodies that are most iconic of gamelan. But they are short—one minute in “Gambuh,” thirty seconds in “Dandanggula,”—and set in the middle of pieces that are each around thirteen minutes in total duration. There is much more of the loosely coordinated arrangement of voices and softer melodic instruments characteristic of *pathetan*, short pieces that in traditional contexts come before, after, or in between the “real” action. “Dandanggula” and “Gambuh” take a kind of music that functions as preludes and postludes to *gendhing* at *klenengan*, that articulates junctures in the dramatic structure of *wayang*, or that accompanies the entrances and exits of dancers, and make it a central feature.⁵

Variation in the orchestration of the *pathetan*-like material—between a solo voice, a chorus, or instruments only—gives it more prominence. It is made to share focus, however, with other material. In both pieces, traditional and quasi-traditional material appears alongside other elements. Some, like the Buddhist chanting in “Gambuh,” are drawn from non-gamelan traditions. Others are entirely non-traditional, using instruments and voices not to produce melodies or rhythmic patterns but instead to create distinctive sonic gestures and textural clouds of sound. Far from being limited to atmospheric introductions or interludes—functioning as liminally as *pathetan* conventionally do—the focus on sound is made a central. This is achieved through formal techniques such as fragmentation, superimposition and

5. See Brinner (1989) for a discussion of the conventional uses of *pathetan*.

recontextualization, and the use of cross-fades to effect transformations of one kind of material into the other.

Early on in “Dandanggula” there is an extremely quick succession of gestures. Two fast four-note figures are played in damped triplets by a group of *saron*. This is followed by *gender* playing a fragment of an *ada-ada*—a *wayang* genre related to *pathetan* sung by a *dhalang* to convey a tense or agitated mood—with the repeated knocking that amplifies the genre’s sense of urgency, but without the vocal melody that is normally central to it. This leads into a stroke of gong and a single note held for a few seconds by a chorus, only to end in a fast upward gliss. All of this takes place in just twenty seconds. This sequence of gestures is one of several interjections into the presentation of *pathetan*-like melodies by voices, *suling*, and *rebab* over a persistent background of random sounds played on the rim of gong and erratic tremolos on lower register *pencon* (horizontally-suspended knobbed gong).

In “Gambuh” there are several short episodes that are entirely textural in character. The piece opens with a two pitch tremolo on several lower register *pencon*, which swells in volume before giving way to several bell like strokes on inverted *pencon*. Another short episode consists of a flurry of whistles produced on *suling*. Supanggah comes back to this texture later in the piece, combining it with the slow downward glissandi of humming tops. Voices are also treated texturally, as in the section following the “wildly exaggerated *alok*” and stroke of gong in which several singers intone “wa-wa-wa-wa-wa-wa . . .” as quickly as possible.

Hastanto’s “Dandanggula” and Supanggah’s “Gambuh” were among the first works by ASKI Solo composers intended specifically for concert presentation, and the first such works to be presented outside of ASKI. In October of 1979, a few months before they were

presented at the first PKM, another work in progress was presented within ASKI at the Sarasehan Komposisi Musik, an event, discussed below, that also included paper presentations and discussion (Rustopo 1991: 113-122). That work, titled “Malam” (Night), was by Pande Made Sukerta (1953–), a senior student from Bali who began studying at ASKI Solo in 1973, and who would soon become its primary composition instructor.⁶

Sukerta himself spoke of creating “Malam” for a competition for new compositions. The cash prize was modest, just enough to cover the expense of supplies and for feeding participants at rehearsals. Sukerta described the other pieces as “nice” and “good,” in a tone that made it clear he regarded this as a shortcoming. “Malam,” selected as the winning piece by a jury that included Supanggah and Martopangrawit,⁷ was, by contrast, an “experimental musical work” (Rustopo 1991: 113-114) that was “mischievous” (*nakal*) (Sukerta, p.c., 8 July 2005) and “the most crazy” (*paling gila*) (Rusdiyantoro, p.c., 9 August 2005).

“Malam” was a response to an imperative to demonstrate boldness (*keberanian*) in the push at ASKI to develop new approaches to musical creativity (Rustopo 1991: 114). Key to Sukerta’s response was the use of anything and everything to produce sound. As he wrote in a statement about the piece:

In my composition Malam I began with the assumption that any object can be a potential source of many sounds with a wide range of characteristics. The objects I have used here are not only gamelan instruments, but anything that can be considered a source of sound, for example, drinking glasses, fabric, bicycles, mallets, sheets of tin, etc. as well as food like crisp chips (*krupuk*) that are chewed or crushed. A musical composition expresses something with sounds—and that something is what I

6. Composition was initially taught by Supanggah; Sukerta took over in 1981 when Supanggah left to study for a doctorate in ethnomusicology in Paris (Roth 1987: 65-66). Supanggah returned to teach at ASKI Solo after earning his PhD in 1985 from the Université de Paris 7 (Perlman 1993: 601).

7. Martopangrawit (profiled in chapter 2) was the most highly respected senior faculty member in the *karawitan* department.

experience and am able to express. (Pande Made Sukerta, quoted in Sadra 1991: 22)

Many of these non-gamelan objects became staples in Sukerta's compositional toolkit, reappearing in several other pieces.⁸ Another material he used at the time, and would use again, was plywood. He recounted how he took down a sheet from a wall in his house (Sukerta, p.c., 8 July 2005). The *krupuk* were not the thin shrimp-flavored variety, but instead a thick kind made from beef skin that produce a particularly loud crunch. At rehearsals, Sukerta reportedly had to urge the performers to exercise restraint and not eat them all before the designated time—though from the other side, Rusdiyantoro complained of Sukerta making him and the other performers sick from having to eat so many (Rusdiyantoro, 9 August 2005).

The Question of Western Influence, Posed

There is a strong tendency in the Western response to experimentalism in non-Western art, such as that I have just described, to assume that it is the result of Western influence. Jody Diamond recounts the reaction at a chapter meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology to a paper on Sukerta's fellow Balinese colleague I Wayan Sadra, who was based at ASKI Solo from 1982 until his death in 2011. Diamond read Sadra's account of his piece "Lad-Lud-An," presented at the second PKM in 1981, in which a performer dropped an egg onto a stone. Sadra describes the sound of the egg breaking, as well as the visual effect of the yellow yolk against the black stone, and the reaction of the audience when the smell of the egg, which was

8. Sukerta used drinking glasses again in several pieces: "Mungkin," the piece presented on the North American tour of a group from ASKI Solo in conjunction with the 1991 Festival of Indonesia; "Gelas 1091," a piece created while in residence at Rutgers University following the 1991 tour; and "Les," a piece created in 2004 as part of a collaborative project of Indonesian and North American composers that I also took part in.

rotten, spread through the theater. His “concept,” he explained, was that “every sound always has a *relationship with elements other than the sound itself*” (emphasis in original).

After Diamond concluded her paper, a graduate student in ethnomusicology challenged her:

“This sounds like a performance piece from New York! Isn't this just Western influence?” (Diamond 1990: 14-15)

R. Anderson Sutton, in discussing Hastanto's “Dandanggula” and Supanggah's “Gambuh” as examples of “experimental composition,” acknowledges a similar response in generalized terms:

In what was clearly an attempt to abandon traditional assumptions in a radical way, two composers from Surakarta, Sri Hastanto and Rahayu Supanggah, presented pieces comprised of fragmented bits of traditional vocal melodies interspersed and overlaid with Buddhist chanting, seemingly random sounds from several gamelan instruments, and occasional bursts of familiar traditional gamelan playing. One's initial reaction was likely to be one of surprise—that composers had really been won over by the musical doctrine of the Western avant-garde. (Sutton 1993: 58)

In an article on “Gamelans and New Music,” Vincent McDermott describes techniques used by A. L. Suwardi, whom he identifies as “the most prolific composer” at ASKI Solo, in a number of pieces:

His discoveries and imagination for new colors in old instruments are quite remarkable. He placed *gender* keys over a set of rotating discs in tubes, thereby making a Javanese vibraphone tuned to *slendro*. At the start of *Debah*, he draws a bow across the edge of the keys. A little later in the same piece he introduces the water *bonang*, a *bonang* pot turned over, filled partly with water, struck, then tipped. It produces an extraordinarily lovely and ethereal glissando. . . . Still later in *Debah*, the chorus enters with kazoos. There is humor but it is made poignant in context. Vocal sound effects are wide ranging in *Bauran*, and in *Malam* the chorus sings a Western major scale . . . Suwardi rarely uses a standard beater for any instrument, but whether he is scraping a gong, letting rounded keys roll side to side on a hard surface, or tapping and pounding on the floor, his sounds are aimed in cogent musical

directions.

McDermott then acknowledges that:

The methods just described may remind us, not necessarily pleasantly, of the 1960s and Western experimental music. (McDermott 1986: 26)

I too, when I first heard the work of these composers from ASKI Solo, was struck by the parallels to trends in Western new music. In 1991, an eighteen member group from ASKI—which by that time had become STSI—performed in Vancouver as one stop on a North American tour. The evening-length program represented the culmination of just over a decade of developing and refining the compositional approach that Sukerta, Supanggah, and Hastanto had pioneered in 1979. It comprised eight pieces, by Supanggah, Sukerta, Sadra, Suwardi, and four of their colleagues,⁹ for various combinations of gamelan and other traditional Indonesian instruments, invented instruments, voices, and—most abundantly in Sukerta’s offering—found objects such as marbles, fans, blankets, plastic cups, and sheets of plywood.

As a young undergraduate studying music composition who had just started learning how to play gamelan, I was captivated. I was struck by the music’s experimentalism, most evident in sections without any clear melody or rhythm, where the performers instead created masses of sounds that would shift in texture, density, and dynamic. It was this feature most of all that qualified these pieces—to my mind as a recent convert to musical modernism—as new music: as analogous to the sound-masses of Iannis Xenakis and György Ligeti, and to John Cage’s efforts to “let sounds be themselves” (Cage 1961: 10).

But although the end results were on some level similar to the work of European and

9. The four others were Joko Purwanto, Sunardi, A. Wahyudi Sutrisno, and Waluyo.

American new music composers, I was quite sure that the means to produce those results were different. It seemed clear that it represented something other than the adoption of a mode of creating and performing new music that was by now international but still centered in the West, still grounded in the practices and values of Western art music. To be sure, the pieces on the program were carefully crafted compositions for acoustic forces, rather than happenings or pieces for live electronics. But as far as I could tell, the pieces did not involve the production of detailed scores which were then faithfully realized by performers, an arrangement which amidst a good deal of experimentation has remained central to the Eurological mode of new music.

The group from ASKI performed without a scrap of notation in sight. As significantly, they played with a level and quality of engagement far exceeding what I had come to expect from performances of notated new music.¹⁰ At the time, with my interest in oral traditions stimulated by my encounter with gamelan and by my interactions with a group of like minded colleagues, I was convinced that notation was in large part responsible for structural flaws in Eurological new music. The division of labor between composers and performers that it facilitated too often led to a divergence of aesthetic priorities, and thus a lack of aesthetic investment in the efforts of the former on the part of the latter. It allowed musicians to play music without internalizing it, a problem exacerbated by the limited rehearsal time typically afforded to music that is often only played once. It encouraged certain kinds of complexity at the expense of others.

I soon learned that the level of engagement of the ASKI Solo performers was not simply

10. Admittedly, my point of reference was limited to the especially lackluster performances of such music in Vancouver.

a matter of not using notation, but more fundamentally the result of the process of creating new pieces. Rather than writing scores, composers develop pieces over the course of an extensive rehearsal process in collaboration with the performers. Consequently, as Alec Roth observes in his detailed study of new composition at ASKI Solo, “it is not a question of ‘memorising the product’; the finished composition already exists within the very being of the performers because it has grown there” (Roth 1987: 77).

Typically, the process begins with an “exploration” of the sonic resources brought together for the composition, with conventional instruments often approached as found objects would be, as sources of sound.¹¹ My initial introduction to the process was first-hand, through participating in the creation of a new work led by A. L. Suwardi, who had returned to Vancouver at the end of the New Music Indonesia tour for a one-month residency. Combining Javanese and Balinese instruments in different tunings, using unconventional techniques such as bowing percussive instruments, or dropping bamboo *suling* into the metal resonators of a *gender* whose keys had been removed, and playing several instruments which Suwardi had himself invented, we collectively generated material, most of it more focused on textures than melodic or rhythmic patterns, through improvisation. Suwardi assumed primary responsibility for arranging this material into sections and determining the order of those sections. He added one simple ostinato to the closing section of the piece, but the rest of the material remained only generally defined. We committed the framework to memory, but the details of what exactly we played were improvised.

11. The practice of “sound exploration” at ASKI Solo, and the compositional process as a whole, is documented in considerable detail in Roth’s study, in a paper by Sadra (1991), and in a self-published booklet by Sukerta (2001).

A Claim of Influence

Alec Roth, in the first pages of his study of *komposisi baru* (new composition) at ASKI Solo, acknowledges that this term, used for “both the compositional process . . . and the resulting compositions themselves” is “clearly Western in origin.” This has, he reports, “led several observers to the conclusion that Western influence is at work here in a big way” (Roth 1987: 3). But “closer observation” of how works were actually created led him, like me, to believe that Western influence—here understood more specifically as the influence of the international avant-garde—was not a major factor. Sutton recognized that Suwardi’s “ideas and techniques . . . seem to parallel the experiments with timbre and polytonality in 20th-century Western art music” but notes that “like most young Javanese gamelan composers” he was “largely unaware of the Western avant-garde when he began his experimental composing” (Sutton 1993: 60). McDermott, while admitting that the “radically new works” by composers at ASKI Solo “are often extremely close to what we hear in Western experimental music, both good and bad,” similarly observed that “these musicians are largely ignorant of Western classic traditions, old or new” (McDermott 1986: 25). Given the apparent lack of opportunities to encounter these traditions, this should not be surprising. During my first stay in Solo, in 1993–95, I encountered next to no European classical music. There was at least one piano at ASKI, but I don’t recall ever hearing anybody playing it. There were, as far as I could gather, no scores of either classical or more recent compositions in the library, and no recordings of such music in the recording collection.¹²

12. Somehow there was, however, a cassette from the world champion Scottish highland pipe band from my Alma Mater, Simon Fraser University. Most likely it was a gift to the group from ASKI Solo that was in residence at the Indonesian Pavilion at the World Exposition in Vancouver in 1986.

The evidence from observation of the institutional setting, from knowledge of key figures, and from the music itself would seem to disprove the assumption that composition at ASKI Solo arose as the result of sustained or focused exposure to the international avant-garde. The emergence of the *musik kontemporer* scene in Solo apparently followed a different pattern than that of the Western-oriented scenes in Jakarta and Jogja, or of new music scenes in other parts of the world. There is some evidence to suggest that this pattern was one of stimulus diffusion. In this pattern, exposure to a way of doing something is limited, and the understanding of how that thing is done is imperfect, but the exposure is nevertheless crucial in stimulating a different way of doing a similar thing.¹³ In the case of *musik kontemporer* in Solo, the most strongly stated origin story is told by the very person responsible for providing the stimulus: Franki Raden.

I first met Raden in Jakarta in 1994, when he was back in Indonesia conducting his dissertation research. Raden told me that he had visited ASKI in the mid 1970s and become friends with A. L. Suwardi. He mentioned giving Suwardi a cassette dub of recordings of pieces by Pierre Boulez and György Ligeti. Raden hastened to add that he did not suggest to Suwardi that he ought to know this music, as someone interested in taking up composition, but only that he might find some inspiration in it.

By the time Raden was completing his dissertation (Notosudirdjo 2001), his claims had grown considerably bolder. In a biography of Suwardi for *Grove Music Online* he wrote:

13. Two examples given by Arthur Kroeber in first proposing the theory of stimulus diffusion are the invention of porcelain in Europe after two hundred years of importing porcelain from China, and the invention of a writing system for the Cherokee language, in which the letters of the Latin alphabet were borrowed as symbols for a syllabary (Kroeber 1940). Marc Perlman suggested the relevance of Kroeber's theory to *musik kontemporer* to Andrew C. McGraw (see 2009:125 for his discussion of the theory's applicability) and myself.

In 1976 Suwardi was involved in an experimental project led by Franki Raden to produce music for the film *November 1828*, directed by Teguh Karya, which won the music prize at the 1978 Indonesian Film Festival. Adopting Raden's approach of treating gamelan instruments as autonomous sound sources, Suwardi and his colleagues searched for new technical performance possibilities.¹⁴

Here, Raden effectively credits himself with introducing what became the most distinctive feature of composition at ASKI Solo: the central place of sound exploration.

Raden's account in his dissertation is more fleshed out, and somewhat more complicated, but his claims are only slightly more nuanced. He writes that his "main idea" in composing music for Teguh Karya's film—a film that depicted the rebellion led by Dipanagara against the Dutch in the early 19th century with the goal of "revitalizing nationalism in the contemporary political context and aesthetic expression"—was "to deconstruct the aesthetic of gamelan in order to pursue the possibility of creating new gamelan compositions that were free of traditional constraints."

With this in mind I introduced ASKI's students to the idea of exploring the pure sonic aspect of gamelan instruments. The first several months of our collaboration were spent developing new techniques in playing the instruments. My intention in this phase was to seek as much as possible the vocabulary or a new gamelan sound; timbre and articulation were thoroughly explored. In the next several months I focused my exploration on the idea of how to organize these new sonic materials in compositional forms and instrumentations. In this phase I recorded all the experimentations on the spot with a Nagra tape recorder. In other words, I did not use notation at all. In the final phase of my work, I remixed most of the materials in the recording studio to create new compositions in an electro-acoustic manner. (Notosudirdjo 2001: 343)

Raden's decision to not use notation was a departure from the approach he took during his

14. *Grove Music Online*, s.v. "Suwardi [Soewardi], Al(oysius)," by Franki Raden, accessed 18 June 2005.

initial interaction with students at ASKI Solo several years earlier. In 1975, “encouraged” by his “exposure to gamelan in the classroom” as a student at IKJ, he became “intrigued by the idea of composing for an entire gamelan orchestra.”

In the next several months I locked myself in the gamelan room of Depdikbud (Ministry of Education and Culture), writing a piece of music for gamelan orchestra in the pointillist style of European post-serialism. . . . Three months later I took a break and went to Solo to meet students of ASKI (Indonesian Academy of Traditional Music) whom I had in mind to perform my music. Unfortunately, in Solo I discovered that ASKI’s students did not learn Western music theory and notation in school. (Notosudirdjo 2001: 340-342)

According to Suwardi, the problem was not just that Raden’s score used Western staff notation; Raden reportedly “translated” his score into the *kepatihan* number notation that had become standard. The obstacle was rather that Javanese gamelan musicians, whatever their level of formal training, do not generally use notation of any kind in performance, and when they do it is limited to notation of the *balungan*—the slow moving and usually rhythmically regular skeletal melody played by a group of metallophones—and vocal parts. Gamelan musicians associated with educational institutions have “become accustomed” to the notation of more intricate parts, using it to teach beginning students, and for the voluminous transcriptions that appear in studies of performance practice—though for performance they still “prefer to memorize.” Playing from detailed notation remained quite foreign, especially given the lack of familiarity with the musical style of Raden’s composition (Suwardi, p.c., 8 September 2004).

Raden gave up on this first attempt at composing for gamelan. That he did so, and that he decided to not use notation when he returned to Solo to produce music for *November 1828*, indicates clearly that ASKI composers were not moved to take up the notation-centered

working methods of Eurological new music. Suwardi may have listened to some examples of Boulez's and Ligeti's music, but neither he nor his colleagues decided to then study the scores of those pieces, much less to produce their own scores. That Raden abandoned notation instead demonstrates both an accommodation of the particular capabilities of the musicians at ASKI Solo, and to a significant extent an adaptation of their working methods. As such, it presaged the nativist turn of many Western-oriented composers in the years that followed—a turn I examine in chapter 6.

Nevertheless, Raden portrays himself as a crucial agent in the emergence of *musik kontemporer* at ASKI Solo. As a critic based in Jakarta, where he could “gain information (records, score, journals, etc.) about the most recent development of the global contemporary musical scene,” he was “the most frequent supplier of local and foreign contemporary music issues for Indonesian society.” His “discussions of contemporary art music issues” in newspapers such as *Kompas* “influenced the thinking of the young generation of gamelan academic musicians such as Supanggah and AL Suwardi.” Supanggah and Suwardi, Raden claims, adopted “‘new’ musical terms such as *kwalitas suara* (sonic quality), *penjajagan bunyi* (sonic exploration) or *sumber bunyi* (sonic resources)” from his own writing about new music, using them in their program notes (Notosudirdjo 2001: 359). Having worked with Raden on the music for *November 1828*, “when Suka Hardjana came to ASKI Surakarta in 1979 to commission the creation of new gamelan compositions, composers such as Rahayu Supanggah and AL Suwardi . . . were ready for it” (Notosudirdjo 2001: 353).

Responses to Raden's Claims

Supanggah and Rustopo, another musician affiliated with ASKI who also took part in making

music for *November 1828*, bristled at Raden’s claims of responsibility for the existence of *musik kontemporer* at ASKI Solo. When talking with them in 2005 about the focus of my own research, I mentioned Raden’s dissertation and its sweeping historical scope. This prompted Rustopo to ridicule Raden’s suggestion that the existence of *musik kontemporer* in Solo was his doing. Rustopo called him “arrogant,” while Supanggih more strongly denounced him as “idiotic” (*goblok*). Supanggih and Rustopo also, curiously, claimed that the *November 1828* project did not take place until *after* the first PKM in December of 1979, the event at which Supanggih and Hastanto premiered their first kontemporer works (p.c., 16 June 2005). I eventually established that this was not true—that the collaboration had taken place in either 1978 or 1979¹⁵—but only after a wild-goose chase that nevertheless turned up perspectives on the project that were helpful in assessing its impact.

Rustopo himself, in his own study of the formation and development of *gamelan kontemporer* in Solo, mentions the project twice. But he does so only in passing, and with little detail; he does not even mention Franki Raden’s name. He does suggest that Pande Made Sukerta, in composing *Malam*, drew upon his “experience in taking part in making illustrative music [*musik ilustrasi*] for the film ‘November 1828’” (Rustopo 1991: 118-119). But when I spoke with Sukerta, this experience, as far as he recalled, did not include working with Raden. What he remembered were the scenes with diegetic music to accompany dance.

15. Whereas in his biography of Suwardi for *Grove*, Raden gives 1976 as the year of the collaboration (*Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Suwardi [Soewardi], Al(oysius), by Franki Raden, accessed 17 June 2005), in his dissertation he gives 1977 (Notosudirdjo 2001: 353). In his own biography in the documentation for the 1981 Pekan Komponis Muda, he notes that he “wrote a composition for gamelan” in 1976, that he “made gamelan experiments with students at ASKI Solo” in 1978, and that he completed music for *November 1828* in 1979 (Hardjana 1986: 85). The film was produced and released in 1979, and won six Citra awards—the Indonesian film industry’s equivalent of an Oscar—in the competition that year (Karya 1979: .5-v, vii).

For one of these, Supanggih “made the song” and played *kendhang* (Sukerta, p.c., 8 July 2005). Indeed, most of the music in the film is diegetic and traditional;¹⁶ there is only one scene with music “free of traditional constraints” that explores the “pure sonic aspect of gamelan instruments,” as Raden described his music (Notosudirdjo 2001: 343). Trying to avoid leading questions, I asked Sukerta if there were musicians involved in the project from outside ASKI. He initially said no, but that the dancer they accompanied was from Jakarta. Eventually I brought up Raden’s name, which jogged Sukerta’s memory. Yes, Raden “also made accompaniment,” but Sukerta claimed not to have taken part in that process (Sukerta, p.c., 7 September 2004).

Suwardi, for his part, has more straightforwardly acknowledged Raden as a source of influence. His name came up without prompting when I asked him how he got interested in composition. He mentioned hearing the music of Boulez on a cassette that he was fairly certain Raden gave him. At first he didn’t remember whether they had initially met before or after the first Pekan Komponis Muda. I mentioned the *November 1828* project; Suwardi confirmed his participation in it, but couldn’t remember when it happened. For that project they “played around looking for sounds.” In support of this, Suwardi taught Raden how to play *rebab* and *siter*, not to the level of being able to “play gendhing” but simply “how to make sound.” Suwardi also recounted recording various archaic gamelan, and also *terompet*, a double-reed used in various Javanese “folk” genres such as *reog Ponorogo*. He made it clear that Raden was chiefly responsible for producing the music—he expressed this using

16. Teguh Karya’s *November 1828* has been rereleased on VHS cassette by Between Three Worlds Video. Supanggih is not credited as contributing music, but Slamet Rahardjo and Sardono W. Kusuma, who were also cast members, are, along with Franki Raden. See Sumarsam (2008) for a discussion of the music of this and other Indonesian historical films.

menggarap, a term that generally means “to work on,” and applies to many aspects of the creative process, but that within gamelan circles also refers specifically to the interpretation of *gending* in performance.¹⁷ But according to Suwardi, the process involved collaboration, with Raden specifying that a scene “needs something like this” and the musicians helping to find what that was. As far as the non-traditional material, what was recorded was not completed musical ideas, but rather “banks of sound” that Raden and his technicians worked with in a studio in Jakarta. The musicians from ASKI Solo were not involved in that part of the process, though Suwardi did observe it on a visit to the studio (Suwardi, p.c., 8 September 2004).

The Question of Western Influence, Theorized

Suwardi’s account would seem to be a more accurate representation of Raden’s contribution to the emergence of the *musik kontemporer* scene in Solo—more accurate than Raden’s self-aggrandizing narrative, and certainly more accurate than Rustopo and Supanggih’s historical revisionism. It recounts what happened in their interactions more matter-of-factly. What is more significant than the accuracy of Suwardi’s account in isolation, however, is the broader context in which it appears. Suwardi’s reflection on how he came to be involved in *musik kontemporer* places the interaction with Raden in the context of a broader range of experiences, which I recount below. He does not discount Raden’s influence, but puts it in perspective, making it clear that it was but one influence of many. Raden’s influence was not unimportant, but neither was it the first or the most significant source of influence.

17. See Brinner (1995: 64-65) and Perlman (2004: 60) for concise discussions of the concept *garap*, in the context of studies which closely examine the performance practice of Javanese gamelan music.

Beyond viewing Raden's influence in context, there is a bigger question that demands scrutiny: the question of whether artistic modernism and experimentalism are justifiably considered Western. As I argue in the introduction to this study, the question cannot be answered absolutely, because its status as Western or not is a function of perspective. More precisely, it has to do with what I call its ethnological valence, which is determined most of all by how or from where a given scene and the individuals within it derive their sense of aesthetic authority. For Franki Raden and his colleagues at IKJ the equation of musical modernism with a movement that was international and that made claims to universality, but that was still predominantly Western, was strong. From their studies with Frans Haryadi, Suka Hardjana, and Slamet Abdul Sjukur they were introduced to the work of a range of new music composers, most of whom were Western, and those who were not, Western-oriented. As importantly, they developed a certain disposition toward those composers and their work. They became for Raden and his peers luminary figures, the standard-bearers for a movement and the inheritors of a longer tradition with roots in Western art music. For them, the specifically artistic form of Western influence—the form that is generally assumed when Western influence is invoked when discussing non-Western art—was indeed significant to their development as composers.

As Harold Bloom has argued, in one of the most cogent theorizations of this form of influence, defining oneself as an artist in contest with one's great precursors is a source of anxiety—though as I will argue in chapter 5, for Western-oriented Indonesian composers this anxiety is compounded and amplified by the distance and disconnect between their precursors, who are mostly from the West, and the immediate cultural context in which they themselves live and work. This anxiety is most palpable in the case of Tony Prabowo, who

idolized the French arch-modernist Pierre Boulez as “a symbol of something he believes he is not, and sometimes wishes he could become: a truly ‘modern’ man” (Griffin 2003: 21).

Raden’s portrayal of himself as a crucial conduit, transmitting information “about the most recent development of the global contemporary musical scene” from his vantage point in cosmopolitan Jakarta (Notosudirdjo 2001:359), projects onto his peers in provincial Surakarta the kind of anxiety-tinged thirst for such information that he and his Western-oriented colleagues had developed. Musicians at ASKI had acquired a healthy sense of curiosity toward musics other than their own—not the least of which were other styles of gamelan and other traditional Indonesian musics, which they were exposed to as students from other regions came to study at ASKI. But this curiosity manifested in a largely anxiety-free openness to whatever music they happen to encounter, rather than a privileging of that which came from the West. A. L. Suwardi was inspired to create an instrument with lengths of aluminum pipe after hearing Lou Harrison’s aluminum gamelan instruments.¹⁸ But he also created another, out of small logs, after seeing and hearing a *amadinda*, a Ugandan xylophone, at the University of Wisconsin–Madison while he was there as a guest teacher in 1987. Both sources of influence were assimilated into Suwardi’s practice of building instruments in the same way. They were, in fact, used in a single piece: *Sak-Sake*, presented at the 1988 Pekan Komponis.¹⁹ Pande Made Sukerta allowed that a certain amount of

18. Rusdiyantoro informed me that Lou Harrison presented a number of his compositions on his aluminum gamelan instruments during his visit to ASKI Solo in 1980 or 1981 (Rusdiyantoro, p.c., 09 August 2005).

19. An excerpt of *Sak-Sake* is included in Jody Diamond’s documentary *Karya: Portraits of Contemporary Indonesian Composers*. In that piece, Suwardi’s Harrison-inspired instrument consisted of short lengths of aluminum pipe resting on pieces of foam, arranged in nine six-pipe courses tuned to the *slendro scale*, strummed with a small brass mallet. For a later piece from 2000—I took part in the performance—the instrument was expanded to allow it to play a ten-tone scale. The piece also used the salvaged innards of an upright piano, mounted on casters and played like an oversized box zither.

influence might follow listening to other music “for appreciation,” but stated “supposing there is, it is only a little.” If he demonstrated any anxiety, it was about the idea of imitation in general, which he insisted was something he avoided. He brought up his use of multiple *kendhang* in his composition “Mana 689,” insisting that “I wasn’t imitating African music” (Pande Made Sukerta, p.c., 7 September 2004).²⁰

The contrast between the disposition of Western-oriented and traditionally-based Indonesian composers is particularly clear in Suwardi’s account of a further interaction with Raden. At the 1984 meeting of the Pekan Komponis Muda, Suwardi presented a piece titled “Sebuah Proses” (A process). The piece was the logical conclusion of the focus on sound exploration in the approach to composition at ASKI. Feeling that “the investigation of sound” was itself interesting—and noting that many interesting sounds are discarded in the subsequent process of selecting sounds and arranging them in a composition—Suwardi decided to present the process of sound exploration itself “as a composition” (Hardjana 1986: 311-316). He deliberately avoided “clear rhythms,” and “melody,” instead presenting “just this sound, that sound.” The piece provoked a lively discussion, with some feeling that such a presentation, lacking a clear form, was not fit to be presented, while others felt that “the form can be provided by the experiencers themselves” (Suwardi, p.c., 8 September 2004).

Raden, for his part, praised the piece, hailing it—and another more thoroughly composed piece by Suwardi presented at the same festival—as “possibly the most interesting and coherent” works he had heard “since *karawitan* composers began creating new *karawitan*

Another performer, Waluyo, who had become quite involved with Islamic music, contributed singing that exploited the potential of the ten-tone scale to suggest Arabic *maqam*—another source of influence that Suwardi welcomed.

20. “Mana 689” is the title track of the second in a three-CD series entitled *New Music Indonesia*, produced by Jody Diamond and Larry Polansky and released by Lyrichord.

compositions that wrestled with aesthetic problems of *musik kontemporer*.” Raden was familiar with what he heard, he noted, having joined in such explorations seven years earlier when he visited ASKI. What he found interesting was the idea of presenting sound exploration as a performance itself. In doing so, “Sebuah Proses” managed to “eliminate the boundary between art events and everyday reality.” This was, Raden added, the very ideal that John Cage had pursued (Raden 1984a).

Suwardi brought up Raden’s review when I asked him about the availability of recordings of international new music at ASKI. He explained that there weren’t any, but that he had sought out recordings while in the United States, on the same trip when he encountered an *amadinda*.²¹ He looked for John Cage’s “Prepared for Piano,” as he identified it,²² at the library at the University of Michigan. I asked him how he knew of this work, and when he noted that it was “extremely famous,” questioned if it was well known within the sphere of ASKI. He then explained that before he came up with the idea of “Sebuah Proses” he had never heard of John Cage, but after the presentation at the Pekan Komponis Muda he read Raden’s review, and his assessment that the piece represented “what had been sought by John Cage, for innovation in music” (Suwardi, p.c., 8 September 2004). Somehow—presumably from later conversations—Suwardi focused on Cage’s music for prepared piano, which was not mentioned in Raden’s article, rather than the later indeterminate work in which Cage more resolutely sought to let “sounds be themselves” (Cage 1961: 10), the work Raden

21. Suwardi was a visiting artist sponsored by Fulbright at the University of Michigan, Oberlin University, and the University of Wisconsin–Madison from 1985 to 1987 (Suwardi, p.c., 8 September 2004).

22. There is no piece by Cage by that title, but many works for prepared piano, the best known of which is *Sonatas and Interludes*.

presumably glossed as an attempt to dissolve the boundary between art and life.

For Raden, and his Western-oriented colleagues, the international new music scene constituted a primary frame of reference and source of authority as they worked to establish themselves as composers. As a critic, and later as a scholar, Raden imposed this framework on his traditionally-based peers as well, in relating Suwardi's work to Cage's ideals, and more critically in another article following the 1988 Pekan Komponis Muda in which he cast all of the new work by "*karawitan* composers" presented in that forum as "nothing other than a Westernization of their manner of expression using elements of their ethnic traditional musics." He declared their use of "polymodality," "exploration of idiom," "exploration of sound color," and "deformation of form" as "identical to the aesthetic problems of Western contemporary music," adding that these were problems that "have long been left behind by Western contemporary music world." Thus, "their innovations in the end are no longer innovations if they are placed on a world map outside Indonesia" (Raden 1984b).

While there are undeniable parallels between the work of traditionally-based Indonesian composers and Western new music, the former is not simply derivative of the latter. Suwardi was not trying to be Indonesia's John Cage—he didn't even know who Cage was until after he had established himself as a notable figure within the burgeoning Indonesian *musik kontemporer* scene. His compositional approach and voice was already well formed, and remained basically the same before and after his first trip to the United States, and a subsequent trip in which he earned his masters degree in ethnomusicology from Wesleyan University. He sought out a few recordings of Cage, and of other composers such as Harry Partch—another American composer to whom Suwardi has been compared, on the basis of his work designing and building instruments. He did so to satisfy his curiosity. Suwardi is

keenly interested in sound, but he did not embrace indeterminacy or other methods that purportedly let “sounds be themselves.” Nor did he start exploring tuning systems based on small number ratios, or Partch’s theory of corporeality (Partch 1974). Suwardi sought out recordings to listen to, but he did not covet them. He no longer had the cassette of Boulez that Raden had given him back in 1975, having “lost it” or “lent it to someone” (Suwardi, p.c., 8 September 2004).

To be sure, traditionally-based composers felt a certain amount of pressure to live up to the expectation that works presented at the Pekan Komponis Muda be modern. One of the most significant sources of pressure was the festival’s director, Suka Hardjana, who would “travel from Sumatra to Bali” to discuss with potential participants the philosophy of the festival, and of the kind of music that it was intended to encourage (McGraw 2004: 117). As a professional clarinetist and conductor who had trained and lived in Europe, Hardjana formed his own aesthetic framework through his involvement in Western art music. This framework in turn shaped Hardjana’s ideas about the festival as a forum for “art for art’s sake,” and the priority he placed on “creating something different” than the traditional forms that “had already been perfected” (Hardjana quoted in McGraw 2004: 117-120). But these ideas were presented “abstractly,” without reference to specific works or composers as models to emulate (McGraw 2004: 118). The discussion sessions which followed the concerts accordingly focused on the question of “finding a new aesthetic basis outside of the aesthetic basis of ethnic music traditions.” If Raden found these discussions to be at “an extremely preliminary stage,” it is mostly a symptom of his own anxiety as a Western-oriented composer “soaked with all of the practices and techniques of the world of Western contemporary music” (Raden 1984b), and unable to set that point of reference aside.

What many traditionally-based composers felt instead was a certain tension between what was asked of them in producing works for the Pekan Komponis, and the expectations that prevailed in their more immediate circumstances. McGraw thus describes how Balinese composers “worked in creative ways to re-insert religious, philosophical, and ritual meanings and symbolism into the works composed for the PKM” even as Hardjana “worked to further peel away Balinese performing arts from their exclusively ritual contexts” (McGraw 2004: 119) by encouraging the creation of works specifically for the “modern concert stage” (Hardjana quoted in McGraw 2004: 119). This tension was considerably less acute for traditionally-based composers from ASKI Solo, who had already begun to internalize the ideal of abstract, experimental music by the time the first Pekan Komponis Muda was held in 1979. For some like Suwardi, their familiarity with this modern notion of art came in part from interacting with artists from Jakarta—not only Franki Raden, but also the choreographer Sardono. More significantly, it was impressed upon them by the more immediate figure of authority who helped make these interactions possible: the director of ASKI Solo, Gendhon Humardani.

The Role of Gendhon Humardani

The Intellectual Development and Career Path of a Cosmopolitan Nativist

Sedyono Djojokartika Humardani (1923–1983), better known as Gendhon Humardani, appears prominently in existing accounts of the emergence of *musik kontemporer* at ASKI Solo.²³ As he was not himself a musician, he did not act as a model in the way that Slamet

23. In the printed program for Vancouver performance by the group that toured North America in 1991,

Abdul Sjukur and Jack Body did for their students at IKJ and AMI Jogja. Yet his contributions as an administrator, thinker, and mentor were no less critical. Under his leadership, ASKI Solo became the preeminent educational institution for the performing arts in Indonesia, by simultaneously providing a solid grounding in traditional forms and encouraging creative experimentation.

Humardani embodied the combination of perspectives and commitments that I have characterized as cosmopolitan nativism. His social and educational background—his family had connections with the Surakartan aristocracy and he attended Dutch-run schools—allowed him to pursue professional training in law and medicine, including one year of graduate studies in anatomy at Guy’s Hospital Medical School in London (Rustopo 1990: 50-53). At the same time, in the pattern promoted by Ki Hadjar Dewantara and the Taman Siswa school system, Humardani maintained, alongside his professionally-oriented studies, an involvement in the traditional Javanese performing arts, one that started at age eleven. After finishing high school in 1943 he became a member of the Jakarta branch of the dance school Kridha Beksa Wirama, another institution discussed in chapter 1. In 1952, while at Universitas Gadjah Mada, he co-founded a similar organization, Himpunan Siswa Budaya, to support student involvement in the performing arts (Rustopo 1990: 58).

the final four paragraphs out of nine in the concise history of “new music” at ASKI (co-authored by Marc Perlman and Jody Diamond) are focused on Humardani’s contribution. Roth’s 1987 dissertation, concerned mainly with the practice of composition at ASKI and the analysis of works, includes only two short chapters on socio-cultural and historical context. The first is an extremely general consideration of the “Change in the Traditional Arts” that accompanied Indonesian independence. The second, focused on the immediate context of ASKI, gives considerable emphasis to Humardani’s role as director. Roth also includes, in an appendix, a translation of a paper by Humardani presented at a Seminar on the Arts in Surakarta in 1972 (Humardani 1987). Humardani likewise appears as a central figure in Rustopo’s 1991 research report—which reflecting Rustopo’s position as a key faculty member at STSI, and STSI’s sponsorship of the study, is focused on institutional developments. Rustopo draws heavily on the biography of Humardani he completed the previous year for his MA (Rustopo 1990).

A pivotal event in Humardani's turn toward the arts as a professional focus came while he was in London in 1961. His home department at Universitas Gadjah Mada, wanting Humardani to return, declined a request on his behalf to extend his stay, which also meant that the British Council could not offer him continued funding. But instead of returning to Indonesia, Humardani went to the United States. With the assistance of Hazel Chung, the wife of Mantle Hood and a dancer who had studied with Humardani in 1959–1960, he received a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation that allowed him to study modern dance for half a year in New York, and modern dance and ballet at UCLA during the 1962–1963 academic year (Rustopo 1990: 53-54).

Rustopo's biography gives no indication that Humardani aspired to become a dancer and choreographer working in these Western forms. Rather, what he sought seems to have been a better understanding of modern art, which he admired as vital and dynamic, that he could then apply in his efforts "to give rise to an existence for traditional art that was creatively Indonesianized, that was modern and/or contemporary" (Rustopo 1990: 5). This project, as Rustopo's biography makes clear, concerned Humardani from the time he was a student involved with *Himpunan Siswa Budaya* in the 1950s. It became his central mission as he moved into the field of arts administration and education.

Humardani is remembered primarily as the director of ASKI Solo during the period in which it rose to prominence, though in fact his initial relationship with the institution was rather complicated. He played a significant role from the outset, serving on the committee that wrote its academic charter, but during its first five years of operations, his official duties were limited to teaching classes on kinesiology and the philosophy of art (Rustopo 1990: 290). In 1967 a student group campaigned to have Humardani replace the interim director;

this was supported by authorities in Jakarta, but thwarted by other members of ASKI's administration. In 1970, the Minister of Education and Culture, Mashuri—another cosmopolitan nativist who like the predecessors in his post had connections with Ki Hadjar Dewantara²⁴—launched a project to establish a number of art centers in Indonesian cities with histories of producing “works of art of great value.” He appointed Humardani director of the Central Java Center for the Arts (Pusat Kesenian Jawa Tengah, PKJT). After a further conflict with ASKI's administration in connection with this appointment, Humardani stopped teaching at ASKI (ibid.:72-76).

In 1971, with a change in ASKI's administrative structure, Humardani was made responsible for academic matters at ASKI. He arranged for ASKI to move from the campus of KOKAR (Konservatori Karawitan, the performing arts high school founded in 1950) to share the facilities made available to PKJT by the *kraton* (the royal palace). With this move Humardani became a strong and more active presence for students at ASKI. He resumed teaching in 1972.²⁵ More importantly, ASKI students and faculty were involved in activities sponsored by PKJT, to the point that the boundary between those activities and ASKI's official curriculum was blurred (Rustopo 1990: 338). The outside community tended not to distinguish between PKJT and ASKI (Rustopo 1991: 89-90), instead identifying the activity there with *Sasanamulya*, the name of the building provided by the *kraton* (Supanggih 2003b: 384). Finally, in 1975, Humardani was named head of ASKI (Rustopo 1990: 86).

24. Rustopo describes Mashuri as “a modern Indonesian who also inherited traditional cultural values,” noting that he was Dewantara's *cantrik* (a student who learns informally while living with a teacher and helping with household chores), and also that his conception of the arts “accommodated the thought of Kant regarding aesthetics” (Rustopo 1990: 401).

25. Humardani taught “Philosophy and Criticism of Art” and advised recitals (Rustopo 1990: 296).

Promoting the Idea of Art

While Humardani would do much to shape ASKI's curriculum in support of the project of creating an existence in contemporary Indonesia for traditional regional arts, it was PKJT that allowed him to see this project realized to the extent that it was. PKJT proved invaluable as a platform to convey his views on the traditional arts and the challenges they faced in the modern age, and as a vehicle to carry out projects to respond to these challenges.

Humardani believed that any innovations to reinvigorate the traditional performing arts needed to be based on an understanding of the true nature of art. To promote such an understanding, he organized both formal seminars with invited presenters, and smaller-scale discussions among members of Solo's artistic community. For the latter, he used the Javanese term *sarasehan*, meaning "informal discussion, seminar" (*Javanese English Dictionary*, s.v. "sarasehan"). Over the course of PKJT's first two years of operation, there were monthly *sarasehan* for each of the three fields represented there: dance, wayang, and *karawitan* (Sumarsam 1995: 125). In these, Humardani gave space to senior artists to relate their experience, but also guided them toward expressing the basis of their thinking as they created and performed, and toward formulating conclusions that were in line with Humardani's conception of art (Rustopo 1990: 291-292).

In more formal seminars, Humardani delivered papers, several of which were later published by ASKI, in which he more explicitly outlined his own perspectives. One of the most significant was a paper on "Fundamental Problems in the Development of the Traditional Arts," presented at the Seminar Kesenian (Seminar on the Arts) in October of

1972 (Humardani 1987),²⁶ a meeting that, with its involvement of notable cultural figures from other institutions, anticipated the subsequent meetings and symposia held by the Jakarta Arts Council that led to the establishment of the PKM.²⁷ In this paper, Humardani distinguished between art's "principal" function of sustaining a "profound spiritual life" from secondary functions such as "ceremonies, education, providing information, propaganda, entertainment including entertainment . . . as wares to peddle . . . and also in seeking status, for showing off knowledge and intellect" (Humardani 1987: 264). In Humardani's analysis, it was increasingly these secondary functions that were emphasized in the traditional performing arts (Rustopo 1990: 121). A major force behind this shift was the rise of a commercialized mass culture, which Humardani believed undermined the public's ability to appreciate the essence of art (ibid.:158). Among the more obvious effects was the rise of a "defective but saleable style" of *wayang*, with both "well-established" and young "talented" *dhalang* following the lead of those who are "most in demand": those *dhalang* who "turn the performance of wayang kulit into a concoction of comedy which send the audience into uproar, right from the opening scene through to the final placement of the *kayon*."²⁸ In this style, *wayang* performances were reduced to "vehicles for the noise of action scenes, vehicles for clowning . . . and vehicles for the musical requests of the audience" (Humardani 1987:

26. The preface to the edition of the paper published by ASKI in 1981 stated that ASKI "considers it essential to reproduce this paper because it covers many important aspects of the Arts, particularly the Traditional Arts, which should be more widely known. These aspects cover basic concepts, activities, and characteristics and also the significance of the artistic world in the world of tradition. The latter question has given rise to many misconceptions in recent times" (Humardani 1987: 240).

27. Participants included Sudjatmoko, Koentjaraningrat, Sartono Kartodirdjo, Umar Kayam, and D. Djajakusuma (Rustopo 1991: 94-97).

28. The *kayon* is a "puppet" that does not depict any human or animal, but rather is used as an all-purpose prop, representing natural entities such as mountains, trees, and the wind. It also functions to demarcate major divisions in a wayang performance; its placement in the center of the screen at the end is the equivalent of a closing curtain.

253-256).

Equally problematic to Humardani was the increasing emphasis among traditionalists on rules: the rules of modality (*pathet*), form, and playing style in *karawitan*; of the ordering of scenes, the musical accompaniment, and the physical forms of the puppets in wayang; the costumes and movement vocabulary in dance (Humardani 1987: 246-249). A preoccupation with ensuring that these “outward aspects” were correct led to “rigidity and decline” and “slight and aimless work.”

Artistic life is thus absorbed in surface activity—beauty degenerates into spectacle and decadence, outward brilliance, golden brilliance, with a superficial attractiveness and glamour, whether it be in dance movement, *karawitan* or wayang performance. (Humardani 1987: 258-259)

Within the circle of ASKI/PKJT, Humardani’s low estimation of the popular trends in the traditional performing arts in society at large needed only to be reinforced. Humardani gave space at *sarasehan* to senior court musicians such as Projopangrawit, who was of the opinion that “nowadays *karawitan* had declined into a noisy entertainment” (Humardani 1987: 256). One increasingly prominent facet of this trend were the new songs by Nartosabdho. As Perlman summarizes, the “stylistic basis” of these songs “was somewhat different from that of the traditional repertory, and the instrumental parts, trying to accommodate the twists and turns of Nartosabdho’s vocal lines, were sometimes forced into unidiomatic awkwardnesses.” The older generation of musicians who taught at ASKI and participated in PKJT-sponsored events “felt this was an objectionable subordination of the instrumental parts to the voice, and derided Nartosabdho’s compositions as shallow and incompetent.” The opinions of the students were mixed,²⁹ but there was no question of either Nartosabdho’s or other similar

29. Harjito, in an interview from 2005, noted that Martopangrawit, the most influential of the court

songs being included in the curriculum at ASKI (Perlman 1999: 5).

More direct intervention was required in the area of creative activity. As Judith Becker noted, ASKI's predecessor KOKAR was founded with the hope that it would support attempts "to synthesize Indonesian musical arts and create an artistic expression that would be representative of the whole republic." But as she further observed in the mid-1970s, "this high hope must be termed a failure." KOKAR, "far from becoming the fountainhead of experimentation and synthesis as was originally hoped, is now one of the few viable institutions sustaining court traditions" (Becker 1980: 34-35). What creative activity did occur at KOKAR and ASKI before Humardani's interventions was mostly limited to reworking traditional material, such as the rearrangement of existing pieces into suites. This was "referred to as creation," but in Humardani's estimation it was really just "the application of rules" (Humardani 1987: 246-249).

Preservation, especially of court traditions, remained a significant activity at PKJT and ASKI. Humardani arranged for ASKI students to study the music and dance for *bedhaya* and *srimpi* pieces that had been the exclusive property of the Surakarta court (I. M. Harjito, p.c., 17 May 2005). He also dedicated significant resources to record the longest *gendhing* in the court gamelan repertoire, building a dedicated room for recording with a glass wall and organizing sessions on a weekly basis (Rustopo, p.c., 21 July 2005).

musicians who taught at ASKI, and many students "didn't like" Nartosabdho's compositions. Harjito himself described himself as being "kind of half and half," appreciating the vocal lines, but agreeing that they were often "not that easy to play"—meaning on instruments such as *gender* (Harjito, p.c., 17 May 2005). Sumarsam, in an article from 1971, offered a "salute" to Nartosabdho for having increased the number of "youth" in *karawitan*, but similarly expressed concern about their violation of "rules," and concluded that "traditional *karawitan* with classical values was already rarely or almost never heard" and that "*karawitan* as a form of art was increasingly diminished in most people's perception and *karawitan* was now listened to more as entertainment" (Sumarsam 1971: 8).

Humardani believed it was important for students to be able to “realize themselves” using “forms of expression” from the past (Rustopo 1990: 226), but did not advocate for the continued performance of traditional repertoire as it would have been performed in its original context. Instead, he linked preservation with development (*pengembangan*). He oversaw the creation of shortened versions of *bedhaya* and *srimpi* dances (Rustopo 1990: 83-84)(Harjito, p.c., 17 May 2005), and returning to experiments he had conducted with fellow students at UGM in the 1950s, the development of *wayang padat*, a condensed form in which performances lasted two to four hours rather than all night (Rustopo 1990: 237-240)(p.c., 21 July 2005).

As Ward Keeler notes, Humardani developed *wayang padat* not for any “practical reasons,” such as “people’s health or their obligation to get to work the next morning.” “Instead, he was at pains to justify shortened performances on purely aesthetic grounds.” Humardani sought greater focus on the core “content” (*isi*) of wayang, and to that end did away “with all elements that did not advance the story.” This was, as Keeler observes, “at the expense of incidentals, such as music and comedy.” These were, of course, precisely those elements which increasingly dominated the performances of the most popular *dhalang*; in pushing to eliminate them, Humardani “was quite at odds with the direction of wayang’s development over the past several decades” (Keeler 2002: 99-100). *Wayang padat* thus represented not only a radical abandonment of core conventions, such as the sequence of scenes which in traditional practice were the same no matter what story was being told, but also assumes a radically different mode of appreciation, one in which viewers would “take in all the content” (Rustopo, p.c., 21 July 2005)—that is, watch with full attention, which is not

at all how most Javanese audiences approach conventional wayang.³⁰

Pushing the Creation of New Art

Humardani was less concerned with reaching the average Javanese audience that actually existed at the time than with speaking to the audience he envisioned in his idealized future for traditional Indonesian performing arts.³¹ Key aspects of this ideal were represented by modern Indonesian art, especially literature and visual art. The “line of development of the modern arts,” Humardani believed, was “solid,” because it was oriented toward “the ideas of our modern world” (Humardani 1987: 242-243). Compared to the traditional arts, the modern arts were “far richer in terms of new works” and “momentum-inducing exchange of ideas in the form of writings, polemic, criticism, etc.”; their “exhibitions and performances at centres of cultural life in the towns, take place with participants and enthusiast [sic] of far great numbers and quality, and are also generally more serious, important and relevant” (ibid.:252).

“The modern arts,” Humardani noted, “demand an individual attitude” and “originality in the realization of form and content.” They are not bound by rules, but rather inspired by “the breath of creativity . . . giving form to things which are new, things which are fresh”

30. As is evident from Keeler’s description of audience behavior at a typical *wayang* performance, few stay for the entire duration, and their level of attentiveness varies, waning through the highly stylized and lengthy narrative descriptions (Keeler 1987: 3-14). “Wayang seems in many ways to preoccupy the Javanese, yet they pay it only intermittent attention” (Keeler 1987: 15). Rustopo, describing Humardani’s efforts with *wayang padat* as “extreme,” believed it was not possible to watch with full attention all night. He tried himself, but was “not strong.” All the same, *wayang padat* was not especially successful, as “society at large prefers all-night *wayang*” (Rustopo, p.c., 21 July 2005).

31. Accordingly, PKJT’s “Dissemination Program” (Program Penyebaran) was focused on education, on “raising the experiential capacity” of society (Rustopo 1990: 320-321). Elsewhere, Humardani seemed more concerned with the ability of traditional art to speak to Indonesia’s modern elite. He complained that “dalangs, the majority of whom come from the country areas or from the traditional classes, who are insufficiently in tune with the needs, both spiritual and physical, of the other classes, who occupy no mean role in giving form to Indonesian culture, will not succeed in capturing the attention of these classes of important people” (Humardani 1987: 269-270).

(Humardani 1987: 250-251). It was this attitude that Humardani felt the traditional Indonesian performing arts most needed to cultivate in order to be a part of modern Indonesian culture—to participate in building “a present-day, modern, contemporary Indonesian culture” (ibid.:266-267).

According to Rustopo, Humardani began more actively encouraging the development of traditional performing arts along the “modern line” in 1972. A catalyst for this shift was the performance that year of *Samgita Pancasona*, a dance piece by Sardono that had been premiered in Jakarta in 1969.³² The work exemplified the qualities of modern art that Humardani espoused, and moreover it was by an artist with a solid foundation in traditional Javanese dance. However, its performance in Solo proved to be quite controversial. It was met by a protest that involved rotten eggs being thrown at the stage (Murgiyanto 1991: 352-353), and resulted in Sardono and several of his dancers being disowned by their former Solonese teachers (Rustopo 1990: 379-380).³³ In the wake of the controversy, Humardani organized a *sarasehan* to discuss the piece. He reportedly managed to bring several “masters of tradition” (*empu tradisi*) around “accept or at least comprehend” Sardono’s work (ibid.:292-293).

32. *Samgita Pancasona*, one of Sardono’s first pieces, was presented at TIM. The 1969 production had a connection to ASKI via Sumarsam, who was “responsible for the music” (Kusumo 1987: 9). In Solo in 1972 it was performed in the auditorium of RRI Surakarta (Rustopo 1990: 379). Rustopo does not indicate who sponsored the performance, if anyone, but did note in an interview that Humardani provided Sardono with rehearsal space at Sasanamulya (Rustopo, p.c., 21 July 2005).

33. As Rustopo points out, the fact that a protestor brought rotten eggs to the performance indicates that the protest was planned in advance (Rustopo 1990: 379-380). Harjito, who participated in the performance but not in the piece’s earlier development, noted that the protest was carried out by an organization of young musicians, influenced by a rich patron who “didn’t like Sardono’s composition.” Harjito also noted that Supanggih was a member of this organization, but thought that Supanggih himself was “OK” with the piece (Harjito, p.c., 17 May 2005). Whatever Supanggih thought of Sardono, he later became one of Sardono’s many musical collaborators.

In the years following the incident, the focus of seminars and *sarasehan* at PKJT shifted from a discussion of the arts in general to a more specific emphasis on the creation of new art. The participation of “masters” decreased in the *sarasehan* as Humardani shifted his attention to the “younger generation of budding artists” (Rustopo 1990: 293). He “spurred” them “to begin creating,” pushed them to trust their instincts, encouraged them to be “crazy” and “unconventional,” and urged them “not to be afraid of violating the rules of tradition” (Rustopo 1990: 92).

In terms of compositions for concert presentation, as distinct from music to accompany dance or *wayang*, Humardani’s “spurring” would not produce harvestable fruit until 1979—the year of both the Sarasehan Komposisi Musik, for which Sukerta composed “Malam,” and at which Hastanto and Supanggih gave papers; and of the first Pekan Komponis Muda, at which Hastanto and Supanggih put the ideas from their papers into practice in the pieces “Dandanggula” and “Gambuh” discussed above. Subsequent iterations of the PKM provided a regular opportunity for ASKI composers to create and present compositions. Within ASKI, the biggest push to produce new works came in 1981 when the creation of a “new-style composition” was made compulsory for all students pursuing a Sarjana Karawitan (S.Kar., the equivalent of a Bachelor of Music) (Roth 1987: 65-66).³⁴

Nevertheless, the period of seven years between the 1972 Seminar Kesenian and the 1979

34. Up until 1981, ASKI graduates were required to perform a recital of traditional *gendhing* (Martopangrawit et al. 1998: 12); according to Rusdiyantoro, and noted by Roth, this requirement was abolished when none of the students taking the exam that year passed. The first two students to complete compositions for their final exam were I Made Lasmewan and A. L. Suwardi in 1983 (Rusdiyantoro, p.c., 9 August 2005; Roth 1987@65). By that point Suwardi had already composed several pieces, including “Ngalor-Ngidul,” a collaborative work with Rustopo and T. Slamet Suparno for the third Pekan Komponis Muda in 1982 (Hardjana 1986: 183-188). See Warde (2002) for an analysis of “Debah,” Suwardi’s 1983 exam piece.

Sarasehan Komposisi Musik were important gestationally. The “hothouse atmosphere” at Sasanamulya, as Alec Roth characterized it, “in which all manner of experimentation was encouraged,” was the result of Humardani’s “constant pressuring of his staff and students” (Roth 1987: 429).³⁵ The “hothouse” analogy is also apt as Humardani was more concerned with generating an environment within the confines of Sasanamulya that would foster “free” creativity than he was with preparing young artists to create work that would survive in the climate of the world at large. The controversy surrounding Sardono’s *Samgita Pancasona* did not dissuade Humardani from pushing students to create similarly innovative work; on the contrary, he did so quite vigorously. It did, however, make him cautious about presenting such work publicly. He did not want young artists to take the “shortcut” of making work “according to the taste of society at large” (Rustopo 1990: 321-322), but he did believe that the public presentation of “‘new’ works thought to be too far beyond the ability of society to appreciate” should be “postponed,” or limited to “special and limited forums” (Rustopo 1990: 321-323).³⁶

Humardani’s encouragement of experimentation coupled with a cautious approach to presentation may have contributed to the relatively delayed development of the composition of concert pieces. More significant, however, was the fact that Humardani exercised considerably more oversight in those areas where he had greater expertise: dance and *wayang*. His active involvement in guiding the development of new forms such as *wayang*

35. In discussions between Humardani and a senior official in the Department of Education and Culture for Central Java, PKJT was to function as a “kitchen” for developing the arts (Rustopo 1990: 325-326).

36. Humardani was “extremely selective,” encouraging public presentation in the case of certain work, such as *wayang sandosa*, a form which used multiple puppeteers and the Indonesian language; but forbidding it in the case of others, such as “Joged” by the choreographer Sunarno, which was “too crazy” with women “rolling around on the floor” (Rustopo, p.c., 21 July 2005).

padat resulted in what Supanggah described as the “school of Gendhon Humardani” (Supanggah, p.c., 21 July 2004).³⁷ No such school developed in music. Instead, Humardani was deferential to senior music faculty such as Martopangrawit, and even to senior students such as Supanggah himself (Rustopo, p.c., 21 July 2005).³⁸

Supanggah and Hastanto were, of course, the first to represent ASKI at the newly inaugurated special forum of the PKM in 1979. The works they presented, while reflecting their individual visions as composers, also harnessed the musical experimentation that had been developing at Sasanamulya—experimentation which just before that was harnessed by Sukerta. Sukerta and other more junior students, such as Rustopo and Suwardi, were, by their own admission, considerably more susceptible to Humardani’s pressuring (Rustopo, p.c., 21 July 2005)—though as will be seen, this pressuring was expressed in general terms rather than specific directives. They were also, it seems, more caught up in the experimentation that was taking place in dance and *wayang*.

The exact course of the musical experiments at Sasanamulya in the 1970s, and the development of an approach based on sound exploration, appears only in broad outlines in existing accounts. Sadra distinguishes between an earlier compositional approach that “emerged in the early 1970s,” in which “the composer makes creative use of existing music materials,” combining “contrasting musical elements”; and one that “developed since 1978” in which “the composer has a more experimental attitude,” creating works with “an open and

37. In Rustopo’s estimation, Humardani’s intervention went too far, with the “fatal” result that there has been limited subsequent development in dance and *wayang* (Rustopo, p.c., 21 July 2005).

38. Supanggah, coming from a family of musicians and *dhalang*, had considerable musical experience upon entering ASKI. He completed his first degree, the Sarjana Muda, in 1971, and his second, the Seniman Karawitan, in 1978 (Perlman 1993: 601).

free orientation” such as those “we see at the Pekan Komponis” (Sadra 1991: 20-21).

I. M. Harjito’s observations point to a related distinction, but also suggest that the seeds for it were planted earlier. He commented on how “around 1971, 1972” Hastanto “started creating something.” The specific example he gave was of a simple elaborating part. While playing *lancaran* “Manyursewu”—a short, repetitive piece used to accompany dance and *wayang*—he “started adding to it,” playing faster *saron* melodies. Harjito also noted, when I asked if he had observed what Sukerta was doing, that after he returned to Solo from teaching at Wesleyan University from January 1975 until June 1976, “something happened at ASKI” (Harjito, p.c., 17 May 2005)—that he encountered upon returning to ASKI a heightened atmosphere of creative activity. That “something” was most likely the initial production of *Wayang Budha*.

Formative Experiences

Wayang Budha and Pentas Kecil (Little Concerts)

Wayang Budha was an interdisciplinary collaboration that went through several versions between its first performance at a celebration of *Waiçak* (the birthday of the Buddha) at Candi Mendut in 1975,³⁹ and the presentation at the Festival Penata Tari in Jakarta in 1978, a forum for choreographers parallel to the *Pekan Komponis Muda* that started one year earlier. The work was one of the first attempts at ASKI to bring dance and *wayang* together in one

39. *Waiçak* falls in the month of May. Rustopo gives 1976 as the date of the first performance (Rustopo 1991: 110); both Suprpto (p.c., 31 July 2004) and visual artist Hajar Satoto (in a program for his 1994 sculpture exhibit *Gatra Swara*) gave 1975. Candi Mendut is a smaller temple near the major Buddhist monument Borobudur, and the site of a Buddhist monastery.

production—a combination without traditional precedent that would become an important and especially innovative instance of Humardani’s efforts to forge a new, contemporary life for traditional performing arts. Wayang Budha also provided a framework for musical experimentation at ASKI through the mid 1970s; it is the only specific work discussed by Rustopo in his history of *gamelan kontemporer* (1991) that was produced before the Sarasehan Komposisi Musik in 1979. Thus, before Sukerta’s “Malam,” the first concert presentation of new music at ASKI, the context for musical experimentation was largely interdisciplinary.

The initiative for Wayang Budha came from Suprpto Suryadarma, a dancer and teacher of movement-meditation who became a practicing Buddhist in 1974, and who continues to be an important figure in the *kontemporer* performing arts scene in Central Java.⁴⁰ When I interviewed Suprpto about Wayang Budha and his relationship to it, he clarified that he is neither a choreographer nor a composer. He instead called himself the work’s *penggagas*, the person who came up with the concept. Rustopo also noted that as a former ASKI student council head and secretary to Humardani at PKJT, Suprpto also contributed his organizational skills and leadership. But Wayang Budha was strongly collaborative, so much so that Suprpto was eventually marginalized, almost to the point of exclusion.

As Suprpto explains, the issue was one of a “conflict between ritual and performing arts,” a “very fierce polemic” (Suprpto, p.c., 31 July 2004). As the work transformed from a fringe activity about which Humardani was initially not aware (Rustopo 1991: 108-109) to an

40. Suprpto co-organized the major 1994 arts festival Nur Gora Rupa at Taman Budaya Surakarta (Notosudirdjo 2001: 350), and since the mid-1980s has regularly hosted performances and workshops at Padepokan Lemah Putih, his home and plot of land where he teaches movement meditation, mostly to foreign students.

official ASKI/PKJT production, Humardani—as he was wont to do—exercised increasingly more oversight. He objected to Suprpto’s mode of participation, which was not to dance, but to meditate. Suprpto noted that for a period “around 1975, 1976” he was not allowed to rehearse at Sasanamulya, but was then pulled back into the ASKI circle in 1977 when he was rehired by Humardani as an administrator. Approaching the presentation at the Festival Penata Tari in 1978—at which point ASKI faculty member Tasman had taken primary responsibility for the choreography, and Supanggah for the music (Rustopo, p.c., 21 July 2005)—the issue resurfaced, and a meeting was held at which Humardani questioned Suprpto and the other participants. Suprpto offered to withdraw. After a period of silence, Hajar Satoto—a visual artist and dancer who created *wayang seng*, puppets made from thin sheet metal, for the initial 1975 version—said “this is Pak Prpto's idea—Pak Prpto can't leave.” Humardani in the end acquiesced, but urged the work to be developed “as a performing art,” and went along to Jakarta to watch over rehearsals (Suprpto, p.c., 31 July 2004).

The particulars of Wayang Budha’s genesis are somewhat murky, but what is clear is that it grew out of more casual and free-form experimentation at Sasanamulya. Rustopo notes “sound exploration and/or experiments in new *karawitan*” began “at least as early” as 1974 (ibid.:108). Suprpto gave 1972 as the year in which he started *pentas kecil*, “little performances” that were “not big presentations ready to be observed” but “more for studying, for mutual discussion.” Sukerta, who moved to Solo in 1973, similarly described *pentas kecil* as emphasizing spontaneous ideas developed quickly and presented immediately. He recounted how the room where he lived was on the opposite side of the *pendhapa* from the bathroom, and how when he was on his way to bathe in the afternoon his colleagues would

call out “pentas dulu” (let’s perform first). Suprpto also described dancing in the *pendhapa* alone at night, sometimes to music such as *macapat*. At other times the “music” was provided by the “nighttime atmosphere” of the *kraton*, an atmosphere that was still (*hening*), that consisted of both natural sounds that were more audible and “inner sounds,” or *suara batin*—Suprpto elaborated on these in his characteristically mystical manner. According to Harjito, Suprpto would also dance during gamelan classes and rehearsals. He started “little by little,” at first to the side, but as he became more comfortable he started dancing in the *pendhapa*. It would seem that the *pentas kecil* were not so much deliberately instated as the result of Sukerta, Rustopo, and other more curious students at ASKI taking note of Suprpto’s presence and beginning to work with him. With Suprpto’s initiation into Buddhism in 1974, the *pentas kecil* became more directed toward a specific aim, culminating in the first version of Wayang Budha for Waiçak in mid-1975.

As a creative achievement in and of itself, and as a contribution to the development of *gamelan kontemporer*, estimations of Wayang Budha’s significance vary. Vincent McDermot, writing not long after having witnessed rehearsals of the 1978 version, enthusiastically characterized the work as “an avant-garde mixture of puppetry, dance, chanting, and contemporary music that could be played without apology anywhere in the West without seeming especially exotic” (McDermott 1986: 24). The more recent retrospective opinions of Rustopo and Sukerta—both of whom were involved in the project from its start—are more reserved, though for different reasons. Rustopo notes that the music for the initial version did not yet take the form of a “stable composition” (*komposisi yang mantap*) (1991: 111). Sukerta, on the other hand, seemed more concerned with the extent to which the music departed from tradition. In his view, Wayang Budha was in certain respects

crazy (*gila*) and mischievous (*nakal*), but musically it was not yet “really mischievous” (*belum nakal sekali*). It was [only] “crazy within the context of tradition” (*gila di dalam konteks tradisi*), still within the scope (*lingkup*) or realm (*kalangan*) of tradition, and still “kind of good” (*bagus-bagus*).

As a supporting example for his assessment of Wayang Budha, Sukerta sang a bit of “Parita,” a piece written by Martopangrawit at Suprpto’s request for a later version of the project. Sung also by Suwardi, Bambang Sunarto, and Suprpto, “Parita” seems to be the most enduring music associated with Wayang Budha. “Parita” was innovative in certain respects, using a radically reduced instrumentation of *gender*, *gender panerus*, and *slenthem* playing through-composed material rather than regular *cengkok* (Waridi 2001: 204-206). It was an influential point of reference for certain directions in *gamelan kontemporer*, particularly those taken up by the *dhalang* and composer Subono (Waridi 2001: 205). But it did not contribute to the rise of sound exploration as a basis for composition. It was still based on a clear melody with a clear sense of meter. It was, as Rustopo put it, “still nice” (*masih enak*).

Martopangrawit’s “Parita” did not completely replace the original music for Wayang Budha, but rather was combined with it. Rustopo’s description of the “new *karawitan*” (*karawitan baru*) in the original version—the “results of the experiments of a group of ‘crazy’ young players” (*hasil eksperimen kelompok pengrawit muda ‘gila’*)—suggests that some of the tendencies which would later predominate in *gamelan kontemporer* were already present, in at least a germinal form:

The basic elements used were sounds produced by several gamelan instruments, such as *kemanak*, *kenong*, *gong*, *suling*, *siter*, *ceng-ceng kopyak*; and other non-gamelan sources, such as stones, wood, zinc sheeting, *terbang*, *terompet*. The composition at times stuck to traditional *karawitan*, but at other times departed entirely from

traditional patterns. The totality of sound heard varied; sometimes it felt pleasant like listening to *klenengan*, sometimes it felt boisterous, tumultuous and indeterminate. As a whole, the form as well as the musical structure has no comparison at all with the form and structure of traditional *karawitan*, although the feeling of traditional *karawitan* could still be felt through the strains of *tembang* “Duradasih” which was mixed with an organization of sounds that gave the impression of having no order.⁴¹ (Rustopo 1991: 110-111)

The instrumentation was not a standard Javanese gamelan, but an eclectic combination of more peripheral instruments, non-Javanese instruments, and non-instruments. These, the alternation of “pleasant” and “boisterous, tumultuous and indeterminate” sections, and the juxtaposition of traditional elements (such as solo vocal melodies) with non-traditional sound-based material were the very ingredients that were most prominent in Supanggah’s and Hastanto’s compositions for the Pekan Komponis Muda, and that would become trademarks of *musik kontemporer* from ASKI.

Learning from Sardono

As a project that was ongoing for several years in the late 1970s, Wayang Budha did much to broaden the base of interest in artistic experimentation at ASKI, involving even its most respected senior teacher, Martopangrawit. Supanggah drew from it in creating “Gambuh” for the PKM, involving participants from it, including Suprpto, and elements such as Buddhist chanting. But for three of the other most active and notable figures in the Solo scene—A. L. Suwardi, I Wayan Sadra, and Pande Made Sukerta—it was another

41. *Suling* (bamboo flute) and *siter* (zither) play a minor role in Javanese gamelan. *Kemanak* are a pair of banana-shaped bells used to accompany the Javanese court dance forms *bedhaya* and *srimpi*, along with *kenong*, *gong*, and *kendhang*; *Tembang* “Duradasih” is the melody from *Bedhaya Duradasih*, a dance from the Kraton Surakarta. *Ceng-ceng kopyak* are Balinese cymbals used most prominently in the smaller marching *gamelan balaganjur*. *Terbang* is a frame drum used in the Islamic genres. *Terompet* is a double-reed instrument used in “folk” forms such as *reog Ponorogo*.

interdisciplinary project, one that was shorter but more intensive, that made a deeper impression. In my interviews, all three began their accounts of how they became interested in composing by noting their experience with the choreographer Sardono, whose controversial 1972 performance in Solo, discussed above, prompted Humadani to shift attention to the creation of new art. Specifically, Suwardi, Sadra, and Sukerta were involved in the production and European tour of Sardono's work *Dongeng dari Dirah* (The Witch of Dirah) in 1973-1974.

The idea for *Dongeng dari Dirah* emerged in the wake of Sardono's failed attempt to bring to Jakarta a production of *kecak* that involved seventy residents from the village of Teges, Bali.⁴² A controversy arose around the project, due to Sardono having neglected to receive official permission from local officials, and from a newspaper article that played up the involvement in rehearsals of children who, as they often would be, were nude. The Governor of Bali banned the Teges residents from going to Jakarta, and the production was cancelled (Murgiyanto 1991: 356-361). Sardono undertook another collaboration with Balinese artists that he had met in Teges, including the renowned *gender wayang* player Made Grindem, after a successful duo performance in France led to a contract to prepare a larger production (Murgiyanto 1991: 362-363). For the first two months of the development period, rehearsals were held in Kerambitan, a small village near the coast, but again Sardono ran into problems. With Humardani's assistance, he was able to continue rehearsing for one month at Sasanamulya in Solo (Rustopo, p.c., 21 July 2005).

42. *Kecak*, a form of dance drama, developed out the interaction in the 1920s between the Balinese dancer I Limbak and the German artist Walter Spies, then resident in Bali. Dancers are accompanied by a male chorus chanting *cak* and similar syllables, a musical practice drawn from exorcistic trance dances. Referred to as the "Monkey Dance," the form became extremely popular among tourists (Picard 1990: 58-61).

Humardani also helped Sardono choose additional musicians for the production. He recommended Suwardi when Sardono asked him for “someone brave, who would like to be invited to do something not traditional”—or more succinctly, someone “crazy” (*edan*). More specifically, Sardono sought players with a curiosity in trying different instruments, and an ability to quickly pick up unfamiliar music. Suwardi recounted Humardani recommending him, having observed him sitting by himself playing instruments such as Balinese *kendang*, “just as I liked” (*semaunya saja*), “just getting sound out of it.” Sardono asked Suwardi if he could play *terompet*, a double-reed instrument used in Javanese folk traditions, most notably *reog Ponorogo*. Suwardi responded that he didn’t yet, but was sure he could, and then improvised on an instrument provided by Humardani (Suwardi, p.c., 8 September 2004).

As Balinese elements were key to the piece, Sardono was also interested in having Balinese musicians involved. Sardono invited Sadra, at the time a recent graduate of Konservatori Karawitan Denpasar who had just moved to Jakarta.⁴³ Seeking a fourth musician on Sardono’s behalf, Humardani asked Suwardi which of the Balinese musicians at ASKI was best at playing Javanese gamelan—not because there was any intention of using Javanese gamelan instruments, but because this was a sign of greater ability to learn new things quickly. Suwardi recommended Sukerta, who had just that year moved to Solo to continue his studies at ASKI (Suwardi, p.c., 8 September 2004). Sukerta had actually already met Sardono during his first study trip to Bali, and participated in some of his “experiments”

43. After touring with Sardono, Sadra studied visual arts and taught gamelan at IKJ, from 1975 to 1978, and present a work at the second meeting of the PKM in 1981. Presumably on the strength of this work, in 1982 Humardani invited Sadra to study and then to teach at ASKI. Sukerta recounted Humardani asking his opinion of Sadra, to which he replied that he was bald and bathed infrequently—qualities which Humardani reportedly accepted as evidence of a desirable eccentricity (Sukerta, p.c., 22 July 2005).

(Sukerta, p.c., 7 September 2004).

After three months of preparation, Sardono and his collaborators took *Dongeng dari Dirah* to France. The tour—which included a run of in Paris for just under a month, followed by a tour of eight other European cities and a workshop at Eugenio Barba's cutting edge International School for Theater Anthropology (Murgiyanto 1991: 363-364)—was the first time Suwardi, Sadra, and Sukerta had been outside Indonesia. Suwardi wryly added, when I asked him if this was the case, that it was also his first time “out of Solo” (Suwardi, p.c., 8 September 2004).

The experience of touring Europe—performing in venues and for audiences that were receptive to new work incorporating traditional elements, and taking in other performances in Paris⁴⁴—undoubtedly contributed to many of the younger participants’ development as cosmopolitan creative artists. But what all three emphasized in recounting their involvement in the project was not the experience of going abroad. Nor was there anything especially remarkable about the music that they played, which was primarily traditional repertoire for *gender wayang*. Instead, what seems to be the most important thing that Suwardi, Sadra, and Sukerta took from Sardono was a more general attitude toward being a creative artist. When I asked Sukerta if there was any particular idea from Sardono that was important, he answered “no, only the experience of freedom” (Sukerta, p.c., 7 September 2004). In a subsequent interview, when I pressed him to more specifically identify what motivated him to begin exploring sound as the basis of his compositional process, he again brought up the experience with Sardono. He admitted to not being able to “accept” Sardono’s experiments when he first

44. Suwardi recounted going to see opera and ballet performances, but did not cite any particular productions or artists (Suwardi, p.c., 8 September 2004). Sadra mentioned that while in Paris they met Slamet Abdul Sjukur (Sadra, p.c., 23 July 2004).

encountered them in 1972, asking himself “what *is* this?” (Sukerta, p.c., 8 July 2005). But from talking with Sardono, and learning about his concepts, he came to be interested in music that “is a bit odd” (Sukerta, p.c., 7 September 2004).

Sadra offered a few more concrete examples of how Sardono’s process enabled him to “develop” his “creativity.” They would play *gender* “beside the sea,” “on the beach,” a “practice of art that was unconventional.” Sardono would have someone accompany dance playing only *ceng-ceng*, a “minor instrument” that Sadra had “never imagined” could be played on its own, rather than as part of a larger ensemble.⁴⁵ For another scene, in which a masked dancer played the role of Rangda, a female demon, another performer repeatedly ripped a cloth. Sadra, like Sukerta, asked himself “what *is* this?” Reflecting on his attitude then, he still subscribed to a sort of “superiority complex” in which “anything other than *gong kebyar* wasn’t any good.” Several years later, he claims he “understood.” “What was sought was a connection between the sound and the visual” (Sadra, p.c., 23 July 2004)—a concept that Sadra adopted as his own, in dropping a rotten egg on a stone in “Lad-Lud-An” at the second Pekan Komponis Muda in 1981.

45. *Ceng-ceng* consist a cluster of small cymbals mounted on a stand, played with two more cymbals, one in each hand. Different versions are used in different types of Balinese gamelan. Sardono seems to have had an interest in isolating instruments from ensembles—a striking practice in a music culture in which there is no tradition of solo instrumental performance. Harjito recounted an instance where Sardono invited him to his house to accompany a rehearsal with four dancers on *rebab*. Sardono had Harjito play in front of a pivoting fan, asking him to respond to the changing force of the wind (Harjito, p.c., 17 May 2005).

The Question of Western Influence, Revisited

Attenuating Ethnological Valence

Ward Keeler characterized Humardani's idea of *wayang padat*, with its singular focus on core dramatic content and assumption of undivided attention on the part of the audience, as "obviously informed by his knowledge of Western aesthetic conventions" (Keeler 2002: 99). This specific claim cannot be denied. In his papers, Humardani clearly acknowledged Western thinkers, citing both aesthetic philosophers and scholars in other fields, including ethnomusicology.⁴⁶ And in translating De Witt Parker's *The Principles of Aesthetics* and having it published by ASKI (Parker 1980), he encouraged and made it easier for ASKI students and faculty to familiarize themselves with the Western philosophy of art. Sadra, for one, included the book in a short bibliography for a report on composition at ASKI (Sadra 1986: 0). A similar claim could be made regarding Humardani's ideas about the kind of creativity that was needed in the present age. In prioritizing individuality and originality, he pointed to exemplars from those fields of modern Indonesian art—literature and visual art—that were themselves based on Western forms and the aesthetic priorities that had developed along with them.

Yet at the same time, Humardani did much to attenuate the ethnological valence of artistic modernity as Western for the young artists working at Sasanamulya. He resisted and countered the status of the ideals he promoted as specifically Western by identifying for them a more widespread basis and presence. It concerned him that society at large regarded

46. Humardani's "Basic Thoughts on Traditional Art" includes references to *Art and the Social Order* by D.W. Gotshalk, Harold Osborne's *Theory of Beauty: An Introduction to Aesthetics*, as well as Robert Redfield's *Peasant Society and Culture* and *The Anthropology of Music* by Alan P. Merriam.

contemporary forms of art as Western or Westernized (Rustopo 1990: 81).⁴⁷ He rejected the idea that the “characteristic of modernity” was “the exclusive property . . . of Western culture,” acknowledging that “Western ideas are a huge and strong part” but also arguing that “this modern line is also built with the bricks and mortar of other cultures.” Alongside references to Western thinkers he also quoted passages from manuscripts by Javanese courtiers, such as the *Serat Centhini* to support his claims regarding the true nature of art (Humardani 1983: 2).⁴⁸ He identified what he termed the “presentation” (*presentasi*) or “non-realistic” (*tan-wadag*) principles as “principles of modern art which in the Western world have been attained through centuries of development,” but also as a “basic principle” in authentic Javanese traditions, giving the abstract quality of *karawitan* and the stylized qualities of Javanese dance movements and the form of Javanese *wayang* puppets as examples (Humardani 1987: 258-259).

Humardani’s position was consistent with the cosmopolitan nativist consensus that emerged out of the Polemik Kebudayaan—an intellectual heritage he directly acknowledged. Early in his paper for the 1972 Seminar Kesenian, Humardani cited a proclamation of “Bung Hatta,” Indonesia’s first vice-president: “Where there is much in the Western world that we must now take, we should receive it by adapting it to our own culture”; and the exhortation of Javanese literary scholar Poerbatjaraka: “Don’t get besotted with the ancient culture, but

47. The term Humardani used was “kebarat-baratan,” to “be like a Westerner” (*Kamus Indonesia-Inggris*, s.v. “barat”).

48. Sumarsam describes the *Serat Centhini* as follows: “Considered one of the Javanese classics, the *Serat Centhini* is the story of wanderers who travel from place to place in Java looking for celebrated teachers and searching for deeper experience and esoteric knowledge. Its diverse subjects—music, theatrical performances, religious knowledge, topography, medicine, etc.—have earned the *Serat Centhini* its reputation as a great Javanese encyclopedic work” (Sumarsam 1995:265, note 24). For another perspective on the *Serat Centhini*, see B. Anderson (1990: 271-289).

don't get besotted with the West either; get to know both, choose what is good from the two of them, so that we may use it safely" (Humardani 1987: 243-245).

In practice, however, the extent to which students at ASKI engaged with Western forms of art was quite limited. The primary framework for creative activity at Sasanamulya remained the traditional Indonesian performing arts. In the case of dance, Humardani had students study some ballet technique (Rustopo 1990: 309). He also applied certain Western choreographic concepts in developing new versions of Javanese dance, but as Rustopo notes, such concepts were used merely as "means" rather than as ends in themselves (Rustopo 1990: 205-206). The objective was to reinvigorate traditional Javanese dance, and to encourage the creation of modern Indonesian dance that was not bound by the rules of traditional dance, but that nonetheless reflected the foundation of its choreographers in traditional dance.

In the case of music, foreign models were all but completely absent. Indeed, Humardani provided no clear sense of what new compositions should be like. Instead, Humardani's spurring took an extremely generalized form. Sukerta relished relating how along with pushing him to create, Humardani would tell him that his work was "shit" (*tahi*). He "never said anything good," only "that's shit! Bad! Bad!" If he approved, "the most he would do is smile" or "laugh a little bit." When I asked Sukerta if Humardani ever provided any more specific direction, Sukerta did note that Humardani's concept was that music could, and should, be made from anything. "If needed, use shit!" (Sukerta, p.c., 7 September 2004). Rustopo similarly recounted Humardani telling junior students that their work was "like shit" or that they were "not crazy enough!" (*kurang gila*). Rustopo believed that Humardani had a definite sense of the level of innovation he wanted to see, but "could not direct." Thus, Rustopo would ask Sukerta what he thought Humardani meant by crazy, and they would keep

trying until they “met something” (Rustopo, p.c., 21 July 2005).

The Basis of Sound Exploration, Reconceived

How then, if not from a specific model, did the practice of sound exploration emerge as a central and most distinctive aspect of the compositional approach developed at ASKI? The interaction with Raden to produce music for *November 1828* certainly contributed to this, but there are numerous reasons to doubt Raden’s claims for its singular importance. Raden, who is basically the same age as Sukerta, Suwardi, and Rustopo,⁴⁹ and who had only begun his own studies at IKJ in 1973 (Notosudirdjo 2001: 449-note 4), was not a seasoned senior composer, but rather a peer—perhaps a somewhat more confident peer, who coming from an institute in the big city with accomplished teachers with international experience had a clearer idea of what being a composer involved, but a peer nonetheless. He did not present a fully worked out method of sound-oriented composition, but was himself experimenting with an alternative approach to the notation-based one that had failed him in 1976.

Sukerta, who was “the truly crazy one” at ASKI (Rusdiyantoro, p.c., 9 August 2005), and whose 1978 “Malam” was the first concert work based primarily on sound, reported that he was not involved in the collaboration with Raden. Even before Raden first visited ASKI in 1976, Sukerta and Suwardi had collaborated and toured with Sardono, and had participated in *pentas kecil*, the “little performances” at Sasanamulya that led to the initial production of *Wayang Budha* in 1975—a production which reportedly included “an organization of sounds that gave the impression of having no order” (Rustopo 1991: 110-111) that was the result of

49. Suwardi, the oldest, was born in 1951; Rustopo was born in 1952; Sukerta and Raden were both born in 1953.

“playing with sound” (*main bunyi*) (Rustopo, p.c., 21 July 2005). The interaction with Raden, rather than single-handedly pushing musicians at ASKI to create “new gamelan compositions free of traditional constraints” (Notosudirdjo 2001: 343), instead reinforced more formative experiences and the ongoing spurring from Humardani, adding legitimacy and a specific focus to the experimentation that was already happening, and that was, to a significant extent, already oriented toward sound.

That sound exploration became so central to the new style of composition at ASKI, and that it was taken up so readily, points to, I suggest, a deeper, cultural basis. There are many examples in Indonesia that point to a heightened level of attentiveness to and appreciation, or at least tolerance and acceptance, for all manner of sound. There is an abundance of onomatopoeic words in Indonesian languages—150 starting with the letter *k* alone in one Indonesian-English dictionary—many of them describing very specific sounds, such as *kelepak*, the “sound of a hand slapping s.t.,” *keletak*, the “sound of a pebble striking wood,” *keletang*, the “sound of jingling or tinkling (of silver coins),” and *keletuk*, the “sound of rapping on a hollow wooden surface, table, etc.” or “sound of creaking (of wooden furniture, floor, etc.)” (*Kamus Indonesia-Inggris*, s.vv. “kelepak,” “keletak,” “keletang,” and “keletuk”).

There is a myriad of sounds and calls identifying specific wares and foods used by mobile street vendors: a small gong signals ice cream; swishing high-pitched bells signal chicken *sate*; a series of open and closed knocks on a small woodblock signals fried noodles; a drawn out “teeeee” in a high pitched falsetto—the second syllable of *roti*—signals bread. Sadra, when a recording of Islamic music started up in a neighboring mosque while I was interviewing him, started talking about differences in “sound cosmology” between the West and Indonesia, where sounds and music function as “codes.” He gave as another example the

use of car and motorcycle horns to indicate all sorts of different things, not just to alert other drivers—specifically, he related how Sukerta would honk his horn from some distance to let his family know he was returning home. Whereas loud music and sound would be disturbing to an American who had just arrived in Indonesia, Indonesians, Sadra claimed, were used to them; they understood them as signals, and were thus not bothered by them (Sadra, p.c., 23 July 2004).⁵⁰

There are a good number of sound making toys. Some, like whistles and flutes, are more like musical instruments; others, like the humming tops used by both Sutanto and Supanggih at the first Pekan Komponis Muda, or clay frogs with a reed to produce a buzzing sound, are less so. Suwardi described these instruments when I asked him when he started to make new instruments—a practice he has engaged in extensively, and for which he is especially known. The numerous instruments that he has designed and constructed—some elaborate, like a *gender* with a vibraphone mechanism, or a “water *suling*” where air passes through tubes and water in a small canister on its way to a standard *suling*; and some simple, like a short piece of bamboo with rubber covering each end and a single blow hole—constitute a significant aspect of the creative practice he developed since he started studying at ASKI, in response to Humardani’s imperative to forge a modern form of gamelan music. But at the same time, it is an outgrowth of activity he has engaged in since childhood—or as he put it in answering my question, part of his “character” since he was little. Inspired by the toys he bought from

50. Sutton, in an article on sound technology in the contemporary Javanese soundscape, relates an anecdote about an Indonesian man who threw a fit after an American couple in an adjacent hotel room asked him to turn the radio he had blaring at night and early in the morning down or off. Sutton suggests that the man’s “violent reaction” was firstly a response to the directness of the request, and secondly because “it was probably inconceivable . . . that playing a radio—filling the emptiness of the night and early morning—could *bother* anyone” (Sutton 1996: 260).

vendors at *wayang* performances or *sekaten*, he tried his hand at making his own. Suwardi also described how children would play with scraps of bamboo left over from newly built houses. He went one step further, cutting pieces and arranging them into a scale. He continued with this kind of “experimentation” after returning to Solo after touring Europe with Sardono, using “glasses filled with water.” He “still used a lot of traditional material”—his thinking “was still tied” to the *pelog* and *slendro* scales. But gradually he turned more to “just sound.” He tried to find sounds, improvising by himself as he was not yet sure how to make a composition. “Finally, after some time, I was opened by all kinds of sounds” and realized that they “can be arranged as one like, can become a composition” (Suwardi, p.c., 8 September 2004).

The shift toward the use of all manner of sounds, rather than only specifically musical sounds, involved a significant conceptual shift. In discussing the emergence of sound exploration with Sukerta at a point well into my research, we went over some of the earlier projects, such as *Wayang Budha*. He talked about a long cloth used by Suprpto and the sound it made, which prompted me to ask about Hajar Satoto’s metal puppets, which were reportedly quite noisy. Sukerta acknowledged this, imitating the sound vocally. These elements were “mischievous” (*nakal*), but the cloth was “for dance, not music,” and the sound of the puppets was “not yet regarded as music.” “Mischievousness in music,” as far as Sukerta knew, “started in 1978, with me.” He then went on to describe “gathering” sounds. Some of these he searched for deliberately, such as plywood, while others he happened upon, such as *krupuk* or the sound of air passing over the end of a *suling* he was carrying while riding on a motorcycle. After finding these sounds, he played around with them. I commented that such a “broad awareness of sound” was interesting—that on the one hand, it’s “an

extremely simple idea,” but on the other, there “has to be a significant change in thinking.” Sukerta immediately pointed to his head and said “it must be opened” (Sukerta, p.c., 8 July 2005).

The opening up to any and all sounds represents a significant shift, but at the same time it is perhaps less of a leap in Indonesia than it would be elsewhere. There is an openness to extra-musical sound in traditional musical contexts, and along with it more explicitly recognized connections between musical sound and other sound. In both Java and Bali, the sound of gamelan, typically presented outside or in open walled *pendhapa*, blends with the sounds of birds twittering during the day, and of insects and frogs at night. Musical references to frogs abound. They are identified as a model for *kotekan*, the interlocking figuration in Balinese music (Gold 2005: 58-59), and referenced in the name of the archaic Javanese gamelan *kodhok ngorek*, which means croaking frogs. A particularly exceptional example is a traditional Javanese gamelan piece that can be seen as a precedent for ASKI Solo-style sound exploration, *gendhing bonang* “Kodhokan”—a piece that includes a section in which most of the musicians stop playing their regular parts and instead imitate the sounds of frogs.⁵¹

To be sure, the compositional focus on sound exploration did not develop organically out of traditional gamelan practice. *Gendhing* “Kodhokan” is anomalous, a singular instance in

51. The piece was played at Klenengan Pujangga Laras—an internationally sponsored monthly gathering, usually held in Solo, dedicated to “classical” repertoire—on 24 June 2004. On that occasion, some players imitated frogs vocally, while others made sounds on instruments: repeated strokes, in rhythms unrelated to the underlying meter—which continued to be marked by the structure-marking instruments and the *kendhang*—using either conventional playing techniques or by using the hard handle of mallets to produce brighter tones; knocks on the wooden cases of instruments; and scraping sounds produced by running the end of mallets across the resonating tubes. This may or may not have resembled how the piece was played in earlier decades, but it is notable that the players consisted almost entirely of “town” musicians, who were not affiliated with ASKI/STSI/ISI Surakarta, and had no involvement in *musik kontemporer*. The one notable exception was Sukamso, a graduate of ASKI and faculty member of STSI/ISI who presented a piece at the sixth Pekan Komponis Muda in 1985, and continues to compose and perform *musik kontemporer*.

which playing around with sound—something gamelan musicians do in joking with each other⁵²—is deliberately incorporated into a traditional piece. It took the kind of hothouse atmosphere fostered at Sasanamulya under Humardani’s leadership, and in large part due to his active encouragement, for sound exploration to be elevated to a serious artistic pursuit. It took time for that pursuit to become a focus in and of itself—for it to become more than incidental sound to accompany dramatic action or to establish a mood for an interdisciplinary performance such as *Wayang Budha*, or a film such as *November 1828*. That really only happened in 1979, when the Sarasehan Komposisi Musik and the composition competition associated with it prompted Sukerta to compose “Malam,” and the PKM commissioned Hastanto’s “Dandanggula” and Supanggih’s “Gambuh.” But from that point on, when composers at ASKI began creating works for concert presentation, sound exploration became the defining feature of their compositional process and style.

There were specific suggestions that pointed young musicians at ASKI toward sound exploration. There was Humardani telling Sukerta to make music from anything, including “shit” if necessary. Raden, with his newly acquired knowledge of and enthusiasm for experimentalism in the international new music scene—and specifically, after a failed attempt to use gamelan instruments as a medium for high-modernist European-style pointillism, an approach which treated them as “autonomous sound sources”—brought something that in a more germinal and less explicit fashion was suggested to Suwardi, Sukerta, and Sadra by Sardono, and that Suwardi, Sukerta, Rustopo, and others, were moving toward in coming up with material for *Wayang Budha*. What Sukerta, Suwardi, and Sadra all identified as most

52. During *andhegan*, interludes where the gamelan slows to a stop and the *pesindhen*, the solo female vocalist, sings a brief solo, Javanese musicians will on occasion bang on instruments as well as vocally tease the *pesindhen*.

important, however, was the push to create independently of traditional conventions that came from Humardani, and that was exemplified by Sardono. This, most of all, is what opened their minds. Once their minds were open, sound exploration was the logical alternative.

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Predicaments

5 In the Absence of Authority: Going Nativist

The Pekan Komponis Muda was not a competition, but a festival. Nevertheless, the metaphor of a race usefully registers the inevitable comparisons between various participants and scenes, in terms of their ability to realize the festival's goal of stimulating contemporary art music composition in Indonesia. At the first festival in 1979, Sutanto with his happening and Otto Sidharta with his live electroacoustics were perhaps fastest out of the gate, picking up on international currents of experimentalism. But as the PKM continued over the next decade, it was traditionally-based composers that proved most capable of sustaining a steady pace, while Western-oriented composers seemed to falter. Four out of the seven pieces on the first PKM in 1979 were by traditionally-based composers. They continued to outnumber their Western-oriented peers at subsequent meetings, with the number of Western-oriented participants dwindling to the point that there were none at all at the fifth and seventh meetings in 1984 and 1987.

In this and the following chapter, I analyze the predicament faced by the Western-oriented side of *musik kontemporer* in terms of the absence of authority. By this I mean the absence of aesthetic authority that was a consequence of the underdeveloped state of Western art music in Indonesia. As we saw in chapter 2, the growth of this musical sphere in the 1950s and 1960s fell short, both quantitatively and qualitatively, of the hopes and expectations of those who strove to advance musical values associated with the European classical canon and

its modernist extensions. Those Western-oriented figures who oversaw the emergence of *musik kontemporer* in the 1970s and 80s fared somewhat better in their similar efforts, but were too small in number to effect a more widespread change in the musical culture. They were unable to reproduce anything close to the setting in which they gained their own authority, and could only do so much for their Western-oriented students, in whom they generally had a lack of faith.

How that younger generation of Western-oriented composers responded to the absence of authority is the subject of the next chapter. This chapter examines the response of those key figures among the senior generation who oversaw the emergence of *musik kontemporer* as a whole. I start by charting the rather remarkable nativist turn on an institutional level represented by the PKM, with a focus on the intellectual background that led to the inclusion of traditionally-based composers in the first place. This is followed by an extended case study of the no less remarkable nativist turn that the direction in the PKM precipitated in its director, Suka Hardjana.

In Search of Authority: The Pekan Komponis Muda as Nativist Turn

Authority Lost and Found

At the first Pekan Komponis Muda in December of 1979, the future of *musik kontemporer*, in both its Western-oriented and traditionally-based manifestations, seemed bright. Not all of the work demonstrated mastery on the level of execution, but there was no shortage of innovation. On the whole, subsequent editions of the festival lived up to the promise of the first. The emphasis, however, had shifted to traditionally-based composers, in particular those

from ASKI Solo and its sister institution in Bali, ASTI Denpasar. These two scenes were the only ones to be represented consistently, each contributing at least one piece, and sometimes two or even three, to each program.

Scenes	Traditionally-Based Composers					Sub-Total	Western-Oriented Composers				Sub-Total
	Solo	Denpasar	Jogja	Bandung	Elsewhere		Jakarta	Jogja	Bandung		
I (1979)	2	1		1		4	1	2		3	
II (1981)	1	1	1		1	4	1			1	
III (1982)	1	1			1	3		1		1	
IV (1983)	1	1			2	4		1	1	2	
V (1984)	2	1		1	1	5					
VI (1985)	1	1			1	3	2			2	
VII (1987)	1	1	1	1	2	6					
VIII (1988)	1	1			2	4	1			1	
Totals	10	8	2	3	10	33	5	4	1	10	
						77%				23%	

Figure 1: Participation in the Pekan Komponis Muda, by number of pieces.

By contrast, the Western-oriented scenes in Jakarta and Jogja—the only Western-oriented scenes of note—faltered. After Franki Raden presented his *musique concrète* composition at the second PKM in 1981, Institut Kesenian Jakarta was represented only every other year, neither by current students nor recent graduates, but instead by a small number of exceptional older figures. Harry Roesli, who participated at the fourth in 1983, studied at IKJ for just one year in 1977 before going to the Rotterdam Conservatory in the Netherlands and then returning to Bandung, the city where he was born and based.¹ Marusya Nainggolan, who participated in the sixth in 1985, graduated almost a decade earlier, in 1976, and in the interim had studied at the the New South Wales State Conservatorium in Sydney, Australia

1. *Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Roesli, Harry,” by Franki Raden, accessed 4 July 2005.

(Hardjana 1986). The most anomalous case—even as the PKM dropped “Muda” from its name in its seventh iteration in 1987, to become simply the Pekan Komponis (Composers Week)—was that of Trisutji Kamal, who participated in the eighth in 1988. Kamal, introduced in earlier chapters, was not a student at all, but rather a peer of Slamet Abdul Sjukur, and at the time a colleague on faculty at IKJ (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta 1988: 6-9). AMI Jogja was even less well represented, with only two more composers participating after the first PKM: Yoesbar Djaelani at the third in 1982, and by Royke Koapaha at the fourth in 1983 (Hardjana 1986). There were no representatives from either IKJ or AMI Jogja—indeed, no Western-oriented composers at all—at either the fifth in 1984 or the seventh in 1987.²

Among the traditionally-based scenes, ASKI Solo and ASTI Denpasar dominated because they most vigorously promoted inventiveness in composition—the quality most obviously demanded of composers participating in the PKM. Innovation was not, however, the sole criteria for selection. Behind the explicit call for composers to depart from the conventions of tradition was the equally important expectation that they have some kind of foundation in a tradition to start with. Overall, traditionally-based composers dominated the PKM, creating more than three-quarters of the works presented, because they were believed to be stronger than Western-oriented composers, precisely because of their foundations in tradition. Suka Hardjana, who as director of the PKM was responsible for selecting participants, expressed this view very clearly when I interviewed him in 2004:

So to come back to the question, why is that from tradition stronger? I come up with one conclusion. Whatever you have command of, if you take tradition as your

2. The sole Western-oriented participant in the PKM with ties to neither IKJ nor AMI Jogja was the pianist and composer Yazeed Djamin, who as detailed in chapter 6 studied in the United States. Besides the pieces he presented at the sixth PKM in 1985, Djamin had practically no involvement with *musik kontemporer*.

starting point, you can do anything. Tradition is extremely powerful. This is proven by the Pekan Komponis—the best comes from tradition.

Hardjana recognized that any tradition, “including Western tradition,” could be a starting point “as long as you have command of it.”

You have a foundation, in all aspects: technique, reference, musical ability, knowledge and experience. This is only “one step away from the contemporary.” Meaning, if you want to open yourself.

Western-oriented composers did not, in his estimation, have such a foundation—or as he put it, slipping into English, “a fundamental”—and linked this lack to deficiencies in education:

The weakness is those from AMI or ISI Yogyakarta study Western music, but not seriously Their study is very limited, and doesn't include fundamentals. If they had a fundamental, I would surely be convinced. Because many contemporary musicians in the West take tradition as their starting point as well.

Summing up their situation, he stated “it is very difficult if you enter the world of contemporary music from a world which is not clear” (Suka Hardjana, p.c., 14 September 2004).

Other senior figures and teachers whose own foundations were in Western art music held similar opinions and made similar comparisons. Trisutji Kamal found the works by traditionally-based composers “interesting”—she singled out those from Padang Panjang, and from Solo. But in her estimation the Western-oriented composers had “not yet reached their target.” They were “still searching” or even “imitating” (Trisutji Kamal, p.c., 27 June 2005). Slamet Abdul Sjukur, who had started teaching at STSI (ASKI) Solo in the master's level program in creative arts established in 2000—an appointment which itself was a telling indication of the relative strength of the traditionally-based side of *musik kontemporer*—felt that those “from tradition” were “far stronger than those from ISI Jogja.” The latter were

“floating,” and “lacked depth” (Slamet Abdul Sjukur, p.c., 20 August 2005).³

The lack of faith in the younger generation of Western-oriented composers on the part of their teachers and seniors is one manifestation of what I am calling an absence of aesthetic authority, an absence that was a consequence of the underdeveloped state of Western art music in Indonesia. These composers lacked aesthetic authority—they were perceived to lack authority, and in some cases felt themselves that they lacked authority—because they lacked a foundation, or as Hardjana put it, a “fundamental.” Their work was considered proof that, on the whole, they were insufficiently qualified to create something that was at once new but also rooted.

Hardjana charged that students at AMI/ISI Jogja did not study Western music “seriously.” The same could be said for those who studied at IKJ. But if they did not study seriously, it was in large part because of the difficulty of doing so, as we saw in chapter 3. Hardjana, Frans Haryadi, and others at IKJ attempted to instill one version of seriousness in their teaching. But composition students gravitated to Sjukur, whose renegade attitudes undercut the authority represented by his colleagues. It most definitely undermined whatever authority IKJ as an institution held for them, as they abandoned their studies without graduating. Suhascarya at AMI/ISI Jogja upheld restrictively high standards, a strategy that did not succeed in producing more conventionally competent composers, according to standards based more squarely in the mainstream of the Western art music tradition than in its experimentalist departures. Instead, it had the effect of squelching compositional activity within ISI and pushing it instead outside its walls—a failure of a more authoritarian authority to impose its outlook.

3. Sjukur clarified, when I asked, that there were no students in ASKI’s graduate program from IKJ.

These teachers did the best they could, but they were faced with circumstances that were less than conducive, and which they could do little to change. They could not make up for the lack of an aesthetically compatible intermediate generation between them and their students, owing to the political and cultural conditions of the 1960s. More importantly, they could not recreate the kind of cultural context in which they had gained their own authority as teachers, composers, and musicians. It was this context, as much as any directed attempt to transfer knowledge or guide the acquisition of skills, that provided them with the experience and frame of reference that fed their own sense of authority, and allowed them to establish a sufficiently deep foundation to be regarded as authoritative.

Just as importantly, they were regarded as having aesthetic authority because the frame of reference was shared. For rather than a simple and concrete quantifiable substance, something that one possesses more or less of in an absolute sense, aesthetic authority, like moral and other forms of authority, is relational and relative, depending crucially on the shared set of values that provides the measure for judging how much authority someone has. Sjukur, Hardjana, and Haryadi had established their authority within the context of the musical circles in Europe in which they studied and worked. In Indonesia, their authority only registered to the extent that it was meaningfully recognized. It was limited by the limited investment, both in terms of number of people invested at all, and the extent to which they were invested, in the aesthetic values of contemporary art music specifically, and the Western art music tradition more broadly. Analogously, the extent to which what they taught was taken by their students as relevant, as contributing to the accumulation of aesthetic authority, was variable, depending as it did on how much specific teachings resonated with a broader frame of reference—or rather, the extent to which students' frames of reference were

congruent with those of their teachers.

It was the generation of Western-oriented composers who got their start in the 1970s and 1980s who most acutely suffered from the predicament of the absence of authority that I describe here. How they responded to their predicament is the subject of the next chapter. But even before they began composing, this absence of authority had made its mark on the cultural ecology out of which *musik kontemporer* emerged, and thus was key in shaping the profile that *musik kontemporer* would assume. The most notable and important effect was the inclusion of the work of traditionally-based composers from the outset in the vehicle that did the most to establish *musik kontemporer* as a distinct field of musical activity: the Pekan Komponis Muda. How and why this happened is the subject of the remainder of this section.

Escaping the Polemic between Tradition and Modernity: The Pertemuan Musik 1974

As can be seen in figure 1 above, the Pekan Komponis Muda quickly turned from representing Western-oriented and traditionally-based composers more or less equally to effectively functioning largely as a showcase for traditionally-based *musik kontemporer*. That it did so was first acknowledged with some reservation. The opening remarks to the fifth PKM in 1984, in acknowledging that all three of the participating groups “took traditional practice as their point of departure” explained that this “was not intended as a limitation”; they were selected simply because they were the ones who were best prepared (Hardjana 1986: 306). With the seventh, however, the Jakarta Arts Council chose explicitly to “focus the program on new works departing from traditional and regional arts” (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta 1987: 1).

No less remarkable than this outcome is the fact that the PKM included traditionally-

based work from the outset. The PKM can thus be seen as a nativist turn in music within the official, state-sponsored sphere, echoing similar turns that had occurred at Taman Ismail Marzuki (TIM) in the other performing arts. More precisely, it was a realization of a cosmopolitan nativist ideal. This ideal was in part the intellectual legacy of debates in the years before independence regarding the form that Indonesian culture should take, reviewed in chapter 1. At the same time, it was formulated anew by artists and *budayawan* who were associated with the *Manifes Kebudayaan*—a cultural manifesto from 1963 promoting the autonomy of art, in reaction to Lekra’s politicization of art—or who had returned from studying abroad, who with the political and cultural shifts following the rise of Suharto’s New Order and the establishment of TIM found themselves assuming positions of greater influence. Charged with overseeing new initiatives to develop the arts in Indonesia, they were faced on a practical level with many of the same questions as their forbears.

When I asked Suka Hardjana, the director of the PKM for its first eight iterations, where the idea for the festival came from, he told me that it “came out of the polemic between tradition and modernity” (p.c., 14 September 2004). In thus characterizing the discussions that took place at TIM and elsewhere—he mentioned Solo, presumably referring to ASKI—he conjured up the *Polemik Kebudayaan*. Although the *Polemik Kebudayaan* had occurred some forty years prior, the issues debated then continued to preoccupy Indonesian intellectuals and artists. As Goenawan Mohamad wryly commented in a 1986 article, any mention of the term “the West”—a category with which modernity remained bound—would invariably prompt discussion along lines identical to that of the *Polemik Kebudayaan*, “as though one were playing a recording from the 1930s” (Mohamad 1994: 51).

The first major discussion concerned with music was the *Pertemuan Musik 1974* (Music

Meeting 1974), a three-day conference held in conjunction with the Pesta Seni 1974 (Arts Festival 1974). In previous years, the Jakarta Arts Council (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta, DKJ), the administrative body that ran TIM, had organized festivals focused variously on traditional, folk, and contemporary arts. With the Pesta Seni 1974, the DKJ brought these different forms together. They also, for the first time, held conferences addressing the state of different artistic disciplines in Indonesia.⁴ The *Pertemuan Musik* involved twelve presenters among a total of around one-hundred attendees from various Indonesian cities. It began with an examination of “the problem of creativity and adding to the repertoire of Indonesian music,” and continued with discussions of music education and criticism (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta 1975: 13-170).

In all of these discussions, there was no one with a position exactly analogous to that of Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana, who started the *Polemik Kebudayaan* in 1935 by declaring that the time had come “to direct our eyes towards the West” (Mohamad 1994: 51). The closest was Trisutji Kamal, who asserted that “Western music” had “reached a position of universality,” adding that the term “music” was understood to mean “classical music,” and that when referring to other forms of music, such as “traditional music, jazz music, folk music,” one always added an adjective. She argued that the role of classical music “in the system of education and the life of a modern nation is extremely important,” and called for various efforts to support the growth of “*seriosa*”—the song genre discussed in chapter 2—beyond vocal music to “all works by Indonesian composers, orchestral as well as vocal”: the formation of a league of Indonesian composers, commissions from institutions such as RRI,

4. In addition to the three-day *Pertemuan Musik*, there was a one-day discussion of painting, a two-day conference on dance, and a three-day conference on literature (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta 1975).

competitions, and performances (Kamal 1975).

Unlike Alisjahbana, Kamal did not accompany her advocacy for that from the West with an attack on the relevance of Indonesian traditions. She was not as forceful. Neither was she as influential, mostly because she was alone in focusing narrowly on Western-oriented art music, even among those who were also professionally committed to Western art music. Binsar Sitompul, a fellow student of Cornel Simanjuntak at St. Xavarius and the author of his biography, and the director of the RRI Chorus, in speaking about music as a reflection of national spirit suggested that gamelan musicians from Java and Bali follow the model of Ensemble Nipponia, a Japanese group that plays “modern works” on “traditional instruments” (Sitompul 1975). Suhascarya, the director of AMI Jogja, revisited the question of instituting a national music, in the context of designing a nation-wide music curriculum. He acknowledged that “diatonic music” was found throughout Indonesia, but did not believe it should necessarily be prioritized over music using “*slendro* and *pelog*,” the two scales used in gamelan music (Suhascarya M. A. 1975: 121-122). Frans Haryadi, who as a member of the DKJ was one of the more influential figures at the meeting, spoke of the desirability of educating Indonesian children in both traditional Indonesian and Western musical systems (Haryadi 1975: 90).

Overall, the *Pertemuan Musik 1974* demonstrated a remarkable degree of inclusivity. The presenters included not only those involved with Western art music such as Kamal, Sitompul, Suhascarya, and Haryadi; but also those involved with Western-style pop (Samsudin Dajat Hardjakusumah, the manager of the pop group Bimbo) and jazz (Paul Hutabarat); as well as those involved with traditional Indonesian musics, including Humardani, who would become head of ASKI Solo, and I Made Bandem, who would become head of ASTI Denpasar.

Among the points made in the conference's conclusions was that the diversity in Indonesian musical life—the conclusion pointed to “traditional music, classical Western, Indonesian *seriosa*, jazz, pop, folk songs, *kroncong*, *hiburan*”—was “valued as a positive situation” (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta 1975: 157-158).

Another conclusion drawn at the *Pertemuan Musik 1974* drew special attention to traditional Indonesian musics, asserting that they “would hold an important role in the development of musical life.” The development of new forms in such musics, however, was assumed to be slow. The conference—or the “formulating team” of the conclusions, which included Haryadi—therefore recommended research into “the matter of tradition and the future.” They also recommended that “activity to practice creativity be carried out intensively,” especially among “young musicians,” whose “orientation” in compositional technique “must be broadened.” The use of “Western compositional technique” might “open new perspectives in the world of creating” for those whose starting point was traditional music. Conversely, those who “grow from the Western music tradition” could “bring about an essential reorientation in matters of ‘composition’ in traditional music” (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta 1975: 158-159).

Providing a Compass for Traditionally-Based Composition: The Symposium Musik Tradisi

Out of the range of topics and musics discussed at the *Pertemuan Musik 1974*, it was this question of how to stimulate creative activity in traditional music that became the theme of the following year's conference on music. The *Symposium Musik Tradisi*, held in conjunction with *Festival Desember 1975*, focused specifically on the potential of those working in Javanese, Balinese, and Sundanese gamelan traditions to contribute to new music in

Indonesia. Only two of the presenters had Western-oriented backgrounds: Frans Haryadi, and Soemaryo L.E., the administrator and educator who had pushed for the founding of SMIND in the 1950s, but had subsequently become a champion of traditional music.⁵ The other four—Humardani, Nyoman Djayus, Tatang Suryana, and Atik Soepandi— were primarily involved with the traditional performing arts. The two groups did not take opposing sides, but rather worked together to identify commonly held principles that would ideally guide the work of traditionally-based composers. Haryadi and Humardani, finding their perspectives and priorities to be quite compatible, formed an especially strong alliance. Among a mix of presentations that included fairly straightforward and normative overviews of Sundanese and Balinese music by Soepandi and Djayus, it was those of Haryadi and Humardani that stood out for grappling with the challenges facing traditional musics and musicians in the present.

Haryadi's presentation, as an introduction, was the most general. He acknowledged the dominance of "pop music and entertainment," in both big cities and "traditional cities" such as Solo and Jogja. He also acknowledged that there were "certain circles that questioned the existence of *karawitan*, or even all forms of traditional music found in this country," finding them to be "insufficiently or not at all in keeping with the spirit and dynamism of humanity at present." In their estimation, traditional music was "not progressive, perhaps even lacking vitality, sterile, ancient, not modern, and so on," and what was needed was "music that is

5. Soemaryo L.E. graduated from the police academy in Jakarta in 1941, but also studied violin with J. Schwerin and cello with Nicolai Varvolomeyev (*Ensiklopedi Tokoh Kebudayaan*, 1:280-285), the latter also the teacher of Amir Pasaribu and a prominent instructor at SMIND. He held various government positions, including head of intelligence, but was mostly concerned with music education. At IKJ he taught Javanese gamelan (Otto Sidharta, p.c., 6 June 2005). Nyak Ina Raseuki, a singer who has worked extensively with Tony Prabowo, described Soemaryo as "the one who was most concerned with traditional music" at IKJ (Nyak Ina Raseuki, p.c., 18 August 2005). It was through him that she learned about ethnomusicology, leading her to complete a PhD at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (Raseuki 2009).

new, that departs from the traditions of past ages or that is entirely separate from them.” Countering this position, which was essentially that of the Western-oriented side of the Polemik Kebudayaan, Haryadi simply asserted that “the reality is that traditional music is alive” and that “in that life is surely contained the seeds of creativity, however small” (Haryadi 1976: 21-23).

Haryadi then proceeded to examine more specific aspects of the problem of stimulating creativity within traditional music. He recognized that exchange between Indonesian and foreign music was inevitable, but argued that for the most part traditional musicians filtered new ideas, and in doing so made them their own. Haryadi also recognized exchange between different regions of Indonesia. He was particularly concerned with the dynamic of exchange between city and village, and the ability of traditional music to endure with the push to modernize village society. While this movement was based on the vitality of the village, the process was “driven by urban society,” even to the point that their “mistakes” invariably became models. Haryadi asserted that it should be questioned whether urban artistic life should always be taken as a model for the life of the arts in the village.

Haryadi did not accept the primacy of urban music, but neither did he believe that traditional music could endure without changing. “The extent of traditional music’s role in the future development of music” depended on “the capacity of the forms of traditional music to develop.” Traditional forms had developed in the past to fulfill specific functions in traditional society such as “customary and religious ceremonies.” Haryadi asked if they had “the capacity to be oriented toward a new social life” and whether they could “respond to the challenges of the new era.” He asked if “the creation of new music” could be “entrusted to traditional music creators”—if they were “ready to face their present environment,” which

“might at first glance appear to be the same,” but in which “the old aesthetic values” had “quietly changed” (ibid.:24-25).

Humardani, in his presentation, focused on “problems” in “the development of Javanese *karawitan*.” Some of these, such as the low social status of musicians, and the difficulty of earning a living as a musician, were socioeconomic in nature. More significant, in his view, were three “core problems,” all of them “problems of attitude,” present among three contingents of Javanese society. The first was the overly conservative disposition of traditional musicians. A focus on “preservation,” on continuing that from the past, made them “apprehensive” with respect to “changes in instinct.” For them, “‘what’s been done is already good,’ ‘those who are senior understand better’ and so on.” Humardani characterized this as a “large scale snobbism,” in which that which is “correct,” which “follows the rules” is “equated with beauty.” The second core problem was the “pressure from non-experts” (*tekanan awam*). From them, there was a “demand for the pleasant” and “the cheerful” that they had become accustomed to hearing at *klenengan*. What made this a core problem was the fact that among the “non-experts or untrained” were “people that are respected and held in awe” by traditional musicians, such as “officials, the wealthy, or the educated.” The “influence of this group—good or bad—cannot be ignored.” The third core problem was the difficulty in cultivating new artists and appreciators. Because of the “increasing distance of the tradition of *karawitan* from present experience,” youth were “increasingly unfamiliar with *karawitan*.” For them, *karawitan* was becoming “an alien music” (Humardani 1976).

These problems—which Humardani had also identified in the paper he presented three years earlier at the Seminar Kesenian at ASKI Solo in 1972, discussed in the previous chapter—undermined creativity in *karawitan* in certain respects, but by no means all. The

conservatism of senior musicians was accompanied by a decline in the composition of weightier new pieces in larger forms. Wasitodiningrat, who replaced his father as director of *karawitan* at the Pakualaman palace in Jogja in 1962 (Waridi 2008: 228), conveyed to one of his American students that he was only good enough as a musician to compose *ketawang* and *ladrang* (Barry Drummond, p.c., 29 June 2006)—though he did in fact compose a few smaller-scale *gendhing*.⁶ There were, however, no shortage of new compositions in smaller forms, but these were not regarded as a positive or noteworthy development by either Humardani or Haryadi. As we saw in chapter 2, Wasitodiningrat was actually quite prolific as a composer. In many respects his most impressive compositional achievement was *Jaya Manggala Gita*, a large scale suite involving several different types of gamelan. But as Becker notes, this suite was “the impressive herald of a great number of songs . . . in support of the various programs and slogans of the free Indonesian state,” and most of those songs were “undistinguished, written in the style of *dolanan*, children’s songs” (Becker 1980: 49). The only acknowledgement at the Symposium Musik Tradisi to Wasitodiningrat’s work was an indirect and passing reference to one of these songs. Haryadi, in making the point that the modernization of villages was a reality and not merely a slogan, added parenthetically that as a slogan it “had even been put to music” (Haryadi 1976: 24-25), an allusion to Wasitodiningrat’s “Modernisasi Desa” (*desa* = village), composed in 1970 (Salim et al. 2004: 120-124).⁷ There was no acknowledgement at all of the even more prolific output of Nartosabdho.

6. *Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Wasitodiningrat [Tjokrowasito, Wasitodipuro, Wasitolodoro], Kanjeng Radèn Tumenggung [Ki]” by R. Anderson Sutton, accessed 18 June 2005.

7. See Becker (1980: 55-64) for an extensive analysis of this song.

In so far as Humardani and Haryadi acknowledged the creativity that existed in *karawitan*—which beyond the composition of new pieces included adding new vocal melodies to existing pieces, or performing them in novel and dynamic new arrangements⁸—they did so in only the most general of terms, posing it as a counter to the kind of creative activity they would prefer to see. Haryadi maintained that the “elements” that “determined the identity of traditional music”—among those he enumerated were the “*slendro* and *pelog* scales with their system of *pathet*,” a “metrical structure” based on a “binary principle,” and the “heterophonic principle” of inter-part relationships”—were “not obsolete.” But at the same time, in “the creation of new music” such principles should “not fall into fixed patterns,” but “contain possibilities for variation and new treatment” (Haryadi 1976: 26). Haryadi admitted that what he “craved” in new composition was a “creative freedom,” one in which composers were “free to arrange new ideas, free to use or discard old ideas or to use new ones in their place”—though at the same time he imagined there would be musicians who “attempt to continue tradition in its present state” (Haryadi 1976: 25). Humardani was more explicit in his call for gamelan musicians to innovate. Just as “creative artists in past eras . . . broke existing rules and created new ones,” so should young musicians. “As long as it is prohibited to break rules of scale, mode and so on, present-day *karawitan* is not the result of creativity in the present age, but the result of creativity of past ages” (Humardani 1976: 38).

Once again, the participants of the *Symposium Musik Tradisi* formulated a set of conclusions. Two of the points had to do with practical matters of improving the “social level

8. See Sutton and Vetter (2006) for an extensive discussion of one of Nartosabdho’s recordings of *ladrang* “Pangkur.”

of artists” and developing creativity in arts instruction in public schools. Most of the points, however, were philosophical, advancing various attitudes and orientations. Humardani and Haryadi were the primary contributors, with eight of the eleven points based on their thinking (Rustopo 1991: 106-107). Their call for innovation was softened, with one point allowing that new composition could “take the form of a full continuation from traditional music,” or it could be “new” or “completely new.” Two other points reflected their concern regarding the dominance of popular taste: the eighth was an oblique note of caution to avoid “problems which can obstruct the development of traditional music” in efforts to raise appreciation, perhaps responding to the commonly held perspective that the new songs and performance style of figures such as Nartosabdho were helping to attract the interest of youth; while the tenth more directly stated that “Common taste which has great influence on the development of *karawitan* needs to be channeled to become a positive factor.”

Instead, what most of the points emphasized, whether they came from Humardani and Haryadi or from other participants, was the self-sufficiency of *karawitan*. The first two points, derived from the discussion, are somewhat cryptic and seemingly self-contradictory. The first stated that comparison with music from other cultures “in the search for new directions in composition” was “absolutely necessary” in terms of “research” (*ilmu*), but that “familiarity with foreign music” was “not absolutely necessary” in the process of composition. The second similarly asserted that notation was needed in composition, but “in composing artists did not absolutely need notation.” The fourth point was less equivocal, asserting that “at the first level new creation should arise from experience in tradition,” advising that “if the wish is to create something altogether new” to “not simply fall into Western or otherwise foreign traditions.” It concluded that “Western or otherwise foreign

elements which are taken and used at first glance are not considered constructive in the creation of new work” (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta 1976: 75-76).

The hope of the *Symposium Musik Tradisi*, identified in the opening speech by Iravati Sudiarso, head of the music committee of the DKJ, was that the principles they identified would “become a compass for creators of new works” (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta 1976: 17). The extent to which they did so directly was limited, with I Wayan Sadra being perhaps the only traditionally-based composer to independently note the relevance of the *Symposium*’s conclusions.⁹ In a working paper presented at the eighth PKM in 1988 (edited and translated as Sadra 1991), Sadra identified the founding of the DKJ in 1969 as the point when “the creativity of traditional artists began to be discussed in a wider scope,” not merely as a something that occurred within specific regions but as something of national significance. The *Symposium Musik Tradisi* made this discussion a primary focus, and as such was “an important precursor” to the PKM (Sadra 1991: 19).¹⁰ It secured a place for traditionally-based composers at the PKM.

Haryadi countered the idea that traditional musicians needed “direction” or even a “recipe” for innovation in their creative activities, suggesting that “creative efforts should be pioneered by artists themselves” (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta 1976: 73). As I argued in chapter 4, composers at ASKI Solo came up with their distinctive compositional approach based on sound exploration not by adopting a pre-existing model, but through their own

9. As noted in chapter 4, Sadra’s introduction to the contemporary art world came through his participation in Sardono’s *Dongeng dari Dirah* in 1974. As a visual art student and gamelan teacher at IKJ from 1975 to 1978, Sadra also would have been exposed to the ideas circulating at IKJ and TIM, including those discussed at the *Symposium Musik Tradisi*.

10. In his original paper, and in an earlier research report (Sadra 1986), Sadra quoted the *Symposium*’s conclusions in their entirety. In the version edited and translated by Jody Diamond, they are recast as a more concise set of questions.

experimentation. These experiments took place, however, under the guidance and spurring of Humardani, who not only carried the “compass” produced at the Symposium Musik Tradisi, but had played a key role in designing it.

Humardani guided young musicians at ASKI Solo toward creating something that was, at least ostensibly, “altogether new,” something that was the result of present rather than past creativity. What they and their traditionally-based peers from other schools such as ASTI Denpasar came up with amply satisfied the expectations and hopes of the *budayawan* at the DKJ, most relevantly Suka Hardjana, the director of the PKM. They demonstrated, quite handily, that “the creation of new music” could indeed, as Haryadi had asked, be “entrusted to traditional music creators”—that is, as long as they were sufficiently invested in the program that the DKJ sought to advance through the PKM.

The Nativist Turn of Suka Hardjana

The prevalence of traditionally-based composers at an event intended to stimulate creative musical activity, sponsored by the Jakarta Arts Council (DKJ) and held at what was effectively Indonesia’s national arts center, Taman Ismail Marzuki (TIM), constituted a significant endorsement of the idea that the traditional musics were a viable point of departure for the development of contemporary forms. With the PKM, music joined the theater and dance scenes at TIM that, as recounted in chapter 3, had started their own nativist turn around the time that TIM was founded in 1968. To be sure, this turn was limited in scope to that particular niche within the cultural ecology of contemporary Indonesia that was centered at TIM. For the most part, Indonesia’s public culture—its popular music, film, and television, which were mostly produced in and disseminated from Jakarta—continued the

xenocentric tendencies evident earlier in the twentieth century. Nevertheless, the nativist turn centered at TIM is notable for occurring among a particular cultural and intellectual elite that held positions of authority at Indonesia's most prestigious official cultural institutions.

The nativist turn represented by the Pekan Komponis Muda had a profound and lasting impact on the profile of *musik kontemporer* because it was a turn at an institutional level. But at the same time it followed, and also contributed to, the nativist turns of many individuals. The impetus for the turn came from individuals associated with the DKJ, such as Frans Haryadi, and those brought in to contribute their perspectives and advice, such as Gendhon Humardani. The turn was then amplified and gained momentum through the institutional setting in which their discussions took place, and the resources those institutions drew upon to implement their recommendations. On a discursive level, the ideas of individuals had greater weight because of their positions of authority. The ideas themselves gained authority and in turn influenced the thinking of individuals initially and also subsequently involved. Individuals who had not previously demonstrated any nativist tendencies, but who were troubled by the absence of aesthetic authority in the realm of art music in Indonesia, subsequently joined in this nativist turn.

Perhaps the most striking case is none other than the director of the PKM himself, Suka Hardjana. Hardjana went from being as committed and uncompromising a proponent of Western art music as Amir Pasaribu to becoming a champion of traditionally-based composers, and even turned to composing for gamelan and collaborating with gamelan musicians himself. By the time I interviewed him in 2004, he shared with me a well-developed and apparently well-rehearsed exegesis of *musik kontemporer*, the PKM, and the mark he left on both as the PKM's director. Within it there were, however, traces of opposing

impulses. He admitted to thinking “a bit Western” but also insisted that he was “not a Javanese person that’s very contaminated by European music!” (Suka Hardjana, p.c., 14 September). As we will see, his sense of his cultural identity was rather more complex and conflicted.

The Dead End of Classical Performance

Going into my interview with Hardjana, I knew that prior to becoming director of the PKM he had established a career as a classical clarinetist. He spoke little about the details of this prior focus and how he came to it, but did, in response to one question, comment generally on his early experience. When he brought up the sense of identity experienced by modern Indonesian artists, alluding to his own studies in Germany and the USA, I asked if Western art music already seemed like his own before this professional training. “The answer,” he noted, “is very personal.” Growing up in Jogja, his surroundings were “always Javanese.” He watched *wayang*, *kethoprak*, *dagelan*,¹¹ and “played gamelan a little bit,” so “physically and culturally, indeed I was Javanese.” But since he was little, his “fantasizing” was “already about the West,” from “the influence of reading, lessons, education, and so on” (ibid.).

The extent to which Hardjana had dedicated himself to Western art music became clear after reviewing earlier biographies, profiles, interviews, and writings. Like Slamet Abdul Sjukur, Frans Haryadi, and other leading figures of his generation, Hardjana spent a substantial period of time abroad. In his case, after studying at SMIND from 1957 to 1962, he went to Germany in 1964 to continue his education at the music academy in Detmold. In 1968 he became principal clarinetist with the symphony orchestra, and an instructor at the

11. Traditional improvised comedy, either group skits, or by solo comedians.

conservatory, in Bremen. In 1969, while touring with this orchestra in Asia, he met former classmates from SMIND who pressed him to return to Indonesia to help build the classical music scene there. He returned to Indonesia in 1971, and has been based there since, save for a few years studying conducting at Bowling Green State University in Ohio (Mack 2004: 338).¹²

Back in Indonesia, Hardjana faced greatly diminished opportunities to develop his career as a solo clarinetist. The existing orchestras were “insufficient” in quality, and the leading pianists were too busy. As one commentator noted, Hardjana was “isolated,” a common condition facing artists returning from “advanced” countries. He did not, however, “surrender to frustration.” Instead, he directed his energy toward teaching at IKJ, and into the Ensemble Jakarta (J.B. 1973), a fourteen-member string orchestra that he founded in November of 1971 (Sinar Harapan 1975). The ensemble performed not only in Jakarta, but also toured to other major Indonesian cities, including Jogja, Bandung, Medan, Ujung Pandang and Surabaya. What Hardjana emphasized, however, was “the educational aspect.” “To hell with concerts” he declared, expressing instead a desire to help lead the group to the level of “famous chamber orchestras in Berlin, London, Paris, Tokyo and so on” (J.B. 1973).

When Ensemble Jakarta did perform, its members typically received only “honoraria” (J.B. 1973). For many in the ensemble, the promise of playing at a higher level was not enough to offset the lack of professional compensation. By 1974 the ensemble had shrunk

12. I have not determined when Hardjana studied in Ohio; Mack does not give a precise date, noting only that it was in the 1980s. For some reason dates are especially difficult to pin down for Hardjana. The short biography in Hardjana’s own book on *musik kontemporer* (Hardjana 2003: 313-314) lists only his date of birth. The dates in an entry in an encyclopedia of cultural figures produced by the Indonesian government (*Ensiklopedi Tokoh Kebudayaan* 2:121) are incomplete and only partially match those found in Mack.

from an orchestra to a clarinet quintet, as several players resigned, feeling that they “cannot live from this kind of music alone.” Several “fled to nightclubs, restaurants, and other entertainment venues” (Kompas 1976), where they found more lucrative playing opportunities.

The fate of the Ensemble Jakarta fed Hardjana’s frustration with the extent to which popular music dominated the Indonesian music scene. As early as 1972 he complained in an article titled “The Impotence of Music’s Development in Indonesia” how “99% percent of music developments” were “entertainment music, not art music” (*musik hiburan, bukan musik seni*). “Serious art music” thus resembled “an isolated island in the midst of a mob that has not made friends with it.” Experienced musicians were forced to “popify” themselves “to secure their status and social security.” Popular music dominated “to the point that even RRI administers a national Pop competition (the only music competition at a national level in Indonesia!),” and “even the Jakarta Arts Council” featured in their “music week” the pop stars “Kus Plus and Titiek Puspa.”¹³ “We surely cannot imagine or hope that our contests and festivals . . . are all only contests and festivals of pop ‘art’,” he declared, assuming that his readers would find the idea of a “pop painting week,” a “pop dance contest,” and a “pop literature week” absurd and objectionable (Hardjana 1972, in 2004a:11-12). In a 1976 interview, his tone went from incredulous to acrimonious. He complained that the “mass

13. Kus Plus, or Koes Plus, was the successor to Koes Bersaudara, one of several “guitar bands imitating the Everly Brothers, the Beatles and similar groups” that “sprang up” in “the late 1950s and early 60s.” One of the more popular groups of the time, they gained notoreity for having been imprisoned for a month in 1965, due to government officials interpreting President Sukarno’s disparaging comments about “Western popular music and its Indonesian imitations”—which he characterized as “ngak-ngik-ngok” music—as a ban (Yampolsky 2001:[iv]). Titiek Puspa, a singer and songwriter, who also appeared in numerous films, has been hailed as “the most enduring figure in the history of *musik hiburan*” (*Ensiklopedi Musik*, s.v. “Puspa, Titiek”).

media” offered more “poison” to the “development of the Indonesian music world” than it did “education and elevation of appreciation for good music” (Angkatan Bersenjata 1976).

The dominance of commercialism remained a prominent theme in a 1980 lecture given by Hardjana on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Jakarta Academy,¹⁴ titled “Problems with Creativity in Present-Day Indonesian Music.” Newspaper articles summarized Hardjana’s talk with the headlines “The Indonesian Music World is Exclusively a World of Commerce” (Kompas 1980: 6), “Our Music is so far Just Entertainment” (Berita Buana 1980), and, perhaps most damning, “Indonesian Music: Naive, Superficial and Anti-Art” (Angkatan Bersenjata 1980). His conclusions were indeed as critical as those of prior years, but there was the beginning of a more considered analysis. He presented the dominance of commercialism as more a symptom of underlying problems that inhibited the development of art music, rather than itself the cause. He opened by asking why it was that genres of “cultured music, ‘art music’” had “not developed at all in Indonesia,” and why it was “only genres of entertainment music” that had “grown so terrifically” (Kompas 1980: 6). He hastened to note that “quantitatively” the “massive development of entertainment . . . was truly encouraging.” But this growth was all “horizontal,” not “vertical,” and had yet to “fulfill the artistic aspirations of music” (Berita Buana 1980: 8.6).

Hardjana questioned the notion, forwarded by figures such as the author Mochtar Lubis, that Indonesians were by nature artistic. Lubis pointed to the praise for Indonesian coming from Western artists such as Claude Debussy, Antonin Artaud, and Andres Segovia, all of

14. The Jakarta Academy was an “honorary council of artists/cultural figures . . . whose members are regarded as *sesepeuh* or highly respected individuals within artistic/cultural circles throughout Indonesia” that was responsible for recommending individuals to the Jakarta Arts Council (DKJ), the body the more directly oversaw activities at Taman Ismail Marzuki, such as the PKM (Hill 1993: 247-249. quoting from documents held by TIM).

whom were “bowled over [*kagum setengah mati*] by Javanese and Balinese gamelan.” Hardjana countered that these were “accomplishments of our forebears,” whereas for “current Indonesian musicians” had produced “a big zero” (*ibid.*). Musical thought had developed on a local level, where it was “supported by strong and deep traditional roots,” but on a “National” level, Indonesian music “started with Cornel Simanjuntak, and ended with Ismail Marzuki.” “After that, it’s three cassettes for a buck [*kaset seribu tiga*]” (*Kompas* 1980: 4), referring metonymically to the flood of popular music by mention of a technology that did much to facilitate the growth of the Indonesian music industry.

The “most central problem” facing Indonesian music, in Hardjana’s opinion, was in “the realm of creativity” (*Berita Buana* 1980). Hardjana had, in a 1975 interview, reported being troubled when asked why the Ensemble Jakarta played “many foreign numbers, mostly Western” and “very infrequently pieces by Indonesian composers.” The question came “not only from Indonesians,” but also “from Westerners.” It was not that Hardjana did not want to play Indonesian repertoire, but simply that there were “extremely few compositions.” They had played works by “the late Mochtar Embut,” but “beyond that, one could say we have no other composers” (*Sinar Harapan* 1975). Hardjana relayed similar exchanges in subsequent interviews. In his 1980 lecture, he recounted being asked by two string quartets from Germany for a score by an Indonesian composer. By that time he was able to offer an arrangement of Ismail Marzuki’s patriotic song “Rayuan Pulau Kelapa” (The Charm of the Isle of Coconuts) by the conductor R. A. J. Soedjasmin. He again suggested the piece to the Japanese Broadcasting Corporation Orchestra when they visited Jakarta. Playing on the title of the song, Hardjana asked, with pointed irony, “is all we have [to offer] coconuts, or charms?” (*Berita Buana* 1980: 2).

Hardjana's Enthusiasm for Traditionally-Based Musik Kontemporer

Hardjana declared in his 1980 lecture that Indonesian music “will not grow as long as the realm of creativity is sickly and not resuscitated.” He also asked whether Indonesian music might “draw upon the vitality contained in the values of traditional culture?” The question at that point was no longer entirely hypothetical. The idea that steps needed to be taken to stimulate creative activity in Indonesian music, and that such efforts should involve traditional musicians, had been taken up at the conferences sponsored by the DKJ discussed above. Hardjana, who was not yet a member of the DKJ, but was a fixture at TIM and on the faculty of IKJ, suggested creating a forum for composers. The DKJ agreed, Hardjana was appointed as the “Project Official” (*Proyek Oficial*), and the first Pekan Komponis Muda was held in December of 1979 (Suka Hardjana, p.c., 14 September 2004).

From the beginning, the PKM featured traditionally-based composers prominently. And as noted above, they came to dominate to the point that two of the eight events featured only traditionally-based composers. The PKM drew heavily indeed on the vitality of the traditional musical cultures in which those composers were based, and in turn secured the place of composers rooted in those cultures in the emerging field of *musik kontemporer*. As the PKM's director, Hardjana thus became one of traditionally-based *musik kontemporer's* most important and influential champions.

The extent to which Hardjana anticipated how much traditionally-based composers would contribute when he proposed the idea of the PKM is not clear. There was little in his immediate background to suggest such a turn, though there was some indication of a shift of focus away from Western-oriented music in a reflection, from May of 1979, on meeting Javanese and Balinese musicians, dancers, and painters in the United States. Hardjana

commented on the irony that artists who “in their own country do not receive much attention from their government or society” were “very much respected and admired” abroad. Commenting further on the “strange feedback loop” between experimental American artists “studying from the East” as a means of releasing themselves from the influence of European art, while “we imitate much from America without seeing the interest and connections,” he concluded the article arguing that “if originality and individuality are still part of our feeling of esteem in art . . . we should bow our heads. Only traditional Indonesian arts are more deserving of respect” (Hardjana 1979a, in 2004b:31-32, 35-36).

What is clear is just how enthusiastic Hardjana was for traditionally-based *musik kontemporer* during, and following, his directorship of the PKM. In the middle of my interview with him in 2004, he proclaimed:

And one thing I want to say to you, in the context of music, the best phenomenon—now I am approaching this qualitatively—what is the best I would say is exactly that which is from tradition. It’s extraordinary. (Suka Hardjana, p.c., 14 September 2004)

This was in contrast with that which was “from the west,” which, as we saw in the beginning of this chapter, Hardjana felt lacked “a fundamental.” In support of this assertion, Hardjana noted how he could “track this through the works at the Pekan Komponis.” Hardjana has left a partial record of his opinions at the time those works were presented in the reviews of the PKM he wrote for the Indonesian press. In these, he did not make such frank comparisons as that in our interview, but his judgement is nonetheless evident.

As director of the PKM, Hardjana could not, and did not, write his reviews as a disinterested observer. He used some of them to argue for the importance of the PKM to Indonesian music, and in these he downplayed evaluation and criticism in the interest of more appreciative and encouraging overviews. A review of the eighth PKM in 1988—the last

before a hiatus of ten years—including as much commentary on contributions from previous meetings as evaluations of pieces presented at that meeting itself, and was more concerned with noting general trends and common purposes within a considerable diversity of work. Hardjana noted how both Suwardi, who elsewhere received his highest praise, and Trisutji Kamal, whom elsewhere he criticized rather severely, engaged in “sound exploration” (Hardjana 1988a, in 2004b:239-240), thus making connections across differences in background and smoothing over judgements of aesthetic value that in other contexts he drew quite sharply.

More often, Hardjana wrote about particular works as if he were offering critical feedback to the composers themselves. This was especially true for work that he felt fell short, which was the case with all of the contributions by Western-oriented composers that he reviewed. Of Otto Sidharta’s “Kemelut,” presented at the first PKM, he commented that his “good idea” of amplifying water sounds “had not yet been exploited maximally.” Similarly, in Kristiyanto Christinus’s “A dan B,” a work for conventional Western instruments, “there was, certainly, an idea,” but Christinus was “overwhelmed with his own reasoning.” Slipping into colloquial Jakartan-Indonesian, he added “Ide sih, banyak . . . ’ngerjain’nya yang susah. Setuju?” (Ideas are plentiful . . . working them up is hard. Don’t you think?) and, as if addressing the two composers directly, “Coba lagi, coba lagi deh!” (Try again, try again eh!) (Hardjana 1979b, in 2004b:42). Hardjana recognized Franki Raden’s electroacoustic composition at the second PKM as a “more determined experiment,” but then also suggested that it was a medium he “seemingly has not yet truly mastered” (Hardjana 1981b, in 2004a:59). He approved of the risks that Yoesbar Djaelani took with his piece at the third PKM in employing “natural” vocal sounds such as “crying, screaming, laughing, groaning,

reading” in a “natural manner” but in a “usage that was not natural (the artificial character of art),” but again suggested that “ideas will stop as ideas if they are not able to come out in a realistic form that can be accepted as truthful.” Djaelani still needed “to search for tactics and work hard” to achieve this (Hardjana [1982?], in 2004b:86).

Hardjana was also at times critical of traditionally-based participants. With them, he did not question their foundational abilities but rather their handling of the challenge to create something new that was the basic premise of the PKM. Most, though by no means all, of those with traditional backgrounds understood this premise to imply significant innovation. Their written statements, collected in a volume edited by Hardjana and published by the DKJ (Hardjana 1986), described how their pieces went beyond existing conventions and sought new possibilities, in the search, as Komang Astita put it, for “a new musical expression different from expressions that already exist” (ibid.:60). They also invariably acknowledged their debt to tradition. How far composers departed from tradition was by no means Hardjana’s only, or even primary, criteria in evaluating their work, but it was something he commented on. In some cases he did so in comparing different composers. Nano Suratno’s contribution to the first PKM made a favorable impression, but it “did not clearly ‘overturn’ the form, arrangement, and stylistic practice of conventional Sundanese *karawitan*” (Hardjana 1979b, in 2004b:40). Other composers “stepped further from traditional conventions” (Hardjana [1979c?], in 2004a:48). I Wayan Sadra, in his piece for the second PKM, used “traditional Balinese instruments, form, and technique only as an expressive medium,” but otherwise “his [point of] reference was no longer Balinese society, culture, custom or art, but a reflection of whatever he saw, experienced, felt, and perceived,” which Hardjana suggested was perhaps a “contemporary attitude.” His Balinese colleagues Pande

Made Sukerta and I Gusti Bagus Suarsana were “not as radical,” but in their own way dealt with the same matter: “how to step out of the snares of traditional conventions” with “at least one foot” (Hardjana 1981b, in 2004a:58).

Hardjana praised those who did break away from tradition with confidence, but did not demand that everyone do so. He was instead most critical of experimentation that he found gratuitous, ungrounded, or unintegrated. He noted that Djoko Walujo, a composer from Jogja who also participated in the second PKM, seemed “rather reluctant to move too far from tradition,” but also “felt some necessity to tease¹⁵ with [his] experiments.” The result was “not bad,” but somewhat unconvincingly combined that which was “especially Jogjanese, neat, painstaking, a little meticulous, calm, and slow but fetching, sweet, ordered and harmonious” with “a whiff of experiment that at times felt simply tacked on” (Hardjana 1981b, in 2004a:59). In a second review of the same performance, he asked,

Why must one be influenced by flirting with experiments? Is it not the case that between that which is traditional and that which is *kontemporer* sometimes no bridge is needed at all? (Hardjana 1981c, in 2004b:64-65)

Along similar lines, he commented that the “strange sounds” in the piece that Suwarmin, a composer from Surabaya, presented at the eighth PKM, “had their own issue which was not yet clear” (Hardjana 1988a, in 2004b:239-240). In the one instance of an outright negative review, Hardjana slammed A. Wahyudi Sutrisno, from ASKI Solo, for his offering at the seventh PKM, the simultaneous performance of three pieces, one using only a *keprak*, a small wooden box used in dance accompaniment, and another in which the players improvise in response to the sounds of the other pieces (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta 1987: 10). “There is little

15. *Berkerling*, “glance out of the corner of one’s eye” (*Kamus Indonesia Inggris*, s.v. “kerling”).

that can be said” about the piece, Hardjana wrote, as it was a “*catastrophic image . . . beyond the ability of my sound mind*” (Hardjana 1987, in 2004b:213).

When Hardjana felt that traditionally-based composers succeeded in creating something new out of tradition, however, he could be positively effusive. “Rebellion is Necessary,” he declared in his review of the second PKM, entitled “Tradition is Modern.” The four traditionally-based composers at this event—Sadra, Sukerta, Suarsana, and Waluyo—were in agreement on this point, he contended, and in “their extremely conceptual works they have endeavored to reorder the old and eerie face of traditional art’s conventions with new values that are full of possibility.” They showed how tradition

could still become a source of creativity with 1001 varieties of riches even up to the highest levels that are the most up to date as well. That is, it turns out that traditional arts are capable of becoming a modern “commodity,” without having to feel awkward in the midst of the hubbub of modern life itself. (Hardjana 1981c, in 2004b:64-65)

Wayan Rai, from ASTI Denpasar, demonstrated in his piece from the third PKM titled “Terompong Beruk,” named after the featured instrument—a type of *trompong* consisting of keys made of palm trunk or bamboo over coconut shell resonators, that was not played as part of a gamelan ensemble, but on its own “by farmers after they finish working” (Hardjana 1986: 157-164)—that to make something contemporary “it was not always necessary to use the latest tools resulting from modern technology,” but that “it was enough to use tools that he found in rural Bali” (Hardjana [1982?], in 2004b:84-85). Of the “young Solonese *priyayi*” who had participated in the PKM from the start, Hardjana remarked that “their presentations are always interesting, attractively made, skillful, full of fresh ideas and as a performance almost always complete,” and that “it is not too much to say that they always make an impression as participants who are always successful.” T. Slamet Suparno, A. L. Suwardi,

and Rustopo, who represented ASKI Solo that year, “not only had a mature concept and idea, but also truly mastered the material they wanted to present” (ibid.:88). After the fifth PKM in 1984, he praised Sukerta and Suwardi for being “courageous” (*berani*), both “in their efforts to create a meaningful distance from their tradition and surroundings” and “because what they do is based on convictions of their own.”

What they do makes us open our eyes, that in fact between tradition and the present age there need not be a separation. That what is old and what is new, what is ancient and what is ultra modern stand at the same point.

Over several pages, Hardjana praises Sukerta’s and Suwardi’s pieces in lavish detail, once again proclaiming that “tradition is modern” (Hardjana 1984c, in 2004b:95-96).

From Stewardship to Cultural Criticism

Through taking on the directorship of the PKM, Hardjana shifted his attention away from a singular focus on performance and channeled a good part of his energy toward cultural stewardship. He by no means abandoned his involvement in Indonesia’s classical music scene—after my interview with him in 2004 we shared a taxi as far as the hotel where he was coaching a young conductor at an orchestra rehearsal. But he did cut back significantly on concertizing in the early 1980s—when he was busy with the PKM and became more involved with the DKJ¹⁶—with almost no performances in Indonesia for five years (Hardjana 1984d, in 2004a:128-129).

Alongside—and to some extent predating—this direct involvement in stewardship, Hardjana began to write more frequently for the Indonesian press. As noted above, he

16. Hardjana served on the Music Committee and as Secretary from 1982—1985, and as Assistant Director for Artistic Direction (Pembantu Pimpinan Bidang Artistik) of TIM from 1982–1983 (Murgiyanto 1994: 247-257).

reviewed meetings of the PKM. He also continued to review classical music events, by both foreign and Indonesian artists. Sometimes he would write straightforward critiques, but as often he would use reviews as occasions to educate audiences or to comment on the state of classical music in Indonesia. He wrote several pieces around the visit by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra in 1984. Some were informational: one with explanations of the terms symphony, orchestra, and philharmonic, and notes on the history of significant orchestras (Hardjana 1984a, in 2004b); another a biography of the NYPO's music director, Zubin Mehta (Hardjana 1984e, in 2004b); a third focused on the repertoire presented (Hardjana 1984b, in 2004b). In two others he argued for the importance of orchestral music. The article "Symphony: Symbol of Progress" maintained that metropolitan centers needed to have an orchestra if they were to be respected by their neighbors (Hardjana [1984g?], in 2004a:108). "Symphonies are Expensive" acknowledged that some might question "whether it is right" to spend as much as was spent on the NYPO's performance "in a country as poor as Indonesia," but ultimately answered that symphonies "are indeed expensive . . . but necessary." Their "behavior" is "a barometer of and impetus for the development and progress of music around them," he asserted—adding that the Orkes Simfoni Jakarta, the one active orchestra in the 1970s and much of the 1980s (chapter 6), "was not yet capable of sustaining this role" (Hardjana [1984f?], in 2004a). In a review of the 1991 visit by an Austrian group to mark the bicentenary of Mozart's death, Hardjana commented on Jakarta's lack of an adequate concert hall (Hardjana [1984f?], in 2004a:189). Other articles were more specifically focused on Indonesian classical music institutions. In a 1986 review of the newly founded student orchestra at AMI/ISI Jogja he balanced criticism with appreciation for its existence—alongside a brief history of classical music education in Indonesia—but also

voiced his concern on the lack of opportunities for ISI graduates beyond campus (Hardjana 1986d, in 2004b).

Hardjana thus remained very much concerned with the state of classical music in Indonesia. But it was no longer his sole concern as it had been in the first few years after returning to Indonesia. His active interest in Indonesia's indigenous musical traditions increased through his directorship of the PKM.¹⁷ Expanding his focus in a different direction, he paid more serious attention as a writer and cultural critic to the broader range of Western-oriented musics in Indonesia. In the case of a cluster of articles from 1986 about the RRI Bintang Radio competition (Hardjana [1986f?], in 2004b), *musik seriosa* (Hardjana [1986?e], in 2004a), and the songwriter Ismail Marzuki (Hardjana 1986c, in 2004b), Hardjana wrote about music with some connection to the Western art music tradition—though part of Hardjana's intent with these articles, as seen in the quotations in chapter 2, was to put *musik seriosa* in perspective as a rather limited form. In other cases, such as a 1988 article written after dangdut superstar Rhoma Irama¹⁸ performed at TIM (Hardjana [1988c?], in 2004a), he addressed a topic it is hard to imagine him touching in the 1970s.

In contrast to Hardjana's earlier statements, in interviews, lectures, and writings, condemning popular music as poison and protesting its dominance of the Indonesian music world, Hardjana's article on Rhoma Irama is an evenhanded analysis of his position in Indonesian music. Hardjana interprets Irama's rise in popularity in terms of its broader social,

17. Hardjana's interest in indigenous musical traditions did not, however, extend much past its intersection with those cultural realms he was most involved in. He championed traditionally-based composers of *musik kontemporer*, and wrote excitedly about the internationalization of gamelan (Hardjana 1986a, in 2004b; 1989, in 2004b), but did not otherwise involve himself in traditional music activity to any substantial extent.

18. On Rhoma Irama's central importance to dangdut, see Frederick (1982) and Weintraub (2010).

cultural, and historical context, connecting it to the eclipse of radio and LPs by television, recording studios, and stadium concerts, and also to “a shift in the historical direction of the Indonesian nation” and its “whole system of values.” Hardjana comments on Irama’s aesthetic innovations, demonstrating real familiarity with his music through references to several of his songs, but he does so to explain its appeal to its audience. In another article titled “Abad XX, Abad Remaja” (20th Century, Century of the Teenager), Hardjana provided a broader historical perspective on the rise of popular music directed specifically to youth, referring to both Euro-American and Indonesian styles and artists from the 1950s, 60s, and 70s (Hardjana [1988b?], in 2004a).

In all of these cases, and increasingly in much of his writing, Hardjana incorporated a sociological perspective. He remained critically concerned with the possibility of Indonesia supporting the kinds of music to which he was most committed professionally—namely, Western art music, and contemporary art music composition. But rather than simply bemoan particular impediments and shortcomings, he increasingly sought to understand why the Indonesian music world was the way it was, and did so much more sympathetically.

The first instance of Hardjana more closely examining music outside the classical canon had a rather personal motivation. In 1976 he wrote a defense of the violinist and conductor Idris Sardi, whom he knew as a friend since they were little, “from the time we were still on a school bench.” Sardi, Hardjana acknowledged in a later article, was a “milestone in the development of Indonesian *kitsch*” (Hardjana 1994, in 2004b:382). In the 1960s, Sardi turned from his classical “idol” Jascha Heifetz to “the populist commercial style” of Helmut Zacharias.¹⁹ This shift to the “world of entertainment show-biz,” and his subsequent

19. Zackarias studied with his father, a concert violinist, and began performing professionally “at the

pioneering innovations in “*Keroncong Beat*”—which involved changes to *kroncong*’s instrumentation to include “winds, electric guitar and drum set” and “mixing musical idioms” including “classical,” “folklore,” and “beat”—provoked abundant scorn from classical, “beat,” jazz, and *kroncong* musicians alike. It also, however, made him fantastically successful and highly influential. When, in 1976, Sardi was appointed as a guest conductor with the Orkes Simfoni Jakarta (along with Frans Haryadi, Praharyawan Prabowo, and Hardjana himself), to assist in its revival, many were incredulous, accusing Sardi of “lacking education,” of “not knowing harmony, timbre, conducting.” Hardjana dismissed these criticisms as “pseudo intellectual,” baseless, and prejudiced. Sardi was talented, skilled, and extraordinarily hard working. He had been involved in “building Indonesia’s music world” since the 1950s, when at the age of ten, regarded as a “wunderkind” by European musicians, he joined his uncle to work at RRI Jogjakarta. At twelve he was enrolled as an “exceptional student” at SMIND (Hardjana [1976?], in 2004a).

When he was fifteen, however, Sardi’s father died. Sardi dropped out of school to take his father’s place in the Orkes Studio Djakarta, and to take on his role in providing for their family. Sardi’s “fate” denied him “the opportunity to stand [alongside] ‘child prodigies’ like Barenboim, Mehta, Pollini, Previn, Abado, Zuckerman,” to “study in Vienna” and pursue his dream of becoming a classical musician. “Is it his fault,” Hardjana asked, that he was unable “to wrestle further with the violin literature by Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Bruch, Bartók, Paganini, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky, Sibelius and so on?” Or that “in Indonesia there was not yet a life for serious music that was able to accommodate a great talent and

age of six.” In his twenties he turned to jazz, recording “some of the first German bop recordings” in 1948, and “in the 1950s . . . became involved in popular dance” (*Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Zacharias, Helmut,” by Wolfram Knauer, accessed 7 December 2005).

potential?”—that his “tremendous music energy” was instead “channeled through the maniacal style of Helmut Zacharias?” (ibid.)

Hardjana neither denounced nor endorsed the direction Sardi had taken. But beyond the main point of his defense—that Sardi was more than capable of conducting the OSJ, and indeed had accomplished more in refining the ensemble’s sound “in three months” than had his colleague, Adidharma, “in seven years”—he did argue that for “an artist” with “total integrity in his musical profession,” categories were not a “central concern.” It mattered little “whether the music was classical, jazz, pop, *kroncong*, rock, or even *dangdut*.” “Only the superficiality of the dull-witted cynically sneers while making stunted musical compartments.” For someone like Sardi, the question was which direction “could support his creative energy” (ibid.).

Five years later, in 1981, Hardjana more directly defended an aesthetic direction related to those pursued by Idris Sardi, in a scathing counter to J. A. Dungga’s complaint about the broadcast of “Bad Music via TVRI.” The music in question was “Orkes Keroncong lengkap,” (*lengkap* = complete) a standard *kroncong* ensemble augmented by “a large orchestra similar in arrangement to a symphonic form.” Whereas in the 1950s Dungga and his co-author Liberty Manik’s objected to the orchestration of popular song because it undermined the distinctiveness of true symphonic music,²⁰ in this instance Dungga was concerned with the integrity of *kroncong* itself, charging that presenting it with orchestral backing was a “defective deviation” from its original form. Hardjana criticized Dungga for overlooking the ample precedent for orchestrated *kroncong* from the 1950s, and for declaring the expansion of the ensemble to be “a waste of money that musically had absolutely no meaning.”

20. See chapter 2 for a discussion of this earlier critique.

Hardjana rejected Dunga's perspective as "narrow and naive," and pointed to other instances of expanding ensembles, including both the innovations of Beethoven, which prepared those of "Bruckner, Berlioz, Wagner" and "Stravinsky," and that of Balinese *gong kebyar*, as examples of answering the "needs and demands of creativity." He further questioned the notion of an original form that was the basis of Dunga's critique, arguing that *kroncong* had "experienced many changes" in its history, giving rise to a plethora of recognized sub-genres. Calling on "Lord Dunga" to "not be a tyrant of development," Hardjana insisted that "development was the right, obligation, and property of all citizens," and charged that it was inappropriate to criticize a figure like Achmad Soenardi, the conductor responsible for the "bad music" on national television, whose contributions as a "fighter and builder" spanned "three eras of Indonesian music."²¹ Soenardi, who was a member of the OSJ and Hardjana's Ensemble Jakarta, was not only "fluent with *kroncong* music" but broadly experienced. His "efforts to incorporate all those elements he had drawn upon in his experience" were "extremely interesting, without caring whether it was from pop, classical or *kroncong* itself" (Hardjana [1981d?], in 2004a).

Hardjana demonstrated a tremendous breadth of knowledge of the wider range of Western and Western-oriented Indonesian musics that he discussed in these articles, and in others, such as an appreciation of the leading "Bintang Radio" (radio star) Titiiek Puspa (Hardjana n.d.[a], in 2004a), or the articles on jazz that he began writing in the 1990s.²² In our interview, he rattled off the names of popular singers such as Doris Day, Connie Francis,

21. By "three eras" Hardjana presumably means the late colonial era, the Japanese occupation and revolution, and the years since independence.

22. Hardjana's anthologies (2004b; 2004a) include thirteen articles on jazz.

Betty Page, Bing Crosby, Bob Hope and Frank Sinatra with some enthusiasm, declaring, when he discussed at some length “the extraordinary phenomenon” of the spread of American music via radio, that “we all knew American popular song, the songs, the singers, the orchestras” (Suka Hardjana, p.c., 14 September 2004). It seems likely that this Western music, and not just Western art music, was also a stimulus for Hardjana’s youthful “fantasies,” even if it was Western art music that he pursued professionally.

At the same time, Hardjana asserted that when one talks about “Western music” in Indonesia it must be “in quotation marks,” a statement that points to some adherence to the belief that art music is Western music’s most fundamental form. Hardjana made this assertion when discussing the limited extent of Western art music’s presence in Indonesia, in connection with Franki Raden’s claim that *musik kontemporer* was the result of the meeting of two traditions (Raden 1994: 6). “What Franki says is too much,” Hardjana maintained, asking “which Western music?” Indonesians could relate to certain repertoire from the classical canon, but “late romantic” and “beyond” was “foreign.” The music of Gustav Mahler and Richard Strauss “was not played in Indonesia,” and is “still not played.” Western art music only had a presence in “enclaves.” It was not a “big, general phenomenon,” in contrast to the “extraordinary phenomenon” of the spread of American-style popular song that started in the 1930s (Suka Hardjana, p.c., 14 September 2004).

Modern Music’s “Primordial Flaw”

Hardjana’s remarks echoed his cultural critique of “modern music,” Hardjana’s term of convenience for those musics that related in one way or another to music of Western origin. This critique found its fullest expression in a substantial 1995 article titled “Notes on

Indonesian Music: The Fragmentation of an Alienated Modern Art” published in the arts journal *Kalam* (Hardjana 1995). In the sweeping historical overview in the first part of the article—covering everything from the origins of *kroncong* in the songs of Portuguese sailors, to the craze for various styles of American popular song starting in the 1930s, the “phenomenal” flowering of *dangdut* in the 1970s, and the emergence of *musik kontemporer*—it is evident just how much Hardjana’s perspective had broadened. In several important respects, such as his intentionally inclusive use of the term “modern music,” he treats all of the developments he discusses as equal. Nevertheless, Hardjana’s analysis of the problematic state of modern music in Indonesia reflects priorities shaped by his primary involvement in European classical and contemporary art music. Other forms of “modern music” are examined not merely as the background to art music activity, but ultimately the goal projected by the article involves realizing modern music’s potential as art.

As in Hardjana’s previous statements about Indonesian music, the impact of mass media, industrialization, and commercialization figure prominently in this critique. They played a significant role in the second and third of the three “waves” of musical influence from the West he identifies in his historical overview; the first comprised music brought by European traders and colonialists, which, with the exception of church music in certain parts of Indonesia, was intended primarily, or exclusively, for European “consumption” (ibid.:6-7). The second wave consisted of “Americanist culture” (*budaya ke-Amerika-an*) by way of the “industrial cultural products” that started arriving in the 1930s through radio and film (ibid.:8). The third, starting in the 1970s, was amplified by the “strengthening of the industrial and market influence of the Japanese economy especially in electronic products” (ibid.:11). Hardjana notes how “hotels, restaurants, pubs and bars, radio, cassettes, TV, film,

video, CDs, satellite broadcasting and open fields with the capacity for tens of thousands of listeners, not concert halls, have become the new musical community at the end of the twentieth century” and summarizes the consequences:

Indonesian music quickly sank again in the hurly-burly of global musical civilization dominated by advanced countries with their control of information technologies and capital clout to control the world music market. Musical institutions such as the studio orchestras once found at various government radio stations died one by one. Similarly, institutions of music education and other musical establishments, whether government or private, increasingly lost their bearings because of the speed of change in the productivity of world music. (ibid.:14)

Elaborating on the fate of radio orchestras in a later section focused on developments related to European classical music, Hardjana notes how these orchestras, which “became an organ in the development of musik Seriosa songs and Hiburan in their golden age,” did not all disband, but “since the 1980s were no longer heard from.” They were “crowded out by the speed of popular music’s development” and “lost out in claiming airspace to private commercial radio broadcasts that by simply running cassettes won in the competition for listeners” (ibid.:21).

Hardjana no longer views popular music and the media which it dominated as an wholly negative force, however. Far from charging that it offered mostly poison, as he had in 1976, he points out instances where it was shaped by and interacted with other forces to make a positive contribution. The popular American-style music that in the 1930s began flowing into a colony that was beginning to imagine its independence “carried a fresh liberating breeze that was more egalitarian” and “offered new dreams” for those who “had long been suppressed by colonization.” The “electronic mass media” that carried this music facilitated the move of musical activity from “exclusive” settings to those that were more open and that

promoted social interaction between various groups, including youth (ibid.:8). Hardjana also recognizes in popular music what he considered significant creative advances. The popular music scene of the 1970s was formed by groups that had “a more local nuance,” and were thus widely accepted and managed “to become ‘lords in their own house’.” In contrast to previous periods, when popular groups played selections from a standard repertoire in more or less the same manner, pop groups in the 1970s “played only their own songs,” and developed their own styles (ibid.:11).

There are points where Hardjana seems to be making a cultural imperialist type argument. There are other points where he laments the lack of permanent institutions to “maintain continuity in musical life” of the sort that exist “in the large cities of developed countries” (ibid.:19). But instead of blaming Indonesian music’s perceived deficiencies on the media, or asking with exasperation why only pop had grown so terrifically and only going as far as identifying material shortcomings in suggesting an answer, Hardjana instead sought to identify more fundamental problems. The article opens with a list of five “distinguishing characteristics” that have hampered the development of modern Indonesian music as a whole. First, it derived not from the “heart of the musical culture of Europe, and then also America” but rather from a “thin and unimportant layer.” From this follows the second and third characteristics: that its development has remained dependent on the “current of musical developments occurring in the West,” and thus it has remained marked as borrowed and lacks “a basic concept”. Fourth, with the exception of a few popular forms such as “*kroncong* or *dangdut*,” it has only developed among certain urban groups and is thus socially alienated. Fifth, its development has been fragmented rather than continuous (ibid.:5).

Hardjana identifies manifestations of these problematic features in different genres across

the “serious”/“entertainment” divide—a divide he acknowledges in discussing the Western provenance of the particular form it takes in modern music (ibid.:20), but looks past, at times quite explicitly, in most of the article. He groups Amir Pasaribu, Cornel Simanjuntak, and Binsar Sitompul (who identified with art music) and Ismail Marzuki, Iskandar, Kusbini, Syaiful Bachri, and Pasaribu’s nemesis Maladi (who were central players in the mid twentieth century paraclassical and popular mainstream)²³ together as the generation marking the first time that “most figures were composers and songwriters” (*pencipta dan penggubah lagu*) (ibid.:9). “*Musik seriosa*, 1950s Bintang Radio-style *musik hiburan*, choirs, rock, jazz, even pop” are lumped together as forms that developed in cities and were “still felt to be foreign” in the “villages and hinterlands” (*pedesaan dan pedalaman*) where eighty percent of the Indonesian population lives (ibid.:18). “Classical music, jazz, pop, rock, *hiburan*, *seriosa*, *musik kontemporer* and other genres of modern music in Indonesia” all “rise and sink, ebb and flow, or worse ‘wither on the vine,’ because they exist in the shadows of that which lies outside of their own selves.” Musical trends such as “*Hiburan* and *Seriosa* in the 1950s” and “*musik kontemporer* in the mid 1970s,” like “rock ’n’ roll in the 1960s” and “disco” and “break dance” in the 1980s,” all emerged some years after such forms were “current” and “still hot in their place of origin” (ibid.:22). And in the most striking instance of looking past the “serious”/“entertainment” divide, Hardjana includes “disco, break dance, rap, rock, pop, reggae, metal, country, orchestra, symphony, opera, *seriosa*, Latin American, *etnik*, *kontemporer*, *dangdut*, vocal groups, jazz, punk, fusion, classical, *keroncong beat*, *tempo dulu*” together in a single list, as the categories coming “in and out of the music business

23. See chapter 2 for discussions of these figures and three more ambiguous cases included in Hardjana’s list: R. A. J. Soedjasmin, a conductor of Indonesia’s military orchestra and director of AMI Jogja, and the Lekra affiliated composers Subronto K. Atmodjo and Sudharnoto.

market,” according to quickly changing tastes, just as in “the fashion world” or “beauty salons” (ibid.:13-14).

However, when it comes to examining the most fundamental problem with modern Indonesian music, and suggesting what would be needed to overcome it, Hardjana’s prioritizing of art music becomes evident. The “fragmentation in the development of modern music,” and the fact that it is stuck “in the shadows” of Western music history, is

a result of the primordial flaw from the beginning of this music’s introduction to Indonesia several hundred years ago. It was born without roots or a basic concept, in particular because we did not become part of the energy of Renaissance civilization, from which Western music has grown and developed. What then followed were transplanted values that . . . have never been able to stand on their own, with the result that what has developed is fragments of musical trends that are cut off and not connected to each other. (ibid.:23)

Hardjana’s evocation of “Renaissance civilization” signals a certain understanding of Western music’s history, one in which a retroactively constructed pantheon of great composers is tied to a history of great ideas, and linked by a narrative of continuous evolution. It reiterates in different terms the distinction he made at the beginning of the article, between the “heart of the musical culture of Europe” and “America,” and the “thin and unimportant layer” from which modern Indonesian music derives (ibid.:5). The music first brought by Europeans functioned either as “exclusive entertainment for themselves,” in “military and government ceremonies,” for “education,” or in “religious ceremonies.” Of these forms, “church singing” was “singular” in having been known the longest and having “retained its style.” “The rest were social musics with a ceremonial and entertainment character” that “changed their style and fashion continuously following the tendencies popular in their country of origin” (ibid.:7). In other words, the Western music that

accompanied the first four centuries of European presence did not include that which became part of the classical canon, but instead was periclassical: those forms which became peripheral as the classical canon took shape.

Even with later developments in the twentieth century, modern Indonesian music had not escaped the problems deriving from its “primordial flaw.” Because it “depends so much on information outside itself,” it had not progressed as much as one might expect given its 500-year history. And in Hardjana’s opinion, it would only “produce its own essence” (*menciptakan watak dirinya*) when it was able to break the resulting “chain of alienation” and gain a sense of itself (ibid.:17).

By way of illustrating what more self-sufficient forms of modern music look like, Hardjana breaks in the middle of the article from his discussion of music in Indonesia to point at what he considers more successful models from elsewhere. Other than the passing mention of American big bands from the 1940s, all of his examples are from art music: Béla Bartók and Zoltan Kodaly’s development of “national Hungarian music” based on the folk melodies they collected, and parallel developments in other “small European countries” by figures such as Smetana, Dvorak, Sibelius, Grieg, and Granados; “Serious music” from America, by figures such as “Gershwin, Barber, Ives, Copland, Bernstein, Cage” and immigrant European composers such as “Stravinsky, Bartók” and “Hindemith”; the “Five Pioneers of new Russian music, Balakirev, Cecar Cui, Borodin, Mousorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov”; and East Asian composers such as Maki Ishii, Toru Takemitsu, and Isang Yun. All of these examples registered “in the constellation of world music culture because they not only mastered the norms and tools of modern culture . . . but all the more because they are solid cultures known for their strong national character” (ibid.:16-17). A different example, that of “artists and

intellectuals” from countries such as “America, Canada, England, Ireland, Germany, Japan, Australia, New Zealand” who had “successfully developed ‘modern’ *karawitan* (gamelan) music”—Michael Tenzer and Sekar Jaya, the Berkeley CA based group he formerly led, are noted—demonstrate how, when the “adequate apparatus and methods” are used to transform a “foreign cultural phenomenon,” it can “enrich one’s own culture” (ibid.:17-18).

Hardjana does recognize exceptions to the general condition of modern Indonesia music, which on the whole he characterizes as “a culture without roots . . . whose existence is always dependent on the flow of energy which comes from outside itself,” resulting “in a long-lasting alienation” and the inability to be accepted as “a real part of rural arts and hinterland society.” These exceptions are *kroncong*, *dangdut*, and several other “syncretic forms,” including “folk musics that have a local character and that have experienced a meaningfully transformative adaptation in certain regions” (ibid.:18). He points again to *kroncong* and *dangdut* in concluding the article, noting that they “have an advantage” as forms existing “only in this country” that are “the result of cleverness in giving birth to a new syncretic culture from other cultures that are creatively adopted.” In his final sentence, he suggests that they stand alongside “Borobudur, wayang, *karawitan*, *pinisi*, and so on”²⁴ as a “small contribution that is extremely meaningful in the invention of our true selves” (*penemuan jati diri*) (ibid.:23).

Hardjana thus recognizes the cultural significance of *kroncong* and *dangdut*, the latter of which is justifiably called “Indonesia’s most popular music” (Weintraub 2010). But in referring to them as a “small contribution,” he also indicates that they do not fully address the

24. Borobudur, the world’s largest Buddhist monument, is located near Jogjakarta. *Pinisi* is a type of a cargo boat developed by the Bugis, an ethnic group from coastal South Sulawesi.

problematic condition of modern Indonesian music. The other critical characteristic of the non-Indonesian examples Hardjana points to as models of self-sufficiency is that they “embrace” music “not only in its capacity as an object for entertainment, but they are truly aware of its standards and essence as part of humanity’s history which provides prestige and higher self-worth for a people” (ibid.:17). The implication here is that only with the development of “serious” forms, of art music, music that fulfills “the artistic aspirations of music,” as he put it in 1980, can the alienation and fragmentation suffered by modern Indonesian music be counteracted fully. Hardjana consistently places “serious” in scare quotes,²⁵ and he doesn’t use the term *musik seni* (art music) at all, but it is nevertheless clear that his avoidance, intentional or otherwise, of such categorical terms does not imply a lack of investment in the ideals they represent.

Hardjana also asserts that

Modern Indonesian music will never become a part of the dialogue of world musical culture and will constantly depend on designs already established outside itself, as long as it fails to draw historical lessons from within itself (ibid.:17).

Which lessons Hardjana refers to here is not entirely clear. The history of modern Indonesian music that Hardjana outlines is one of continuous and problematic dependency on outside models. Syncretic forms such as *kroncong* and *dangdut* avoid that specific problem, but are otherwise insufficient in “building a sense of identity” that is “full of character and authority” (ibid.:14). For that, Hardjana looks to examples from other parts of the world.

That the first of these is Bartók and Kodaly’s development of a national Hungarian music

25. In discussing the emergence of the distinction between “serious art” and “entertainment art” in the first half of the twentieth century, Hardjana even uses letters to stand in for the terms used in different languages: “E” for “*Ernst*” and “U” for “*Unterhaltung*,” “S” for “Serious” and “E” for “Entertainment,” “S” for “Seriosa” and “H” for “Hiburan” (Hardjana 1995:20).

based on folk melodies—which, he notes, became “one of the most influential ideas in the development of twentieth century modern music in the world” (ibid.:15)—suggests that modern Indonesian music might also look to traditional Indonesian music. Hardjana acknowledges briefly the pioneering efforts of the PKM to “bring to life new experimental musical works having their point of departure in various musical disciplines” as a “forum” that “promised much new hope . . . for the future growth of modern music.” But the PKM “was stopped just like that”—discontinued when funding for it dried up—and subsequent activities of a similar sort “have not yet displayed a clear form” (ibid.:22).

The failed promise of *musik kontemporer* is most directly a matter of insufficient institutional support and a resulting lack of continuity. More fundamentally, it has to do with its limited broader significance. The PKM successfully established *musik kontemporer* as a field encompassing Western-oriented and traditionally-based work on equal terms, but this accomplishment had a negligible impact on the broader sphere of music in Indonesia. In his reviews of the PKM, Hardjana had proclaimed that “tradition is modern,” arguing that at least some traditionally-based composers had successfully transcended the traditional/modern dichotomy. But as a cultural critic, Hardjana had to acknowledge the ongoing persistence of this dichotomy beyond the rarefied context of the PKM. For want of an alternative, Hardjana uses the term “modern” to designate what in effect remains a musical realm all but entirely distinct from “various traditional music, folk music and regional musics whose historical development and socio-cultural background have their own story” (ibid.:5), as he explains in a note at the beginning of his article. These musics figure hardly at all otherwise, except implicitly in his acknowledgement of the advantages of a syncretic form such as *kroncong*, and briefly as one point of comparison in his conclusion where he states that “unlike the

historical development of music in the West, or the historical development of our traditional arts, the development of modern Indonesian music . . . is not the history of humanity, but the history of people's taste" (ibid.:23).

In his own artistic pursuits, however, Hardjana was, first through his directorship of the PKM, and later in his own forays as a composer, increasingly looking to traditional Indonesian music as a means to escape the predicament of Western-oriented modern Indonesian music. But as we will see in the next and last section in the profile of this centrally important figure in *musik kontemporer*, coming to traditional music after having been so Western-oriented for so much of his career turned out to be somewhat fraught itself.

Nativism by Proxy

Hardjana opened one of two reviews he wrote of the fifth PKM in 1984—the first at which all the participants had traditional foundations—with a rather dramatic account of the impact those participants had:

In the middle of the bright lights and noise of the big city Jakarta, young kids from the outlying regions arrive with all their simplicity and honesty. Yet their enthusiasm and thinking are as brilliant as those bright lights. They come bringing a wealth of lessons for the dim-witted inhabitants of the big city . . . They are a small slice of Indonesian humanity who are still sturdy enough to face the influence of modernization that is a cause of anxiety. And they propose to us that one's surroundings, tradition, and self-certainty are the most potent protection to face all of that. (Hardjana 1984c, in 2004b:90-91)

On a certain level, the variation on the primitivist trope of the over-civilized and alienated learning from simpler and more honest folk functions rhetorically, setting up a dichotomy that Hardjana can then strike down in praising the sophistication of the traditionally-based composers he has invited to participate. But on another level, Hardjana's comments hint at

the critique of Western-oriented modern Indonesian music he articulated in a more developed form eleven years later, in the 1995 article discussed above. In referring to the “dim-witted inhabitants of the big city,” he would seem to be speaking less of himself, or of Western-oriented Jakarta-based composers and musicians in particular, but more generally of urban Indonesians as a whole. But in retrospect, his later comments and activities suggest that Hardjana was himself looking increasingly to traditional music as a more grounded source for new musical directions.

When I interviewed Hardjana in 2004, he revealed a somewhat more actively curatorial dimension to his work as director of the PKM. He did not simply issue open-ended invitations to participants to present their work, but at least on some occasions he effectively commissioned them with more or less specific criteria. In some cases, there were practical motivations, as in 1983 when a currency devaluation caused the PKM’s budget to be “cut in half.” Hardjana used this as an opportunity to promote the idea of chamber music, and the development of “instrumental technique” and “an individual approach” that he understood to be an essential aspect of that form.²⁶ In other cases his requests were more idiosyncratic, such as when he asked Blacius Subono to compose only for *pencon* (knobbed gongs).²⁷ He recounted how after being struck by the contrapuntal character of *gender wayang* played at a *wayang* performance in Teges, Bali, he asked I Wayan Suweca and Ketut Suryatini to develop this aspect, leading to their piece “Irama Hidup” for ten *gender wayang* for the seventh PKM in 1987 (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta 1987: 14). In this case, he encouraged the

26. Alec Roth noted that for the fourth PKM in 1983, because of “financial constraints” participating ensembles were limited to no more than nine musicians (Roth 1987: 138).

27. “Owah-owah (Sworo Pencon),” co-composed by Subono and Santosa for the fourth PKM in 1983, featured *pencon*, but also included vocals, *suling*, and *gender* (Hardjana 1986: 252).

composers to approach a traditional form with chamber music proportions²⁸ “in terms of a large orchestra.”

Hardjana spoke also of presenting composers with the mission of finding solutions to what he considered “interesting problems” with *karawitan*. “I chose my victims, I gave them my problem, according to my fantasizing.” For example, there was the problem of the inaudibility of Javanese *gender* that he posed to A. L. Suwardi. The *gender*, Hardjana gushed, was a remarkably beautiful instrument. “Even just a single note”—he said as he walked across the room in his house where we were speaking and struck a key on the instrument in the gamelan he had acquired “for his compositional interests”—“ah, it’s beautiful.” When it was played, it was “fantastic—a kind of narcissistic music. A paradise of sound—a paradise of sound imagination.” Yet in the context of a full gamelan ensemble, “it could not be heard.” This is not to say it was insignificant to the overall sound—Hardjana likened it to ingredients that subtly affected the flavor of certain foods, like *gudangan* (a mixed vegetable salad with a dressing of seasoned grated coconut) or *rujak* (a fruit salad with a pungent dressing). Hardjana told Suwardi he didn’t want “Javanese gamelan”; he wasn’t asking him to alter gamelan, which was “already perfect.” Instead, in asking Suwardi if he could find a way to “make the *gender* audible,” he made it clear that he was asking him to “pull the *gender* out from the *gendhing besar*”—the “great *gendhing*,” Hardjana’s formulation referring to the traditional practice of Javanese *karawitan*. A key part of Suwardi’s solution, presented in his piece “Gender” at the fourth PKM in 1983, was to adapt to the *gender* the rotating vane mechanism from a vibraphone.

28. *Gender wayang* are typically played as a pair, or a quartet, with the second higher register pair doubling the first. In accompanying Ramayana stories, additional percussion instruments are part of the ensemble.

Hardjana remarked that although he is “Javanese also,” “really the gamelan is A. L. Suwardi’s business, not mine.” In pushing Suwardi to innovate, Hardjana only came up with the “trigger.” By the mid 1990s, however, Hardjana had begun to make gamelan more his business, with a lengthy gamelan composition entitled *Bulan Tertusuk Ilalang*. The work, which Hardjana termed a *gendhing film* grew out of, and took its title from, a collaboration with the groundbreaking and award-winning independent filmmaker Garin Nugroho.²⁹ Nugroho, whose previous feature film had crossed the boundaries of ethnographic and narrative film, embarked on a different kind of experiment in this collaboration with Hardjana. He agreed that Hardjana would compose the music first, and then Nugroho would shoot and edit the film, reversing the typical order of operations as well as the usual hierarchy in which music plays a subordinate and supporting role. The two had worked together on the scenario, which the music was intended to depict as much as other aspects of the film, and the dialogue was revised several times. In the end, however, Hardjana felt that the “visualization” had deviated too much from the agreed-upon scenario, and refused to allow his music to be used. But having conceived of the music as a work that could stand on its own, that was more than mere “illustration,” Hardjana presented the ninety minute work as a concert piece, as part of a seven city tour that also included a lecture and a solo clarinet recital (Pos 1995).³⁰

Three years later, in 1998, Hardjana revised and retitled the work *Wulan* (the Javanese equivalent of the Indonesian *bulan* = moon). Now around an hour long, the piece was presented at the second Art Summit Indonesia—an international contemporary performing

29. For critical reflections on Garin Nugroho and his work, see Cheah et al. (2004)

30. The month-long tour, intended as a retrospective of his forty year career in music, took Hardjana to Jakarta, Bandung, Semarang, Jogja, Solo, Surabaya, and Denpasar.

arts festival held every three years in Jakarta and the most prestigious event of its kind in Indonesia³¹—along with a second and very different composition for gamelan, entitled *Bamban*. Based on a “new concept” termed “Anti Parametrical Aesthetic,” the bulk of that forty to fifty minute piece involved non-traditional techniques and arrangements as a “deconstruction” of those “artificial sounds” that came to be “entrenched” as “music,” as “culture.”³² Elaborating in his program notes on the literal meaning of the Javanese word *bamban* as “returning to the starting point,” Hardjana writes of the usefulness of “returning to our initial stage” when “a process reaches a deadlock.” *Bamban* is “a necessary action” in response to “meeting a dead end,” not with the idea of a return to some point of origin, but to find a different path—perhaps also a dead end, but one that is “more interesting” and that “offers hope” (Hardjana 1998c:52).

The impasse Hardjana alludes to would seem to be his unsettled sense of identity, a sense he became more acutely aware of through the process that began with *Wulan*. In an interview around the time of his 1995 tour, Hardjana explained that he was motivated to compose for gamelan because “as a Javanese person I feel closest to that art which is my mother culture” (*induk kebudayaan saya*)—that despite having mastered “Western classical [music]” he “still

31. The Indonesian composers that have appeared over the years—Rahayu Supanggah and Slamet Abdul Sjukur at the first in 1995; Tony Prabowo along with Suka Hardjana in 1998; I Nyoman Windha and A. L. Suwardi in 2001; I Wayan Sadra in 2004—represent the favored status of those based in Jakarta and Solo, and, with the inclusion of Windha from ISI Denpasar, the legacy of a network that grew out of the PKM. Windha participated in the eighth Pekan Komponis in 1988. The Art Summit has also featured non-Indonesian participants of considerable stature; the 1998 event included the composers Kaija Saariaho and Alvin Lucier.

32. *Bamban* begins with the performers positioned throughout and surrounding the concert hall playing *gong*, *kempul* (small knobbed gongs) and *bendhe* (flat gongs), some of them stationary, some of them moving. The notation for an approximately ten minute section in the middle uses graphic symbols to indicate only what techniques should be on different instruments, with the *rebab* player asked to play on and beneath the bridge. I obtained a copy of the score from Rusdiyantoro, the director of Ensemble Kentingan, the group from ASKI (STSI) Solo that realized the piece.

had a spiritual connection” with Javanese music, even though, as he admitted, he was unable to play it (Asri and Susanto 1995). In 1998, he spoke to the press of “going home to my neighborhood/village” (*pulang kampung*) (Kompas 1998), and in the program for the Art Summit performance of both *Wulan* and *Bamban* as a “pilgrimage to my cultural point of origin (*ziarah ke induk budaya asal-usul*): Java” (Hardjana 1998c:52).

With *Wulan*, this return mostly took a more literal form.³³ The work consists largely of “ancient melodies in a new arrangement” and “new melodies with a traditional approach,” mixed with some “total departures from tradition,” from that which is “proper” (*baik dan benar*) (Suara Pembaruan 1998). These departures aside, the work gives the impression of being straightforwardly traditional, with pieces from the standard *karawitan* repertoire presented whole. Yet at the same time, the traditional (and neo-traditional) material invariably involves departures from conventional practice. In some cases these departures are obvious, such as the opening section which uses the trademark ASKI Solo device of superimposing rhythmically independent elements: a *pesindhen* singing the melodies of *sendhon* “Rencasih” and *pathethan sanga ngelik*, both of which are most commonly performed in the context of *wayang* by a *dhalang*, accompanied by *rebab*, *gender*, *gambang*, and *suling*; a two-part male chorus; a melody reminiscent of the long introduction played by *bonang* in *gamelan sekaten*;³⁴ and the soft tinkling of a *gender panerus*, the only element in

33. My discussion is based primarily on a studio recording of the piece obtained from Rusdiyantoro, who as noted below directed the ensemble that played it, and to some extent collaborated in its creation.

34. *Gamelan sekaten* is a form with larger and lower pitched bronze instruments, without vocals or other kinds of instruments except *bedhug*, a very large low-pitched drum, that is believed to have been created by the Islamic saints who converted the Javanese to Islam in the 15th and 16th centuries. In Solo and Jogja, it is now played exclusively as part of the *sekaten* festival held in the month of Mulud to celebrate the birth of the prophet Muhammad. ASKI Solo had its own set of instruments built for study and for use in new compositions.

meter. In other cases, they are very subtle, such as a performance of *ladrang* “Asmaradana” in which the gamelan is reduced to *jineman*-style instrumentation (*kendhang*, soft-sounding and structure-marking instruments, but no *rebab*)³⁵ and with the *pesindhen* either humming or singing without words. There are also idiosyncratic moments, such as an erratic solo played by *gender panerus* that in the notation is indicated simply by the title “*Awur-awur I*,”³⁶ and more conspicuously avant-garde passages, such as a six-and-a-half minute section for multiple *rebab* that starts with consonant held-tones, moves into a swarm, and then ebbs and flows in intensity with more frenetic bowing and tremolos. In the three-and-a-half minute section that follows, Hardjana has a male chorus sustain a multi-pitched drone on the syllable “aum” while a *pesindhen* sings *sendhon* “Abimanyu”—another melody from the *wayang* repertoire—and a *gender panerus* again tinkling in the background.

Because, as Hardjana admitted, he cannot himself play gamelan, he relied extensively on the expertise of the musicians with whom he worked. Exactly how much is not clear. Rusdiyantoro, who is credited in the Art Summit program as the director of Ensemble Kentingan, the group from STSI (ASKI) Solo that performed both the initial version of *Bulan Tertusuk Ilalang* and *Wulan*, noted that although Hardjana refers to it as his work, in truth it was a collaboration. I recognized the notation for the piece as being in Rusdiyantoro's meticulous hand.³⁷ Rather than a complete score—it lacks even a title or attribution—it

35. *Jineman* are light and small-scale pieces featuring a melody sung by a *pesindhen*. *Ladrang* “Asmaradana” tends in contemporary performance practice to be considered a *gendhing populer*, and would be played in a very lively manner by a full gamelan ensemble. See Sutton (2006) for a discussion of a typical performance of *ladrang* “Pangkur,” a similar piece, by Nartosadho's ensemble.

36. The related verb form of *awur*, *ngawur*, is used pejoratively among gamelan musicians to describe making things up, especially when this is due to insufficient knowledge.

37. I was very familiar with Rusdiyantoro's notation, having lived with him in Vancouver in 1992, and having studied with him at Simon Fraser University, where he was a visiting instructor. He spent

includes only that which is necessary to facilitate rehearsal and performance. Detailed notation is provided only when players need to coordinate their parts, as in the case of the two-part male chorus in the opening, or where the text is non-standard, as with the *sendhon* “Rencasih” and *pathethan sanga ngelik* in that same section. For most sections all that is provided is a title, and in some cases reminders about techniques, variations, or instrumentation. This is true both for traditional sections such as “Asmaradana, slendro sanga” (where the *laras* and *pathet* are indicated because these differ from those that are usual),³⁸ and non-traditional ones such as “*Awur-awur I*” and the lengthy section for multiple *rebab*—which is represented simply by the title “Geometri,” the letters “A,” “B,” and “C” as a reference to subsections, and two lines beside C, which seem to indicate the point at which the *rebab* play a fast tremolo while glissing either up or down, and then converge again with longer bow strokes.

Whether Hardjana specified all the traditional material or asked Rusdiyantoro or other players to suggest suitable pieces, he undoubtedly would have left the realization of those pieces to the players—as is done both in traditional performance practice and in most pieces of *musik kontemporer*—though the variations in instrumentation seem idiosyncratic enough that I would assume they were specified by Hardjana. There is a section with multiple *siter* playing a *balungan* in unison that is notated, which is presumably one of Hardjana’s new melodies. The drone on the syllable “aum” required considerable stamina on the part of the male singers—to the point that, according to Rusdiyantoro, one of them joked that he would

many an evening carefully preparing notation.

38. There are three *pathet* (modes) in each of the two *laras* (tuning systems), *slendro* and *pelog*, used in Central Javanese *karawitan*. A number of pieces, including *ladrang* “Asmaradana,” may be played in different *laras*, and some may be played in different *pathet* as well. *Ladrang* “Asmaradana” is most commonly played in *slendro manyura* and *pelog barang*.

“rather die than have to sing that again” (Rusdiyantoro, p.c., 9 August 2005)—and thus would seem to be an imposition of compositional authority beyond that typical of the creative processes I have observed or participated in at ASKI. Rusdiyantoro commented that the “technique” in the section for multiple *rebab* was “also difficult,” again pointing to Hardjana’s direction. But he also noted that in the end, his improvisation was included, indicating that Hardjana relied on the player’s creative input. However the balance of creative responsibility is weighed, the style and overall conception of *Wulan* is quite unlike that of the various types of composition practiced at ASKI, suggesting that the overall artistic vision for the piece, if not every detail, was determined by Hardjana.³⁹

In speaking with the press in advance of the 1998 Art Summit Performance of *Wulan*, Hardjana remarked that “looking at himself” he was “only able to sit at the threshold (*tritisan*) of the house of Javanese culture.” He remained “on the edge” in part because he had “not mastered the skill of gamelan,” but “most of all out of respect.” “I only look around, unsure of what to do (*longak-longok*) and comment . . . My works are part of my way of commenting.” Hardjana was thus somewhat discomfited by his lack of practical knowledge of *karawitan*. But even more than this lack, what troubled him was the knowledge and outlook that he had acquired from being “in the fantasy of Western musical culture” (*angan-angan budaya musik Barat*) since his youth. “It’s like I’m wearing borrowed clothes. [They’re] good, but still borrowed.” So he “diligently occupied” himself with “gamelan

39. Overall, *Wulan* moves at a much statelier pace than either ASKI-style *musik kontemporer*, or other more outwardly traditional forms such as *penataan*. In the latter, apparently introduced by Sri Hastanto in the 1980s as another graduating project option for ASKI students (Roth 1987:218; Sukamso, p.c., 4 August 2004), fragments of traditional repertoire are patched together in new arrangements. Senior performance faculty, such as Mloyowidodo and Martopangrawit, disliked the form, much more than *musik kontemporer*, for the way it would switch from a fragment of one piece to another. See Sutrisno (1998) for an enthusiastic account of the form by a practitioner.

culture,” citing his involvement in co-directing the first International Gamelan Festival in Vancouver in 1986—an event that grew out of the PKM.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, he had to admit that he was an “*indo*” (using the colloquial term for Eurasian) from having “soaked for too long in Western culture and artistic and philosophical knowledge” (Kompas 1998). He went a step further in the preamble of his program notes, noting how he felt like he had become “a cultural ‘mephisto’.”

An ‘indo’ amidst a certain ‘missing link’ crowd that has lost its way. I now feel neither a part of this or that. A world between that exists outside the boundaries between the two. An “in-between” world, that is altogether deceptive [*semu*] and extremely unnerving.

Assuming he was not alone in his predicament, he asked “Do you not feel this way?” The compositions he presented at the Art Summit are “works that exist in the push-and-pull complex and syndrome of deceptive worlds that more and more I don’t know or understand” (Hardjana 1998c:50–51).

By the time of my interview with Hardjana in 2004, he seemed to have arrived at a stable if not entirely resolved relationship to his predicament. He asserted that he was “not a Javanese person that’s very contaminated by European music”—that although he was “musically Western, because I live from there, I think about that” he was still “struck with amazement every time I hear classical Javanese gamelan music.” Yet in recounting how he

40. At the *sarasehan* held as part of the sixth PKM in March 1985, Franki Raden and Sardono W. Kusumo underlined the importance of initiating a dialogue between this forum and the “international world.” This was realized the following year, in conjunction with the residency of a group from ASKI Solo at the Indonesian pavilion at the 1986 World Exposition in Vancouver, Canada. Works by Blacius Subono and Santosa, and A. L. Suwardi from ASKI Solo, and I Ketut Gede Asnawa from ASTI Denpasar were performed at the event (Hardjana 1986: 475-476). I visited this exposition twice, but this was before I had encountered Indonesian music. The festival, and the residency of Indonesian musicians, did much, however, to stimulate interest in gamelan among my colleagues in the Vancouver scene.

would discuss his musical “obsessions” with the composers he selected/commissioned for the PKM, he acknowledged that his thinking was “a bit Western,” and joked that he was “disturbed” (*terusik*) and prone to “mischief” (*untuk nakal*).

Within the Indonesian music world, Suka Hardjana commands as much authority as anyone. His authority rests, however, first and foremost on his mastery of Western art music—mastery at a level obtained, and thus only fully understood, by only a handful of Indonesian musicians—and then after that on the openness of his perspective and breadth of his knowledge. Among the ranks of Javanese gamelan musicians, his authority is recognized by those involved in the elite sphere of Indonesian public culture—whose involvement in that sphere is due, in part, to Hardjana’s recognition of their potential—resulting in an ongoing collaborative creative relationship with musicians from ASKI (STSI/ISI) Solo, and his appointment to the faculty of its graduate program in 2000. His stature has enabled him to accomplish a great deal. It has not, however, made him immune from the doubt that comes from “standing on the world of ‘in between’” (Hardjana 2000)—a predicament that is felt all the more acutely because the world of Western art music in which he was first absorbed is, in Indonesia, only incompletely present.

6 In the Absence of Authority: Repercussions and Responses

Suka Hardjana, profiled in the previous chapter, was far from alone in taking what I have characterized as a nativist turn. To my knowledge, all Western-oriented composers of *musik kontemporer*, with but one exception, have engaged in one way or another with traditional Indonesian musics, in many cases working extensively with traditional instruments and the musicians that play them. At the same time, there are a number of younger composers who have persevered in pursuing the Eurological mode of new music composition as a major focus, creating notated works for the European classical instrumentarium. It is to these composers, who have been most adversely affected by the predicament I outlined at the opening of the previous chapter—the absence of aesthetic authority that was a consequence of the underdeveloped state of Western art music in Indonesia—that I turn in this chapter.

I start by first following through with the historical survey of Indonesia's classical music scene begun in chapters 1 and 2, focusing on developments from the 1970s through the 1990s in Indonesian orchestras. Then, after an overview of the variety of responses of younger Western-oriented composers to the lack of opportunity and support offered by that classical scene, I turn to more in-depth examinations of three individual composers. The first, Royke Koapaha, has struggled with the lack of affirmation from AMI/ISI Jogja, the school where he studied and now teaches. The second, Tony Prabowo, went on after studying with Slamet

Abdul Sjukur at IKJ to become far and away the most successful Western-oriented Indonesian composer of his generation. The third, Michael Asmara, stands between the first two, overcoming a similarly difficult experience at AMI/ISI Jogja by setting his sights elsewhere, while at the same time advancing his own career through his efforts to build a community of like-minded musicians in Jogja. I examine the directions they took as musicians and composers, and the perspectives they gained, in relation to their respective circumstances. None can be taken as representative of the typical Western-oriented Indonesian composer, as there is no such thing. Nevertheless, their individual cases, taken together, bring into sharper relief the cultural dynamics at play on the Western-oriented side of *musik kontemporer*.

“Classical” Music in the New Order

The Ongoing Struggle of Classically-Oriented Orchestras

As we saw in chapters 1 and 2, Western art music had a limited presence in colonial and newly postcolonial Indonesia, and most of what there was of a “classical” music scene is more accurately characterized as paraclassical. The political and economic conditions from the 1970s on were, for the most part, conducive to growth in many forms of “high” art. While there has been some growth in the localized practice of Western art music in Indonesia, as the following discussion of Indonesian orchestras demonstrates, the situation continued to fail to live up to the expectations and hopes of many of its most important figures.

A curious feature of Indonesia’s orchestral music scene is that it is split between two primary centers, neither of which alone has all of the resources necessary to sustain a

professional symphony orchestra. Most of the performance activity is in Jakarta, which up until the 1990s was the only city able to support viable professional orchestras.¹ Most of the players, however, are associated with AMI Jogja, which with its merger in 1984 with several other schools became ISI Jogja (Lindsay 1985: 71). ISI remains the only college level institution in Indonesia to train orchestral musicians. The Orkes Simfoni Jakarta (OSJ)—formed in 1967 by merging the musicians of two separate orchestras at RRI, the Orkes Studio Djakarta, which as noted in chapter 1 most closely resembled a Paul Whiteman-style dance band, and the more classically-oriented Orkes Radio Jakarta—was, through the 1970s, Indonesia’s only major orchestra. It had no permanent members, instead hiring musicians from Jogja (Hardjana n.d.[b], in 2004b:476). The same was true of two more recent ensembles discussed below: the Nusantara Symphony Orchestra, founded in 1988 (Budi Ngurah, p.c., 9 July 2005), and the Twilite Orchestra, founded in 1991. 80% of the latter’s members are from Jogja, among them ISI instructors (Leksono 2004: 73). This pattern has persisted despite a not insignificant distance, especially given the limitations of Indonesia’s transportation infrastructure, of over 500 kilometers, or 300 miles, between the two cities.

This split has remained stubbornly persistent because the pool of active orchestral musicians is small. Several people have stated that although there are several orchestras in Jakarta, the players are mostly the same—they differ mostly by their names, their directors or conductors, and to some extent their repertoire (Hardjana n.d.[b], in 2004b:475)(Nainggolan 2001)(Fahmi Alattas, p.c., 18 August 2005). Michael Asmara added that there was “no way two could play at the same time” (p.c., 29 July 2004). Whether or not this is literally the case,

1. The Surabaya Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1996 (<http://surabayasyphonyorchestra.com/eng/index.php>, accessed 28 February 2010).

there does seem to be very significant overlap; eighteen of the fifty-three musicians listed on the program of the Nusantara Symphony Orchestra's concert on 8 June 2005 are also among the seventy members of the Twilite Orchestra (Leksono 2004: 218-219).

The split is somewhat troublesome, with the shuttling back and forth of ISI faculty and students interfering with instruction at ISI. Edward Van Ness, the conductor of the Nusantara Symphony Orchestra, reflected that they "are taking the best out of ISI without even asking any permission." Because "they come in for gigs . . . a lot of their time is not available at the campus" (Edward Van Ness, p.c., 14 June 2005).

More significantly, the split is indicative of the limited extent to which Western art music has been taken up in Indonesia. That the one Western-oriented conservatory is located in Jogja is the result of particular historical circumstances: the presence in the last decades of the colonial era of St. Xavarius in nearby Muntilan, and perhaps also the fact that Jogja functioned as the capital of Indonesia during the revolution. But despite the existence of SMIND and then AMI/ISI in Jogja, no independent professional orchestra has been founded there; the only orchestra in Jogja is the student ensemble at ISI. According to Hardjana, this is because Jogja is "poor" (Hardjana n.d.[b], in 2004b:476). More specifically it is because those with enough wealth to individually or collectively sponsor an orchestra have not been inclined to do so.

The fact that no institution comparable to ISI Jogja has been founded in Jakarta, where most of the players work, similarly points to a lack of interest, will, and/or coordination on the part of teachers, advocates, and public and private funders. There has been a proliferation of private music schools throughout Indonesia, many of them run by Yamaha. Royke Koapaha, who began his formal studies at a Yamaha school in Bandung in 1975, contends

that “classical music in Indonesia is inextricably linked to ’72, the year that Yamaha opened” (Royke Koapaha, p.c., 14 August 2005).² But while Yamaha and similar schools may have given some musicians their start, or boosted their careers,³ mostly they have catered to amateurs. As Hardjana complained, Jakarta “does not have a school that teaches the performance of orchestral instruments. All there are are hobbyist courses and private music schools” (Hardjana n.d.[b], in 2004b:476).⁴

The absence of a conservatory in Jakarta also reflects a lack of demand from students, which follows in turn from a lack of demand from audiences. While Jakarta has at no point since independence been without an orchestra, orchestral music has not exactly thrived. The amount of concert activity has been limited, resulting in similarly limited opportunities to earn a living playing classical music. Over its first seven years of operations, 1967–1974, the OSJ managed to perform a total of seventy-seven concerts, an average of just under one concert per month (Hardjana [1976?], in 2004a:42).

The OSJ seems to have been caught in a vicious cycle. The lack of interest on the part of

2. Royke granted that Yamaha was “merely looking for money,” an assessment that seems to have been widespread. A newspaper feature on the state of “classical music” in Indonesia portrayed Yamaha as being mostly interested in selling its instruments (Zaman 1984). All the same, Royke credited Yamaha with increasing the level of appreciation of music. He related how prior to studying guitar at Yamaha, he and his friends referred to any playing that involved “picking,” rather than “just strumming,” as “*klasik*.” “At minimum, we came to know what *klasik* actually is from Yamaha” (Royke Koapaha, p.c., 14 August 2005).

3. One prominent example, mentioned below as the conductor of the Nusantara Chamber Orchestra, and discussed briefly in chapter 6, was Yazeed Djamin, who won Yamaha’s 1972 and 1974 Electone Festival championship. The Electone was the electric organ decried by Slamet Abdul Sjukur (chapter 3).

4. There is one private school, the Yayasan Pendidikan Music (Music Education Foundation), that can at least lay claim to having contributed to the training of several classical performers of note, including the Indonesian pianists Kuei Pin Yeo (<http://www.thejakartapost.com/yesterdaydetail.asp?fileid=20040314.L02>, accessed 20 July 2007) and Ananda Sukarlan (Slamet Abdul Sjukur, p.c., 12 June 2005). However, the number of instruments for which it offers instruction is limited.

audiences undermined its growth, artistically as well as in terms of numbers of players and concerts. This resulted in low esteem among audiences and players alike, further limiting growth. Jakarta audiences were excited about a performance by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, which toured Indonesia in 1984; the concert, held in the main hall of the Senayan convention center, sold out. As impressive and seemingly encouraging as this turn-out was, it was interpreted as having more to do with curiosity and the prestige of the foreign than as an indication of the actual level of interest in classical music. In any case, the attendance at OSJ concerts was, by contrast, poor, even when those concerts were free (Zaman 1984). Part of the problem, identified by Hardjana some ten years earlier, was that the Indonesian audience for classical music, whom he called “troublesome,” was “too ‘foreign minded.’” The problem extended to fellow musicians, who rarely attended concerts even when they were given free tickets. Hardjana also noted, however, that he himself did not play with the OSJ because of the low level of their performance (J.B. 1973). If this assessment is fair, it could not have helped them with attracting audiences.

In 1976, a few years after making this comment, Hardjana did perform with the OSJ, as one of a number of guest conductors. The goal, according to the invitation Hardjana received from the RRI administration, was to “revive” the OSJ, which “faced a chronic and critical decline,” and more broadly “to resuscitate the life of serious music in Indonesia” (Hardjana [1976?], in 2004a:31). Such calls were made repeatedly through OSJ’s troubled history. 1986 was a particularly challenging year. A fire destroyed Studio V of RRI Jakarta, which was considered the only performance hall in Indonesia adequate for a larger symphony orchestra (Hardjana 1991a, in 2004a). Three-quarters of the score library was also lost in the blaze (Edward Van Ness, p.c., 14 June 2005). This setback only compounded more endemic and

intractable problems. As Hardjana noted in a 1991 article, titled “Orkes Simfoni Jakarta Needs Renovation,” experienced players were retiring, withdrawing because of illness, or passing away. New players were “hard to recruit” because of the “lack of funds,” which together with the “bureaucracy” made it impossible to offer them “permanent positions.” Some players were “resolute nonetheless” and played for “honoraria.”

In 1988, the OSJ’s longtime principal conductor, Adidharma, retired. His replacement, Hardjana noted, was capable as a conductor, but lacked clout. The OSJ became inactive for nearly two years, before a 1991 performance sponsored by the Japan Foundation (Hardjana 1991a, in 2004a). In 1992, Adidharma stated bluntly, in an article titled “Professionally Managed Orchestras Still Long Way to Go in RI,” that “regrettably Jakarta . . . does not have a good symphony orchestra.” He continued that “orchestral groups cannot develop well here,” citing the lack of performances. Formerly, the OSJ “held routine concerts once a month,” but “for the last six years it has only rarely given concerts. Even the broadcast of classical music by the Symphony Orchestra on radio is done only once a month” (Jakarta Post 1992).

In 1988, as the Orkes Simfoni Jakarta was, in Hardjana’s words, “gasping for breath,” the Nusantara Chamber Orchestra (NCO) was founded, along with a private foundation to support it. The orchestra, led by pianist and composer Yazeed Djamin, fared little better. Hardjana gave the NCO a decidedly lukewarm assessment in his review, which had the subtitle “The Difficulty of Founding a Quality Orchestra” (Hardjana 1990, in 2004b). The NCO “lasted for about four years and then went to sleep due to financial and management problems.” Shortly thereafter, Djamin moved to Malaysia. The NCO was revived a decade later, in 2004, and renamed the Nusantara Symphony Orchestra (NSO). Edward Van Ness,

whom AMI Jogja had convinced in 1974 to help rebuild their program (chapter 3), was called in to do the same for the NSO (Edward Van Ness, p.c., 14 June 2005).

A more optimistic review of classical music activity in Jakarta from 2006 offered only faint praise for the NSO. Noting that “there have been years when an invitation to an NSO concert was something to be avoided,” the review promised that “that has changed,” and that more recent performances “were certainly enjoyable events.” Still, there were reservations. The review commented on lingering problems such as the lack of quality string players. The departure of a single violinist, IG Bagus Wiswakarma, was an event worth noting. The review added that “something needs to be done about building up the quality of string playing,” and suggested “bringing in faculty from overseas” as a possible solution. After half a century of efforts to develop a localized practice of Western art music, that practice still lacked the authority—and seemingly the expertise—to look first to itself.

The Apotheosis of Paraclassicism: The Twilite Orchestra

In one of his articles on orchestral music in Indonesia, Hardjana commented that there are no orchestras in Indonesia. He reasoned that there were orchestras “only in Jakarta,” and Jakarta was not the “true face of Indonesia” (Hardjana n.d.[b], in 2004b:474-475). Tony Prabowo made a similar pronouncement, but for him the issue was not the concentration of orchestras in a capital city that in many respects stood apart from the rest of the country. Instead, he questioned the legitimacy of those orchestras. He “enraged many Indonesians” by stating in a 1998 interview that “Indonesia has no orchestra!” (Griffin 2003: 10), or more precisely, that “we don’t even have a standard [level] orchestra”—that is, an orchestra meeting the artistic standards of the international classical music world (Chudori 1998).

Prabowo's comment was prompted in large part by the low level of performance. But it can also be understood to refer to the aesthetic focus predominant among Indonesian orchestras. The Nusantara Symphony Orchestra has taken up the cause of classical music proper, dedicating itself for the most part to the core of the Western art music canon.⁵ It is, however, the exception rather than the norm (Budi Ngurah, p.c., 9 July 2005). In the decade before 2004, when the NSO picked up where the NCO had left off, orchestral musicians in Jakarta found work accompanying pop singers under the direction of conductors and arrangers such as Erwin Gutawa. This continues to be their bread and butter. As through much of the history of orchestral music in Indonesia, it is the paraclassical that has predominated.

Of all the orchestras that have come and gone since independence, the most intriguing case, in the way that it mixes the classical and the paraclassical, is the Twilite Orchestra (TO). A larger and more successful ensemble than the NSO that tours regularly to major Indonesian cities, the TO represents the dominant face of classical music in Indonesia. The image, and image-consciousness, of the TO is well represented by a coffee-table book published in 2004 (Leksono 2004). With a dust jacket sporting several corporate logos—that of its primary sponsor, the foundation started by the cigarette company Sampoerna, displayed most prominently on the back—the production values of the book are high. It is printed in black

5. However, the one concert of the NSO that I attended, on 8 June 2005, had a mixed focus. The program included pieces by J. S. Bach, Felix Mendelssohn, and Igor Stravinsky, but also three pieces that were not standard classical fare. Two featured the Indonesian Youth Choir: David Fanshawe's "African Sanctus," with accompaniment from "Papua instrumentalis," a group led by Epi Martison, a member of Tony Prabowo's New Jakarta Ensemble, discussed below; and an arrangement of the Balinese social dance form *janger*, with accompaniment by Balinese gamelan players and a Balinese dancer. The third was an orchestral piece based on *janger* titled *Jangeran* by New Zealand composer Chris Watson, erroneously attributed in the program to Otto Sidharta.

and white, with bronze ink for accent (suggestive, probably unintentionally, of gamelan instruments) and an abundance of artful photographs, presumably by the corporate sponsor Leonardi Portraiture, whose logo is on the back inside flap, along with Volvo and Bimasena, “The Mines and Energy Society.” The TO has become, as the book puts it, “a brand that combines an artistic and commercial image” (ibid.:15).

The TO and its name had its genesis in “one incredibly romantic evening” in 1991, when a group of musicians led by the conductor Addie MS played a private engagement to celebrate the new villa of the prominent Indonesian businessman Indra Usmansja Bakrie. At that engagement they “presented all pop songs,” but as the narrative of their formation continues, their concerts now “include at least one or two classical numbers” (ibid.:48). The TO’s first public appearance in 1992 was not a concert presentation but a broadcast performance on Indonesia’s first private television station, RCTI.⁶ The program was with David Foster, whom allmusic describes as one of “the most commercially successful producers and composers in all of popular music” and credits with “virtually defining the adult contemporary format.”⁷ Many of the TO’s subsequent concerts were also with Western guest artists, including Natalie Cole, the daughter of Nat King Cole, and Richard Clayderman (Leksono 2004: 16-17), a classically trained pianist turned prolific recording artist and

6. RCTI started broadcasting in Jakarta in 1990, and nationally in 1995 (Lindsay 1997: 113-note 34).

7. Foster’s success came from “lending his signature sweeping power ballad aesthetic to smash hits from Celine Dion, Chicago and Whitney Houston” (<http://www.allmusic.com/cg/amg.dll?p=amg&sql=11:4hxxsa93gb23u>, accessed 05 February 2007). In his own right, he is perhaps best known for the music he composed for the 1985 film *St. Elmo’s Fire*, including an instrumental theme that hit #15 on Billboard’s Hot 100 chart. The piece was inescapable when I was in high school due to the extensive airplay it received. Owing to the fact that I grew up in Foster’s home town, Victoria, BC, Canada, his name frequently came up when I mentioned I was interested in becoming a composer—“oh, like David Foster?” Although I had yet to be indoctrinated into the creed of avant-gardism by my undergraduate composition teachers, Foster was very definitely not someone I wished to emulate.

performer of easy-listening instrumental pop, some of it labelled “neo-classical,” who overall I would point to as a prime example of paraclassicism.⁸

Popular artists and repertoire were key in the TO’s rise, and continue to be featured in its programming. At the same time it has made an engagement with classical music proper a key part of its identity and credibility. In discussing the TO’s repertoire, the English language summary in its book begins by noting that the orchestra “has staged a wide collection of music from operas, operettas, ballets, symphonies, marches, overtures, concertos, and other forms of musical works.” Continuing, it adds that it also “plays music from Broadway musicals,” “movie themes,” and “Indonesian national music.” This last category includes “songs from the era of struggle for Independence,” the same songs that were a staple of fare offered by the Orkes Studio Djakarta, and “Indonesian art songs,” that rather vague category referred to in Indonesian as *lagu seriosa* (ibid.:chapter 3). The more detailed “Repertoire Gallery” in the Indonesian language body of the book starts with this category, there called “Indonesian Collection.” Among the works listed are songs by Gesang and Marzuki, as well as by Pasaribu’s nemesis, Maladi. Neither Pasaribu nor Simanjuntak are represented, but their colleagues Manik and Sitompul are.⁹ The chapter continues listing items in its “Classical and

8. Clayderman’s repertoire encompasses the best known of classical works, or best known movements in the case of multi-movement works; newly composed pieces in a vaguely Romantic style stripped of dynamics, dramatic contrast, and harmonic or emotional complexity; and popular songs from “La Vie en Rose” to those of the Swedish pop group ABBA. Almost invariably, his piano playing is backed by lush arrangements of acoustic or synthetic orchestral instruments and drum kit, which most critics in the West would decry as saccharine. allmusic notes that Clayderman was once recognized as “the most successful pianist in the world” by The Guinness Book of World Records, and that Nancy Reagan called him “the prince of romance” (www.allmusic.com, s.v. “Richard Clayderman”, accessed 05 February 2007). He is seemingly ignored by music scholars, a search of JSTOR returning only three articles. Two of them, interestingly, mention his popularity in connection with profiles of the music industry in China and Japan (Hamm 1991: 13; Mitsui 1983: 111-112).

9. See chapters 1 and 2 for discussions of these figures.

Semiclassical Treasury,” which consists of warhorses of the orchestral canon, typically single movements in the case of multi-movement works. Richard Strauss’s *Also Sprach Zarathustra Op 30, Introduction* is listed there, but also under film music as the theme from *2001: A Space Odyssey*. There are also sections for “Broadway Musicals” and “World Music, Pop Music, and Seasonal Music” (ibid.:149-169).

The Twilite Orchestra is essentially a “pops” orchestra. Indeed, it explicitly identifies with the category, with a chapter in its book titled “Indonesia Pops Orchestra” (ibid.:33-44). Rather than documenting the TO’s own Indonesian precursors, as the title suggests it might, the chapter is mostly taken up by an overview of the form in the West.¹⁰ It begins by noting examples of pops orchestras playing classical selections, of opera superstars singing songs from films and musicals, and with the observation that “even in countries where the classical tradition is very thick like Austria there are pops orchestras” (ibid.:33-34). The history of the Boston Pops figures prominently. For the most part the chapter is celebratory, but at those points where the TO’s own artistic direction is discussed, there is an undertone of defensiveness, as if it feels the need to justify its choices. The chapter closes by discussing an exchange with the late composer and singer Harry Roesli, in which Roesli responded to statements by Addie MS, the conductor of the TO. Addie had stated that his goal was to provide “a bridge for music lovers,” who after “appreciating what he presented” would “go

10. Documenting the history of orchestral music in Indonesia would have required considerable research. As the TO’s conductor Addie MS notes in the opening of his preface, the very idea for publishing a book on the TO came out of his desire “to look at the history of symphony orchestras in our land, especially in the fifties which is said to be the Golden Age of symphonic music in Jakarta.” He was unable, however, to find a single book or recording (Addie MS, in Leksono 2004:viii). This lack is symptomatic of a xenocentrism that has long dominated the outlook of the metropolitan cultural sphere and Western-oriented music culture in which the TO exists, and which, despite a commendable effort to promote music by Indonesian composers, it perpetuates in the bulk of its programming.

toward orchestral music proper.” Roesli advised that Addie should “stay his course.” He need not “develop his orchestra in the form of Ansembel Jakarta”—the short-lived chamber orchestra founded by Suka Hardjana discussed in the previous chapter—“or the Nusantara Chamber Orchestra.” The TO’s current format “was needed by a group of society.” Roesli added that “the alternative entertainment offered by Addie MS is just as serious as orchestras that play exclusively classical repertoire” (ibid.:43-44).

Addie’s concern betrays a certain amount of investment in a cultural hierarchy in which Western art music holds pride of place.¹¹ But if the TO ranks somewhat lower than an orchestra such as the NSO among one particular contingent of Indonesia’s musical elite, this has little bearing on its standing as far and away the most successful bearer of orchestral music in Indonesia. Its formula is, as Roesli observed, in tune with the taste of the audience it serves—an audience which draws mostly from “the middle and upperclass segment of the society” (Leksono 2004: 209) and that includes many of the more sizable and influential political and economic elite. It is the TO that best represents the state of classical music in Indonesia. That this state is not strictly classical—it is more accurately, as I have argued, characterized as *para*classical—matters to a few, including many of those involved with *musik kontemporer*. But for most, it is irrelevant.

11. Like the TO itself, Addie MS did not start out as staunchly classical, but first established himself as an arranger working with pop singers (*Ensiklopedi Musik*, s.v. “Sumaatmaja, Addie M”).

Responses to the Absence of Authority

The Disconnect with the “Classical”

For a figure such as Harry Roesli—who straddled the worlds of art and pop with appearances both at the PKM and on programs of the TO, recordings with his rock band and of his electroacoustic compositions, and involvement with the film and theater worlds in which the lines between art and pop are less sharply drawn¹²—performing with the TO was a viable channel for his artistic vision. Djaduk Ferianto, a traditionally-based composer who will be profiled in the following chapter, similarly welcomed the opportunity to create music for the TO.¹³ For most of those involved with *musik kontemporer*, however, the TO has offered little. It is instead emblematic of the dominance of a paraclassical orientation within Indonesia’s classical music scene that most *musik kontemporer* composers find antithetical to their own aesthetic priorities. Slamet Abdul Sjukur, decrying the superficiality of a public “determined to become metropolitans,” gave as an example the craze for fried chicken. “Our taste is more concerned with the batter and the sauce than the flavor of the chicken itself, to the point that if one were to substitute a worn out sock, people wouldn’t notice” (Sjukur 1991: 127). The TO, as Addie MS recognized, mostly presents something other than orchestral music proper. But for most of its audience, familiar and accessible music with the prestigious veneer of an

12. For a profile of Roesli as a pop figure, see Sakrie (2007: 141-147). For a perspective that also takes into account his experimentalist work, see Tyson (2011). Roesli’s electroacoustic piece “Asmat Dream” is the title track of a compilation of works by Sundanese composers produced by Jody Diamond and Larry Polansky (1993).

13. Djaduk was contracted as an additional musician to perform with the TO for *Opera Hanoman*, an production by the theater director Nano Riantiarno with whom Djaduk had worked. Addie MS was initially made responsible for the “music directing,” but because of his limited knowledge of wayang, which the production referenced, Djaduk ended up composing the music (Djaduk Ferianto, p.c., 27 July 2004).

orchestral arrangement is exactly what they want.

Far more consequential than the lack of esteem composers have for Indonesian orchestras, however, is the lack of interest those orchestras and most orchestral musicians have in *musik kontemporer*. There have been a few occasions for which orchestral players have been mustered to perform kontemporer compositions. Sjukur's "Om," for string orchestra—his first orchestral work—was commissioned by the Director General for Culture for the fiftieth anniversary of Indonesia's independence and performed at the 1995 Art Summit (Mack 2005: 155-155-165). Tony Prabowo's "Requiem for Strings"—which like many of his works for Western instrumentation was commissioned and first performed by an ensemble in the United States—was performed by the ISI Jogja orchestra at the next Art Summit in 1998 (Griffin 2003: 149). But for the most part, the orchestral scene has been indifferent at best, and at times openly hostile to anything even mildly modernist. Fahmi Alattas, another student of Sjukur, described the reception of an arrangement he had made of the popular *orkes Melayu* song "Bunga Nirwana" for the television program Orkes Remaja (Teen Orchestra).¹⁴ He set the melody as a "samba" in 7/8, which proved to be beyond the ability of anyone in the percussion section. All the players joined in cursing Alattas, regarding him as "inhuman" (Fahmi Alattas, p.c., 18 August 2005).

This sort of aesthetic disconnect between modernist composers and the average orchestral performer is common enough in any classical music scene. But in Indonesia, the gap between the two is better described as a gulf. In large part this is because of the absence on both sides of significant contingents whose aesthetic and practice aligns more closely with that of the

14. *Orkes Melayu* is a popular music genre that predated *dangdut*, and that is claimed by some involved with the latter to be the genre out of which it grew (Weintraub 2010:chapter 2).

Western art music tradition. The most prominent but exceptional case of a composer committed fully to European classical music was Yazeed Djamin, the one Western-oriented participant in the PKM who was affiliated with neither IKJ nor AMI Jogja. After twice winning Yamaha's Electone Festival Championship, Djamin went to the United States in 1974 to study piano and composition at the Peabody Conservatory. In 1985, when he presented three works for piano and one for piano and violin at the sixth PKM, he was midway through a doctorate program in piano performance at The Catholic University of America. After finishing in 1988, he returned to Indonesia and founded the Nusantara Chamber Orchestra. But as noted above, the NCO only lasted for "about four years" before it "went to sleep." Shortly after that, in 1994, Djamin was lured away to become composer-in-residence with the National Symphony Orchestra of Malaysia.¹⁵

Orchestral performers, on the other side, generally showed little commitment to the Western art music canon. Most students at ISI Jogja aspire to play in the TO or other orchestras, such as the one led by Erwin Gutawa, which are even more focused on arrangements of pop music (Michael Asmara, p.c., 29 July 2004; Fahmi Alattas, p.c., 18 August 2005). They have limited exposure to the core of the orchestral canon, and even less to works by early twentieth-century modernists on its margins—although apparently the student orchestra that used to exist at AMI Jogja, before students became too busy with "outside projects," would perform works by Debussy, Stravinsky, Bartók, Copland, and "very rarely Schoenberg." "*The Rite of Spring* was performed" (Michael Asmara, p.c., 29 July 2004), a work that as Alattas pointed out was far more challenging in its use of meter than his arrangement of "Bunga Nirwana" in 7/8.

15. *Grove Music Online*, s.v. "Djamin, Yazeed," by Franki Raden, accessed 10 June 2005.

The Rise of Eclecticism

Despite Alattas's negative experience, he still dreams of writing for orchestra. He has managed to have some of his instrumental music performed, such as a piece for solo clarinet presented at the 1998 Pekan Komponis that he composed for a friend who was open to playing multiphonics (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta 1998: 10). But mostly he has ended up composing electroacoustic music, pursuing his interest in microtonal tuning systems with tunable electronic keyboards. Some of this music is more abstract in its exploration of clusters and sustained sonorities, while other pieces incorporate references to musical styles—such as the blues, *tanjidor*,¹⁶ and gamelan—that would be suitable, in their electronically simulated form, but minus the microtonal tunings and other avant-gardist distortions, for the music he composes and arranges for television programs.¹⁷

The eclecticism of Alattas's music is a microcosm of that which was becoming typical of *musik kontemporer* as a whole. Among the pieces by Western-oriented Indonesian composers at the Forum Musik Jakarta—a one-time festival held in 1996 that like the PKM included traditionally-based composers as well, but unlike it also featured composers from abroad—there were a few that continued the experimentalism evident in the works of students of Slamet Abdul Sjukur and Jack Body presented at the first few PKM. Haryo “Yose” Suyoto,

16. *Tanjidor* is, in its roots, “an Indonesian version of the European brass ensemble,” but it is also an example of a hybrid genre. At some point repertoire from various Sundanese and Batavian genres “became the standard repertoire of the band,” for which traditional Indonesian or Chinese instruments are added. *Tanjidor* musicians “considered European marches and waltzes to be the signature pieces of the genre” (Sumarsam 2013:17-18). Volume 5 in Philip Yampolsky's *Music of Indonesia* series features recorded examples, as well as further information about the genre.

17. Alattas gave me a CD of some of his microtonal works. I obtained a copy of his concert at the 1998 Pekan Komponis from Otto Sidharta.

who had studied with both teachers, presented a one piece for twelve radios,¹⁸ and another for bowed glasses and cardboard (Tejo 1996a). Ben Pasaribu, who had completed his M.A. at Wesleyan University in 1990, presented a “quartet for three videos and one human” (Suara Pembaruan 1996). There were also two pieces for conventional instruments: one by Nainggolan for soprano, cello, and piano that also involved dance; and one by Suyoto for three marimbas (Tejo 1996a).

Just as prevalent at the Forum Musik Jakarta were pieces demonstrating new directions. Harry Roesli’s contribution, with its use of electronic keyboards, guitar, and “musical material taken from house music,” represented an engagement with popular music idioms beyond simply accepting composing or arranging jobs for money. The same was true of Didi AGP, with a piece for an “electronic ensemble, MIDI sequencer, digital tape, and Minang vocals” (Enge 1996), except that in his case his involvement with more mainstream musics—playing bass, arranging, and songwriting for various jazz artists, and writing music for film and television—was his primary career focus (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta 1998a: 7).¹⁹ His incorporation of Minang vocals also represented an engagement with a traditional music, as did Marusya Nainggolan’s piece for a “Betawi music ensemble” (Tejo 1996b).²⁰

18. The piece was titled “Homage to JC,” presumably meaning John Cage, who in 1951 pioneered the use of radios in experimental music with his “Imaginary Landscape no. 4.”

19. Didi AGP studied “orchestration and composition” with Slamet Abdul Sjukur, and “received much support from Haryo Suyoto,” but at the same time studied bass with Indonesian jazz musician Amir Katamsi, and took jazz courses with Jack Lesmana and Elfa Secoria (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta 1998: 7).

20. Among the most significant genres in traditional Minang music are those involving singing (*dendang*) by one or two singers, accompanied by flute (*saluang*) or a bowed lute (*rabab*). Betawi refers to the ethnic identity of descendants of those who during the colonial era migrated from various parts of what is now Indonesia to Jakarta, which was then called as Batavia. For introductions to Minang and Betawi musics, see volumes 3, 5, 6 and 12 of the Music of Indonesia series produced by Philip Yampolsky.

The increasing openness toward popular idioms was one manifestation of a broader tendency toward populism that I examine in the following chapter. It is a tendency evident among traditionally-based composers as well, but at the same time it one that many composers, on both the traditionally-based and Western-oriented sides, resisted. By contrast, practically all Western-oriented composers engaged with traditional Indonesian musics, mostly through direct collaboration with traditional musicians. Over the course of my research I learned of only one Western-oriented composer who avoided this direction. Suyoto was reportedly “fanatical” about “not wanting to take elements from tradition” (Michael Asmara, p.c., 06 April 2004). All others have at some point worked with traditional musicians. Several have made doing so a key aspect of their compositional practice. Even those who earlier in their careers appeared staunchly Western-oriented, or who otherwise appear aesthetically aligned with internationalized trends with Western roots, had followed this tendency. Trisutji Kamal, who at the *Pertemuan Musik* in 1974 called for greater institutional support for European classical music and for Indonesian composers based in that tradition, now works regularly with her ensemble “consisting of Piano Duo and Balinese Percussion” that she founded in 1994 (<http://www.geocities.com/trisutji/CV.html>, accessed 19 July 2007). Suka Hardjana, as we saw, became one of the most outspoken champions of traditionally based composers through his position as director of the PKM, and in the 1990s had himself begun composing for Javanese gamelan.

Yet even while *musik kontemporer* as a whole was drifting away from a primary basis in the Western art music tradition, there were a handful of figures who were persistent in composing in idioms and forms rooted in that tradition. None did so exclusively—without exception they engaged in one or another of the directions identified above. Nevertheless,

their compositional engagements with Western art music idioms were central to their musical identities, whether or not they self-identified or accepted being identified as Western-oriented. The remainder of this chapter will be taken up with profiles of three such composers, exploring their relationships to a still predominantly Eurological international avant-garde, to the lack of support from what there was of a “classical” music scene within Indonesia, and to the nativist directions that were increasingly prevalent in *musik kontemporer*.

Royke Koapaha

The Conflicted Identity of a Pure Urbanite

The first figure I will discuss is Royke Koapaha (1961–).²¹ Koapaha described himself as one of a handful of Indonesian composers who were “pure urban”—two others he mentioned were Suyoto, discussed briefly above and in chapter 3, and Budi Ngurah, who teaches cello at ISI Jogja. They grew up in large cities—in Koapaha’s case, Bandung—speaking Jakarta-slang and listening to rock and pop, by both Western and Indonesian artists. Underscoring his lack of connection with traditional and quasi-traditional Indonesian forms, he noted how when he was young he would laugh when he heard *kroncong*—a genre with Western roots that was the music of earlier generations of city-dwellers, but that in the form that developed since independence incorporated much of the sensibility of traditional Javanese gamelan music. Koapaha is not as “fanatical” about keeping his music free of traditional elements as

21. Except where noted otherwise, all quotations in this section are taken from a conversation with Royke Koapaha and Memet Chairul Slamet on 6 August 2005 and a subsequent conversation with Koapaha alone on 14 August 2005.

Suyoto; he recounted how he had studied gamelan for three years as a student at AMI, and expressed his concern about the declining interest in gamelan among Indonesian youth. But neither has he embraced working with traditional musicians or composing for traditional instruments as a significant focus.

Koapaha's initial involvement with music on more than a casual level was with guitar. Guitar seems to be the most common first instrument among Western-oriented composers of *musik kontemporer*—a tendency that almost certainly follows from the instrument's ubiquity in Indonesia.²² After picking up some basics from a friend of his older brother, in 1975 Koapaha started taking lessons at a school run by the Japanese company Yamaha. He did well, winning several awards for his playing while in high school. He has continued to pursue classical guitar seriously, and has earned some distinction, winning Indonesia- and Southeast Asian-wide competitions. He has taught guitar at ISI Jogja since the late 1980s.

Though it was only when he began studying at ISI—or AMI, as it was known at the time—that Koapaha became actively involved in composition, he had already gained some familiarity with the international avant-garde while in high school. One source was his guitar teacher, who introduced him to the music of Leo Brouwer and Belá Bartók. Another was a circle of friends that included Harry Roesli who were interested in progressive rock. He described how when they would sit around drinking and listening to bands like Gentle Giant,

22. Others whose first instrument was guitar include Franki Raden, Arjuna (another notable figure at IKJ who did not continue composing but remained a close friend of Tony Prabowo), and Michael Asmara. As Philip Yampolsky notes in volume 20 of his *Music of Indonesia* series, a recorded survey of “Indonesian guitars” focused on their incorporation into “local musics,” “guitars are everywhere in Indonesia.” “They are not just used by teenagers strumming the accompaniment to Jakarta pop tunes,” he adds, but acknowledges that “there’s plenty of that, too.” In my own experience I encountered plenty of amateur adolescent guitarists, playing and singing outside of houses in the evenings, and also busking.

Kansas, or King Crimson, they would also listen to cassettes they found of European composers such as Iannis Xenakis, reveling in the “strange sounds” that emerged from both.

Koapaha decided to pursue further studies at AMI, rather than IKJ where Roesli had studied, as his Dutch guitar teacher had promised to help him apply to later study at his alma mater, the Sweelinck Conservatory, in Amsterdam. Koapaha started at AMI in 1981, the same year that AMI’s director Suhascarya eliminated contemporary music from the curriculum. As detailed in chapter 3, Koapaha experienced several major setbacks as a result of Suhascarya’s lack of support. Suhascarya thwarted Koapaha’s aspirations to study in the Netherlands by failing to respond to letters of invitation from the Sweelinck Conservatory’s director. Suhascarya similarly passed over Koapaha when choosing who would go to study at the Stephen F. Austin State University in Texas, despite the fact that he had earned the highest grade on the test given by Dan Beaty, the guest instructor from that school. As also noted in chapter 3, Koapaha suffered as the result of a general aversion to anything conspicuously *kontemporer*; he was mocked by fellow students and made the butt of jokes by fellow faculty.

Koapaha described AMI at the time he started as a “no man’s land,” and spoke of there being a “missing link” after Jack Body had left, with nobody creating anything. There was only one person, Yoesbar Djaelani, a “very prominent” student of Body’s, who started an extra-curricular composition study group. Conditions improved after Suyoto returned to Jogja in the late 1980s, but even then Koapaha and his colleagues mostly worked outside of AMI—which by then had become part of ISI. They organized events, including a series of eight concerts, one per semester over four years. They made connections with others in the contemporary arts scene in Jogja, participating in events at the *padepokan* (studio) of the

senior choreographer Bagong Kussudiardjo. Koapaha spoke of “leaving the nest”—referring presumably to AMI/ISI—and becoming involved with Sanggar Bambu, a community of artists from various disciplines, including followers (*anak buah*) of the poet and dramaturge Rendra, and the poet Emha Ainum Nadjib.

Koapaha did not leave the nest forever, however. Nor did he stray very far. Despite the difficulties he has experienced at AMI/ISI, in his work as a composer he has remained in the circle that relies to a significant extent on the meager support that the institution has offered, in terms of resources such as players, and perhaps most significantly, employment. In Koapaha’s case, he teaches at ISI not as a composer, but as a guitarist. He has continued to be involved in other circles as well. He plays in rock bands, and he noted that in the rock scene centered around Jalan Malioboro, the famed street in the center of Jogja, that is what he is known for. More specifically, he is interested in a “progressive direction.” He also continues to perform as a classical guitarist—he mentioned a group recital in which he had taken part the previous year at a prestigious studio in Jakarta.

Koapaha’s varied involvements complicate his sense of musical identity, especially because they undermine as often as they reinforce his sense of belonging to disparate communities. He recounted how the composer and impresario Sapto Raharjo—who will be profiled in the following chapter—would introduce him as a guitarist, while his guitarist colleagues would introduce him as a composer. Most troubling, he noted how his involvement in rock was a cause of suspicion when he engaged in composition. When I asked for whom this caused doubt—I assumed it was not an issue among his closest colleagues—he said it was a general perception, “common sense.” “Who is this person? He’s a rocker.”

Anxieties and Shortcomings

In contrast to his earlier role model, Harry Roesli, Koapaha has not integrated his varied creative interests. Instead, his activities have remained rather compartmentalized. The worlds of rock and composition have remained, for him, separate. The logic of exclusivity that persists among those involved with Western art music at AMI/ISI is undoubtedly a factor. For unlike Roesli, Koapaha has not found the courage to defy the authority represented, however imperfectly, by AMI/ISI. He has remained somewhat tethered to ISI, as a “*kontemporer* composer” and a classical guitarist. He is thus reminded of ISI’s inadequacies, and by ISI of his own shortcomings.

Of the Western-oriented composers that I spoke with, Koapaha was particularly forthright about his anxieties. The lack of support and insufficient guidance from teachers and schools, and the paucity of opportunities to learn, or to have works performed, were common topics of discussion with most, but for Koapaha they had a greater sense of immediacy. He believed—mostly justifiably—that his experience had been harder than most. When “Jack Body was around” at AMI, it was “thriving.” His students “went along to Jakarta,” and “participated in the PKM.” The implication was that those who started after Body left missed out on such opportunities, though Koapaha himself had presented his “Sonatina for Piano and Flute” at the fourth PKM in 1983, and participated as a performer in Djaelani’s “Tanya Yang Tak Terjawab IV” the previous year. Koapaha was, however, the last composer from AMI to participate in the festival. More to the point, after Body left, Koapaha and his colleagues “no longer had a figure [to look to]”; they “didn’t know anything.” Franki Raden, Tony Prabowo, and Otto Sidharta at IKJ, “all of them had more of a teacher” (*lebih punya guru*). There was more “intense” activity with guests from abroad, and their primary teacher, Slamet Abdul

Sjukur, had himself studied in Europe. They had more opportunities to interact with people from outside, and they themselves went to Europe.²³ “I have never been to Europe,” Koapaha emphasized. “I’m in Jogja”—that is, stuck in Jogja.

Again, it is not strictly true that Koapaha has been confined, or confined himself, to Jogja. But it is the case that he and most of his colleagues from AMI/ISI—Michael Asmara, profiled below, is an exception—have tended to remain within their own circle of activity, and have a correspondingly limited perspective. Koapaha’s points of reference in talking about new music included a handful of notable figures such as Xenakis, Isang Yun, and John Cage, but mostly it was skewed toward composers of guitar repertoire, and those who happened to have passed through AMI/ISI. An exchange between Koapaha and his close friend Memet Chairul Slamet hints at their concern with the status (or lack thereof) of the visiting instructors they were telling me about. After discussing the excitement around American composer Philip Corner’s repeat visits, Koapaha mentioned Ellen Southard, who was “not a composer” but nevertheless “taught composition” at AMI. Koapaha added “I don’t think she’s famous.” Slamet teased “famous according to Asmara, right?” After clarifying that Slamet was referring to Corner, Koapaha joked “yes, famous to Asmara” and laughed heartily.²⁴ There was perhaps also an element of envy here, as Asmara had made a

23. While it is true that there were a greater number of illustrious guests who came to Jakarta—Slamet Abdul Sjukur arranged visits by Ton de Leeuw, Jean-Claude Eloy, Les Percussions de Strasbourg, and a five-week festival of French contemporary music (Slamet Abdul Sjukur, p.c., 9 September 2004)—to my knowledge, of Koapaha’s cohort, only Otto Sidharta and Harry Roesli studied composition in Europe. Suyoto studied briefly in New Zealand, while Marusya Nainggolan studied in Australia and the United States. Tony Prabowo did not study formally abroad, though as we will see in the pages that follow, his success had much to do with opportunities through a connection with the Juilliard School.

24. American composer Philip Corner, whom I discuss at greater length in chapter 6, does not have anywhere near the stature of contemporaries such as Philip Glass, Steve Reich, or Terry Riley, but is notable for his involvement in Fluxus and other facets of 1960s experimentalism in New York. Ellen Southard is a pianist on faculty at Shasta College, a community college in Redding, California (<http://>

particularly strong connection with Corner.

More than the caliber or standing of the composers they had the opportunity to interact with in Jogja—which was mixed—what perpetuated their sense of isolation was the lack of a culture at AMI/ISI to contextualize the information they were able to glean about the international new music scene. As contemporary music had been excluded from the curriculum, there was no instruction to sustain such a culture; instead, there developed a general hostility to musical modernism and experimentalism. Apart from the limited instruction they received from visiting teachers, Koapaha and his colleagues studied with each other, or on their own. Koapaha may have been stuck in Jogja, but there were “many books.” “But for those books, I had to, I acted as teacher, I acted as student.” He read books by Vincent Persichetti, Arnold Schoenberg’s *Style and Idea*, and the “Philosophy of Atonal Music,” by which he presumably meant Theodor Adorno’s *Philosophy of Modern Music* (he could not recall the author). He read these in English as best he could, having studied English in a private language course for just three semesters. He explained the danger of misunderstanding the ideas he encountered in these books with the rather colorful analogy of a discarded chamber pot—or as he put it, a “piss-pot.” “You know piss-pot?” he asked in English. “Pot for piss!” It was as if “a plane from Europe came” and “tossed out a piss-pot.” He happened to take it, without knowing what it was. He looked at it, and thought, “oh, maybe it’s for holding vegetables,” and thus “its function changed.” Less colorfully, and presenting this as a more widespread issue, he talked about how he thought there were “many that don’t understand [John] Cage,” imitating aspects of his “behavior, without the philosophy.”

Koapaha's anxiety thus took both the form of self-criticism, and a more general critique of *musik kontemporer* in Indonesia. On a personal level, he recognized that he was stylistically inconsistent. He acknowledged criticism to that effect from Jack Body about a piece of his, only two minutes long, that "used triads" in the first part, and "quartal" harmony in the second. He felt he lacked the kind of compositional system he perceived in European composers, and—again comparing himself to his peers from Jakarta—that students of Slamet Abdul Sjukur such as Tony Prabowo had developed. From what I have heard of and read about Koapaha's music—he admits to being "the worst" at documenting his work—it does seem extremely varied. And rather than the result of a deliberate eclecticism, it seems rather, as Trisutji Kamal said in general of Koapaha's generation, that he was "still searching." Koapaha's essay on his string quartet "Dari Suata Satu" included in the compendium of documents from the PKM—but apparently not the work that was performed—describes a complex compositional process of assigning themes derived from the harmonic series to a grid of "boxes" which are then assigned to different instruments, and subject to permutations such as "retrograde" and octave displacement (Hardjana 1986: 240-249). For Nur Gora Rupa, an interdisciplinary arts festival held in Solo in 1994, Koapaha presented a nearly twenty-minute piece that was appropriately experimentalist in certain respects.²⁵ The second half consisted of single tones or chords played on synthesizers and isolated percussive sounds, coordinated loosely if at all, with the instruments distributed around the performance space. The first half featured a theatrical element, with two performers trying fitfully to sleep,

25. Nur Gora Rupa was a major festival produced by the Taman Budaya Jawa Tengah di Surakarta (more commonly referred to as TBS), a cultural center located on the outskirts of Solo next to the main campus of ASKI. I am lucky to have attended much of this festival, though unfortunately, I did not take notes on what I observed. I do not recall seeing Koapaha's performance; my comments are based on video documentation I obtained from the archives of TBS.

occasionally rolling over each, stealing pillows, shifting their sleeping pads, or adjusting their *sarongs*. The musical accompaniment by two synthesizers was reminiscent—in its melodic focus, constantly shifting modes, and particular kind of heterophony—of the music of Spanish-Canadian composer José Evangelista, who had visited AMI/ISI while in Indonesia for three months and “made a big impression.”²⁶ Yet other pieces conform to the idea from AMI/ISI that one “must [create] classical works. That is, they must be normal—not avant-garde.” This is the case with his “Tiga Bagatela” for cello and piano, which are vaguely Bartókian—modern in their harmonic language, but basically classical in instrumental technique and expression.²⁷ It was presumably also the case with his “Sonatina” for piano and flute, the piece that he ended up presenting at the fourth PKM in 1983.

Koapaha attributed his stylistic inconsistency to his being “ahistorical with Europe.” “I read books, I looked at everything, this is baroque, this classical. And all of that entered me at the same time.” He had perhaps internalized a criticism that Dieter Mack, who had also taught as a guest instructor at AMI/ISI, had been leveling generally at Indonesian composers for some time (Mack 1994). Koapaha too understood this as a broader issue, as the “Indonesian condition.” He did “not know where things were going.”

Looking to Where the Grass Is Greener, Staying Where It Is Not

Memet Chairul Slamet chimed in after these comments, stating in sum that “We only have a

26. Evangelista relates his compositional approach, which uses “monodic writing, creating musical texture from a single melodic line without the assistance of either harmony or counterpoint” to his “growing interest in the music of Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia” (Notes from the audio CD *José Evangelista*, Salabert/Actuels SCD 9102, 1992).

27. A performance at the 2008 Yogyakarta Contemporary Music Festival can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8m7hbuNSacg> (accessed 14 October 2011).

spirit that is extremely unclear, in my opinion,” which prompted Koapaha to start laughing. The two then began comparing how their respective backgrounds contributed to their lack of clarity. Slamet commented that although he started at AMI only one year after Koapaha, he thought of himself as very much his junior. The issue was that he came “late to music school,” because he was from a village. It was only at AMI that he began studying his primary instrument, flute, with a “method that was correct,” that he “studied classical [music]” and “technique.” His prior background was in *kroncong*.

Koapaha countered that “actually, that’s fortunate” because “there’s a lot of tradition,” and reiterated that he himself was “urban.” Koapaha had grown to regard this as a distinct disadvantage, and, in contrast to Suyoto’s indifference to anything traditional, had become concerned with the state and status of musics such as gamelan. In a variation on the trope that Indonesians needed to take a greater interest in their own traditions, lest someday they find themselves having to travel abroad to study them,²⁸ he related his fear that the decline of traditional music in Indonesia might undermine its ability to contribute to global culture—that this would reverse “the trend of the twentieth century” to “look to the East” evident also in the interest in Buddhism. “At a certain moment, Europe won’t look to the East any more.”

Koapaha had himself made some effort to study gamelan at AMI/ISI, but was “confused,” not having found teachers “that could explain.” He was frustrated by how

28. In an example of this platitude recounted by Marc Perlman, in a speech in the 1980s the Governor of Central Java “warned Indonesian youth not to abandon the traditional arts,” noting how “humiliating” it would be “if future generations of Indonesians had to go to Australia, Europe, Japan, or America to study their own traditional music!” (Perlman 1999: 2) While there certainly are some from the political and economic elite who only engage with traditional music and dance once they go abroad to study—one of Suharto’s grandchildren is among the Indonesian students I have taught as director of the Cornell Gamelan Ensemble—Indonesia remains unequivocally the center of a musical culture that like Western art music has also become international in its reach.

“*karawitan* people” teach by rote, how they “only say ‘like this’” and use terminology inconsistently. One exception, a lecturer at ISI named Soeroso who Koapaha described as a “*karawitan* musicologist,” had studied gamelan “theoretically” in the Netherlands and written a book. Koapaha did not know to what extent he was known as a player in Jogja, but he did teach practical classes at ISI. He was “the only one at ISI able to dialogue with us”—that is, those studying Western music who did not already have a practical background in gamelan. But unfortunately, he was “too modest.” Koapaha felt that there needed to be a more concerted effort on the part of government—he used the English phrase “grand planning”—to offset the “shifts” in an urban society that was becoming “alienated from its own culture.” This would include the formulation of methods for teaching gamelan to “dilettantes.”

Koapaha’s interest in gamelan remains that of an outsider. He has not, to my knowledge, attempted to engage with it as a composer to any significant extent. It is not really available to him as a musical focus that might provide some clarity. Classical guitar and progressive rock seemingly are—he expressed no misgivings about his involvement in either, other than that they contributed to his confused sense of musical identity. He expressed his admiration for Slamet’s ability to “enter one track” and “concentrate,” but stated, when I asked him if he didn’t want to do just one thing, that to do so would be “to limit myself too much.” A person “has a thousand aesthetic possibilities.” “How far can I go? And in which direction?” To limit himself to “*musik kontemporer*” would be “a shame,” “too poor.” Yet *musik kontemporer* also seems to be essential to realizing himself musically. Despite how fraught his involvement in composition has been, he has stuck with it.

Vincent McDermott, a composer who had studied gamelan in Solo in the 1970s and had returned to teach at the new “Western Music Composition” (*Penciptaan Musik Barat*)

graduate program at ISI, relayed Koapaha's impression of his Indonesian teachers' response to his ambitions to become a composer.

You want to write music? How dare you want to write music. Look at what Mozart has done, look what . . . What are you, a child. How dare you think you can do something. Maybe, write some exercises. Do not think that you can be a composer. (Vincent McDermott, p.c., 6 August 2005)

According to McDermott, Koapaha says "this is in his heart, it resonates with him, twenty or thirty years later," and that "he's still fighting the battle against that." In other words, Koapaha continues to struggle to free himself from the idea, lodged in his psyche by his teachers, that he lacks the authority to be a composer. That he has not had the opportunities to more fully engage in and learn from the musical culture he most values—which while not as historically distant as Mozart is distant nonetheless—has only increased his self-doubt.

While Koapaha certainly recognizes the ill-treatment he has suffered from his teachers, especially Suhascarya, he is not as critical of them, or of AMI/ISI in general, as one might expect. On the contrary, he spoke highly of Suhascarya. He declared that "his tradition was fantastic," and when I asked him which tradition, he replied "whichever—he's known as a walking dictionary," and cited his knowledge of everything from the history of rock to gamelan. Instead, Koapaha, and to a certain extent his colleagues, have internalized the idea that they are the ones who lack authority. AMI/ISI has not facilitated, and in Koapaha's case has thwarted, their access to the kind of experience that would increase their authority specifically as composers. They do not question the authority of AMI/ISI to the extent that those who have had such experience, and who have gained a greater perspective, do. Instead, like children of abusive or negligent parents, they continue, on some level, to seek that institution's approval.

Tony Prabowo

Becoming Indonesia's Most Successful Composer

The second figure I will discuss is Tony Prabowo (1956–), one of the group of students who studied at IKJ with Slamet Abdul Sjukur shortly after he returned to Indonesia in 1976. Prabowo is unambiguously the most successful and most highly regarded Western-oriented composer of that group, and indeed of his generation.²⁹ Senior figures such as Sjukur and Suka Hardjana, who as we have seen were broadly critical of that generation, have singled him out as an exception. In a review of *Suita 92*, a concert of new works by Prabowo, Sjukur, Trisutji Kamal, and Marusya Nainggolan, Hardjana described Prabowo as “the youngest” and also “the most talented” (Hardjana 1992, in 2004b:331). Several years later, in a review of a performance of his works by the Canadian violist Stephanie Griffin, Hardjana proclaimed him to be “the most serious Indonesian composer at this moment!” (Hardjana [1998b?], in 2004a:325). Sjukur, when telling me about how he tends to work slowly, noted in a passing comment his admiration for “composers who can work quickly, like Tony Prabowo.” He added “and he’s good”—a simple, but rare unqualified expression of approval (Slamet Abdul Sjukur, p.c., 9 September 2005).

Prabowo has been fortunate to have his talent recognized by well-positioned cultural figures, leading to several high-profile performances of his work in Indonesia and abroad.

29. Prabowo’s has been successful mostly in terms of the number of commissions and performances of his work. His only commercially-released recording—*Commonality*, produced as both an audio CD and a DVD by the now-defunct SIAM Records—is of his work with the New Jakarta Ensemble, discussed below. Prabowo has also self-produced a professional quality double CD of his works for Western forces, with funding from the Sampoerna Foundation—the same foundation that funded the production of the Twilite Orchestra’s coffee-table book.

Two connections have been especially important. In 1996, Joel Sachs, a faculty member at the Juilliard School in New York, and director of the New Juilliard Ensemble and the school's Focus! Festival, learned of Prabowo after seeking recommendations from cultural personnel at American Embassies in Pacific Rim countries. Sachs invited Prabowo to present his first major work for Western instruments, *Dongeng Sebelum Tidur* from 1992, and subsequently commissioned two other substantial works: "Autumnal Steps: Homage to Takemitsu" for chamber orchestra, which was premiered later in 1996; and his first opera, *The King's Witch*, which was premiered in a concert version at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall in New York in 2000 (Griffin 2003: 16-17), and subsequently as a fully staged production at TIM in Jakarta, with Sachs's Continuum Ensemble, in 2006³⁰. Prabowo has also benefitted greatly from his ongoing working relationship with Goenawan Mohamad, a journalist and public intellectual best known as the founder and editor of *Tempo*, Indonesia's leading weekly news magazine until it was banned by Suharto's New Order regime in 1994.³¹ Also a poet, Mohamad has written texts for many of Prabowo's work, including the libretto for *The King's Witch* (ibid.:13).

As much as his talent, what sets Prabowo apart from most of his peers is the strength of his aesthetic focus. Prabowo is the one composer I know of who actually describes himself as Western-oriented, a fact reported by Stephanie Griffin in her study of his music (Griffin

30. Carla Bianpoen, "'The King's Witch' weaves a new version of an old story," *Jakarta Post*, 1 December 2006 (<http://www.thejakartapost.com/Archives/ArchivesDet2.asp?FileID=20061201.B10>, accessed 01 July 2007).

31. For comments on *Tempo's* significance, see Steele (2003). In addition to his work with *Tempo*, Mohamad has been an important supporter of the arts. After *Tempo* was shut down, Mohamad was involved in founding the artists' community Teater Utan Kayu. Since 2008, he has been a curator for Komunitas Salihara, currently Jakarta's leading independent contemporary arts center (<http://salihara.org/about/curators>, accessed 7 February 2013).

2003: 53), and corroborated by his colleague Michael Asmara (p.c., 27 May 2005). More specifically, Prabowo identifies with the high modernism of the mid-twentieth century avant-garde. In an interview and profile on “New Music from Indonesia”—a podcast run by a digital music distributor from 2006 to 2008 that mostly promoted Indonesia’s burgeoning indie pop scene—Prabowo, when asked to describe his music, explained that

Basically my music is influenced by Western contemporary music. So it’s—if you know about Arnold Schoenberg and two students of him, Alban Berg and Anton von Webern. And also other composers like Olivier Messiaen, or Boulez. (Episode 49 of New Music from Indonesia podcast, archived at <http://www.equinoxdmd.com/podcast.html>, accessed 26 July 2007)

In particular, Prabowo has idolized Pierre Boulez—or as he calls him, “*Ayah* Boulez” (*ayah* = father)³²—as “a symbol of something he believes his is not, and sometimes wishes he could become: a truly ‘modern’ man” (Griffin 2003: 21). He also found inspiration in the music of “*Ayah* Toru Takemitsu,” especially in his harmonic language (ibid.:66), as he signaled in the title of his chamber orchestra commission from Joel Sachs—which, in addition to directly paying homage to Takemitsu, referenced two of his more notable works.³³ When I spoke with him in 2005, Prabowo expressed with pride how Chinese composers such as “Tan Dun, Qu Xiaosong, Zhou Long, Chen Yi” were so prominent in New York, as he discovered during the year he spent there, from October 1997 to April 1998, on a grant from the Asian Cultural Council. He even joked that New York’s new music scene might eventually “be controlled by China,” adding “If they are going to do it, good, OK” (p.c., 07 May 2005). He does not, then,

32. *Ayah* and *bapak* both mean father. They are both used as a term of address, but whereas *Bapak* or *Pak* is used generally for any older male, *Ayah* connotes an actual relationship.

33. Both of the works Prabowo references, “Autumn” and “November Steps,” are scored for *shakuhachi*, *biwa*, and orchestra. Prabowo’s own piece, as noted below, incorporated a large Javanese *gong ageng*.

look exclusively to European composers—though they seem to be the first that he mentions—but also identifies with Asian composers who have become fully vested members of an internationalized avant-garde.

Nativism by Necessity

I have at times wondered whether Prabowo might have focused exclusively on composing for Western instruments in a modernist idiom had it been possible for him to do so. As we will see, he seems at times to disavow his work for traditional instruments and musicians, though the integrity of that work suggests that he does in fact take it seriously. In any case, the question is hypothetical. As we will see, he would not have been able to sustain an exclusively Western-oriented focus within Indonesia, and although he has had more opportunities to spend time abroad than most of his peers, he has neither pursued formal studies during those trips, nor attempted to relocate for more than a year.

In the years after, and even during, his studies at IKJ (described in chapter 3), Prabowo, along with his colleagues who similarly left IKJ without graduating, engaged in a grab bag of musical activities. Griffin notes how Prabowo, Franki Raden, and others were trying, with varying amounts of success, to get “into ‘the Industry’” as arrangers, recording engineers, and producers (Griffin 2003: 10). Prabowo recounted assisting Raden on a number of his film projects, including *November 1828*.³⁴ He also worked with Raden making orchestral arrangements for Guruh Sukarnoputra’s concert spectacle *Untukmu Indonesiaku!* (For You,

34. This is the film project described in chapter 3, for which Raden worked with students at ASKI Solo. Raden listed Prabowo as his assistant (Notosudirdjo 2001: 342-343), but when I spoke with Prabowo, he remembered little about this specific project.

My Indonesia!) (p.c., 07 May 2005).³⁵ Prabowo was less indiscriminately enthusiastic about this work than his colleagues, however. In 2005, he still spoke highly of Sukarnoputra's work, but according to Fahmi Alattas, at the time he was "highly selective about the jobs that he accepted" (Griffin 2003: 10). In general he has remained a fan of progressive rock, without any sense of irony, but he has not pursued this musical avenue himself since high school. He was a "self-professed 'rocker'" then, with a taste for "black leather and blue nail polish" (ibid.:3), but since studying at IKJ he has cultivated a more serious image.

As Griffin observes, Prabowo instead "focused on collaborations with theater and dance" (Griffin 2003: 10). This allowed him to work within an art-oriented context, but it also drew him away from a singular focus on European-style modernism. His first collaborator, the choreographer Laksmi Simanjuntak, asked him on two of the four occasions they worked together to compose for Javanese instruments and musicians (ibid.:13). He continued to work with traditional instruments and musicians on subsequent collaborations. Among these was *The Ritual of Soloman's Children*, a theater production by renowned Javanese dramaturge W. S. Rendra that was presented in New York in 1988, providing Prabowo with "his first major performance outside Indonesia" (ibid.:15). Prabowo's music for this production was pre-recorded, and from comparing a recording I obtained with one of a prior collaboration with

35. Guruh Sukarnoputra (1953–), who as his name indicates is the son of Indonesia's first president, Sukarno, was the "foremost exponent of the *gedongan* style" (Frederick 1982: 125-126). As William Frederick explains in one of two brief acknowledgements of Sukarnoputra in English language scholarship, the term *gedongan* is "from *gedung*, or urban, concrete, multistory building." In a "faddish dispute" on "university campuses," *gedonangan* was opposed to that which was *kampungan*, a term roughly equivalent to "low-brow," such as the far more popular genre *dangdut*—the main focus of Frederick's article (Frederick 1982: 125-126). Sukarnoputra's "grandiose pop spectaculars" (Perlman 1999: 3-4) involved large dance troupes in glittery costumes and orchestras, à la Las Vegas. *Untukmu Indonesiaku!* was also made into a film, and the music released as an album. A short clip from the film can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hszv6HydeJU> (accessed 29 July 2014).

Simanjuntak, definite similarities are evident.³⁶ A section for multiple *suling* may very well be taken directly from his *Music for 14 Sulings* composed for Simanjuntak's 1987 production *Penangkapan Sukra*, for which Prabowo recorded multiple tracks played by Hendri Soedjatmiko (ibid.:119). This section starts with a shifting drone made up of different long tones, with simple flourishes, then cross-fades into a texture consisting of repeated sharply articulated bursts played in layers of different accelerating pulses, and then develops into a more varied texture with the addition of breathy gestures.

Neither this section of Prabowo's music for Rendra nor most of the others employ traditional material—the final section, which features a solo female vocalist singing in what sounds to me like a traditional idiom from some part of Sumatra, paired with an octave drone sung by male vocalists, is the one exception. His music for the choreographer Sulistyio Tirtokusumo's 1993 production *Panji Sepuh*, for nine *rebab*, three *gender*, and nine voices, which used an ensemble of performers placed throughout the performance space, was similarly non-traditional in style, from start to finish.³⁷ But in neither of these pieces did Prabowo attempt to compose for traditional Indonesian instruments “in the pointilist style of European post-serialism,” as Raden did in his first failed attempt to compose for gamelan in 1975 (Notosudirdjo 2001: 340-342). The pieces have less to do with the astringent harmonic language or the expressionist gestures of high modernism, but instead bask in lush, mostly

36. I was given a copy of Prabowo's music for *The Ritual of Solomon's Children* by my colleague Andrew Mertha, now in the Department of Government at Cornell, who happened to have worked on the production in New York as a technician. Stephanie Griffin gave me a recording of Prabowo's “Music for Rebabs, Sulings, Voices, Genders and Gongs” from 1987.

37. I attended a performance of this production at Taman Budaya Surakarta in 1993—my first introduction to Prabowo's music. In terms of musical content, apart from Prabowo's originally composed music, the piece also involved traditional *macapat*. I obtained a copy of video documentation from the archives of TBS in 2005.

consonant, sustained but always shifting textures consisting of overlapping long tones on multiples of the same instrument, somewhat reminiscent of the drone based music of Terry Riley or La Monte Young—or perhaps more directly, the ambient music of Brian Eno.

This collaborative work, most of which was for traditional Javanese instruments, preceded his first significant pieces for European forces. In fact, his “Music for Flute, Clarinet and Piano” from 1980 is the only earlier piece in this category in the list of works in Griffin’s study (Griffin 2003: 149-152). His first major concert work, according to Griffin, was *Dongeng Sebelum Tidur*, for soprano and mixed ensemble—the 1992 work that, as noted above, earned Suka Hardjana’s praise, and secured his relationship with Joel Sachs. It was in this piece, and the commissions from Sachs that followed from it, that Prabowo was first able to fully explore and realize his aesthetic affinity with European-style modernism. In identifying with Schoenberg, Webern, Berg, Messiaen, and Boulez, he effectively disregards the twelve years in which he worked in quite a different style and with different means.

The New Jakarta Ensemble and the Evolution of a Hybrid Style

Even after the turn toward European-style modernism with *Dongeng Sebelum Tidur*, Prabowo continued, when asked to, or when it made sense, to compose for traditional instruments. In 1996, a commission from another choreographer, Linda Hoemar, prompted Prabowo to found the New Jakarta Ensemble. Prabowo worked extensively with this group for the next four years, involving them in *Empty Tradition/City of Peonies*, a major collaborative production with Chinese choreographer Yin Mei premiered at the Asia Society in New York in 1998,³⁸ and *Kali*, his second opera, co-composed with American composer

38. It was the music from this production, along with excerpts of video documentation of the

Jarrad Powell (Griffin 2003: 37, 79-80).

The majority of the New Jakarta Ensemble's members—five out of seven—were traditionally-based Minangkabau musicians. They had all trained at ASKI Padang Panjang in West Sumatra (ibid.:35-36), and would have engaged in the compositional experimentation that had been taking place there since the late 1980s, in parallel to that at ASKI Solo and other sister institutions, and prompted in part by the PKM.³⁹ Through this training, and their association with the Minangkabau choreographer Gusmiati Suid—who as Griffin notes was “celebrated in Indonesia for her fusion of modern dance with traditional Minangkabau elements” (ibid.:36-37)—they were quite open to Prabowo's compositional ideas. At the same time, their traditional background necessitated an approach that accommodated their lack of facility with notation. As with the process employed by traditionally-based composers of *musik kontemporer*—such as that developed at ASKI Solo, described in chapter 4—this approach involved working out material in rehearsal, in collaboration with the performers. Owing to his own orientation toward Western new music, Prabowo perhaps brought more preconceived ideas to the process than traditionally-based composers typically did, as is evident from Griffin's description:

He [Prabowo] brings a design to rehearsals, but is flexible about the ways in which it materializes. After much experimentation and repetition, the ensemble creates something as close as possible to his original concept. Prabowo never explains this

production itself, that SIAM Records released on the New Jakarta Ensemble CD and DVD entitled *Commonality*.

39. Those involved in this experimentation at ASKI Padang Panjang used the term *musik kontemporer*, which “according to one account was imported after some individuals attended a composer's festival in Jakarta in the 1980s” (Fraser 2007: 253). This would have been Achyar Adam, who participated in the sixth PKM in 1985 (Hardjana 1986: 379-386), and Hadjizar, who participated in the seventh in 1987 (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta 1987: 8). As Fraser explains, the more immediate motivation to experiment was the dominance of commercialized and Westernized forms of Minang music (Fraser 2007: 252-261).

concept to the group. At times he notates it as a graphic score, which the players do not see. (ibid.:41-42)

The players then “memorize the music once it is fully developed to Prabowo’s taste,” so that “what has its origin in a composer-directed improvisation becomes a fixed composition”—though as Griffin notes, pieces that are not performed for some time sometimes need to be “reconstructed from what each player can remember” (ibid.:43).

In contrast to the traditionally-based Minangkabau members, the other two members of the New Jakarta Ensemble have considerable skill as interpreters of notated music. The violist Stephanie Griffin, who completed her DMA at the Juilliard School in 2003, was invited to join after having worked with Prabowo during his visits to New York in the late 1990s. Nyak Ina Raseuki (1965–) is a vocalist who grew up as an “*orang desa*” (village person) in Aceh, surrounded by some traditional music but mostly “*hiburan*” and more recent popular genres. After studying classical piano from elementary through junior high school, and singing pop while finishing high school in Jakarta, she enrolled as a voice major at IKJ, where she was “poisoned” by Prabowo and another prominent composition student, Arjuna (Nyak Ina Raseuki, p.c., 18 August 2005).⁴⁰

With the Minangkabau members, Prabowo favors non-melodic percussion instruments, or pitched instruments used “in a way that timbre and atmosphere are far more important than their pitch” (ibid.:44-45). Their parts, though created through a collaborative method similar to that devised by traditionally-based composers, stylistically resemble the gestural character of much avant-garde percussion music. This complements his writing for Griffin and

40. Griffin describes Arjuna, who was “five or six years [Prabowo’s] senior,” as “a keen intellect and avid reader” and his “most important mentor” at IKJ (Griffin 2003: 5). Marusya Nainggolan claimed that Arjuna was the real talent behind both Prabowo and Franki Raden (p.c., 20 May 2005).

Raseuki, which is specified in more detail, especially in terms of pitch material, and thus more directly connected to his aesthetic affinity with Schoenberg. Much of his viola writing is atonal, but not strictly serial. Contrary to Royke Koapaha's assumption, Prabowo's compositional approach is not systematic, at least not rigorously so, except in some of his earlier compositions. Instead, he strives for the impression and sound of atonality.⁴¹ He makes abundant use of *sprechstimme* in his vocal writing for Raseuki, another borrowing from Schoenberg.

Yet at the same time, Prabowo's writing for Western instruments, whether in the context of the New Jakarta Ensemble, or his subsequent work, has departed from an exclusive focus on the "Schoenberg-inspired post-tonal language" of his works from the 1990s. He strikes a balance between atonal writing and the use of modes, mostly of his own invention. Some of these modes he describes as "Eastern-style"—though as Griffin observes, they are not apprehended as such by the traditional Indonesian musicians with whom Prabowo has worked.⁴² Prabowo also makes abundant use of what in Western art music would be termed ornamentation, but in his case "is an integral part of the line" (Griffin 2003: 91). With this, he appeals more specifically to an Indonesian model, arguing that whereas "in Bach, ornamentation is on a structure that is very clear," in Javanese music "Eastern modal

41. What Koapaha was picking up on was Prabowo's stylistic coherence. "Prabowo," Griffin notes, "is already at the point where he can 'improvise' twelve tone rows." He "did a little calculation in *Autumnal Steps*"—indeed, Griffin's analysis identifies a twelve-tone row and its permutations, as well as rhythmic palindromes—"but not since" (Griffin 2003: 54-71). Nevertheless, it was through such work that Prabowo "applied himself assiduously to perfecting . . . aspects of his craft" such as "counterpoint, harmony and twelve-tone practices" as a "way of aligning himself with the legacy of Western composers" (Griffin 2003: 78).

42. Griffin describes how Musliwardinal, one of the members of the New Jakarta Ensemble, had "difficulty remembering" a melody in one of these modes. Not able to "understand it as a scale," he instead "needed to memorize each interval." Griffin notes, "from his perspective, what seems 'modal' to Western ears might as well be a twelve-tone row" (Griffin 2003: 25).

ornamentation is part of the structure” (Griffin 2003: 91). The ornamentation he uses, much of which he developed in collaboration with Raseuki—who though she studied traditional music as an ethnomusicologist was not steeped in a particular tradition herself—does not, however, conform to any specific traditional Indonesian idiom. Prabowo’s use of “frequent grace notes (some of which span large intervals), trills which start slowly and accelerate, trills of varying intervals (from a minor second to a major third), glissandi of various speeds, accelerating repeated notes sometimes ending in ululations and fast repeated notes on the same vowel, which he usually notates as tremolo” (Griffin 2003: 91-92) is instead more generally evocative of “Eastern” music. His “Eastern modal ornamentation” and his “Eastern-style” modes derive as much, or more, from his admiration of other “Eastern” composers such as Takemitsu and Chou Wen-Chung as they do from any particular traditional Indonesian music.

Selective Identifications

After the production of Prabowo and Jarrad Powell’s opera *Kali* in Seattle in 2000, the New Jakarta Ensemble began a “sabbatical.” Griffin, in her thesis, noted that this “sabbatical” seemed to be of indeterminate length, though Prabowo denied to both the media and members of the ensemble “allegations that the group has disbanded” (Griffin 2003:50). Still inactive in 2005, there was little doubt by then that the ensemble was effectively defunct. Prabowo had not, however, stopped collaborating with traditional musicians. He had established a working relationship with Syahrial, a younger Minangkabau musician who after studying in Bali, graduating from STSI Denpasar in 1996, had based himself in Jakarta. Prabowo and Syahrial were together credited as the “penata musik” (music arrangers) for a 2005 production by the

choreographer Jefriandi Usman, for which they composed for a small ensemble of Minang musicians.⁴³ For another choreographer, they created a pre-recorded accompaniment consisting exclusively of Syahrial's *suling* playing—which with its focus on non-pitched percussive sounds was even further removed from traditional idioms than that of Hendri Soedjatmiko, with whom Prabowo collaborated for his earlier work for dance.

I complimented Prabowo on this second piece with Syahrial after hearing a rehearsal. He responded by stating that “actually my music is more for Western instruments” (p.c., 27 May 2005). In terms of number of compositions, this is not factually true; in the list of works included as an appendix in Griffin's thesis, including those for choir, only about a third are for Western forces (Griffin 2003:149-152).⁴⁴ Similarly, his statement that his music is like that of European high-modernists like Schoenberg, Webern, Berg, Messiaen, and Boulez does not account for the full range of his compositional output. Certainly, his engagement with atonal expressionism is a core aspect of his musical style. Slamet Abdul Sjukur related how early on in his studies Prabowo became especially “infatuated” with Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*, and how even as he assimilated other stylistic input it remained a primary point of reference (Slamet Abdul Sjukur, p.c., 20 August 2005). But as we have seen, this other input was substantial. His earlier collaborative work is more reminiscent of minimalism than it is of high modernism, and since the late 1990s he has incorporated into his writing for Western instruments some of the generically “Eastern” characteristics he developed in his work with

43. The production, produced by Taboosay Body Motions Dance Company, was titled *Jalan Panjang Tubuh & Pikiranku*. I did not see the performance, but obtained a copy of the program from the lighting designer, M. Aidil.

44. Twenty-one out of the sixty items in Griffin's list are for Western instruments or Western-style choir. A number of others, such as nine works composed for Nyak Ina Raseuki as vocalist, are not easily categorized as Western or Indonesian. For seven works for theater and two soundtracks, Griffin does not indicate instrumentation.

Nyak Ina Raseuki and the New Jakarta Ensemble.

The discrepancy between how Prabowo sees himself as a composer—or how he would like to be seen—and the actual stylistic diversity of his music stems in part from his lack of a way with words. As Griffin notes, Prabowo “essentially is not a ‘language person’” (Griffin 2003: 90). She cites Raseuki, who describes him, in somewhat essentializing terms, as “an inward looking, inarticulate person very much nurtured by the non-verbalness of Javanese culture” (Nyak Ina Raseuki, quoted in Griffin 2003: 90). When I met with Raseuki, she complained to me about how Prabowo is “brilliant,” but “has no opinions,” clarifying that what she meant was that he was unable to articulate his ideas verbally, whether philosophical or even simply explaining how his music should be performed (Nyak Ina Raseuki, p.c., 18 August 2005).

More fundamentally, however, the disjuncture between Prabowo’s most explicit declarations of identity on the one hand, and his musical work and passing comments on the other, is a response to various expectations and assumptions, from various sources, some specific and some general, regarding the kind of music he ought to be composing. As Griffin observes, in his fascination with the music of Schoenberg,

Prabowo was excited about discovering music that many Western composers were already trying to escape. He had the advantage of hearing Schoenberg, Webern, Berg, Stravinsky, Messiaen and others with fresh ears—uncorrupted by what he probably should have learned in school. (Griffin 2003: 53)

Griffin presumably refers here to the expectation that contemporary composers be up to date with more recent aesthetic developments. Sjukur addresses this point from a somewhat different angle, in commenting that most young Indonesian composers do not listen broadly enough. This is not just because they are not serious enough about their studies, as Hardjana

charged, but at least as much because they have limited opportunities to expose themselves to new music. Sjukur brought up Prabowo as an exception, due to his frequent trips abroad (Slamet Abdul Sjukur, p.c., 20 August 2005).

Prabowo did indeed listen broadly, and not just to contemporary art music composers such as Toru Takemitsu and Walter Zimmerman, two names mentioned by Sjukur. He also remained a huge fan of progressive rock, considering it an important and enduring influence on his music, and thought it “a pity” that Sjukur was “not involved with rock music” (Prabowo, quoted and paraphrased in Griffin 2003: 8-9). Within the realm of new music—a realm which was not uniformly more influential, but that on a certain level counted most—Prabowo encountered much during his time in the United States. In a program note, he defended his choice to compose for multi-tracked solo performers by referring to the use of this technique by Steve Reich and by “postmodern composers such as Laurie Anderson” (Tony Prabowo, quoted in Griffin 2003: 121). Yet as Griffin notes, he claims to “have no influence from American composers,” who to him are “John Cage and Morton Feldman”—two more senior and authoritative figures.⁴⁵

Counterbalancing Aesthetic Authorities

The question remains: why has Prabowo been so fixated on the older style of new music

45. Griffin also notes that Prabowo “was listening to a piece for multi-tracked bassoons by the American composer Paul Dresher in June 1999 when he resolved to write his first piece for multiple violas.” Stylistically, Prabowo’s piece was unrelated to Dresher’s, and thus he denied that it was a source of inspiration, though he was clearly interested in Dresher’s technique (Griffin 2003: 121-122). Rather than adopting Dresher’s model wholesale, however, Prabowo’s compositions for multi-tracked solo performers can be seen as an outgrowth of his earlier work for traditional instruments for his collaborations with choreographers, which involved pre-recording multiple tracks or tones by a single performer, as well as composing for multiples of the same instrument. Those pieces, composed before his first trip to the US, as noted above, are more reminiscent of the drone based music of Terry Riley or La Monte Young than they are of the pattern-based minimalism of Steve Reich.

represented by the Second Viennese School? He was not pushed in that direction by Sjukur, who as we saw in chapter 3 encouraged and himself leaned toward more heterodox forms of modernism. It probably has in no small part to do with an honest aesthetic affinity discovered at a point in his studies when he was especially impressionable. But it is also, perhaps, because this style represents especially solidly the authority of the Western art music tradition in its modernist incarnation. It is not that Prabowo has been compelled to repudiate other strains within this tradition. He did not become narrowly partisan in his aesthetic opinions. He is not without his preferences, but in general he is accepting and approving of stylistic diversity, as indicated by his thinking that Indonesia should have something like New York's Bang on a Can festival;⁴⁶ Prabowo had, in fact, participated in two meetings to try and establish a contemporary music festival that would include jazz and gamelan as well as "contemporary classical music" (p.c., 7 August 2005). Instead, Prabowo's concern with aesthetic authority manifests itself in his concern with the kind of compositional technique that the Schoenbergian style demands. As Griffin observes, Prabowo has incorporated "counterpoint, harmony and twelve-tone practices into his compositions" as a "way of aligning himself with the legacy of Western composers," and he has applied himself assiduously to perfecting these aspects of his craft" (Griffin 2003: 78).

46. Ironically, by identifying with Schoenberg Prabowo aligns himself with the roots of what became a post-tonal orthodoxy in the American new music scene, associated with the "uptown" rather than the "downtown" side of the aesthetic divide that emerged in New York starting in the 1960s (Gann 2006). The Bang on a Can festival was founded in 1987 to provide a platform for some of those on the "downtown" side. Though vestiges of the divide remain, by the mid-1990s, when Prabowo's music was first performed in New York, "downtown" music had, with Bang on a Can holding its festival at Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center from 1994 through 1998 (Brackett 2002: 212-213), broached the divide and established a significant presence uptown. The inclusion of Prabowo in the Juilliard School's 1996 Focus! Festival is itself a sign of the softening of the exclusivity of the "uptown" side—though given his predilections, Prabowo was far less of a challenge to "uptown" aesthetics than most Indonesian composers would have been.

Prabowo's aesthetic choices, and his declarations regarding what kind of composer he is, are also, I would argue, driven by a certain anxiety about his artistic identity. He is, Griffin notes, "painfully aware of the paradoxes surrounding his role as an 'Indonesian composer' abroad and as a 'Western-oriented' composer in Indonesia." He has faced what Griffin describes as the widespread assumption that "Indonesian composers must, by definition, specialize in gamelan" (ibid.:21)—an assumption that his second trip to the United States would have invited. In 1994, four years after accompanying Rendra to New York, and two years before returning for the 1996 Focus! Festival at the Juilliard School, Prabowo went to Seattle to collaborate with the Jarrad Powell on a contemporary wayang production titled *Visible Religion* that involved the Javanese *dhalang* Sri Joko Raharjo, the Balinese *dalang* I Made Sidia, and the ensemble Powell directs, Gamelan Pacifica (ibid.:15). Prabowo defied expectations, however, by focusing on voices and non-melodic instruments and composing a "prerecorded soundscape of multiple *terompets*." He thus lent "more of a 'Western' contemporary flavour" to a production that otherwise consisted of actual traditional repertoire and pieces in a traditional style by Powell (ibid.:31). For his subsequent collaborative projects in the US—the 1998 production of *Empty Tradition/City of Peonies* and the initial 2000 version of his opera *Kali*, a continuation of his work with Powell—Prabowo again found himself associated with traditional Indonesian music by working with the Minang musicians of the New Jakarta Ensemble.

Prabowo admitted at one point that "I don't really feel comfortable with the New Jakarta Ensemble" (Prabowo, quoted in Griffin 2003: 50). That he has established a working relationship with Syahril suggests that his discomfort has more to do with differences in aesthetic outlook or personality than it does with collaborating with traditional musicians per

se.⁴⁷ Most of all, however, his discomfort seems to have to do with being identified too closely with the New Jakarta Ensemble. Prabowo made the above quoted comment after relating to Griffin how Sjukur, who thought highly of all his work, nevertheless advised him “only to send music with traditional instruments” to a curator from Darmstadt. Prabowo sent the curator a CD of the New Jakarta Ensemble, but then declined to accept an invitation to meet (*ibid.*).

Griffin suggests that Prabowo’s “attitude towards tradition” is “sometimes misinterpreted as snobbery or even scorn,” but argues that it is actually “one of caution and deep respect” (Griffin 2003: 29). In composing for gamelan instruments he has “become an expert at avoiding the conventions of Javanese gamelan”—though he did, as Ann Warde points out, incorporate both a large Javanese *gong ageng* and “a Javanese-gamelan-derived cyclical rhythmic framework” in the outer movements of his orchestral piece “Autumnal Steps” (Warde 2002: 126-130). He seems to have little to say about Javanese *karawitan* or other traditional Indonesian music itself; his “deep respect” manifests itself instead in critical comments about others who, in his opinion, mistreat traditional music in their creative work. He was “appalled” that Jarrad Powell, as part of his contribution to their co-composed opera

47. For his part, Epi Martison, the “unofficial leader of the five traditional Minang players” (Griffin 2003: 48), noted that although he learned much from working with Prabowo, in the end they were “not compatible.” Prabowo, he said, wanted to be “high class,” whereas Martison preferred the unpretentiousness of “*kampung* people.” Martison by no means entirely avoids cultural spheres inhabited primarily by high society; I saw him lead a group listed as “Papua instrumentalis” that provided the instrumental accompaniment to an arrangement of David Fanshawe’s *African Sanctus* performed by the Indonesian Youth Choir on a concert of the Nusanatara Symphony Orchestra on 8 June 2005. But he is more interested in working with isolated ethnic groups in the *pedalaman* (hinterlands) of Kalimantan and Sumatra (Epi Martison, p.c., 15 August 2005). On another occasion, Martison joked that he preferred the designation “musik aneh-aneh” (odd music) to *musik kontemporer*, which he considered “too elitist” (p.c., 25 May 2005). Syahrial, from my conversation with him (p.c., 21 June 2005), and from observing some of his work with his ensemble Metadomus, including a self-released CD (no date) and a performance in Jogja on 3 July 2005 as part of a four-city Indonesian tour, seems, by contrast, more intent on advancing his own career as a composer.

Kali, asked Musliwardinal, a member of the New Jakarta Ensemble, to sing a Minang song as a countermelody to a Javanese-style melody Powell himself had composed, effectively presenting traditional material as his own, and displaying a lack of sensitivity both to Musliwardinal's discomfort with the situation, and the fact that the traditions are completely unrelated (Griffin 2003: 31-32). A piece by Lou Harrison he heard performed by Gamelan Son of Lion "pained and bored him," and he objected that "it was little more than a transcription of Javanese music, masquerading as 'new music' in the West" (ibid.:29). Regarding a rather different example, when discussing a number of different Indonesian artists with myself, Michael Asmara, and Sapto Raharjo, Prabowo told me the artist who made him "most sad"—that is, whose music he disapproved of most strongly—was Irwansyah Harahap. He did not present a fully articulated critique, but from his comments he seems to have found Harahap's inclusion in a single performance of disparate genres—an acoustic performance of *gambus*,⁴⁸ music inspired by the *qawwali* music that he had learned from Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan while studying ethnomusicology at the University of Washington, and electric *sitar* in the style of John McLaughlin⁴⁹—a random and unconvincing hodgepodge (p.c., 7 August 2005).⁵⁰

What Prabowo objects to is not the use of traditional material per se. Nor is he necessarily opposed to musicians engaging in musical traditions that are not their own, whether in performance, or in transforming them in the creation of new music. He is, in a

48. *Gambus* is the term for various types of lute, some of them closely resembling the Middle Eastern 'ūd.

49. English jazz guitarist who worked extensively with North and South Indian musicians such as *tabla* virtuoso Zakir Hussain.

50. Prabowo was presumably referring to Harahap's audio CD *Rites of Passage* (Harahap 2002).

sense, himself engaged in this latter project, in composing for traditional Indonesian instruments and musicians. Nor is he biased against popular styles. Prabowo had also arranged pieces by McLaughlin's Mahavishnu Orchestra for a short-lived chamber orchestra he led while studying at IKJ (Griffin 2003: 6-7).

The common denominator in the critiques cited above is the use of traditional or quasi-traditional material by those who have not mastered the traditions they draw upon. He could accept Powell's work for Javanese gamelan—at least enough that he agreed to collaborate with him on *Visible Religion*—but not of his use of Minang music, a tradition Powell had no prior experience with. This position involves, of course, assessing the extent of someone's mastery. In the case of Harahap, Prabowo could only have intuited his less than thorough grasp of *qawwali* or Hindustani improvisation. But with Powell too Prabowo is making judgements based more on impressions than his own knowledge, except that in the case of Powell Prabowo overestimates his mastery. Prabowo has praised Powell's ability as a gamelan player (p.c., 07 May 2005), but in fact Powell has only a modest knowledge of traditional *karawitan*. Prabowo is not “pure urban” to the extent that Royke Koapaha, Haryo “Yose” Suyoto, or Budi Ngurah are. But neither did he grow up fully immersed in Javanese culture. He was born in Malang, a moderately large city in East Java, and moved with his family to Jogja when he was twelve. His parents “had a traditional Javanese outlook,” but as *priyayi*—both of his parents had noble titles—they spoke Dutch at home, and listened to popular Dutch songs from the 1940s and 50s (Griffin 2003: 1-2). He would have had some passive exposure to gamelan, but did not learn to play it—at least not until he got to IKJ, at which point he studied some Balinese gamelan with I Wayan Sadra (I Wayan Sadra, p.c., 23 July 2004).

Javanese gamelan is Prabowo's tradition in the sense that he is Javanese. But in practical terms it is far less his tradition than it is Powell's. Traditional Minangkabau music is his only in so far as it has come to be understood as the cultural property of all Indonesians. Prabowo has found ways to work with Javanese instruments, and Javanese and Minangkabau musicians, but fundamentally, he remains an outsider to these traditions. Both the approach and the results of his collaborations bear some resemblance to that of traditionally-based composers from Solo. But although he was impressed with this music when he first heard it at the PKM meetings in the 1980s—he recounted how he was “so surprised,” how it “made me open my eyes” to the possibility of “contemporary music from tradition” (p.c., 7 August 2005)—his appreciation only goes so far. According to Raseuki, he finds their pieces “formless”—though “he's scared to say [so]” (Nyak Ina Raseuki, p.c., 18 August 2005). In speaking with me, he admitted to disliking the music that Supanggah had composed for *I La Galigo*, a major theater production directed by Robert Wilson inspired by the Sureq Galigo epic of the Bugis people of South Sulawesi.⁵¹ In his comments, he drew comparisons with Western-oriented composers from East Asia such as Takemitsu, and asked me “what the system of education was” at ASKI (p.c., 06 May 2005), betraying his lack of a sense of where those composers were coming from.

Prabowo's engagement with traditional Indonesian instruments and musicians has, since early on, been a centrally important aspect of his compositional work. It has been encouraged by, and also provided, pivotal opportunities to advance his career, and it has profoundly shaped his compositional voice. Yet in speaking about himself as a composer, he emphasizes the Western-oriented, and more specifically the Schoenbergian, facet of his artistic persona.

51. See Weiss (2008) for a discussion of this production.

To be sure, he has a deeply felt aesthetic affinity with this style that is evident in his writing for Western instruments. But his emphasis on this facet to the exclusion of others has a different motivation. He foregrounds it, I would argue, because it most effectively counterbalances the aesthetic authority of traditional Indonesian music. This is an authority that is more deeply rooted and more widely recognized in Indonesia. But it is also one that he is unable to fully draw upon, as he does not himself have a foundation in traditional music. He is careful, in harnessing the expertise of his collaborators who do have such a foundation, to compose in an idiom that avoids evoking traditional models and that instead reflects his own compositional sensibility, and he can be highly critical of work that is too directly derivative. The authority of the Western art music tradition is unassailable, but it is only deeply understood, especially in its modernist manifestations, by a small circle of Indonesians. That circle has a critically important influence in the cultural sphere within which Prabowo works, and has been crucial in supporting Prabowo's growth and activity as a composer. Nevertheless, its broader influence in Indonesia is circumscribed. The real source of Western art music's authority lies elsewhere. And so, despite his status as the most successful and acclaimed Western-oriented composer of his generation, Prabowo is not immune to anxiety—anxiety born of a distance from both of the major sources of aesthetic authority that figure in his compositional universe.

Michael Asmara

Overcoming Obstacles, Seizing Opportunities

The third and final figure I will profile is Michael Asmara (1956–).⁵² A classmate of Royke Koapaha at AMI Jogja, Asmara experienced many similar difficulties. He too faced disapproval from AMI’s director, Suhascarya, who happened to be his granduncle. Suhascarya was “angry” at Asmara for applying to AMI, presumably because Suhascarya did not consider him sufficiently qualified, but in the end “couldn’t say anything” because Asmara was accepted, after studying privately for a year, by other instructors. Asmara started in 1980. He got along with some of his instructors well—he spoke fondly of a visiting American teacher who taught him serial counterpoint, along with the baroque counterpoint that he was hired to teach. But with others, he was “often in conflict,” and he found himself “marginalized in the campus circle.” That, on top of not being able to afford tuition, led him to drop out before graduating, in 1983.

Despite these problems, Asmara has fared much better than others in his cohort. His success in advancing his career as a composer did not come as readily as it did for Tony Prabowo, with whom he has been friends since they attended high school in Jogja. As he put it, Prabowo and others at IKJ were “much more advanced” because of the greater resources available to them in Jakarta; Asmara specifically noted their proximity “to the embassies,” presumably meaning those of countries where contemporary art music had a more vigorous

52. Except where noted otherwise, all quotations in this section are taken from conversations with Michael Asmara in 2004 and 2005, and all discussions of particular pieces are based on digital copies of recordings and photocopies of scores obtained directly from the composer.

existence.⁵³ Equally important was the possibility of making connections with powerful and influential figures in the Jakarta arts scene, whether those associated with the Jakarta Arts Council, those on the planning committee of the Art Summit Indonesia, or other more singular forces such as Goenawan Mohamad.

Prabowo, as we saw, was collaborating with leading figures in Jakarta's contemporary art scene by the late 1980s, and by 1996 had made the connection with Joel Sachs at the Juilliard School that so significantly boosted his career, especially in terms of writing for Western instruments. A similar break for Asmara, through which he gained broader recognition for his work, did not come until 2003, when his "String Quartet No. 2" was performed at the Asian Music Festival in Tokyo, that year's official conference/festival of the Asian Composers League (ACL). His work has been performed at two subsequent ACL meetings, in Bangkok in 2005 and in Taiwan in 2011, but it wasn't until the 2011 meeting, with funding from the Asian Cultural Council, that he was able to travel to attend the performances of his work.

When I asked Asmara in 2004 if he had ever been to an ACL meeting outside Indonesia, he told me that "only elite composers went," by which he meant those who are "based in Jakarta" or that were on the board of the Asosiasi Komponis Indonesia (Indonesian Composers Association, AKI). Founded in 1994, the organization was at its peak in 1999 when it hosted the ACL's meeting in Solo and Jogja. Asmara did attend that event, but wasn't invited to participate, despite having been invited to AKI's earlier planning meeting. While

53. Asmara was perhaps also thinking of cultural centers such as the Erasmus Huis and the Goethe Institut, which as noted in chapter 3 were an important source of recordings of contemporary art music. The embassies themselves also at times played an important role. As noted above, it was an American Embassy staff member who recommended Prabowo to Joel Sachs, leading to one of the most important breaks in his career. The Lembaga Indonesia Prancis, the Indonesian operation of the Institut français, has an office in Jogja that, at least recently, been supportive of *musik kontemporer* activity there.

other Indonesian participants in subsequent ACL meetings went “through AKI,” Asmara first participated after Jack Body—about whom Asmara had heard stories while a student at AMI, but didn’t meet until the 1999 ACL meeting in Jogja, and didn’t really get to know until 2003—recommended that Asmara send one of his pieces after hearing his piece for three Javanese *gender* at the 2002 Yogyakarta Gamelan Festival.

Asmara said of the tendency for “elite” composers to monopolize limited opportunities that he “can understand.” “They want to develop,” he noted. Jack Body “passes on commissions to promising students,” but “that never happens here.” “Indonesians, if there's money, without a doubt they do it themselves. If there's not, only then do they offer it to someone else.” This was a pattern he had already “memorized,” and because he understood it, it did not make him angry. “The Philippines is similar,” he added, observing that the senior composer Jose Maceda “goes every time there is an ACL, by himself,” and suggested, laughing, that this was a “factor of developing countries.”

Whether or not this is a fair generalization, it is true that Asmara’s breaks have come mostly from non-Indonesians. In 2003, the same year that his “String Quartet No. 2” was first performed at the ACL after acting on Jack Body’s encouragement, Body invited him to New Zealand to have the work performed at a contemporary music festival there and to give a workshop for composers. He also travelled to Osaka, Japan, to work with Gamelan Marga Sari to realize “Niji,” a piece commissioned by the ensemble’s director, Shin Nakagawa, that I discuss further below.

Asmara as Activist: Founding and Directing the Yogyakarta Contemporary Music Festival

Asmara has also boosted his stature by taking on the role of an organizer—or, as Slamet

Abdul Sjukur put it, speaking of himself, an “activist,” explaining that “in Indonesia it is not enough to be a composer; one has to make programs of *musik kontemporer*” (Slamet Abdul Sjukur, p.c., 09 September 2004). In 2004 Asmara founded the Yogyakarta Contemporary Music Festival (YCMF), which to date has been held seven times. The festival’s programs have included pieces by well established Indonesian composers, such as Otto Sidharta and I Wayan Gde Yudane,⁵⁴ and also Sjukur, the “father” of *musik kontemporer* himself. But in contrast to an event like the triennial Art Summit Indonesia—which in keeping with its name focuses on artists considered to be at the peak of their fields, dedicating whole programs to composers like Sjukur, Prabowo, Hardjana, Supanggih, Sadra, and Suwardi—the YCMF has prioritized inclusivity and building interest in *musik kontemporer* among the youth who will ensure its future vitality. Many of the thirty to forty participants in each of the 2008, 2009, and 2010 festivals were younger composers. The statements on the YCMF website for these three events highlight the importance of cultivating not only young composers, but also young performers and young listeners. The YCMF encourages “appreciation and understanding of contemporary music,” not only through “performances,” but also “discussions,” “educational activities,” and “music students’ interaction with noted composers, performers, and scholars.” The YCMF has sought to provide young performers with opportunities to discover “techniques of how to explore their instruments along with musical interpretations,” and to allow young composers to gain “deeper knowledge about musical style and form in addition to the ideological and aesthetic background of their

54. Yudane (1964–), a Balinese composer who studied with Slamet Abdul Sjukur at IKJ in the mid-1980s, has created electronic music that is “ambivalent toward high-low, pop-serious” distinctions (McGraw 2004:363-364). He has also won numerous awards for his *kreasi baru*, compositions for Balinese *gamelan gong kebyar*.

works.”

The focus of the YCMF on community-building is apparent also in their approach to including international participants. Where from the outset the Art Summit has featured international figures of considerable stature, such as Kaija Saariaho and Alvin Lucier, both of whom presented programs at the 1998 event, the YCMF, since its inaugural 2004 event, has mostly focused on the work of composers based in Jogja, with a smaller number of pieces by those from abroad, like myself, who happened to be in Indonesia at the time. There was something of a shift in 2007 with the inclusion of works by some of the most highly esteemed (and in some cases deceased) composers from Japan and Korea, such as Isang Yun, Joji Yuasa, Toshi Ichianagi, and none other than Toru Takemitsu himself. The shift was facilitated by, and perhaps directly the result of, the participation of the Japanese violinist Rieko Suzuki, whom Jack Body had heartily promoted while he was in Jogja two years earlier, in 2005. Regardless of how the inclusion of works by these composers came about, it served “to fully as possible inform the musicians and audience of Yogyakarta about current ideas, theories and concepts inside the musical world—especially in Asia.”⁵⁵ But no less important than exposure to the work of leading Asian composers was facilitating more immediate interaction. This aim was identified explicitly with the 2009 and 2010 festivals, which noted an emphasis—or in 2010, an exclusive focus—on “programming works by composers we know personally.” The goal was “to ensure . . . that the work between them, the young Indonesian composers and performers will be as optimal and instructive as possible—whether it is by direct contact or through email.”

55. “Current” in this case is relative, as all of those figures had risen to prominence in the 1960s and 1970s, and Takemitsu and Yun had both passed away in the mid 1990s.

In directing the YCMF, Asmara has thus been less singularly focused on artistic excellence, and more concerned with giving opportunities to young composers and performers. This is not to say, however, that he is without his own ambitions. The statement for the second YCMF in 2005 rather boldly declared that “Yogyakarta has now become the centre of development of contemporary Art Music.”⁵⁶ Whether or not that was a fair claim at that point, after seven events the YCMF has established itself as the most significant Indonesian festival of *musik kontemporer* in the first decade of the twenty-first century. The foundation for its success is the enthusiasm Asmara has been able to generate among the composers who participate, as well as the team he has assembled to plan and carry out the festival’s various activities—a team that is not hidden behind the scene, but integral to it.

The extent to which it has grown and thrived, however, has much to do with Asmara’s efforts to strengthen connections to a network of influential figures within Jogja, between Jogja and other centers in Indonesia (most notably Jakarta), and much further afield. For the 2005 YCMF, Asmara assembled a “steering committee” with other prominent figures in the Jogja arts scene, such as the Dean of the Performing Art Faculty at ISI, Triyono Bramantyo, and the director of the Yogyakarta Gamelan Festival, Supto Raharjo (who is profiled in the next chapter), as well as Shin Nakagawa and Jack Body. At the next YCMF, in 2007, the Jakarta-based composer Otto Sidharta, who was the chair of AKI, joined the “executive committee.” The three subsequent festivals in 2008, 2009, and 2010 were organized in cooperation with Cantus Music Centre, a music school and concert production organization in Jakarta that Sidharta directs, as well as the Lembaga Indonesia Prancis and the graduate program of ISI Jogja (Pasca Sarjana ISI Yogyakarta), which were the venues for the concerts,

56. Presumably Asmara means within the scope of Indonesia.

workshops, and discussions (<http://www.ycmfindonesia.webs.com>, accessed 11 February 2013).

Asmara has not blatantly used the YCMF as a vehicle to advance his own career as a composer; he has not presented his own works at the festival since the inaugural 2004 event. Nevertheless, he has benefitted from the increased attention that being the YCMF's director has brought him. In a profile that appeared in *The Jakarta Post* around the 2009 YCMF, he told his interviewer that he started the YCMF because he was “lonely” and “needed friends.”⁵⁷ More specifically, he desired a community of like-minded musicians who shared his interest in contemporary art music. The YCMF has done much to galvanize and build such a community. Other named entities have formed: the Independent Composers Community Yogyakarta, the group of composers that Asmara rallied to produce the YCMF, but that claims to also be “active in producing audio-visual documentation, as well as publishing music scores and journals”;⁵⁸ and the Yogyakarta Contemporary Music Ensemble (YCME), which has ventured beyond the YCMF to perform in other Indonesian cities, and, in 2011, to a new music festival in Izmir, Turkey. As a quartet of flute, violin, cello, and piano, the YCME is, to my knowledge, the first permanent Western chamber type ensemble dedicated to contemporary art music, and its level of performance is impressively high.⁵⁹

Asmara's considerable contributions to the life of *musik kontemporer* in Jogja, and

57. Reposted on <http://indonesianow.blogspot.com/2009/10/michael-asmara.html>, accessed 08 February 2013.

58. I have not yet ascertained how much of this the ICCY has actually done. Its page on [vimeo.com](http://vimeo.com/user6549580) features only two videos, both of pieces by Asmara (<http://vimeo.com/user6549580>, accessed 21 February 2013).

59. Audio recordings of six of the eleven works presented at the Asian Composer Festival in Izmir, Turkey, are posted on the YCME's page on [soundcloud.com](https://soundcloud.com/ycme/) (<https://soundcloud.com/ycme/>, accessed 21 February 2013).

Indonesia, have also led to specific opportunities for himself. As the artistic director and manager of the YCME, he has benefitted directly from its activities; his “Quartet” was one of eleven pieces the ensemble presented in Turkey. Asmara was commissioned by the Dutch pianist Kees Wieringa shortly after he performed and gave a workshop at the 2005 YCMF. He secured funds from the Asian Cultural Council (ACC) to bring three musicians from other parts of Asia to the 2010 YCMF, and then a year later received travel funds himself, enabling him to go to Taiwan in 2011 to finally hear his work performed at a meeting of the ACL.⁶⁰

In 2009 Asmara went to Malaysia for the Goethe Institut’s Young Composers in Southeast Asia Competition and KL Contemporary Music Festival ’09 in Kuala Lumpur. He was not himself involved in the competition or the festival at that point—Indonesia was represented by Otto Sidharta, Tony Prabowo, and Slamet Abdul Sjukur—but went to observe. At that festival he befriended Kee Yong Chong, a rising star in Malaysia’s new music scene.⁶¹ The next time the Goethe Institut competition was held, in conjunction with the Southeast Asian Contemporary Music Festival in Bandung in 2011, Asmara was invited to join Chong and others on the jury by its artistic director, Dieter Mack (p.c. via e-mail, 15 February 2013)—another “activist,” mentioned at various points in this study, who made his biggest impact on the *musik kontemporer* scene in Bandung. In 2013, Asmara represented Indonesia in a project that paired Studio musikFabrik, a fifteen member new music ensemble from Cologne, Germany, with the fifteen member ASEAN Contemporary Music Ensemble,

60. http://www.asianculturalcouncil.org/our-grantees/grantee/asmara_michael_79, accessed 7 February 2013.

61. Kee Yong Chong (1971–) studied at the Xian Conservatory in China and the Brussels Royal Conservatory in Belgium, and has attended master classes by Brian Ferneyhough, Daan Manneke and Salvatore Sciarrino. He has received prizes from numerous international competitions, and several prestigious commissions, including one from the Serge Koussevitzky Music Foundation (<http://www.chongkeeyong.com>, accessed 21 February 2013).

which was founded by Chong and others after the 2011 festival in Bandung. Asmara's commissioned work, "Etude for Orchestra," was the one piece on the program, performed in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, and Bangkok, for the combined forces of both ensembles.⁶²

Asmara has credited the Independent Composers Community Yogyakarta with conceiving and executing the YCMF, but it is Asmara himself who is recognized as the driving force behind it. It is Asmara who was profiled following the 2009 YCMF in an article in *The Jakarta Post*. The opportunities detailed above have followed in various ways from the stature he has gained through his considerable efforts in the service of community.

A Sometimes Experimentalist Modernist

Underlying Asmara's steadfast commitment to the work of directing and running a festival and an ensemble is a clarity of aesthetic focus that is exceptional relative to most Western-oriented Indonesian composers. His focus is comparable to, and compatible with, that of Tony Prabowo, both sharing a predilection for musical idioms of the mid-twentieth century avant-garde. But as with Prabowo, this has not been a singular focus. Asmara's output does include numerous works for conventional Western instruments and ensembles, including ten pieces for piano and three for string quartet—some of which he wrote without any foreseeable opportunity to have them performed. Most of these pieces, though not all, bear the hallmarks of high modernism: atonal melodic writing, with a preponderance of "dissonant" intervals such as tritones, major sevenths, and minor ninths, and at most fleeting suggestions of tonal centers; a fluid approach to rhythm, with musical gestures detached from any sense of meter or pulse; exaggerated dynamic contrasts, with changes between or

62. E-mail announcement from Kee Yong Chong, 21 December 2012.

crescendi and decrescendi over single notes and motifs; in his string writing, frequent changes of articulation and tone through bow position or the use of harmonics. But just as many of his pieces, again like Prabowo, admit other stylistic influences. This is especially true of those for less conventional forces.

A number of Asmara's works relate as much or more to the experimentalisms introduced in the 1970s by Slamet Abdul Sjukur and, more immediately for those in Jogja, Jack Body. As noted above, Asmara did not meet Body until 1999, but felt his impact nonetheless through the cohort of student composers that had studied with him. Especially significant were Yoesbar Djaelani, whose "Tanya Yang Tak Terjawab" Asmara performed in at the third PKM in 1982, and Haryo "Yose" Suyoto, who continued the "home concerts" started by Djaelani (chapter 3). In 1988, six years after performing in Djaelani's piece, Asmara composed a "multimedia" piece in a similar vein. Titled "The Resistance of Substance," the piece included children making "crying" and "crying-singing noises" and adults making "fighting noises." The piece also used a number of motorcycles, radios, and sirens, along with a *gender*, three *kentongan* (a log-drum sounded as an alarm), a *pesindhen*, and a tenor.

Like Sutanto, in the "happening" that he presented at the first PKM in 1979, Asmara has incorporated audience participation in several compositions, though usually in a more controlled fashion. In a piece for gamelan instruments I observed at the 2004 Yogyakarta Gamelan Festival, he signaled the audience to clap once when he raised a candle to his left, and three times when he raised it to his right. The audience played a more prominent role in his "Gending Dolanan," presented at the Nur Gora Rupa festival in 1994.⁶³ In addition to

63. My discussion is based on video documentation I obtained from the archives of TBS, and a copy of the score I obtained from Asmara.

signaling different sections of those seated to shout, cheer, and whistle—who at various points were illuminated by a spotlight used primarily to highlight a solo female dancer—Asmara asked volunteers to play several different gamelan instruments distributed throughout the performance space, instructing them to improvise on specified pitches when he cued them to do so. The dancer also stopped dancing at various points to play. One other volunteer acted as a conductor, giving cues by lifting lamps with one or both hands when instructed to do so by Asmara, who stood in the middle of the performance space with a score, which indicated simply the sequence of entrances and exits.

Contrasting with the sometimes rowdy contributions from the audience was a slow and measured part for piano. While the other parts came in and out, the pianist steadily built up two alternating figures, starting with the same single pitch with which both figures began, sounded every 10 seconds, then gradually adding notes, one by one, repeating each pair of figures three times before adding another note. The notation for the part consists simply of dots on and around a line, indicating contour and approximate timing, and a note specifying the pitches to be used. Reminiscent in its chromaticism and pacing of the piano music of Morton Feldman, the unfolding of a clearly defined process has more in common with younger “minimalist” composers, such as Philip Glass—whose music, which he heard via a cassette from a visiting dance student from the Netherlands, inspired some of Asmara’s earlier piano pieces.

Identity and Agency

A more intensive source of influence who Asmara encountered somewhat later was Philip Corner (1933–). Corner has employed certain techniques of repetition and process associated

with minimalism, but more significantly, as an early member of the international art movement Fluxus, he was involved in the more resolutely experimentalist forms of conceptual art and performance art.⁶⁴ In New Jersey in the mid 1970s Corner co-founded Gamelan Son of Lion, an ensemble that used iron instruments constructed by Barbara Benary, primarily to play their own compositions. Corner himself made a point of not studying traditional Javanese music, believing that it “wasn’t safe” for himself “as a creator” to do so. It was only once he had “assimilated the gamelan” on his “own terms,” by writing compositions that came out of his sense of himself and of his “culture”—which he identifies as a “finely spun-out network” of like-minded avant-garde artists that extends “over the whole world”—that he decided he could “go to Java.” Meeting and hearing the work of Indonesian composers at the first International Gamelan Festival in Vancouver in 1986 was a “great revelation”; he learned of “people in Indonesia who I can . . . identify with and feel as part of my culture” (Corner 1986: 24-31). While at the festival, he spoke with Franki Raden, and began to plan his first visit to Indonesia. Once in Jogja, where he was invited to give a workshop at AMI, Corner met Asmara, whom he found to be someone he could relate to especially readily; he has stayed with Asmara on subsequent visits. Asmara similarly felt a compatibility with Corner, noting “I was inspired by his thinking, found much that I agreed with.”

As much as particular ideas and opinions, what Asmara shares with Corner is a skeptical attitude and critical perspective. Both question and depart from certain commonplace ways of thinking about things, such as the relationship of their compositional practices to tradition and their sense of cultural identity. Corner’s identification with a “finely spun-out” international

64. *Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Corner, Philip,” accessed 21 July 2012.

network of avant-garde artists takes the place of a more common identification with geoculturally defined and historically continuous tradition. “I’ve never been able to feel I’m in a particular tradition . . . I never felt that I belonged to Western culture.” Going further, he suggests that it is “not at all certain” that the “avant-garde in 20th century America . . . is part of the Western tradition.” He argues:

America is a transplanted provincial place on the terrain of another culture which was wiped bare but still leaves traces and auras. With the admixture of African culture and everything else, America as a whole sits uneasy with the Western tradition. It is already not part of the Western tradition as we know it in Europe. So we could say that none of us are Western in a wholly unadulterated sense. (ibid.)

In continuing to state that “as a modern, as an American and even to a certain extent as a Jew” he feels “that there is not a music that is mine,” Corner does not completely discount the relevance of ethnic and other group identities. But he challenges the usual idea that America is part of the West, expressed in formulations such as Euro-American music, which conjoins two distinct geographical entities within a shared cultural frame. “My music”—that is, the music he composes—“is the only music that feels like my music,” Corner asserts. “I compose in order to create my culture.” Accordingly, as noted above, he avoided learning about traditional Javanese music before he composed his own pieces for gamelan—before he “assimilated” it on his “own terms” (ibid.)

Asmara does not articulate his perspective quite so neatly, but underlying his sometimes contradictory statements there is a similar drive to actively define both his own identity and that of his music. His vantage point, as an Indonesian composer drawn toward musical resources from the Western art music tradition, is also different, and not simply a mirror image of Corner’s—though there are certain symmetries.

Asmara has not divulged much about his family background. The above-quoted profile of

him as director of the YCMF noted that he “sheepishly revealed he’d come from a Yogya ‘blue-blood’ family.” He alluded in our conversations, however, to his family having “financial issues” that precluded his taking music courses. I surprised him by guessing from his European name that they were Christian, though Asmara himself is a committed atheist—an extremely marginal disposition toward religion in Indonesia that is indicative of his self-determination. Asmara was born in Jakarta, and “moved around” to various places, including Medan,⁶⁵ before his family settled back in Jogja when he was in junior high school. He described his parents as “amateur musicians”; as is common for *priyayi*, their interests included both Javanese and Western music. His father “often played recordings of *karawitan* and Western classical music.” Asmara further commented “one could say it was compulsory” to listen. His mother sang in a church choir, as did Asmara for a time. He went along to rehearsals where his father played trumpet, but also, like his father, studied traditional Javanese dance, albeit only briefly. His father also took him to watch *wayang kulit* performances, where he would sit behind the *dhalang*, and to gamelan performances.

Asmara’s only practical experience with gamelan, however, was from introductory courses at AMI.⁶⁶ He did not, then, acquire anything close to the grounding in traditional Javanese music of the typical student at ASKI Solo. But neither was he “pure urban.” One evening when we went to a street-side *lesehan* (an informal eatery where one sits on mats on the ground), he started singing along with a *rambangan*⁶⁷ playing on the radio. When I asked

65. Medan, Indonesia’s fourth largest city, is the capital of North Sumatra.

66. According to Asmara, students enjoyed studying gamelan a lot, though the most advanced instruments they would learn were *bonang* and *gambang*. After AMI merged with ASTI and other institutions to become ISI, gamelan was no longer required for those majoring in Western music.

67. Jogjanese name for *palaran*, a form in which *macapat* (sung Javanese poetry) is accompanied by gamelan.

about it, he told me he had learned *macapat* from his mother when he was young—well enough that he still remembered it decades later.⁶⁸

Asmara's choice to pursue training in Western art music did not come at the expense of his appreciation for *karawitan*. He has even embraced, in a modest way, the role of spokesperson for traditional Javanese music—a role Tony Prabowo has assiduously avoided—by participating in a mostly English language e-mail discussion list, <gamelan@listserv.dartmouth.edu>. In addition to posting announcements about events in Jogja and other news, most but not all involving gamelan, he has also contributed to conversations. His Javanese pride was on display when he chimed in on a thread with the subject “there is no mozart in gamelan music” [sic.] that started with a message from a young gamelan student contemplating how much experience was required to attain mastery of *karawitan*. The absence of famed child prodigies such as Mozart was taken not as a deficiency, but rather as evidence of *karawitan*'s sophistication. Asmara added that it was “illogic to compare Mozart as composer and Gamelan” as there have been anonymous composers in Java from “around 8 century” whose pieces are still performed. When asked what the evidence for this was, he replied “haa.ha..the evidence ...again this is a view of Mozart side, who always needs evidence.” Announcing the name of the composer “as Bach or Mozart is funny for us,” he stated, as gamelan pieces do not have one composer but many, and pieces are “given as an offering to the King or the Goddess.” “And do not forget,” he concluded, “mystery is necessary for us as Javanese.”⁶⁹

68. Although he knew the *macapat*, he did not immediately recognize the treatment as *campursari*.

69. As a postscript, he admitted “actually I hate Mozart..he..he..”. The discussion, which took place 11–12 February 2011, is archived at <http://listserv.dartmouth.edu/scripts/wa.exe?A0=GAMELAN>. Asmara also mentioned Mozart, and his prolificacy, in my initial interview with him, in explaining

In another comment on the list Asmara gestured toward a more universalist stance. In a debate over how best to introduce Javanese gamelan music to those unfamiliar with it—a debate that began with the suggestion that *gendhing soran*, pieces involving only the loud instruments, were “more easy to digest” than pieces involving singers, and that included a fair bit of essentializing about the preferences of Western listeners—Jody Diamond, one of the administrators of the list (and whose interview with Philip Corner is the source of the passages quoted above), offered “I like to think there is no ‘Western’ listener, only human listeners.” Asmara, in a post with the subject “1000%...”, added another zero in the body of the message, stating “I am 10000% agree with you, music have not ethnicity, religion or whatever.”⁷⁰

Yet when it comes to reflecting on his own work as a composer, his comments reveal not a concern with asserting music’s autonomy from ethnicity and other socio-cultural frames, but rather a desire to redefine the ethnicity of the tradition he has chosen primarily to work in. In 2005, once I had gotten to know Asmara and his views fairly well, I asked him what he thought of the term “Western-oriented.” He said he “did not agree” with it as a term for what he and his colleagues were doing. It implied they wanted to “Westernize” (*membaratkan*, *mem-‘Western’-kan*) what was around them, as if it was something pure into which they introduced Western elements. In his case he wanted to do the opposite. His intention—he characterized it as his “obsession”—from early on was instead to Javanize Western music.

how he was compelled to compose whether or not there was any prospect of having a work performed.

70. The thread, which began with a post from Bambang Setijoso with the subject “Gendhing Soran, why not?”, ran from 29 April to 1 May 2010.

Javanizing Western Music

Asmara's efforts to Javanize Western music are not primarily on the level of idiomatic adjustments, though idiom has been relevant. He related how his first composition—"Ilusi Untuk Hidup," which he wrote for a festival co-organized by a number of arts institutions⁷¹—took as a point of reference Philip Glass's opera *Einstein on the Beach*, and how he "saw that as like a gamelan piece." It demonstrated how repetition "can be applied to Western instruments," and that despite the questions from those selection committee for the festival, who had "Western discipline," "actually repetition is OK in Western music." That being the case, he felt he could "transcribe gamelan music to Western instruments."

Asmara asked, referring back to my question, "So am I Western-oriented, in that case?" I, in turn, asked him why he didn't simply compose a piece for gamelan instruments. He explained that there were "already people from gamelan" who were doing so, and perhaps more importantly, that because he was a student of Western music he was afraid a work for gamelan instruments wouldn't be accepted by the committee. He said he was open to composing for either Western instruments or gamelan, but insufficiently confident (*agak malu-malu*). He then noted that students "hadn't yet turned their attention to traditional instruments," and "hadn't observed that there was anything of interest in tradition." "Our thinking was still Western," he admitted. When I asked if it was fitting to call that an orientation, he conceded that it was.

71. As Alec Roth explains, the success of festivals in Jakarta such as the PKM, which brought together representatives from academies in various regional centers, "led immediately to the arts academies themselves getting together to organise an annual festival to be hosted by each institute in rotation" (Roth 1987: 56). Asmara indicated that his work was selected for the festival held in Solo, in "1981, or 1982." Roth gives 1980 as the year of the inaugural festival, held at ASTI Yogyakarta, and 1983 as the year that Festival IKI was held at ASKI Solo.

Yet Asmara distinguished himself from students such as Haryo “Yose” Suyoto who were more decidedly Western-oriented. “My concept is different,” he asserted. What he took from the West was only certain “ways of thinking” about composition, about “exploration,” or an awareness of form. Pointing to the many books on Western music he had on a shelf in his living room, I asked “so you’re genuinely interested?”, to which he responded “Definitely” (*pasti*). He wants “to know how Westerners explore instruments.” But did he want to follow their model? “Join their style, no,” he answered—but then acknowledged that he followed some of it “just because I like it.” “Serialism” was a “system he thought was suitable” for him (*cocok untuk diri saya*). He also acknowledged that he had “a bit of a desire to change the style of tradition.” By way of explanation, he observed that gamelan musicians “had to sound things first,” that for them it was “feeling that emerged first” (*rasanya dulu yang maju*). In many cases, they simply take existing forms and arrange them. “My approach is different, it’s logic that comes first, then feeling.” He is more concerned with concepts. Still, he insisted that even though he uses serial techniques, “my way of thinking is like a traditional person.”

I did not press Asmara on what thinking like a traditional person meant to him. What he offered immediately after making this claim was that in matters of ornamentation, “cengkok-cengkok,”⁷² or tempo, he made an effort to introduce traditional thinking. Earlier in our conversation he stated that he “infuses” his pieces for Western instruments “with much Javanese philosophy,” both “consciously and not.” This presumably accounts for his use of numbers in the titles of his string quartets, which he explained has nothing to do with the

72. *Cengkok* is, to my knowledge, a term specific to Javanese *karawitan*. As Marc Perlman explains, the term has “varied meanings,” but most commonly refers to the melodic patterns of “soft elaborating parts.” Explaining further, the term “is a way of referring to the conventionalized aspect of melody . . . the stable melodic content of a stock phrase . . . which can be varied and embellished in indefinitely many ways but which remains recognizable” (Perlman 2004: 57).

sequence in which he composed them—he titled his second, from 1996, “String Quartet No. 7”—but rather with their numerological significance.

In reference to the compositions themselves, the infusion of traditional thought is more often somewhere between philosophical abstractions and musical specifics. He reportedly composed “A Little Piece for Pianoforte” in 2001 “in connection with the old ceremonial gamelan sekaten,” whose music Dieter Mack, presumably following Asmara, describes as being characterized by its “serene quietness, elegance and balance”—an “aura which Michael Asmara tried to create with a contemporary musical language for piano.”⁷³ The piece sounds, however, much more like Arnold Schoenberg’s “Sechs Kleine Klavierstücke, Op. 19,” if a little more subdued and spacious, than it does a *gendhing* played as loudly as possible on an oversized *gamelan sekaten* in the midst of the carnivalesque atmosphere of Mulud (Pemberton 1987: 25-26).⁷⁴ An earlier piano piece, “The River,” from 1986, similarly sounds much more like Philip Glass than a transcription of gamelan. Asmara’s “inspiration” for his “Three Pieces for Solo Violin,” from 2008, came from the *rebab*, the “two-stringed spike fiddle” that is “the only bowed instrument used in gamelan music.” As he explains,

I began composing this piece by taking a few phrases from a rebab melody I once heard in its traditional gamelan setting, and freely developing and expanding those phrases as I saw fit to create these three pieces.

73. Notes to the audio CD *Asia Piano Avantgarde*, by pianist Steffan Schleirmacher (2005).

74. *Gamelan sekaten*, larger and lower-pitched than standard Javanese gamelan, are also played extremely loudly. In a photograph in an article by John Pemberton, a gamelan musician poses, with his mallet above his head and a grin on his face, at the *demung* in a *gamelan sekaten* whose middle key he cracked in two. The musician “reportedly received a prize from the palace” for “this amazing feat.” Although *gamelan sekaten* is played loudly, and at times involves playing at a fast tempo, there is a certain austerity to the music, in contrast to both the *rame* (boisterous, lively) quality of a *klenengan* (and the carnival that is also part of the *sekaten* festival, and the dramatic changeability of mood at a *wayang*. It is perhaps this “aura” that Asmara is trying to recreate.

“What I ultimately want to do with this work,” he concluded, “is to bring the violin as close as possible to the spirit of the *rebab*.” This did not, however, entail anything approaching literal imitation. Like most of his string writing, the piece makes ample use of the techniques characteristic of high modernism listed above (exaggerated dynamics, frequent shifts between bow position, and between bowing and pizzicato). The one technique perhaps taken from *rebab* is a scratchy tone produced by bowing with excessive pressure, although in his piece the noise is sustained rather than used to articulate beginnings and endings of notes. I am unable, even as a *rebab* player, to sense what the original phrases are. Bringing the violin closer to the spirit of the *rebab* did not, apparently, preclude transforming the *rebab*’s phrases beyond recognition.⁷⁵

Ethnological Valence, Revisited

Asmara’s contention that music must not have ethnicity, his claim that he thinks like a traditional person, and his obsession with Javanizing Western music, together shed a different light on the concept of ethnological valence that I have proposed as a way to theorize the notion of things having ethnicity. A key premise that my theorizing builds on is that ethnicity is not an inherent property, but rather is something perceived and/or attributed—or, in the case of people rather than things, felt and asserted. Diamond’s comment, that she likes to think “there is no ‘Western’ listener, only human listeners,” has to do with perception, though in her case, in seeking to counter essentializations of the listening habits associated with a given ethnicity (or meta-ethnicity), she effectively discounts any influence of cultural

75. My comments on “A Little Piece for Pianoforte” are based on the recording by Steffan Schleiermacher (2005); “The River” on a recording I obtained from Michael Asmara (n.d.); and “Three Pieces for Solo Violin” on a performance and recording by Emilie-Anne Gendron (2011).

background on listening. Asmara proclaims his agreement with Diamond, but shifts seamlessly from the ethnicity (or lack thereof) of the perceiver to the ethnicity (or lack thereof) of the thing that is perceived—in this case, pieces of music.

Similarly, in acknowledging that he is obsessed with Javanizing Western music, Asmara's focus is on things, and not so much the thing perceived, but the thing created. He explained how in his compositional practice he seeks to infuse both the exterior and the interior of his pieces with Javanese-ness—the exterior through his approach to musical attributes such as ornamentation or phrasing, the interior, through thinking like a traditional person, with Javanese philosophy.⁷⁶ He had less to say about how his work would be perceived, or by extension how he would be regarded as a composer. But toward the end of our conversation on the topic, after discussing his use of compositional techniques that are derived from Western art music, and how his approach differs from that of traditionally-based composers, he did comment “I don't know if I would be called Western-oriented or not.”

I suspect most Indonesians would consider Asmara to be Western-oriented, though how strongly they would think this would depend on which aspects of his compositional output they are familiar with. No less importantly, it would depend on what informs their frame of reference—the extent of their familiarity with the Western art music tradition, and more specifically the international avant-garde, on the one hand, and *karawitan* on the other. The ethnological valence of his pieces would be sensed in part according to their instrumentation, but also according to their idiom. Asmara's works for piano, orchestral strings, or orchestra, would almost certainly be read as Western, or Western-oriented, though their use of a style

76. Asmara's distinction between exterior and interior may well relate to the Javanese concept of *lair-batin*, body and soul, and perhaps even *kebatinan*, which refers both to the inner self and the Javanese mystical tradition.

heavily indebted to mid-twentieth century modernism might not evoke the Western art music tradition as strongly as *lagu seriosa* was felt to have a “church flavor” by mid-twentieth century critics (chapters 1 and 2). This is not because high modernism is any less specific an idiom, but simply because it is not as well known in Indonesia.

Those pieces that included gamelan and other Javanese instruments would not be read as so straightforwardly Western. But neither does the use of Javanese instruments alone preclude the possibility of Asmara being considered Western-oriented as a composer. As used in his earlier pieces, traditional instruments, like the *kentongan* in “The Resistance of Substance,” would have been read as iconically Javanese. But their iconicity was contained by their also having a representative function. As he put it in describing “Banjir” (flood), a “total theater” piece from 1984 that was his first to use *kentongan*,⁷⁷ traditional instruments were used “in connection with the story.” “Banjir” also used *lesung*, a hollowed out log used as a mortar for pounding rice to remove husks that has also, because of the musical character of its use, been adapted to performing arts contexts.⁷⁸ In Asmara’s piece, it was used to convey a sense of life returning to normal after a flood, whereas the music proper was scored for an ensemble of flute, oboe, bassoon, guitar, and string orchestra.

77. With choreography by Synthia M.T. Sumukti and text by Gentong Haryo Seno Ali.

78. A key example is *kethoprak*, a form reportedly invented by R. M. Wreksodiningrat, an official at the court of Paku Buwana IX, in 1914. Noting “peasant women singing as they were stamping rice in traditional fashion in a hollow log (*lesung*),” Wreksodiningrat added other instruments and choreographed dances based on the rhythms of the interlocking stamping. The practice was quickly taken up by “groups both amateur and professional” and developed into a popular theatrical form (Brandon 1967: 47-48). One of the more popular songs of Nartosabdho, who early in his career performed with *kethoprak* troupes, is “Lesung Jumengglung.” The song describes and depicts the *lesung* in both its text and its music. A short documentary on YouTube profiles Sanggar Seni Sekarjagad, a cultural organization founded in Sukoharjo, a town south of Surakarta, to preserve the “lively intangible heritage” of *lesung* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IdRRmmChN68>, accessed 27 February 2013).

Asmara's 1991 "Prelude" featured more specifically musical, but no less iconic, elements from Javanese court traditions. It starts with *kemanak*, a pair of banana-shaped bronze bells, playing the simple alternating pattern that they do in the *gendhing kemanak* with which they are primarily associated.⁷⁹ The pattern even includes the *salahan*, the rhythmic variation of two off-beat strokes on the higher-pitched *kemanak* that anticipates the approaching gong—though Asmara, describing himself as “a little . . . not anti-, but ‘don’t return to tonic’,” deliberately chose not to use gong, precisely because it is like “the return to tonic,” something that “Javanese need.” “Prelude” also features a “singer/pesinden” singing an excerpt from a traditional Javanese poem, “Wahyu Mahkota Rama,” in the *macapat* meter *dhandhanggula turulare*, and in the *pelog nem* scale. These elements are, however, set in a piece which otherwise has nothing to do with traditional Javanese performance practice, nor for that matter with the conventional practices of Western art music. Instead, both Western pitched percussion and piano, and gamelan instruments in *pelog* and *slendro* tunings, follow a similar process of building up repeated sequences of notes as the piano part in “Gending Dolanan,” though in this case indicated through textual explanations. The instruments play independently of each other; with regular intervals at different tempos that remain constant through to the end, and with the instructions for each player to choose his or her own pitches, and to play each note in the sequence with a different dynamic, the overall effect is that of a cloud of clock-like machines.

79. *Gendhing kemanak*, one category of pieces used to accompany the *bedhaya* and *srimpi* dances that were specific to the Central Javanese courts (Holt 1967: 115-118), consist of elongated melodic lines sung by a female chorus, accompanied by a relatively spare ensemble of *kemanak*, *kendhang*, *kenong*, *kethuk*, and *gong*.

Composing for Gamelan

Starting in 2002, Asmara began a much more intensive engagement, composing a number of concert pieces for ensembles consisting exclusively of gamelan instruments. As significantly, the gamelan parts were neither drawn from traditional practice, nor generated by the performers based on written instructions, but largely, or entirely, through-composed. The first two—the “trio” for Javanese *gender*, “Night Music for Marzenka,” that caught Jack Body’s attention at the 2002 Yogyakarta Gamelan Festival, and “A Piece for 15 Rebab,” also from 2002—are relatively modest pieces for multiples of the same instrument that explore more systematically the juxtaposition of different scales.

Far more ambitious, almost orchestral in scope, is “Niji,” a composition scored for a more or less full Javanese gamelan and voices. Its opening and closing sections employ some instruction-based elements that, as in earlier pieces, add some degree of theatricality. Over the course of an extended opening, the majority of the performers enter the stage from the audience, speaking phrases from a poem by Shin Nakagawa—who commissioned the piece—and ringing bells a specified number of times. This activity is layered over two simple musical elements that start the piece: a pulsed drone from repeated strokes on a single *bonang* pot, and a *rebab* alternating between a held tone and six-note phrase that is varied rhythmically by elongating a single note, one note later with each repetition. This linear process is not unlike that used in previous pieces, but here the *rebab* part is fully written out, as are changes in the dynamics of the *bonang* drone.

After ten iterations of the *rebab* phrase, a *slendro gender* enters with a short repeated pattern, providing a link to the next section, for three *gender*, that is drawn from his “Night Music for Marzenka.” For most of the section, the three parts, for the one *slendro* and two

pelog gender found in a typical full gamelan, play continuously at a more or less even pulse—though the *pelog barang gender* plays in triplets against the even eighths and sixteenths of the other two, as they are notated using a hybrid system of ciphers for pitches and stems and beams for rhythm. Toward the end, they play short gestures in rhythmic unison, most of them placed on off-beats so as to obscure any sense of meter.

The *gender* are then joined by the *slenthem* in a transition to what, involving as it does the full ensemble, may be considered the core of the piece. Unison accents played by all of the bronze instruments mark the opening of this section, and periodically punctuate a texture that is at first diffuse, with each part playing single notes or short motives, but that through meticulously detailed scoring builds in density and energy, as some parts shift in and out of playing longer phrases, while other players stop playing their instruments to hum or speak text. After a shift with almost everyone humming the texture becomes more focused, even briefly suggesting a more conventional texture of a mostly stepwise *balungan*, first in *slendro* and then switching seamlessly to *pelog*, played by *demung* and *saron*, with *peking* doubling each note and *slenthem* playing one subdivision behind, as they traditionally would. The *balungan* leads into an extended *gantungan*, “hanging” on a single pitch, and the texture shifts back to being more rhythmically diffuse, building in density, and then playing one last stroke in unison on a different pitch. The piece ends with the players speaking fragments of the text—the score indicates simply that they should “make an improvisation”—as they leave the stage.

With a few of the parts in “Niji,” Asmara makes use of the expertise of his performers in traditional performance practice. For the *pesindhen*, who enters shortly after the introduction of humming in the section for full gamelan, he requires it. In contrast to the rhythmically

precise notation of the pointillistic instrumental parts, her fully idiomatic part is notated only approximately, with only periods to indicate tones that should be held longer. The exact execution of the line is left to her, as it would be traditionally—though in most traditional contexts, nothing at all, not even the text, would be explicitly specified. The *pesindhen* also adds appropriately idiomatic *gregel* (ornamentation), as does the *rebab* player. The *gregel* is especially key to the effectiveness of the *rebab* part in the opening, which is also notated only approximately with respect to rhythm—though that part uses the *pelog* scale quite unidiomatically, as a seven-tone scale rather than as a system of five-tone modes.

The brief passage in the section for full gamelan suggestive of traditional repertoire, while benefitting from the performers' experience in playing such repertoire, does not require knowledge of traditional performance practice. With traditional repertoire, players derive their parts from a notated (or memorized) *balungan* by applying the appropriate *garap* (treatment) implied by the musical context. In “Niji” all the parts are written out in full. What is required instead is thus an ability to read staff notation—or more specifically, its system of indicating rhythm. Going beyond this specific technical skill, as importantly “Niji” requires the ability of both the director and the ensemble to work together to realize a score where the parts mostly do not follow the conventions of an established idiom, either in themselves or in relationship to each other. Players cannot rely on anticipation of the expected, or confirmation of it from listening to other parts, but must follow the conductor. It demands, in short, a skill set specific to the Eurological mode of new music.

Asmara's compositional engagement with gamelan instruments has thus involved much less of an accommodation of the approach to music making of traditional or traditionally-based performers—an approach which can be termed Indological—than, for example, Tony

Prabowo's work with the New Jakarta Ensemble. He has, instead, transferred the same working methods used in his concert pieces for Western instruments, methods in which fully notated scores play a central role. He has, from this perspective, compromised less. This is not so much out of ideological rigidity, but more because the players he has worked with have allowed him to do so.

Asmara's "A Piece for 15 Rebab," though composed in 2002, was not performed until I premiered it at the Yogyakarta Gamelan Festival in 2005.⁸⁰ He was able to get his "Night Music for Marzenka" performed thanks to the availability of Marzanna Poplawska, then in Indonesia conducting her dissertation research, and Sumianto, a graduate of STSI (ASKI) Solo who was exceptionally committed to *musik kontemporer*. The third player, Bambang Siswanto, was one of the most promising gamelan musicians to pass through STSI in the late 1990s, but was far more focused on traditional repertoire. He managed to learn and play Asmara's piece, but he noted that he wasn't really able to grasp it (*tidak bisa ditangkap*) and that it was "odd." It came as a shock to him, as he was used to "memorizing a melody" and then "expressing" it. Instead, he felt "disturbed," and his "brain had to work." Siswanto commented that Asmara "never played" himself, but nevertheless he "could tell when there were mistakes," and so Siswanto "believed in him as a composer" (Bambang Siswanto, p.c., 24 July 2004).

Asmara composed the much more ambitious "Niji" knowing that "it was not Indonesians that would play," but instead the Japanese group Gamelan Marga Sari, directed by Nakagawa, that commissioned the piece. This is not to say Asmara did not have to take into account their capabilities. From visiting the group he knew that some had "no musical

80. I performed one of the parts live along with a multitrack recording of myself playing the others.

experience other than gamelan.” He knew that “not all of them are musicians,” that some were “visual artists,” and that some counted “in the gamelan method” while others counted “in the method of Western music.” Nakagawa had asked for “an improvisational piece” so that the group could “enjoy the process,” and was worried the piece Asmara wrote would be beyond their capabilities. In the end, the group was able to tackle the piece. The group did get “stuck” during the dress rehearsal, but managed to play the piece without any problems for the performance.

(Re-)orienting the Eurological

When I spoke with Asmara about “Niji” in 2004, I asked whether the piece could be played in Indonesia. His immediate response was that he could not imagine it being possible, but then he said “maybe, but the process would be long.” “Niji” has yet to be performed in Indonesia. However, “A Piece for Bonang,” a composition in a similar vein but for a smaller ensemble of five players, has. The piece was presented at the Southeast Asia Competition and Festival in Bandung in 2011, the competition whose jury Asmara was invited to serve on by Dieter Mack.

Scored for all the *pencon* instruments in a Javanese gamelan (*bonang barung* and *bonang panerus* in *slendro* and *pelog*, and *kenong*), “A Piece for Bonang” uses serial techniques, taking “4,5,1,7 pelog” and “6, 5,2, slendro” [sic] as “the basic row” and then using it “to create permutations.”⁸¹ Even more than “Niji,” the resulting composition has nothing to do with traditional idioms, with only a fleeting reference in one instrument’s part to the

81. From notes posted by Asmara at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gFiVb7n4x4c>, accessed 22 May 2013.

alternating figures of *mipil* technique.⁸² Having organized and participated in a performance of the piece myself, it became clear that it required no familiarity with the performance practice of *karawitan*, but instead needed to be approached as a piece of contemporary percussion music that happened to be scored for Javanese instruments.⁸³

“A Piece for Bonang” was performed in Bandung in 2011 by Ensemble Kyai Fatahillah, which is perhaps the first group of musicians who are equally at home performing both traditional gamelan music—in their case, Sundanese *gamelan salendro*—and complex notated scores in the Eurological mode of *musik kontemporer*. Most of the ensemble’s members were graduates of the performing arts high school in Bandung (SMKI, Sekolah Menengah Karawitan Indonesia), a school whose focus was traditional music, but where “Western music” was added around 2001. The group’s founder, Iwan Gunawan, noted that this was a “cause for concern,” but did not elaborate (p.c., 11 June 2005). The group formed at the Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI, formerly IKIP, Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan), where the members gained considerable skill as composers and performers of *musik kontemporer* under the tutelage of Dieter Mack, who had been teaching as a guest lecturer at UPI/IKIP since 1992.⁸⁴

82. In this technique, pairs of tones from a slower-moving *balungan* are repeated, in anticipation of their appearance in the *balungan*.

83. I organized the performance after learning of the piece from a recording of a rehearsal that Asmara had posted online. The group that played the piece was the “new music unit” of the Cornell Gamelan Ensemble. In contrast to the students and community members of the regular ensemble, who like the members of Gamelan Marga Sari often have little or no musical experience other than with gamelan, the “new music unit,” formed for this performance, consisted of three graduate composition students, myself, and Cornell’s director of percussion, Tim Feeney. That we were able to perform the piece satisfactorily owed much to the guidance Feeney was able to offer, drawing upon his extensive experience with contemporary art music as a percussionist with a Doctor of Musical Arts from Yale University.

84. http://www.dieter-mack.de:8081/dieter_mack/about-me/biography, accessed 29 May 2013.

Mack's influence is especially apparent in the work of Gunawan, which I first heard when I went to a rehearsal at UPI in 2005. Kyai Fatahillah was preparing a program to take to a major festival of Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia in Berlin, the music programs of which were curated by Mack. It was this opportunity that prompted the group to give itself a name. The program also included a new piece written for the ensemble by Slamet Abdul Sjukur, from whom I had found out about the rehearsal, and with whom I had travelled from Jakarta. Some of the items the group played demonstrated their facility with traditional Sundanese music. Most striking was their ease in playing the scores by Sjukur, and especially that by Gunawan—scores which like Asmara's "Niji" were through-composed and fully notated. It was this capability that distinguished them from other gamelan ensembles. For the more traditional items, Gunawan played *kendang*, while for Sjukur's piece and his own he conducted, the players reading from parts on music stands. For Gunawan's piece "Fonem" the players also spoke what I described in my fieldnotes as a "made up text" that sounded "vaguely German"; the program notes clarified that "the underlying concept" for the piece was the "desemanticisation" of "syllables of words in foreign languages." The music was sharp and angular, with unpredictable accents that were closely coordinated with sequenced computer processed sounds. One player, seated in a chair, played a set of *kendang* set vertically in a circle, with mallets. Another played what Gunawan described as "prepared bonang . . . like Cage," with the pots rearranged so that traditional patterns would sound completely different.⁸⁵

Ensemble Kyai Fatahillah strengthens the facet of *musik kontemporer* represented by

85. http://hkw.eu/en/programm/2005/raeumeundschaten/veranstaltung_1343/Veranstaltungsdetail_1_5300.php?calmonth=2010-06&month=2010-06&bcal=1, accessed 16 August 2010.

Asmara's compositions for gamelan instruments, providing a more dependable outlet for the performance of such works within Indonesia. Through their engagement with fully notated scores and modernist idioms, they meet composers like Asmara halfway, or perhaps even further. They support a rather different kind of nativist turn, one that does not require composers working in a Eurological mode to altogether change their working methods.

This kind of nativist turn also differs from those I have examined so far in that it is less dramatic. In Asmara's case, this is not only because of the direction he has ended up taking, but also because of where he started. His application of the serialist techniques he employed in his pieces for Western instruments to his score for *bonang* represents a significant degree of continuity in his compositional approach. But there is also significant continuity in his outlook, as he was already in one important sense nativist.

In Asmara's narrative of how he came to compose the music he does, there is no episode of a revelatory encounter, such as Sjukur falling in love with the music of Ravel, or of any other decisive moment that led him to become captivated by Western Art Music. He does not define himself as a composer in relationship to idols such as Boulez or Takemitsu, even though he shares with Prabowo a predilection for the musical idiom of high modernism. He is not "pure urban," but grew up amidst a mix of Javanese and Western cultural expressions. Thus, when he began pursuing music seriously in two closely related environments that were very much Western-oriented—that of AMI, and that of the circle of students who were marginalized because of their interest in *musik kontemporer*, but who nevertheless remained in AMI/ISI's orbit—Asmara was, he recounted, "thought to be a *karawitan* person."

Far from becoming a *karawitan* person, however, Asmara became a composer steadfastly committed to the Eurological mode. He has actively and explicitly promoted this mode

through the Yogyakarta Contemporary Music Festival, which starting with the fifth festival in 2009 declared its goal thus: “to create a space for atonal, twelve-tone and total serialism, electro-acoustic and aleatoric compositional methods.” The statement added at the end “along with the influences of ethnic musical styles,” a relegation of traditional music to a minor, supporting role that parallels its place in Asmara’s own compositions: as fleeting references within or self-contained elements juxtaposed against music that is otherwise decidedly modernist, whether it is for Western or Javanese instruments. Yet although Asmara’s approach as a composer is solidly Eurological, he claims to think “like a traditional person.” He rejects the label “Western-oriented,” and speaks of his obsession to “Javanize” Western music.

Asmara’s approach to Javanizing Western music is, however, highly idiosyncratic, and with no obvious effect on how his music sounds. This is in contrast to the way his application of serialist techniques make his gamelan compositions sound utterly unlike traditional *karawitan*—or, for that matter, the Indological *musik kontemporer* of traditionally-based composers. He states that he thinks “like a traditional person,” but he does not act like a traditional Javanese musician. The most important effect of Asmara’s efforts to Javanize Western music is not on the way his music sounds, but rather on the authority, or sense of authority, he thereby gains. He has engaged with a Eurological mode of creating music, and has thus developed that part of his musical self that is Westernized. But he has done so without becoming fully Western-oriented, without feeling like he is simply following an external aesthetic authority. Maintaining a sense of connection to his own Javanese heritage helps him do this, and in turn bolsters his authority when he then turns toward composing for traditional Javanese instruments. Asmara’s practice as a composer is thus hybrid, and no less

so in his pieces for Western instruments than in his pieces for gamelan or mixed instrumentation. But as a hybridity that is not necessarily apparent, what matters is less that it “intervenes in the exercise of authority” (Bhabha 1994: 114)—that is, by authorities that would have power over him—but more that it fosters his own authority and thus enables him to act.

This is not to suggest that external authorities no longer mattered, or that Asmara could simply ignore them. He responded to them in diverse, sometimes contradictory ways. Asmara called Javanizing Western music his obsession, but he also declared that music must not have ethnicity. In between these two seemingly incompatible positions is another part of the mission statement for the Yogyakarta Contemporary Music Festival, which identified its “intention . . . to inform the Yogyakarta musicians and audience as fully as possible about current ideas, theories, and concepts in the musical world especially in Asia.” Here there is both a generalizing of aesthetic authority, posing “ideas, theories, and concepts” as “current,” rather than coming from a specific geo-cultural area, and at the same time a prioritizing of attention to how the modernist aesthetics have been taken up “in Asia.” The common denominator underlying all of these statements is a quiet challenging of the idea that musical modernism is necessarily Western.

Having more successfully established a sense of his own authority as a composer than most of his peers—including, perhaps, Tony Prabowo—Asmara has brought to his more concrete efforts to reinvigorate the Western-oriented *musik kontemporer* scene in Jogja a much needed confidence. He has done so, in part, by making it less Western-oriented, even as it remains largely Eurological. Together with the contributions of others such as Iwan Gunawan and Ensemble Kyai Fatahillah, the Eurological mode of *musik kontemporer* may

yet find the authority that it has heretofore lacked. It may yet gain a more prominent place in the broader field of musical activity that the term *musik kontemporer* has come to designate. It is highly unlikely, however, that it will dominate, as there are other equally notable trends. It is to these that I now turn.

7 Out of Obscurity: Blurred Boundaries with the Rise of Eclecticism

Up to this point, the focus of my account of *musik kontemporer*'s pre-history, its history proper, and the predicaments with which those involved with it must contend, has been directed toward understanding its most exemplary facets: the modernist and experimentalist work carried out by both Western-oriented and traditionally-based composers. There is, however, more to *musik kontemporer* than sound exploration, the use of electronics, happenings, and the language of high modernism, applied to either Western or Indonesian instruments, as the brief account of the eclectic offerings at the first Yogyakarta Contemporary Music Festival that opens this study, and the short section on the rise of such eclecticism in the previous chapter, have quite vividly demonstrated.

This chapter seeks to make sense of the increasingly eclectic profile of *musik kontemporer*. From the outset, because it encompassed the work of both Western-oriented and traditionally-based composers, *musik kontemporer* has been fundamentally diverse. There was nevertheless a shared emphasis on conspicuous innovation, encouraged by the senior figures who oversaw the emergence of *musik kontemporer*'s initial scenes, and the central forum, the Pekan Komponis Muda, that brought those scenes together. The price of this emphasis on innovation was a certain degree of obscurity. As the influence of those senior figures waned, *musik kontemporer* began to drift toward a more unruly eclecticism, which

can be understood as a shift away from elitist conceptions of aesthetic validity toward those that were more populist, away from a primary responsiveness to authority toward a search for broader relevance. The balance of specific concerns and strategies varied considerably, between the active pursuit of an audience broader than the rather specialized one that *musik kontemporer* had developed; an engagement with musical idioms that would seem to support such a move, or that were more consonant with the full range of one's individual affinities; a renewed commitment to traditional musics that, at least in living memory, if less so presently, were widely appreciated; or a prioritizing of more participatory and interactive modes of music making. Common to all of these approaches was some idea of connecting, actually or at least potentially, with a broader socio-aesthetic base.

With this shift came a blurring—or in some cases a redrawing, or effacing—of boundaries, and the increasingly consuming debate over what was and what was not *musik kontemporer*. The biggest and most unsettling challenge came from the increasing amount of work that eroded what Andreas Huyssen characterized as “the great divide” between high art and popular culture (Huyssen 1986). It is this work, and the composers who produced it, that the bulk of this chapter profiles, through case studies of what I call alternative populisms. Before turning to those, I first examine a challenge to *musik kontemporer*'s sense of identity rooted in aspects that were present from the start: the presence of what in general terms might be called traditionalism. Finally, I examine the truly alternative populism represented by composers who have chosen to collaborate with individuals and communities at further remove from the elite urban milieu in which *musik kontemporer* initially developed.

A Fundamental Diversity: The Enduring Importance of the Traditional

Trajectories of Traditionalism

After the eighth iteration of the Pekan Komponis Muda in 1988—which by that point was called simply the Pekan Komponis—the Jakarta Arts Council withdrew its funding for the event. The festival was not held again until ten years later, in 1998, and after that only sporadically, with a meeting in Bandung in 2000, and most recently in Solo in 2005. It ceased to be a regular annual event, and thus no longer functioned as the central forum for *musik kontemporer* it had been through the 1980s.

Musik kontemporer thus lost the aesthetic anchor that the PKM had provided, in large part through Suka Hardjana's exercise of both curatorial agency, in inviting and not infrequently advising participants, and critical authority, in offering feedback in discussions and in printed reviews. Other losses in particular scenes further contributed to a decline in the importance of centralized aesthetic authority. With his death in 1983, Gendhon Humardani was no longer present to push his vision of a contemporary existence for the traditional performing arts on students and faculty at ASKI Solo. Though in his teaching Slamet Abdul Sjukur had encouraged his students to question authority in general, his exit from IKJ, which prompted theirs, more decisively undermined whatever aesthetic authority IKJ had represented.

Unmoored, *musik kontemporer* began to drift toward the kind of unruly eclecticism touched on briefly earlier in this study, and that will be explored more extensively in this chapter. What made that eclecticism especially unruly was work that engaged with aspects of popular culture, which from Humardani's perspective, and Hardjana's also, at least initially,

was the opposite of the kind of musical creativity they encouraged. But also contributing to that eclecticism was a diversity more fundamental to *musik kontemporer*.

From its outset, the PKM accommodated a considerable range of work. Besides the inherent heterogeneity of experimentalism, there was the fundamental plurality that derived from the inclusion from the outset of both traditionally-based and Western-oriented participants. While the sides of *musik kontemporer* they represented remained distinct in this forum, the strong showing of traditionally-based composers reflected and reinforced the underlying balance of aesthetic authority that led Western-oriented composers—and, as we saw, Hardjana himself—to work with traditional instruments and musicians, in ways examined in the previous two chapters.

Cutting across the distinction between the Western-oriented and traditionally-based was that between experimentalism and what might be characterized as traditionalism. While the kinds of conspicuous experimentalism represented on the Western-oriented side by Sutanto's happening and Otto Sidharta's and Franki Raden's electroacoustics, and on the traditionally-based side by ASKI's sound exploration, were mostly held up as exemplary—an exception was A. Wahyudi Sutrisno's piece for the seventh PKM, which Suka Hardjana panned as a "*catastrophic image . . . beyond the ability of my sound mind*" (Hardjana 1987, in 2004b:213)—there was also work that was more aesthetically conservative.

The significance of such work, in terms of the challenge it posed to *musik kontemporer*'s experimentalist identity, varied considerably, however. Traditionalism on the Western-oriented side, because of its lack of "a fundamental," as Hardjana put it (chapter 5), meant something different than it did on the traditionally-based side, and had a different trajectory. As the number of Western-oriented composers at the PKM dwindled, the works they

presented tended to hew more closely to the Western art music canon, at least in format: Royke Koapaha's "Sonatina" for piano and flute at the fourth PKM in 1983 (Hardjana 1986: 239-249); Marusya Nainggolan's pieces for a flute trio, a cello quartet, and a sextet of winds, strings, and piano, and Yazeed Djamin's pieces for piano and piano and violin at the sixth in 1985 (Hardjana 1986: 387-397); and Trisutji Kamal's work for two pianos and singers at the eighth in 1988 (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta 1988: 6-9). These more "classical" pieces at the PKM did not, however, presage a more widespread turn toward the Western art music canon on the part of Western-oriented composers. Djamin, as director of the Nusantara Chamber Orchestra, might have been a force for this direction, but ceased to be a significant presence of any kind after moving to Malaysia in 1994 (chapter 6). Kamal, who had once appeared as a standard bearer for classicism, as for example in her comments at the *Pertemuan Musik* in 1974 (chapter 5), had, like so many Western-oriented composers, gone nativist, founding an ensemble that included Balinese percussion in 1994 (chapter 6). Nainggolan had similarly turned away from her earlier focus on classical instruments and players, even if she retained the terminology. A concert of her works in 2005 featured an ensemble with the English-language name Marusya Chamber Music that combined four guitars, marimba, electric bass, drum kit (played by the rock drummer Innisisri), and traditional percussion (one of the players, I G KOMPIANG RAKA, was also a member of Kamal's ensemble), with Nainggolan herself on piano.¹ The "Dialogue in Music" they presented steered clear of the modernism of her earlier work, which in at least one case employed serialism,² instead trading in folk-rock

1. The concert, which I attended, was held on 25 June 2005 at the Gedung Kesenian Jakarta, where Nainggolan served as director.

2. The composition for flute trio, "Malam," that Nainggolan presented at the 1985 PKM was based on a theme using the "system of 12 notes" (Hardjana 1986: 389).

and other popular idioms, with Nainggolan and Raka adding paraclassical and what had come to be called *etnik* accents.

A composer like Joko Lemas, who presented a wind quintet in a neo-classical style at the first Yogyakarta Contemporary Music Festival (Introduction), is thus more an idiosyncratic exception, among a host of idiosyncratic exceptions, than he is representative of a new mainstream. Perhaps because the aesthetic conservatism exemplified by his work represented neither a new orthodoxy, nor, more importantly, a return to an older one, it has been tolerated even by those who have followed and/or pushed an avant-gardist agenda. Fishing for his opinion of such work, I brought up Joko Lemas's wind quintet in speaking with Slamet Abdul Sjukur, knowing that he had, in the 1970s, complained about the Indonesian music world being one or two hundred years behind (chapter 3). Sjukur did not know of Lemas, so he asked me what his work was like. I described the piece as sounding like something out of the Paris conservatoire circa 1910, and admitted that I found it rather anachronistic. But was this a problem, if the work was good? Sjukur responded "if it's good, no problem" (Slamet Abdul Sjukur, p.c., 20 August 2005). Joseph Praba, who prided himself as being an "orang gila" (crazy person), characterized Trisutji Kamal as "mischievous" (*nakal*), who composed pieces that were "not pleasant for the ear to listen to"—though he liked them. Praba did, however, readily acknowledge, when I expressed my surprise, that she was not as far out as Sjukur (Joseph Praba, p.c., 14 August 2005). Discussing Kamal with Michael Asmara, Asmara recognized that Kamal was "not revolutionary," but also argued that one should not compare the "extent of progression with Europe, America"; one needed to view it "relative to the general culture" (Michael Asmara, p.c., 06 September 2004).

In some of the newer traditionally-based scenes, aesthetic conservatism was more of an

issue. Jennifer Fraser notes that many Minangkabau composers involved with *musik kontemporer*, such as the brothers Hajizar and Elizar, were “driven by a concern for indigenous aesthetics,” and saw *musik kontemporer* as an alternative to the somewhat Westernized and pop-oriented form of *talempong kreasi*.³ Elizar’s piece “Bakucimang,” presented at the eighth Pekan Komponis in 1988, worked entirely with traditional material.⁴ Other Minangkabau composers, however, “wished to reserve the term exclusively for avant-garde practices that were not culturally reformist in nature.” Anusirwan, who became a member of Tony Prabowo’s New Jakarta Ensemble, was dismissive of the “reimagination of indigenous sources in new forms,” criticizing them as “mere arrangements and thereby less creative” (Fraser 2007: 252-253).

There has also been some tension between avant-gardism and more aesthetically conservative or traditionalist positions in the better established traditionally-based scenes in Solo and Denpasar. But as two conspicuously iconoclastic cases demonstrate, both of them involving gongs, the most venerated of gamelan instruments, the way in which this tension plays out, and what it meant for *musik kontemporer*, is more complex than it might first appear. Sang Nyoman Arsawijaya’s 2006 graduating recital piece “Geräusch,” which involved playing a gong with an electric grinder (McGraw 2009: 131-133), prompted I Nyoman Windha, as ISI Denpasar’s leading composition faculty member, to channel

3. *Talempong kreasi* is a genre of new “creations” using large ensembles *talempong*, brass gong-chimes similar in form to Javanese *bonang*, tuned diatonically to facilitate the performance of traditional and pop melodies in arrangements using Western-style functional harmony. See Fraser (2007:chapter 4) for an extensive discussion.

4. The focus of the piece was the interlocking patterns of *talempong pacik*, small hand-held brass gong chime, which Elizar “tried to develop,” in part by drawing on “techniques and patterns of other Minangkabau musics” (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta 1988: 10). As Jennifer Fraser notes in her brief discussion of the piece, the the “musical references” to specific regional styles “are explicit ”(Fraser 2007: 253-254).

successive classes into creating “more healthy works of art in the interest of the Balinese people” (I Nyoman Windha, quoted in McGraw 2009:124). Arsawijaya’s piece was intended as a “provocative statement of protest against the ISI faculty.” But rather than an outright rejection of traditionalism, he and others more specifically objected to the emphasis on formalism in ISI Denpasar’s pedagogy, viewing it as a betrayal of what they believed was the true spirit of traditional Balinese music. Arsawijaya’s and others’ transgressions, McGraw observes, were “often rooted in a respect for a real or imagined golden age” in which composers were less beholden to rules, and in which art employed the ugly toward critical ends (McGraw 2009:132-134).

Starting with a performance more than a decade earlier, at Taman Budaya Surakarta in 1995, I Wayan Sadra made use of gongs by dragging them on the floor. In his case, the gesture was intended as a critique of the mythology surrounding gongs, prompted by a visit to a foundry which made pointedly evident to Sadra that gongs “emerged not from the mystery of ritual, mantra and religion, but from pure, grinding, exploitative labor” (McGraw 2013b: 341-342). Rahayu Supanggah, when I interviewed him in 2004, alluded to Sadra’s (mis-)use of gongs after I asked him to elaborate on his comment that he didn’t want to damage tradition. He noted that he could not bring himself to use instruments in the way that some of his colleagues do. He stopped short of condemning Sadra, or others who play instruments in ways that might damage them, whether for the sake of social critique or simply in search of new sounds, stating simply “That’s their responsibility, not mine—I have a different attitude” (Rahayu Supanggah, p.c., 21 July 2004). Sadra’s iconoclasm did not disqualify him from taking his turn as head of the *karawitan* department at STSI (ASKI) Solo in the mid 2000s, a role that seemed to inspire a heightened concern with the decline of general interest in

gamelan in Java. The problem, Sadra suggested, had in part to do with “stagnation” and the lack of new compositions that used “complete gamelan,” as opposed to non-standard sets of instruments—such as just gongs—“as the basis of innovation” (I Wayan Sadra, p.c., 04 August 2005).

The tension between an avant-gardist imperative and the concerns of traditionalism in Denpasar and Solo—where the two most significant contingents of traditionally-based composers are based—had most of all to do with finding a balance between, on the one hand, creative freedom and ideas of aesthetic and social progress, and on the other, propriety and the maintenance of traditions. The question of whether work of a more traditionalist character should or should not be regarded as *musik kontemporer* was less of an issue. In both scenes, *musik kontemporer* was well enough established that its place at one end of a spectrum of approaches to the creation and performance of music that related in different ways to long-standing traditions did not threaten its identity. A full survey of these approaches, most of which would not be categorized as *musik kontemporer*, is beyond the scope of this study. Here I provide only a partial sampling of work by composers at ASKI Solo to draw attention to the enduring importance of an ongoing involvement in tradition on *musik kontemporer*’s profile. As will be seen, composers at ASKI Solo did not focus exclusively on *musik kontemporer*, but also produced work that fell at different points toward the traditional end of the spectrum.

In Service of Tradition

In general, Sutton’s comments about A. L. Suwardi from 1993, that “unlike many of the Western composers we would identify as avant-garde” he “does not appear to have a political

or social axe to grind, nor is he bent on consistently offering up challenging or unusual music for gamelan” (Sutton 1993: 60), continue to hold true for nearly all of the composers associated with ASKI Solo. In support of his observation, Sutton pointed to two pieces by Suwardi, a *ketawang* “in a mostly traditional *bedhayan* style,” and a “light dolanan (à la Nartosabdho) written in the early 1980s,” the latter created “for the opening of a government-funded dam in Wonogiri” (Sutton 1993: 61). Suwardi has continued to compose in a variety of styles. The two pieces he presented at the Art Summit Indonesia in 2001 featured the fruit of more than twenty-years exploring sound, using mostly instruments of his own invention, and though they contain rather more material of a quasi-traditional character than some of his earlier pieces, they still feature long sections that focus on sonic textures rather than melody or rhythm. But for a commission for a recording project featuring “Contemporary Composers” produced by John Noise Manis,⁵ Suwardi composed a piece for *siteran* ensemble that was innovative in squarely traditional ways—combining a vocal melody in the style of the *kroncong*-derived *langgam* form with instruments in the *siter* family playing as they would for *jineman*, “a genuine Javanese genre,” but tuned to a *barang miring* scale.⁶ His aim

5. The project, which involved Suwardi and five other faculty members at ASKI (STSI) Solo, resulted in the audio CD *Gamelan of Java, Volume II: Contemporary Composers* (Lyricord LYRCD 7457), one of a significant number of projects and CDs produced by Giovanni Sciarrino under his pseudonym John Noise Manis. According to Manis, for this project “the musicians were entirely free to conceive and realize their compositions.” In many other projects involving traditional repertoire, however, Manis has intervened, sometimes significantly; see my review of two of his CDs (Miller 2011) for an overview and critique.

6. *Siteran* ensembles are named after the plucked zithers (*siter*) which form the core of its instrumentation. They also typically include one or more singers and a drummer. In his notes for the piece, titled “Sindhen Kewek,” Suwardi states that the ensemble “experienced its ‘golden age’ in the 1920s and 1930s.” By the 1990s, it was associated mostly with street musicians. *Langgam*, as discussed in chapters 1 and 2, was a form of *kroncong* that drew upon Euro-American popular song, and that was later adopted to gamelan by Nartosabdho and others. *Jineman* are light and small-scale pieces featuring a melody sung by a pesindhen. *Barang miring* is not traditionally a scale that instruments are tuned to, but rather a scale superimposed on the *slendro* tuning system by singers and

was to “offer new possibilities of treatment . . . in the hope that it will help revitalize the development of *siteran*.”⁷

With some ASKI Solo composers, the contrast between their *kontemporer* and traditional work can be even more stark. In 2005 Sukamso presented “Glenak Glenuk,” a work that featured *kempul*, a set of small hanging gongs conventionally used to punctuate phrases and mark subdivisions in cyclical structures.⁸ Sukamso removed them from the rack from which they are usually hung to be played by a single player, and gave one to each of eight players seated in a semi-circle, along with individual *pencon* from a *bonang panembung*. At the opening the instruments are played with conventional mallets, but with fast bouncing strokes that mute the sound, which is further muffled by the placement of the instruments directly on padding on the floor. The short gestures passed among the players, with no sense of meter, give rise to a murmuring texture that changes in density and dynamic, but is otherwise consistent. The piece turns theatrical when the players, all male, first whisper and then talk with one another, until a ninth female performer walks past. Sukamso jumps up and leads her back to the middle of the semi-circle and convinces her to join them. After another minute or so of discussion, as if in rehearsal, they recite *kendhangan* syllables in an exaggeratedly slow unison.⁹ Later in the piece, the male players play just the *kempul*, with the mallet on the knob and by slapping their hands on the face, in unison in a through composed rhythmic pattern

rebab, most often for short melodic passages.

7. Unabridged program notes from a CD release by John Noise Manis (2009), lyrichord.com/linernotes/LYRCD7457US.pdf, accessed 17 December 2013.

8. My discussion is based on a copy of a video recording obtained from Kaori Okada.

9. *Kendhangan*, the parts played on *kendhang*, can be spoken using standardized syllables. As dance movement correspond closely to *kendhangan* patterns, Javanese dance teachers routinely use such syllables in teaching.

with no obvious sense of repetition. In contrast to this conspicuously *kontemporer* work, Sukamso also, in that same year, composed a piece more in keeping with his role at ASKI/STSI/ISI, and in the broader *karawitan* community in Solo, as a gender specialist.¹⁰ At the Klenengan Pujangga Laras, a monthly event sponsored by non-Indonesian aficionados of *karawitan* that has become one of the major venues for the playing of “classical” repertoire, Sukamso presented a newly composed *gendhing* in a fully traditional idiom.¹¹ The *gendhing* took its title, “Leng-Leng,” from the opening words of the text to *pathetan slendro nem wantah*, the melody on which the piece was based, using the same kind of compositional process as other well known pieces in the traditional repertoire.¹²

Other composers at ASKI/STSI/ISI downplay the distinction between *kontemporer* and traditional. Supanggah went so far, when I interviewed him in 2004, to assert quite adamantly that for him “there is no difference between tradition and *kontemporer*.” To a certain extent this outlook is reflected in his work. Compared to most of his colleagues, those pieces that would be categorized as *kontemporer*, subsequent to “Gambuh,” the piece he presented at the first PKM in 1979, have tended to be more suffused with traditional material. Meanwhile, his *gendhing* tend to be more melodically complex than most, whether recently composed or

10. Sukamso was, for example, the *gender* player on most of the final series of recordings released by national recording company Lokananta (ACD 301 through ACD 325).

11. For this particular *klenengan*, the participants had decided to play all *gendhing* written by regular participants, recognizing the increasing number of such pieces by musicians in the scene in Solo. As Kitisie Emerson, who along with her husband Wakdi Dwidjomartono is primarily responsible for organizing the *klenengan*, noted, “it was an entire evening of new pieces, but all in a traditional Solo style such that you would never know the pieces didn’t come out of Bp. Mloyo’s notation book!” (http://www.gamelanbvg.com/pl/reports/year_04/4_10_20050521.html, accessed 31 December 2013). The reference is to the authoritative compendium of traditional Solonese repertoire compiled by Mloyowidodo (Mloyowidodo 1976).

12. This process of turning unmetered vocal melodies into gamelan compositions is the subject of the fourth chapter of Sumarsam’s 1995 book *Gamelan: Cultural Interaction and Musical Development in Central Java*.

older. Yet the differences in approach between these and other facets of his work remain unmistakable. This is neatly demonstrated by two pieces Supanggah presented at a Pujangga Laras *klenengan* in 2009 that doubled as an inauguration of a gamelan that he had just acquired. The first, a *gendhing* that like Sukamso's was based on *pathetan slendro nem wantah*—though more cryptically and in a *bedhayan* style, with a prominent vocal melody sung by a large mixed chorus—was played by the regular participants at the *klenengan*. They were able to sight-read the piece—which for the instrumentalists meant interpreting the *balungan* as they would any piece in a traditional idiom¹³—though the singers stumbled at times over less predictable turns of phrase, and the ensemble as a whole might not have made it through some somewhat unconventional transitions had Supanggah himself not played *kendhang*.¹⁴ The second piece was an almost completely reworked version of “Gambuh.” It was stripped of the most conspicuously experimentalist elements in the 1979 PKM version—the textural episodes, the humming tops, and exaggerated *alok* (chapter 4). Instead, all the material related to traditional idioms, though not all of them were Central Javanese. The first of two sections involving full gamelan treated the *pelog* scale more in the manner of a piece for a Balinese *gong semar pegulingan* in *saih pitu*,¹⁵ and included a male performer singing in

13. See Brinner (1995) on the issue of musical competence, and how notation is used. See Perlman (2004), especially chapter 4, for a focused examination of “The *Balungan* as Melodic Guide.”

14. The piece—titled *gendhing* “Sasangka,” the first word in the second phrase of *pathetan slendro nem wantah*—began not with a *buka*, a melodic introduction played by *rebab* or some other instrument, but directly from *pathetan Kedhu*, another *slendro nem pathetan*. Supanggah was able to signal the entrance of the rest of ensemble with *kendhang* strokes that lead into the first stroke of gong. My comments are based on a recording obtained from <http://www.gamelanbvg.com/pl/>, accessed 13 January 2014.

15. *Gong semar pegulingan* is an older form of Balinese gamelan associated with Balinese courts. Many *gong semar pegulingan* are tuned to *saih pitu*, a heptatonic scale similar to Javanese *pelog*, but used distinctively as a true heptatonic mode, rather than as tuning system allowing modulation between pentatonic modes.

the style of Balinese *tembang*. A later section superimposed melodies of a Balinese *suling gambuh*, a Javanese *pesindhen*, and Qur’anic recitation. It was not the regular *klenengan* participants who performed the piece—indeed, they would not be able to—but rather Supanggih’s own ensemble, Paguyuban Gamelan Garasi Benawa, the members of which are all instructors at ASKI. Many of them were involved in the recording of yet another version of “Gambuh,” released on a self-produced CD with the bilingual title “Kurmat Pada Tradisi (Homage to Tradition)” in 2001.

Of all the composers associated with ASKI/STSI/ISI Solo, the most insistently committed to that scene’s hallmark approach of sound exploration, and its implied departure from tradition, is Pande Made Sukerta—though that insistence has come to manifest itself more in his teaching than his compositional output, which tapered off in the mid-1990s.¹⁶ In our conversations in 2004 and 2005 there were several times that he declared “it’s called new composition [*komposisi baru*], there has to be something new.” Otherwise “it’s just composition.” It is not that Sukerta insists on discovering an entirely new palette of sounds for every composition. On the contrary, he has liberally reused “discoveries” from his earliest explorations of sound, such as flexed sheets of plywood and the clapping of drinking glasses. And though he spoke of stepping outside tradition, of leaving tradition behind completely, with only one or two exceptions his pieces also include traditional material—though invariably that material is handled in ways that clearly reframe it. It may be radically circumscribed in scope, as with his use of a Minangkabau *saluang* playing an idiomatic trill

16. Sukerta’s commitment to sound exploration is evident in his self-produced handbook on composition, which he first put together in 1989. The most recent version is from 2001. Jody Diamond is apparently working on an English translation, with the intention of publishing it in *Balungan* (Jody Diamond, p.c., 1 November 2013).

but sticking to a single note in one section of his 1989 composition “Mana 689.” Later in that same piece, the *saluang* plays the kind of unmeasured flourishes it would in a traditional context, but superimposed with another performer speaking in Javanese and low pitched glissandi produced by rubbing the head of a large frame drum.¹⁷ In an essay co-written with Suwardi about the pieces they presented at the fifth PKM in 1984, they addressed the occasional use in their pieces of “figuration, techniques and idioms that resemble traditional models,” acknowledging that however much they may long for “emancipation” from their background, it is one thing that “consistently pounds” on their “spirit.” They asked whether this was “a sign” of their “inability” to “act and change totally” (Hardjana 1986: 316). Yet far from viewing an involvement in tradition only as an impediment, Sukerta believed it provided an indispensable foundation. He believed that for “people making composition, tradition must be strong.” He felt that people who “don’t know traditional *karawitan*” should “not bother” to compose, as the results would be “really bad” and “only sort of new” (Pande Made Sukerta, p.c., 07 September 2004).

Supanggah, when I interviewed him, declared “I am a traditional person.” The same can be said of all the composers in the scene at ASKI/STSI/ISI, Sukerta included—even if, in suggesting “traditional” and “non-traditional” as terms to categorize the inclinations of different regional scenes, he identifies with the latter category.¹⁸ They are all profoundly grounded in their backgrounds and ongoing involvement in their respective regional musical traditions. Those, like Sukerta, who expressed a desire to break free from their backgrounds,

17. My comments are based on the recording of the piece on a CD produced by Jody Diamond (1993).

18. In Sukerta’s opinion, *musik kontemporer* composers in Bali still worked within the framework of tradition.

have departed from tradition only to then bring tradition along with them. He has engaged in what he regards as non-traditional composition, but that work nevertheless reflects his foundation in traditional music.¹⁹ But while all composers in the scene at ASKI/STSI/ISI are in an important sense traditional, that sense is different from the sense in which, for example, the majority of the participants at an event like Klenengan Pujangga Laras are traditional. The way in which their *kontemporer* compositions exist—as idiosyncratic pieces created for specific occasions and committed to memory by the specific group of players involved in their creation and realization, which if they are performed for another occasion must be recreated, and as often as not are extensively reworked—differs markedly from the way in which traditional gamelan repertoire exists—as pieces held at least at one time in shared memory, and even if recalled, or seen for the first time in case of new *gendhing*, conforming to melodic conventions that allow any group of musicians steeped in the interpretive practices of *karawitan* to realize.

In declaring that for him, there is no difference between tradition and *kontemporer*, it is surely not that Supanggah fails to recognize these very real differences. Rather, his declaration is a refusal to submit to an intellectual framework that defines tradition as less than fully contemporary, and that thus reinscribes the longstanding polemic that pits tradition against modernity. Though very much committed to the project of strengthening traditional music’s contemporary existence, a project that, as he put it in the notes to his self-published CD (2001), included the creation of “strange new works of karawitan,” Supanggah had little investment in the term *musik kontemporer*—or, for that matter, in identifying himself as a

19. For a more extensive discussion of Sukerta’s relationship to tradition, see my profile of him and his work in a recently published volume on *Performing Arts in Postmodern Bali* (Miller 2013).

“composer,” a term that “arrived from, in quotation marks, ‘Western music’” (Rahayu Supanggah, p.c., 21 July 2004). Instead, he asserts the primacy of tradition as the framework for all of his work, compositional and otherwise.

There are some figures in on the Western-oriented side of *musik kontemporer* who thought modern and traditional music were better left as distinct realms. The singer Nyak Ina Raseuki, though she professed to “really love tradition,” and indeed has involved herself in projects to bolster its continued existence,²⁰ felt that the compositions of composers from ASKI Solo were “lacking in structure,” and thus denigrated traditional music. Their work, and that of other traditionally-based composers, was not based on the discipline of composition (*ilmu komposisi*), as was the work of Tony Prabowo, the composer with whom she had worked most extensively, and whose work she regarded most highly. In her opinion, “if we are going to adopt modernism, we have to adopt it fully” (Nyak Ina Raseuki, p.c., 18 August 2005). In other words, modern music, in her view, should follow established Western models.

Raseuki perhaps gives voice to a perspective that some others on the Western-oriented side of *musik kontemporer* share but do not articulate. They represent a measure of dissent to the outlook expressed by Suka Hardjana, that “tradition is modern” (chapter 5). But while her critique suggests that traditionally-based composers are less effectively modern, it does not dismiss them outright as irredeemably traditional. It does not seriously challenge their standing as significant figures in the field that had come to be known as *musik kontemporer*.

20. Raseuki completed her PhD in ethnomusicology at the University of Wisconsin, and at the time I interviewed her was involved with the Lembaga Pendidikan Seni Nusantara (The Foundation for Education in Arts of the Indonesian Archipelago), an organization founded by Endo Suanda focused on developing curricular materials on traditional Indonesian musics for Indonesian schools.

It could not do so, as by that point they were too well established. Indeed, Raseuki asked me not to relay her criticism of specific composers, not wanting to offend them.

The issue of *musik kontemporer*'s relationship to traditional musics is not completely resolved. But overall, tradition is too important to too many composers—those with a foundation in traditional musics, like those at ASKI Solo, obviously, but also to Western-oriented composers, as we saw in chapters 5 and 6 and will see further in this chapter—and thus to the field as a whole to be neatly cordoned off. The polemic between tradition and modernity that overshadowed the discussions of the arts that led to the founding of the PKM was not completely extinguished. But among the circles of those involved with *musik kontemporer*, its intensity was greatly reduced, from open flames to smoldering and occasionally flickering embers. That the traditionally-based, if not tradition itself, can be modern, is beyond serious question. The way in which traditionally-based composers most significantly challenge *musik kontemporer*'s territorial integrity—to draw a parallel to a longstanding concern about the status of the Indonesian polity, a concern that has intensified with the decentralization of political authority and rise of regionalism following Suharto's downfall—is not through presenting traditionalist work as *kontemporer*, but rather through realigning their primary commitment as musicians away from *musik kontemporer* and back toward tradition.

Alternative Populisms and a More Unruly Eclecticism

"This is What You Call Kind of Pop!": I Wayan Sadra's Musik Dialektis

Not so long after I Wayan Sadra began dragging gongs, he also began moving in a more

subtly subversive direction. To close a faculty presentation at STSI (ASKI) Solo in 2000, Sadra organized what amounted to a jam session. A young student, Gondrong Gunarto—the first part of his name referred to his long hair—started with a short *jembe* solo. Less than thirty seconds in, after establishing a short fast-paced groove, he was joined by others on other drums and shakers, and Sadra proclaiming “Agak pop! Ini namanya agak pop!” (Kind of pop! This is what you call kind of pop!). The groove continued while Sadra introduced the band. Eventually people in the audience, including myself, were invited to join in. Playing gamelan instruments, violin, flute, or vocalizing, the style of the group improvisation shifted from the vaguely Afro-Cuban opening to a more atmospheric and free-form cloud of noodling, until the percussionists reestablished a rhythmic focus with another groove.²¹

The “band” at the core of this improvisation consisted of a group of students with whom Sadra had begun working on an ongoing basis. At some point they took on the name Sono Seni Ensemble, after the name of the studio where they rehearsed, on the grounds of a home Sardono had renovated in the old Kemlayan neighborhood of Solo. Many of the members were involved in an earlier project, a piece from 1997 entitled *Bunyi Bagi Suara yang Kalah*.²² A notable feature of the performance was the thinly veiled political commentary of the ending, which involved the participation of a cow that was meant to represent the Indonesian Democratic Party²³. With its use of visual and theatrical elements, the piece was

21. In addition to attending and participating in this performance, which Sadra called “Memanggil untuk Improvisasi” (call to improvise), I consulted a field recording I made.

22. The members of Sono Seni listed by Andrew McGraw are “Gondrong [Gunarto]—the *jembe* player from the jam session described above—“Zoel [Mistortioify], Danis [Sugiyanto], Agus Bing, [Joko S.] Gombloh, and Peni [Candra Rini]” (McGraw 2013b: 346).

23. For several minutes, the cow—billed as “Prof. Dr. Cowsapy (worldwide musician)” (*sapi* is Indonesian for cow)—paced around to the sparse accompaniment of isolated gestures played on gamelan, other assorted percussion, amplified violin, electric guitar, and electric bass, until Sadra ends the performance by calling out “Stop playing, the cow can't budge.” Following this, an MC announced

consistent with the “holistic productions that combined the visual and sonic arts” (McGraw 2013:338) that Sadra had been producing since his time at IKJ in the late 1970s—the most frequently cited example is “Lad-Lud-An,” the piece involving a rotten egg dropped on a stone that Sadra presented at the second PKM in 1981. But apart from the absurdist ending, the piece was mostly about the fusing of instruments and genres. As Marc Perlman notes, the instrumentation included Javanese and Balinese gamelan instruments “alongside a violin, electric guitar, electric bass, two Roland D-50 synthesizers, and digital delay,” as well as “an African *jembe* drum, miscellaneous percussion and sound effects, and a fog machine.” The stage was given “a rustic look, with foliage sprouting everywhere.” The music was “a spirited mix,” including “a traditional Javanese ditty . . . as well as the rock stylings one would expect from the electric guitars.” Much of it was based on short riffs played on the gamelan instruments and electric bass, as vamps over which the other instrumentalists “take solos like jazz players” (Perlman 1999:13-14).

Most of the work produced collaboratively by the Sono Seni Ensemble was in a similar vein.²⁴ Andrew McGraw, who joined the ensemble in 2003, admits to being “rather surprised

that the performance was over “because the cow is so easily reined in.” As Marc Perlman notes, the cow represented the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI), whose leader, the “popular opposition figure” Megawati Sukarnoputri, was “forced from the leadership of the PDI in a government-backed power play.” Sadra “got the idea of working in the reference to the PDI” after realizing that the performance date he had booked, 27 June 1997, was the anniversary of “Black Saturday,” when “government toughs invaded PDI headquarters and beat and evicted her supporters, provoking a riot and subsequent government crackdown” (Perlman 1999:13-14). In McGraw’s account of the piece—which he did not himself observe, but heard about as a member of the Sono Seni ensemble—the “work’s climax” involved pulling “a water buffalo—the mascot of the PDI—upon the stage,” and subjecting it to “the resonant low sounds of the many gongs Sadra’s musicians continuously beat” until it defecated (McGraw 2013:342). In the video documentation from TBS that I observed, consistent with Perlman’s account, it was a cow, not a water buffalo, that was brought on stage, and it did not defecate. It may be that Sadra remounted the piece; McGraw states that the piece was staged in 1998, which is the year that Suharto resigned.

24. My assessment is based on rehearsals I observed in 2004, a copy of video documentation (Sono Seni Ensemble and John Jacobs 1999), and an audio CD (Sono Seni Ensemble and Takahito Hayashi

and, honestly, a bit disappointed,” having known about Sadra’s more radically experimentalist work, “to find that the Sono Seni Ensemble was engaged in what I first heard as a kind of ‘ethnic pop music’” (McGraw 2013b: 348). Through his involvement with the group, McGraw discovered that in its working methods and underlying philosophy, there was more to it. Summarizing Sadra’s own account of his shift toward a populist aesthetics, McGraw notes how “Sadra articulated his evolving concept of the relationship between art, the composer and society through the term *musik dialektis*, most clearly outlined in his 2002 article for *Gong*.”

During the late New Order, Sadra states, *musik kontemporer* was incorrectly imagined as a kind of barometer of the health of the national arts. But this art was restricted to a tiny elite of college educated composers and upper class listeners and was segregated from the ‘folk’ (*masyarakat*). Distanciation from the masses was, to a certain extent, engineered upon the assumption that, being uneducated, the *masyarakat* would reject the form. By the *reformasi*, the perceived failure of *musik kontemporer* as a ‘well- rooted’ and strong ‘national art form’ was then paradoxically blamed on the lack of a strong audience (ibid. 349, summarizing Sadra 2002).

Sadra continues to describe the emergence during the *reformasi*, the period following the fall of Suharto, of “various multicultural ensembles outside of the conservatory whose practice resided between the ‘mainstream industry’ and ‘serious’ composition.”²⁵ These ensembles “embodied the *musik dialektis* approach by engaging a temporal, spatial and ethnic openness” (ibid.), appropriating “several musical grammars,” from sources such as “pop, *keroncong*, *dangdut*, gamelan, jazz, and even serious electronic musics” (Sadra 2002:35). *Musik dialektis* “suggests an assemblage of topics and references rather than a cohesive genre” (McGraw

2000).

25. Sadra names Irwansyah Harahap’s ensemble, Talago Buni, Planet Bambu, Modero, and Sawung Jabo, in addition to his own Sono Seni ensemble (Sadra 2002:35).

2013:350). It would “not be entertainment or traditional music [*klanengan*] nor an antagonistic avant-garde” (Sadra 2002:35), instead dissolving “the antithesis between the pop-serious divide as theorized by the Frankfurt school” (McGraw 2013:350).

In the case of the Sono Seni Ensemble, the “musical grammars” they appropriated reflected the backgrounds and interests of the individual members. McGraw notes that as students of Sadra’s from STSI (ASKI) Solo, they were all “conservatory educated” and further notes that they were “fluent in East Javanese folk forms, jazz, rock, refined Solonese court gamelan, *keroncong*, Sumatran flutes, Balinese gamelan and Chinese folk musics” (ibid.:346). They were not uniformly fluent in these musics, but rather each brought different capabilities and affinities. Significantly, the group included those who did not fit the profile of a typical ASKI/STSI student. Joko S. Gombloh, as an ethnomusicology student, wrote a thesis on rock music in Solo, while Agus Bing completed the equivalent of a MFA after majoring in violin at ISI Jogja (Joko S. Gombloh, Agus Bing, p.c., 27 July 2004). Gondrong Gunarto, who started off the jam session described above, reportedly dropped out before graduating. They were not, in other words, necessarily highly skilled in traditional Indonesian musics—though some certainly were. Their level of fluency with jazz and rock also varied considerably. The premise of *musik dialektis*, and how the Sono Seni Ensemble put it into practice, was not, however, predicated on everyone having mastery of one specific genre. Instead, as McGraw notes, much of their time in rehearsal involved “transferring musical patterns between different idioms such that they no longer felt ‘natural’ or to be a part of musical common sense,” an approach that Sadra termed *transmedium* (ibid.:346-347).

The music that resulted from the Sono Seni Ensemble’s collective approach would not ever be mistaken for pop—that is, the specific popular music genre designated by the term in

Indonesia²⁶—though some of their work does resemble the fusion style of jazz that was the most common variety of the form in Indonesia. Nevertheless, the trend within *musik kontemporer* that their music represented, glossed as “band” or “combo,” was regarded as “dangerous” by Nyak Ina Raseuki (p.c., 18 August 2005)—who though she herself performed with jazz-fusion bands, preferred, as we saw above, her *musik kontemporer* to be more disciplined. Slamet Abdul Sjukur, commenting on the Sono Seni Ensemble, reportedly accused Sadra of spoiling his musicians (Michael Asmara, p.c., 08 July 2005). Sadra was aware that his “less controversial and more ‘listenable’ compositions” to have “eroded his credentials among some in the Indonesian and Western avant-garde,” some of the latter finding his music “cheesy,” and some of the former feeling that he had “sold-out” (McGraw 2013:353). But in Sadra’s view, represented by his production manager in a press release, the use of “modern and popular instruments such as guitar, bass, keyboard and drum” did not imply that their work would “totally submit to mainstream pop music.”²⁷ Sadra did indeed share creative responsibility with the other members of the Sono Seni Ensemble, but he did not simply give them carte blanche. Their engagement with the popular was, at least philosophically if not stylistically, carefully considered, as Sadra’s critical comments on other populist developments in *musik kontemporer*, noted below, demonstrates. But it was precisely because the populist turn took so many forms that it was seen, by some, as a threat to *musik kontemporer*’s integrity.

26. See Wallach (2008b) for a discussion of *pop Indonesia* in the context of a broader study of popular musics in Indonesia.

27. Esha Kardus, quoted in *The Jakarta Post*, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2000/09/29/sonoseni-stage-collaborative-works.html>, accessed 26 May 2014.

Eschewing Obscurity

Sadra's turn to *musik dialektis* and his work with the Sono Seni Ensemble can be understood as a reaction to the complacent insularity of *musik kontemporer*. At ASKI/STSI/ISI Solo in particular, which provided an especially secure and supportive institutional base, faculty members involved in *musik kontemporer* were comfortable. They were perhaps even a little too comfortable, as far as the health of *musik kontemporer* was concerned. The "hothouse atmosphere" fostered by Humardani (Roth 1987: 429) did not completely isolate them from a changing climate in which *karawitan*'s once broadly supported existence in Javanese society was being eroded by the growing prevalence of commercialized popular music. It did, however, effectively insulate them from its effects. As well-supported civil servants, the artistic and economic viability of their activities did not depend on attracting the interest of the public at large. Some occasionally created work that picked up on trends that did originate as a response to shifts in popular taste, such as Suwardi's Nartosabdho-style *dolanan*. But many were able to focus on work that was guided by Humardani's ideas about the form that the traditional performing arts should take to have contemporary relevance, including more rarefied experiments like those created for the PKM. As noted in chapter 4, Humardani advised against the public presentation of such work outside of "special and limited forums." The task of a broader "*penyebaran*" (dissemination) was indefinitely deferred (Rustopo 1990: 321-323).

The enthusiasm for experimentation among the generation that studied under Humardani was not matched by those who followed. Alec Roth, based on his observations in 1984, commented that "the period of intensive and single-minded experimentation at ASKI . . . now seems to be over." Composition had, in being made part of the curriculum, been

“institutionalised,” but not necessarily to its benefit (Roth 1987: 217-218). Students have continued to compose, but except in a few cases they have done so primarily to fulfill curricular requirements. Sukamso noted that the majority of the students who choose composition for their thesis project “aren’t really interested,” but are “forced into it” because they lack sufficient “skill” as players (Sukamso, p.c., 4 August 2004). That is, they choose composition instead of presenting a recital or writing a thesis, the other two options. Danis Sugiyanto, a member of the Sono Seni Ensemble, similarly noted that many students choose composition as a “shortcut,” and further estimated that as many as sixty percent relied on others to compose their required pieces for them. Very few, even among those who composed their own piece, continued to create work after they graduated (Danis Sugiyanto, p.c., 23 July 2004).

Beyond examination pieces, most of the compositional activity at ASKI/STSI/ISI Solo has been carried out by faculty. A small number of leading figures, such as Rahayu Supanggah, A. L. Suwardi, and Sadra, have been particularly successful; all three have, as noted in chapter 5, presented concerts at the prestigious Art Summit Indonesia, and have also performed and engaged in collaborations abroad.²⁸ Others receive some credit as faculty for creating new works for events on campus, as an adjunct to their primary work as teachers, and, in cases like that of Sukamso, their activity outside ASKI/STSI/ISI as performers. Much of this work, as some of the examples described in the previous section demonstrate, was in a

28. To point to just a one example each: In 2005, Suwardi composed music for and performed in the interdisciplinary production *Spice Root* with South African director Rehane Abrahams, which I learned about from a flyer he brought back. Sadra contributed to *Search: Hamlet*, a 2002 production directed by Singaporean director Ong Keng Sen mounted in a castle in Denmark (<http://globalshakespeares.mit.edu/search-hamlet-ong-keng-sen-2002-two/>, accessed 30 May 2014). Of the many collaborations Supanggah has engaged in, the most prominent is Robert Wilson’s *I La Galigo*, noted in chapter 6.

similar vein as that which was presented in 1980s at the Pekan Komponis Muda, though perhaps with less of a sense of urgency.

Alternative Populisms in the Face of Industri

For his own presentation at the Art Summit Indonesia in 2004, Sadra presented a work featuring the conspicuously rebellious gestures with which he had established his reputation as a standard bearer for experimentalism. The piece, “Daily,” began with a group of performers dragging gongs on the floor. It ended with a variation on the breaking of an egg in “Lad-Lud-An.” Instead of dropping a single rotten egg on a stone, he sat on a stool with his back to the audience and tossed multiple eggs at a large griddle cum canvas, a nine-by-twelve foot iron sheet to which gas burners and two contact microphones were attached. The sound of the eggs smashing against the surface resounded through the hall, enhanced by digital delay.²⁹ Visually, the end result was like a large abstract expressionist canvas, while the scent of cooked eggs wafted through the air.

For the most part, however, Sadra was committed, up until his untimely death in 2011, to the ideal of *musik dialektis*. He adopted this focus not just out of dissatisfaction with *musik kontemporer*'s isolation, but as a principled rejection of its acceptance of obscurity. While this focus set Sadra apart from his peers at ASKI Solo, he was far from alone in the broader, and broadening, sphere of *musik kontemporer*. His was but one example of what I characterize as alternative populisms.

29. The contact microphones were mine; Sadra had conscripted me to operate the effects in the control booth of the Gedung Kesenian theater in Jakarta where the work was performed on 12 and 13 September 2004. In describing this piece I also consulted video documentation I obtained from Danis Sugiyanto.

The direction pursued by Sadra, and by others whom I profile in the case studies that follow, represent a populist alternative to what itself was identified as “an alternative” (*sebuah alternatif*). Suka Hardjana used this formulation as the subtitle for his compilation of documentation from the first six meetings of the Pekan Komponis Muda (Hardjana 1986). The brief introduction, which acknowledges the limited scope of the volume, noting that it provided only documentation and did not include analysis or critical evaluation, does not identify what the PKM and the work it presented were an alternative to. But from Hardjana’s other writing, it can be assumed to be first and foremost a situation in which there was little to no musical creativity in “serious” forms. It was an alternative to a cultural ecology in which commercialized popular culture was overwhelmingly dominant.

The opposition of art and pop was one that was fundamental to *musik kontemporer*. The sense that the terrific blossoming of contemporary music was all “horizontal” and not “vertical,” and had yet to “fulfill the artistic aspirations of music” was a key motivation for Suka Hardjana in proposing the PKM in the first place (chapter 5). The sense that developments in the traditional arts were misdirected, emphasizing their “secondary” functions such as entertainment, was similarly key to Humardani’s efforts to push those at ASKI Solo to fully realize art’s “principal” function of sustaining a “profound spiritual life,” leading young musicians like Pande Made Sukerta and A. L. Suwardi to develop a compositional approach based on the exploration of sound (chapter 4).

There has been, however, a notable shift in how the opposition of art and pop is conceived, a shift signaled by the use of the term *industri* in place of the term pop. Most literally, *industri* was a shorthand for the profit-focused media companies, international and Indonesian, that were the driving force behind popular culture’s dominance. By extension, it

also referred metonymically to stylistic traits and aesthetic tendencies of the music those companies promoted. Most incisively, it referred to the realm of musicians and music making that conformed to, or at least had to contend with, the demands of those companies and the audiences they catered to. *Industri* was roughly synonymous with pop, but it no longer involved a blanket dismissal of a whole range of musical genres, as in the case of Hardjana's equation, before he himself developed a more nuanced perspective, of pop with poison (chapter 5).

In some cases, the distinction between *kontemporer* and *industri* is cast almost as clearly as that between art and pop had been. A preview of the eleventh Pekan Komponis in 2005—the latest remounting of the festival—quoted Waridi, a faculty member at STSI (ASKI) Solo who acted as the festival's coordinator, stating that the goal was “to spur and provide a creative space” for artists who differed from “*musik industri*,” and instead worked within the “*kontemporer* corridor.”³⁰

Beyond such categorical assertions, it was becoming harder to insist on a clear boundary between *kontemporer* and *industri*. One challenge came from the usage of the term *kontemporer* itself. In the 1970s and 80s, the adjective *kontemporer*, when applied to art, was most frequently applied to modern directions in the performing arts that were best exemplified by scenes centered at Taman Ismail Marzuki, the national arts center in Jakarta that was the venue for the PKM. Accordingly, the *Ensiklopedi Musik*'s entry for “*musik kontemporer*” is focused entirely on a discussion of the PKM. Increasingly, however, *musik kontemporer* was being used in a more general sense to describe any current genre of music.

30. <http://www.detikhot.com/index.php/tainment.read/tahun/2005/bulan/12/tgl/03/time/160020/idnews/491613/idkanal/228>, accessed 11 January 2006.

There is no entry for “musik kontemporer” in the Indonesian language Wikipedia, but among the first twenty of 225 results from a search for the term there are artists associated with the term in its initially most common usage: Harry Roesli, Slamet Abdul Sjukur, and Nyak Ina Raseuki. But there are also artists and genres that have nothing to do with this particular history: “Campursari,” “C-pop” (Chinese pop), “Pat Metheny,” “Dangdut,” and “Madonna” (<http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Search?search=musik+kontemporer>, accessed 30 August 2012).³¹ The network of composers on whom I focus in this study were increasingly unable, then, to claim the term *musik kontemporer* as exclusively their own.

A more serious and vexing challenge was internal, coming from within the ranks of those involved with *musik kontemporer*. Their involvement entailed some investment in the idea of *musik kontemporer* as a distinctive category, though the extent and nature of that investment varied, in part due to how and when they acquired it. Among those profiled in the case studies that follow are those who were not affiliated with the scenes I have focused on in this study. They came to *musik kontemporer* through other institutional and social contexts, contexts that made them receptive to some of its ideals, but did not so fully instill in them one or another of its favored versions of experimentalism or modernism. They were, as we will see, more inclined to populism and popular culture aesthetics.

Everyone involved in *musik kontemporer*, however, must be regarded as coming to it after some combination of more foundational musical experiences and affiliations. *Musik*

31. Anecdotally, when I asked about a recording I heard in a restaurant in Bali, of MIDI-sequenced arrangements of “most popular Indonesian folksongs” in a style that derived mostly from hugely popular *degung instrumental* genre that was ubiquitous in establishments frequented by tourists, the wait staff described it as “kontemporer” (p.c., 15 July 2005)—probably because of the use of synthesizers. The CD was part 4 in a series of “Lounge Music Degung Bali Instrumentalia,” arranged by I Gusti Sudarsana, and produced by Maharani Record. For more on *degung instrumental*, see (Swindells 2004: 200-204).

kontemporer is not, after all, a music that anyone grew up being involved in. What most of those who got their start in the first flourishing of *musik kontemporer* proper did grow up with was one or another form of popular music. For many Western-oriented composers, including no less a figure than Tony Prabowo, progressive rock was the music of choice, a sub-genre that had its own pretension to Art. Some, like Royke Koapaha, continued to play in rock bands, contributing in his case to his confused sense of musical identity (chapter 6). Others, including Prabowo, did not, though it remained an important and enduring influence on his music. For those on the traditionally-based side, the most inspiring figure was Nartosabdho—a figure whose compositions were derided by senior gamelan musicians, but who as others took his populism even further came to be regarded as “a model of artistry” (Perlman 1999: 6).

The generations that emerged in the 1970s and 80s were not encumbered by the kind of deep-seated aversion to the popular demonstrated by Hardjana, Humardani, and other senior figures. That more rigid aesthetic hierarchy was relatively new, and still had limited currency. On the Western-oriented side, this had to do with the predominantly paraclassical constitution of Indonesia’s classical music scene, and the lack of attention to the weightier aspects of the Western art music canon. The situation was slightly different on the traditionally-based side. As Marc Perlman succinctly notes, while the repertoire of Javanese gamelan “contains many long, difficult, challenging compositions that breathe seriousness and majesty,” it has “always included as well tuneful little ditties with playful, or even raunchy, lyrics.” As a tradition it is “capacious,” demonstrating “great powers of incorporation” (Perlman 1999: 4), a corollary of the long history of back and forth between court and village. The new type of populism that followed after Nartosabdho’s pioneering innovations, which frequently drew upon the styles

and aesthetics of commercialized popular culture to which it was a response, proved more difficult to incorporate. This was true not only for those affiliated with academies such as ASKI Solo with their narrower focus on those aspects of the tradition specific to the courts and their immediate environs, but also for those musicians who were not formally trained but nonetheless prominent in what in recent memory was gamelan's more integrative mainstream.³²

The freedom from a more stringent aesthetic hierarchy was, in important respects, positive. For Western-oriented composers, it was a mostly favorable facet of what was an otherwise troubling absence of authority. For traditionally-based composers, it was a return to a mostly enriching openness. For both, it obviated the kind of constrictive orthodoxies that led to an exclusive and isolating economy of prestige, allowing those who chose to branch out greater leeway to respond to and draw upon significant aspects of their immediate cultural ecologies. Composers had greater latitude in choosing how to act musically in the face of *industri*—how to respond to the overwhelming dominance of commercialized popular culture, which for some meant at least gesturing at getting in *industri*'s face. The music industry itself was unmoved by a form as peripheral as *musik kontemporer*, but for most of those involved in *musik kontemporer*, even those with a populist stance, it remained anathema. Being involved in *musik kontemporer* came to have less to do with conforming to one or another stylistic paradigm, and more about the idea of maintaining artistic integrity, and avoiding corruption or compromise. Choosing such an involvement meant pursuing not

32. For example, my drum teacher, Wakidi Dwidjomartono, the younger sibling of the renowned drummer Wakidjo (who led the gamelan at RRI Surakarta and recorded extensively, especially on the Kusuma label) and a very highly respected drummer himself, would refer to *campursari* as “campurshit.” The linguistic mashup is no doubt indebted to his American wife Kathryn Emerson, but his opinions are broadly representative.

just populism, but an alternative populism. How, stylistically, this was interpreted varied considerably, and in that way the freedom from aesthetic hierarchy appeared instead as a problematic lack of an aesthetic anchor. The drift toward eclecticism made it increasingly difficult to say with certainty what *musik kontemporer* was. But for at least most of the composers discussed in this chapter, jettisoning the anchor was a worthwhile gambit, if it allowed their musical endeavors, whatever they might be called, to be more resilient and responsive.

Djaduk Ferianto: Learning from *Industri*

Building on a Legacy of Populism

Well before Sadra took his own populist turn, there were others pursuing what in certain respects were similar directions. He was preceded, among others, by those from the traditionally-based scene in Jogja, which from its outset had a more populist character. In large part, this has to do with the circumstances of its emergence.

The traditionally-based scene in Jogja has not figured prominently in my discussion so far.³³ That scene was slower to develop than the one based at ASKI Solo, and has never been as committed to the kind of experimentalist aesthetic favored at the PKM. For these same reasons, it is of considerable interest in terms of the changing face of *musik kontemporer* that

33. What I know of the scene in Jogja, beyond the work of Djaduk Ferianto and Sapto Raharjo on which I focus in this chapter, derives primarily from: an interview with Yohanes Subowo, a younger sibling of Blacius Subono who teaches dance at ISI Jogja; an interview with Raharjo, a son of the prominent musician Suhardi, and a member of Djaduk Ferianto's Kua Etnika ensemble; and most of all from Sutrisno S. Hartana, with whom I have worked for several years, both in Vancouver and in Jogja. While these and other traditionally-based composers in Jogja deserve more attention than I have given them, my sense is that they, like the more traditionally-inclined Trustho, who I mentioned briefly in chapter 2, have not intersected so much with the broader field of *musik kontemporer*.

is the focus of this chapter. There was no parallel in Jogja to the hothouse environment that Humardani fostered at ASKI Solo, which as we saw in chapter 4 supported the development of a radically new compositional approach based on the exploration of sound. ASKI's sister institution, Akademi Seni Tari Indonesia Yogyakarta (ASTI Jogja, since 1984 part of ISI Jogja), was focused more on dance, and its director and instructors did not prioritize innovation or encourage independent thought. In the opinion of Hardja Susilo, a dancer and musician from Jogja who since the late 1950s has been based in the US, ASTI was very "conscious" of "formal education," and "the music part of it is not well taken care of" (Hardja Susilo, p.c., 21 November 2006).

Djaduk Ferianto (1964–), in confirming that the gap between his appearance at the PKM in 1987, and that of Djoko Walujo, eighteen years his senior, in 1981,³⁴ did in fact reflect a real lack of an intermediate generation, by way of explanation noted that the "culture" in Jogja differed from that in Solo. Because of its "feudalistic" character, the "process of regeneration" and thus its "growth" was "very, very slow" (Djaduk Ferianto, p.c., 2 August 2005). Djaduk considered himself lucky to have studied visual art at ASRI (*Akademi Seni Rupa Indonesia*); the "culture" there was more "egalitarian" and "democratic," and "freed each student to discuss, to have opinions." This was in contrast to ASTI and AMI, which by his account rigidly followed a conservatory model, and were "feudal" in insisting that instructors knew best.³⁵

34. The gap of fourteen years between Djoko Walujo (1946–) and Otok Bima Sidharta (1960–), Djaduk's older brother and co-composer of the piece presented at the PKM, is only slightly less.

35. Djaduk's sense of "feudal" is perhaps somewhat idiosyncratic, but the term itself is widely used in Indonesia. As Adrian Vickers notes, it is, as "a trope representing the past," a "powerful term in social discourse, regardless of its accuracy from a Western analytical position" (Vickers 1996: 5).

Djaduk's years at ASRI were one stop along a circuitous route to establishing himself as a creative musician and one of the most active and prominent figures in the Jogja scene. He gained his foundation in the arts at the private studio of his father, the noted choreographer and impresario Bagong Kussudiardjo. Kussudiardjo's early work, shaped by studies with the American choreographer Martha Graham, was decidedly modernist, but he made his career producing more populist amalgams of regional Indonesian dance traditions for national events, government sponsored cultural missions to other countries, and his network of dance schools (Murgiyanto 1991: 82-167). Djaduk thus grew up studying dance and music in a milieu whose aesthetic orientation was contemporary—though in a different sense than that at ASKI Solo or TIM and IKJ in Jakarta—and at the same time grounded in tradition—and more specifically, despite its pan-Indonesian ambitions, Javanese tradition. He studied “traditional music, in particular *kendhang*,” in his youth, but after finishing high school, his father wanted him to study Western music at AMI. He chose to study visual art at ASRI instead, but dropped out before completing his degree as he was too busy with “jobs in music” (Djaduk Ferianto, p.c., 27 July 2004).

Some of Djaduk's music, such as the work he and his brother Otok Bima Sidharta presented at the 1987 PKM, has been for Javanese gamelan. And some of it has had an experimentalist bent, such as the piece “Ngeng” from 1993, for three performers making contorted vocal sounds.³⁶ But more centrally, Djaduk's idea of *kontemporer* is grounded in a logic of fusion: of different traditional musics with each other and, most distinctively, with elements from Western popular genres. His intentionally accessible aesthetic sensibility is

36. I have not heard this piece, but composer Nick Brooke has singled it out as one of the most striking pieces of *musik kontemporer* he has encountered in Indonesia (p.c., 2 December 2011).

best exemplified by his work with Kua Etnika, an ensemble he founded in 1996 whose instrumentation includes a wide range of traditional instruments, from Indonesia and elsewhere, as well as an array of modern percussion and, very prominently, synthesizer.³⁷ Their debut performance, a program of works titled *Nang Ning Nong* that was also released as an independently produced CD with the same title, featured Balinese *gamelan gong kebyar* on all but one piece.³⁸ There are clear references to Balinese idioms—though only occasionally, as in “Bali Kagol,” which opens with an abbreviated *gineman trompong* played on *reyong*,³⁹ and includes a brief and not especially explosive *kebyar* passage as a transition between sections, is there an incorporation of the most distinctive features of traditional Balinese music. Overall, however, they do not dominate, but instead alternate with more or less specific references to other Indonesian musics, such as the distinctive drumming of Sundanese *jaipongan*,⁴⁰ and non-Indonesian musics, as with the use of Hindustani *tabla*. These various references are held together compositionally through form and by the overall sound. Formally, the pieces on *Nang Ning Nong* consist of sequences of short episodes, mostly made up of short melodic phrases, that are sometimes stated only once, but more often

37. See Raharja (2001) for a profile of this ensemble by a former member.

38. My comments here are based on the CD recording. The direction Djaduk was taking with Kua Etnika was already evident, however, in a performance I attended in 1994.

39. *Gineman* are metrically free preludes, played by a solo instrument such as the lower-register gong-chime *trompong*, sometimes accompanied by other instruments such as *suling* and *rebab*. They are associated with older repertoire.

40. *Jaipongan* is popular Sundanese *gamelan* genre, notable as the one “purely Indonesian” genre to become popular beyond one specific region (Manuel and Baier 1986). Developed by Gugum Gembira in the late 1970s, *jaipongan* fuses aspects of several different Sundanese genres. The “flamboyant and virtuosic” (ibid.:102) drumming derives from the older genre *ketuk tilu*, which itself draws upon the martial art form *pencak silat*. There is one drummer, who plays an expanded set of *kendang*, one large and up to five small, and manipulates the pitch of the large *kendang* by pressing on the large head with (almost invariably) his foot, an effect that is heightened by amplification. The *kendang* and drumming style made popular by *jaipongan* has been quite widely adopted by Javanese *wayang* troupes.

are repeated two or four times. The internal structure of the phrases also tends to be very square. The result is that the pieces are, as Sono Seni Ensemble member and STSI (ASKI) Solo instructor Danis Sugiyanto put it, “easy to predict” (p.c., 23 July 2004). Sonically, the juxtaposition of various “ethnic” instruments is smoothed over by other elements of the arrangement and how the recording is engineered—which is paralleled by how sound reinforcement is handled in live performance. There is ample use of synthesizer—five of the eight pieces begin with an ambient drone—and assorted non-gamelan percussion instruments. The latter provide texture, in the case of shakers, rainsticks, and wind chimes made of bamboo or metal, or accenting flourishes, in the case of the shimmering glissandi of a mark tree⁴¹ or the swell of a cymbals that frequently precede strokes of gong. Everything is bathed in digital reverberation. All of these aspects serve as a connection to a globalized production aesthetic that links otherwise disparate genres of popular music, from adult contemporary to New Age. Djaduk does in fact acknowledge New Age artists such as Kitaro as “references” (Djaduk Ferianto, p.c., 27 July 2004).⁴²

Learning from Industri

Djaduk’s aesthetic follows directly from his more positive attitude toward *industri*. He stands out among those involved in *musik kontemporer* as a defender of what *industri* has to offer as a model. Djaduk spoke of “knowing well the issues in the world of pop culture,” as he “studied in pop culture.” Much of what he learned was practical, having to do with how to

41. A mark tree is “a set of 30–40 thin brass tubes, graduated in length from 10 to 30 cm and suspended from a stick” (*Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Wind chime,” accessed 18 September 2012).

42. Subsequent recordings by Kua Etnika such as *Unen-Unen*, though also self-produced, are even more slick in their production values.

run an independent studio like that of his father. “We are, in quotation marks, ‘professional artists’,” Djaduk said of Kua Etnika, adding that they were “responsible to that choice.” He spoke of effective management, of securing “access” to resources, funding, and performance opportunities. Their CDs function as business cards, and they have sought and received sponsorship from the cigarette company Djarum. Other professional practices that Djaduk picked up from *industri* have more obvious aesthetic effects. He made a point of noting that Kua Etnika has invested in its own sound reinforcement equipment—it’s “good to have your own mics,” and to do soundchecks, as “better production” means that “people can enjoy” (Djaduk Ferianto, p.c., 27 July 2004). Lighting also added to people’s enjoyment, and indeed Djaduk’s concert presentations typically make use of the kind of colored lighting, and occasionally also dry ice, more typical of pop productions.

Djaduk also noted that he and Kua Etnika had learned to “live in two worlds,” one that is “*realis*” and one that is “*idealis*.” With some projects, however, Djaduk and his colleagues seem to have adopted fully to the “realist” world. The debut recording of Orkes Sinten Remen, a group he founded a year after Kua Etnika, in 1997, was released on cassette rather than CD to reach a broader market.⁴³ It features a *kroncong*-inflected cover of John Denver’s “Leaving on a Jet Plane”—and, conversely, a country-inflected cover of the Gesang Martohartono’s “Caping Gunung.”⁴⁴ In 2004, members of this group backed up presidential and vice-presidential candidates on the television special “Tribute to Indonesia” that aired on

43. The cassette, titled *Komedi Putar*, was released by the company Dian Pramudita Kusuma in 1999, but it is the logo of the cigarette company Djarum, credited with “presenting” (*mempersalahkan*) the group, that appears on the front of the insert. They (Kua Etnika) took over production and distribution with their second release, *Parodi Iklan*, from 2000.

44. Gesang Martohartono was a notable composer of *langgam kroncong*, discussed in chapter 1. He is best known for his song “Bengawan Solo.”

the eve of the election.⁴⁵ These more lucrative endeavors help to “subsidize” Kua Etnika’s studio in Jogja, which is used not only for the rehearsals and recording projects of Djaduk and its other members, but also for presentations of “*kontemporer* works” of music, dance, and theater (ibid.).

To speak of subsidizing “*idealis*” work with that which is “*realis*” involves a recognition of the distinction between the two. Djaduk has also acknowledged the existence of a gap between the two worlds, speaking of them as “two camps” that are “mutually suspicious.” But far from accepting that they and the worlds they are intended for are inescapably irreconcilable, he advocates for interaction and exchange between those involved with *musik kontemporer* and those who work in the realm of *industri*. Getting to know musicians in the pop world, especially those in the jazz scene, Djaduk realized that they had “extraordinary musical references;” they were familiar, from having travelled abroad, with a broad range of music, including “*musik kontemporer*” and different forms of “new music.” They had a “vision for *musik kontemporer* in Indonesia” (ibid.).

Among several musicians Djaduk mentioned was keyboardist Dwiki Dharmawan, who with his group Krakatau followed, according to Djaduk, his “desire to make *musik kontemporer*” with “a basis in tradition,” even though “his own foundation is not tradition, but pop” (ibid.). When I interviewed Dharmawan, he explained that for its first decade Krakatau was highly successful playing pop songs in a light jazz-rock fusion style—which as Djaduk noted was what jazz was generally understood to be in Indonesia. Sales of their first five albums averaged around half-a-million copies each. In the early 1990s, Dharmawan and

45. The program was broadcast by Metro TV on 4 July 2004. All of the candidates were present, except for the incumbent President, Megawati Sukarnoputri. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who ultimately won the race, has released several pop albums of his own.

fellow co-founder Pra Budidharma grew increasingly tired of playing in this style, which they had adopted after signing a recording contract and working with a producer. They became artistically dissatisfied, and wished to return to something more like the “progressive” style they had started out with. They began to incorporate elements of traditional Sundanese *karawitan*, and eventually reformulated the group to include traditional musicians. Their first album in this configuration, *Mystical Mist*, sold only 44,000 copies, or roughly 10% of what they used to sell. And whereas before they were routinely nominated for music awards, they now no longer fit any of the categories. As Dharmawan described it, they have effectively been “thrown out of the *industri* world” (Dwiki Dharmawan, p.c., 19 August 2005).⁴⁶

Djaduk, for his part, has not only adopted much of the production aesthetics of popular music, but has been eager to break into the world of *industri*. He enthusiastically accepted an invitation from the Indonesian television station RCTI to collaborate with another jazz keyboardist, Aminoto Kosin, for the program *Dua Warna*. Over the course of two years, they did “six 90-minute shows” that aired “during evening primetime” in which Djaduk and Kua Etnika joined a group of Jakarta-based studio musicians to back up some of Indonesia’s best known pop singers. As R. Anderson Sutton has noted, in a critical analysis of “the collaboration, “though the title of the show suggests a balance between two ‘colors’—pop/international style on the one hand and ‘ethnic’/indigenous” on the other—neither the audio nor the video components of the broadcast presented anything approaching an even balance.” Kua Etnika added mostly non-pitched percussion to pop arrangements that were made in advance by Kosin (Sutton 2002b: 18-22).

46. For a more extensive profile of Krakatau, which both corroborates and complicates Dharmawan’s narrative from my interview with him, see Harnish and Wallach (2013) .

Djaduk was able to strike something closer to parity in more recent work with Kua Etnika, in a configuration that combines four musicians playing various gamelan instruments (Javanese *saron* and *bonang*, Balinese *reyong*, and Sundanese *kendang*), five playing pop instruments (keyboards, electric guitar and bass guitar, drum kit), Djaduk playing assorted percussion, and Trie Utami, who sang on Krakatau's first album. The gamelan instruments are featured prominently—on one video clip, Utami introduces ensemble member Purwanto playing “the only one in Indonesia, and the only one in the world: solo *bonang*.”⁴⁷ The basic format, however, derives from pop, whether a funk vamp underlying solos, Djaduk's song “Sintren,”⁴⁸ or an arrangement of the theme from *Mission Impossible*.⁴⁹

In reinventing Krakatau, Dwiki Dharmawan very clearly sought to break out of the stylistic limits of the pop-oriented jazz mainstream in Indonesia, limits he felt were constricting. But when I interviewed him, nothing he said suggested any identification with *musik kontemporer*, especially not in the understanding of the term I am concerned with in this study. Toward the end of our conversation, when I asked him about the term, it was clear he understood it in a general sense, to refer to anything “newly created in the present,” including *dangdut*. His concern was more with the inadequacy of the categories used by *industri*, in particular because of the challenges it posed in terms of “positioning” Krakatau (Dwiki Dharmawan, p.c., 19 August 2005).⁵⁰

Djaduk appears to many in the realm of *musik kontemporer* to have moved in a direction

47. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aM-Rc9t5rq8>, accessed 20 September 2012.

48. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8hIo1leHenA>, accessed 20 September 2012.

49. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1h5dcjRIQ-E>, accessed 20 September 2012.

50. Dharmawan did not bring up the term *kontemporer* himself. In discussing available categories, he spoke instead of how he preferred “world fusion” (in English) to “world music.”

opposite to that taken by Dharmawan. Franki Raden commented that “the style of Djaduk with Kua Etnika has increasingly approached the style of commercial pop with a little bit of ethnic flavor,” adding “in other words, the originality evident in Kua Etnika’s early period is no longer apparent.” Djaduk has indeed sought to find a place for himself in the world of *industri*. But instead of turning his back on *musik kontemporer*, he would like to bring it along with him. In relaying his admiration for artists such as Aminoto Kosin and Dwiki Dharmawan to Suka Hardjana, he suggested that maybe we—meaning those in the *kontemporer* world—were mixing with the wrong circles. But *kontemporer* composers were “extremely a priori.” It was “as though there was a kind of credo,” that “if we associated with them”—those in the pop world—“we were committing a sin.”

Djaduk has increasingly focused on fitting into *industri*. But though he sees himself as having emerged from the *kontemporer* realm, and continues to seek the approval of arbiters such as Suka Hardjana, his aesthetic sensibility has always been somewhat at odds with the experimentalism of *kontemporer*. In speaking with him, he complained of *musik kontemporer* becoming “slow,” “not dynamic.” He believed that *musik kontemporer*’s “most important characteristic” was “deconstructing or changing” what was “mainstream,” but this did not mean it had to be “difficult.” He made passing reference to John Cage, in recounting how he learned that “what I can’t translate in the language of sound, I can with visual language,” but this seems to have been more the idea of Cageian multimedia than its actual practice; the comment followed his noting how he learned about lighting from *industri*. When it came to encountering actual work from the American experimental tradition, he was considerably less enthusiastic. He recounted how he and a journalist walked out Alvin Lucier’s presentation at the 1998 Art Summit, as he found his music “boring.” “My ears couldn’t take it.” He faulted

this on Lucier's music, declaring that it "was not for listening."⁵¹

Sadra relayed how sometime in 2002 or 2003, Djaduk and his colleagues came to Solo, and declared that "the time had come" for "friends in Solo" to "stop exploring, with sound exploration." They were "too serious," and their work "didn't sell" (*tidak laku*). Sadra was taken aback, that Djaduk, who as he noted was a small kid sitting with his father at Sadra's performance at Bentara Budaya in Jogja in the early 1980s, would presume to tell him what he should do. Sadra accepted that Djaduk was indeed successful, but also told him "we also want to choose a path" (I Wayan Sadra, p.c., 5 August 2005). Djaduk argued the same point when I spoke with him in 2004, in defending his decision to prioritize "communication" with his audience. He claimed to "value the choice of my friends" who maintained "a kind of credo," that "*musik kontemporer*" was "not for lots of people," but for themselves—though he also characterized this attitude as "fairly egoistic." He also claimed to "respect" the criticism of others, and asked them to "please respect my choice." He insisted he could make "something more complex," and conform to the idea that "*kontemporer* . . . is always complex." But "that is not my choice." He was not, however, a slave to *industri*. "I do not serve *industri* 100%. I also study there, but I have my idealism."

Djaduk demonstrates a strong desire to convince those whose opinions he apparently values to share in his particular approach to a more populist version of *musik kontemporer*—one informed by certain ideas of professionalism, as distinct from Sadra's work with the Sono Seni Ensemble, which at times was somewhat rough around the edges; and one consistent

51. The piece Djaduk described was "Music for Gamelan Instruments, Microphones, Amplifiers and Loudspeakers," which involves placing individual *bonang pencon* over microphones to shape feedback, the pitch of which other players attempt to match on *gender*, producing beating patterns. Like Lucier's other explorations of acoustic phenomenon, the piece is not just about the abstract idea, as Djaduk claimed, but is very definitely intended for listening.

with his penchant for more straightforward musical ideas. He wanted to see a different shift in *musik kontemporer*'s center of aesthetic authority, not from foreign models to native traditions, but from avant-gardism to a more “communicative” aesthetic. But as the polemic between him and his friends, from Solo and elsewhere, indicates, he has had rather less success in this regard than he has in making inroads into *industri*.

Sapto Raharjo: A Maverick Challenges the Fold

An Independent Experimentalist

There had, in fact, been significant changes in *musik kontemporer* of the sort Djaduk advocated, starting in the mid 1990s. But rather than a shift in its aesthetic center, the change instead took the form of a diversification, one that occurred not just within *musik kontemporer*'s own circles, but as importantly through a repositioning of *musik kontemporer* in the broader musical scene. One of the most significant contributions in this respect came from Sapto Raharjo (1955–2009), who founded and directed the Yogyakarta Gamelan Festival, an event that had its roots in a festival of “contemporary gamelan composition” but ended up becoming something else.

Sapto Raharjo falls in between the categories of the Western-oriented and the traditionally-based. This is not so much because he was both, but because he was neither, at least according to the more restricted sense in which I use the terms. I have characterized as Western-oriented those who have had significant formal training or active involvement in a music that is understood in Indonesia to be Western. For nearly all of those in *musik kontemporer*, this was Western art music, though many of Sapto's peers who studied at IKJ

and AMI Jogja were initially inspired by progressive rock.⁵² I have used traditionally-based to describe those who studied at ASKI Solo and other institutions for the study of *karawitan* and other traditional Indonesian performing art forms, most of whom grew up playing gamelan or other traditional musics.

Sapto played some gamelan in his youth, and continued to use gamelan in his work up until his death in 2009. But he never became a gamelan musician per se.⁵³ He also grew up hearing Western art music, on his parents' radio and from a neighbor who played piano, and formed rock bands and folk combos while in high school. After dropping out, he decided against trying to apply to AMI, as he was worried that the “discipline” of reading notation would “wreck” the sense of musicality he had already acquired, which he identified by singing a short phrase in the *pelog* scale using Javanese syllables. Instead, he convinced the director of the film and theater arts academy (Akademi Seni Drama dan Film, ASDRAFI) to let him enter and study incidental music for theater (*musik ilustrasi*), which he did for three years, from 1975 to 1977.

Sapto did not pursue a career composing for theater, film, or television, however. In terms of his creative work, he mostly composed music for concert presentations, most of which he produced himself. For one of his earliest productions, *Yogyaharmonik 78*—which he presented in Jogja and also in Jakarta at TIM, entirely independently of the curatorial agency of Suka Hardjana—he attempted to convey the “distinctive sounds” of Jogja with an

52. Western-oriented is, of course, equally appropriate for any of the genres of popular music that follow Western models—and also equally in need of problematization and qualification. For contributions along these lines, see Baulch (2007) and Luvaas (2009).

53. Sathya Burchman, in a chapter profiling Sapto Raharjo from his M.A. thesis, reports that “most gamelan musicians would not identify Sapto as a gamelan player per se, but rather as someone who has appropriated gamelan instruments and some techniques for another kind of music” (Burchman 2000: 100-101).

ensemble of “synthesizer, electone, acoustic guitars, drum, violin, flute” and vocalists (Raharjo 2005: xxi, 73-75). In 1986, he sought to integrate gamelan into his work in a production with the English language title *Gamelan Meets Synthesizer Art Rock*. Sapto continued to explore combining gamelan with Western instruments in the 1990s, through collaborations with French and Italian jazz musicians that resulted in performances in Indonesia and at jazz festivals in Europe.⁵⁴

This aspect of Sapto’s work followed a logic of fusion akin to that of Djaduk Ferianto, though it tended to be less slick in its production aesthetic, and focused less on careful arrangements than on rambling improvised solos. Other aspects of Sapto’s work spring from more self-consciously experimentalist inclinations. Sapto’s experimentalisms are distinct, however, from the strains prominent at the Pekan Komponis Muda. They neither came out of an intensive hot house like atmosphere such as that fostered by Gendhon Humardani at ASKI Solo, nor did they take their inspiration exclusively from the models coming out of the Western art music tradition conveyed to students at IKJ and AMI Jogja by Slamet Abdul Sjukur and Jack Body—though Sapto was also interested in those models. Sapto found at least as much stimulus in technology and popular music, signaled explicitly in the titles of his self-produced programs “Digital Sound Experimental” from 1990, and “KIN: Reflection of the Now and Future Experimental Rock,” from 1991.

The result was a more eclectic experimentalism, exemplified well by the multimedia concert-length events Sapto began producing in the 2000s. His 2003 *Teror Mata Sapi*, which

54. Four CD recordings came out of these collaborations over a period of three years: *Borobudur Suite* and *Merapi* with saxophonist André Jaume, released in 1995 and 1996; *Java* with accordionist and multi-instrumentalist Miqueù Montanaro, released in 1997; and *Katak Katak Bertanggo* with vibraphonist Alex Grillo, released in 1998.

he touted as “a new concept of making music,” comprised seven pieces, ranging from a sequenced composition for sampled violin that bore some resemblance to American minimalism, to a piece where the sound is the byproduct of a group of performers playing hopscotch on an amplified stage plot. The opening number, “Teror DJ,” combined the two aspects, with the entire crew of performers bouncing up and down, pumping their fists in the air, and chanting, in time to dance-club style electronica, replete with moving colored lights. Sapto tied all of this together in his role as MC, providing extensive commentary and exegesis on the work and the creative process that produced it, with extensive use of PowerPoint.⁵⁵

Sapto’s impulse to experiment was evident from early on. While still in high school, he became bored with playing in bands—as he put it, he grew “*jenuh*,” a word that describes the feeling of having had too much of something—and began experimenting with combining band and gamelan instruments. He also created music using sets of cans of various sizes, from small paint cans to oil drums, which he played at a fair at the end of the school year (Sapto Raharjo, p.c., 29 July 2004). During his first year at ASDRAFI, he put on a performance of what he called “Wayang Kreasul,” with puppets made of manila paper and fluorescent paint that glowed under ultraviolet lights—an idea he got from going to discotheques—and accompaniment by his Pads Group band. A newspaper review called the production “Wayang Kurang Ajar” (rude wayang) (Raharjo 2005: 67-69).

During this time, Sapto was also making an effort to follow “what’s the term, the latest

55. My account of this work is based largely on video documentation of the performance at Taman Budaya Yogyakarta Sriwedani on 8 June 2003, augmented by Sapto’s own account (Raharjo 2005: xxv, 163-165). The piece was intended as a light-hearted response to life in a post 9/11 world; the title is a play on *telor mata sapi*, an egg fried sunny-side-up (Sapto Raharjo, p.c., 29 July 2004).

developments in music,” reading not only the Indonesian magazine *Aktuil*, but also the publications of two foreign-sponsored cultural organizations in Jogja, the Dutch-funded Yayasan Karta Pustaka and the Lembaga Indonesia Perancis (France Indonesia Institute), as well as the magazine produced by the United States Information Service. From these he became familiar with the names of John Cage and Karlheinz Stockhausen, and some idea of what they did, though he had not yet had the opportunity to hear their music. More immediately, he saw a production by the theater director Putu Wijaya—a key figure in the *tradisi baru* movement based at TIM (chapter 3)—that he described as “wild, almost without form,” and that “caused my ideas to broaden.” In 1976 he met Jack Body, participating in the production of the television documentary “What is Indonesian Music?” that Body organized with Ed Van Ness (chapter 3). From their discussions of “*musik kontemporer*, new and avant-garde works” Sapto “received many new insights” (Raharjo 2005: 72).

Inviting the Maverick into the Fold

It was not, however, until the late 1980s that Sapto began to more directly engage with the experimentalism of the international avant-garde. In 1988, a program officer from the Goethe Institut contacted Sapto to let him know that Dieter Mack would be visiting Indonesia, along with a group of five German musicians. In addition to a performance at ISI Jogja, Mack and his group presented a concert together with Sapto and his group at a private venue north of the city that closed with an unplanned improvisation involving both groups.

That same year, Sapto began an association with the radio station Geronimo, an association that would continue through the rest of his life and that, as we will see, supported and informed his subsequent endeavors. Initially he produced a program titled “Apresiasi

Music” (Music Appreciation) that ran once a week for one hour, from 11:00 PM to midnight. The program was noted in an essay on music in a volume commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Taman Ismail Marzuki arts center in Jakarta as one of two radio program to “broadcast and discuss experimental works of music” (Mulyadi 1994: 137). The following year, in 1989, Sapto became further involved with the station, both in its management through planning programming, and in producing broadcasts. Among the special programs he produced were those that hewed closer to the pop format of the station, such as “Three Days of Rock” in 1991. But one of the first—the first noted in his autobiography—was a shorter program titled “Musik Garda Depan 4 Negara” (Avant-garde music from four countries). The inclusion of a broadcast realization of Cage’s “silent” piece, “4’33,” resulted in the phone “ringing off the hook” as listeners called wondering if there was a “technical problem” or “operator error” (Raharjo 2005: 114). The other composers on the program reflected Sapto’s rather eclectic sense of what constitutes the avant-garde. Two figures canonical in Indonesia, Slamet Abdul Sjukur and Jack Body, were joined by Leonard Eto, then artistic director of the Japanese *taiko* group Kodo (Bender 2012: 102), and Shlomo Bat-Ain, an American musician who, from the scant traces he’s left on the infosphere that is the World Wide Web, seems to play fusion jazz with world music accents.⁵⁶

It was also only after Sapto had established himself as a creative musician that he began to make direct connections with others in the field of *musik kontemporer*. Frequently, it was others who initiated contact with him. Most of them were from scenes other than the one at

56. Mentioned neither in Grove Music Online or allmusic.com, a Google search for Shlomo Bat-Ain did turn up listings for two out-of-print LPs on Amazon.com, and a single track on soundcloud.com, a slower tempo funk groove featuring rambling solos on electric guitar and *sitar* (<https://soundcloud.com/shlomo-bat-ain>, accessed 17 June 2013).

AMI/ISI Jogja. The first was Harry Roesli, who commented on Sapto's work in a newspaper review in 1980, after which he met Sapto on a visit to Jogja. Other connections came even later. Franki Raden—who Tony Prabowo noted deeply admired Sapto's work, claiming enthusiastically that he was “experimental before us” (Tony Prabowo, p.c., 7 May 2005)—wrote an article titled “Sapto Rahardjo, Profil Komponis Garda Depan” (Sapto Raharjo, profile of an avant-garde composer) in 1992, after meeting Sapto at his “Non Stop 3 Days Music Concert” titled “WIN.” The following year, 1993, Sapto, Raden, and Roesli appeared together on a concert in Jogja, presumably organized by Sapto, titled “Musik Untuk Generasi Masa Depan” (Music for the future generation). The program also included Ben Pasaribu, whose path to *musik kontemporer* was, like Sapto, not through any of the scenes that had formed in the 1970s and 80s in Indonesia, but unlike Sapto involved a more decisive encounter with the international avant-garde through his studies with Alvin Lucier at Wesleyan University.⁵⁷

Whereas Raden presented a re-worked version of “Dilarang Bertepuk Tangan di Dalam Toilet,” the *musique concrète* composition he first presented at the PKM in 1981 (Chapter 3), which as a review of the concert noted “gave a sound picture not at all associated with conventional instruments, or the skills to play them,” the music of the other three “often used a more physical beat.” Sapto's piece “even carried a funky rhythm” (review reproduced in Raharjo 2005:124-125). The following year, however, Sapto produced a more austere experimentalist work. For the 1994 Nur Gora Rupa festival in Solo, he presented “Kutut

57. The nephew of Amir Pasaribu, Ben Pasaribu began his musical career “as a drummer in a rock group,” then studied ethnomusicology at the University of North Sumatra (*Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Pasaribu, Ben,” by Franki Raden, accessed 28 June 2005). There he met Edward Van Ness, who encouraged and then helped arrange for him to go to Wesleyan (Edward Van Ness, p.c., 14 June 2005).

Manggung,” a piece he identified as the “peak” of his use of a Roland S-50 digital sampling keyboard. The primary material for the piece was samples of *perkutut*, a type of dove very popular with Javanese bird aficionados, played by Sapto on the keyboard or in automated sequences using a computer. For three minutes in the middle of the seventeen minute piece the samples formed a short repeating four-beat pattern, but mostly the effect went between a bird market in an echo chamber and denser clouds of electroacoustic sound. Sapto alternated between kneeling in front of his keyboard and computer, which were set up on the floor, and walking around the large *pendhapa*, recording other sounds with a microphone or playing snippets of the popular gamelan piece *gendhing* “Kutut Manggung” on a portable cassette player. For the last section of the piece, Sapto distributed clay bird whistles to the audience, who were invited to join in (Raharjo 2005: 126-129).⁵⁸

From Artist to Impresario: Founding the Yogyakarta Gamelan Festival

Within Sapto’s output, “Kutut Manggung” is the piece that most closely aligns with the kind of experimentalist imperative central to the identity of *musik kontemporer*. 1994, the year that Sapto composed it, was also the year that Sapto cemented his association with central figures in the Indonesian *musik kontemporer* world. He was involved in the founding of Asosiasi Komponis Indonesia (Indonesian Composers Association, AKI), the idea for which came up at the Nur Gora Rupa festival, and worked as one of its administrators until 2000. In that capacity, he attended the 1997 meeting of the Asian Composers League (ACL) in Manilla, and served on the steering committee of the 1999 ACL meeting in Jogja. By his account, he

58. My comments are based on Sapto’s account of the piece, and from reviewing video documentation of the performance, which I attended.

was instrumental in convincing his committee members that it was safe to go ahead with the meeting in Jogja despite the rash of riots and incidents of anti-Chinese violence, the worst of which took place in Jakarta, in the wake of the Suharto regime's response to the Asian financial crisis—riots which led Suharto to step down in May of 1998. As the “Executive Chairperson,” he oversaw all aspects of the conference and festival's organization.

By the 1999 ACL meeting, organizing events had become key to Sapto's professional identity—perhaps even eclipsing, and certainly overtaking for a number of years, his work as a composer. His primary focus as an event organizer was not *musik kontemporer*, however, but rather, in name at least, gamelan. Sapto was the founder, driving force, and main personality—Marc Perlman aptly uses the term “impresario” (Perlman 1999: 2)—behind the Yogyakarta Gamelan Festival. The YGF, which was to be the subject of the second book in a planned trilogy that started with Sapto's autobiography (Raharjo 2005: .08-viii), is in turn the event with which Sapto was most closely associated. The YGF, which has involved over one hundred different artists and ensembles, including many groups from abroad, is carried out with a small army of volunteers, and attracts sizable audiences of mostly college-aged youth. It has been held every year since the first in 1995, except for 1998, when it was officially cancelled after foreign governments posted travel advisories. Despite this a few individuals from France and USA joined with “close associates” from several Indonesian cities to mount a one day event. It has continued unabated after Sapto's death, thanks to the dedication of the core team of organizers Sapto had assembled.

The YGF had its roots in events which seemed to reflect Sapto's strengthening orientation in the early 1990s toward *musik kontemporer*. The first gamelan-centered event Sapto organized was a concert as part of the 1993 Festival Kesenian Yogyakarta (Yogyakarta

Arts Festival). The program honored Wasitodipuro's contributions through a remounting of his 1952 magnum opus, *Jaya Manggala Gita* (chapter 2), but also looked to more recent innovations involving computer generated compositions by RM Wasisto Surjodiningrat and Spto himself.⁵⁹

The second event, held in 1994 a few months after Nur Gora Rupa, was a "Festival" of "Komposisi Gamelan Kontemporer" (Contemporary Gamelan Composition) that was rather more focused on *kontemporer* than it was on gamelan. Of the four composers featured on the "Festival," which was actually just a single concert, Djaduk Ferianto had the most extensive involvement with gamelan, though by that point he was already exploring the kind of fusions he would realize most fully through Kua Etnika. Slamet Abdul Sjukur had not yet composed for complete gamelan, though he had composed for a double-manual *gender* that he commissioned from the visual artist Hajar Satoto (Slamet Abdul Sjukur, p.c., 09 September 2004).⁶⁰ Spto himself was generally regarded as "someone who has appropriated gamelan instruments and some techniques for another kind of music" (Burchman 2000: 100-101). The fourth, Ben Pasaribu, had involved gamelan in some of his compositions, including those he composed at Wesleyan, but as an ethnic Batak from North Sumatra, gamelan played little role in the cultural milieu in which he grew up and worked.

Gamelan as Spirit, or Pretext

Spto came to regard these events as precursors to the YGF. In my interview with him in

59. <http://www.gayam16.net/YGF/prod03.htm>, accessed 07 January 2005.

60. This was the instrument I saw Sjukur perform on—in a collaboration with Suprpto Suryodarmo, the conceiver of Wayang Budha (chapter 4), at Nur Gora Rupa—mentioned briefly in the introduction. I later reviewed video documentation of the performance obtained from TBS. Sjukur showed me the instrument when I visited him in his home on 20 August 2005.

2004, he referred to the 1993 concert as his “first experiment or research” for the YGF, while in a retrospective article from 2001, the year of the sixth YGF, he spoke of the 1993 and 1994 concerts as “the basis towards expanding the event on a higher level.” The direction of growth was, however, in the terms Suka Hardjana used to describe the growth of the Indonesian music world in his 1980 lecture, more “horizontal” than “vertical” (chapter 5). Even more than the Yogyakarta Contemporary Music Festival (chapter 6)—a younger event that developed out of the milieu that the YGF had fostered, and which in its first iteration was similarly eclectic—the YGF prioritized participation over advancing one or another notion of artistic excellence. It had no particular aesthetic agenda, but was instead defined simply as an international gathering of “gamelan lovers.”

This is not to suggest there were not certain prevalent aesthetic tendencies. These were, however, largely the byproduct of the way that programming was carried out and how the event was structured. As Sapto declared in his retrospective, the YGF has “never been known to be discriminative towards its participants,” adding “If there ever was a time that we rejected those who wanted to play in the concert, it was because the agenda was already fully booked.” The YGF did not even insist on the basic criteria that participants had to play gamelan. Perlman noted how the 1997 festival included “a small ensemble of Sumatran instruments” led by “a young musician from Medan . . . in a fiery updating of Melayu musical traditions” that had “no relation to the *gamelan*” (ibid.). Jody Diamond, in a more extensive review of the same festival, noted there were also groups from Padang Panjang, West Sumatra, and Palu, Central Sulawesi, which similarly had nothing to do with gamelan (Diamond 1997). One of the more spectacular presentations I witnessed at the 2005 festival was by a thirty-plus member diatonic *angklung* ensemble from Bandung, of the sort that

Slamet Abdul Sjukur subverted for his 1975 production for the folklore festival in Dijon (chapter 3). In this case, the group was fully representative of the tradition invented by Daeng Sutigna, even including a rendition of “The Blue Danube” in their set.

Alongside non-gamelan ensembles that represented traditional (or quasi- or neo-traditional) musics from other parts of Indonesia were non-gamelan presentations that in different ways referenced gamelan. One of the concerts at the 2004 festival opened with a piece conceived and organized by Alex Dea called “Jogja Mix,” which in title referenced John Cage’s “Williams Mix” and “Fontana Mix” but was effectively a localization of his “Imaginary Landscape no. 4” for twelve radios.⁶¹ Twelve radios were used for this piece as well, scanning the airwaves of Jogja, but in this case three stations had been asked to play recordings of Wasitodipuro playing gender. The point was to draw attention to how little gamelan was heard on radio. Other pieces, such as a “soundscape and dance improvisation” by Weizen Ho, an “interdisciplinary performance devisor” from Malaysia, were more celebratory than critical, incorporating samples of gamelan along with other vaguely ethnic sounds into electronic dance music reminiscent of Goa trance.

Of the ensembles that did play gamelan, more often than not they combined it with other instruments or other elements, or used it in ways that had little relationship to traditional practice. Also at the 2004 festival, the group Gong Dolly Gong joined three *balungan* instruments, gong, and *kendhang* with electric bass, two electric guitars, and drum kit, and

61. Alex Dea is an alumnus of Wesleyan’s World Music program who has been based in Indonesia and Malaysia since the early 1990s. Dea has been a regular participant in the YGF, for several years presenting sections of a piece titled “In Pelog,” which like Terry Riley’s groundbreaking minimalist composition “In C” has players move through a sequence of short phrases, repeating one an undetermined number of times before moving on to the next. In the case of “In Pelog,” the phrases were taken from the *balungan* of the popular gamelan piece *gendhing* “Onang-Onang,” and played on *balungan* instruments.

three women in matching yellow blouses and batik skirts swaying and singing at microphones like backup singers in a pop group. In 2005, a group from a Christian high school presented something like a morality play, beginning with a sermon, which in one section had a pulsing *kempul* like a bass line, anchoring harmonic changes every four or eight beats, accompanying a chorus of male voices singing a catchy diatonic melody, with a group of *saron* providing a short repeating riff, all of which stylistically most closely resembled 1980s synth pop.

What there has been rather little of at the YGF is traditional Javanese *karawitan*. Perlman, writing about the 1997 event in which he participated as a member of the ensemble of American gamelan enthusiasts that rehearses at the Indonesian consulate in New York, noted that “aside from some curtain-raisers performed by children . . . the only completely traditional performance in the festival is our own” (Perlman 1999: 2). At the 2005 festival, the closest thing to a traditional performance was by a student group from Universitas Gadjah Mada. The group was joined by Djoko Walujo, Wasitodipuro’s successor at the California Institute of the Arts, playing *rebab*, a leading instrument in traditional settings that in this instance was largely drowned out by an oversized chorus of eleven male and seventeen female singers.

Perlman aptly summed up the YGF as “more a celebration of musical syncretism and experimentation than of tradition” (ibid.). Sapto Raharjo declared “Gamelan is a spirit, not an object . . . the instruments are just the medium” (Raharjo, quoted in Diamond 1997: 92). He may have made this statement in response to, or anticipation of, criticism of the festival’s lack of focus, but it also seems to accord with his rather expansive vision of gamelan’s contemporary existence.

Sapto’s vision was, however, deliberately alternative. Also absent from the YGF were

groups that played *campursari* or other styles that had achieved such widespread popularity in the 1990s (chapter 2). When I asked Michael Asmara about the lack of participation of “very classical” and “very pop” groups, he explained that it was “because of the system.” Groups were not invited to perform, but rather they asked the festival to take part (Michael Asmara, p.c., 13 August 2005). It was this, as much as the blurring of the “boundaries of gamelan,” that bothered I Wayan Sadra, who objected to how the openness of the YGF to “beginners” compromised the legitimacy of the event. As much as gamelan players, he was referring to composers, arguing that many of those who come—he said “I don’t need to mention names,” but then off the record spoke about a number of participants from Japan who “can’t play any instruments”—have “just started studying.” “In their own countries they’re nobody,” but at the YGF “they become composers.” His point was “not whether its good or not” but rather the “attitude,” the lack of “respect” for the forum. “It’s like a family performance,” adding as clarification “Just play, we’ll just watch. Not professional. Not for prestige. And the legitimation isn’t there” (I Wayan Sadra, p.c., 04 August 2005). Sadra had taken his own populist turn with the Sono Seni Ensemble, opening the ensemble to a ragtag group of young musicians, but the YGF proved to be a bit too inclusive.

The YGF effectively operates on an open mic principle, implemented on a larger scale and with the requisite organization. The core festival staff secures the venues—which change from year to year—and funding to cover production and publicity. Accommodation and some assistance with local travel is provided to some foreign participants. Otherwise, there is little in the way of financial expenditure, or income. Performers are not paid artist fees, and the audience is not charged admission. The YGF attracts volunteers not through the incentive of free tickets, but through the excitement that has been generated around the event—and

perhaps a free t-shirt. The cover photo of the YGF's Facebook page is a montage of photos, mostly of groups in matching yellow-green shirts; superimposed on a blurry photo of someone pointing straight at the camera is the caption, in English, "The next Volunteer of Yogyakarta Gamelan Festival could be You!"⁶²

Like most open mic events and other activities based on voluntary participation, those who get involved self-select. While decisions to participate are made individually, there are other factors shape the overall patterns of participation. Starting with the second YCMF, Michael Asmara instituted "practical guidelines" limiting groups to a maximum of five performers, and their presentations to ten minutes, precisely because this would rule out bands that would play a set, as are common at the YGF (Michael Asmara, p.c., 13 August 2005). The YGF has no specific guidelines of that sort, but the structure and character of the festival is no less effective in determining the kinds of musicians that seek to participate, and those that do not. *Campursari* groups, whether already or seeking to become successful, have no need and are not interested in performance opportunities that do not pay. The format, social milieu, and aesthetic profile of the YGF similarly offer little to those who relate to what used to be the mainstream practice of Javanese gamelan prior to *campursari*'s rise. For both professionals and amateurs with that orientation, outside of paying or other specific types of formal engagements such as competitions, it is a non-presentational mode of participatory music making—epitomized by informal gatherings (*klenengan*) and practices (*latihan*) that are focused entirely on traditional repertoire, and that proceed not like a variety show but according to a distinct musical and social logic—that best serves their interests.⁶³

62. <https://www.facebook.com/YogyakartaGamelanFestival>, accessed 28 June 2013.

63. See Turino (2008) on the distinction between the presentational and the participatory. *Klenengan* and *latihan* are much longer, and more loosely scheduled, than concert presentations. Non-listening

The participants the YGF attracts are quite diverse in terms of their aesthetic inclinations, but less so demographically, with most being better educated, middle class, relatively young, and living in urban centers. They overlap not with gamelan's current and past mainstreams, but rather with the audience Sapto was engaged in surveying as chief of research and development at Geronimo. In that capacity, Sapto oversaw the team whose charge was to "carry out audience demographic data collection and analysis" to "determine audience listening tastes" and develop "time-slotted, targeted broadcasting programs which consist mostly of Western and Indonesian pop music" (Burchman 2000: 102).

Recontextualizing Musik Kontemporer

To be sure, Sapto's own artistic priorities are distinct from those of the commercial radio station at which he worked. In the process of overseeing the YGF, Sapto helped form "a community" that was to be the subject of the third book in his trilogy, on "arts management" (Raharjo 2005: viii, 154). It took the name "Gayam 16," after the address of the "music gallery" just a few doors down from Geronimo's building that a former head of the "Geronimo Listener Club" helped Sapto found. Besides acting as headquarters for the YGF, Gayam 16 was intended to support the "growth of music groups" that identify as "indie-label . . . in the midst of the 'major label' music industry that in general is dominated by music conglomerates with *mainstream* genres, whether rock, pop, or other *mainstreams*" (Raharjo

participants may or may not be present, but if present they constitute onlookers rather than an audience that the playing participants perform for. The assignment of players to instruments is typically not set in advance, but is instead negotiated, mostly indirectly through action rather than through direct discussion, with attention to the relative status of those who show up. Repertoire may be decided in advance, but more typically is subject to a similar negotiation. In either case, the pieces and the order in which they are played follow musical conventions. For more on the musical practice of Javanese gamelan on this level, see Marc Benamou's incisive survey of "The Musical Scene in Solo" (2010: 3-39).

2005: 155). Sapto thus also draws a clear distinction between the kind of music that he is concerned with supporting and that produced and distributed by *industri*. But his notion of an alternative is rather different than that of the Pekan Komponis, which even in 2005 was equating “popular music” and “*industri*.” Sapto had a genuine interest in both experimentalism and the traditional, and worked to promote them through the unlikely medium of a radio station primarily focused on “mainstream” pop. In 1995, for example, he received a career development grant from the Ford Foundation to support his work in developing radio broadcasts of “Indonesian ethnic music” (Burchman 2000: 102). But these commitments did not lead Sapto to close himself off from *industri* in the broader sense as a potent aesthetic force, and they certainly didn’t get in the way of taking advantage of the resources he was able to access through working for one of its channels.

Those “indie-label” groups that in one way or another engaged with the “spirit” of gamelan make up one of the core constituencies served by the YGF. Another is composers of *musik kontemporer* who similarly had some relationship to gamelan through their work. A third is musicians from abroad, some of whom would be identified with new music or contemporary art music, while others might be more readily associated with the more recent and even more nebulous category of world music. The primary points of aesthetic reference of these different constituencies may differ, but fundamentally they had in common a certain creative inclination: a tendency toward, in Perlman’s terms, “syncretism and experimentation”—though not necessarily experimentalism. That which is unambiguously *musik kontemporer* has maintained a significant place in the YGF, even as the festival has diversified—or as Sapto put it, expanded to “a higher level.” But it has not been privileged.

The YGF has thus posed a challenge to the order that had established *musik kontemporer*.

Sharing the stage with other forms of creative experimentation, which is part of that challenge, can also be understood as the manifestation of a more fundamental realignment. Dispensing with the meritocratic approach to curation exemplified by Suka Hardjana and the Pekan Komponis Muda, the YGF is messily democratic. Anyone who wants to participate can, with no prerequisites, no limitations based on genre, no insistence on any particular form of innovation—and not even any clear definition of what it means to embody the “spirit” of gamelan.

Hardjana did, in speaking about the PKM in 2004, stress that it was “a forum which we made extremely open.” He did not select “only certain genres of music,” but was open to participants with backgrounds in “any kind of music . . . from Western classical, Eastern classical, gamelan, jazz, popular music, dangdut, whatever” (Suka Hardjana, p.c., 14 September 2004). This was at least somewhat evident at the 1998 Pekan Komponis, the first after a ten year hiatus, with the participation of Fahmi Alattas—who while continuing to explore a fascination with microtonalities gained from his studies with Slamet Abdul Sjukur makes money composing for television programs—and especially Didi AGP, whose primary involvement is jazz and pop (chapter 6). But the extending of the original openness, an openness to not only those engaged with Western models of new music but also those with a foundation in traditional Indonesian musics, to an openness to those involved with jazz and other more mainstream forms of “modern music” (so far, in the sporadic attempts to continue the Pekan Komponis there has yet to be a *dangdut* musician) is a more recent turn that parallels the populism represented more emphatically by the YGF. Hardjana also stressed that the different musics in which Pekan Komponis participants had their foundations “could only be sources.” “They certainly couldn’t make pop, or classical music.” The Pekan Komponis

was “a forum of new music,” and so while participants “were allowed to depart from any source” the pieces they made “had to be new—totally a new one” (Suka Hardjana, p.c., 14 September 2004).

The YGF made no such demands. It was, as Sadra put it, “a festival without curatorship.” It was not, however, without direction. Relatively speaking, Sapto steered the YGF with a light hand. He did not act as an arbiter, nor did he attempt to guide participants toward certain concepts or aesthetics, as Hardjana did with the composers who created works for the PKM (chapter 5). He did not double as critic, though he did, during set changes, conduct post-performance interviews with representatives from the groups that played, and he framed those groups in introducing them in his role as MC. In that role he was very much the key personality associated with the YGF, like the host of a radio or television program, though he was more than just the voice and face that read scripts produced by others. Sapto involved himself intensively in all levels of organization. The YGF was very much his pet project, and it embodied the vision of a creative musician whose aesthetic affinities were multiple.

Growing out of events that Sapto had effectively curated—the 1993 concert featuring Wasitodipuro’s *Jaya Manggala Gita* along with works involving both gamelan and computers, and the 1994 Festival of “Komposisi Gamelan Kontemporer”—the YGF continued to feature forms of creativity that were not bound by the conventions of established genres and idioms. But it did so in a way that was absolutely non-dogmatic. It has remained open to the kind of conspicuously experimentalist work that at least used to be evoked by the term *musik kontemporer*, and work that is otherwise self-consciously artistic, but it does not insist that participants conform to such ideals. Nor has it tried to convince those who are “too serious” to learn from *industri*, as Djaduk did with his friends from ASKI Solo. It by no

means features the full range of contemporary forms of expression involving gamelan, but its scope is significantly broader than that of its 1994 precedent. It is, effectively, a festival of contemporary music, in a broader sense of the term, that relates, at times tenuously, to gamelan. But Sapto, who in the early 1990s was happy to be identified as an avant-garde composer, deliberately did *not* use the term *kontemporer* for the YGF—a choice that was the background to his jokingly overblown praise for Michael Asmara’s boldness in calling his own festival the Yogyakarta Contemporary Music Festival, in comments Sapto made before presenting his jingle-length MIDI-sequenced fanfare at the first YCMF in 2004.

The most significant aspect of the YGF’s challenge to *musik kontemporer* is that it denies its claims to distinctiveness. It hastens the blurring of boundaries that was the source of the anxiety manifest in the growing debate in the late 1990s over what is and what is not *musik kontemporer*. The YGF has remained effectively neutral on this question, refusing to take sides. Nevertheless, it remains one of the more significant forums for those who do identify with *musik kontemporer*. Some have had misgivings, like Sadra, who felt that he had “already played” at the festival “too often,” and was now “tired” of it (I Wayan Sadra, p.c., 04 August 2005). Others, like Michael Asmara, have presented pieces nearly every year. Well established figures might treat it casually, as the prize-winning Balinese composer Yudane did in 2005 when he played a duet on a single *saron* with the New Zealand composer Gareth Farr, while younger musicians give it their all, as with Kelompok Los, an ensemble of students from STSI (ASKI) Solo that presented two meticulously composed and rehearsed pieces at the 2004 festival. For the most part, pieces are well received by an appreciative and relatively sizable audience, though more dynamic pieces that demonstrate technical skill tend to garner a more enthusiastic response than those that are more austere. In either case, the

YGF puts the ideas of composers into wider circulation. It thus offers opportunity, as the same time as it challenges. On balance, most seem to think this is worth the tradeoff.

Iwan Hassan: Finding Refuge from the Commercialism of Art

Frustrated with Art

A particularly ironic case of how the art/pop dynamic has played out in and around *musik kontemporer*—one that shows quite starkly how realms of music generally associated with the ideals of Art are, in Indonesia, bound up in commerce and mainstream populism—is that of Iwan Hasan.⁶⁴ A younger composer, born in 1967, Hasan grew up in Jakarta. Like many other Western-oriented composers, his primary instrument is guitar, which he first studied through Yamaha music classes, and then pursued more seriously as an undergraduate studying music and economics at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon. His major in music was classical guitar, but he also studied jazz piano and composition.

Upon his return to Indonesia, Hasan wanted to be “a classical performer and composer” and to play “traditional mainstream jazz.” I clarified that by that he meant standards, and asked if there was a bit of a scene in Jakarta. “Not really,” he answered. There were only a few lounges that had jazz, and other than that a few opportunities to “play weddings, and that kind of thing,” so he quickly grew frustrated. He was also frustrated trying to play chamber music in “the real serious direction,” as opposed to “playing light classical music in hotels, and restaurants . . . just playing for the money.” His attempts to form “a serious chamber music group” failed because “there was no money.” With other players prioritizing their

64. All quotations in this section are taken from an interview with Hasan in 2005.

paying gigs, “no one was really serious establishing themselves as a music performer in a real manner”—Hasan’s sense of “real” having, evidently, more to do with his studies in the USA than with the reality of making a living as a musician in Jakarta.

Hasan got “more and more” into his “composition side,” but there too his ambitions were thwarted. In 1993, after hearing one of Hasan’s chamber music compositions, Yazeed Djamin, then director of the Nusantara Chamber Orchestra, invited him to arrange it for orchestra. Hasan did so, and paid someone in the orchestra to copy parts—he had not yet learned to prepare scores using notation software. But the board of the orchestra, for reasons Hasan did not convey, did not approve its performance, and the piece went unplayed.

Hasan “stopped doing music altogether” for about two years. He got back into music in 1995, when Franki Raden asked him to conduct his *Opera Merah Putih*, a large scale work composed for the fifth anniversary of SCTV.⁶⁵ A few years later, Hasan was invited to participate in the 1998 Pekan Komponis on Raden’s recommendation. The pieces he presented—which, as he pointed out, were the only ones at that year’s festival written “note for note,” and which he reportedly composed within the space of three weeks—earned him a lukewarm review from Suka Hardjana, who commented that Hasan “seemed intent on reporting the results of his studies to date, especially in America” (Hardjana 1998a, in 2004b).

Turning to Rock

Meanwhile, Hasan had found a vehicle that was better able to accommodate his creative

65. SCTV, Surya Citra Televisi, Indonesia’s second private television station, was founded in 1990. An excerpt from Raden’s piece can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I07p5iLJnVY>, accessed 19 September 2011.

energy. In 1995, he decided to start a band with a clarinetist he had met while working with Raden, who shared an interest in creating original music rather than just gigging for money. They wanted to create their “own kind of music.” What they formed was a progressive rock group, called Discus. The eight members on the group’s second album, . . . *tot Licht!*, played a wide array of instruments: various wind instruments, including Balinese, Sundanese, and Torajan *suling*; violin; classical guitar and a 21-string harp guitar that Hasan had learned to play while in Oregon; a smattering of pitched and unpitched percussion, most of it Balinese; and the usual complement of electric guitar, bass, keyboards, and drums. All of the members sang, six of them credited with “lead vocals.” This allowed them to cover similarly diverse ground stylistically. Within the 9 minutes and 20 seconds of the album’s first track, “System Manipulation,” they shift between an opening texture of interlocking hand clapping underlying a pentatonic melody sung by one of the male members; a melodically and rhythmically angular Frank Zappa-esque instrumental section that starts out with hocketing between unison accents played by drums, bass, and guitar, and chords and short figures on organ, violin, and clarinet, in additive groupings of a steady pulse that defies identification of meter; a vaguely ethnic section with alternating gongs, a repeated rhythmic pattern on a cowbell, and a chorus of *suling*; a section with heavy-metal-style low register heavily distorted electric guitar, the drummer keeping a steady backbeat on the bass and snare drums and an open hi-hat, and a speaking/growling male vocalist; and a section in a light jazz fusion style, with a nimble, bouncing bass line and swung ride cymbal underlying a female singer alternating with sprightly melodic interjections played in unison by an undistorted electric guitar and clarinet.

At first Discus experienced some difficulty figuring out where they fit in the Indonesian

music scene. Rock festivals “didn’t want us, because we were strange.” Jazz festivals “would let us play, but the audience didn’t like it.” Then, a group of fans of progressive rock founded the “Indonesian Progressive Society.” Discus’s second album was released in 2003 on a new Indonesian label that was created by the multinational music giant Sony in response to the society’s lobbying efforts, greatly improving its distribution.⁶⁶ Discus was declared the Best Progressive Band at the 2004 Anugerah Musik Indonesia, the Indonesian equivalent of The Grammy Awards. They have garnered some international attention as well. In 2000, a year after they released their first album, they were invited to a “progressive music festival” in the United States, after which they did a brief tour that ended with an appearance at the Knitting Factory, a key venue in New York City’s downtown scene. Their second album is discussed on several websites run by fans of progressive rock, and a Japanese group took considerable trouble to perform a quite faithful cover of Hasan’s “System Manipulation,” the song described above.⁶⁷

Hasan had played in rock bands previously, while in high school, but he had “left rock music almost completely for ten or more years” while focusing “fully” on “classical and jazz standards” during his studies in Oregon. He “didn’t intentionally leave rock music,” but was, nevertheless, led away from it by his program. That program exposed him to the canon of contemporary art music—he mentioned “Pierre Boulez,” “John Cage,” and “Minimalism” when we discussed his understanding of the term *musik kontemporer* at the outset of our interview. But it didn’t indoctrinate him into any particular creed of modernism. What he did

66. The CD insert includes three logos, of PRS Records, Indonesian Progressive Society, and Intrepid Music. Copyright is held by Intrepid Music, while PT Sony Music Entertainment Indonesia is credited with manufacturing and distribution.

67. http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=zFZffluSP_8

develop was a commitment to the “academic sort of way to compose,” to composing “note for note.” In Indonesia, the Pekan Komponis, *musik kontemporer*’s foremost institution, provided him with one opportunity to present his work. But overall, because of the “circumstances” in Indonesia, he “went back into” rock. He still hoped that someday he might again “write chamber and orchestral music.” But for the moment, his band Discus was what appeared to him to be “the only way I can I play the music that I like.” It was progressive rock, a highly specialized and newly-opened-up niche within the realm of *industri*, rather than “classical” or jazz—which in Indonesia are even more bound up with aesthetic expectations conditioned by the dominance of *industri*—that has allowed Hasan to most fully exercise his artistic integrity.

Yasudah: Mixophony as an Idiosyncratic Middle Way

Finding a Path and Following It Home

An especially poetic case, both in terms of his story and how he articulates his engagement with the popular, is that of a musician who goes by the name Yasudah.⁶⁸ Presumably a pseudonym—*ya sudah* means “yes already,” which in Indonesian, a language without tense, is an extremely common phrase—Yasudah uses the name exclusively, and is referred to that way consistently.⁶⁹ Yasudah was born and grew up, and now lives, in Baluwarti, the

68. Except where noted otherwise, all quotations in this section are taken from conversations with Yasudah in 2004 and 2005.

69. The cover of his cassette release “Di-et? No!” lists his name as “S. Yasudah.” It also credits production to “Yawis & Co,” the producer as “Mr. Nggih sampun” (“ya wis” and “nggih sampun” are “ya sudah” in low and high Javanese, respectively), and the distributor as “Mr. Yesalright.” As well as a factual response, “ya sudah” and its Javanese equivalents are used like “OK,” as an exclamation to express a range of different moods. Out of respect for the integrity of his persona, I decided not to ask

neighborhood within the outer walls of the Kraton Surakarta, the main palace in Solo, that traditionally housed both aristocrats and palace retainers.

Despite growing up in the immediate environs of a major epicenter of high Javanese culture, Yasudah had no direct involvement in gamelan. He described a hesitation to play, even when opportunities presented themselves, as the result of a distance he felt because he didn't fully understand it. He was, however, a serious fan (*penggemar berat*) of radio broadcasts of *wayang orang*, listening to the broadcasts on RRI every Wednesday evening. He preferred *wayang orang* to *wayang kulit* because it was "more complete," with the troupe of performers better able than a single *dhalang* to convey different characters through the distinct timbres of their voices and their ways of speaking.

By his own account, Yasudah's involvement in music "came late." Though he listened to rock bands such as The Beatles and Deep Purple while in high school, he only started playing in bands after he graduated. His interest was strong enough, however, that he visited the campus of ASKI, which at the time was just a few blocks away from his house, and also that of AMI Jogja, as possible places to study music. During both visits, he asked himself "could I go to school here?", but described feeling as if his mouth was "locked shut." It was only after he moved to Jakarta in the late 1970s, to look for work, that he discovered an atmosphere in which he felt more at ease. He went to TIM (the Taman Ismail Marzuki arts center) and happened upon a festival. Then he visited the campus of IKJ, and encountered the scene that had developed around Slamet Abdul Sjukur (chapter 3). He described seeing the "listening room"—the collection of recordings and playback equipment assembled by Tony Prabowo, Otto Sidharta, and others—with "many cassettes, classical, *kontemporer*, *etnik*, whatever."

Yasudah what his legal name was.

This provided much stimulation—“maybe too much,” he reflected, as exposure to so much music was too “intense” as a “jump” from “nothing at all.” What made the biggest difference was Sjukur’s teaching style, and his rejection of conventional hierarchical relationships. Yasudah finally felt like he “could ask and answer freely, without any burden,” because of a “dialectic connection” that was lacking in other places. At ASKI, Yasudah attributed this lack to the “existence of the *kraton*,” and the idea that only once one was “old” could one talk. At IKJ, he felt “that even as a newcomer I could talk freely. Everyone could talk freely until discovering the route of their choice.”

The route that Yasudah ended up following was somewhat circuitous, shaped by discontinuities that were the result of further periods of hesitation and doubt. He delayed enrolling at IKJ until 1980, at first because he arrived in Jakarta after classes had started, and then because he felt “confused.” After leaving IKJ—like almost everyone else in the composition scene without having graduated—he “retreated completely” (*mundur total*) for six years, between 1987 and 1993. When he reemerged, it was first through a symposium on metaphysics that he organized at Oncor, an artistic community and “venue for experimental arts activities,” managed by Tony Prabowo and his colleague from IKJ, Arjuna, that formed after TIM had, as Franki Raden put it, “lost its aura as the center for contemporary arts” (Notosudirdjo 2001: 383). It was only after he moved back to Solo, just after the symposium, that he started making music again.

IKJ had provided Yasudah with an “orientation.” Before starting at IKJ he was looking for “a form to hold on to,” but what he wanted was “to enter music, as a way of life.” “Maybe this was what inspired me to go the route of *musik kontemporer*,” he reflected. His studies helped him realize that “what was needed was exploration, not submitting to existing genres.”

He was “made aware” that “it wasn’t a form that I needed to find actually, but an existence behind that form.”

Yasudah very readily embraced a philosophy central to *musik kontemporer*, but he felt less affinity with those aspects of *musik kontemporer* that were themselves genre-like, foremost among them the high modernist style that Tony Prabowo and Michael Asmara found so compelling. While at IKJ he wrote a number of through-composed, fully notated pieces, but looking back he describes them as “introductory level compositions.” He realized he was less interested in pieces that were “written . . . descriptive and strict, already fully formed [*langsung matang*], total,” though he also experienced a bias, in himself as much as around him, against pieces that weren’t fully composed. “What is this exploration? An unfinished work, and you’re presenting it?”

Nevertheless, it was this more exploratory approach, in the vein of the workshops that Sjukur conducted on making music from readily available objects, that Yasudah gravitated toward. He recounted how while at IKJ he would do performances where he “didn’t bring anything,” instead using “whatever I could find at the performance space.” Working with a theater group in Jakarta, he “made an installation” with “empty bottles” and other random objects, and played that. Some of his first efforts after moving to Solo were also in this vein. For the Nur Gora Rupa festival in 1994 he organized a piece titled “Karnival Sepeda Bunyi” that involved a large group, consisting mostly of school kids, riding and making sounds with bicycles. In 1996 he gave an evening-length presentation—also at Taman Budaya Surakarta, the arts center that was the venue for Nur Gora Rupa—which he played solo, and then with his wife, Susana Miranti Kröber, originally from Germany, on a number of sound sculptures, mostly made from springs attached to various sized tin cans.

Reconciling Musical Habits through Philosophy

In 2000, Yasudah began integrating his explorations of sound producing materials with a mode of music making that was, at least for him and the people he worked with, more in tune with the environment they had grown up in, and that he had returned to. This was an environment where every day one heard the “*slendro/pelog* of gamelan” and the “pop/rock of *industri*,” as well as “buskers on the street, playing guitar,” but that was “without classic or *kontemporer*.” For an event at Taman Budaya Surakarta commemorating Martopangrawit—the court musician turned key teacher and mentor (chapter 2)—he formed a band with two people that he had worked with since 1995 and some students from ASKI. The following year, hearing of their plans to perform at the Yogyakarta Gamelan Festival, a friend from IKJ asked what kind of gamelan they were going to play. Their instrumentation did not include gamelan, but rather Yasudah’s sound sculptures, multiple singers, and an “ancient and simple” keyboard that Yasudah named “Kanjeng Kyai Kothak Jedhung” (His Venerable Highness Green Caterpillar Box). Punning on the word gamelan, his friend said “*damelan*” (Javanese, “activity”), which led to them coming up with the name Sareng Damelan—meaning, roughly, Nest of Activity.

Yasudah and Sareng Damelan’s first cassette was a self-produced release titled *DI-ET? NO!* that jokingly credited production to “Yawis & Co,” the producer as “Mr. Nggih sampun” (*ya wis* and *nggih sampun* = *ya sudah* in low and high Javanese, respectively), and the distributor as “Mr. Yesalright.” Most of the album’s ten tracks are essentially songs, featuring relatively straightforward and catchy melodies, often in diatonic approximations of *slendro* or *pelog*. The arrangements, however, are never completely straightforward, though there are abundant references to popular idioms and—thanks to the stock patches on Yasudah’s

keyboard, which imitate slap bass, drum kit, timpani, assorted Latin percussion, and an array of “ethnic” instruments—to the sound of certain late 1980s pop. To take one example: “Republik Plèsètan” (republic of puns, which describes well the group’s playful use of language, mostly Javanese, but with some Indonesian and a couple of English words) begins with the whole group chanting in vigorous rhythmic unison, the two women on clear pitches a major sixth apart and the men speaking. The text of what they chant, and the rhythm they chant it in, reappear in the guise of the syncopated minor/pentatonic melody of the chorus, set against a medium tempo funk vamp. Before it, against the same funk vamp in the relative major, the verse features a quasi-*pelog* melody reminiscent of *langgam* sung by one of the female members, with spoken or half-spoken interjections by the male members. The rhythmic continuity is interrupted, first in the verse by an *andhegan*-like pause filled mostly with dialogue against a background of soft wooshing noises. Then, following the chorus and what at first seems like a bridge, the rhythm parts fade out, taken over by a diffuse texture with one of the female singers repeating a short phrase, quietly and in a low register; dialogue and muttering involving the rest of the members; and more whooshing noises. The rhythm parts sneak back in, with a melodic embellishment played in reverse, like the guitar solo in The Beatles’ “I’m Only Sleeping.” The verses and chorus are repeated, the chorus this time ending with a more definitive rhythmic cadence as the ensemble shifts into the same diffuse texture as before.

DI-ET? NO! is an example of a “blend of various musical styles & contexts” that Yasudah has variously termed “mixo-context” or “mixophony,” one of five categories in a seemingly ongoing attempt to comprehensively categorize “contexts of musical projects,” or more broadly, “contexts of sonic phenomenon,” as he put it in one of our interviews from

2004. The first context, “chaostophony,” refers to “everyday sound phenomenon that happen without the intention of a musical consciousness.” In the fifth context, “cosmophony,” “there is no sound”; in explaining it, Yasudah instead spoke of the intervals between planets. In between are more specifically musical contexts. Yasudah offered “beatophony” as the context adopted “when a person begins to study music,” though beyond “a beat, a rhythm that is repeated, as a constant,” it also referred to the use of “scales—major or minor diatonic, pentatonic *slendro/pelog*.” “Explorophony” is the “realm of explorers,” who as Yasudah observed,

tend not to be satisfied playing music tied to certain patterns, and a metronomic, too constant, monotone. So they carry out explorations for sound phenomenon as broadly as possible . . . making their own scales. If necessary, they draw material from chaostophony, as a source of inspiration.

“Explorophony” aptly denotes the context most typical of *musik kontemporer*, the context that Yasudah encountered at IKJ and that he credits with inspiring him to “open” himself “as widely as possible.” “Mixophony,” then, is about “how to make combinations,” drawing primarily upon “beatophony” and “explorophony.”

Yasudah’s theorizing goes beyond narrowly musical concerns. In the succinct account of categories included in the insert of Yasudah and Sareng Damelan’s second self-produced album—an album of “Ethno Rox-pop” songs, mostly composed in 2002, that was their foray into what he there termed “Beato-context”—Yasudah glosses “Cosmo-context” as “Music for the Soul Evolution.” When I spoke with Yasudah in 2005, he had replaced “phony” with “kronos,” and his philosophizing had turned to the various “typologies of time” connected to “the evolution of a person’s spirit.” In this scheme, the five terms were “kronos-chaos”; “kronos-metros”; “kronos-bisnos,” the time it takes to complete actions; “kronos-psikos,” a

phase that with its danger of, as he put it, “psikodilematik” or even “psikotrajik,” that one must work through; until reaching “kronos-sukmanos” (*sukma* = “soul” in Javanese). More recently, Yasudah has offered workshops in Germany on “a new approach to experience self-structure” in which he “encourages the group to find eight self aspects in between different horizons e.g. horizon of knowledge, understanding, 5-senses.”⁷⁰

Whether having to do with the specifically musical or the spiritual, the underlying motivation for Yasudah’s theorizing is personal. It has to do, most of all, with Yasudah’s quest to find a life in, if not necessarily a livelihood from, music. Recognizing that “music without text”—that is, instrumental music—“needs a high level of interest,” Yasudah spoke of using text, and drawing upon the “storehouse” of “rock/pop,” as a way “to fish for interest from broad society.” He acknowledged that “explorophony” would be “heavy” to the ears of “general society, regular society” (*masyarakat umum, masyarakat awam*). He displays something, then, of the concern with accessibility at the center of Djaduk Ferianto’s kind of populism. He did not, however, speak of himself and the members of Sareng Damelan as “professional artists,” and has made only modest attempts to break into the world of *industri*.⁷¹ Yasudah’s engagement with elements from the context of “beatophony,” and his efforts to integrate them and those from “explorophony” into what he calls “mixophony,” appear more fundamentally to be an attempt to reconcile conflicting musical interests. When I asked him when these efforts started, he began by explaining that “before IKJ, I only played

70. Post on Yasudah’s Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/yasudah.solo>, accessed 28 July 2013.

71. Yasudah did send me a text message in 2005 about going with Sareng Damelan to play at an event in Bandung, which he described as “an effort [to present] *Etnik-kontemporer* in the arena of Rock Bands” (upaya Etnk-kntmpr pd ajang RockBand) (Yasudah, p.c. via text message, 1 August 2005). Most likely, the specific “arena” was that of the underground or indie scenes, described by Wallach (2008b) and Luvaas (2009).

regular band [music].” He “did not reject that musical habit,” but did become “anxious” (*penasaran*) to learn. “Is it this, or can be however, or . . .” But he found the never-ending polemic surrounding *musik kontemporer*, and the obsession with the question “how does one compose twenty-first century music?”, troublesome. He found himself getting caught up in it, until he developed his concept of “five-contexts” (*panca-konteks*) as a frame for understanding music. Rather than getting “stressed,” as others did, “trying to come up with a perfect conclusion,” Yasudah was able to “feel calm facing the variety of music I see on the face of the earth.” He escaped what he called the “sectoral fanaticism” that argued for the superiority of one kind of music over another.

In life, as in music, Yasudah argued, “an attitude has to be taken, and carried out.” Yasudah chose not to enter a life in music by defining himself according to a given tradition.

I’m a rock musician, for example, that means—or I’m a classical musician, or I’m a kontemporer musician. Even that I’m not. This is music. If I play music, I want to study to carry out this life. Music is learning . . . Experiencing this, playing music, what are the hidden connections to life?

But as much as it transcends *musik kontemporer*, Yasudah’s rejection of musical pigeonholes has, in his case, grown out of it. It was his studies with Slamet Abdul Sjukur at IKJ that first opened his mind, and it was there that his experimentalist inclinations were legitimized. While studying at IKJ he did not reject the “musical habit” of playing in “regular” bands, but neither has he returned to playing in regular bands. His brand of populism is, instead, highly idiosyncratic, with the indelible mark of the other musical habit he developed, at IKJ, of “explorophony.” His interest in “beatophony” is less about breaking into any mainstream, and more about remaining true to his whole musical self.

A Truly Alternative Populism: Beyond the Urban-Elite

Sojourns outside the Usual Circles

Not all of the populist venturings away from *musik kontemporer*'s centers of gravity have involved engaging with one or another aspect of popular culture, or the realm of *industri* which is responsible for its ubiquity. A different direction steers well clear of the whole urban-elite realm, one in which *musik kontemporer* first established a niche, but that is dominated by pop and *industri*.

An example is a different project undertaken by Yasudah, which I found out about when he sent me a text message letting me know it was about to be profiled on MetroTV (Yasudah, p.c. via text message, 25 June 2005). Fortunately, there was a television at the friend's house where I was staying, and I was able to tune in.⁷² The project, called "Suara Serumpun Bambu" (Sound of a Single Clump of Bamboo) was a collaboration between Yasudah, Sareng Damelan, and a few other urban artists, with residents of Berjo, a village near Telaga Madirda, a small spring-fed lake on the slopes of Mount Lawu, the imposing volcano that lies to the east of Solo. The Kabupaten of Karanganyar, the administrative district where the village is located, sponsored the project in the interest of developing tourism in the area.⁷³

The project took the form of a quasi-ritualistic performance event in multiple parts. In one, the performers, in costumes with elaborate headdresses made of bamboo, were stationed or moved around part of the lake, with a few on a bamboo raft, singing and playing bamboo

72. Yasudah also posted video documentation of the project on YouTube. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OW9zKLkQvaM>, uploaded 2 Feb 2010, accessed 18 October 2010.

73. The number of tourists visiting Java are a fraction of those visiting Bali, and they are most concentrated in Jogja. Karanganyar, on the opposite side of Solo from Jogja, is quite far off the established tourist circuit.

instruments. In another section, they performed an arrangement of “Matur Nuwun,” the opening track from Yasudah and Sareng Damelan’s *DI-ET? NO!*, with the performers standing and moving in concentric circles. The middle circle was a group of women keeping time by gently tossing and catching soybeans with a *tampah*, a winnowing tray.

Some of the local musicians in the project were members of Keluarga Thek-Thek Mekar Sari, a group that built upon the music used during night watches, adding additional instruments, most of them also made of bamboo, to accompany songs. As Yasudah put it, they sang “hundreds of songs,” but the accompaniment was invariably the same. He recounted how the workshops he conducted with them and others “to explore other possibilities” had mixed success. One day “they would get something,” but the next they would have trouble recreating that “atmosphere,” and would return to “*thek-thek*,” the interlocking rhythms on their bamboo instruments, and singing. The project was interesting, but as Yasudah’s wife Susana put it, articulating a perspective they seemed to share, the Keluarga Thek-Thek Mekar Sari members were “so tied to their habits.”

Yasudah’s project at Telaga Madirda is one of several examples of *kontemporer* artists from urban centers working with those at sometimes significant remove from their usual social circles. One of the earliest instances was the *kecak* production that Sardono developed in Teges, Bali, in 1972 (chapter 4). Going further afield, in 1978 Sardono led a study group from IKJ—of which Franki Raden was a member (Hardjana 1986: 85)—to Tanjungmanis, a village in East Kalimantan where the Tauw clan of the Kenyah people had resettled. Sardono returned there in 1982 to retrace part of the route they had taken from their original home in highlands of the interior of the island, and in 1987 organized a nine-day event at the Taman Ismail Marzuki arts center to draw attention to the ecological disaster of the forest fires that

engulfed the land surrounding Tanjungmanis. The event included Sardono's own multimedia piece *Hutan yang Merintah* (the lamenting forest) which involved eleven dancers from Kalimantan, and included an electroacoustic composition by Tony Prabowo which used as source material recordings of the Kenyah performers (Murgiyanto 1991: 322-337). Sardono has also collaborated with Asmat and Dani people from West Papua, the latter one of those ethnic groups that, in a particularly egregious popular culture parallel to the temporal othering by anthropology critiqued by Johannes Fabian (Fabian 2002), is routinely described as a vestige of the stone age.⁷⁴

In 1993, more than a decade before Yasudah's project in Telaga Madirda, Slamet Abdul Sjukur undertook a project in a similar setting, working with residents of Trawas, a village in the mountains south of Surabaya in East Java. He was invited by the director of a local non-profit environmental education organization⁷⁵ to "entertain the people in the village, for Earth Day." Finding that idea ridiculous, Sjukur instead worked with them to "make music together," leading them through exercises in starting from silence, and encouraging them to make their own instruments (Slamet Abdul Sjukur, p.c., 09 September 2004). As Supto Raharjo recounted—presumably on the basis of viewing the profile of the project on RCTI TV—one of the results was a "composition" produced by attaching "sound producing

74. One of the first guidebooks to the Indonesian half of New Guinea, by Kal Müller, was titled *New Guinea: Journey into the Stone Age* (Lincolnwood, IL: Passport Books, 1990) up until it was retitled *Indonesian New Guinea: West Papua/Irian Jaya* when it was republished by Periplus in 2002. As recently as 2001, an article in the New York Times described their traditional way of life as "one of the world's last vestiges of the Stone Age," even as it documented the group's adoption of "modern conveniences and Christianity" ("Stone Age Ways Surviving, Barely," by Calvin Sims, *New York Times*, 11 March 2001. <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/03/11/world/stone-age-ways-surviving-barely.html>, accessed 31 July 2013).

75. Pusat Pendidikan Lingkungan Hidup, literally "Living Space Education Center." The organization's website is (<http://pplhselo.or.id>, accessed 1 August 2013).

objects” to the nets with which the villagers would “often catch butterflies” (Sapto Raharjo, quoted in Burchman 2000: 111).

The urban/rural distinction is not necessarily the one that is most pertinent in these projects, nor is it invariably involved. When Sjukur told me about the project in Trawas, it was in conjunction with other instances in which, as he put it, he has made music “for people who have absolutely no musical background.” The first of these was the 1975 *angklung* project in Paris, which Sjukur carried out with members of the Indonesian community connected to the embassy (chapter 3). Sjukur also recounted creating a piece for a “newspaper salesperson” who could make “really great sounds,” who at the time Sjukur and I spoke was working “as a parking attendant in Blok M,” a large bargain shopping district in South Jakarta. On another occasion, Sjukur told me how he agreed to participate in the 2003 JakArt Festival⁷⁶ only if they accepted his proposal to create a piece for one hundred Jakarta teenagers—or “ABG,” *anak baru gede* (newly big kids), as they were identified in the title of the piece—playing only bamboo *kentongan* (Slamet Abdul Sjukur, p.c., 20 August 2005).⁷⁷

Joseph Praba, one of Jack Body’s students at AMI Jogja, recounted his “automotive

76. From the traces it has left on the web, JakArt, which has a not so active Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/JakArt-Festival>, accessed 2 August 2013) with a link to a currently unavailable website (<http://www.jakart.info>), seems to be an ambitious but also alternative interdisciplinary arts festival. A PDF about the 2008 event summarizes the history of the festival, the first of which was held in 2001 (http://www.subudworldnews.com/newsAddons/SWN_en_JakArt.pdf, accessed 2 August 2013). With its frequent references to “Bapak” (Father), and the fact that it is stored on the website of Subud World News, suggests a connection to the international spiritual movement Subud, whose founder, Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo, is referred to by the movement’s followers as “Bapak” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subud>, accessed 2 August 2013).

77. Emma Baulch notes how musicians in the reggae, punk, and death metal scenes in Bali in the 1990s used ABG derisively to refer to young teenagers and their fickle, market influenced tastes (Baulch 2007: 22). Sjukur presumably did not intend to insult the youth whose creativity the piece, “100 ABG Babu” (babu = *bahasa bambu*, bamboo language), was, as the introductory notes to the score explain, intended to draw out.

music” project, a piece composed for a large number of motorized vehicles, mostly motorcycles, but also some cars, and a truck “with the muffler opened up” that was “used as bass.” The piece, which through a grant from the Swiss government was recorded and filmed at an airfield in Wonosari, a town southeast of Jogja, used graphic notation, with numbers from 0 to 10 to indicate gradations between idle and full throttle. Praba “conducted” using a traffic light. The piece was inspired by “the sound of motorcycles” and a concern with sound pollution, but sought more broadly to increase awareness of various kinds of pollution—not just sound, but also “gas pollution” and “social pollution.” To that end, he approached motorcycle gangs, the members of which, as he explained, were seeking only for society to acknowledge that they existed. The piece “offered them a way to receive applause, praise,” and reportedly had the effect of improving relations between different gangs (Joseph Praba, p.c., 11 August 2005).⁷⁸

A Permanent Relocation: Sutanto “Mendut”

The figure who has demonstrated the most sustained commitment to working outside the established urban-elite-centered sphere of *musik kontemporer* is Sutanto. The most prominent of Jack Body’s students at AMI Jogja, representing the school with his “happening” at the first Pekan Komponis Muda in 1979, and that same year winning first prize in a composition competition held by the Jakarta Arts Council, Sutanto stopped composing and “vanished from the Indonesian music scene” (Notosudirdjo 2001: 349) after he was expelled for leading the

78. The piece, titled “Menjilat Lapisan Ozone” (Licking the Ozone Lazer), is listed on Praba’s website as a “Concert of Sound Art” (*Konser Seni Bunyi*) presented in Jogja, Solo, and Surabaya in 1992 (<http://josephpraba.wordpress.com/about/>, accessed 7 August 2013). The website makes no mention of the film, which I have not been able to track down. The audio recording he gave me seems to be an electroacoustic piece produced in a studio with recordings of individual motor vehicles.

protest against AMI's elimination of contemporary music from its curriculum (chapter 3). When he reconnected with the *kontemporer* performing arts scene, it was from his base in Mendut, a small village near Borobudur, one of the world's largest Buddhist monuments and a major tourist attraction. Sutanto had established a studio and gallery, with a focus on glass painting, which he also used as a base for his work encouraging villagers "to use theater as a medium for community development." He also had the "aim to develop Mendut village to become a center for alternative world culture" (Sutanto, paraphrased in Notosudirdjo 2001:350).

Sutanto's idea of alternative world culture incorporates aspects of the experimentalism he engaged in in the 1970s. This was most spectacularly evident in the piece he presented at the Nur Gora Rupa festival in 1994, a piece I was roped into through the American composer Nick Brooke, who contributed an electroacoustic element at Sutanto's request. As he did for the first Pekan Komponis Muda, Sutanto orchestrated a "happening," with most of the performers coming from Mendut. The various components of the piece, many of which were executed in parallel, independently of one another, ran the gamut from the refined to the rustic, the mundane to the outlandishly bizarre. There was one female dancer dancing the slow sinuous movements of the *bedhaya/srimpi* forms specific to the courts, in full costume. She provided a stark contrast to several long-haired and shirtless young men, who at times moved in ways that seemed to draw upon "folk" forms such as *jathilan*, and in one case the spastic movements of the demon Cakil,⁷⁹ but more often simply leapt and thrashed about. They entered surreptitiously, hiding their tights under plain clothes, which they then

79. Cakil is a wiry, fanged demon in Javanese *wayang*, and dances derived from it, who is inevitably encountered and killed in the middle of each performance.

removed—two of them rather ceremoniously while standing on a chair, flinging articles of clothing and their shoes into the air. Further along in the forty-minute performance, the whole group of them engaged in more tossing of objects, this time tin cans. Seven performers, including three young men dressed in shorts, bright yellow t-shirts, and hard hats, formed a small chorus, following the grossly exaggerated conducting of an eighth performer. Filling out the troupe were about fifty school age kids, who for much of the piece did a line dance in a large circle around most of the other performers, and a flock of a dozen or so ducks who were shepherded around the stage toward the end. Members of the audience joined in, including Yasudah and participants of “Karnival Sepeda Bunyi” (see above), who rode their bicycles around the oversized *pendhapa* of Taman Budaya Surakarta in the opposite direction of the line of school kids. Adding to the chaotic atmosphere, a torrential rainstorm started part way through the piece, resulting in streams of water pouring off the edge of the roof—which, given the *pendhapa*’s open walls, were very clearly visible and audible. According to Franki Raden, and the video documentation I acquired from Taman Budaya Surakarta’s archives, the title of the piece was “Show Sexy,” but for my small part I was instructed to repeatedly say “so sexy,” as slowly and with as low a voice as possible, into a microphone. The idea was that this would sound like *sukses* (succession), a hot but somewhat taboo topic as President Suharto grew older, and his grip on power began to loosen.⁸⁰

Ten years later, in 2004, when I went with Brooke to visit Sutanto in Mendut, I found that the scope of his work had expanded considerably. He took us to visit one of several communities in the area he had established a relationship with. Driving more than an hour,

80. My account of the piece is based on my memory of the performance, and from reviewing video documentation obtained from TBS.

the last part on rough and very steep roads, he took us to the village of Gejayan, nearly 1000 meters up the slopes of Gunung Merbabu. On the way, he made some calls on his mobile phone to inform “his community,” as he spoke of them, that we were coming. When we arrived in Gejayan we were fed a meal in the home of the village head, after which we observed a rehearsal of the group Sutanto had been working with. Most of the fifty or so members of the group played *teruntung*, a small frame drum held in the left hand and struck with a long thin stick held in the right; a few played other small gongs and *kendhang*.

Sutanto’s role in shaping their performance seemed to be relatively minimal. He explained that traditionally there would be only a few musicians, accompanying a large group of dancers. His suggestion was simply to invert this, and create an “*orkes teruntung*.” He gave a similar explanation in the spoken introduction to the public performance documented on a VCD he gave me—which had an ink-jet printed cover with the title *Orkes Teruntung: Kolaborasi Sutanto (teruntung orchestra: collaboration [with or by] Sutanto)*—noting how after they agreed to the idea, he asked them to “try playing them together—do you like it, or not?” After the performers were all seated in their places, but before they started, Sutanto improvised for about a minute on an upright piano. He played piano together with them later in their performance, but the *teruntung* players all but completely drowned him out.

For the most part, the group played what presumably they would usually play, only in a different configuration and, no less significantly, in a different context. They played not in their own village, but down the mountain on a stage erected in the small city of Magelang. It was not an enclosed theater, but a temporary stage, outdoors, in front of a temporary canopy over the audience, not unlike those that would be used for a *wayang* performance. The context did not preclude one of the performers apparently going into trance and collapsing,

requiring a few other performers and Sutanto to carry him out of the performance area while the music continued. Audience members were invited to participate by handing out *kentongan*, and at one point Sutanto stood on the edge of the stage clapping their beat to them, like a singer at a rock concert. And while a few accepted the invitation with the kind of abandon that would be typical in a truly communal setting, by getting up and dancing right in front of the stage, most played while sitting politely in their chairs.

When, on the ride to Gejayan, Nick asked Sutanto what his music was like now, Sutanto likened it to “fluxus,” and said it was “more sociological.” He described himself as less of a “composer,” and more of an “agitator.” Sutanto had, in fact, taken a leading role in organizing protests by vendors working in stalls by the entrance to Borobudur in response to plans to replace their stalls with a shopping center. The protests involved performing artists, including a group of dancers that a newspaper caption identified as an “artists community from the slopes of Gunung Merapi” presenting “happening art” (*Kedaulatan Rakyat*, 19 December 2002).

As much as agitating, Sutanto had come to occupy himself with organizing arts events. Foremost among these is what came to be called the *Festival Lima Gunung* (Five Mountain Festival), which has been held annually since the first in 2002. The title of the festival references the peaks that surround the Magelang area, but as Sutanto explained in a newspaper interview, “the mountains serve more as a symbol of rural groups that have long been sidelined by government institutions rather than a mere indication of origin.” The festival “aims at affirming that outside the government and political elite—with their frequent mismanagement of the population—there is an ongoing process of artistic creation in villages, or on mountain slopes, to maintain traditions and instinctive abilities.” Sutanto has

been the driving force behind the festival, but at the same time, he is concerned with providing “opportunity and trust to art communities to manage their own affairs, which have previously been in the hands of other circles” (Sutanto, quoted and paraphrased by Sudiarno 2004).

For Sutanto himself, the “arts community of the ‘five mountains’ that encircle Borobudur temple” represents a potent alternative to the urban elite-centered arts world he has, for the most part, left behind. As he declared in the abstract for a presentation at the 2007 Asian Composers League meeting in New Zealand (which his mentor Jack Body played a key role in organizing) “I have become disaffected with the dominant urban arts bureaucracy that relegates rural culture to the stereotypical ‘farmer’s strength’.” Sutanto proposed “‘Unique potential’” as “another descriptive of this ‘village’ culture,” adding that

in reality the diversity is much broader and richer, with its aesthetic vision and perspective of function in art. Further, and still more ‘wild’ descriptions of rhythm, melody, visual arts, theatre, ritual, literature and religion, myth and mystery, philosophy and politics extend to the unexplainable and unfathomable.⁸¹

It was not only the “dominant urban arts bureaucracy” that Sutanto took issue with, but also the urban artists they primarily served. Driving back from our visit to Gejayan, Sutanto opined that “city musicians are boring,” naming some of the more prominent figures in *musik kontemporer*: Djaduk Ferianto, Sapto Raharjo, I Wayan Sadra, and Franki Raden.

Nevertheless, Sutanto has far from completely severed his connections with the urban kontemporer scene. The video documenting the performance of the *orkes teruntung* from Gejayan shows among the audience members Emha Ainun Nadjib, a poet with whom Djaduk Ferianto has worked; Setyaji Dewanto, a musician who played regularly with Sapto Raharjo,

81. <http://www.asiapacificfestival.org.nz/conference/speakers-abstracts.html>, accessed 1 July 2007.

and worked with him on the Yogyakarta Gamelan Festival; and Michael Asmara. Asmara told me that Sutanto has complained about not being invited to perform at the YGF, revealing his interest in participating at the same time as it points to his disagreement with its own open-mic approach as an alternative to the “dominant urban arts bureaucracy.” Despite not participating, Sutanto does, according to Asmara, watch regularly (Michael Asmara, p.c., 13 August 2005).

Reclaiming Kontemporer

It is, however the “rural mountain communities,” with what in his ACL presentation he called “their wild dreams,” whose “culture” Sutanto wishes to “represent,” and with whom his “productivity is aligned.”⁸² It is these communities, he asserted when we spoke in 2004, that were “truly avant-garde.” To a significant extent, in designating them so Sutanto is reclaiming the term to refer to what he considered progressive from a broader social and spiritual perspective. Sutanto has, he told me, written appreciatively in *Tempo* about the greater role of animism in religion in various areas around Gunung Merbabu, arguing that monotheism reduces creativity. In invoking the concept of the avant-garde, Sutanto is seemingly thinking of the concern, shared by both historical avant-garde movements such as Dada and Constructivism, and neo-avant-garde ones such as Fluxus, with breaking down the distinction between art and life. At the same time, the international avant-garde remained for Sutanto an important point of reference. A collection of writings he published in 2002 includes essays on “Experimental Music According to Jack Body,” “Pioneers” such as John

82. Abstract for presentation at the 26th Conference/Festival of the Asian Composers League, held in 2007 in Wellington, New Zealand. www.asiapacificfestival.org.nz/conference/speakers-abstracts.html, accessed 1 July 2007.

Cage and Olivier Messiaen, and the “Craziness” (*Gila*) of the twentieth century as manifest in the work of Igor Stravinsky, Charles Ives, and Frank Zappa. It also includes essays honoring the contributions to Indonesian music of Slamet Abdul Sjukur and Suka Hardjana.

While in some of Sutanto’s collaborations, such as the one that formed the *orkes teruntung* in Gejayan, traditional aesthetics are fundamentally left intact, in others, such as “Show Sexy,” the impact of a sensibility shaped by the kind of conspicuous experimentalism characteristic of urban-based movements such as Fluxus is significant. This impact is also seemingly evident in a group that Sutanto presumably brought, along with the Gejayan *orkes teruntung*, to perform in Jakarta—not at one of the prestigious venues in the center of the city, but at a “cultural night” organized by the Urban Poor Consortium and held outdoors in Cibubur, a neighborhood near the city’s southern edge. The VCD documentation of the event that Sutanto gave me (produced by Urbanpoor Media) does not clearly link the footage of different performers with their names, which appear only in the opening credits, but the performance in question is, I believe, the one titled “Topeng Kontrol Trias Politika.” The title references “Montesquieu’s threefold division of political authority: the legislative, judicial, and executive powers” (*Kamus-Indonesia Inggris*, s.v. “trias politika”). The performance brought together “Senirupa Pertunjukan Lereng Tidar,” a performance art group from a neighborhood in Magelang (*senirupa* = visual art, *pertunjukan* = performance); a group of art students from Magelang; and a group from the Padepokan Budaya Sumbing, a cultural center named after the volcano to the northwest of Magelang. On the upper of the two-level stage are musicians and dancers in traditional dress: *blangkon* (a traditional headdress), black jackets, and in the case of the dancers, black and white checked *jarik*, a cloth similar to a *sarung* worn around the waist over trousers. The musicians played various small gongs and

drums similar to the auxiliary percussion in the *orkes teruntung*. As they played, a rather differently attired group marched into position, and then marched or hopped up and down in place in a line facing the audience, on the lower level. They wore shorts or mid-calf-length trousers; baggy suit jackets, and in some cases ties, but no shirts; and either boots, socks, or bare feet, in one case painted as if wearing socks. Most distinctive were their *topeng* (masks), which resembled rather crude versions of traditional *topeng*, but with erect phalluses in place of noses. One of the performers had a condom dangling from the end of his. Which models this performance and others like it draw upon is a question that bears further investigation, as blatantly sexual content is by no means unprecedented in the traditional Javanese performing arts, if perhaps not quite as deliberately lewd as here. If the performance can be considered avant-garde, it may be precisely because it channels such older modes of expressing sexuality that have been excised in sanitized versions of traditional forms that have been “upgraded” to become art.⁸³

There are many other questions that need to be answered. I was unable to ascertain even basic factual details about the Festival Lima Gunung or other projects Sutanto had undertaken or inspired, as when I returned to Mendut in 2005 Sutanto was fully preoccupied with the dire situation faced by his teenage son, who had been arrested for possession of a small amount of marijuana and was being held in an adult prison.⁸⁴ When I went with Sutanto to the court room for the issuing of his son’s sentence, I did, however, have an opportunity to speak

83. See, for example, Amrih Widodo’s study of how government sponsored programs sought to “domesticate” the social dance form *tayuban*—a form in which professional female entertainers are hired to dance with male guests at social events—by “transforming it into an art form” (Widodo 1997).

84. The disproportionate punishment was interpreted as vengeance for Sutanto’s role in preventing the construction of the shopping center at Borobudur.

briefly with a few people that had worked with Sutanto, and thereby gained a glimpse of some of the other personalities in the scene. There were two dancers, Wastiko and Wendi, who seemed to be in their thirties. They taught part time at universities, in Jogja and Surabaya respectively, and from their deportment struck me as having been educated, if not raised, in urban centers. A particularly interesting character was an older man named Sucoro who was an activist in the community around Borobudur. He seemed to be a local, but had with him a book on existential philosophy. When I asked him about it, he told me that a tourist had given it to him. His case suggests other vectors for the kind of modernist influence that would be consonant with the intellectual milieu at festivals like Nur Gora Rupa in Solo, or the events that Sutanto put on in Mendut in the 1990s. One of these, which with tongue in cheek was titled the “First Worldwide Cultural Congress” (*Kongres Kebudayaan se Dunia I*), convened notable figures in Indonesian *kontemporer* arts world, such as Bagong Kussudiardjo, Goenawan Mohamad, the poet and cultural critic Nirwan Dewanto, and the visual artist Heri Dono (Sudiarno 2000).

Of course, one would want to know more about the full range of people that have come to be involved in the activity that Sutanto seems to be at the center of: artists who, like Sutanto, were educated at formal institutions, including those in Magelang; performers who are not formally educated, at least not in the performing arts, who work primarily as farmers; and other members of the communities, who constitute the primary audience for the Festival Lima Gunung and other such events. One would also want to have a better understanding of the social, cultural, and economic context, and of other forces which act upon the area’s cultural ecology. This is true of all of the artistic activity surveyed in this chapter, and indeed in this study. But it is especially important with cases such as Sutanto’s work with the

mountain communities surrounding Magelang, which constitute a truly alternative populism.

As distinct as they are from one another, the other cases—Sadra’s avant-garde jam band Sono Seni; Djaduk Ferianto’s engagement with *industri*; Sapto Raharjo’s own multimedia performance events, and the eclecticism of the Yogyakarta Gamelan Festival which Sapto founded and led; Iwan Hassan’s finding refuge from the commercialism of the Indonesian jazz and classical music scenes in his progressive rock band Discus; and Yasudah’s ventures into *mixophony* with Sareng Damelan—all take place within the cultural sphere of urban Indonesia. They all engage with various more popular musical facets of that cultural sphere of which *musik kontemporer* is itself a more specialized part. With the exception of Hasan’s *Discus*, which rose to considerable prominence within its own specialized niche, they have all absorbed more aesthetic influence than they have exuded. Yasudah’s project at Telaga Madirda, Slamet Abdul Sjukur’s collaboration with residents of Trawas, and Sutanto’s work with the mountain communities in the Magelang area especially, are noteworthy less as transformations of their own aesthetics as creative musicians, and more as engagements with rural communities on their own turf. In the case of Sutanto’s work, because it has been so sustained, the impact on the artistic life of at least some of the communities seems to have been quite significant.

It is not that Sutanto has converted individual musicians to one or another version of *musik kontemporer*, in the way that Tony Prabowo and Arjuna “poisoned” singer Nyak Ina Raseuki. There does seem to have been some adoption of at least the term “happening art,” which presumably was introduced by Sutanto. Besides the use of “happening art” at the protest against the shopping center at Borobudur, a blog from a Catholic church and educational center in the village of Selo, located at the summit of the pass between Gunung

Merapi and Gunung Merbabu, displayed photographs of what it called “happening art” in conjunction with Christmas celebrations, and to counteract the use of narcotic drugs among youth.⁸⁵ It may be, however, that the term designates little more than the presence of unusual costumes and perhaps antics at otherwise routine dance presentations.

In any case, the use of the term stands as a rather different example of the “internationalization” of aspects of “twentieth-century avant-gardes,” and specifically, of at least the name of a form developed by “the now-global Cageian experimental movement,” than those alluded to by Georgina Born (Born and Hesmondhalgh 2000: 20), and examined by John Corbett (2000). It is an internationalization that goes beyond the network of interconnected scenes in the world’s major metropolises, which are centered around Western composers and their jet-setting or ex-patriate non-Western peers. It goes beyond efforts to join and extend that network represented by the Art Summit Indonesia and the Yogyakarta Contemporary Music Festival. There is some amount of diffusion of ideas, and certain practices and attitudes, deriving from the international avant-garde. Sutanto also insists that his projects are “*kontemporer*,” and not traditional (Sutanto, p.c., 9 August 2004). But rather than groom the villagers he works with to be successful in the urban-centered realm of *musik kontemporer*, Sutanto is more concerned with pushing those villagers, and those urban artists who will pay attention, to recognize that what they do is at least as vital and worthy—that it is no less *kontemporer* than what is usually recognized as *musik kontemporer*.

85. <http://egspi.blogspot.com/> accessed 18 October 2008.

Conclusion

In the preceding pages, I have set out, first and foremost, to explain what *musik kontemporer* is—or more precisely, after asserting at the outset that it is not a genre but a field of musical activity, what kind of musical activity it encompasses—and to account for how it came to have the profile it does.

In part, my approach has been historiographic. In the middle part, the two chapters on the history of *musik kontemporer* proper, I have pieced together accounts of the emergence of its three most significant initial scenes, and profiles of some of the figures central to them. I have drawn from various sources: a combination of writings from the time that have been published or that I retrieved from archives; retrospective accounts, by scholars and participants, Indonesian and otherwise; and oral history, gleaned from my interviews.

In the preceding two chapters of the first part, on *musik kontemporer*'s prehistory, I have drawn more extensively on a range of existing scholarship to fill out the picture provided by earlier writings by a smaller number of Indonesians. There, my concern was to show the connections, and lack thereof, between those involved in *musik kontemporer* and the musicians and composers who came before; between *musik kontemporer* itself, other contemporary Indonesian musics important to it, and past musical practices; and between the ideas behind *musik kontemporer* and intellectual threads that go further back. The chapters support a critical take on the idea of understanding the present and more recent past through

an understanding of the more distant past, by examining more precisely the relationship of *musik kontemporer* to its precursors and to earlier legacies.

The three chapters of the third and final part include some further intellectual history, in examining the concerns behind the establishment of *musik kontemporer*'s most important forum, the Pekan Komponis Muda. But mostly I have focused in on individuals, combining biography, profiles of their work as composers, and a reckoning of their artistic, ethical, and critical perspectives on themselves, each other, and *musik kontemporer* as whole. The case studies in these three chapters are a lens through which I have probed the impact of two predicaments. The first is what I describe as an absence of aesthetic authority that specifically affected Western-oriented composers, but that has also played a key role in determining the balance and relationship between *musik kontemporer*'s Western-oriented and traditionally-based sides. The second is a concern with *musik kontemporer*'s obscurity, a concern that cut across the Western-oriented/traditionally-based distinction, that gave rise to a more unruly eclecticism, and that has consequently blurred the boundaries between *musik kontemporer* and other musics.

In all of this, I have endeavored to listen and engage with the voices of the individuals I write about with care and respect, to take their points of view seriously and to put them at the center of my account. I cannot, however, claim to be a completely disinterested and impartial scribe, even if I have mostly managed to set aside, or better, transcend biases I once held more strongly. My attention to *musik kontemporer* as a scholar grew out of my earlier involvement as a performer and composer who collaborated with a number of traditionally-based composers affiliated with ASKI Solo. With great admiration for their work, I was motivated to scrutinize the question of Western influence, in order to substantiate my sense

that it represented something other than the simple adoption of Western models of new music. In the end, shifting from the question of influence to identifying and charting the sources and distribution of aesthetic authority, I ended up paying just as much attention to the experience and work of Western-oriented composers. I was also, because of my initial sympathies, motivated to argue for the strength and self-sufficiency of traditionally-based composers—to assert that they are not just younger siblings following in their older Western-oriented siblings' footsteps, attempting to fit into their hand-me-down shoes as best they can, despite having differently shaped feet (because of their different musical foundations). Shifting to an examination of *musik kontemporer* as a whole, I have confirmed that its traditionally-based side is in many important respects stronger than its Western-oriented side—stronger in its institutional base, its level of self-assuredness, and how it is regarded by those who confer authority and opportunity—and at least as well represented in the field. But in the process of painting a broader picture, I have also taken account of work that crosses the Western-oriented/traditionally-based divide, mostly due to what I characterize as the nativism of those from the Western-oriented side. I was further impelled to recognize the substantial amount of work that engages in various ways with *musik kontemporer*'s popular other, or that in different ways departs from its modernist and experimentalist centers of gravity.

My study is occupied to a significant degree with documentation. I do advance arguments about how I believe the evidence I present should be interpreted, and those arguments involve a certain amount of theorizing. But as much as possible, I have tried to follow my evidence, to allow my theorizing and my arguments to grow out of my engagement with the findings of my research. The priority I have given to documentation was, I believe, what was called for by my topic. For while particular aspects of *musik kontemporer* have received scholarly

attention, there was, in my opinion, no adequate overview of the field as a whole. There was certainly nothing that put it in historical perspective while also being grounded by ethnographic inquiry. I cannot claim to have produced an exhaustive treatment of my topic—I regret, for example, not having provided more than passing acknowledgement of some of the important work coming out of Bandung. Similarly, much more could be said about other work being done in Jakarta. My study overlaps somewhat, but mostly complements and is complemented by, the important work of my colleague and friend Andrew Clay McGraw, which focuses on the vitally important *musik kontemporer* scene in Bali, and involves a more intensive application of social and cultural theory, and more attention to matters of political economy. And then there is the spread of *musik kontemporer* to Indonesia’s “outer islands,” represented in my study only by passing reference to work by Minangkabau composers from West Sumatra.

My contribution, relative to McGraw’s, is perhaps more modest theoretically, but more ambitious in scope. Though it falls short of being truly comprehensive, I believe it does cover the most significant bases, and as such it lays crucially important groundwork for further studies of *musik kontemporer* in Indonesia. Beyond *musik kontemporer*, it contributes an important perspective to the broader study of music in contemporary Indonesia, and suggests lines of inquiry that could be productively applied to contemporary musics in other parts of the world as well. By way of conclusion, I turn now to some more particular thoughts on how my findings and arguments relate and contribute to directions in Indonesian music studies, ethnomusicology, and the study of culture more generally.

Positioning my Contribution

Bruno Nettl begins his 1985 book *The Western Impact on World Music* by asserting:

During the last hundred years, the most significant phenomenon in the global history of music has been the intensive imposition of Western music and musical thought upon the rest of the world. (Nettl 1985: 3)

Nettl's examination of "the formidable number of responses" to this imposition was part of a general shift in ethnomusicology away from its singular focus on the distinctiveness of non-Western musical cultures, and toward a concern with how musical cultures were changing. Hybrid forms, shunned by pioneers of the field such as Jaap Kunst, and forms that were fundamentally Western in their musical idiom, began to receive serious scholarly consideration—though more slowly in some quarters, such as Indonesianist ethnomusicology, than others.¹

Through examining Indonesian *musik kontemporer*, a form that would appear to be the result of Western influence, this study contributes to a reexamination of the phenomenon first comprehensively surveyed by Nettl. In this reexamination, the phenomenon is formulated somewhat differently, as I discuss below. But there is also a more direct challenge to Nettl's assertion.

At least as significant a phenomenon in music since the early twentieth century, in the West no less than anywhere else, is the industrialization and commercialization of music. The majority of music most of the world encounters today comes to us by way of the music industry—referring first and foremost to those conglomerates whose business is the

1. Indonesianist ethnomusicology has largely caught up, however, as a special issue of *Asian Music* focused on Indonesian popular music attests (Wallach and Clinton 2013).

production and dissemination of music through broadcasts and recordings. And the majority of that music, in most places, is what we call popular music. This is certainly the case in North America. It is also the case in most of Indonesia.

This study has not concerned itself primarily with the history of Indonesian popular music or of the Indonesian music industry. But at the same time, that history is centrally important to the history of *musik kontemporer*, its emergence, and its acquisition of its distinctive profile. It was popular music genres that were most dominant in the musical life of colonial society in the Dutch East Indies, and subsequently the public culture of independent Indonesia. It was popular music that more fundamentally informed what there was of a classical music scene, giving it a predominantly paraclassical constitution that exasperated *musik kontemporer*'s precursors from the 1940s and 1950s, and foiled their attempts to steer the scene in a direction that would support a practice of art music composition more in line with the canon of Western art music. The dominance of popular music was decried by the next generation of Western-oriented figures as well, such as Suka Hardjana, who once likened popular music to "poison." The response of the traditional performing arts to the increasing dominance of commercialized popular culture was similarly disparaged by Hardjana's traditionally-based counterpart Humardani, who characterized prominent instances of that response as "idiotic" and "kitsch." The creative work by the younger composers that Hardjana and Humardani oversaw in the 1970s and 1980s—work that established the field of *musik kontemporer* proper—was intended as an alternative. Initially, this work was predominantly experimentalist in character; in the case of Western-oriented composers, this was in large part because the paraclassically inclined classical music scene provided little in the way of opportunity or support. But since the 1990s, an increasing

number of composers, Western-oriented, traditionally-based, as well as those in between, have engaged with aspects of popular music, while continuing, for the most part, to avoid *industri*. They have done so in a bid to broaden the socio-aesthetic base for their work, but in the process, they have greatly complicated a sense of what *musik kontemporer* is.

More centrally, my argument relates to efforts to complicate the cultural imperialism thesis, a thesis Nettl at once reiterated, in characterizing the flow of music and musical thought from the West as an “intensive imposition,” even as he challenged it by turning his focus to the tremendous variety of responses to that flow. Subsequent ethnomusicological studies of popular musics in different parts of the world have seized upon terms such as glocalization in drawing attention to the dynamics in the adaptation of global forms to local conditions. More recently, turning toward examples that do not display audible marks of indigenization, scholars have highlighted how transnational cultural forms are strategically deployed. Jeremy Wallach argues that “the real question . . . is not how Indonesian punk is distinctively Indonesian but rather how punk music and style operate within an Indonesian national youth culture” (Wallach 2008a: 113). Brent Luvaas describes Indonesian indie pop groups as “accomplices” and “coconspirators” rather than “victims” of a globalization they regard as an alternative to existing, mostly nationally imposed, constructions of locality (Luvaas 2009: 248-249). Emma Baulch identifies similar motivations for the “gesturing elsewhere” of Balinese youth involved in reggae, punk and death metal (2007).

In my case, I am dealing with a field of music that encompasses both activity that is indebted to foreign models, and activity whose relationship to foreign models is more ambiguous. *Musik kontemporer* refers equally to the work of Western-oriented composers with a strong affinity for the musical idioms of mid-twentieth century European modernism,

and to that of those traditionally-based composers whose no less modernist approach based on the exploration of sound relates only indirectly to the international avant-garde, instead taking its cue from ideas about the imperative to innovate that have been abstracted from Western modernist aesthetics. While these facets are particularly exemplary, there are many others. There are plenty of composers who draw upon both traditional and non-traditional sources—or, as Djaduk Ferianto calls them, “references.” Most, though not all, of the non-traditional ones would be thought of as Western—though as often as not they would relate at least as much to the realm of the popular as that of the avant-garde. The picture is further complicated by the fact that those composers who do, in some of their work, hew closely to canonically modernist idioms such as serialism, also compose for gamelan and other traditional Indonesian instruments. They may or may not be any less Western-oriented in their basic outlook on composition, but their output cannot be regarded as completely Westernized as that of, for example, Balinese headbangers.

Other Theories, Considered

In trying to make sense of *musik kontemporer*'s variegated profile, and how it acquired it, I have not, as I noted in the introduction, adopted any single major theoretical framework. This in no way suggests that available theories could not provide insightful perspectives. The different ways of theorizing hybridity, for example, could be productively employed in a number of cases. The more straightforward definition of “cultural hybridity” as involving the “mixing of elements developed in separate semiotic worlds,” used by R. Anderson Sutton (Sutton 2010) in examining a number of “encounters” between gamelan and Western music—one of which, the “Ethno-Pop- Jazz-Fusion” of Krakatau, lies just outside the

boundary of *musik kontemporer*—applies equally well to cases like Djaduk Ferrianto, who in looking to Krakatau and others in the realm of *industri* straddles that boundary. There's a related type of hybridity in the methods Tony Prabowo developed to create music in collaboration with the traditionally-based Minangkabau musicians in the New Jakarta Ensemble that remained basically avant-garde in style. But in Prabowo's case, and that of Michael Asmara, who has more doggedly stuck to creating through-composed scores in his pieces for gamelan instruments, the more relevant theories of hybridity are those that address questions of subjectivity in postcolonial conditions, such as W. E. B. DuBois's notion of double-consciousness (DuBois 1989), or Homi Bhabha's examinations of in-betweenness (Bhabha 1994).

These theories of hybridity are less helpful, however, in apprehending the centrally important traditionally-based scene that formed at ASKI Solo in the late 1970s, and its signature practice of sound-exploration. Extracting the widest possible array of sounds out of gamelan and other traditional instruments was not an element derived from the separate semiotic world of a foreign model, but was grounded in indigenous relationships to sound and sound-making. It did involve a shift in consciousness, but rather than finding themselves in between the categories of Western and non-Western, the tension they experienced was between their commitments to the traditional and the modern. Looking at the whole picture, *musik kontemporer* cannot be spoken of as a hybrid genre, as it is not a genre at all. Rather, it is a field encompassing a diverse range of creative musical activity. Its sense of unity, to the extent that it has one, is not that of a hybrid, but, to borrow a different metaphor from the natural sciences, more like conglomerate rock.

It makes some sense, at least in approaching the two most exemplary aspects of *musik*

kontemporer, to go back to the old distinction between Westernization and modernization. But this too has its problems, at least as the distinction was deployed in ethnomusicology before other issues, and with them other theoretical frameworks, displaced it as a significant concern. The practice of sound exploration involves a more radical and deliberate kind of aesthetic change than the adoption of notation, the founding of conservatories, or the use of electronic sound technologies—the cases of modernization that scholars of Javanese gamelan have examined. It is, with respect to Nettl’s definition (Nettl 1985: 20), more than an “incidental movement” away from traditional practices. At the same time, although the notions of artistic modernity that were its impetus can be traced back to the West, it was conceived as and felt to be something other than a “movement . . . in the direction of Western music and musical life” (ibid.). The atonal string quartets of Michael Asmara do seemingly represent such a movement: not just the Westernization of a non-Western music through “the substitution of central features of Western music for their non-Western analogues” (ibid.) but the wholesale adoption of a Western model. Yet Asmara himself is far from thoroughly Westernized.

I have therefore been concerned with more explicitly delimiting the extent and impact of Western influence, not only on the traditionally-based side of *musik kontemporer*, but also on its Western-oriented side. I have also been concerned with accounting for what it is that binds, however loosely, these and other aspects of *musik kontemporer* together.

My Theoretical Contributions

As a way of accounting for the independence of the traditionally-based scene that developed at ASKI Solo from the international avant-garde that in important respects it resembled, I

developed a theory of ethnological valence. The push to break free from the rules that governed the traditional performing arts, and to engage in radical experimentation, came first and foremost from ASKI's director, Gendhon Humardani, whose ideas about artistic modernity were very much influenced by his engagement with modern dance and Western aesthetic philosophy. These ideas were presented, however, in a frame of reference that prioritized the traditional Indonesian performing arts that were ASKI's nearly exclusive concern. Because of this, and because of the long standing pattern in Indonesia's cultural elite of what I have termed cosmopolitan nativism, a pattern to which Humardani was heir, the ethnological valence of ideas about artistic modernity and practices of experimentalism as Western were, for composers at ASKI, almost fully attenuated.

In practical terms, what has bound the different aspects of *musik kontemporer* together—indeed, what established it as a field of creative musical activity in the first place—are the forums at which it is presented. The first and by all accounts the most important of these was the Pekan Komponis Muda, which from the first meeting in 1979 brought together both Western-oriented and traditionally-based composers. But more than simply providing opportunities for young composers to have their work heard, forums such as the PKM functioned as centrally important nodes in the web of relationships—of people to each other, and between people and institutions—through which aesthetic authority was variously conferred or denied, reinforced or questioned.

There were not separate webs for Western-oriented and traditionally-based composers, but rather one, even though the sources of their authority—their grounding in a musical tradition, or perceived lack thereof, in the case of Western-oriented composers—were distinct. It is a fundamental and pervasive distinction, recognized by Indonesian composers

themselves, even as an increasing number of them cross over the divide, or fall in between. It persists in no small part because the divide is even more pronounced in the larger world of music in Indonesia. But within the sphere of *musik kontemporer*, the distinction, though recognized, has not ossified into labels. The composers involved with *musik kontemporer* bring to it their various backgrounds and affiliations, and the music they create takes many different forms. Some pieces are more solidly identified as *musik kontemporer* than others, but this does not have to do with the traditionally-based/Western-oriented distinction. Rather, it has to do with how strongly they relate to *musik kontemporer*'s experimentalist and modernist centers of gravity—centers of gravity within one single field of *musik kontemporer*.

What makes *musik kontemporer*'s profile especially distinctive is not simply that it encompasses both Western-oriented and traditionally-based manifestations; that is common enough in those parts of Asia and other places where contemporary art music has been taken up. It is the extent to which these strains coexist and interact within a single field, and the prevalence and prominence of work that in various ways relates to traditional music. And more than any other theory, it is the concept of aesthetic authority, and the charting of its patterns of distribution—where it is drawn from, by whom, to whom it flows, and who accumulates it—that I have found most useful in accounting for why this is so, and how it came to be.

It is both in its presence and its absence that aesthetic authority has shaped the profile of *musik kontemporer*. Much of the impetus for *musik kontemporer*'s initial emergence and development in the 1970s and 80s—especially in terms of securing and then making use of an institutional base in recently founded cultural centers and councils in Jakarta—came from a

handful of composers and musicians who had gained their own authority as artists from studying and working in Europe. They gained support from those others among Indonesia's cosmopolitan cultural elite who believed that Indonesia should, as a modern nation, have composers of contemporary art music. The preeminent example in the late 1970s was Slamet Abdul Sjukur, who brought back to Indonesia a decidedly avant-gardist compositional voice he had developed over his fourteen years in Paris.

Looking at the bigger picture, however, it is the absence of authority that has had the greater impact on the Western-oriented side of *musik kontemporer*. Sjukur and his colleagues Suka Hardjana, the initial director of the Pekan Komponis Muda, and Frans Haryadi, who played an important role in founding the PKM, returned to Indonesia from Europe to find a sorely underdeveloped classical music scene, and nearly nothing of value to them in terms of creative work. Their precursors had failed to establish a classically-oriented practice of art music composition, or to shift the aesthetic constitution of a musical scene that from its colonial era roots had been predominantly paraclassical, with little regard for the authority of the Western art music canon. Their students at the Institut Kesenian Jakarta, and those at Akademi Musik Indonesia in Jogja, were thus unable to gain the kind of foundation that Hardjana, Haryadi, and Sjukur, and AMI's director Suhascarya, deemed necessary. These senior figures dealt with this situation in very different ways. Sjukur pushed his students to make do with what they had, while at the other extreme, Suhascarya upheld rigid and conservative standards that served only to drive composition to AMI's margins. In both cases, composers in these two Western-oriented scenes tended toward experimentalism, and nativism, though there were also those who continued to find themselves drawn to idioms rooted in the Western art music tradition. Those who have continued to compose have

struggled to gain a sense of their own aesthetic authority, even in the case of the most successful, such as Tony Prabowo.

The other effect of the long standing absence of authority that has hampered the development of art music composition in Western-oriented circles, has been to allow the traditionally-based circles to develop more freely on their own terms. More precisely, because they were not stuck in the shadow of a well established Western-oriented scene that had behind it the towering edifice of the Western art music tradition and its internationalized avant-garde extension, traditionally-based scenes were better able to make even those terms that did derive from elsewhere their own. Humardani—who also contributed much to establishing an institutional base for *musik kontemporer*—was able to present ideas of Art as universal, and the young composers at ASKI Solo whom he pushed to break free from traditional conventions devised their own ways of doing so, rather than following anyone else as a model.

Equally important as the absence of a strong local representation of a foreign authority—one that given the general prevalence of xenocentrism in Indonesia might have had considerable power—is the authority that traditionally-based *musik kontemporer* itself enjoys, precisely because it is based in indigenous traditions that have considerable aesthetic authority within the niches of the cultural ecology it occupies. While the incursions of a mostly Western-oriented commercialized popular culture had, since the final decades of the colonial era, posed an increasingly unavoidable challenge to gamelan musicians in Java's urban centers—leading to the populist innovations of Wasitodipuro and Nartosabdho reviewed in chapter 2—it was not until the mid 1970s that it began eroding the widespread social base of support for gamelan in the rural areas from which so many of the composers in

the scene at ASKI Solo came. Javanese gamelan was thus very much a vital tradition and the primary frame of reference for those composers who established themselves in the 1980s as primary contributors to the new field of *musik kontemporer*.

That young composers at ASKI were given the opportunity to present their compositional efforts on a national stage has to do, however, with a different dimension of tradition's authority. The notion that gamelan and other traditional forms of expression were old-fashioned—or worse, that they embodied an old feudal order and were thus impediments to progress—had gained general currency among those who regarded the Western-oriented public culture centered in Jakarta as Indonesia's future. Among a crucially important segment of Indonesia's intellectual and cultural elite, however, it was cosmopolitan nativism, with its deep roots in Indonesia's imagining itself as a nation, that prevailed. Thus, conservatories and academies for the traditional performing arts were founded, and provided with considerable resources to carry out their programs. The vitality of the traditional performing arts also impressed up and coming artists in the 1970s associated with the de facto national arts council (DKJ), national arts center (TIM), and national arts institute (IKJ) in Jakarta, leading to boldly nativist movements in contemporary theater and dance. When the Pekan Komponis Muda was launched in 1979 as a commensurately vital initiative in music, traditionally-based composers from other regional centers were given equal billing. They demonstrated, as Suka Hardjana proclaimed, that “tradition is modern.” Regarded by Hardjana as having a more substantial foundation—giving them, in my terms, greater aesthetic authority—they came to dominate the PKM, and in doing so solidly established themselves as a centrally important part of *musik kontemporer*. The traditional has thus continued to be a powerful source of aesthetic authority, even as *musik kontemporer* as a field has grown more eclectic and

disparate.

Broader Implications

My study joins others that call for a counterbalancing of two significant tendencies evident not only in ethnomusicology, but across a broad range scholarly disciplines that deal with things cultural. These tendencies represent undeniably important theoretical and methodological advances, and shifts toward new realities. But important as they are, when taken too far they can lead us to overlook other on the ground realities.

The first tendency is the preoccupation with the effects and manifestations of the formidably powerful forces of globalization—the increased flow of information, commerce, and people in a world that has always been connected, but that over the past century has become more intensively so. *Musik kontemporer* might be assumed to be an instance of the “internationalization of twentieth-century avant-gardes,” or even more specifically the localized Indonesian manifestation of “the now-global Cageian experimental movement” (Born and Hesmondhalgh 2000: 20). Both are phenomena that could benefit from a more rigorous application of perspectives developed with respect to other instances of transnationalism in music and the arts. However, as my study shows, *musik kontemporer* represents something else. Influence from a still predominantly Western international avant-garde played an important role in stimulating composers in certain scenes of *musik kontemporer*. Much of that influence came via senior figures who brought it back from more or less extended periods of study abroad. But *musik kontemporer* is not, on the whole, a transnational form, despite the efforts of some, like Michael Asmara, to turn it into one. Its distinctive profile has much more to do with local conditions, not only the prominent place of

traditional music and other performing arts in the cultural sphere it inhabits, but also the relatively underdeveloped state of Western art music that might otherwise support more sustained transnational connections. My study thus suggests that even studies of self-consciously modernist forms may benefit from greater attention to “theorizing the local,” as Richard Wolf has proposed as a more productive approach for community-based and locally focused performance traditions in South Asia (Wolf 2009).

The second and much broader tendency is perhaps one of the most significant over the past few decades, part of the wave (or waves) of theorizing in the wake of intellectual movements such as poststructuralism. It is the tendency to focus attention on the extent to which so many types of cultural phenomenon once taken to be natural are in fact constructions. A key instance for ethnomusicology is the notion of tradition. As the Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm has pointed out, many supposedly old traditions are in fact recent inventions (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). Hobsbawm’s intervention is actually quite straightforward, and he distinguishes invented traditions from both “‘custom’ which dominates so-called ‘traditional’ societies” (ibid.:2) and “the strength and adaptability genuine traditions” (ibid.:8). Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, examining the related concept of heritage, goes somewhat further in arguing that heritage, though “it looks old,” is “actually something new,” a “mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 7).

Interventions such as these have effected an immeasurably important shift in the way scholars approach their objects of study, and more generally in the way we understand so many aspects of human existence. They have changed, probably irreversibly, the way we think about both big concepts such as tradition and heritage, and also more specific

phenomena, like experimentalism. But as much as we should avoid reverting to thinking of tradition or experimentalism as stable entities or essential qualities, those terms can still be useful in their unqualified forms if they are understood instead as analytic categories to apply to cultural phenomenon that are not merely constructions.

Benjamin Piekut pointed to this possibility in examining various manifestations of “actually existing experimentalism” in New York in 1964, even as he placed the phrase in scare quotes (Piekut 2011: 8). He acknowledged at the end of his introduction that he is “intrigued by the idea of experimentalism as an arena of risk, testing, and even (productive) failure” (ibid.:19). But mostly he used his introduction to argue that the notion of (American) experimentalism, typically defined by characteristics such as the embrace of indeterminacy, the “welcoming of daily life,” and “rugged individualism” is not an explanation, but an “achievement.” It depends on a “grouping” of composers who embody these qualities, a grouping that is not simply a representation but a narrative that is performed.² His case studies examined “actually existing experimentalism,” but rather than theorizing the fact of their existence, his overarching concern was to place “pressure on accepted narratives”—to challenge accepted notions of what experimentalism is.

In a more recently published collected volume, Piekut has more fully embraced the idea of “actually existing experimentalism” by bringing together others concerned with examining what else experimentalism might be, beyond the accepted paradigmatic examples (Piekut 2014). My own study also contributes to this project—though it too is preoccupied in its own way with challenging an accepted narrative, one that posits experimentalism, and

2. Piekut’s argument and method, as he explains, draws upon the actor-network theory of Bruno Latour.

contemporary art music in general, as something that spreads from center (the West) to periphery (the rest of the world). In the case of Indonesian *musik kontemporer*, that is undeniably part of the story. But as I have argued, it is not the whole of it. In future scholarship, even greater attention could be given to the social and cultural conditions that give rise to and sustain experimentalism in music and art, even in cases where there is little or no substantial relationship to the mostly Western high-art models that are taken as its exemplars. This would contribute much to a theorization of experimentalism itself, as mode of artistic production, which perhaps in most cases should include the way in which it is constructed as a category, but need not be limited to or even emphasize that plane of analysis.

The core of *musik kontemporer* is most sensibly understood as an instance of experimentalism. But as this study has shown, it also relates to experimentalism's putative opposite, the traditional. That term is also problematic, for reasons beyond the fact that it often presents as essential that which is constructed. It is not too narrowly applied, as with experimentalism, but used impossibly broadly. It lacks precision also in its multivalence. It is "considered by some a vitiated, contaminated term," as Philip Yampolsky notes (Yampolsky 2013:xv), most likely in reference to the baggage it carries, implicated as it is in complex, value-laden discursive histories. Yampolsky might also be responding, in declaring that he finds the concept useful, to the rejection of the traditional as a governing paradigm for ethnomusicology as it has redefined its purview to also embrace that which is the opposite of the traditional: the popular, the modern, the hybrid.

Problematic though it may be, the term traditional is still widely used in ethnomusicology. That is because, underneath the discursive accretions, it does usefully refer to musics and aspects of music making that are real, in the sense that they have an actual

existence, and that are distinctive—and that thus warrant further attention, in the myriad forms they take. They are not unchanging, and need not be pure, but they are nevertheless genuine. What my study shows is that even in the case of a music that might be considered the opposite of traditional, the traditional has been a potent force. This was especially the case through *musik kontemporer*'s emergence and coalescence in the 1970s and 80s, when the traditional played a centrally important role in establishing *musik kontemporer*'s distinctive profile. It has remained vitally important to many of those involved with *musik kontemporer*, as the overviews and profiles in the previous chapter have demonstrated.

Conversely, *musik kontemporer* has helped to secure a contemporary existence for traditional musics, even as a broader more popular basis for their existence has, in many cases, been lost. *Musik kontemporer* has, to a significant degree, realized Humardani's program, even if the forms it has taken are more varied than those he envisioned. Along with other *kontemporer* performing arts, it has fulfilled the optimistic prediction of the dancer and choreographer Sardono W. Kusumo, noted by Jennifer Lindsay, that increasingly artists would be able to move freely between the once antagonistic worlds of the modern and the traditional. The two have been able to "stimulate each other," allowing the "traditional arts" to "remain as they always have been, at once traditional and contemporary" (Lindsay 1985: 277-278). In accordance with this perspective, in a recent e-mail the young singer and composer Peni Candra Rini, who studied and now teaches at ISI (ASKI) Solo, has expressed her conviction that "traditional art and contemporary art are like two sides of one coin, that cannot be separated and must always be in rotation, that are of great benefit to the development of traditional arts and world performing arts" (Peni Candra Rini, p.c. via e-mail, 26 March 2014). This may, in the end, be one of *musik kontemporer*'s more significant

contributions.

Final Thoughts: The Meanings of Eclecticism and the Future of Musik Kontemporer

In a critical survey of how ethnomusicologists talk about musical multiplicity, Mark Slobin makes a case for the word “eclecticism.” The sense that in his view offers the most potential is one that emphasizes agency. He asks us to “bear in mind that the word’s Greek etymology comes from the idea of choice, selectivity and combination.” He further points to the *Oxford English Dictionary*’s stress on “eclecticism’s all-important link to open-mindedness,” noting how “after ‘that borrows or is borrowed from diverse sources,’ the *OED* offers ‘unfettered by narrow system in matters of opinion or practice’ and ‘broad, not exclusive, in matters of taste’.” Such open-mindedness, in Slobin’s view, is “crucial for grasping today’s musical choices.” It stands in contrast to a different, disapproving sense of eclecticism, “the way it traditionally figured in criticism as a kind of absence of originality or defect of taste” (Slobin 2007: 15).

In speaking of *musik kontemporer*’s “impossibly eclectic profile,” or of its drift “toward a more unruly eclecticism,” my use of the term has rather more to do with this second more judgement-laden sense. This reflects not my own opinions—which I have done my best to set aside, and that in any case on this point are mostly neutral. Instead, it points to the challenge that such eclecticism poses, at least for some, to the sense of *musik kontemporer*’s coherence and integrity. The sense of eclecticism that appeals to Slobin, on the other hand, gets at the underlying impetus for many of the alternative populisms, and other alternatives to the alternative that *musik kontemporer* was meant to be, that I survey in chapter 7. This is most clearly the case with I Wayan Sadra, whose *musik dialektis*, while not using the term eclectic,

very explicitly promotes exactly the kind of borrowing from diverse sources that eclecticism, in its more positive sense, designates.

The contrast between these two senses of eclecticism thus gets at the crux of the debate over what is and is not *musik kontemporer*, which fundamentally is about a struggle to define the boundaries and/or aesthetic focus of the field that the term has referred to. It gets at the tension that arises from movement in opposing directions. There is the centrifugal motion away from *musik kontemporer*'s centers of gravity as I Wayan Sadra, Djaduk Ferianto, Sapto Raharjo, Yasudah, and Sutanto have, in their various ways, sought stronger connections with a broader socio-aesthetic base. And then there is the centripetal motion represented by the critique of such populisms, such as Raseuki calling the “band” or “combo” trend “dangerous” (chapter 7); by Waridi's renewed assertion of the fundamental difference of the “kontemporer corridor” from “*musik industri*” (chapter 7); and, more positively, by the YCMF's explicit promotion of serialism and other compositional methods most closely associated with high modernism (chapter 6). All of these involve the exercise of aesthetic authority, through the appeal to aesthetic positions that the establishment of *musik kontemporer* as a field has made more authoritative.

There has similarly been motion both away from and toward the term *musik kontemporer* itself, though these do not necessarily coincide with the motions in practice and ideology described above. *Musik kontemporer* remained, in 2004 and 2005, far and away the most widely used term within the field of musical activity I have examined in this study. Explaining what the term refers to has remained a concern of figures both senior as junior, as clearly signaled by the titles of Suka Hardjana's 2003 book *Corat-Coret Musik Kontemporer: Dulu dan Kini* (A Sketch of Musik Kontemporer: Then and Now) and Agus Bing's 2004

article “Menggugat Istilah ‘Kontemporer’ dalam Festival” (A festival shakes up the term “kontemporer”).³ But there has also been evidence that some, including some of *musik kontemporer*’s most prominent figures, have begun to step away from the term. Tony Prabowo and Nyak Ina Raseuki, having grown weary of the polemic around *musik kontemporer*, have reportedly come to prefer *musik baru* (new music) (Nyak Ina Raseuki, p.c., 18 August 2005). Michael Asmara opted to use the English language “Contemporary Music” for the festival he founded (chapter 6). Sutanto described the mountain village artists he elects to keep company with, over boring city musicians, as avant-garde, and spoke of their “wild dreams” (chapter 7). Sapto Raharjo quietly abandoned the term *kontemporer* in expanding the scope of the gamelan festival he founded (chapter 7)—though he also, in commending Asmara at the inaugural YCMF for being the first to “pin the label *kontemporer*” on his festival (conflating *kontemporer* and contemporary), expressed his hope that the festival would continue, declaring that he was “addicted” (Sapto Raharjo, quoted in Bing 2004:42).

Returning once again to the question of what *musik kontemporer* is, it is important to recognize that it is both a discursive formation—an “achievement,” as Piekut would put it—and an actually existing field of creative musical activity. As a field, it has had a shifting relationship to other fields within the cultural ecology of contemporary Indonesia, especially as it has expanded with the participation of a more diverse range of musicians. But nevertheless, because of its history, because of its rather focused emergence in a handful of initial scenes brought together early on by the PKM, it has had a well-defined gravitational

3. Bing’s article was written in response to the inaugural Yogyakarta Contemporary Music Festival, the example of *musik kontemporer*’s “impossibly eclectic profile” that I discuss at the outset of this study.

center—or rather, a set of gravitational centers in a relatively stable relationship, like a stellar system of several stars orbiting each other. As a discursive formation, an “achievement,” it thus differs from American experimentalism in that it is less a “grouping” formed by imposing a name and a narrative retroactively—claiming Charles Ives as an early pioneer, excluding Miles Davis, or more to the point, Bill Dixon, and other contemporaneous figures grouped instead with jazz (Piekut 2011:8-14)—and more an actual group, or group of groups, of musicians that got their starts at around the same time. Brought into orbit around the focal point of the PKM, the application of the term *musik kontemporer* to all of these groups—the traditionally-based ones as well as the Western-oriented ones—was uncontroversial.

What has proved more challenging is *musik kontemporer*'s increasing eclecticism, both in the work of individual composers and in its overall profile. I have jumped from one metaphor to another in describing and explaining both the earlier and more recent situations, and the shift from the former to the latter: the loss of aesthetic anchors, the blurring (or redrawing or effacing) of boundaries, centrifugal versus centripetal motion, and orbiting gravitational centers. Rather than push any one of these further, it seems more effective to draw upon yet another less fanciful and more theoretically developed metaphor. In accounting for the place of the Western-oriented and the traditionally-based in the profile of *musik kontemporer*, it is the concept of aesthetic authority that I have found to be most useful. The concept is less helpful, however, when it comes to understanding on a theoretical level the increase in eclecticism, accounting only for the waning importance of centralized aesthetic authority, and not for what took its place. A better candidate for that is the more familiar concept of cultural capital—perhaps less as employed by Pierre Bourdieu himself (1984) than how it has been taken up by scholars of popular culture, the pioneer in this regard being Sarah Thornton

(1996).

The concept of aesthetic authority, as I have used it, has fit my purposes better than cultural capital, as it better describes the more internal logic of how, within what at least initially was a quite circumscribed field, individual artists and the scenes they form relate to each other, and the more intensive relationship of both to specific aesthetic hierarchies—as distinct from a concern with how cultivated dispositions, the capacity to appreciate expressive forms, and education more generally relate to and perpetuate social distinctions.⁴ To be sure, those involved with *musik kontemporer* were competing for resources, but these were mostly specific: the resources that would allow them to produce their work and get it performed, and to gain recognition. *Musik kontemporer* did develop at least a limited economy of prestige, even if it was not quite as terminal as that of the avant-garde in the West (McClary 1989). But a no less important factor, which the concept of aesthetic authority better conveys, is the sense of confidence and conviction an individual composer needs in order to create.

The senior figures who in different ways contributed to the emergence of *musik kontemporer* shared the goal of creating a space for and stimulating an interest in music as art. This is especially clear in the writings of Humardani and Hardjana, who in speaking of art's "principal" function of sustaining a "profound spiritual life" (Humardani, quoted in chapter 4); or of music fulfilling its "artistic aspirations," to be not only "an object for entertainment" but something that could provide "higher self-worth for a people" (Hardjana, quoted in chapter 5); and in urging young musicians to innovate; expressed ideas consistent with the idea of art as "an independent and privileged realm of spirit, truth, and creativity"

4. See Swartz (1997), especially chapter 4, for a succinct discussion of Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital within a cogent introduction to Bourdieu's work on the relationship between culture and power.

(Shiner 2001: 187).

Something of this conception of art has remained central to the idea of *musik kontemporer*. It is the promise of creating work according to one's ideals that attracts musicians to the field, at least as much as the relatively meager economic gain, either monetary or cultural. At the same time, the singular importance of the notion of art is diminishing, giving way to other ideas about what music is, and what it is for, such as the greater concern for the social evident in many of the alternative populisms described in chapter 7. There are still some who tend toward the kind of categorical distinctions that Humardani, Hardjana, and others made between music that realizes its potential as art, and music that does not. And the ongoing concern with defining *musik kontemporer* points to a persistent anxiety provoked by the field's increasing eclecticism. Mostly, however, there has been a greater appreciation of the value of other forms of musical expression. Experimentalism and modernism are still most exemplary within the field of *musik kontemporer*. It is in them, at least for now, that aesthetic authority remains most concentrated. But there has been a move away from these singular gravitational centers toward a more diffuse field. There has been a move toward musical styles that may not be quite as highly valued, but—to more explicitly engage with an economic metaphor—whose value is more liquid, because they have greater currency.

Both discursively, and as an actual field, there is no question that what *musik kontemporer* is will continue to change. It may or may not continue to be the preferred term that it has been. It may come to refer mostly to a smaller set of core practices, though for those it might also be replaced by other terms. Beyond those cores, as a field of activity it is likely that it will continue to diffuse into the broader cultural ecology, becoming less a

distinct entity, and more a tendency. The idea of music as art might become less about a category, and more about a function. The word *kontemporer* might then be understood primarily, as Sadra argued it should, as an adjective, rather than as a noun. Even if all of this were to happen—if *musik kontemporer* effectively ceased to exist in anything like its current form—that outcome need not be regarded as a failure on the part of those who have worked so hard to make *musik kontemporer* what it is. On the contrary, if the ideas and practices that *musik kontemporer* helped to cultivate are taken up more widely, that could be regarded as an even greater success.

Appendix I: Interviews Conducted

Interviews are listed by the primary interviewee (in most cases, an arbitrary distinction), alphabetically according to the way I refer to that person in the text (as I explain in the Technical Notes, in most cases I treat the last given name as if it were a surname, but not for those who are invariably referred to by their first given name), and then by the date of the interview. The list also indicates the city in which the interview was conducted.

Agus Bing and Joko S. Gombloh. Jogja, 27 July 2004.

Alattas, Fahmi. Jakarta, 18 August 2005.

Asmara, Michael. Jogja, 5 August 2005.

Asmara, Michael. Jogja, 10 July 2005.

Asmara, Michael. Jogja, 29 July 2004.

Body, Jack. By telephone, 29 May 2005.

Danasmoro, Lukas. Solo, 11 August 2005.

Danis Sugiyanto. Solo, 23 July 2004.

Dea, Alex. Solo, 27 July 2005.

Dharmawan, Dwiki. Jakarta, 19 August 2005.

Djaduk Ferianto. Jogja, 2 August 2005.

Djaduk Ferianto. Jogja, 27 July 2004.

Hardjana, Suka. Jakarta, 14 September 2004.

Harjito, I. M. Middletown, CT, 17 May 2005.

- Hasan, Iwan. Jakarta, 1 July 2005.
- Kamal, Trisutji. Jakarta, 27 June 2005.
- Martison, Epi. Jakarta, 15 August 2005.
- McDermott, Vincent. Jogja, 6 August 2005.
- Nainggolan, Marusya. Jakarta, 20 August 2005.
- Ngurah, Budi. Jogja, 9 July 2005.
- Pasaribu, Ben. Jogja, 8 July 2005.
- Praba, Joseph and Michael Asmara. Jogja, 14 August 2005.
- Praba, Joseph. Jogja, 11 August 2005.
- Prabowo, Tony and Michael Asmara. Jogja, 7 August 2005.
- Prabowo, Tony, Sapto Raharjo, and Michael Asmara. Jogja, 7 August 2005.
- Purwanto. Jogja, 14 August 2005.
- Raharjo. Jogja, 3 September 2004.
- Raseuki, Nyak Ina. Jakarta, 18 August 2005.
- Royke, Koapaha and Chairul Memet Slamet. Jogja, 6 August 2005.
- Royke, Koapaha. Jogja, 14 August 2005.
- Rusdiyantoro. Solo, 9 August 2005.
- Rustopo. Solo, 21 July 2005.
- Sadra, I Wayan. Solo, 4 August 2005.
- Sadra, I Wayan. Solo, 5 August 2005.
- Sadra, I Wayan. Solo, 23 July 2004.
- Sapto Raharjo. Jogja, 29 July 2004.
- Sapto Raharjo. Jogja, 29 July 2004.
- Sidharta, Otto. Jakarta, 6 June 2005.
- Sito. Jogja, 6 July 2005.
- Sjukur, Slamet Abdul. Solo, 9 September 2004.
- Sjukur, Slamet Abdul and Ricky Jap. Jakarta, 20 August 2005.

Slamet, Chairul Memet. Jogja, 6 August 2005.
Subowo, Yohanes. Jogja, 7 July 2005.
Sugeng. Solo, 13 July 2005.
Sukamso. Solo, 4 August 2004.
Sukerta, Pande Made. Solo, 7 September 2004.
Sukerta, Pande Made. Solo, 8 July 2005.
Supanggih, Rahayu. Solo, 21 July 2004.
Suprpto Suryodarmo. Solo, 31 July 2004.
Susanto, Hadi. Jogja, 6 August 2005.
Susilo, Hardja. Honolulu, HI, 21 November 2006.
Sutrisno Hartana. Jogja, 10 August 2004.
Suwardi, A. L. Solo, 8 August 2005.
Suwardi, A. L. Solo, 8 September 2004.
Syahrial. Jakarta, 21 June 2005.
Van Ness, Edward. Jakarta, 14 June 2005.
Waluyo. Solo, 3 August 2004.
Yasudah. Solo, 7 August 2004.
Yasudah. Solo, 12 July 2005.
Yasudah. Solo, 31 July 2004.
Yayat. Solo, 9 August 2005

Appendix II: Participation in Creative Projects

This appendix lists the creative projects of *musik kontemporer* that I have engaged in as a composer/performer/improviser, starting with the project that provided me with my first hands-on introduction to *musik kontemporer*. I as I elaborate in my Acknowledgements, it was in this capacity, rather than as a researcher, that I first became involved with *musik kontemporer*. During my first two trips to Indonesia, in 1993–95 and 2000, when my primary goal was to learn to play traditional Javanese *karawitan*, I also found opportunities to collaborate with Indonesian composer/performer/improvisers. When I returned to Indonesia in 2004 and 2005 to more formally conduct research for this study—research that consisted mostly of talking with those involved in *musik kontemporer*, whether in the formal interviews listed in appendix I or more informal conversations—I continued to engage in such collaborative projects. This activity was not participant-observation, but simply participation; it was not undertaken to support academic research, and was not, at least not during my first trips, accompanied by the all-important ethnographic method of writing fieldnotes. Nevertheless, it was critically important in shaping my understanding of the music and the musical scenes that I would later examine as a scholar. It was also an important dimension of my relationships to both the individuals I worked with, and others aware of this work, whom I have now written about.

- 1991 “Proses Dua.” A collaborative composition led by A. L. Suwardi, with Michael O’Neill, Kenneth Newby, and myself, developed over Suwardi’s month-long residency at the Western Front, an artist-run center in Vancouver, Canada. Performed on 7 November.
- 1994 Participation in an improvisation led by Pande Made Sukerta on sound sculptures by Hajar Satoto, for the opening of an exhibition at Taman Budaya Surakarta, 26 March.
- 1994 “three blue lotus.” A piece I composed for bowed *gender*, *kendhang*, bowed *siter*, and melodica, to accompany one section of *An Episode of Vishnu*, an evening-length dance performance by choreographer Bambang Mbesur. I also performed in a piece composed by Sunardi to accompany another section. Presented at TBS on 14 April.
- 1994 Project organized by the English composer Adrian Lee, consisting of rehearsals and a recording session, for which I composed my own piece and played in new pieces by Rasita Satriana, Joko Purwanto, Teti Darlenis, and I Nengah Muliana, all faculty at STSI (ASKI) Solo, as well as Adrian Lee. August and September.
- 1994 “Kami Sedang Membangun Rumah.” An evening-length dance performance by Marintan Sirait and Marjie Suanda, with improvised musical accompaniment by I Wayan Sadra, Endo Suanda, and myself. Presented at Taman Budaya Surakarta on 21 and 22 December 1994.
- 1996 Participation as a performer (with Gamelan Madu Sari) in a recording for broadcast and CD release (on and by CBC Radio Two’s Westcoast Performance) that included Sutrisno S. Hartana’s composition “Sangaskara.”
- 2000 Participation as a performer in a new composition by A. L. Suwardi, presented at Taman Budaya Surakarta. 20 April.
- 2004 Sekar Anu, the name of an ensemble founded for a collaborative project involving four composer-performers from Indonesia (AL Suwardi, Pande Made Sukerta, Ida Bagus Widnyana, and Dewa Nyoman Supenida), and four from the US (Nick Brooke, Andrew Raffo Dewar, Andrew Clay McGraw, and myself). We presented the collaborative composition “Maya” on 16 July at the Yogyakarta Gamelan Festival, and individual composed pieces at concerts at the Wantilan Bali Hotel, Denpasar, on 27 August, and at the Panggung Tirta Sari, Peliatan, Bali, on 29 August.
- 2004 *Garap Gamelan Reflektif*. A concert of new compositions by Sutrisno S. Hartana, in which I participated as a performer. Presented at the Gedung Societet, Taman

Budaya Yogyakarta, 12 July.

- 2004 “Daily.” One of four compositions by I Wayan Sadra presented on a concert of his work as part of the Art Summit Indonesia, for which I provided technical assistance. Specifically, I manipulated the equalization of the amplified sounds of eggs, thrown by Sadra, striking a nine-by-twelve foot iron sheet to which gas burners and two contact microphones (that I provided) were attached. Presented at the Gedung Kesenian, Jakarta, 12 and 13 September.
- 2005 “A Piece for 15 Rebab.” Composition by Michael Asmara, which I performed (playing one part live along with a multitrack recording of myself playing the other parts) at the Yogyakarta Gamelan Festival. Studio Misty, 14 July.
- 2007 Participation as a performer in *Semar’s Journey*, a collaborative interdisciplinary *wayang* production by Gamelan Madu Sari, led by Sutrisno S. Hartana.

Glossary

B: Balinese

I: Indonesian

I+: Indonesian and other regional languages

J: Javanese

S: Sundanese

abangan. J: Javanese who are nominally Muslim but whose religious and cultural orientation is fundamentally syncretic.

ACL. Asian Composers League.

ada-ada. J: A category of unmetered song used in Javanese *wayang* and other dramatic contexts to convey a tense or agitated mood.

AKI. *Asosiasi Komponis Indonesia*. Association of Indonesian Composers, organization founded in 1994.

alok. J: Non-melodic vocal interjections such as *glissandi*, often coordinated with important structural points, intended to enliven Javanese gamelan performances.

AMI. *Akademi Musik Indonesia*. Tertiary-level music conservatory in Jogjakarta, now part of ISI Yogyakarta.

andhegan. J: Short interludes in Javanese gamelan pieces in which the ensemble stops, a *pesidhen* sings one or more phrases, and the ensemble resumes playing.

angklung. S/B: Pitched bamboo rattle, typically played in groups. Also the name of a type of Balinese gamelan that once included this instrument.

ASKI. *Akademi Seni Karawitan Indonesia*. Indonesian Academy of Traditional Musical Arts. Name of several tertiary-level conservatories for traditional performing arts.

balungan. J: Skeletal melody of a Javanese gamelan piece, typically played in unison by several metallophones.

Batak. Ethnonym for several related ethnic groups from North Sumatra.

Batavia. Capital of the Dutch East Indies, renamed Jakarta during the Japanese occupation.

bedhaya/srimpi. J: Two highly refined dance forms specific to the Central Javanese courts, involving seven or nine, or four female dancers, respectively.

- Betawi. Ethnonym for an ethnic group that formed in the vicinity of Batavia.
- Bintang Radio. “Radio Star.” Singing competition, and the winners of that competition, held by Indonesian National Radio (RRI), started in 1951.
- bonang. J/S: Gong-chime with ten to fourteen *pencon*, used in Javanese and Sundanese gamelan.
- bonang barung. J: Mid-register *bonang* in Javanese gamelan, considered a leading instrument.
- bonang panembung. J: Low-register *bonang*.
- bonang panerus. J: High-register *bonang*.
- budayawan. I: Individuals involved with the arts and culture as critics, producers, or administrators.
- campursari. I: Hybrid popular Javanese genre, combining gamelan and Western band instruments, most prominently electronic keyboards.
- ceng-ceng. B: Balinese gamelan instrument: a cluster of small cymbals mounted on a stand, played with two more small cymbals, one in each hand.
- ceng-ceng kopyak. B: Balinese gamelan instrument: two medium-sized cymbal held in each hand.
- cengkok. J: Melodic patterns, subject to considerable variation, of the soft elaborating parts in Javanese gamelan.
- dangdut. I: Hybrid popular music genre, combining elements Indian film music, Western rock, and other popular musics.
- Dayak. Ethnonym for a large number of ethnic groups from the interior of Borneo.
- dhalang/dalang. J/I+: Puppeteer in *wayang*, or narrator in related dramatic forms.
- DKJ. *Dewan Kesenian Jakarta*. Jakarta Arts Council.
- Electone. Electric organ manufactured by the Japanese company Yamaha.
- Eurasian. People of mixed European and Asian descent.
- gambang kromong. I+: Hybrid musical genre incorporating Indonesian, European, and Chinese instruments that developed in the vicinity of Batavia.
- gambus. I+: Term for various types of lute, some of them closely resembling the Middle Eastern ‘ūd.
- gamelan sekaten. J: Large, lower-pitched Javanese gamelan associated with the festival sekaten.
- gangsingan. I+: A cylindrical top that hums as it spins.
- garap. J: The way in which something, e.g. a Javanese gamelan piece, is worked out.
- Gedung Kesenian. Prestigious performance venue in Jakarta.
- gender. J, B: General term for metallophones with thin keys suspended by cords over a rack with tuned resonators. In Javanese gamelan also refers to *gender barung*, considered one of the most important instruments.

- gender panerus. J: High-register gender.
- gender wayang. B: Balinese gender, used primarily to accompany *wayang kulit*.
- genderan. J: The music played on gender.
- gendhing. J: A general term for Javanese gamelan pieces that more specifically refers to pieces using larger-scale formal structures.
- gendhing bonang. J: A Javanese gamelan piece in which only loud instruments are used, and in which *bonang barung* functions as the leading melodic instrument.
- gendhing dolanan. J: Short Javanese gamelan pieces based on or in the style of children's songs.
- gendhing kemanak. J: Javanese gamelan pieces featuring elongated melodic lines accompanied by a pared-down ensemble of punctuating instruments, including two *kemanak*.
- gerongan. J: Male chorus that sings with Javanese gamelan.
- gong ageng. J: Large Javanese gong.
- gong kebyar. B: A form of Balinese gamelan developed in the early twentieth century.
- Hanoman. I+: A monkey-like Hindu god and a central character in the Ramayana epic.
- hiburan. I: "Entertainment." Indonesian popular music genre pre-dating rock and roll.
- IKKI. *Ikatan Komponis-Komponis Indonesia*. League of Indonesian Composers. Short-lived organization, active from 1977 to about 1981.
- IKJ. *Institut Kesenian Jakarta*. Jakarta Arts Institute.
- jathilan. J: A trance dance using hobbyhorses.
- jineman. J: Light and small-scale Javanese gamelan pieces featuring a melody sung by a *pesindhen*.
- Jogja, Jogjakarta: Common name, and the more orthographically consistent spelling of the formal name, for the city Yogyakarta.
- karawitan. J/I+: Javanese gamelan and vocal music, or any traditional Indonesian music. See the introduction for a more extensive discussion.
- kemanak. J: Javanese gamelan instrument: banana-shaped bronze bell.
- kempul. J: Small Javanese gong.
- kendhang/kendang. J/I+: Term for various kinds of double-headed drum used in gamelan ensembles.
- kenong. J: Javanese gamelan instrument: large but higher-register gong-chime, used to punctuate subdivisions of a *gong* cycle.
- kentongan. I+: A log-drum sounded as an alarm
- Kepatihan. J: Name of a notation system for Javanese gamelan using numbers to indicate pitch, taken from the name of a neighborhood in Solo.
- ketawang. J: A relatively short formal structure used in Javanese gamelan pieces, with two phrases of eight pulses in each *gong* cycle.

- kethoprak. J: A popular Javanese theater form, developed in the early twentieth century.
- ketuk tilu. S: Sundanese dance and music genre involving a professional female dancer-singer who dances with male audience members, accompanied by a pared-down ensemble, often performed by itinerant entertainers.
- klenengan. J: Social and musical events involving Javanese gamelan, played on its own rather than as accompaniment to *wayang* or dance.
- KOKAR. *Konservatori Karawitan*. Conservatory of Traditional Music. Name of several secondary-level conservatories for traditional performing arts, the first of which was founded in Solo in 1950.
- Kridha Beksa Wirama. J: Javanese dance school founded in 1918.
- kroncong (keroncong, kerontjong). I: A hybrid Euro-American-Indonesian genre, believed to have roots in music brought to what is now Indonesia by the Portuguese in the 16th and 17th centuries.
- krupuk. I+: Deep-fried chips made from starches and other ingredients.
- ladrang. J: A relatively short formal structure used in Javanese gamelan pieces, with four phrases of eight pulses in each gong cycle.
- lagu. I+: Melody.
- lagu perjuangan. I: Songs of the struggle, dating from the Indonesian revolution.
- lagu seriosa. I: Serious songs.
- lancaran. J: Javanese gamelan pieces using small-scale formal structures, in which the *balungan* is typically faster and thus more prominent (*lancar* = fluent, flowing).
- langen sekar. J: Christian genre of Javanese gamelan music.
- langendriya. J: Javanese dance-opera form.
- langgam, langgam kroncong. J: Songs from the Javanized repertoire of *kroncong*, or in that style, which may also be played on Javanese gamelan.
- Lekra. *Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat*. Institute of People's Culture. Arts organization associated with the Indonesian Communist Party.
- lesung. J: A hollowed out log for hulling rice using, also used as a musical instrument.
- macapat. J: Major category of Javanese sung poetry.
- Melayu. Ethnonym, roughly synonymous with Malay, for the primary ethnic group in eastern Sumatra, the Malay peninsula, and coastal Borneo.
- Minang, Minangkabau. Ethnonyms of the primary ethnic group in West Sumatra.
- musique concrète. French: Genre of electro-acoustic music created by Pierre Schaeffer in Paris in 1948, involving the manipulation of recorded sounds.
- Nur Gora Rupa. Interdisciplinary arts festival held in 1994 at TBS, Solo.
- OSJ. *Orkes Simfoni Jakarta*. Jakarta Symphony Orchestra, active from 1967 through the late 1980s.
- padepokan. J: Art studio, especially for dance.

pathet. J: Mode.

pathetan. J: Category of unmetred pieces played by soft-sounding gamelan instruments, by themselves or accompanying a *dhalang* or other solo vocalist.

PKM. *Pekan Komponis Muda*. A more or less annual festival held eight times between 1979 and 1988, and sporadically after that.

pelog. J/S: A pentatonic scale, similar in intervallic structure to *mi-fa-sol-ti-do*, and a heptatonic tuning system accommodating several such pentatonic scales.

penataan. J: Form developed at ASKI Solo involving novel arrangements of traditional repertoire.

pencon. J: Knobbed gong, here used to refer to horizontally-suspended and higher-pitched knobbed gongs that are typically arranged in sets as a gong-chime, such as *bonang*.

pendhapa. J: A pavilion-like structure, with a pyramid-shaped roof and high ceiling, supported by columns rather than walls.

pesindhen. J: Solo female vocalist who sings with gamelan and other ensembles.

PKJT. *Pusat Kesenian Jawa Tengah*. Central Java Center for the Arts.

priyayi. J: Traditional Javanese nobility, Dutch-educated Javanese officials, or more generally the Javanese cultural elite.

Pudjangga Baru. I: Literary magazine active from 1933 to 1942.

Ramayana Ballet. Pioneering production of the dance-drama form *sendratari*, created in 1961.

rebab. J/B/S: A two string bowed lute, considered a leading melodic instrument in most of the traditional Indonesian musics in which it is used.

reog Ponorogo. Traditional dance form from the Ponorogo regency in East Java, involving a lion-peacock mask.

reyong. B: A gong-chime similar to *bonang* used in Balinese gamelan.

RRI. *Radio Republik Indonesia*. Radio of the Republic of Indonesia.

saluang. Minangkabau: end-blown bamboo flute.

sarasehan. J: Informal discussion or seminar.

saron. J: Metallophone with thick slab keys that sit on a hollowed-out solid wood stand that acts as a trough resonator.

Sekaten. J: A week-long festival to celebrate the birth of the prophet Muhammad.

sendhon. J: Category of unmetred pieces similar to *pathetan*.

siter. J: Box zither.

slendro/salendro. J/S: An anhemitonic pentatonic scale.

slenthem. J: *Gender*-type metallophone, with seven keys, that typically plays the *balungan*.

SMIND. *Sekolah Musik Indonesia*. Indonesian School of Music. Secondary-level

- conservatory of Western music founded in Jogja in 1950.
- Solo. Common name for the city Surakarta.
- STOVIA. Colonial-era school in Batavia that trained native doctors.
- suling. J/B/S: General term for end-blown bamboo flutes.
- suling gambuh. B: Large bamboo flute, several of which are used in the Balinese dance-drama form *gambuh*.
- Surakarta. Formal name for the city Solo.
- Taman Siswa. Native-run school system founded in the colonial era by Ki Hajar Dewantara.
- tembang. I+: Sung melody.
- terbang. I+: Frame drum used principally in Islamic genres.
- terompet. I+: Double-reed used in various Javanese “folk” genres.
- trompong. B: Lower-register gong-chime used primarily in older forms of Balinese gamelan.
- teruntung. J: Small frame drum used in Javanese “folk” traditions.
- TBS. *Taman Budaya Surakarta*, officially *Taman Budaya Jawa Tengah di Surakarta*. Central Java Cultural Center in Surakarta.
- TIM. *Taman Ismail Marzuki*. Indonesia’s effective national arts center located in Jakarta.
- Torajan. Ethnonym for ethnic group from highlands of South Sulawesi.
- wayang. J/B/S: General term for theatrical forms, most of which involve leather shadow puppets, and relate episodes from the Hindu epics Mahabharata and Ramayana.
- wayang kulit. J/B: Wayang using leather (*kulit*) shadow puppets
- wayang orang. I: Javanese commercial dance-drama form, based on the courtly form *wayang wong*, in which dancer-actors (*orang* = person) enact stories from *wayang*.
- wayang padat. J/I: Condensed form of *wayang kulit* developed at ASKI Solo by Gendhon Humardani.
- wayang wong. J: Javanese courtly dance-drama form in which dancer-actors (*wong* = person) enact stories from *wayang*.
- Yogyakarta. Official spelling of the city Jogjakarta.

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Abbreviations

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