Balinese Hybridities: Balinese Music as Global Phenomena

by

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“Exiles” (in lieu of a preface)

Over the seven years that I have been travelling to Bali, Ubud has transformed dramatically. During my first summer (2005), it was practically as ghost town. My friend Paddy and I used to survey the empty Monkey Forest streets looking for mildly populated bars and restaurants. To my dismay, the “reggae bar” was always the most popular. In crowded restaurants full of Australian, Japanese, and Taiwanese tourists, we could sustain the illusion that we were not tourists. At least we were not these kinds of tourists. We had come under different circumstances. We were not there to exploit exchange rates and profit from their relative poverty. We were studying music. We imagined ourselves as participant-observers ready to forge deep and meaningful relationships with “The Balinese.” We were already obsessed with Balinese music. Back then, he and I used shared everything we knew about gamelan. Neither of us had started grad school yet. So, we hadn’t yet figured out how to trade knowledge like a commodity. The arrangement worked well at the time, because neither of us had much money or knowledge to begin with. What little we shared made us both feel slightly richer. I imagined us like mini-Chernoffs, cruising the streets of Accra. Maybe our Balinese friends would even give us cool nicknames like Chernoff’s African friends had given him. ‘Psychedelic’ was Chernoff’s, right? In those days, there were still a few bars that advertised “magic mushroom cocktails.” So far, things appeared almost exactly like you would read about them. These were the illusions we could maintain…for a while at least.

Many of the Ubud-area restaurant employees seem to come from other areas, either locally or from poorer regencies, like Karangasem, Bangli, Jembrana, or Buleleng. Most of them sleep either at the restaurant itself or share cheap, temporary accommodations with the
other employees. The ones I’ve met didn’t seem to make very much money, but they still made more than they would have back home.

Like countless other bars and restaurants in the Ubud area, the bar Exiles emerged for a few brilliant moments and then vanished anonymously into the roadside ether. My first trip to Exiles was after the Oakland-based group, Gamelan X performed at the Bali Arts Festival. And as it turned out, much of the group was having a big post-show party there. That night, under those particular circumstances, the atmosphere was electric. There was live music and the dance floor was packed. Gamelan X’s presence contributed immensely to ambiance of the affair. There seemed to be as many actors as acrobats as musicians in the group. By my estimation, they were raver-types, folks who regularly went to desert parties and whatnot.

The rest of us tourists, plus the expats and Balinese at the club were clearly outmatched in terms of the raw charisma exuding from their pure hedonist revelry. I imagined that the folks who worked there were in awe, as we all were. There was a wall missing on the opposite end of the bar, which opened onto a manicured lawn, complete with palms and flowering trees. There were tables and an incredible view of the stars in the southern hemisphere. By my recollection, the whole night was surreal and gorgeous, rife with enough cheap alcohol and good music to last well past dawn.

This is what I was hoping for when I went back the following year (now 2006). This time, I was in Bali on my own and the nights were lonesome. As fate would have it, I found the place empty. I was literally the only customer. I couldn’t even find the bartender when I first walked in. I called into the back room, and eventually a young, friendly looking waiter answered. I was eager to try out my Indonesian, and likewise he wanted to work on his English. I gave up first. We spoke in a mixture of broken “Indonenglish” and impromptu sign language for the next several hours. He told me about his house and his family in Bangli.
think his parents had sent his older brother to college but did not have enough money for him as well, so he worked. He worked and lived at the bar, along with several of the other employees.

As I listened to him, I imagined the difficulty of making ends meet in Bali. I thought back to the year after I graduated college, working as a pizza delivery guy in Claremont, Ca. I had found the work so degrading. People regularly assumed that I was uneducated, or simply incompetent. And these judgments quickly led to impatience, or even disgust. “How could you be so fucking stupid!!!” someone once screamed at me as I called for directions. Even then, my circumstances seemed to pale in comparison to the work he did. My shifts were six hours long. His were twelve. I had three days off per week. He had one. I had the luxury of sleeping at home in my own bed. He slept at the restaurant. I imagined sleeping at the pizza place. I imagined working without tips and sending most of what little I earned back to my family. I thought about the fact that foreign customers in Bali were at least as condescending as those I had encountered on my delivery route. I had seen the way people mocked their Balinese servers, “I don’t suppose you have honey-mustard here, do you?” Such customers rarely seemed impressed by the fact that their servers were trilingual (Balinese, Indonesian and English) and that many speak some Japanese, German, and even Mandarin.

He spoke about the difficulties of his situation quite matter of factly. But I never got the sense that he wanted to elicit my sympathy. But it was hard not to be moved. Listening to him made me feel like I had never experienced any real hardship. The stale, superficiality of my own, “first world problems” came slowly into focus. After telling me these details about his life and family, he asked me about where I was from. I fell back on the kinds of small talk that had become second nature while staying in Bali. Barely listening to myself and I studied his face as I spoke. Like most guys in their early twenties, he perked up when I mentioned
American girls. We talked like that for a few hours, getting drunker as time wore on. I paid for my drinks. He had his for free. No other customers ever showed up to disturb us. At some point, the owner arrived. He was friendly, well dressed. His wrist was adorned with a conspicuous and expensive-looking gold watch. He thanked me for coming and hoped that I would return with my friends.

I noticed the time at around 2:30am. I had a lesson the following morning and did not want to sleep through it. So I kindly thanked the waiter for the company and excused myself. That was when things got awkward. He initially wished me off, but as I got up, he placed his hand on my forearm and looked at me earnestly, “You won’t forget me, right?” It was a little uncomfortable but I tried to chuckle it off, “Ha ha…of course, not!” I said.

He kept his hand on my arm, “No. Really. You won’t forget me, right? I am very poor.” There was a sudden shift in tone. The kind you only find after a night drinking. His eyes were welling up at this point. I was frozen, but I kept a smile on my face, completely unsure of how to respond. Had our economic differences been weighing on his mind this whole time, the way it had been weighing on mine? Luckily, the bartender was nearby watching soccer on the TV and noticed our awkward impasse. He walked over to us quickly and with a big grin, removed the waiter’s hand from my arm. He smiled, “He is very drunk, ha ha ha…crazy!” He then placed his index finger in a diagonal line across his forehead (a common hand gesture indicating the presence of a crazy person). I feigned a laugh or two, “Yeah, I’m pretty drunk too. Sampai jumpa! (‘Til we meet again).” But I never actually saw either of them again.

I fully intended to visit them again, despite of how unsettled I felt after my departure. I decided to wait a few weeks to let the awkwardness die down. I had hoped that by then, that
I wouldn’t have to acknowledge the uncomfortable final moments of my last visit. As it turned out, *Exiles* was closed. Closed for good.

I had made friends in Bali before, but this was the first (of many) times, that I experienced the incongruities of intercultural interaction as defined in both cultural and material terms. Most of the time, they lie dormant, surfacing periodically in subliminal cues and are largely relegated to the background. However, in this instance, they sprang suddenly to the surface, passionately manifesting a stark reminder of the incongruous histories that define us both.

With this chance encounter at a deserted Balinese bar, I got my first dose of the intercultural intimacy I had longed for as an idealistic student/ethnographer, and it quickly became more than I could handle. The ethics and politics of collaboration are a focal point for ethnomusicological studies on intercultural interaction, and Indonesian music studies are no exception (Cohen 2009, McGraw 2010 and Weiss 2009 are a few). From the interaction described above, I can fully empathize with those and the countless other scholars in our field, who are motivated to explore the ethics of intercultural interaction in terms of their historical roots and their interpersonal consequences. These encounters, shared by both artists and ethnographers alike, are galvanizing, if not traumatic. When stripped of its theory and coolly rational analysis, this dissertation explores such raw and ambiguous moments, replete with both volatility and transformative power.
PART I

Introduction: The Wide World of *Gamelan*

*Pengantar*

It was 2007, a balmy August evening at a *Shinto* shrine just outside of Tokyo. I was playing Balinese *gamelan* with the Yokohama-based group *Terang Bulan*, accompanying over one hundred Japanese dancers as they performed *Rejang Dewa* for a crowded audience. In New York City, I have seen traditional Balinese *gamelan* instruments played by computer-operated robots at a trendy Brooklyn art gallery. After a short drive northeast to the MIT campus, I have encountered the inverse; a nearly complete Balinese *gamelan gong kebyar* fashioned from plastic, played by humans, and emitting a cornucopia of electronically manipulated *music concrète*. Hop onto YouTube and one can find dozens of amateur Balinese musicians singing multi-tracked rock, reggae and hip-hop arrangements of classical Balinese poetry. From the intense sentimentality of acoustic spa music by accomplished Balinese composers, to the “Zumba meets Yoga” aesthetics of aerobic Balinese dance classes, the 21st century finds the eccentricity of Balinese fusion projects as neither alien nor aberration.

These Balinese fusion musics occupy multiple transcultural spaces equally facilitated by the “supercultural supervision” (after Slobin 2011) of commercial media and the anarchic improvisations of internet culture. Born in part from exotic Orientalist fantasies of cultural difference, Balinese fusion musics comment on issues as diverse as cultural preservation, cosmopolitanism, and liberal multiculturalism. As a dizzying array of improvisatory “riffs” on “Balineseness,” they argue for an interpretation of Balinese and Bali-inspired performance practices as a formerly local art-form transposed beyond place into a transnational multitude of artistic memes.
A “Fusion” By Any Other Name

This dissertation explores contemporary approaches to Balinese musical hybridity in works by Balinese, North American, and Japanese artists. For the sake of both clarity and brevity, I refer to these musics generally as “Balinese fusion musics.” Similarly this broad spectrum of musical genres describes Balinese music as pluralized into a myriad of global phenomena rather than as a single phenomenon. This is meant to highlight the diverse and multiple ways in which artists conceptualize Balinese music without prioritizing a single version as authoritative or authentic.

The term “fusion” is admittedly loaded and does occasionally inspire ire from those in and out of the field. I first noticed negative reactions to it when posting about my
dissertation research on the *gamelan* listserv in the spring of 2012. Several respondents questioned my decision to use Balinese “fusion” music, over more popular terms like “hybrid.” “Fusion” and “hybridity” are more or less synonyms. So, why not name this study “Balinese hybrid musics” instead? While either term is applicable, my word choice was far from arbitrary. Both “fusion” and “hybridity” have their histories. Each conjures distinct but overlapping associations, both in the field of music and in the humanities more generally.

The OED defines fusion as, “the act or operation of fusing,” while the “hybrid” is defined as “a product derived from heterogeneous sources.” So while fusion refers to the process of blending two contrasting elements, hybrid refers to the end product of such synthesis. Hybridity and “the hybrid” clearly hold more cache in contemporary academia. In the humanities, these terms are closely associated with the work of Homi Bhabha. In Bhabha’s landmark text, *The Location of Culture* (Bhabha 1994), he describes “the hybrid” as a subversive and emancipatory product of an otherwise hegemonic globalization. For Bhabha, the hybrid is the quintessential product of postcoloniality being both locally rooted and immanently cosmopolitan. With his focus on “boundaries,” “interstices,” and the “beyond,” Bhabha locates hybridity’s efficacy in its ambiguity, its *liminality*. Through their inherent indeterminacy, hybrids can escape the politics of dominance and subjugation endemic to confrontations between colonizer and colonized, Orient and Occident, and “First” and “Third” worlds. He writes, “a place of hybridity, figuratively speaking, where the construction of a political object that is new, *neither the one nor the other*, properly alienates our political expectations, and changes, as it must, the very forms of our recognition of the moment of politics.” (Bhabha 1994: 37). During the 1990s and since, these defining features of “the hybrid” have been picked up in a number of fields. Abu-Lughod’s famed description
of “halfie” anthropologists (Abu-Lughod 1991) is one prominent example that theorizes the hybrid’s ability to confound binary oppositions.

Indeed, much of the music and many of the artists encountered during my research can be described as “hybrid” in a Bhabha-esque sense. These “Bhabha-esque” hybrids present themselves as participants in a transcultural aesthetic. Balinese artists like I Wayan Balawan, I Dewa Ketut Alit and I Wayan Gede Yudane consciously work to confound the simplistic assumptions about Asian and European cultural difference. However, while many projects present their fusion of Balinese and non-Balinese musics as a performative transcendence of cultural difference, I also discuss artists who combine Balinese and non-Balinese aesthetics to critique ruptures in the global multicultural fabric. Composers like Michael Tenzer, Evan Ziporyn and Andrew McGraw provide a meaningful contrast more established definitions of musical hybridity because they highlight the productive gaps of cultural miscommunication. Their works present fusion as a failure. As such, “the hybrid” emerges as an often awkward and occasionally violent and horrific chimera. In my reading, much of the discourse on hybridity either fails to take these uncomfortable descriptions of intercultural interaction into account or it critiques them as ill informed and otherwise inauthentic.¹

“Fusion,” by contrast is more so defined by its commercial rather than academic applications (though the two are not mutually exclusive). In music, “fusion” is perhaps best recognized as a genre category that combines rock and jazz (jazz-rock). The online database Allmusic describes “fusion” as a “a mixture of jazz improvisation with the power and rhythms of rock,” with artists like Herbie Hancock, Pat Methane, Miles Davis, John

¹ Sumarsam’s forthcoming Javanese Gamelan and The West also explores the awkward products of intercultural encounter.
McLaughlin, Frank Zappa listed as representative examples. Jazz-rock artists capitalized on contemporaneous musical developments in both jazz and rock idioms. The genre emerged in the early 1970s at a time when artists were seeking refuge from the aesthetic limitations of both older styles and the insular and concept-driven aspects of the avant-garde (Nicholson 1998). Fusion provided a viable alternative by retaining elements of improvisation, a complexity of rhythm and form combined with the visceral and unpretentious aesthetics of rock instrumentation. Moving out of the 1960s, rock also became increasingly complex as rock artists began drawing from more complex musical forms, including jazz and classical musics.

As fusion “declined” from the mid-1970s onward, the term began to describe commercially driven “lightweight” crossovers between jazz, pop, easy listening and R&B. “Fusion” now includes genres of “smooth jazz,” with artists like David Sanborn and Kenny G. These types of “fusion” are routinely criticized and outright mocked by jazz aficionados as cheap, market-driven bastardizations of the jazz aesthetic. In its present incarnation, fusion functions as an umbrella category to describe the early experiments of Davis, Zappa and others and the commercially oriented jazz-rock, jazz-pop crossovers.

Beyond the realm of jazz, there is a third genre category implied when individuals speak of “fusion.” These musics are variously referred to as “world music,” “worldbeat,” and “ethnic” or “global” fusion. One could also argue that the commercial world music industry (as described in Feld 2000) both implies fusion and is its umbrella term. In some cases “world

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2 Allmusic was founded in the late 1990s and claims to hold the world’s largest online database of digitized music, liner notes, and artwork. Their database provides information to online distributors including itunes, Amazon, eMusic, AOL and Yahoo. They are a subsidiary of the Rovi Corporation, which also provides information to Billboard Magazine.  
music” and “fusion” are treated as synonyms. For example, National Geographic defines world music, or what Feld would call the “world music industry” as simply, “world fusion music.” Online music distributors may group and/or subdivide these categories differently. For example, iTunes groups them under the general heading, “World” while CDBaby subdivides world music into over one hundred subgenres that include “worldbeat” and “world fusion” among its constituents.

Allmusic by contrast, distinguishes between worldbeat, world fusion, and ethnic fusion as three distinctive genre categories. Obviously, it is a Sisyphean task to define all of the world’s musics with any strict determinacy. And so their epistemological claims should be taken with a requisite grain of salt. However because Allmusic draws from a database of over thirty million songs, their access to “big data” leaves them well positioned to parse out certain insightful characterizations that will become meaningful as we consider various approaches to Balinese fusion later on.

“World fusion” is defined as a subgenre of jazz that combines non-European elements. Defined this way, jazz-based evocations of non-European musics such as “Night in Tunisia” are considered “world fusion.” “Ethnic fusion” is defined as a separate category, which refers to local indigenous musics that self-consciously blend local musics with mainstream pop or rock aesthetics. This definition is similar to the way in which Carole Pegg defines the commercial category “world music” more generally.⁴ Indonesian artists as aesthetically diverse as, Guruh Sukarnoputra, Krakatau, I Wayan Balawan and Agus Teja would fit within this particular definition.

Worldbeat is perhaps the most ambiguous yet also the most evocative subgenre of world music. Allmusic defines worldbeat as a “sensibility” rather than a simple genre. The pop star “curators” (after Feld) of the mid-1980s, including Paul Simon, Peter Gabriel and David Byrne are cited as antecedents to contemporary worldbeat. Feld describes that these artists were marketed as contemporary musical explorers, venturing to exotic locales and unearthing “unknown” or “vanishing” musical traditions. (Feld 2000: 149). In this way, worldbeat implies a romantic subtext at best, and may be considered overtly Orientalist at its worst.

At some point, this categorical cacophony of micro-genres fades into background noise. There are too many instances of overlap and inconsistency to choose any single one with confidence. However, out of this apparent mess we are able to locate loosely connected music-cultural associations and tendencies. In fact, all of these genre categories are relevant when looking at global approaches to the marketing and performance of Balinese fusion music. For example, Balinese artists who aspire for recognition in the global marketplace, self-consciously appropriate terms like “ethnic fusion” (etnik or etnis) and “world music” as a means to broader recognition. They interpret and indigenize these market categories thus endowing them with new connotations.

Defining the Meme

The lack of specificity incumbent upon “fusion” allows us to examine certain musical similarities as they appear spontaneously without any pressure to make them conform to a single teleological or arboreal model. Instead, Balinese fusion musics are more like an outbreak, a chaotic rhizome of loosely connected riffs. Viewed from afar, the global terrain of

\footnote{http://www.allmusic.com/subgenre/worldbeat-ma0000011922 accessed 1/19/13.}
Balinese fusion music creates a dense web of improvised associations as individuals interact with globally circulating ideas about Balinese culture. The earliest works studied here include Japanese transvestite cabaret using Javanese gamelan to promote pan-Asian propaganda during the Second World War. I also examine contemporary American works that critique the ideology of liberal multiculturalism as articulated in a uniquely American context. In all cases, global ideas and aesthetics about Balinese music are reimagined to generate new local meanings.

Throughout the world, Balinese arts are performed on invisible side streets and alleyways, in bars with stages smaller than dinner tables, and on large concert stages with fireworks and live circus animals. It is precisely this diversity that makes the idea of a “transnational” or “pan” Balinese music difficult if not impossible to classify. The spread of Balinese musical traditions cannot be traced to a single migration, or cultural intervention. It is the product of multiple, overlapping colonial histories and multicentered global flows. In this way, these phenomena are inadequately explained by theories of idea diffusion or diaspora. Balinese music does not become diffuse, nor do practitioners necessarily feel “alienated” from its homeland as gamelan spreads across the globe. Moreover Balinese music has multiplied, both with unpredictability and a high degree of variability.

Despite the fact that these musics cover a broad aesthetic and cultural palette, they are unified by a single claim. That claim is to a relationship with the island of Bali. And while Bali is a very real place, one cannot ignore the fact that Bali’s prolonged history of representation by others has created an imagined but equally efficacious Balinese “dreamworld.” As explorers, colonizers, ethnographers have spent centuries aestheticizing this small spot on a rather large globe, Bali functions incorporeally, as a fantasy object in the minds of others. As an idea, Bali conjures a host of ethnographic fantasies fueled variously by
touristic, political, and cultural desires. I posit these imaginings as a form of inspiration that is as potent as any “real” fieldwork. This dissertation argues for an expanded consideration of Balinese music that takes both lived experience (ethnography), as well as performative and textual interpretation (hermeneutics) into equal account without arguing fiercely for one’s validity over the other. They are inevitably intertwined. The impact of artistic and ethnographic imagery on Bali’s own material, economic and environmental conditions are testament enough to that fact.

The Dutch used ethnography to justify colonial interventions, American artists, scholars and anthropologists from the 1930s used Bali as a case study for unique, non-Western examples of a variety of cultural curiosities from schizophrenia to musical modernism. As a member of the Indonesian nation-state, Bali has represented an idyllic and pre-modern remnant of the ancient Majapahit dynasty time and again. The touristic value of Bali’s cultural uniqueness has been skillfully deconstructed in the recent past. However many of these deconstructions posit the fantasy of a “real” Bali which persists despite the violence of misrepresentation.

While I understand the usefulness of this characterization, it has nevertheless made it difficult to discuss Bali as a place with porous and malleable cultural borders. Scholarship on Balinese culture is loaded with a preemptive defensiveness concerning its perpetual resilience in the face of various interlopers. Even those wishing to extol cosmopolitanism in the contemporary Indonesian arts eschew its ideological inspirations from the West (McGraw 2005, Miller 2006). The notion of Western “influence” which Jaap Kunst once described as a “corrosive acid,” still carries strong associations with neocolonialism.

The “Westernized” Balinese hybrid may be threatening for other reasons. Rather than stand as a symbol for the degradation and defeat of Balinese identity in the face of an
encroaching and indomitable West, the Balinese hybrid effectively negates the category of the Other in need of representation. Bali and its Balinese cease to exist as a neatly defined piece of anthropological real estate. This, in the minds of some, could put the ethnographer out of a job. However such an interpretation of cultural analysis assumes that the ethnographer functions primarily as a translator. It assumes with both altruism and tacit condescension that our job is to “speak for those who cannot speak for themselves.” But if we consider analysis, the “paradoxical act/art” of it (after Agawu 2003: 183) as fundamentally creative and interpretive, “difference” ceases to be a prerequisite.

I have already described a few ways in which the “hybridity” model is not wholly applicable. In an odd way, the inconsistency of the term “fusion” offers a solution. It describes the processes which inform these diverse musical phenomena without overly determining their significance. Looking back to the OED, it is worth noting that the term fusion also refers to the combining of elements through a process of “melting.” This implies that in order for elements to fuse, they must first be broken down. The surrounding conditions must be intense enough to instigate a phase change. In the case of Balinese fusion music, such heat is produced through the friction of intercultural interaction. I interpret the transposition of Balinese music to meme (an infinitely variable unit of cultural imitation) as just such an event. A central theme is that any individual or artist in dialogue with a fantasmatic ideal of Bali can produce a meaningful and constitutive experience. In any encounter, real or imagined, both acculturation and alienation are mutually guaranteed.

Methodology

"What do we think we are doing?" is one of ethnomusicology’s most popular

6 After Dawkins.
perennial questions. Within it resides a far greater potential to examine the role of desire in our work than its more succinct variant, "What are we doing?" As a discourse of truth (and not a deliberate fiction), our written work strives for maximal consonance with experience and perception. In fact, techniques of narrowing the persistent gap between text and experience have been central to discussions of contemporary ethnography since the mid-1980s (Clifford and Marcus 1985, Barz and Cooley 2008). The reflexive turn in ethnomusicology called for critical approaches to the practice of ethnography in order to clarify the tacit biases that define our work. This framework emphasizes the textuality of ethnography as well as the means to both accentuate and undermine it (reflexity, focus on the individual, ethnography as literature).

Balinese fusion music first attracted me as a topic because of its apparent contradiction to the notion of Bali and the Balinese as a bounded anthropological entity. As mentioned above, Bali has a long, complex history of representation by others. Arguably it was Bali’s celebrity-status within anthropology and ethnomusicology that allowed me to first encounter it as an undergraduate. Much of this history was unknown to me when I first started playing gamelan. In fact, during much of my first semester, I was not sure whether gamelan was Asian or African in origin (although I was sure it was one of the two). The more I studied Balinese music, the more I began to see it as so many others have, as an ethnographic object that is both fantasized about and fought over, like something between a canvas and battlefield. It was much later when I realized that I was also doing my own share of fantasizing and fighting as well. This is a common syndrome for ethnographers. We stare into the heart of darkness and it stares into us. One might even conjecture that our own guilt over identifying with this violence lies at the root of our altruism.

However, while it is not fashionable to say so, many still understand the undulations
of ethnographic aesthetics teleologically. Like calculated lines of paint added to an ancient canvas, our ethnographic work transforms the collective body of history, improving it in the mind of some with greater expressive realism and more vivid color (history in HD). Even the purportedly postmodern technique of accentuating ethnography’s fictive elements (its textuality) on a meta-discursive level strives to characterize the explanatory power of ethnography more “realistically.” This has caused some argue that the aesthetics of postmodernism are as deterministic as anything that came before it (Zizek 1999).

With these issues in mind, my approach is systematic but also eclectic. I do not attempt to describe Balinese fusion music comprehensively. Instead, I take specific projects and pry into their historical and political contexts while conjecturing towards their broader resonances, informed through several years of ethnographic research. Despite being founded upon loose-associations and displaying broad aesthetic disparities, these musics are all conditioned by specific and situated local histories. The exploration of local interactions with larger transnational ideals bears important contributions to our discourse on global trends because it avoids the tendency towards a “singular anthropological globalism” (Tsing 2000). “Micro-studies” allows us to look beyond the gloss of “global flows” in order to parse out the significance of the particular historical and cultural interconnections between North America, East Asia and Indonesia (Wolf 2009: 9).

For presentational clarity, I group these fusion projects by their geographic areas of origin. Part I looks at Balinese fusion musics in North America. Part II discusses Balinese fusion in Japan. Part III describes Balinese approaches to fusion and hybridity, with a concerted focus on contemporary Balinese fusion musics.

Before launching into that, a brief apology. There are many thriving Balinese music subcultures in Europe: England, the Czech Republic and the Netherlands. Due to its
geographic proximity to Indonesia, there are also many longstanding ensembles in Australia and New Zealand as well. Additionally, there are countless groups at institutions scattered throughout Asia, including Malaysia, China and Singapore, as well as in central and Latin America. None of these scenes are examined with the depth that they deserve in this dissertation. While I do examine three scenes in detail, this dissertation does not order Balinese fusion musics into any sort of index. I am currently in the process of building a website (http://www.gamelan-mendunia.com) which will hopefully do exactly that. The appendix is meant to be an editable, eclectic and curated digital archive of sound, images, and video clips which aspires to do some justice to the artistic diversity that describes in joyful terms, the viral reproduction of the gamelan meme.
CHAPTER 1: Theorizing Balinese Music as Global Phenomena

Transnationalism And Ethnomusicology

Before looking at Balinese fusion musics, it is important to tease out the multiple approaches to transnationalism in contemporary ethnomusicology in order to properly situate the following study. Over the last fifteen years, transnationalism has emerged as a dominant topic. A quick search through the society’s journal quickly reveals that “fusion,” “globalization”, “transnationalism”, “diaspora”, and “intercultural” yield disproportionately high results. Each term appeared sporadically in the waning years of the twentieth century, but they are now ubiquitous in the twenty-first.

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries music-cultural migrations were the purview of German “comparative musicology.” These scholars engaged with musical migration in an effort to trace the evolutionary origins of Western music. Hornbostel’s theories of “blown fifths” and “pure melody” are two famous examples of early ethnomusicology that interpreted intercultural musical interaction within a hierarchical, evolutionary framework. However, after the Second World War, ethnomusicology shifted away from comparative studies and musical origins towards individual area studies (Nettl 2010).

This was accompanied by a methodological shift from so-called, “armchair” ethnomusicology to studies rooted in fieldwork and ethnography. In the decades immediately following this ideological turn, intercultural interaction or “globalization” as it was more commonly described, was regarded with an anxious cynicism. Alan Lomax famously summarized this sentiment with his warning of cultural “grey-out.” He writes, “the uprooting and destruction of traditional cultures and the consequent grey-out or disappearance of human
variety presents a serious threat to the happiness of mankind” (Lomax 1968: 5). Pioneering ethnomusicologists like Lomax and Charles Seeger were deeply committed to the preservation of traditional musics. Thus ethnomusicology of the post-war era became deeply intertwined with folklore studies with a focus on cultural preservation. Such concern for “vanishing” traditions is also well documented in anthropology from the 1960s (see Rosaldo 1989).

While fieldwork and ethnography remain central to the ethnomusicological project, music’s global migrations re-entered the field in meaningful and challenging ways in the 1990s. Since then, the transnational flow of musical ideas and identities has been studied extensively and through a multitude of lenses. This literature is so vast, it would be impossible to cite its sources comprehensively. However several notable works have been vital to the development of the discourse. Steven Feld’s “Sweet Lullaby for World Music,” theorizes this shift quite aptly. In particular, he traces the evolution of “world music” from an academic designation to a commercial industry in 1990s (Feld 2000: 149). For Feld, the late 1990s was a period that reconfigured, “how the musical globe was being curated, recorded, marketed, advertised, and promoted” (ibid: 151). In moving from the academic “museumification” of culture, to its commodification and mass-production, “otherness” as cultural difference was interpolated into a “world pleasure and commodity map.” In particular, Feld focuses on the structuring of difference through commercial marketing by analyzing relationships between local artists and global distributors.

Synthesizing various streams of discourse on music and globalization, Martin Stokes (2004) points to eight major themes in the literature. These themes highlight ways in which music production and distribution destabilize histories of hegemonic dominance between centers and peripheries or conversely, their capacity to reinscribe colonialist or “high-
modernist aesthetic hierarchies” (Stokes 2004: 48). Borrowing from dominant streams of postcolonial studies and the ideas of Franz Fanon (1963) these studies describe globalization as a “totalizing” system (Erlmann 1996).

Through the 1990s and into the early 21st century, studies of transnationalism and intercultural interaction critiqued “top-down” flows in which global forces exert hegemonic influence over local communities because they reinscribe asymmetric power relationships (Averill 1994, Ranmarine 1996). Other studies describe an inverse, “bottom-up” model wherein local musics are picked up (and are in some cases, stolen) by supercultural entities and distributed globally (Erlmann 1996, Zemp 1996, Feld 1997, 2000). Such interactions have been summarily described as the “culture vulture” model (Kheshti 2011: 712). These two models for intercultural interaction have helped to articulate several ways that cultural practices migrate through geographic and cultural regions via the asymmetric distribution of capital.

Another approach has been to look at “reverse flows” in order to see how local musics are brought to global channels. This includes studies of music and diaspora (Myers 1999, Monson 1999, Slobin 2011, Lausevic 2007) as well as more recent studies of music and displacement (Levi and Scheding 2010). In works that emphasize asymmetric power relationships between “super” and “sub” cultures, the actors playing the “supercultural” role have been many and varied. At the turn of the 21st century, both the nation-state and multinational record companies were extensively critiqued as hegemonic forces that racialize local music through folkloric preservation and world music production (Radano and Bohlman 2000, Kheshti 2011).

Some studies of music and globalization prefer emphasize the inexistence of a single, controlling agency (Slobin 1992). Slobin’s model understands cultural flows in terms of
multiple agendas. In *Micromusics of the West*, Slobin describes various cultural actors working at several levels of miscommunication at once. As such, he highlights the interpretive differences among multiple readings of the same “text”. These discursive fissures open up spaces for marginalized, “local” populations to subvert the hegemonizing predilections of superculture (Slobin 1992).

Similarly, scholars have investigated ways in which transnational musics decenter hegemonic forces. These works describe how “dominant traditions,” are “deemphasized through polylateral exchanges and new markets” (Guilbault 2006 [1993]: 141). In these studies, the increased affordability of media distribution technologies allows emerging economies to circulate goods without mediation from North American and European markets (Manuel 1993). In some ways, the emergence of Balinese fusion musics in Indonesia and other parts of Asia are a prime example of such an exchange. In this case, the flow of cultural commodities is intra-Asian and therefore not dependent upon North American or European markets (although artists may actively seek representation in those markets as well). In the performing arts, these intra-regional relationships challenge the “inroads of institutionalized interculturalism, whereby South-South cultural exchange is unavoidably mediated by the North” (Bharucha 1992: 31).

Stokes’ summary also highlights how prior arguments over the status of globalization as either a positive or negative force have been defused in the 21st century. We are well aware that globalization relies on an underlying continuity of power asymmetries, which in turn structures the circulation of people, goods and information. However, the symbolic authority of cultural hegemony is also subject to resistance and reinterpretation. It is in the privacy and indeterminacy of signification that musicians and artists are able to “flip the script” on
neocolonial understandings of race, gender, and class. Thus globalization and intercultural interaction are powerful and prevalent, but also multivalent phenomena.

It is similarly difficult to describe the multiple agencies involved in the production, distribution, and performance of Balinese fusion by framing them in terms of appropriation or in the historically naive, but life-affirming terms of postcolonial reconciliation. On one level, it is the uneven distribution of capital that facilitates the mobility of foreign individuals to formulate discourse on Balinese music. At the same time, these same artists and scholars use their projects to present incisive critiques of these very conditions.

This is also the case with intra-Asian Balinese fusion projects, such as those emerging out of Japan, Singapore and Malaysia. However the “intra-Asian” flow between Japan and Indonesia hardly qualify as an “inverse flow.” Japan is neither a developing economy nor a “new” market like those described in Guilbault’s work. Japan has its own history of colonialism and Orientalism throughout East Asia. Generally speaking, studies of music and globalization frequently assume a European or North American face on the “global.” In that respect, this study offers a different perspective on such local/global interaction because it locates non-American or non-European entities as new centers for “the global,” while also describing the “reverse flow” of cultural commodities from Indonesia abroad.

In line with the above models, I operate on an assumption that the Balinese performing arts have stretched beyond the boundaries of their presumed cultural and national origins. That is to say, like the *djembe* and *didgeridoo, gamelan* instruments have initiated their own “diasporic” life in various regions throughout the world (Slobin 2007). As such, it is unproductive to view non-Balinese interpretations of the Balinese performing arts in terms of their “authenticity” or “engagement” with the “real” practices of Balinese *gamelan* in
Indonesia. By the same token, it is as unproductive to even view such performances as a form of “representation” or as a metonym for an essentially “Balinese” or “Indonesian” tradition. If *gamelan* has truly gone global, the original has effectively dissolved any authoritative claim over its copies. Analytical concern with the accuracy or authenticity of Balinese music performance does us a disservice because it reduces ethnographic work to a simplistic and morally heavy-handed tale of “getting it right” and “getting it wrong.” In order to gauge relative authenticities, this approach requires the author to possess a superhuman autonomy. It assumes that the ethnographer can both write and observe cultural phenomena from a meta-theoretical position. It also ascribes false fixity to the notion of “culture” itself. The impossibility of analytical autonomy and the inherent permeability of culture have both been major themes in ethnographic writing over the last three decades.

Stokes also argues that this kind of academic editorialization is endemic to discussions of musical “hybridity” as well. He cites several studies that position various hybrids as either “authentic” or not. These studies tacitly reinscribe a binary opposition between authentic and inauthentic means of hybridizing musical traditions (Frith in Stokes 2004: 60). For example, “authentic” subcultural musics are often pitted against the supposed “inauthenticity” of mainstream, dominant, or nationalist musics. Ethnomusicologists have theorized a similar binary without the assumed value judgments, by framing hybrid musics in terms of “intentional” and “unintentional” hybrids (Weiss 2009).

While authenticity is unproductive as an evaluator of fusion musics, it is important to acknowledge the function of a belief in authenticity in the musical construction of selves and others in the context of intercultural performance. Many contemporary fusion projects are framed in terms of a postcolonial reconciliation, which aestheticizes present intercultural encounters as a transcendence of colonial prejudices. An artist’s belief that their work repairs
(or at least avoids) the damage done to Bali by colonial representations is an important structural element. It is an organizing principle seen in many contemporary intercultural performances and may be explored as such without attempting to evaluate its relative success or failure.

**Global Gamelan as “Diaspora” or “Subculture”**

The following examples of Balinese fusion music create an eccentric portrait of transnational musical flows in the 21st Century. While this eccentricity provides an opportunity to explore identity and ideology through differing histories and geographies, the internal diversity and inconsistency within the topic make it difficult define. These musics do not originate from a single geographic region or cultural group. Likewise they do not fall under a single genre category in terms of production and consumption.

The presence of various “local” musics in ever shifting, “global” contexts has been widely discussed in our field. Although subject to revision and reinterpretation, in each case the notion of “culture” as a trustworthy analytical unit often remains in tact. Many studies prefer to describe various “traditional music” groups in Europe and North America as musical subcultures. For example, Maria Mendonça’s study of Javanese gamelan in England describes the scene as a constituent within a larger transnational, “pan-Gamelan” movement (Mendonça 2002). Labeling Balinese fusion music as a semi-cohesive subculture has some advantages. First, it provides a general rubric for cross-cultural comparison, which in turn contributes to larger picture of transnational gamelan in general. However, that is the kind of gloss this study seeks to avoid.

Balinese music could be described as a kind of transnational network and thus fall under the rubric of “subculture,” but even that definition falls apart if we consider that each geographic region also constitutes a separate scene with its own particular history that has
powerfully conditioned the adoption and labeling of certain “Balinese” musical aesthetics. At some point, the heterogeneous “scenes within a scene” make ‘subculture’ seem vague and unwieldy. To describe Balinese fusion music as a coherent scene, genre, or musical subculture would create artificial links and set arbitrary aesthetic standards. By emphasizing common interpretations of Balinese performance practice, one risks further marginalizing divergent perspectives, thus reinforcing a hierarchy of performative “authenticities.” Rather than illustrating the ways in which these eclectic genres conform to transcultural expressive conduits, my aim is to articulate the gaps, the productive moments of interpretive disparity, that articulate the precise meaning of the Balinese performing arts to a particular group.

While these projects have emerged at a point in history (the present, roughly) they were spawned in diverse geographies. They each emerge from radically different political, linguistic, and ethnographic histories. It is for this reason that Balinese fusion musics ought not to be thought of as a ‘subculture’ per se. Clearly, this population of music and musicians is too diverse to be streamlined into a single demographic. It cannot align with a structuralist understanding of culture as an internally coherent system of symbolic communication. To assume this level of consistency within a diverse transnational community runs the steep risk of manufacturing false links and creating a facile cultural relativism between disparate groups.

Contemporary and postcolonial approaches to cultural identity, while sensitive to issues of hybridity and personal choice, have developed a comprehensive theoretical vocabulary for discussing cultural communities separated by vast geographic space. For this reason, many scholars have chosen to describe transnational music through the analogy of “diaspora.” In humanities, diasporic groups currently serve as “exemplary communities of the transnational movement.” (Tololyan 1991: 5) However, a crucial element of diaspora is the
assumption of a shared, collective experience, which may be “re-told”, or “rediscovered” through a variety of performative means (Stuart-Hall 1993: 223). Regrettably, this shared experience often comes in the form colonial oppression. Oftentimes this is also the initial catalyst for migration. Crucially, this shared domain of experience is non-consensual. Diaspora communities have been forcibly removed from their place of origin. This facet of shared experience cannot be aptly applied to Balinese performing artists all over the world. American and Japanese performers do often share a bond of common experience as travellers (tourists), but to compare this with the experience of those in the African or Jewish diaspora is an awkward and facile simile.

Another major difference between the transnational gamelan community and a diasporic one is the connection to a “homeland.” It could be argued that Bali serves a “homelandesque” function for both non-Balinese performers of Balinese music and for Balinese performers living abroad. Indeed many students treat their first trip to Bali like a kind of musical pilgrimage, during which one expects to be united with the “authentic origins” of the tradition. But this is a homeland of the mind and that is a crucial, distinguishing factor. Those feelings of alienation play out almost entirely in a fantasy space. For non-Balinese performers of Balinese music, Bali is a touristic homeland, experienced through an imaginary, partial identification with selected, and often idealized aspects of Balinese culture.

The term diaspora has spread like wildfire throughout academia over the last several decades. As such, its definitions have been modified over time to more appropriately fit new contexts. Slobin describes two ethnomusicological interpretations of “diaspora” which, while different from the original concept, capture partial aspects of Balinese music as global phenomena. Firstly he describes the “sonic diaspora,” wherein music-cultural aesthetics are
circulated through transnational media (Slobin 2011). American composers Colin McPhee, Evan Ziporyn and Michael Tenzer all had their first galvanizing encounters with Balinese music through recorded media. He calls the second type a “material-cultural diaspora.” This refers to the “diasporic lives” of musical instruments. However Slobin himself questions the sustained relevance of a term like diaspora for the coming century.

In the case of Balinese fusion musics, Slobin’s earlier ‘affinity-group’ model (1992) is better suited to describe this eclectic, international assortment of projects better than “diaspora.” All of these performers, Balinese and non-Balinese alike are bound by a certain affinity for the Balinese arts. As we will see, each area’s differing history with Bali even creates affinity groups within affinity groups each with their own aesthetic interpretations of Balineseness. One may consider oneself an American or Japanese gamelan musician to varying degrees of depth. Appadurai’s notion of “ideoscape” (another framework that Slobin employs) is useful in considering the ideological ties that bind many of these musics together. The aims and methods of both “ethnomusicology” and “bimusicality” form one such ideoscape that was influential in the development of international gamelan performance communities in North America and Japan. As mentioned above, perhaps the only trait consistent to all of these musics is the claim to a relationship with Bali.

Balinese fusion musics also behave like memes. Coined by Richard Dawkins, a “meme” refers to a unit of cultural repetition (Dawkins 1976). It can be an idea, an aesthetic, or even a fragment of one that is repeated like a gene, except with an extremely high degree of variability (Dawkins 1983). The notion of Balinese music as meme is appealing because rather than assume a kind of “migration” or “diffusion” from a single origin point, Balinese music has spread, it has “gone viral” through intercultural encounters both real and virtual.

7 Mendonça (2011) also discusses several ways in which gamelan itself was influential to Hood’s development of bimusicality.
The ‘Real’ Bali and Contemporary Ethnomusicology

It is tempting to thread Bali’s fantasy function back to European Orientalism. The imperialist activities of Orientalist writers, artists, and ethnographers amount to a kind of primal baptism that birthed Bali as the quintessential Asian fantasy object. There are many eloquent studies both in and out of music, which convincingly argue such facts. Boon (1977) and Vickers (1989) are a few of the most famous. These works are sometimes framed in terms of a Foucauldian “archeology” or “genealogy” (Foucault 1972). By describing the conditions through which knowledge emerges around certain “objects,” these works demonstrate the ways in which “discursive formations” are connected to power and political interests. Even an object’s own “object-hood” is determined through the politics of various “authorities of delimitation” (ibid: 41-42). This particular “logic of un-masking” (after Žižek 1999: 37), which is in many ways an icon of poststructuralist thought is occasionally represented in ethnomusicology as an attempt to tease out the “real” Bali from the ethnographically constructed, epistemologically invalid idea of Bali. This fundamental misunderstanding relies on an assumption (or an attempt to prove) that beneath the violence of our distorted representations resides a real and unspoiled Bali. This may be true. Or we may just be presenting ourselves with another fantasy in a “turtles all the way down” sort of scenario. This dissertation tends to assume the latter.

In particular, I focus on the ways in which cultural ideologies structure the individual experience of an intercultural encounter. In other words, without the ideological fantasy to structure our perception of raw social events there is no reality (Žižek 1989: 47). I do not wish to paint an old-fashioned deterministic view of ideological “interpellation” or to imply that we as individuals do not have the ability to respond creatively in the face of ideological
coercion. We will see an abundance of works, which are politically and culturally subversive. However even in such cases, when artists work *against* a certain ideological representation, one cannot ignore the ways in which ideology *negatively* structures their position. I simply want to demonstrate that it is impossible to decouple the ideological construction of Bali in a way that leaves intact some kind of “real,” pre-fantasized Bali. As such, neither the “real” nor the “fake” Bali exists without the other. As mentioned in the introduction, I propose that the relationship between experience and representation is symbiotic. When we consider Bali, we must take it as it is, as fantasy and reality rolled into an intricate and often self-contradictory package.

I posit this approach in contrast to recent studies, which borrow heavily from poststructuralist methods and postmodern aesthetics to critique European and North American representations of Balinese culture as covering up the reality of the “lived” Bali. This critique is not meant to imply that the studies are not valuable. They are in all cases, excellent pieces of scholarship that are both informative and many have been personally inspirational.

For example, Katherine Wakeling’s 2010 Ph.D. dissertation critically evaluates the theorization of Balinese music by both foreign and Balinese scholars. According to Wakeling, Balinese music theory has, since the Dutch colonial occupation, been a privileged form of enunciation that promotes politically motivated (and sometimes imperialist) ideologies (Wakeling 2010). During the colonial era, music ethnographers “aestheticized” Balinese culture by engaging in tropes of “harmony,” “unity” and “balance.” This created a framework for Balinese aesthetics based explicitly on “modernist nostalgia.” However by writing an over-aestheticized and apolitical Bali, scholars like Colin McPhee tacitly enabled “broader strategies of Dutch governance” (Wakeling 2010: 52-53). She also effectively
demonstrates how these tropes persist in current scholarship as naturalized, “absolute” characteristics of Balinese culture (ibid). As such, Wakeling’s genealogical exploration of Balinese music theory reveals important, previously under studied connections between colonial music ethnographies, the agendas of American modernist artists, and music ethnographies of the present. While her work stands as a unique contribution to scholarship on Balinese music, its problems lie in trying to counteract this century of aesthetic momentum through the introduction of a single “alternative,” cure.

Wakeling’s “alternative” differs from the standard theorization of Balinese music by focusing on indigenous, spoken discourse as it is engaged during processes of gamelan pedagogy. Its status as an alternative relies on two assumptions. The first is that Balinese music scholars have, until now, remained “distanced” from Balinese cultural authenticity through an engagement with non-indigenous musicological terminology. Due to a variety of personal, political and cultural hang-ups, Balinese music scholars have not yet been able to “truly engage” with the Balinese people. Thus the distorted quality of their misrepresentations results directly from an encounter with Balineseness mediated by social mores ill-equipped for intercultural interaction.

The problem with such “alternatives” is that they merely replace the fantasy content of so-called “Orientalist,” “exoticist,” or “colonialist” representations with another equally desirable fantasy. This alternative is nearly identical to earlier ethnographic work in terms of form because it presumes to know the interiority of a coherent “Balinese” disposition. Also it serves an identical function in the reproduction of knowledge about Bali in general as a form

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8 In this way, Wakeling’s critique of McPhee mirrors anthropological criticisms of Margaret Mead. Mead was criticized for framing aspects of Balinese and Samoan sexuality in a way that addressed sexual repression and unequal gender roles of in America at the time (Pollmann 1990). Wakeling discusses ways in which characteristics of Balinese “absolute” music were appropriated by scholars like McPhee and Cowell in order to advance the cause of American modernist music (Wakeling 2010: 66-68).
of academic scholarship. In both early ethnographies and these recent “critical” ethnographies, the stated goal is the maintenance of cultural diversity under threat by the homogeneity of “Eurocentric” systemization.

The second assumption is that language functions as a more or less direct line to the interior world of the Balinese. She presumes that by analyzing speech, we may come closer to an unmediated Balinese musical core. In such a way, her alternative promises to show Balinese music “on its own terms.” The value of such an approach is not under question. Her work is an important contribution to the largely unstudied topic of Balinese language about music. However the epistemological boundaries ought to be clarified. The most contentious point being, whether language actually provides us with greater proximity to the “inner world” of the Other. It is of course an illusion that the ethnographer ceases to act as the primary agent in fashioning texts. As Riesman notes, “We are using other people for own purposes all the time…using the knowledge they give us for goals they would never have imagined.” (Riesman in Abu-Lughod 1991: 159). The ethnographer never erases him/herself from the text, becoming a vessel for the Other to speak. In text, the Other is never “alone.” Thus, the agencies and agendas of authors and their subjects cannot be conflated no matter how “in synch” they appear.

Another issue involves defining the properties attributed to the voice when we treat it as a conduit to authentic experience. In other words, what does this characterization allow “the voice” to signify? What are its fetishistic characteristics? A typical fetish object represents an otherwise displaced object of desire. In this case, the Balinese “voice” serves as a fetish, if we consider the authentic, interiority of the Balinese people as the displaced object, which the ethnographer desires to attain. If this is the case, the task of analysis is not to deconstruct fantasy in order to reveal some hidden dimension, but rather to locate the
organizing principle of desire within the fantasy itself. The status of Balineseness as a
displaced object of desire is a major theme throughout this study.

In another example, Andrew McGraw critiques Michael Tenzer’s structuralist
analysis of Balinese melody (Tenzer 2000) for reinforcing Eurocentric paradigms of musical
thought while simultaneously marginalizing other meaningful areas of academic pursuit. This
Eurocentrism is described as a persistent fascination with “the notes” that contributes to our
general inattentiveness towards “Balinese temporalities” (McGraw 2008a: 2). He offers a
valuable point. Tempo analysis has not been rigorously applied to most studies of Balinese
music. However, in light of his own critique, McGraw presents an unlikely alternative to
Tenzer’s apparent Eurocentrism by engaging in empirical modes of data gathering and
analysis. By utilizing empiricism’s self-effacing rhetoric of objective transparency,
McGraw’s notion of Balinese temporality claims to represent a Balinese musical
phenomenology as it is, “actually performed and thought about” (ibid). In this way,
McGraw’s work echoes Wakeling’s claim to the real of Balinese experience as an
“alternative” to Eurocentric mishandlings of Balinese culture by earlier scholars. In some
ways, McGraw’s study strives for an authenticity even beyond that of Wakeling’s by going
beyond language and gesturing towards the ways in which Balinese musicians think. He
seeks to cut out what Žižek sometimes calls the “minimum ventriloquist effect,” of the voice
by tapping directly into cognition.

Matthew Isaac Cohen’s recent work takes notions of cultural proximity a step further
by placing intercultural performance along a long-term teleological arc (Cohen 2010).
Cohen’s detailed analysis of Indonesian music and dance on the Western concert stage during
the late 19th and early 20th centuries traces early performances as “detached appropriations”
of vague Indonesian source material to the later “ethnographically sensitive” works which
seek to engage the Other (ibid: 4). Cohen’s study encompasses everything from Western artists performing in an ostensibly “Asian” milieu, to some of the world’s first touring Indonesian artists. Cohen explicitly states that his goal is not to legitimize or otherwise canonize these works as “successful” or “unsuccessful” examples of intercultural interaction. Rather, his stated goal is to describe how each artist relates to the concept of “Otherness” (ibid: 21).

These negotiations proceed from a variety perspectives. Artists from the late nineteenth century are described as Orientalist. According to Cohen, such works do not truly engage with the other. Instead they merely “help the mind intensify its own sense of self.” (Ibid: 4). Cohen traces the shift away from these representations in a roughly chronological fashion, beginning with some unflattering newspaper descriptions of Javanese music and dance from the late nineteenth century. According to Cohen, these Orientalist performances offer a “mediated” portrait of Javanese performing art forms.

Cohen also discusses early examples of Indonesian groups touring the West. He describes way in which these performers were forced to represent their local identity in ideologically and commercially recognizable terms. Some examples include Indian performances of Indonesian arts inspired by Rabindranath Tagore’s “Greater India” concept. He also discusses Devi Dja’s work in Hollywood in the 1950s. While these works clearly demonstrate a reification of, and a capitulation to notions of Indonesian-ness present in Orientalist discourse, Cohen describes these works as “tactical Orientalism,” meant to sway audiences towards the “value and sophistication of Asian culture” (ibid: 5).

To aid in his exploration of the other, he engages with concepts from the French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas. Levinas’ work provides an interpretive framework that prescribes an evaluation for each artist in terms of their interaction with the Other. Following
Levinas, one’s encounter with the Other is a necessarily traumatic event that will result in three possible conclusions. One may attempt to kill the Other as the signifier of alterity but the signifier itself will not be undone. One may attempt to ignore the Other. As an example, he describes academia’s repeated attempts to ignore the Other by framing the misrepresentation of the Other as a kind of unconquerable obstacle. Lastly, one may try to totalize or enslave the Other, thus erasing alterity by folding it into the frame of self. For Cohen (after Levinas) this complex conundrum is transcended through the “will to encounter and engage deeply with alterity” (ibid: 3). Given proper execution, this transcendent artist may thus “truly cross cultures” (ibid).

Cohen substantiates his argument by portraying the “development” of intercultural performance as an evolution from “detachment” to “engagement.” Towards the end of each chapter, Cohen synthesizes the expository material preceding it. In each case, he describes how a given artist has grappled with otherness. Oftentimes this encounter is framed as a failure. For example, in describing the British puppeteers Richard Techsner and Edward Craig, Cohen states, “In their aesthetic enjoyment of wayang technology, Craig and Tescner brought to light wayang’s signification as a tool set, but neglected to appreciate the full potential of wayang as a cross-cultural bridge” (ibid: 47). In Cohen’s narrative, this utopian vision of the “true cross cultural encounter” is partially realized by Indonesian artists from the mid-twentieth century, most notably Devi Dja whom he describes as the “quintessential cosmopolitan patriot” (ibid: 201). There is also a clear shift in register in the last chapter when referring to intercultural performances after Mantle Hood’s “reverent arrival to Indonesia” (ibid: 219).

This is not an attempt to undermine the patriotism of Devi Dja or Mantle Hood’s reverence for Indonesian performing arts. Cohen’s teleological model is however problematic.
because it assumes that Orientalist fantasies are on a teleological trajectory towards dissolution. At the same time, he does not extend a favorable Levinasian treatment to most of the non-Indonesian artists that were working prior to 1960. In his eyes, they have all fallen short by the current standards of “engaged” performance.

At the same time, he is keenly aware of the ways in which Indonesian artists practiced exoticism towards their own Indonesian others. However these examples are generalized as “tactical,” leading towards an appreciation of Indonesian artistry despite their capitulations to exoticism. To critique Western artists for their inability to understand the “true potential” of Indonesian artists, while exalting Indonesian artists for their ability to “adapt” to commercial demands seems inconsistent.

Cohen engages with contemporary ethnographic tropes as a means of demonstrating how earlier artists “didn’t get it.” For example, in critiquing the Balinese presentation at the 1931 World’s Fair, he writes, “Electrical stage lighting, an elevated stage and conventional seating arrangements made Paris audiences into passive, touristic spectators, cut off from the multi-directional flow of energy that makes Balinese performance a moral transaction” (ibid: 144). Thus the Parisian performance appears profane and “immoral” compared to his idealized notion of an “authentic” Balinese performance. As such, the analysis gets caught up in comparing intercultural works with a fetishized, Balinese “real.”

In all three of the above examples, an actuality of Balinese expressive praxis is believed to have been obfuscated by a history of scholarly and artistic representations. Such representations are often portrayed as implicitly corrupt due to their particular colonial, institutional, or political ties. However Žižek writes that is not sufficient to simply “un-mask” the representation and expose it as such. Rather, he suggests that analysts treat this “illusion” as the natural state, which allows for the production of meaning. Such fantasies
provide us with the “coordinates” of desire. The task is not to locate a reality beyond the illusion; it is to find the reality fully realized and thus plainly visible in the illusion itself (Žižek 1989: 47). As such, I attempt in the following analysis of Balinese fusion music, not to “un-mask” the various cultural interpretations and misunderstandings that inform these works. Rather, I wish to explore them as productive spaces of localization wherein artists create a common space between their music and that of the Other.

**When Performing Balineseness, Mind the Gaps**

Bali as a signifier raises an array of images and spurs a diverse set of aesthetic responses across the globe. This diversity is, in part conditioned by their differing political and cultural histories. These differences separate the three regions under focus. Rather than chase after similarities between artists, performers, and ideologies, this study explores the political and historical conditions that have allowed for similarities and differences to emerge without evaluating some as more “engaged” or “tactical” than others. In fact, it is precisely this extreme variability of interpretations that we explore.

This project began as an exploration into the Balinese *gamelan* scene in Japan. I was struck and somewhat intrigued by subtle differences in the ways Japanese and North American *gamelan* players interpreted and thus chose to “represent” Balinese music. It became quite obvious that “Balineseness” as a point of reference, meant very different things for Japanese artists and audiences as it did for those in North America. While I initially perceived these differences as mere “quirks” (as many North American *gamelan* players tend to do), I quickly realized that Japan’s differing political and cultural history has greatly impacted the aesthetics and the significance of Balinese music performance in Japanese contexts. These differences have allowed Japanese artists and audiences to forge a
relationship with the Balinese arts and with Balineseness that is both unique and distinctive. Thus, my next immediate priority was to look more closely at the North American gamelan artists I have been studying and performing with for the last twelve years.

In discussing some of these conflicting and idiosyncratic takes on Balinese culture with Balinese artists it became quite obvious that while Balineseness carries a kind of immediate, personal and political gravitas, these artists also operate with a notion of Balineseness that is also ideological. This is enabled through an acute awareness of the status of Balineseness as a global, commercial entity. For Balinese artists, cultural identity acquires a kind of double significance. It is both an internal frame of reference, evoked through the belief in gamelan as a Balinese birthright. This is articulated through the authentication of performances based on their inherent Balineseness (any performance by a Balinese is Balinese). However, there is another level at which Balinese artists encounter Balinese arts as an external, reified entity. This is the level at which Balinese artists interact with Bali as an object of discourse. This is present in a number of discourses both academic and popular. This is the Balineseness to which individuals must aspire. As such, it is not a given. It is not a birthright. On this basis, cultural pundits may critique certain types of fusion as “Un-Balinese.” Thus Balinese artists are forced to engage, negotiate, and even fight with this notion of Balineseness as “foreign” unto themselves. These negotiations are particularly poignant in works that overtly acknowledge the status of Balinese music as a global art form. These works confront the alterity of their own tradition as it has been engaged with and fantasized about through several centuries of ethnographic study. I Dewa Ketut Alit is one artist that openly challenges accepted notions of Balineseness through radical musical reinvention. However, some Balinese artists are not at all interested in debunking anthropological “misappropriations.” In fact, many readily embrace the aesthetic tenets of
Balineseness as a global commodity. In some cases, these are the very aesthetics that contemporary scholars have sought to deconstruct and decouple from the “real” notion of Bali (diatonically-tuned *gamelan* could be one example). These Balinese works present insider meditations on the global status of their cultural identity. It is Balinese music self-consciously reconstructed as a global commodity for both local and transnational consumption. With the inclusion of Bali as a global phenomenon *within the Balinese context*, this study comes full circle.

As scholars have critiqued the production and proliferation of Balinese cultural imagery, this study treats that image as a place in and of itself. It is only to this limited extent, that we may refer to a transnational Balinese *gamelan* community. In my experience, this bond is most palpable among non-Balinese artists and students staying in Bali, as well as between non-Balinese and Balinese artists residing outside of Bali. However this is not always a place of common ground. It is more aptly thought of as a place in the mind. People do not necessarily “come together” in their appreciation of Balinese music. In fact, individuals construct radically disparate interpretations of its meaning and its aesthetics. To this extent, we all operate in translation with one another, with an infinite number of meanings slipping between the cracks.

While the study is loosely organized in geographic terms it is not my intention to portray any of these three “scenes” as internally coherent or cohesive. They are all riddled with internal intricacies, idiosyncrasies and antagonisms. These cracks ultimately conspire against any definitive “aura.” This study focuses on specific projects, most of which are the product of a single artist or composer. By evoking Abu-Lughod’s “ethnography of the particular”, this work aspires to embrace the conflict and contradiction inherent to ideas of
Balineseness and thus potentially subverts “the most problematic connotations of culture: homogeneity, coherence, timelessness” (Abu-Lughod 1991: 154).

Rather than prioritize a particular idea or subject-position as inherently “authentic,” this study chooses to keep the idea of Bali deterritorialized to some extent. In doing so, I aim to highlight the interpretive slippage, and discrepancies of meaning between varying interpretations of Balineseness. Bali has been thematized as a fragile and ineffable object of fantasy in performances the world over. Rather than frame intercultural performances as “representations” of a displaced, obscured, omitted, or otherwise covered up Balinese authenticity, I focus on the perpetual deferral of meaning that comes from trying to represent Bali. In particular, I wish to focus on elusiveness of Balineseness as an ethnographic fetish object in itself.

I use the term “deferral” with reference to semiotics. French linguist Ferdinand De Saussure locates deferral as the primary phenomenon of language in his “Course in General Linguistics” (Saussure 1959). He famously describes the structure of language as “differences without positive terms” (ibid: 120). In doing so, he calls attention to the arbitrary relationship between signifiers and the objects they signify. The substantive feature that endows a given sign with its meaning (“value” in Saussure’s terminology) is difference from other signs in the system.

Following Saussure, Jacques Derrida developed the term différance. Although, the term itself is multivalent, one aspect of différance refers to the arbitrary relation between signifiers and their signifieds, as well as the arbitrary relation of signifiers to themselves. Derrida writes of this as a kind of “deferral” because a sign can never wholly summon the object to which it refers (Derrida 1982: 10-13). We are therefore forced to employ other signs in an effort to fill in the description. This process is infinite, thus perpetually deferring the
meaning of a given sign indefinitely. In the present case, that sign is “Bali.” Its ultimate “signified” does not reside in a single discourse, or in its totality. To be consistent, this necessarily includes texts authored by Balinese artists and scholars themselves. To prioritize (or even unify) that perspective would effectively reduce this study to a meager hierarchy of false authenticities. In it, intercultural performance would again find itself relegated to a series of trials wherein artists endeavor to Balineseness but inevitably fall short in one way or another. Rather than use scholarship as a means to legitimate certain (and thus tacitly debunk other) ideas of Balineseness, this work explores the “spacing” (espacement, after Derrida) between such formations.

This kind of inquiry holds the benefit of unraveling certain institutional prejudices regarding the long-term “appropriation” of Balinese music, as well as reformulating our premises for understanding musical propriety in general. The focus is on intercultural performance as a negotiation between individuals and various culturally and historically entrenched ideologies. These ideological forms place mandates on the individual, to which the individual must respond. In this process, the extent to which various ideologies hail individuals into a kind of symbolic identification is constituted by a partial failure. This is precisely the type of failure that Cohen alludes to with this formulation of “engagement” but misinterprets. This type of analysis is relevant even to those who consider “ideology” an antiquated Marxist relic that has been largely supplanted by the methods and aesthetics of poststructuralism. One counter-argument is that individuals can perform ideology even without necessarily believing it because the act of performance constitutes a form of belief (Žižek 1989: 38-42).

Chapter Summary

North America (Chapters 2 and 3)
In locating various performances in dialogue with certain ideologies, this study examines conditions that allow for certain patterns of unity and rupture. For example, in North America, there are several kinds of Balinese “fusion” musics that interact with liberal multiculturalism (Chapter 2 and 3). As such, these performances and their surrounding discourses (reviews, articles, etc.) both critique and seek confirmation from them.

A key aspect to multiculturalism is a belief in the inherently positive social quality of cultural diversity. Through this lens, intercultural encounter is read as an act, which yields compassionate and ethical subjects. This creates the illusion of an inherent relationship between the “universal” claim of the ideology and its “particular” content. The performances are seen as contributors to a greater cause of universal racial and cultural tolerance. It is thus promoted as inherently, socially constructive. However, while several artists actively seek to fund and promote their work in such terms, there are others who remain captivated by the apparent incommensurability of Balinese and non-Balinese identities. This inability to connect presents alienation as a necessary by-product of participation in the multiculturalist project. Another means of performing incommensurability is through the use of “irreverent” humor, and irony. These works self-consciously acknowledge the impossibility of participating in a “global village” scenario.

**Japan (Chapters 4 and 5)**

In the Japanese examples, the aestheticization of cultural incommensurability is not nearly as prominent. This is explored through Japan’s differing cultural history with Bali and Indonesia in general. During the Second World War, gamelan was used to promote a mono-ethnic conception of Asian cultural identity (Chapter 4). This “strategic hybridism” effectively sought to erase the liminal third space attributed to conventional notions of
hybridity (Iwabuchi 2002: 53). A comparative approach helps avoid the facile conclusion that hybridity inherently resists the violence of hegemony. While hybridity is often lauded for its subversive potential, one should not confuse that particular potentiality with a predetermined result. After Word War II, Balinese gamelan in Japan was developed through world music programs. This created several generations of Japanese gamelan performers introduced to Balinese music through Mantle Hood’s notion of “bi-musicality.”

**Bali (Chapters 5 and 6)**

Chapters five and six explore Balinese approaches to fusion music. We begin by examining early examples of “otherness” in Balinese music. These “proto-fusions” help to demonstrate that even so-called “classical” or “traditional” Balinese musics explicitly and self-consciously appropriate non-Balinese material. These examples are considered with respect to insider and outsider discourse on intercultural interaction from the colonial period through the late 1990s. In general, these discourses describe hybridity and cultural interaction as antithetical to Balinese cultural sustainability. Under various regimes, hybridity has been repeatedly described as “corrosive” and threatening to the purity of Balinese “identity.” However since the *reformasi* (1998), the tone of public discourse appears to have changed dramatically.

Chapter 6 continues the conversation through an in depth analysis of several contemporary Balinese fusion projects covering a broad swath of aesthetic and commercial trajectories. Through both music and prose, these artists describe the present role of Balinese music as a “global” musical phenomenon in diverse and even contradictory ways. For example, during the mid-2000s, many Balinese fusion projects were framed within the discourse of “*Ajeg Bali*” (Stand Up Bali). For many Balinese, *Ajeg Bali* advocates for an aggressive posturing of Balineseness in the face of threatening global influences. Other artists
seek to recapture the essence of “lost” Bali through the evocation of nostalgic colonial imagery. Both approaches rely on the notion of a “real” or authentic Bali, which is both directly and indirectly under threat of extinction, and thus rely on a belief in “Balineseness” as holistic and self-contained. Recently, experimental Balinese composers I Wayan Gede Yudane and I Dewa Ketut Alit have addressed the implications of “fusion” and cosmopolitan aesthetics for the sustained health and relevance of Balinese gamelan music.

The last chapter zooms out from individual projects in order to view the flow of transnational ideologies more generally. From here we are able to locate various points of coincidence in rupture between the diverse approaches to Balinese music. The result is a kind of infinite fantasia on the notion of Balineseness. While these ideas emerge from particular historical and political conditions, their particular resonances, as well as their specific performative affects remain under the semi-autonomous purview of the individual artists seeking to engage with them. As such this formerly local identity now exists as a potent international signifier both within and beyond geography, history, and politics.
CHAPTER 2: Balinese Culture/American Dreams

Introduction

The following two chapters investigate diverse manifestations of Balinese fusion music in North America. First we trace Balinese music’s roots in American culture by examining attitudes towards Buddhism, Hinduism and Southeast Asian culture more generally during the 19th and 20th centuries. I argue that elements of American transcendentalism, both influential in the construction of both Theosophy and the American modernist movement, created a social frame for the American interpretation of Balinese arts. I hope to show that in these exotic and Orientalist musings, lie incipit forms of cultural discourse which later framed the American aestheticization of Balinese culture.

As mentioned earlier, the histories presented here do not trace an arborescent, “genealogy” (a family tree of Balinese arts abroad). Such a model would bind events into a rigid sequence of cause and effect at best, and at worst, breed teleology. Instead this and the other types of historical context provided in this dissertation are meant as frames of reference, wherein artists freely (or not so freely) draw associations with earlier aesthetics and ideologies in their contemporary work. The sporadic and incoherent connections from colonial past to postcolonial present should not conspire to form a linear continuity. Instead they weave loose webs of association. Deleuze and Guattari (1980) famously write of the relationship between ideologies of past and present as, “rhizomatic.” Dutch, Japanese and American ethnographies produced during Bali’s colonial period were intimately tied to and
structured by the machinations of colonial imperialism. While some current performance practices preserve patronizing and paternalistic understandings of Balinese culture present often these colonial tropes appear in a vestigial sense, like after-images from a particularly bright and traumatic camera flash.

I hope to offer a nuanced look at the aestheticization of Balinese music in North America. In part, I aim to show how colonial tropes have been recontextualized with new and occasionally subversive associations. I also examine the aesthetic effect of “bi-musicality” and world music programs in shaping perceptions of Balinese music for American performers and audience members. In particular, I look at how these models establish a sense of simultaneous identification and alienation. American composers and artists have been cognizant of these effects and often use gamelan to critique the humanistic narratives of liberal multiculturalism and intercultural interaction that underlie American gamelan pedagogy. I also examine works that use Balinese music to demonstrate the artist’s own sense of alienation from it. Through various strategies of irony and parody, these works mock American efforts at performing “Balineseness.” In all cases, Balinese fusion musics provide fertile ground for reflexive exploration of the ethical and moral ambiguities of contemporary intercultural engagement. As the former executive director of New York’s Gamelan Dharma Swara comments, “Gamelan in the U.S. is as much, if not more, a story about us than an accurate representation of Indonesian culture.” (Pellegrinelli 2010)

**Bali in the Colonial Imagination**

It is difficult to say when or exactly how Balinese culture entered the imaginations of American artists and ethnographers. Of course, there are antecedents in the Orientalist

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9 North Bali was under Dutch control as early as the 1850s. However Bali’s colonization began in full in 1908, following the second puputan in Denpasar and continued until Indonesia declared independence from the Japanese in 1945.
ethnographies of British and Dutch scholars. These works and the postcolonial critiques of them will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 6. However, it is worth briefly introducing the work of three Dutch scholars who were influencing in shaping foreign perceptions of Balinese culture from the mid 19th through the early 20th centuries. In many ways, their work collectively transformed how the much of the West including North America came to imagine Bali.

Dutch scholar and scientist, Robert Baron Von Hoevall (1812-79) sponsored a series of scientific expeditions to Bali in the mid 19th century. His work focused on the literary traditions of north Balinese Brahmins. His work details the sophisticated nature of Balinese tradition and mythology and thus transformed European understandings of Bali from an “incestuous, cannibalistic” culture to “an island of culture and learning” (Vickers 1989: 82). According to Vickers, Hoevall’s work was foundational for several Orientalist scholars working at the time. Von Hoevall’s contemporaries would focus on the Balinese ability for craftsmanship. These two elements of Balinese character offer a convenient pretense for the pervasive belief that, “everybody in Bali seems to be an artist” (Covarrubias 1937: 136).

Scholar H.N. van der Tuuk argued staunchly against missionary presence in Bali. He argued that such interventions were destroying Bali’s “unique” religious culture (Vickers 1989: 83). The Dutch later appropriated the notion of Balinese cultural “uniqueness” in order to justify their own initiatives to “preserve” Balinese traditional culture.

F.A. Liefvinck developed ideas from the English explorer Raffles’ earlier ideas to promote the concept of the autonomous and egalitarian “village republic.” He also introduced the concept of Bali Aga (original Bali). The Bali Aga construct remains a meaningful referent in contemporary discourses on the authenticity of Balinese cultural practices. Both foreign and Balinese artists and scholars have initiated projects dedicated to the preservation of Bali
Aga traditions, and its associations with spirituality, ancientness, and transcendence are powerful signifiers in works by contemporary fusion artists.

From the work of these three writers, we begin to see the ancestral semblance of contemporary rhetoric on Balinese culture and society. Bali remains to this day, a bastion of highly cultivated, native culture with a rich and ancient tradition. The Dutch were quick to establish a rhetoric of “authentic” or “traditional” Balinese culture that is emblematic in Liefrinck’s village republic. When Liefrinck creates the, “village republic,” he simultaneously creates the sense that it is threatened by powerful Others embodied in the Balinese kings. The Dutch believed it was their responsibility to “return,” Balinese social life to a pre-feudal, egalitarian structure. With Van der Tuuk’s assertion that Bali is culturally unique, Bali instantly becomes an endangered species. The overtly political nature of these constructs is evident when one considers how the

As such, Dutch ethnographic representations of Balinese culture were used by the colonial administration as a tool towards Bali’s domination in the 1920s-40s. Many of these cultural stereotypes have been naturalized in subsequent scholarship and artistic representation throughout the 20th and early 21st centuries. The following section will explore how these colonial imaginings interfaced with preexisting philosophical and artistic trends in North America.

‘A Very Yankee Sort of Oriental’: Hindu Bali in American Culture

Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau are two major figures in American literature. And both were heavily inspired by Hindu philosophy. Emerson, the founder of the transcendentalist movement, actively sought early translations of the Bhagavad Gita and Visnu Purana (Goodman 1990). Emerson found their messages about spiritual unity and
liberation to be inspiring and reflective of certainly intrinsically American qualities. These texts also provided an uplifting alternative to the oppressive pessimism of Calvinism (ibid).

Deeply involved in the American Unitarian movement, Emerson also espoused a belief in spiritual oneness. This in itself was a critical response to the holy trinity and to conservative branches of American Protestantism. At the same time American transcendentalist ideologies were having a profound effect on a group of Bengali intellectuals halfway across the world in India. These scholars who would later develop, “neo-Hindu,” philosophy in order to appeal Hinduism to a global audience (Williamson 2010: 22).

There are palpable associations forged between Asianness and the “natural” world, in the writing of both Emerson and Thoreau. Scott writes, “While seated in the midst of the New England woods, Thoreau could feel at one with the wider world, and in particular the currents of Asia. As he [Thoreau] put it, ‘for the most part it is as solitary where I live as on the prairies. It is as much Asia or Africa as New England.’” (Scott 2007: 27). This “spiritualization of the vernacular” (Tick 1991: 229) endowed life’s quotidian elements with deep, spiritual connotations and also emerged as a prevalent theme among American modernist composers.

In 1893, the Indian monk Swami Vivekananda gave a speech at the 1893 Parliament of World Religions. This event is often cited as a pivotal moment for the entrance of Hinduism into American consciousness (Williamson 2010: 1). The speech impressed many prominent American intellectuals and Vivekananda quickly rose to celebrity. Through his influence, Vivekananda is credited with modernizing Hindu philosophy for Western and specifically American audiences. His charismatic presence led to the founding of several American-based Vedantic institutions. Vivekananda’s spiritualist tone set a trend for an
interpretation of Hindu philosophy and incorporated ideas of religious pluralism, contemporary European philosophy and science.

Vivekananda’s approach purposefully deemphasized references to specific deities or renunciatory practices of asceticism. Indian philosophers were concerned that such details might potentially alienate foreign audiences. At the time, Indian-Americans were still grappling with stigmas perpetuated by British scholars concerning the “savagery” of certain Hindu and tantric beliefs. For these reasons, much of Vivekananda’s work omits descriptions of tantric practices altogether.

As a result Vivekananda devised a “contextualized” approach to Hinduism that was also heavily criticized by several Western scholars. He was accused of distorting Hindu philosophy to the point of being “unrecognizable.” (Williamson 2010: 2). However, by tailoring Hindu philosophy and religion to American audiences, Hinduism became a ripe source of inspiration for the countless American HIMMs (Hindu-Inspired Meditation Movements) that emerged in the 1920s. Williamson is eager to point out that the contemporary HIMM phenomena is not a simple appropriation of Indian philosophy, but rather the product of a lengthy intellectual exchange between American and Bengali scholars who were inspired by American transcendentalist philosophy (Williamson 2010: 25). Aside from Vivekananda’s Vedantic philosophy, these groups were inspired by theosopy, “New Thought,” and other new belief systems that borrowed eclectically if not haphazardly from Eastern religions. Contemporary themes of spiritual unity, human goodness and insight over logic are endemic to these HIMMs.

These strains of early twentieth century spiritualism were major sources of inspiration for many modernist composers as well. Charles Ives was great admirer of Thoreau, and like the transcendentalists he evokes spirituality through cosmic and naturalist
sonic imagery. Ives work has been cited as a premonition of America’s post-war interest in “world music.” (Craig in McAllester 1979: 185). American composer, Ruth Crawford was also inspired by mysticism and spirituality and the works of mystic composers such as Scriabin and Dane Rudyar in particular (Tick 1991: 228-229). And all of these composers were part of a group founded and led by Henry Cowell, an early exponent of Balinese music and musical hybridity. This group of “ultra-modernists” also included the Canadian composer and Balinese music scholar, Colin McPhee.

From here, the connection between strains of American mysticism and beliefs about Balinese music become more immediate. While American Hinduism and HIMMs were experiencing a boom in the 1920s, North American scholars, artists, and intellectuals were travelling to Bali en masse. This was largely enabled by the Bali’s newly developed tourism industry (developed by the Dutch company, KPM). By the mid-1930s, Bali’s tourism increased from a few hundred visitors to well over several thousand (Picard 1996: 40).

This period also saw the publication of popular Balinese travelogues. Hickman Powell’s The Last Paradise is one example. These travelogues often present exotic and feminized portraits of Balinese culture. Powell refers to south Bali as “a teeming pregnant woman” whose eyes, “burned afterglow of fallen empires.” (Powell in Vickers 1989: 2). Bali was also the subject of several fictional films marketed for their use of “native” casts. These films loosely interpreted scholarship on Balinese religion, the arts and mysticism. Taken together, these works helped establish the image of Bali as a quintessential island paradise. Calon Arang (1927), Goona-Goona (1930), Island of Demons (1933), and Legong: Dance of the Virgins (1935) were some of the major films produced during this time. These works helped disseminate the aesthetics of Balinese culture to American popular audiences. Also from its very inception Balinese tourism promoted the fact that Balinese culture was under
threat from foreign influences. Anthropologist James Boon speculates that the “impending
demise” of the traditional Balinese way of life aided in captivating foreign tourists, who by
their very presence were also participating in this gradual process of modernization (Boon
1977). This trope of ‘vanishing native’ has retained its potency even in relatively recent
examples of Balinese music ethnography.

**Colonial Influences on North American Ethnography**

It was also during the 1920s and 30s that we encounter the first substantive
ethnographies by North American scholars and social scientists. This includes work by
American anthropologists Margaret Mead, Gregory Bateson, Jane Belo and later, Clifford
Geertz. Pollmann (1990) describes the intellectual and interpersonal connections between
foreign artists like McPhee, Miguel Covarrubias, and Spies and scholars like Gregory
Bateson, Margaret Mead, and Jane Belo. For Pollmann, Margaret Mead’s description of
“Balinese character” was largely tailored to address particular issues in *American society*
regarding repression, sexuality and childrearing. Thusly the Balinese were transformed via
ethnography into “fitting symbols of the American dream” (ibid).

During the 1930s, we also see the first North American scholarship on Balinese
music. These artists and scholars thematized Balinese music in order to bolster the tenets of
American modernism (Wakeling 2010: 43). For Wakeling, scholarly discourses such as
McPhee’s, “Absolute Music of Bali” were integral to the construction of Balinese music as
modernist in the American cultural imagination (Lechner 2008, Wakeling 2010). McPhee’s
incorporation of Balinese musical material into modernist compositions further naturalized
this connection. This connection between Balinese music and the musical modernism
tradition has been maintained through the work composers and ethnomusicologists, including
Michael Tenzer.

The aestheticization of Balinese music also fed into a larger ideological complex
concerning Balinese culture and identity. Since McPhee’s time, North Americans have
consistently emphasized themes of “harmony” and “balance” in Balinese music and culture
(Wakeling 2010: 78). Many ethnomusicologists have uncritically appropriated these
constructed aesthetics as “intrinsic” to Balinese art and culture. These early
criticizations were structured by an American fascination with Hindu philosophy and
natural world and maintain efficacy in contemporary understandings of Balinese culture and
temperament. The most notorious of these ideas is perhaps Bateson and Mead’s notion of
Balinese culture as “non-climactic,” as conditioned through a mother’s “genital-teasing” of
Balinese youths (Bateson and Mead 1942: 32).

The ideological confluences between North American scholars in the 1920s and 30s
and Dutch colonial ethnography are not surprising when one considers the practicality of
conducting fieldwork under the auspices of an imperial regime. Mead’s writing plays
interestingly with the colonial concepts of Balinese high culture as well as the Orientalist
notion of Bali as a “timeless” society. She writes that Balinese mothering, “lays the
groundwork for an ambivalent attitude towards fear…and for the open preference for
theatricals and theatrical behavior which are so characteristic to the Balinese” (Mead in
Pollman 1990: 30). Mead also describes Balinese parenting as a type of Freudian pathology.
She describes at length processes by which Balinese mothers and nurses tease the genitals of
young children as a means of eliciting emotion. Then the mother will consistently “undercut”
the stimulus before reaching some kind of emotional climax (ibid: 31). For Mead, “real”

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10 See Wakeling 2010: 55.
emotion is robbed of its intrinsic meaning and is transformed into an aesthetic, theatrical display. According to Mead’s analysis, this habituates a level of emotional repression and inner conflict. These pent up emotions are then released at socially appropriate venues such as trance rituals.

A philosophical extension of Mead’s work is expressed through Bateson’s notion of “steady state,” which according to Bateson is indicative of “Balinese character structure.” (Bateson 1974 [1936]: 112). For Bateson, the “steady state” is cultivated through genital teasing. And it is further exemplified in Balinese gamelan and dance, which according to Bateson, exhibits a lack of ‘climax’ (ibid: 113). Some of Bateson’s assumptions concerning Balinese character are also at least partially informed by the Dutch baliseering (‘balinization’) project, during which the Dutch dramatically restructured Balinese culture out of an ostensible desire to “preserve” it. This included outlawing Malay language and rigidly fixing the caste hierarchies. The campaign’s primary aim was to stem the growing nationalist sentiments in Bali by alienating the Balinese public from the progressive nationalist movements in Java. This also allowed Dutch officials to focus their attentions on wooing high-caste Balinese with money, land, and political power in exchange for loyalty (Robinson 1995: 44). Bateson however assumed that this relatively recent, Dutch-enforced rigidity was innately “Balinese.” This is due in part to Dutch rhetoric presenting baliseering as a “return” to indigenous cultural values.

Bateson writes that because of the caste system, Balinese have internalized a sense of stasis that quells any desire to acquire or challenge existing social power (Bateson 1972 [1936]: 119-121). Citing previous scholars, he also expounds upon Bali’s “preoccupation” with aesthetics of “balance.” He refers to a Balinese saying, which refers to the pre-colonial era as a time “when the world was steady” (ibid: 121). Needless to say, Bateson’s
interpretation of caste rigidity more accurately reflects of Dutch aspirations than Balinese identity.\textsuperscript{11} Political and in-fighting, power struggles and warfare were endemic to feudal Bali (Robinson 1995: 3). Prior to the balseering project, Balinese were actively debating the caste system. Several prominent Balinese intellectuals actively and publically called for its abolition.

Thus both Bateson and Mead’s work supports notions of Balineseness (termed Balinese character) that are rooted in colonial ideologies. Mead’s Freudian ideas of climax avoidance as well as Bateson’s steady state both neatly align with colonial ideas of the Liefrinck’s unique and timeless Balinese village republic. Mead’s assumptions about Balinese theatrics, echoes earlier statements found in the work those who argue for the ubiquity of the arts in Balinese social life. However, Mead puts a Freudian twist on the idea of theatricality. For Mead the “theatrical” outbursts of emotion seen during Balinese trance rituals are the result of a parenting that encourages youths to deny any real emotion.

Aesthetics of stasis have been connected to Balinese perceptions of time, both musical and otherwise. In his influential essay, “Person, Time and Conduct” anthropologist Clifford Geertz writes “the nature of time-reckoning this sort of calendar facilitates is clearly not durational but punctual” (Geertz 1966: 1). This refers to earlier themes about Balinese “stasis” as well as to earlier colonial ideas that Balinese culture has remained unchanged for hundreds of years. Geertz’s conceptualization of “punctual” rather than durational time became a key point of reference for American ethnomusicologists in the 1970s, most notably

\textsuperscript{11} Currently, Balinese notions of ‘Steadiness,’ or stasis are prominent in the post-bombing cultural movement, ‘\textit{Ajeg Bali}’ (see Allen and Palermo 2005).
in the work of Judith Becker (1979). Becker’s connections to Geertz’s work remained largely unchallenged until recently.\(^\text{12}\)

**The ‘Vanishing Native’ in Balinese Music Studies**

As mentioned above, the idea of Bali as an indigenous culture in peril has been one of its most pervasive and compelling stereotypes. McPhee’s critique of the emerging *kebyar* genre is one example. For McPhee, *kebyar* eroded the formal elegance of earlier court musics. According to McPhee, *kebyar* reduced contemporary Balinese music to mere *pastiche*. In terms of musical form, he describes *kebyar* as a series of “overextended” fantasias, transformed into *cliché*” (McPhee 1966: 329). For McPhee this music, “lacks the classic calm of, the broad melodic line and the unity of mood of the older music” (ibid: 342). Generally speaking, he implicates *kebyar* (as a product of modernity) in a gradual process of cultural degradation. He writes of how, “the subtle tones of the *gender* are lost” (ibid: 329) and how softer instruments were “abandoned” in favor of a more percussive *kebyar* sound.

For McPhee, *kebyar* is one indication that “traditional” Balinese culture is not only threatened, it is threatened by the Balinese *themselves*. His writing assumes that the Balinese do not appreciate the uniqueness of their cultural heritage and are not well suited to preserving it. Similar critiques of contemporary Balinese arts can be found in other literature from the 1930s as well. While authors write favorably of the Balinese arts in general, they are often critical of newer genres that display overtly European influences. Spies and DeZoete (1938) write disparagingly of European influences in Balinese *djanger* from the 1920s which they liken to the “euro-oriental bastard” *Komedie Stamboel* (Spies and DeZoete 2002 [1938]:

\(^{12}\) See McGraw 2008a and 2008b.
216). Without traditional arts, the Balinese are considered to “have no style of their own,” thus lending credence to the idea that the Balinese culture must be protected from the “corrosive” influences of outside culture. Of course, the great irony of such attitudes is that while Balinese culture must be preserved by outsiders, only outsiders are truly capable of recognizing and preserving which traditions ought to be preserved. However, this is a complex issue. Since Balinese appropriated cultural tourism from KPM in the years following independence, they exploited their own image as “vanishing native,” for its own commercial benefits. Thus it would unfair to castigate North Americans alone for engaging in this trope. However, I would like to stress that it is precisely this perilous, unstable, and volatile quality to Balinese culture that inspires and structures many North American works for Balinese gamelan.

This trope of the “vanishing native” is also traceable, albeit in a vestigial sense to several examples in contemporary ethnomusicology. Several scholars have discussed how individual composition has eclipsed the age-old practice of “group composition” (Harnish 2000). While group “composition” is still a pervasive part of Balinese music-making, his writing posits the iconic Balinese cultural trope of, “collectivity” as diminishing in the wake of modernity. While overtly critical of colonialism and western ideological hegemony, this reading tacitly embraces a homogenous understanding of Balinese “traditional” practice that links communality with older, supposedly “purer” musical practices.

This strategy for understanding Balinese culture is present not only in the texts themselves but also in how they are marketed. The publisher’s notes for the back cover of Michael Tenzer’s Balinese Music read, “Despite changes effected by contemporary life, hundreds of village groups still perform regularly around the tiny island.” This innocuous sales pitch points to the assumption that Bali is an endangered species. The performing arts
exist, “in spite of,” cultural change rather than because of it. “Contemporary-ness”, is perceived as incommensurable with tradition. In such descriptions, change necessarily connotes loss.

In this chapter, we have explored some connections between Dutch colonial and North American ethnographies however we have also located clear aesthetic, ideological and philosophical corollaries between the North American aestheticization of Balinese culture and the philosophies of early American transcendentalists. In investigating the form and function of “Eastern” thought, Hinduism and, Balinese culture I hope to have developed a nuanced portrait of Balineseness, as experienced and interpreted through American eyes and ears. And while transcendentalism is by no means innocent of connections to colonialism, it is clearly a different case (Huberman 1995: 160). As such transcendentalisms connections to North American performances of Balinese music through the work of modernists like Cowell and McPhee ought to be granted some separate considerations from the colonial paradigms of European Orientalism.

In the following chapter we will explore prevalent themes of cultural incommensurability in North American Balinese fusion projects composed in dialogue with the ethnographic imagery presented above. These scholarly discourses were, for many contemporary North American artists, their primary introduction to Balinese culture. Artists and composers interact with these cultural stereotypes in creative and dialogic ways. As such, notions of “harmony,” and “balance,” (and others such as, “community,” and “spirituality”) might recur, they do not inevitably function as signifiers of neocolonialism.
CHAPTER 3: Split Centers: Balinese Fusion Music in North America

Introduction

Having examined the ideological antecedents that shaped North American understandings of Balinese culture, the following chapter examines how these notions are engaged and renegotiated in contemporary Balinese fusion projects. I read many of these works as an evolving critique of cultural difference as framed through ideologies of liberal multiculturalism.13 Such works do so through the performance of an aestheticized “split-subjectivity” enacted through the dramatization of a tumultuous encounter between self and other. Through this abstract recreation of an intercultural encounter, they mediate and negotiate multiple cultural affinities. I also look at the prevalence of works, which portray the utopian desire for fusion leading to tragic and polarized end. In doing so these pieces express a deep incommensurability between self and Other.

I posit this critique in response to mainstream humanist rhetoric, which idealizes intercultural interaction as a means to greater cultural understanding. As mentioned earlier, hybridity is often described an indeterminate “third space,” endowed with the potential to subvert totalizing systems (Bhabha 1994). Echoing such discourse, these fusion works also frame hybridity as a highly charged and unpredictable phenomenon. Yet while most authors focus on hybridity’s potential to confound binary relationships, these works focus on its destructive potential to further reify polarized notions of cultural difference.

In these works, hybridity emerges as a space of “awkward engagement” (Tsing 2005). And I interpret these phenomena with several analytical tools. Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek writes that ideology (as a discourse which distorts the true nature of material and

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13 Gutmann describes liberal multiculturalism as the pervasive cultural ideology of the late 20th and early 21st centuries (Gutmann 2003).
social relationships) is structured around the desire for a necessarily impossible objective (Žižek 1989). Žižek describes this object cause of desire in terms of a Lacanian “objet a.”

This object is described as an ineffable phantasmatic quality that one searches for in the Other, is the primary organizing principle of fantasy. As such it is of no inherent substance. According to Lacan, attaining the object cause of one’s desire shatters the fantasy frame and creates a schism within one’s own subjectivity (Žižek 2007: 48-50). Already this description bears strong resemblance to narrative of Tenzer’s piece, which imagines two socio-musical entities (represented by two gamelan) that meet, collide and are subsequently driven into polarity. As we will discuss, one could interpret that the object cause of desire in this work is a holistic bimusicality embodied in the “perfect fusion,” of the two groups. However once the two musics finally “fuse,” they are soon polarized into separate, irreconcilable aesthetic worlds.

In general, this chapter plays with the idea that fusion (as an “object cause of desire”) is the necessarily impossible goal in American works for Balinese gamelan. While terms like “fusion” and “hybridity” suggest a kind of synthesis, this “coming together” inevitably produces gaps predicated upon the a priori separation of two socio-musical entities. In performance, this gap is articulated in the form of irreconcilable cultural differences that are performed symbolically through aestheticized musical gestures. Thus “fusion” musics, in their ostensible “coming together,” also reify a belief in predetermined cultural difference.

This chapter focuses with a predominant interest in writing music for Balinese instruments. If I were to discuss every composer who has written for Balinese gamelan this chapter might never end. It is a running gag that nearly every major American composer of the last thirty years as written at least one piece for gamelan.¹⁴ Composers like John Cage,

¹⁴ Evan Ziporyn p.e.
Lou Harrison, and to some extent Steve Reich have spent some time with Balinese music, but Balinese *gamelan* does not exert a substantial influence upon their overall compositional aesthetics. The works I discuss are grouped roughly into two “generations.” The first generation became involved in intercultural collaboration during the years immediately following the development of world music programs in the United States (1960s onward). As representatives of this “first generation” of American *gamelan* composers, I focus on the work of Michael Tenzer, Wayne Vitale, and Evan Ziporyn. Among the countless American composers who have been inspired by Balinese *gamelan*, I have chosen them for several reasons. Firstly, Balinese music comprises a substantial portion of each composer’s *oeuvre*. Secondly, they have each have profound influences on compositional practice in Bali and as well on the compositional approaches to Balinese *gamelan* by younger North American composers of the “second” generation. While I delineate certain broad aesthetic and philosophical differences between these generations, I would like to emphasize that these boundaries are porous.

Before going on, let me clarify my own position in relation to these works. I have been an unabashed fan of Balinese music by Balinese and non-Balinese composers alike since my early twenties. I first encountered Balinese music through the pedagogical/aesthetic paradigm of an American world music program. With some of these projects, I was a passive observer, soaking in rehearsals and performances. In others, I was a performer and a low-level collaborator. The artists and ethnomusicologists I interviewed were sometimes wary to reflect on the conditions that produce their work for fear that they had devolved into narcissistic solipsism. However, in learning, performing and identifying with these works, I am convinced that the issues they raise are more than just, “First World problems” (to reference the hilarious and acerbic internet meme). More specifically, they each raise several
pointed concerns about the ethics and politics of intercultural interaction. As such, they speak to the most relevant concerns of our field.

**Post-War Developments: Bimusicality and the Center for World Music**

Balinese *gamelan* has left an indelible mark on American music in the 20th and 21st centuries. And yet one is hard-pressed to locate a comprehensive history from its earliest performances to the present day. Several scholars have looked at Javanese music abroad (Perlman 1994, Diamond 1998, Miller 2005, Cohen 2010). In her work on Javanese *gamelan* in Great Britain, Maria Mendonça locates “communitas” as a central theme in the “pan-*gamelan*” experience (2002, 2011). Sumarsam’s forthcoming book, *Javanese Gamelan and The West* describes the complexities of intercultural interaction between Javanese and non-Javanese artists throughout the twentieth century. Of the studies that theorize Balinese music abroad, most are divided into pre- or post-WWII brackets. For example, Matthew Cohen describes performances by both Indonesian artists (including Balinese) and Indonesia-inspired Westerners on the American concert stage from the early 20th century through the 1950s, ending his book just prior to the development of the first American world music programs.

Massive changes in geopolitics following the Second World War have likely made it difficult for scholars to reconcile colonial and postcolonial representations of Balinese music abroad within the scope of a single study. The end of WWII also instigated an epistemic rupture in the humanities and social sciences. In ethnomusicology, it is also the point at which scholarship moves away from grand narratives of musical evolution to geographically focused area studies and cultural relativism (Nettl 2010: 83).
Colin McPhee’s orchestral work *Tabuh-Tabuhan* (1936) was considered a landmark work of musical hybridity for much of the twentieth century. Credited as the first Western composer to bring “authentic” Balinese music into a symphonic form, he introduced Balinese music to American audiences as a quintessential representative of “the new” (Young 1986: 56-57). For McPhee and other American modernists, Balinese *gamelan* was everything European music was not. Balinese music was praised for its emotional detachment and as well as for its integration into the fabric of daily life. As such it provided an ideal “Other” to the perceived excesses and elitism of European Romanticism. Borrowing material from non-Western traditions was not unusual among modernist composers, however McPhee’s work received special recognition. Very few of his contemporaries could boast eight years of field experience living with indigenous artists, while transcribing and studying their music. To this day, McPhee’s work is considered a major intellectual antecedent to works by Steve Reich, Lou Harrison, Evan Ziporyn, Michael Tenzer and others (Oja 2004: xi). Also of note, Javanese dancer Devi Dja toured the United States in the 1930s and 40s. Her revue, *A Night in Bali* capitalized on the Bali’s newfound celebrity status as a premier tourist destination. During the years preceding World War II, financial constraints forced her dance group into a regular gig at the Balinese-themed Chicago restaurant, The Sarong Room (Cohen 2010: 194). The next major concert tour by a Balinese performing arts ensemble was not until after the war when John Coast brought Peliatan’s acclaimed Balinese *gamelan* ensemble *Gunung Sari* to tour North America in 1952.

Many of the funding institutions and performance ensembles, which currently support the performance of both Balinese traditional music and Balinese fusion music got their start in late 1960s and 1970s. These organizations include the David and Flora Hewlett Foundation (longtime supporters of *Gamelan Sekar Jaya*), The Asian Cultural Council, The
Ford Foundation, as well as countless local, and university sponsored organizations. American governmental support of such international arts initiatives was spurred on the heels of the American Cold War as the United State sought to shore up relationships with potential allies.¹⁵ These roots are also co-synchronous with the emergence of North American ethnomusicology in the late 1960s (Lueck 2012). As Lueck notes, the summer program sponsored by Samuel Scripps and run by the American Society for Eastern Arts (ASEA) was foundational for an entire generation of ethnomusicologists and composers working on East and Southeast Asian musics. These artists (among them, Steve Reich, Kathy Foley, Phillip Yampolsky, Lisa Gold, Jody Diamond, and others) established Balinese performance practices as we have come to experience it, at American universities, concert halls, and consulates.

In the latter quarter of the twentieth century, Balinese music, along with other forms of Indonesian gamelan was reimagined through the intellectual and pedagogical aesthetics of university world music programs. Thus postcolonialism, civil rights, the expansion of higher education, theories of cultural relativism, and multiculturalism have all played a large part reframing American attitudes towards Balinese music performance. As such, this essay examines ethnomusicological practices as “autoethnography,” a form of discourse that recognizes the structures of political reality, which are ritualized in academic settings (Meneley and Young 2005: 9). Generally speaking, ethnomusicologists have incorporated multiculturalist ideologies for the stated goals of enhancing awareness of and sensitivity to global musics. However some argue that an institutional will-to-difference sustains these goals, thus reifying cultural boundaries rather than eliminating them (Agawu 2003: 174). For Trimillos (2004) world music performance ensembles endeavor to create a nuanced

¹⁵ Andrew McGraw p.c.
understanding of musical traditions through “strategic essentialism.” At the same time, he cites a perennial concern that such “staged authenticity” reinforces superficial notions of cultural difference (Trimillos 2004: 39). This paradox resonates with cultural theorists, who critique the ideology of multiculturalism on a larger scale (Žižek 1997, Modood 2008).

**From Relativism to Multiculturalism**

The ideological tenor of liberal multiculturalism is a crucial element to the aesthetics of contemporary gamelan performance. According to founding ethnomusicologist, David McAllester, “At the time, we considered that we were the real discoverers of the World of Music” (McAllester 1979: 179). This was partially inspired by “the relativism of anthropology, the global travels of World War II, and the ethical commitment of the Peace Corps” (ibid: 180). In a manner, not unlike the Hindu evocations of Emerson and Thoreau, he writes, “We saw ourselves as a kind of Brahmanic Trinity of the Arts: we would be the Destroyers of ethnocentrism, the Preservers of rich cultural heritages around the world, and the Creators of rich cultural understanding. We were eager to assuage the trauma of three centuries of colonialism.” (Ibid: 180). This optimism is reflected in gamelan “fusion” works of the 1970s. In 1978, composer Barbara Benary writes, “There comes a delightful point beyond which it no longer seems to matter whether one is using ethnic music or serving it; it can become so familiar that it no longer seems, ‘ethnic.’” (Benary in McAllester 1979: 185). Such optimism regarding the potential of fusion to yield entirely new means of human understanding comes on heels of Mantle Hood’s famous, “bi-musicality.”

However, directly beneath this celebratory surface (one which is continually promulgated through the marketing and promotion of world musics), deep anxieties regarding the ethics of appropriation have never been far off. Balinese music scholar and composer Evan Ziporyn discusses how, in the early years of Gamelan Sekar Jaya, some members were
vocally opposed to composing for Balinese instruments. He jokingly refers to this attitude as, “Balier than thou.”

“While in later years, it would become something that people could argue about, back then the whole vibe was, ‘Suweca wants us to do this, so we do this… this is how sit, this is how we dress, this is how we play this piece, this is how we do an offering’… every single thing was just an attempt to replicate some idealized version of the way, the “Balinese” did it” (Ziporyn interview: 12/19/11). 16

Re-creating a sense of Balinese authenticity, through prayers, offerings, and dress is still an important component of Balinese performance practices in the United States. However, the more stringent attitudes towards composition have relaxed considerably since the 1980s. In fact, Sekar Jaya has been one of the most active environments for new American gamelan composition in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

Ziporyn, along with Sekar Jaya co-founder Michael Tenzer and composer Wayne Vitale were among the first composer/scholars to write extensively for Balinese gamelan. Each began experimenting with Balinese music composition in the 1980s through collaborative projects with celebrated Balinese artists. Both Tenzer and Vitale worked with master drummer, I Wayan Tembres. For Vitale the impetus to compose initially arose from a desire to explore Balinese music’s inner logics. Through composition, he could explore the ways in which melodic, rhythmic, and textural layers combine to create a coherent musical effect. 17 Both Tenzer and Vitale’s works with Tembres were premiered in Bali’s quotidian performance spaces, temple ceremonies and tourist shows.

Vitale and Tenzer’s experiences during the 1980s speak to the newness of the intercultural form. Although these collaborations were not the first intercultural collaborations between Balinese and non-Balinese artists they were pioneering events in a

16 Referring to Sekar Jaya co-founder, the Balinese artist and composer, I Wayan Suweca.
17 Vitale p.c.
new intellectual climate. 18 As discourses on multiculturalism and cultural relativism were being put into praxis through rapidly expanding world music programs and arts funding organizations, Bali was also experiencing new commercial and intellectual openness as the result of changes in “New Order” cultural policy (Ramstedt 1992: 59). 19 Although left-wing political ideologies were heavily suppressed in the New Order, there was a greater emphasis placed on both cultural diplomacy and cultural tourism (ibid: 82). In contemporary Indonesia, intercultural collaboration has become commonplace almost to the point of being cliché. Arts institutions under sponsorship from governmental organizations and NGOs have successfully appropriated the cultural capital of intercultural collaboration. As such, contemporary Balinese intercultural performances are often padded with politically and economically motivated discourse on cosmopolitanism and economic development (Sudirana 2011).

Following a successful and influential tour to Bali in 1985, Sekar Jaya’s profile as the world’s premier exporter of the Balinese performing arts was firmly established. Balinese gamelan works by Vitale, Tenzer, and Ziporyn are currently well known in Bali. They have even been taught to Balinese composition students at Institut Seni Indonesia (Arts Institute of Indonesia) in Bali’s capital city of Denpasar. An exemplary collection of their work can be found on the New World Records recording, American Works for Balinese Gamelan (1995). These pieces were composed in the late 80s and early 1990s, more than a decade after Sekar Jaya’s founding in 1979. These works represent serious and in some cases, bold and uncomfortable attempts at enacting and defining the complexity of intercultural negotiation.

Michael Tenzer is a central figure in the development of Balinese music performance in North America. By the early 1990s, he had already composed several works for Balinese

gamelan both in the US and in Bali. As a student at Yale and UC Berkeley, Tenzer was himself educated in the twilight of musical modernism, not more than a few years before minimalism and ethnomusicology reorganized the aesthetic concerns of Western art music\textsuperscript{20}. As such, the aesthetics of modernism form an important part of Tenzer’s compositional aesthetic. Specifically, he espouses the belief that rigor, in the form of strict compositional determinacy, non-repetitive form, and melodic, and harmonic complexity constitute, “great works.”

It was the presence of modernist musical features that first attracted Tenzer to Balinese music. In order to illustrate his loyalty to modernist aesthetics, he offers this light-hearted comparison between his music and the work of Evan Ziporyn, “Whereas somebody like Evan (Ziporyn) would look at Balinese music and say, ‘oh cool, there’s all this repetition, I think I’ll get into that,’ my thought was, ‘there’s all this repetition, I gotta get rid of that!’” (Tenzer interview 2/19/11). As such, Tenzer’s works often feature an intentional sense of linearity by obscuring points of musical repetition. While certain musical themes do reappear, motives are often melodically transformed or rhythmically altered. One example can be found in the piece, Banyuari (1992). One of Banyuari’s iconic moments is a complex interlocking figuration (kotekan) written in quintuplets. This melody first appears in the latter third of the piece (10:01). After a brief interlude, the same core melody (pokok) appears again, but as a square sixteenth-note figuration.

\textsuperscript{20} Interview 2/19/11.
Since Banyuari, melodic experiments with non-duple subdivisions have become prevalent in North American and Balinese works. Another prophetic musical moment in Banyuari comes in the form of a drum solo based on a Karnatak drumming pattern and a metric modulation. About a decade or so after Banyuari, both non-duple kotekan and Indian/Karnatak based drumming became emerging trends in experimental Balinese Tabuh Kreasi.

Vitale’s work, Khalayan Tiga is the only work on the album performed by Balinese musicians. The piece was performed by members of Sekehe Gong Abdi Budaya from the village of Perean, Tabanan. According to Vitale, he first heard the group on a series cassettes produced by the Balinese record label “Bali Records.” He recalls being so struck by the group’s intensity, speed, and precision that he literally wore out his cassettes while living abroad in Germany (Vitale interview 1/5/2012). To an ear familiar with the idioms of Balinese tabuh kreasi, Khalayan Tiga clearly pays homage to the formal aesthetics of Balinese kreasi from the late 70s through the 1980s. This strategy of homage through the

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21 I Dewa Putu Berata’s Lemayung (2005), Andrew McGraw’s Cara Landa (2004), and I Made Subandi’s Ceraki (2005) are all examples.
self-conscious appropriation of recognizable Balinese motives is characteristic to many of Vitale’s earlier works. His first piece, *Sekar Panca Warna*, features motivic gestures iconic in the work of several major Balinese composers including, I Wayan Berata (quoting Kosalia *Arini* and *Tabuh Pisan Bangun Anyar* among others), and I Nyoman Windha.

*Khalayan Tiga* refers to the realization of “three fantasies” surrounding the genesis of the piece (Perlman 1995: 2). The first of these was to meet the Perean musicians he had admired for so many years via cassette. The second was to learn their repertoire (which he did upon visiting Perean in the early 1990s). His third fantasy was to write a piece for them. Vitale’s describes his time in Perean as one of the “top” musical experiences of his life (Vitale interview). Unlike many forms of popular or classical music, Bali is a place where it is tremendously easy (provided one can afford the plane fare) to meet, study with, and even befriend one’s musical idols. In the experiences of many of American artists and students (as well as in my own experience), Balinese artists are often flattered by the interest and are genuinely eager to share both their time and their expertise. Vitale’s work expresses the mixture of both excitement and awe inherent to such treasured moments.

Both Vitale and Tenzer’s works were written in the early 1990s, a discursive “hey day” for liberal multiculturalism. Examples of state sponsored multiculturalism can be traced back to the Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1971 (Modood 2007: 16). However it became a popular, if not ubiquitous topic among policymakers, political theorists, and other academics in the 1990s (Taylor 1997, Bhabha 1998, Gutmann 2003, Kymlicka 1995). Both of these early works approach fusion with an optimism similar to that found in Benary and McAllester’s statements above. However while relativism focuses on cultural similarities, liberal multiculturalism emphasizes an appreciation of pure difference.
Parekh (2010) describes multiculturalism as a worldview rather than a philosophical and a political movement. Although there is no monolithic theory for multiculturalism, according to Parekh; it nevertheless operates upon several basic tenets. First, “human beings are culturally embedded in the sense that they grow up and live within a culturally structured world.” Secondly, each culture has “different systems of meaning and visions of the good life.” And finally, “every culture is plural.” As such, multiculturalism embraces both the “inescapability and desirability of cultural plurality.” (Ibid: 238-240). For many scholars, recognizing and affording unique benefits to cultural groups is a crucial aspect of putting multiculturalism into action (Taylor 1997). Amy Gutmann describes liberal multiculturalism as a belief in autonomy and political recognition for all human individuals while fully embracing and acknowledging cultural difference (Gutmann 1992). As a worldview, multiculturalism assumes that human conflict can be reduced to a lack of awareness and understanding between cultural groups. Therefore by simply encountering the Other and appreciating difference, we may develop empathy. Multiculturalism thus assumes that intercultural contact necessarily results in tolerance and that difference as such is inherently positive (Nagle 2009: 8).

This generalized perspective on the nature of human interaction is ubiquitous and often tacit to intercultural artistic collaborations. The Asia Pacific Performance Exchange (APPEX) has promoted their work as an “homage to multiculturalism” (CIP 2003: 3). According to their website, the APPEX format, “demonstrates how cross-cultural collaboration can provide artists a more informed understanding of Asia and America as well as valuable insights into their own worldview” (ibid). Thus APPEX presents the ideological structure of liberal multiculturalism brought into artistic praxis. Collaboration is the vehicle
through which artists learn to appreciate the Other, thus positively affecting their own perception of human life.

**Split Centers: The Impossibility of Balinese Fusion Music**

Evan Ziporyn came to Balinese music slightly later than Tenzer and Vitale. He first encountered Balinese music as an undergraduate music student at Yale University. He describes his first encounter as pure serendipity. After hearing a recording of Balinese *gamelan* at a New Haven record store, he overheard Yale professor Martin Bresnick talking about Tenzer’s recent return from Bali at nearby pizza place (Ziporyn interview 12/19/2011). The following summer, Ziporyn travelled to San Francisco to meet Tenzer and his newly formed *gamelan* group (*Gamelan Sekar Jaya*). This began a lifelong career with Balinese music.

Ziporyn’s first *gamelan* piece was a collaborative work with Balinese composer, I Nyoman Windha. They worked on an arrangement of Windha’s *Kembang Pencak* originally written for *gamelan gong kebyar* and pencak silat dancers (Indonesian martial arts). At the time, Ziporyn was still reticent to write music for *gamelan*, feeling that he lacked sufficient knowledge to compose “Balinese” music. While working with Windha, Ziporyn tricked himself into writing by imagining the saxophone quartet as a substitute for the choreography that had accompanied an earlier version of the piece in Bali. By envisioning the saxophone parts as separate entity from Windha’s music, he was able to interact with the music on a conceptual basis without necessarily “fusing” (Ziporyn interview 12/19/2011).

Ziporyn’s initial uneasiness with *gamelan* is also articulated in the piece, *Aneh Tapi Nyata* (translated as, “Strange But True”). Written for a combination of Western and Balinese instruments, *Aneh Tapi Nyata* speaks of the awkwardness, embarrassment, and alienation
experienced by musicians striving for deep knowledge of another tradition. As we see in the vocal text, the optimism of multiculturalism’s postwar promise appears to fade away while the specter of colonialism emerges as a transfigured reminder of former conflicts.

*Aneh Tapi Nyata* (Vocal Text)

Apa arti dunia ini?
Mengembara,
cari Jamu Pantas
tamu untuk mengobati ngeri.
Zaman Kami hilang tradisi,
mana beli?
Kalau bisa minta sisah dari banten
masih asli.
Baru tiba membuka kapor saya;
Di dalam selalu soal ikut jalan.
Aneh tapi nyata: lagu barat dinyanyi
dirangi campuran begini...
Berkumpul sampai terpisah
Sementara peleburan
Manis, asem, terserah penonton.

What does it mean, this world that I see?
Find a tonic for a foreigner that can cure my anxiety.
These days my tradition is gone--where can I buy it?
May I ask for the leftovers from your authentic offerings?
Newly arrived, I open my suitcase;
All my problems have come for the ride.
Strange but true: a Western song accompanied by this mixture--
Gather together until forced apart
A momentary fusion
Sweet or bitter, it's up to you.

*Aneh Tapi Nyata* is one of the first pieces by an American composer to describe a measure of insecurity and skepticism towards the multiculturalist mandate. In it, he speaks of submerged desires that tacitly motivate the postcolonial desire for reconciliation. In Ziporyn’s reading, the American desire for spiritual connection emerges as a response to our own spiritual depravity. In a society where liberal capitalism is the dominant organizing principle of social reality, our first instinct is to try and buy it back (as in the lines, “These days, my tradition is gone. Where can I buy it?”).

The piece raises several poignant and perhaps unresolvable questions. One of the most disturbing being, “What do we have to offer the Balinese, besides money?” This is often uncomfortably apparent to the many foreign tourists living abroad in Bali. Bali’s tourism
infrastructure is organized in terms of what Picard (after McKean) calls, “boundary maintenance.” (Picard 1990: 38). “Boundary maintenance,” was initially conceived as an optimistic description of Bali’s cultural tourism model. The term implies that the Balinese have effectively separated cultural behaviors performed for indigenous peers and cultural behaviors performed for tourists (tourist performances, for example), thus creating an invisible boundary between the Balinese and their “guests.”

This separation is similarly apparent to any student who has travelled to Bali and studied Balinese music firsthand. The etiquette and customs for teaching foreign students is different than the etiquette and customs for teaching Balinese students. This is done for several practical reasons. While students, and particularly young children pay to study in large, private facilities (known as sanggar), other teaching arrangements are done less formally through familial connections and through family friends. In such arrangements, teachers often do not ask for money. In return, the student is expected to assist the family in various other ways, including helping with ceremonies or house maintenance. Realistically, tourists cannot be expected to meet such expectations, as such obligations are carried out for many years, even if the student has stopped “taking lessons.” According to one Balinese teacher, I Gusti Komin Darta tourists are often (but not always) transient in the lives of their Balinese teachers and thus money is seen as the most efficient way to reciprocate for their teacher’s time and expertise.22 Even in Picard’s description, these boundaries between, “culture for self,” and, “culture for Other,” are porous and permeable. However, they nevertheless describe a gap between Balinese and non-Balinese students created by the tourism infrastructure. This point of slippage is one crack among many in the intercultural terra.

22 I Gusti Nyoman Darta p.c.
These gaps have repercussions for conceptualizing hybridity and musical fusion more broadly. To what extent are we allowed (or do we allow ourselves) to, “truly cross cultures?” (Cohen 2010: 4). What does that even mean? Is it really just a simple matter of will and intention? Hybridity is often written of as a means to subvert the scripts handed down by hegemonic ideologies. However as Ziporyn describes, our own baggage has inevitably “come for the ride.” Despite best intentions, American students and composers of Balinese music are often interpellated as ambassadors of superculture, unwittingly handing out scripts to subsequent generations of Balinese composers.

_Puser Belah_ (2003)

Where else might the present skepticism towards multiculturalism arise? Is it possible that the structure of multiculturalist ideology is itself partially responsible for this impasse? Could alienation be a logical, even _necessary_ outcome of fusion? While liberal multiculturalism insists upon universal human rights and dignities, individuals are simultaneously required to be mindful of the cultural and historical situatedness of others. Both Gutmann and Taylor (1997) discuss the contradiction of assuming both universal sameness and situated difference as a primary hurdle in identity politics since the rise of discourse on multiculturalism. They argue that these mandates, frame social relationships paradoxically. We are to identify with our “Others” as human beings endowed with a basic and inherent dignity, yet we must simultaneously preserve a certain measure of inscrutability because we are restricted from identifying with an individual’s, cultural or historical circumstances fully. To fail in either pursuit is to run the risk of exoticizing, objectifying or even exploiting others. And so, even when we identify with certain individuals, cultures, or
musics, we are required a certain degree of alienation from them. Brian Nagle describes this as multiculturalism’s “double bind” (Nagle 2009).

In the 21st century, scholars have been more pointed in their critique. Kenan Malik argues that, “multiculturalism has helped to segregate communities far more effectively than racism” (Malik 2001). Others argue that the celebration of diversity has created “ethnic fiefdoms” which are forced to compete with one another for limited economic resources in the form of public aid. This leads to increased resentment between minority groups rather than understanding. Multiculturalism thus “erodes the pan-ethnic solidarity needed to sustain society-wide economic redistribution” (Nagle 2009: 10). Nagle also cogently describes multiculturalism’s flaws as theory. He writes, “The idea that multiculturalism can provide the basis for intercultural dialogue unfortunately appears to reduce cross-community contact to an appreciation of alterity, an encounter with ethnic difference which at best leaves the respective parties with a heightened respect for the ‘Other’” (ibid: 11). Multiculturalism helps unify individual ethnic identities through political recognition yet also alienates them from one another. For Malik, this ultimately, “imprisons us in a human zoo of differences” (Malik 1996: 150).

Malik’s “imprisonment,” appeals directly to the sense of alienation conveyed in these American gamelan works. Michaels Tenzer’s 2003 composition, Puser Belah offers several salient examples on the function of alienation in intercultural interactions. The piece is scored for two complete Balinese gamelan semaradana (a total of nearly 70 musicians). It was taught to members of Sanggar Cudamani, Gamelan Genta Bhuana Sari, Gamelan Sekar Jaya and members of the Vancouver-based ensemble Gamelan Gita Asmara. In an article for a Canadian New Music journal, Circuit he describes the title in these terms, “Puser Belah means, roughly, ‘split navel’—for the Balinese, the human navel is the centre of the body,
analogous the centre of the cosmos. To split it (a violent image) is to render the cosmos unstable” (Tenzer 2011: 3). He also offers the following summary for the piece as a whole,

“The two gamelan begin as separate entities (read: cultures) acting without consciousness of each other, playing in different densities, floating in coexistent layers of unmeasured time. No gongs sound. Little by little they become mutually aware through passages of shared pulsation and thematic alignment. Elements of both cooperation and conflict coalesce but synchrony is sporadic. Gongs emerge to mark separate and irregular periods of coordination. At last, the two gamelan play together in a fully cyclic format where all elements integrate and fuse. But this relationship ruptures explosively. Conflict returns on a canvas of conflicting pulsations and periodicities, indeterminate pitch, and the full withdrawal of gongs.” (Tenzer 2011: 3)

Tenzer openly describes his work as an attempt to unify a persistent rift in his Balinese and non-Balinese musical identities. Performed as a kind of intercultural encounter between two entities, both the catastrophic split and the resulting chaos, aptly describe a subject caught by their desire to fuse and its disastrous consequences. In Tenzer’s work the gong cycle functions as the arbiter of identities, which are either in or out of synch. The “full withdrawal of gongs” at the end of the piece thus signifies a complete breakdown in their relationship.

The pinnacle of their entanglement, as well as a brief moment of idealized fusion is symbolized during the piece’s literal and metaphorical mid-section, the “pengawak.” The Balinese formal construct pengawak or “body” is derived from large-scale gong-forms characteristically attributed to the Majapahit Gamelan Gong Gede. In Gong Gede, the pengawak is also considered the focal point of a given work. Tenzer adopts the term in that sense. Tenzer’s pengawak is characterized by a long unfolding rhythmic form based on a single Karnatak drumming pattern. In his compositional life he cites these rhythmic forms as the curative for the repetition of Balinese gong forms, he had been trying to subvert.

Following this idealized fusion, there is a climactic rupture. The musical event serves multiple symbolic functions. On one level, Tenzer wishes to aurally signify the bombing of
two Balinese nightclubs, an event which had taken place less than one year before *Puser Belah*’s performance. Here he draws a clear analogy between his inner psychological experience of a cultural incommensurability and the tragic bombing. This analogy also resonates with Balinese responses to the event. Soon after the Bali bombing, Balinese journalists and cultural critics began reconstructing the attack in terms of a failed intercultural interaction. These writers blamed the fact that had sold itself out to foreign developers thus corrupting the purity of their cultural essence (Lewis and Lewis 2009). This spawned an entire movement dedicated to the restoration of Balinese cultural values (*Ajeg Bali*), which we will explore in greater depth in later chapters.

The piece ends with the two *gamelan* in irretrievably separate musical spaces. One *gamelan* continues on with a frantic interlocking *kotekan*. Tenzer’s use of indeterminacy enhances the listener’s sense of melodic and cosmic instability. The other *gamelan* plays a slow, plaintive melody in unison at an entirely different tempo.

While *Puser Belah* began as a naive quest for the “perfect fusion”, Tenzer ultimately realized was that there is no such thing (interview 2/19/2011). While his beliefs in rigor and philosophical introspection brought him deep within his own subjectivity, he realized that there was no singular kernel to unify his multiple affinities and identifications. As such, *Puser Belah* does not only reflect a core belief in the impenetrability of cultural difference between an individual and his Balinese others. More crucially, it reflects an impenetrable difference within ones’ own subjectivity. In truth, Tenzer is not nearly as troubled by the unknowability of the Balinese “other” as he is by the unknowability of his own self. Thus while globalization has allowed for increasingly mobile, and malleable, transnational identities, there is an underlying sensation that one’s affinity to a particular aesthetic necessarily detracts from identification with another. This is sustained by a core anxiety that
our fractured multiplicities do not necessarily add up. And such notions appear contrary to the promises multiculturalism seems to make.

Tenzer’s overtly identifies with the aesthetic values of musical modernism. These are values that he is compelled to identify with by virtue of his education, upbringing and social interactions. Such affinity also allows him to travel and study Balinese music. Notions of multicultural tolerance allow him to appreciate Balinese musical aesthetics as deep and meaningful. A persistent passion for Balinese music and culture demands inclusion within a larger frame of reference called “self.” However, in such circumstances, a surplus is produced. This surplus is indicated by Tenzer’s inability to realize his perfect fusion. He is defined by his desire for an object that is in excess of his identity. This indivisible remainder refuses total assimilation within any one of his multiple affinities. As such he is necessarily split. He is barred from identifying completely with his identity as modernist composer, a Balinese musician, or even as a tourist. He is half Balinese and half not, but the two halves do not make a whole.

**A House in Bali (2009)**

Evan Ziporyn’s recent opera also dramatizes the anxieties of intercultural collaboration. This time it does so through a critical look at the life and work of Colin McPhee. Both the title and the libretto are taken directly from McPhee’s own memoir, *A House in Bali*. Billed as a “cross-cultural opera,” the work features substantial artistic contributions from several major Balinese artists including, I Dewa Ketut Alit, I Nyoman Catra, Ni Desak Made Suarti Laksmi and dancer/choreographer Ni Kadek Dewa Aryani.

Alit, a founding member of Bali’s internationally known, *Sanggar Cudamani* and currently the director and founder of *Gamelan Salukat* has garnered widespread attention
from composers, artists, and scholars around the world for his experimental approaches to Balinese gamelan. His works have been the focus of several scholarly publications, more than any living composer in Bali today. He also has a longstanding relationship with Ziporyn, serving as a guest artist at MIT for the last seven years. Both Catra and Laksmi are faculty members at the Indonesian Institute of the Arts (ISI) in Denpasar and Aryani is one of Bali’s most sought after performers of both traditional and experimental dance.

The opera was received with ambivalent reviews from journalists who possess varying amounts of exposure to, or background knowledge of Balinese music. Some reviewers praised the work as “syncretic” and “bicultural”, acknowledging Ziporyn as a “spiritual descendent” of McPhee. They credit Ziporyn with navigating the musical and cultural worlds of Bali and early 20th century Euro-America with aplomb, from the practical details of tuning and orchestration to more complex aesthetic negotiations. Less favorable reviews described the plot as either incoherent, or altogether absent. A New York Times reviewer wrote that, “Western characters never amount to more than ciphers,” and that this was “further diminished” by the “chaotic” visual presentation (Smith 2009).

A House in Bali generated heated discussion in Indonesia and in the United States for its allusions to Spies’ and McPhee’s alleged pederasty. While Spies’ pederasty is a better-known fact, McPhee’s sexuality has been a topic of speculation. The facts of McPhee’s personal life, including his divorce from anthropologist Jane Belo and his intense mentorship of the young Balinese dancer, Sampih have fed into these associations. Ziporyn addressed the topic publically both on the gamelan listserv as well as in a series of blog entries after its US premier. He writes,

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“Every reader I know who has read McPhee’s memoir – walks away from it asking the question that begins this essay. And none of us walk away knowing the answer. As has been said to me dozens of times by dozens of interested parties, ‘the real McPhee story is what’s NOT in the book.’ So it seems to me that any honest rendition of that encounter, AND of McPhee’s account of it – should explore that exact ambiguity.” (Ziporyn blog entry 9/20/2009)

In response to Ziporyn’s post, were several lengthy contributions by Michael Tenzer, Wayne Vitale, and scholar/historian, Adrian Vickers. Several respondents explicitly confirmed to the best of their knowledge that McPhee was, in fact a pedophile. However some were also concerned that the opera’s legacy might shift attention away from McPhee’s intellectual and artistic achievements (Vitale 2009).

Whether fact or fiction, Ziporyn’s inclusion of McPhee’s alleged pedophilia poignantly serves as an allegory for the violent and perilous nature of “fusion” through intercultural interaction. In the spirit of classical opera, A House Bali describes itself as a “tragical romance.” (HiB press release 2010). McPhee’s desire for the untamed and vigorously youthful Sampih encapsulates the Western fascination for Bali as the personification of individual liberty through hedonism. As such, Sampih embodies the objet a. The pedophilia taboo intensifies the impossibility of their literal and metaphoric aesthetic fusions. Like Puser Belah’s cataclysmic “bombing,” following the sublime fusion of the pengawak attaining the objet a leads a deepened rift between self and other by splitting at the very core of one’s own desire.

The individual fates of McPhee, Spies, and Sampih corroborate this message. Dutch authorities arrested Spies for immoral behavior. On his way to the Netherlands to face prosecution a Japanese vessel attacked his ship and he was killed. After fleeing his own prosecution from the Dutch, Colin McPhee divorced his wife and descended into alcoholism (Vickers 2009). Although these details do not appear in the opera, Sampih (still in 20s) was
murdered after a successful tour to the United States. While the crime remains unsolved, many speculate that Sampih’s international fame had drawn ire from jealous contemporaries.

McPhee’s awkward encounters and misunderstandings with the Balinese clearly describe Ziporyn’s own anxieties as McPhee’s “spiritual descendent.” An anxiety of things “lost in translation” is evident in Ziporyn’s work dating back to Aneh Tapi Nyata. What is lost in translation is all the more terrifying for being so. It opens up an incalculable void, the measure of which cannot be accounted for. It leaves open the prospect that in missing anything, one misses everything.

Politics of Intercultural Interaction

At this point, I interject some of my own observations watching this and other intercultural projects take shape. I was a long-time fan of both Alit and Ziporyn’s music. I was also acquainted with many of the Salukat musicians as I had done some collaborative work with them a few years prior. During the summer of 2009, I attended rehearsals for the House in Bali project from mid-May until its premier. Alit began rehearsing with Gamelan Salukat every day, a full month before the American musicians arrived. Rehearsals were two to three hours long and gradually became longer as the performance date drew nearer. Alit told me that he had been staying up late into the night listening to a MIDI realization of the score trying to catch the subtle changes in rhythm and to locate points of repetition. In the early rehearsals, he occasionally appeared frazzled as he worked to convey Ziporyn’s score from the transcriptions he had made into Balinese shorthand notation. The process appeared arduous, but once the ensemble knew the material, they executed the music with both precision and panache.
New challenges arose once the American musicians arrived. They arrived about two weeks before the premier. While the American musicians did not have to struggle to memorize their parts, there was the added complication of coordinating tempi and dynamics with the Balinese ensemble. But these issues took far less time to resolve than when rehearsing the Balinese group alone. Rehearsals grew to as long as six hours just prior to the show. Additionally, the Balinese were expected to perform double duty acting as Balinese villagers in the construction of McPhee’s house. It was an arduous process. However, from those I spoke to, (mostly young musicians entering college), they greatly enjoyed the experience. The older musicians that I spoke to were also grateful though more ambivalent.

Some have argued that Ziporyn’s opera presents a “meta-representation,” of its own subject matter by reproducing, “the ideologies and conditions it appeared to critique.”\(^{24}\) In his reading, the conditions through which the opera appropriates Balinese arts and Balinese artists reproduce unfavorable power asymmetries. McGraw describes the Balinese artists and musicians in Ziporyn’s opera as a mere “labor-force” rather than engaged artistic and aesthetic participants. He critiques the work as non-collaborative, citing several interactions with Balinese members of the project who were under the impression that Dewa Alit was co-writing the music with Ziporyn. He also interviews several performers who speak in negative albeit general terms (not specifically tied to the opera) about the continued Western “theft” and objectification of Balinese culture. In other contexts, Alit is particularly vocal about the detrimental effects of tourism on the Balinese arts. In numerous personal conversations, he has spoken to me of the ways in which Balinese musicians are tacitly influenced by touristic tastes. For Alit and other artists, the lines between cultural tourism and culture for its own sake are increasingly blurred.

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\(^{24}\) Andrew McGraw p.c.
While it is true that the Balinese musicians worked longer and harder hours than the American musicians, they were far from passive recipients of neocolonial orders. Even prior to Ziporyn’s arrival, there were lively discussions and (sometimes tense) debates between Alit and the other musicians regarding Ziporyn’s musical intentions. There was one particular issue involving a scene with Balinese gender wayang.\footnote{I Gusti Komin Darta p.c.} The musicians I Gusti Komin Darta and his younger brother, I Gusti Ketut Muliawan worked hard to interpret Ziporyn’s MIDI realization but in the end chose to arrange fragments of traditional repertoire unique to their area.\footnote{I Gusti Komin Darta p.c.} Through these artistic decisions the Balinese musicians voluntarily took ownership of the project. There was no threat of force or added material gain. Moreover they acted out of a genuine interest in the project and an appreciation for the craft of music making.

McGraw’s comments strive to make a broader point concerning contemporary intercultural performance. He ponders whether or not such situations are surmountable given their current political and commercial configurations. As these issues stem from deeply embedded historical and ideological circumstances, they are by no means particular to Ziporyn’s opera. This critique could equally apply to projects by Tenzer, Vitale and others.

In fact, Tenzer has encountered similar criticisms from Balinese artists themselves. Tenzer’s \textit{Puser Belah} was the first of three intercultural compositions aimed at creating a “pure fusion” between Western classical and Balinese music. During the summer 2006, I witnessed the rehearsal process for the second piece in his triptych, \textit{Buk Katah}. One evening, I was sitting on a \textit{bale} (elevated platform in a Balinese house) listening to a lively conversation between Tenzer and several members of the Dewa family, the founders and hosts of \textit{Sanggar Cudamani}. After rehearsal, Tenzer and three \textit{Cudamani} musicians were working on difficult four-part, interlocking drum rhythm. After some strained and
unsuccessful attempts at the passage, they took a break. The mood turned light with casual banter over coffee and cigarettes. Dewa Sugi, the younger brother of Cudamani’s music director I Dewa Putu Berata was also present. He had a stern look on his face. He spoke quickly and in a coarse tone to the four of them. Interpreting his comments as a joke, the musicians all burst out laughing. Tenzer on the other hand, looked less amused. I asked Tenzer what he had said. Tenzer responded, “He’s saying that because of pieces like mine, Balinese people feel pressured into writing music that is increasingly complex. He doesn’t like it and I don’t think he’s joking.” Sugi’s face remained deadpan.

Despite the guise of sarcasm, Sugi’s point was not lost on Tenzer. In fact, it merely clarified a point he already found quite troubling. Later in response to Ziporyn’s blog entry Tenzer writes,

“\[quote]
I too have obsessed about the power asymmetry and felt that awkward sense of being unjustifiably puffed up. For me it was especially acute around money issues because over the past decade I have been able to bring off some fairly expensive projects there, and to pay people well to play my modernist, ultra-complex music. People find it curious and rewarding to learn but only the most hardcore musicians love it. Nevermind that I made the musicians into mercenaries for my compositions. I was haunted by a hollowness, a sense of unjustifiable privilege that detracted from the value of my art.” (Tenzer “re: Notes After an Opera” 9/20/2009)
\[quote]

Is an idealized partnership between Balinese and non-Balinese artists possible while pervasive cultural and economic asymmetries lay between them? What would be an ethical solution? Would it be worth setting up a “dialectical system where both parties hold veto power at each aesthetic decision?”26 Such an arrangement would yield entirely new works with vastly different aesthetic and conceptual trajectories than those envisioned by Tenzer and Ziporyn. Ethnomusicologist Sarah Weiss notes necessarily involving “native” collaborators in such a way can easily create further epistemological problems. In doing so,

\[footnote]
26 McGraw p.c.
there is an inherent risk of positioning authenticity as a superficial, “cloak of protection from political attack” (Weiss 2009: 218).

It is worth mentioning that high-profile gigs (like the House in Bali and Puser Belah projects) are rare commodities for aspiring Balinese artists. From 2007 through 2008, I lived and worked with artists at Sanggar Ceraken at the home of Balinese composer, I Made Subandi. Many of the Ceraken musicians are students at Bali’s performing arts high school (SMKI), and the conservatory (ISI). During many of our post-rehearsal and late-night conversations, they would speak with clear admiration of Dewa Alit’s prowess as an international composer. Also, with a bittersweet mixture of appreciation and jealousy they would speak of the skill and opportunities afforded to his Pengosekan/Ubud area musicians (primarily those in Cudamani and Salukat). I asked one musician, I Wayan Gede Sukaryana (Balot) why he thought new music from the Pengosekan area was so unique and captivating. He said, that in Bali there are literally hundreds of talented Balinese artists who are as talented as those in Cudamani. The problem is that these artists do not have the same exposure to international culture and ideas. For Balot, these experiences are invaluable both in terms of local prestige (Balinese cultural capital) as well as providing artists with a diversified and cosmopolitan aesthetic palette. While such exposure may not be garnered through equitable, or in some cases enviable economic means, there are clearly, intangible benefits to becoming a “Balinese musical mercenary.”

**Fusion of The Absurd: Humor, Irony, and The Second Generation of Balinese Fusion Music**

As mentioned above, the renewed skepticism towards the intercultural encounter can be read as a critique of multiculturalist ideology. These works operate as a critique of the
paradoxical injunction of simultaneous identification and alienation. This structure presents fusion (also authenticity) as an unattainable object of desire, the pursuit of which inevitably ends in disaster. In more pragmatic terms, it also arises as a direct response to mutual anxieties regarding the economics and the ethics of intercultural interaction.

Both Tenzer’s and Ziporyn’s work present large-scale examples of an increasingly pervasive theme in North American compositions for Balinese gamelan. Recently works by younger composers have addressed issues of cultural and economic asymmetry through various aesthetic means. On the whole, these dramatizations portray intercultural interaction in less violent terms than their predecessors. However they nevertheless maintain, and in some cases highlight a fundamental incommensurability between Balinese and North American cultures.

The following section examine recent works by young North American composers, most of whom are in their 20s and 30s. These artists represent, a “second” generation of Balinese fusion music. Born in the seventies and eighties, these artists were raised in an era of musical pluralism. As such, many of them readily identify with Balinese music as “theirs.” For some of these composers, music by Vitale, Tenzer, and Ziporyn was as much a part of their Balinese music education as Balinese traditional music. As a result, these works frame the fusion encounter in markedly different terms.

These works still express an insurmountable difference between Balinese and American cultures; however the impossibility of the multiculturalist mandate is critiqued satirically through the use of humor, irony, and pastiche. I would argue this intentional aesthetic distanciation from “Balineseness,” is an attempt to satirize and in a sense disavow the desire to, “go native” through musical fusion.
From an ethnographic perspective, this group of artists is arguably the most difficult to describe. I have known and worked with most of them as peers and collaborators. We have played Balinese music and performed our own works on the same concert programs. For these reasons, it is particularly difficult for me to distinguish between their intentions and my own ideological agenda. This is true, to an extent, with all of the works discussed. In all cases, I seek to read and interpret these works through philosophical lenses, which may be idiosyncratic. However, with these artists, it has been particularly difficult to distinguish their ideas from mine. If I occasionally appear overly reflexive (narcissistic), it is out of an effort to delineate what will undoubtedly remain murky a degree of separation between their artistic intentions and my own interpretative aims.

Andrew McGraw composed *Sikut Sanga* in 2009-2010. The work was written for the New York-based *gamelan* ensemble, *Dharma Swara* and premiered at the Bali Arts Festival in 2010. The performance context was unusual for a North American *gamelan* group. That year, *Dharma Swara* was the first-ever non-Balinese group to perform as part of the *Parade Gong Kebyar* (*Gong Kebyar Exhibition*). I was present throughout the yearlong rehearsal process, both played and danced for the group and also helped write one of the four pieces.

Composed for a *mebarung* (a competitive, “battle of the bands” format) between *Dharma Swara* and a Balinese group representing the Balinese regency of *Jembrana*, McGraw’s work explicitly calls attention to the non-Balinese identities of the American

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27 In prior years, this event has been billed as the, *Lomba Gong Kebyar* or “*Gong Kebyar Competition*.” While concerts are still held in the competitive *mebarung* format, they are no longer formally adjudicated. These on-going concerts are part of the larger *Pesta Kesenian Bali* (Bali Arts Festival). It was reported in *Dharma Swara’s* promotional materials and in subsequent profiles in the New York Times and on NPR that the group was the first ever non-Balinese *gamelan* to performance at the Arts Festival. This is not entirely accurate. To my knowledge, the first non-Balinese, Balinese gamelan group to perform at the Arts Festival was *Sekar Jaya* in 1985. Since then dozens of gamelan groups from the US, Japan, England and elsewhere have performed at the Bali Arts Festival. However, *Dharma Swara* was the first of these groups to perform in the prestigious, *Gong Kebyar* Exhibition.
performers by quoting well-known American songs, like “New York, New York” and the theme from the television game show “The Price Is Right”. Performed for a Balinese audience that was largely unaware of the source material, these overtly non-Balinese references create a sense of distance between the American performers and the audience. This “inside” joke was then contrasted with an “outside” joke by featuring a “mash-up” of several famous Balinese works joined in comedic succession. While much of the Balinese audience was cognizant of the quotations and its comedic effect. The extent to which these fragments satirized our as gamelan wannabes was lost to the majority Balinese individuals I spoke to. As such, the satire was intended primarily for the group itself, perhaps to shield us from taking ourselves too seriously.

While Tenzer entertained the notion of a “perfect fusion,” McGraw overtly denies the possibility of such commensurability. He recognizes the desire to fuse, but dismisses it as an ill-fated illusion. While McGraw is himself a scholar of Balinese music, he has described scholarly knowledge as a type of “cultural autism.” (Interview 2/8/2011). Even with extensive fieldwork and a so-called “deep knowledge” of Balinese musical tradition, scholars produce such knowledge for limited contexts and are thus unable grasp the whole. In adopting this position, he muses that foreign players of Balinese music are doomed to a necessarily incomplete (and also hilariously awkward) picture of things. The use of parody in Sikut Sanga is a synecdochic critique of “going native.” He is reacting to the celebratory discourses of multiculturalism, which presume that contemporary artists are disengaged from the bonds of neocolonialist structures. As such McGraw’s work highlights the naiveté of western artists and scholars, who claim to know Balinese, “sound structure” on its own terms.

28 Some of the pieces quoted were, Topeng Tua, Baris, Sekar Jepun, Panyembrama, Legong Lasem, Cendrawasih, Tabuh Pisan, and Kebyar Legong.
In looking at McGraw’s work, there appears to be a palpable, ontological shift moving from the “first” generation of Balinese fusion to the “second.” This may be read as analogous to an intellectual climate shift from structuralism to post-structuralism. While structuralist models espouse cultural relativism, they also pessimistically rely on cultural determinism. This model suggests that Balinese and American individuals originate from closed and mutually exclusive cultural systems. As such, fusion fails because of the lack of commutability between these autonomous structures. However, McGraw frames the failure of fusion differently. Through irony, he emphasizes the gaps, the void of meaning in intercultural interpretation. *Sikut Sanga* may be read as an attempt to distance oneself from the desire to become Balinese by mocking one’s attempts to do so.

His use of irony critiques the fallacy of multiculturalism through its staunch assertions of, “un-Balineseness.” As such he tacitly endorses the existence of an ineffable and authentic Balinese cultural identity. With cases of “cultural autism,” there is an untraversable gap of meaning, which is not present for the Balinese. It suggests that there is a culturally holistic position in those who are “non-autistic.” These are the Balinese, “insiders.” This Balinese *authenticity*, ineffable to us non-Balinese wannabes, thus serves as the “object cause of desire.” In this way, he emphasizes the function of Balineseness as an impossible goal, highlighting the persistence of the gap rather than the chaos of the encounter. The fundamental character of the encounter does not change in moving from Tenzer’s to McGraw’s work. However, McGraw’s work illustrates a significant alteration in its dynamics by emphasizing the distance between the subject and their desire.
Figure 3: *Gamelan Dharma Swara* at the Bali Arts Festival, July 2010.

*Pastiche* and stylistic quotation is also used in works by composers, Paddy Sandino and Eric Vandal. Both Sandino and Vandal encountered Balinese music while studying music composition in college. Like *Sikut Sanga*, these works satirize the gap between Bali and North America. However, they also use stylistic quotation to suggest affective bridges between them. With their familiar, and even irreverent approaches to Balinese *gamelan* composition, these works present another spin on the subject’s relationship to desire. By incorporating musics like afrobeat and heavy metal into their work with a full awareness of its potential to evoke the naïve sentiments of mid-20th century multiculturalism, they express ambivalence towards the notion of “pure” fusion. As such, these works are neither pure affinity, nor pure critique. They realize that their efforts to merge Balinese music with other forms may not necessarily yield an idealized mixture of both traditions. But they do not
satirize the absurdity of such unions. Instead, they appear content to enjoy these juxtapositions as pleasures both guilty and its sublime.

Sandino describes his affinity for Balinese music emerging from its apparent similarities to techno and funk, which were already firmly embedded in his musical consciousness.\(^{29}\) I have known Sandino since 2004. We were musicians together at the Calarts gamelan, *Burat Wangi* and spent our first summer in Bali as roommates. In 2006-2007, we were classmates in ethnomusicology at the University of British Columbia. That summer, we were both invited to compose new works for *gamelan semarandana*,\(^ {30}\) by Balinese musician I Wayan Sudirana director of *Gamelan Cenik Wayah*. We each rehearsed our pieces over a three-week time period. Among its many influences, his piece *Check This Out* interfaces aesthetics from the Balinese genres *tabuh kreasi baru*, *lelambatan* and Balinese *musik kontemporer*. However, the final section of the piece displays distinct references to another deeply regarded music of his youth, Yoruban afrobeat. The irony of these juxtapositions is not lost to him. In fact, he openly describes such references as a kind of, “failure” on his part. When asked whether or not he tries to compose in a Balinese traditional milieu, he responded by saying, “I’m pretty much always trying to do that…and knowing that I’m failing. But at the very least I try to do something that’s not horrifying to a Balinese audience.” (Sandino Interview 2/19/12)

Ironically, it was precisely this “failure,” that yielded *Check This Out*’s most iconic moment. Following a long melodic, *pengawak* which utilizes both drumming and melodic elaboration styles taken from Balinese *lelambatan* repertoire, the piece shifts predictably to a faster tempo, to its *pengecet* section. However mid-*pengecet*, the tempo unexpectedly drifts

\(^{29}\) Sandino p.c.

\(^{30}\) A type of Balinese gamelan, which is organologically similar to *gong kebyar*. However, *gamelan semarandana* uses a seven-tone diatonic tuning system. See McGraw 1999, Vitale 2002.
downward to an easy-going 75 beats per minute. Three syncopated and rhythmically interlocking parts are introduced in the penyacah, calung, and jegogan creating an unmistakably funky bass-line. As the mood settles in, Sandino staggers the entrances of the kantilan, pemade, and reyong. While the pemade and kantilan play syncopated melodies meant to invoke funk guitar riffs, the reyong part exhibits some “Balinese,” characteristics with a figuration of interlocking byots\(^ {31} \) reminiscent of kecak (interlocking vocal chant).

Figure 4: Sandino’s “Check This Out”(2007), funk excerpt

The next big moment comes towards the very end of the piece. After the funk interlude, the music resumes its formerly frenetic tempo. There is a sudden break at which point the musicians yell, “Aaaaaw! Check This Out!” in a rousing unison before returning to the final kebyar-like fanfare. At the time, many of Cenik Wayah’s musicians were still in high school or just entering college. The oldest members were still five or six years younger than

\(^ {31} \) A stroke where the each reyong player strikes two pitches and immediately dampens them.
Sandino and I. These younger musicians, many of whom listen to pop, rock and metal in their spare time connected with the music in a visceral way. In rehearsal, the musicians would frequently cheer, hoot, and holler after playing. During the second performance one of the lead musicians, ugal player Anak Agung Bagus Krishna, rose to his feet during the final aggressive notes of the kebyar, jumping as his mallet hit each key with explosive authority. This uncharacteristically emotional exuberance struck me as a stark contrast to the uniform and often strictly choreographed movements (gaya) of most groups in similar concert settings. With its curious mixture of Balinese, funk and metal aesthetics, Check This Out drew spontaneous applause from Balinese audiences at various points. The group also continued to perform Check This Out for tourists during their regular weekly performances. At its second performance, Cenik Wayah’s owner and main sponsor planned a surprise by timing fireworks to go off at the precise moment when the musicians yelled, “Check This Out.” Despite its positive response from the audience, Sandino was non-plussed by the aesthetic intrusion. Not only did the fireworks betray the grit of the source material, it also distorted the ambiguous irony such stylistic quotations are meant to convey. As in the responses to Sikut Sanga’s mash-up, Cok Wah’s gesture implied that irony had gone entirely unnoticed, or was at least dramatically misinterpreted.

While ironic distanciation may be one way of forfeiting identification with Balineseness, perhaps the pursuit of authenticity is a moot point. Even if he were interested in fusing with, “The Balinese,” what exactly would they be fusing with? Sandino is white, half-Irish, half-Italian man from Las Vegas writing Yoruban Funk music for a group of Balinese teenagers. Is it appropriate to say that he or any other single composer represents the aesthetic concerns of Western culture? Or is his music moreover an avenue to micro-musical expression?
Rather than operating in dialogue with explicit ideology, it would appear that his work intersects with Balinese music on the level of affect. Brian Massumi emphasizes affect’s autonomy from the logic of ideology. Affect is an immediate impingement on the senses, which precludes signification and is thus not confined to “semantic or semiotic” order (Massumi 2002: 24). Affect does not communicate through dialectical processes of logic or causation but through “intensities” which are registered on a visceral, gut level. Despite a myriad of confusions concerning stylistic quotation and the presence or absence of irony, it would appear that *Check This Out*, connected affectively with both the Balinese audiences and performers. However because such connections are “pre-symbolic” they are nearly impossible to convey with any specificity. And so through gestures, like Cok Wah’s fireworks, these meaningful affective connections may become obscured by an impenetrable surface of differences.

Eric Vandal’s piece, *Jembatan Méta l* exhibits a similar approach to Sandino’s. The piece was written for the Montreal-based gamelan group, *Giri Kedaton*. *Giri Kedaton* has relatively young leadership for a North American group. The group’s directors are in their 30s and have been directing the ensemble since they were in their mid-twenties. The musicians’ themselves are also young as most North American gamelan groups go. The group seems to attract younger musicians in a transitional phase of life between finishing college and embarking on more permanent career plans. This is one reason why the group has been particularly open to composing Balinese gamelan fusion works.

In 2008, they released an album of new works for Balinese gamelan titled, *Projet Gamelan X*. Nearly all of the works were composed by *Giri Kedaton* musicians with at least four years experience with Balinese music. The only non-original piece is a cover of

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32 Vandal interview 1/19/2012.
Radiohead’s, “Kid A.” Many of the tracks combine Balinese *gamelan* with rock band, including drums, electric bass, keyboards, and guitars with heavy distortion.

_Jembatan Métal_ (literally, metal bridge) makes the most of Balinese *gamelan*’s aesthetic and affective connections to heavy metal music. These alignments are made more apparent through a mixed instrumentation of Balinese *gamelan* and rock band. For Vandal, the association between Balinese *gamelan* and heavy metal has been apparent since he first began studying Balinese music in late-90s. He credits these musical features as one of Balinese music’s key attractions. The energy, tempo, and intensity inherent to heavy metal make natural transitions to Balinese music and instrumentation. Rhythmic breaks (angsel), virtuosic running lines, and loud dynamics all provide meaningful substance for Vandal’s aesthetic “bridge.” In fact, Vandal intentionally borrows motives from several Balinese traditional pieces including *Teruna Jaya* and re-castes them in a heavy metal context. On the surface these blend into an integrated aesthetic and musical whole. However for listeners familiar with traditional Balinese music, it provides some funny and perhaps ironic moments. For example, the slower second section of the piece labeled, _pengawak_ features a slow and lyrical melody for the pemade and kantilan parts. Such figurations are common in the slower sections of _tari penyambutan_ (so-called, “welcome dances”). This particular melody bears close resemblance to parts of the welcome dance, _Pendet_. Welcome dances are typically danced by young women and exude a particularly refined, feminine grace. However, in the context of _Jembatan Metal_, the melody is endowed with the menace of a sinister funeral dirge.

Both Vandal and Sandino’s works explore certain aesthetic associations between Balinese music and music’s that they readily identify as theirs. When asked if such the desire to fuse such aesthetics was born of a desire relate to Balinese music, both were content to
admit that Balinese music has already infected their own musical sensibilities to the degree that Balinese aesthetics and “their own” aesthetics were indistinguishable. This is perhaps also the case for all of the composers discussed here. However, they may not all be equally comfortable saying so. Thus it appears that this discrepancy in perception is at least partially, generational.

*Gamelan, Machinery and Sci-Fi: Balinese Music as Primitive Future*

“By the late twentieth century, our time, a mythic time, we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs. The cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics. The cyborg is a condensed image of both imagination and material reality, the two joined centres structuring any possibility of historical transformation.” (Haraway 1991: 150)

In the last part of this chapter we will look at one of the more idiosyncratic incarnations of Balinese fusion music in North America. All of these works create an analogy between Balinese instruments and machinery interfaced with the aesthetics of American science fiction or “geek” culture. These works create a dense web of associations between the American industrial revolution, utopic and dystopic narratives of paradise and paradise lost, and neo-tribal techno-cultures. In particular the *Gamelan Elek Trika and Gamelatron* projects take this metaphor to its extreme with innovative and hybridized, electro-acoustic ensembles. *Gamelatron* and the bay-area music group *Gamelan X* are both regular fixtures at the annual “Burning Man” festival and thus interface the Balinese aesthetics with the aesthetics of neo-tribal, hippie and steam-punk sub-cultures.

*Gamelan Elek Trika*

While many of these projects are recent, the association between Balinese music and science fiction is not. Evan Ziporyn’s MIT-based Balinese *gamelan, Gamelan Galak Tika*
may have started the trend in the 1990s. While the words “galak” and “tika” have Balinese meanings (a crude but literal translation would be “gamelan crazy time”), the name more aptly evokes sci-fi geek culture with its allusions to the television show, “Battlestar Galactica,” as well as with its former tagline, “intergalactic gamelan.” The group has maintained its connections to sci-fi culture through a myriad of projects incorporating Balinese gamelan, electric and electro-acoustic instruments as well as robots and gamelan-shaped MIDI controllers. Recently, several current and former members of Gamelan Galak Tika, collaborated on the construction of a fully synthetic Balinese gamelan dubbed, Gamelan Elek Trika. Nearly complete, the ensemble consists of seven instruments (four gangsas, gong, kendang, and a full reyong). The developers include Laurel Pardue, composer Christine Southworth, Andrew and Matt Boch as well as Alex Rigopulos (founder of Harmonix, the game video company responsible for Rockband and Dance Central). The designers are all current or former members of Galak Tika. The instruments themselves are constructed using “force sensitive sensors, piezos, and capacitive sensing,” which are encased in a synthetic resin shaped either as keys or as bossed gongs. The information is then fed into a single laptop which designer, Laurel Pardue describes as a metaphor for the singularity of conscious that group’s strive for in Balinese gamelan performance (Pardue et al. 2011: 5). An additional performer is able to alter the information coming from the various instruments (including velocity, pitch, timbre, as well as change patches) through Ableton Live software. According to the developers,

“MIDI enables a massive new sound palette with new scales beyond the quirky traditional tuning and non-traditional sounds. It also allows simplified transcription for an aurally taught tradition. Significantly, it reduces the transportation challenges of a previously large and heavy ensemble, creating opportunities for wider audiences to experience Gong Kebyar's enchanting sound. True to the spirit of oneness in Balinese music, as one of the first large all-MIDI ensembles, Elek Trika challenges performers to trust silent instruments and develop an understanding of highly intricate and interlocking music not through the sound of the individual, but through the sound of the whole.” (Ibid: 1)
There is a long-standing tradition of tinkering in American experimental music, and it would seem that *Gamelan Elek Trika* is another example (Dewar 2009). Many of the design innovations in *Gamelan Elek Trika* are addressed at specific issues encountered when trying to perform traditional Balinese gamelan in the United States. As such, the ensemble can be read as an attempt to “localize,” Balinese music. In getting rid of the “quirky traditional tuning,” the ensemble is able to integrate into other performance contexts. The ensemble is essentially a large set of gamelan-inspired MIDI controllers, which means that ensemble could use instruments to trigger nearly any sound imaginable, from gamelan sonorities, to percussively triggered musique concrete. So far, there have only been two pieces written for the electronic gamelan. *Super Collider* was composed in 2010 by Christine Southworth. The piece makes use of the multiple patches, including vocal effects from Balinese artists mimicking the sounds of Balinese instruments.33 Balinese composer and frequent guest artist at MIT, I Dewa Ketut Alit currently has plans to compose for the ensemble. Also the lightness and size of the instruments makes the ensemble more mobile, potentially making formerly cumbersome gigs more feasible.

Some aspects of *Elek Trika*’s design are meant to preserve or reinterpret perceptions of Balinese tradition. Pardue discusses how musicians must develop an understanding of, “the whole,” rather than concentrate on the sound of the individual musicians. Because these instruments do not produce any sound of their own, the material played by performers may be dramatically different from emerging sonorities. There is also as much as 5 milliseconds latency between instrumental attacks and the emergent sounds. As such, musicians must focus on and adapt to the totality of the sound rather than their pattern of percussive attacks.

33 The other was written by Brian Baumbusch.
While this may seem like a “schizophrenic,” (after Schaeffer) distancing of sound from its sound source, the developers understand this as analogous to the, “oneness” of Balinese gamelan. With words like, “oneness,” and “enchanted,” their description recollects colonial portrayals of Balinese music but in a radically different context and with radically different intentions. The term “oneness” is particularly evocative of modernist conceptions of Balinese music that emphasize the notion of egalitarian “unity,” as an extension of the colonial understandings Balinese social structure (Wakeling 2010: 48).

Despite these associations, it would be overly determinist to describe the aesthetics of Gamelan Elek Trika as Neo-orientalist. The Neo-orientalism thesis might apply if the group were purporting to represent Balinese tradition, if they were performing “on behalf” of the Balinese as such. While many of these musicians have spent some time in Bali, the vast majority of their Balinese music experience is located in Boston, MA. Gamelan Elek Trika is meant to evoke a sentiment unique to their cultural and geographic background. Evan Ziporyn corroborates this sentiment. He positions their concerted focus on new music as a conscious decision not to emulate “Balineseness.” Thus it is their desire to forge a new tradition that enables the project to be a hybrid. It allows the gamelan, a set of instruments with a clear iconicity of place, to become effectively deterritorialized. While they make references to certain aspects of Balinese tradition, it is unclear whether these aesthetics refer to specific performance practices, elements of culture, or both. Balineseness is less of a model and more a point of departure or a source of inspiration. While some Bali-philes may balk at the description of Balinese tunings as “quirky,” the sentiment shows these individuals are creatively adapting what they enjoy of the gamelan aesthetic to suit their own needs without claiming to improve the tradition as it stands in Bali. They are not seeking to improve
Balinese performance practice; they are merely creating a *gamelan* which more readily aligns with theirs.

*Elek Trika*’s engagement with neo-colonial tropes recalls Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of, “plateau”\(^{34}\).” According to Massumi,

“A plateau is reached when circumstances combine to bring an activity to a pitch of intensity that is not automatically dissipated by climax. The heightening of energies is sustained long enough to leave a kind of afterimage of its dynamism that can be reactivated, or injected into other activities.” (Massumi 1987: xiv).

These artists appropriate constructs on Balineseness, which were generated during the intensity of the colonial era. As it stands, these constructions of Balinese culture have been extensively transformed as they were activated, reactivated, and re-reactivated throughout the 20\(^{th}\) century. While it is the intensity (in terms of cultural and political might) which has left these tropes active, with its dissipations and subsequent reimagining they are too vestigial to import the kinds of social relationships and connotations of violence that terms, like “Orientalist,” or “neo-colonial” might imply.

**Gamelatron**

While connections between Balinese *gamelan* and science fiction may have begun with *Galak Tika* in the early 1990s, they are becoming increasingly popular in the 21\(^{st}\) century. This is evident in the emergence and success of the composer, programmer, and visual artist Taylor Kuffner, inventor of the “*Gamelatron*.” Taylor had just spent four years living in Indonesia. He began as a “Dharma Siswa” recipient at Indonesian Arts Institute (ISI)

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\(^{34}\) A term, which in itself is an homage to Gregory Bateson, Margaret Mead, and the Balinese. Bateson uses the term “plateau” to describe the non-climactic libidinal economy of the Balinese which is based on studies by Mead concerning “genital teasing.” (see chap. 2)
in Solo\textsuperscript{35}. During this time he was first exposed and inspired by Balinese music. Whilst still living in Solo, he made several trips to Bali, and eventually moved there. In Bali, he studied Balinese artists like I Wayan Sadra,\textsuperscript{36} and I Made Senin learning traditional and contemporary music for \textit{gong kebyar}, and \textit{semar pegulingan} repertoires. Kuffner describes being particularly drawn to the sounds and cultural aesthetics of \textit{gamelan selonding}. Over the years, he gradually accumulated many instruments, a nearly complete \textit{gong kebyar}, as well as \textit{gender wayang} and \textit{selonding}. Eventually, a motorbike injury forced him to move back to the United States.

The \textit{Gamelatron} project began during a 2008 residency with the League of Electronic Urban Musical Robots (LEMUR). The \textit{Gamelatron} is comprised of robotically activated mallets which are attached to the keys and gongs Kuffner’s Balinese instruments. The instruments may be set on loops or may be programmed to perform fixed compositions. Kuffner is also able to program the \textit{Gamelatron} to “perform” for indefinite periods of time. For this reason, the \textit{Gamelatron} is more frequently used for sound installations rather than concerts.

Since 2008, the \textit{Gamelatron} has been seen in galleries throughout the world. He has received numerous commissions, as well as reviews in the New York Times, The Guardian, and in Reuters. Two of his installations are currently on display in New Orleans and San Francisco. He was also recently invited to do an installation for an upcoming TED project. However despite his success, Taylor’s \textit{Gamelatron} project has met mixed reactions from the American \textit{gamelan} community. He speaks of being harshly turned away from several universities with a strong history of supporting \textit{gamelan} performance. One university told

\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Dharma Siswa} is an Indonesian government sponsored scholarship that provides a visa (KITAS), enrollment fees and a monthly stipend to study at an Indonesian university.

\textsuperscript{36} There is different Sadra, who was a famed scholar and composer of Indonesian \textit{musik kontemporer}. For more on that Sadra see McGraw 2005.
him that his project “had nothing to offer our gamelan community.” According to Kuffner, he has been given the “cold shoulder” by a number of American gamelan groups and universities on numerous occasions.

Taylor’s case is interesting because it reveals something of a political infrastructure within the North American gamelan community. While gamelan purists may take offense to his removal of the “human element,” it is hardly a more radical experiment than the kinds of projects being done in nearby Boston. In fact, it is the exact inverse of Gamelan Elek Trika. While Gamelatron involves robots playing “authentic” Balinese instruments, Gamelan Elek Trika involves “authentic” humans playing synthetic instruments. A possible point of contention for some scholars, might be his appropriation of Balinese Hindu aesthetics as presented through his work. Early in the project’s history he concocted his own fantasy mythology concerning the “origin” of the Gamelatron which borrowed from certain colonial tropes about ancient musics and their relationship to “spirituality” and “oneness.” And even when describing the history of Balinese gamelan music itself, he tends to conflate Javanese mythological narratives with ethnographic information. While these mythological aspects are commonly referenced in Indonesian scholarship, it also glosses over the contemporary construction of gamelan “tradition,” post-independence.

As an example, Kuffner made frequent references to the Pangider Bhuwana, during his interview. The Pangider Bhuwana is a Balinese cosmological diagram, which locates the individual tones of a given scale with their associated directions, colors, and deities. Contemporary knowledge on the subject is often attributed to a Balinese lontar (palm-leaf manuscript) known as the Prakempa, which is one of only two known Balinese manuscripts

37 Kuffner p.c.
38 Christine Southworth may have pioneered the idea with her “Ensemble Robot.” See http://www.ensemblerrobot.org/
39 See Tenzer 2000: 36
to contain any information regarding music (the Aji Gurnita is another). Since the mid-eighties, one particular edition of the Prakempa has been particularly influential in constructing a cosmological history for Balinese music. In particular, I Made Bandem’s 1986 Indonesian translation of the Prakempa, has become a standard text in many Indonesian universities. According to Andrew McGraw,

“The power/knowledge contained within the (prakempa) lontar is multiplied as it is formalized and co-opted by the state system. An analogy could be made between Foucault’s institutionalization of discipline in modern societies and the institutionalization of mystical, historical works in the state conservatory system as exemplified by Bandem’s edition of the Prakempa.” (McGraw 2005: 96-97)

One could fault Kuffner’s version of gamelan history for its uncritical adoption of Bandem’s prakempa as he glosses over the politics of its canonization. As such, the Gamelatron, fetishizes the religious and “sacred” aspects of gamelan performance. It prioritizes gamelan music’s religious connotations over its equally valid secular meanings.

During the Gamelatron’s first performances, Taylor would read a fictional origin story of the Gamelatron and its instruments. According to story, the Gamelatron comes from a distant future, where humans have evolved beyond their bodies. These beings discover ancient gamelan instruments as remnants of human civilization. However, without bodies they are unable to reconstruct the music. Thus the Gamelatron is built to recreate the spiritual wisdom of ancient humans and may even be utilized as a path to enlightenment.40

Even a cursory analysis of this text can locate several “Orientalist” tropes. Kuffner’s evocation of gamelan’s “ancientness,” recalls Victor Grauer’s treatment of contemporary pygmy music as, “echoes from our forgotten ancestors” (Grauer 2006). Again, we might argue that Taylor’s bond with Balinese music is deeply affective. The spiritual mythology of Balinese music, regardless of its politics or its historical veracity is what has struck Taylor to

40 Kuffner p.c.
be of prime significance in Balinese music. In truth, Taylor’s interpretation of Balinese music as inherently spiritual, and his reliance on recently reconstructed mythological narratives are not drastically different from the amorphous and colloquial spirituality attributed to Balinese music in contemporary touring productions like Cudamani’s *Odalan Bali* and *Bamboo to Bronze*. However, these productions are consistently praised for their ethnographic realism as well as their incorporation of “postmodern” aesthetics. It would appear, that to some degree, Taylor’s feelings of exclusion result partially from his status as an, “outsider” in the American *gamelan* scene.

In each of these examples we have seen how idiosyncratic the aesthetic universe of Balinese fusion really is. While Vandal and Sandino seek to draw out the funk and metal in Balinese music, Kuffner is struck by sublime and sacred sonorities. For him, Balinese music is a spiritual means to transcendence. But what happens when these highly personalized, micro-musical approaches to Balinese music cross paths? This recently occurred when the San Francisco-based *Gamelan X* challenged *Gamelatron* to a *mebarung* at the 2011 Burning Man Festival.

*Gamelan X* began as a Balinese fusion group focusing on *kecak* music. They have recorded several CDs and performed a successful tour to Bali in the summer of 2005, where they performed a fusion version of the *Ramayana* combining elements of *kecak*, *beleganjur*, jazz, experimental music, acrobats, singers and actors. More recently they have begun collaborating with Balinese artists including Cudamani’s, I Dewa Putu Berata. Since 2005, they have performed every year at the annual Burning Man festival. This year, Taylor Kuffner raised over six thousand dollars to construct a temple for the *Gamelatron* at Burning Man. Kuffner’s temple, incorporated the *Gamelatron* into its architecture providing a space for sand-weary Burning Man travellers to, “chill out and meditate.”
At one point during the four-day festival, *Gamelan X* entered the temple and formally challenged *Gamelatron* to a “battle.” This gesture was meant as a light-hearted parody of the *mebarung* aesthetic where rival Balinese villages would hold musical competitions against one another. For *Gamelan X*, this competitive spirit was very much in keeping with the aesthetics of Balinese tradition, and in particular the hyper masculine, “warrior” spirit associated with *gamelan beleganjur* (Bakan 1999). However, for Kuffner this invitation was perceived as an affront to his aesthetic. For Kuffner, Balinese music is about peace, love, spirituality and transcendence and he was angered that others would impinge upon it. The result was a brief confrontation between Kuffner and *Gamelan X’s* Dan Bales.\(^{41}\) Thankfully, no blood was shed as *Gamelan X* peacefully retreated. This confrontation sheds some light on the internal fissures and contrasting interpretations of Balineseness even among North American *gamelan* practitioners, and is perhaps more evidence as to why it is not always productive to view it as a coherent musical subculture.

Even among Balinese fusion musics, *Gamelan X*, and *Gamelatron* are incredibly similar. They both integrate Balinese music within neo-primitivist, utopian sub-culture. They both wanted to bring Balinese music to Burning Man. They both have connections with techno and rave culture, and they have both spent considerable amounts of time in Bali. Yet, despite all these apparent similarities they’ve taken away drastically different interpretations of Balinese music. In Kuffner’s eyes, the music that *Gamelan X* performs is not his music. Despite being “Balinese” music they are alien to each other. Then it would seem that the world of Balinese fusion music does not spread like a tree, emanating from Bali forming branches and sub-branches throughout the globe. It is more chaotic than that. These are

\(^{41}\) Sandino p.c.
nearly random events forming spontaneous associations partially with and partially in 
opposition, and partially in total ignorance or indifference to one another.

As a closing thought, I would like to briefly return to the *gamelan/machinery*
metaphor and speculate a bit as to some of its inspirations and associations. In the previous 
chapter, I discussed how ethnographies on Balinese culture and Balinese music interacted 
with the philosophical tenets of American transcendentalism and modernism. With Bali’s 
strong associations with ecologism, it would appear incongruous for Balinese culture to 
conjure such futuristic imagery. However it is possible that the “orient as utopia” as seen in 
the philosophical works of the transcendentalists and the modernists is one site of 
convergence between Bali and sci-fi. As discussed previously, both Emerson and Thoreau 
locate the spiritual liberation of the individual within Hindu philosophy. This notion of 
spiritual transcendence was picked up in the cosmological works of the modernists. It was 
also during the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century that the Hindu Inspired Meditation Movements began to 
take shape, based largely after the modernized Hindu philosophies of Swami Vivekananda. 
New Thought, Transcendental Meditation, and New Age all derive from these earlier 
movements (Williamson 2010). These Americanized “Oriental” philosophies are now 
expressed through contemporary science fiction sub-culture.

Industrialization has also been synonymous with American modernism, and 
American identity since the Industrial revolution. Thus, it perhaps only natural that 
Americans would immediately associate a large ensemble of metal percussion instruments 
working in close coordination with a factory. In 2007, Andrew McGraw musically enacted 
this analogy with his arrangement Raymond Scott’s “Powerhouse,” (also known as the 
Looney Tunes Factory Theme). The simplest answer may be that the Balinese *gamelan* with 
it’s “quirky” sounds, its alien faces carved in wood, and its abundant sheen of oddly shaped
metal resembles something from another planet. Alterity alone may be enough to explain the myriad of artistic works drawing associations between Balinese *gamelan* and sci-fi stories of futuristic enlightenment. But this is only strengthened by the decades of scholarship, and touristic discourse, which reconstruct Bali as the “last paradise.” The story of Bali is a science fiction story in and of itself. It has been described continually as a last bastion for humanity, under threat of immanent annihilation. Historians Raymond Williams (1978) and Frederic Jameson (2005) have both written on the political nature of the science fiction genre. For Jameson, science fiction offers multiple perspectives on the notion of utopia. However, generally speaking utopian politics inevitably boil down to, “a dialectic between Identity and Difference” (Jameson 2005: xiv). This could be rephrased in active terms as “identification” and “alienation, which as we have discussed are two core themes in American *gamelan* fusion projects.
CHAPTER 4: Indonesian Gamelan as Colonial Cabaret: Imperialism, Pan-Asian Identity and the Takarazuka Gamelan

Introduction

The previous two chapters looked at the ways in which North American artists imagine Balinese music and culture through fusion. In this chapter, we take a similar approach to Balinese fusion music in Japan. The Indonesian performing arts have been more or less “big in Japan” since the 1980s. The Tokyo metropolitan area in particular boasts dozens of active Balinese gamelan ensembles run through schools, universities, and private studios. And there are several more thriving Balinese music scenes in the Osaka and Okinawa regions as well. Japan has a long and complex history with Indonesia from Japan’s colonial occupation of Indonesia (1943-1945) to its present status as a premier Japanese tourist destination. Despite this extensive history, reports on Japan’s exceptionally vibrant Balinese music scene remain scant. Morishige and Nakagawa published an “informal chronology” that describes the emergence of gamelan performance through world music programs at the Kunitachi School of Music and the Tokyo University of Fine Arts (Morishige and Nakagawa 1991). Recently Benary and Deguchi compiled a list of Balinese and Javanese gamelan groups in the Japan, which include short biographical sketches and interviews with their lead musicians (Benary and Deguchi 2010). Included in their article is a condensed, English translation of Akiko Kawaguchi’s own chronology of gamelan in Japan, which was first published by the Japanese Musicological Society in 2002 (Kawaguchi 2002).

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42 Some anthropologists have speculated that Indonesia and Japan may have interacted in ancient times, but there is very little hard evidence to support this. See (Kumar 2009)
The world of Balinese gamelan in Japan is diverse. It is populated by both professionals and amateurs, as well as by academics and non-academics. Ethnographic portions of this chapter are the product of several years and more than half a dozen trips to Japan. I have been lucky enough to perform with several different groups throughout the Tokyo area during these various sojourns. While the primary goal of my first trip was to meet my would-be in-laws, I found myself immediately struck by the vibrancy and skill of the Balinese gamelan musicians I encountered. With my limited knowledge of Japanese, I was able to converse fluently in Indonesia’s national language, Bahasa Indonesia, a language that frequently doubles as the lingua franca for gamelan enthusiasts the world over. On several return trips, I gradually amassed interviews, as well as video and audio recordings from a variety of studios throughout Japan. I have also been fortunate to meet and collaborate with several Japanese artists in Bali.

These artists all express a profound and inspiring commitment to the Balinese performing arts as well as to Balinese culture in general. And they have also inspired me to study Balinese music in a “no compromises” kind of way. Most of the artists I knew routinely practiced with several different teachers at once, rehearsing as much as three to five times a day while in Bali. For me, this was a whole new level of engagement. While so many American students tend to respect Balinese musicians to a fault, many Japanese performers believe that we (as foreigners) can be legitimate, professional-grade Balinese gamelan musicians in our own right. We may not be as good as the best in Bali, we can still be good enough to call ourselves “Balinese musicians,” even if we are not Balinese. This willingness to stake a claim in Balinese music, I found to be a refreshing contrast to the comparatively fetishistic reverence of my North American compatriots.
This chapter describes the beginnings of *gamelan* music in Japan from two differing historical points. These dueling origins are important when considering current Japanese constructions of Balineseness. As such, I also approach contemporary Japanese-Balinese fusion music from two perspectives. By first examining the aesthetic and ideological influences of the Japanese colonial occupation in representations Indonesian culture, we are able to make associations and distinctions between the Bali of the colonial past and the Bali of the touristic present. Specifically, I look at Japan’s first Indonesian *gamelan* as it was incorporated into colonialist cabaret performances during the Second World War. These cabaret performances present a romanticized portrait of Japan’s colonial occupation of Indonesia from 1942 to 1945. The aesthetic and ideological tenets of these works still produce potent resonances. As such, the colonial legacy as well as Japan’s continued history of political and economic dominance over Indonesia establishes context for investigating intercultural flows between the two regions.

Secondly, we examine the emergence of Balinese *gamelan* through Japanese world music programs. From there, we look at the emergence and popularity of private Balinese music studios from the 1990s onward. These studios place less emphasis on the cultural and historical contexts of Balinese *gamelan* by focusing almost entirely on praxis. While the Japanese ability to assimilate foreign cultural practices irrespective of origins has become a negative cultural stereotype\(^\text{43}\), this essay considers the ways in which such decontextualization allows Japanese artists to imbue Balinese music with distinctly local relevances. At this point, I present case studies on several Japanese *gamelan* artists who approach the notion of Balinese music fusion in Japan from different perspectives. These varied perspectives present a commentary on the contemporary fragmentation of cultural

\(^{43}\) See Iwabuchi 2002: 58
identities by expressing a mutual attachment for and an alienation from traditional notions of “Balineseness” and “Japaneseness.” These artists feel only partially represented by both cultural ideologies. This failure to fully identify with both ideals provides inspiration for a dynamic debate on cultural identity in a globalized society. These projects range from binding Balinese Hindu elements with Japanese Shinto celebrations to more secular and idiosyncratic projects.

Iwabuchi (2002) understands many of Japan’s intra-Asian cultural interactions as a “re-centering” of global power. He illustrates how these interactions are ideologically linked to pre-World War II discourses, which claim Japanese superiority over the rest of Asia. In his analysis, he discusses how reified notions of “Japan”, “Asia,” and “the West” functioned in Japan’s discursive formation of cultural, national, and nationalist identities during the 20th Century (Iwabuchi 2002: 7). More specifically, he describes three major shifts each characterized by changes in Japan’s cultural and economic attitudes towards Asia and the West. These periods are the pre- and post World War II eras, and Japan’s economic, “return the Asia” in the early 1990s. These three historical periods also present relevant ideological contexts for the appropriation and representation of Indonesian cultural practices in Japan through the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

**Colonial Beginnings**

As seen in chapter 2, Indonesian culture has provided unending phantasmic fodder for foreign observers since the 19th century. Both their commercial power and their ability to evoke nostalgia for an imagined island utopia have been so pervasive as to warrant several in depth studies into their construction through periods of colonialism, nationalism, and cultural tourism. These works provide valuable insights. However they often describe touristic visions
of Indonesia as the object of a distinctly North American or European neo-colonialist gaze. As such, the ways in which touristic tropes are defined, appropriated, and performed in Asia remains under examined. Through the analysis of two Japanese theatrical productions created almost sixty years apart, the first part of this chapter explores aesthetic interpretations of colonial imperialism through the appropriation of Javanesque and Balinese cultural imagery, including music, dance, and religion. In Japan’s case, notions of diversity, hybridity, and cosmopolitanism were engaged in order to sustain a mono-ethnic vision of Asian cultural identity. This was used to justify imperial aspirations throughout East and Southeast Asia. In hindsight, there is an obvious paradox. In contemporary discourse, hybridity is a liminal space, a place of negotiation and ambiguity. However, Japanese hybridity during the Second World War was a reified space, which bonded Japan to other Asian peoples while simultaneously subjugating them within a multicultural hierarchy.

Although Japan’s history of overt colonial aggression has long passed, these productions illustrate ways in which artists borrow and recontextualize colonial-era tropes, in order to rearticulate Indonesian identity within the commercially recognizable framework of Japanese cultural tourism. This framework emphasizes representations of Bali and Java in the marketing of Indonesian identity to Japanese consumers. Colonial nostalgia is a prominent aesthetic in the construction and maintenance of such touristic imagery. Through the deployment of nostalgia, these works present the Japanese public with a romantic memorial of Japan’s colonial invasion by perpetuating an enduring pan-Asian mythology while simultaneously disavowing the political violence that motivated its discursive formation.

Rustom Bharucha (2006) and Matthew Cohen (2010) have applied critical theory to performance studies by describing appropriations of Asian performing arts as versions of Orientalist discourse. Cohen describes Orientalist performances are ultimately self-serving,
through the detached and ethnographically invalid representation of local traditions (Cohen 2010: 4). And while it may be argued that the plays discussed here present clear examples of intra-Asian Orientalism, the point of this essay is not to critique them as such. The primary goal of this section is to explore how each production engages with the fantasy of Indonesia (embodied in a mixture of Balinese and Javanese performing art forms) with a clear eye on its relationship to Japanese identity. In both productions, a discourse of pan-Asian unity is evoked as a means of coping with the trauma of imperialism by subsuming it within the artifice of ethno-nationalist ideology.

The first of these productions, Onnabahansen (1941), was produced and staged by the all-female Takarazuka Cabaret Company just one year prior to the Japanese invasion of Southeast Asia. This show featured Japan’s first documented performance of Indonesian music, and presents an idealized foreshadowing of colonial imperialism (Takarazuka 1941b: 58). As a form of political propaganda it anticipates and thus aims to soften critical perspectives on Japan’s aggressive foreign policy. By engaging pan-Asian identity, this production bolstered contemporaneous literature in the Japanese social sciences positing pan-Asianness as an anti-European, anti-colonial stance, while simultaneously justifying Japanese imperial forays into Southeast Asia. The tropes described in this colonial era production are recapitulated, and recontextualized in a discussion of the recent Broadway-style musical, Southern Cross (2004-2009). While the two productions result from radically different cultural and historical circumstances, they both perform a discourse on pan-Asian unity. While the Takarazuka revue achieves this through the notions of identity that are directly linked to imperialist ideologies, Southern Cross does so through the nostalgic evocation of a past affinity fractured by the chaotic violence of war. In the latter production, the aesthetics of nostalgia blend seamlessly with touristic imagery. Thus by recalling colonial discourse on
pan-Asian identity, *Southern Cross* also becomes operative in a process of commodity fetishism, wherein tourism to Indonesia is endowed with an intangible and almost metaphysical significance.

Colonial nostalgia has been a prominent theme in anthropological work since the mid-1980s. Rosaldo describes the paradoxical nature of this longing on the part of former colonizers in that it mourns what one helped to destroy (Rosaldo 1989: 107). In this process, he implicates anthropological researchers who served dual roles as both researchers and colonial officers. As such, he locates “imperialist nostalgia” as integral to the fabric of early anthropological work. He presents the following quote from Bronislaw Malinowski as an example, “Ethnology is in the sadly ludicrous, not to say tragic position, that at the very moment when it begins to put its workshop in order, to forge its proper tools, to start ready to work on its appointed task, the material of its study melts away with hopeless rapidity.” (Malinowski in Rosaldo 1989: 115). As mentioned in Chapter 1, similarly nostalgic sentiments were also expressed by scholars from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As early as 1817, Thomas Raffles was lamenting the incorporation of Dutch military motifs into Javanese court ceremonies. He writes, “The ceremonies and state of the native courts have lost much of their genuine character, from the admission of European custom, introduced by the Dutch after the last Javan war.” (Raffles 1817 in Sumarsam 1995: 3) Such nostalgia is present nearly a century later as Jaap Kunst begins his famous study on Javanese court music with the following critique of Western cultural influence:

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44 The inversion of this phenomenon has also been discussed in recent anthropological discourse wherein post-colonial states seek to, “evoke the glamour or grandeur of imperial spaces” (Bissell 2005: 216). Nostalgia by its own etymology (from Greek, *nostos* meaning ‘homecoming’, *algia*, ‘pain’) describes a sense of loss that is caused by dislocation. As such, it describes of mourning for the stability and juridical certitude of the colonial regime (Bissell 2005, Ferguson 2002).
The interloper is not a more or less kindred culture, not even one that could share
with the civilizations of the Archipelago the collective appellation “eastern”, but one
of an utterly alien nature, one which not only modifies the existing cultural values
without stimulating the organism it influences, but, like a corrosive acid, like a
transfusion from a different blood-group, attacks and destroys it in its profoundest
essence. European-American civilization is so utterly foreign to the Indonesian
cultures that it cannot be assimilated by them; at best-and then only in its lower
forms-it might be a substitute; whilst at the same time this civilization is, in the
nature of its being, so aggressive and expansionist that it cannot be rejected or
warded off either. (Kunst 1973: 3-4)

As discussed in the previous chapter, these paranoiac fantasies of the “vanishing
native” also appear in Balinese music scholarship from the early twentieth century.
Simultaneously, this trope of the vanishing native was also appropriated and recontextualized
in Japanese ethnological work in the 1930s through the end of the Second World War
(Hosokawa 1998: 10).

**Japanese Ethnology and the Second World War**

In order to understand the aestheticization of Indonesian culture by Japanese
ethnologists in the 1940s, we must first understand Japan’s appropriation and indigenization
of European ethnology. In many cases, Japanese discourse on Indonesian culture appropriated
nostalgic, Orientalist tropes while framing them in opposition to European and North
American ethnographic discourse. As Japanese foreign policy became increasingly aggressive
in the 1930s, this opposition was perpetuated through notions of pan-Asian identity. Japan’s
imperialist projects were justified in terms of a rescue or restoration of Asian nations from
their morally corrupt European invaders. Also by perpetuating the notion of corrosive Western
influence as described by European scholars *themselves*, Japanese ethnologists and
musicologists were able to divert culpability in the “mourning for what one has destroyed,”
into a mourning of what “the West” has destroyed.
Japan’s Meiji restoration (1868), instigated a swift and comprehensive cultural revolution. It was during this period of rapid modernization that Japan founded and developed its first universities and academic departments. Japan’s first departments of sociology, ethnology, and (predominantly western) musicology were founded during this time. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Japanese sociology and ethnology showed a clear preference for German and Dutch theoretical models (Becker 1936: 461). Thus Germany and Japan established an intellectual relationship that would later reinforce their political and military alliance in the 1930s. In the early twentieth several Japanese scholars studied abroad in Vienna and Leiden. European theories regarding the “exotic” Asian nations were modified and imported to suit Japanese understandings of the Asian identity. Japanese scholar Masao Oka is credited with importing concepts of German Volkerkunde to Japanese ethnology (Doak 2003: 109). These scholars mention that Max Weber and the French sociologist Emile Durkheim were particularly influential to streams of Japanese ethnology through the 1930s. According to Doak, Japanese scholars were attracted to German notions of, “volk” (folk) because of its integral relationship to national identity (ibid: 109-110).

In fact, national or “cultural” identity (encapsulated in the term, “minzoku”) would become the primary concern Japanese ethnology leading into the 1930s. Initially the term was used to describe a biological sense of racial identity. However, by 1934 academics and cultural theorists (including anthropologists) had developed the term to describe an intangible sense “cultural” identity, which existed beyond race (ibid: 110). Doak believes that these

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45 A type of German ethnology which focused on Asian or “exotic” cultures. Usually constructed in opposition to Volkskunde, which was the study of European “folk,” or “peasantry” (Nakao 1993).
46 For information on the relationship between German ethnology and Japanese wartime anthropology also see Van Bremen, Shimizu, Miyazaki, and Nakao in Van Bremen and Shimizu 2003.
evolving theories of *minzoku* provided an important ideological justification for Japan’s impending military invasions of East and Southeast Asia. As *minzoku* became less biological, it began to describe a more malleable kind of, “cultural identity” which could be applied to several Asian races simultaneously. Eventually, Japanese scholars were able to subsume most of East and Southeast Asia within the ever-widening fabric of a “Greater East Asian” cultural identity embodied in the term *minzoku*.

In order to facilitate colonial imperialism, this discourse framed Asia within a cultural hierarchy that assumed Japan’s inherent superiority. This conglomerate of nations and former colonies was given the Japanese title, *Daitoa Kyoeiken* or “The Greater Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere”. As such, Japanese ethnologists write of war-era ethnography as an “expansion of self” rather than an, “encounter with the Other.” The crucial distinction is that Japanese discourse subsumed all Asian identities within a single Japanese cultural ideology (Miyazaki 2003: 223). Universities, private corporations, as well as government and military offices began creating special research foundations. These institutions hired teams of ethnologists to investigate a range of cultural, economic and political issues throughout East and Southeast Asia. These organizations looked at the role of Chinese communities Indonesia and Taiwan (presumably these communities were the largest threat to the success of Japan’s planned invasions), as well as indigenous customs regarding land rights (Nakao 2003: 273). In addition to gathering data for the Japanese imperial government, these pre-colonial expeditions form the backbone of Japanese contemporary anthropology on East and Southeast Asia (Van Bremen 2003: 22-23).

As Japan became fixated on this expanded sense of Asian identity a scholarly need for ethnographic research on all aspects of Asian culture developed (Shimizu 2003: 62-63). This included musicological research. In 1937, less than one year after Japan signed the Anti-
Comintern Pact with Germany, Japan’s first ethnomusicological organization was founded. 

*Toyo Ongaku Gakkai* (The Society for Research in Asiatic Music) remains Japan’s oldest and largest ethnomusicological organization. Reflecting Japanese interest in *minzoku*, ethnomusicology (*minzoku ongaku gaku*) eclipsed western musicology (*ongaku gaku*) in size and popularity until well after the war.47

The society’s journal, *The Journal for the Society for Research in Asiatic Music (Toyo Ongaku Kenkyu)* was first published in November 1937. The intellectual relationship between Japanese and European politics is clearly articulated in its inaugural issue. An article by Shigeo Kishibe (1937) presents a brief history of German comparative musicology, explaining its methodological superiority to English and North American branches of ethnomusicological study. In particular, Kishibe cites the rigorous empiricism of comparative musicology as evidence of its superiority (Kishibe 1937: 66). Comparative musicology’s emphasis on evolutionary theories and musical origins may have been part of the appeal as well (Nettl 2010: 70). This particular way of viewing musical and cultural evolution reinforced dominant themes in Japanese Sinology, which understood Chinese history and philosophy as a Japanese cultural antecedent (Hosokawa 1998: 10). And it was these same theories of cultural evolution that were applied to all of Asia as Japan began its imperial conquests. A particularly meaningful event in this process was the “repatriation” of Japanese *gagaku* (court music) to China by musicologist Hisao Tanabe. According to Hosokawa, Japan used this event to create a heritage-based link to Chinese culture while simultaneously exercising their superiority over it (ibid: 11).

47 The Anti-Comintern pact represented an early stage of Japan’s alliance with Germany leading into World War II. The pact allied Japan and Germany against the spread of Russian Communism.
The desire to create a pan-Asian cultural identity also marks a decisive shift in Japanese attitudes towards Asia and the West. Prior to World War II, Japanese discourses had emphasized Japan’s “native uniqueness” (Iwabuchi 2002: 53). While the Japanese were aware of their cultural connections to other East Asian cultures, Japan had been previously indifferent towards Asian contributions to the history of Japanese culture. Iwabuchi refers to this politically motivated shift in cultural identity as “strategic hybridism” (ibid). Unlike hybridity, Japan’s strategic hybridism, “Suppress(es) the ambivalence generated by the act of cross-fertilization” (ibid: 54), thereby reinforcing cultural boundaries and effectively eliminating the “liminal third space” that hybridity creates. He later claims that, as a discourse, strategic hybridism essentialized hybridity as an ahistorical aspect of Japanese national and cultural identity.

As Japan sought authority over Asia, it was crucial to establish superiority over the “other” prominent modernity. At the time, European colonial authorities ruled over much of Southeast Asia. In order for the Japanese to ideologically justify their military interventions, Japan had to argue for its moral authority over European culture. In other words, Japan had to frame its imperial conquests in terms of an anti-European colonial resistance. In this way, Japan was able to alienate western authority on the grounds that it was incapable of understanding the morals, values and needs of “Asian” people.

The pre-war and war-era writings of musicologist Hisao Tanabe are examples of such discourse. Tanabe was a founding member of Toyo Ongaku Gakkai, and an influential and prolific Japanese musicologist. While his first works dealt with European art music, he began focusing on Japanese and Asian musics in the 1930s. Tanabe conducted research on music in China, Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Burma and Thailand. He introduces the first issue of the Journal of the Society for Research in Asiatic Music with the following remarks:
In the words of the proverb, “The light comes from the east”. The brilliant culture of Western modernity was [formed from] elements originally imported from the East, which the West accumulated and developed over a long time before giving birth to the exuberant flowers and rich fruits [we now see]. However, this brilliant culture of Western modernity is at last showing sings of stagnation and decay. Lacking a spiritual culture to match its advances in material civilization, it cannot help dying unless infused with fresh blood, just like a human body that has exhausted its capacity for growth and begins to age and wither. The sun that rises in the East is about to sink in the West. Now the world is again awaiting the light from the East, which is why many Westerners have devoted a great deal of effort to research into Asiatic culture. *Yet, research into Asia should be done by Asiatics.* We Japanese are the hope for Asia, so we have to take the initiative in the study of Asiatic culture and work hard at it. (Tanabe in Hosokawa 1998: 12-13)

Tanabe presents a discourse of Asian cultural superiority against a critique of a “stagnant” and “decaying” Western modernity. Tanabe claims that the greatness of Western civilization is based on Asian ideals and in the wake of decline, Western scholars are returning to the study Asian cultures in search of inspiration.

While markedly different in terms of political and historical context, Japanese criticisms of Western civilization bear a peculiar formal resemblance to postcolonial critiques of Orientalist scholarship. In fact, the Japanese government explicitly opposed the colonial occupation of Asian countries by non-Asians. Tanabe and others criticized Western scholars’ inability to understand Asian societies. This inscrutability was linked directly to Western culture’s lack of “moral values”. According to Hosokawa, Asian “morality” was framed in Confucian terms. Also there is frequent emphasis on the Asian scholar’s “embodied” knowledge of Asian societies. This is presented as a kind of knowledge that is always already barred from non-Asian observers. For this reason, Tanabe asserts that scholarly work on Asia, “should be done by Asiatics”. Due to the rapid industrialization and cultural restructuring of the Meiji Restoration, Japan is poised to assume this role of the modernized (but not Westernized) Asian social scientist ready to bring “Light” to the Asian world.
The ideological position of Japanese ethnographic work developed as Japan entered more fully into World War II. After Japan successfully colonized much of East and Southeast Asia, Tanabe published a monograph entitled, *Music of the Greater East-Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere* (*Daitoa no Ongaku*, Tanabe 1942). As a product of Japanese imperialism, the work strives to write Southeast Asia into a Japanese narrative. He praises the Japanese ability to see through intra-Asian difference and into the core ideologies uniting all Asian peoples. These praises of “Asian” cultural values are frequently juxtaposed with hard statements against the degenerate values of the “West.”

While Tanabe was a major figure in war-era music ethnography, he was not the only scholar doing such work. Another important musicologist of the pre-war era is Takatomo Kurosawa. Kurosawa carried out musicological research in Southeast Asia in 1939 (Morishige and Nakagawa 1998: 15, Umeda 1997: 5). Kurosawa’s five-month research expedition throughout Southeast Asia included stops in Taiwan, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, as well as lengthy stays in Java and Bali. Kurosawa’s records on Java and Bali represent some of the earliest Japanese ethnographic work on Indonesian music (Umeda in Kurosawa 1997: 7). While in Indonesia, he witnessed several *gamelan* performances as well as forms of Indonesian shadow puppetry (*wayang*). His writing expresses a fascination and respect for Indonesian culture. However, he makes frequent and cryptic references to the impending Japanese “project” in Southeast Asia. He claims the best way to appeal to Indonesians is to learn and understand their culture rather than force them to adopt Japanese traditions (Kurosawa 1997: 5). These sentiments are echoed in several other music ethnographies of the period.

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48 In a humorous moment, he derisively criticizes Western scholars for their inability to properly pronounce the word, "gamelan".
Onnabahansen

Japan’s first known *gamelan* ensemble was purchased by railway magnate Ichizo Kobayashi in 1941. While Kobayashi was an accomplished businessman and politician, he is also known for founding the popular Takarazuka cabaret company. According to scholar Jennifer Robertson, Kobayashi created Takarazuka in order to increase traffic on a newly constructed railway line, as well as to promote a new "Victorian Orientalist" resort located outside of Osaka (Robertson 1998: 4). The troupe's thematic material, staging, music and choreography were inspired by European cabaret models. Takarazuka performers were even nicknamed "Takarasiennes", as an *homage* to their French counterparts. However, the most enduring and iconic feature of the Takarazuka review is its all-female cast playing both male and female roles. This aspect of the Takarazuka revue has garnered considerable attention and controversy over the years, even leading to homophobic accusations of lesbianism by the press (p. 4). The politics of gender in relation to the Takarazuka cabaret and modern Japanese society have been explored at length in Robertson (1998).

The increase in imperial funding for research on Southeast Asia also reflected a general increase and awareness of Southeast Asian culture amongst the Japanese people. Popular theater was one place where the Japanese public could encounter exotic and essentialized versions of Asian culture. From 1941-1944, the Takarazuka cabaret ran their “Daitoa” series. Each year, the troupe would feature a full-length performance set in one of Japan’s colonies. Photographs and descriptions of these wartime performances are rare, however some records remain through the annually published “Takarazuka Yearbook” (Takarazuka 1941a), and the “Takarazuka Script Collection” (Takarazuka 1941b). The *Daitoa* productions were set in Mongolia, Beijing, and Taiwan.
Purchased from a Javanese nobleman, Takarazuka’s Central Javanese *gamelan* was put to use in a revue, which offered a romantic fantasy of Japan’s impending colonial invasion (Takarazuka 1941b: 58).

*Figure 5: The Takarazuka *gamelan*. (Courtesy of The Ikeda Archive)*

Set during the mid-16th Century, *Onnabahansen* (or “She-Pirates”) tells the story of eight Japanese women travelling the “Southern Seas” in search of their missing lovers (p. 46-58). After various trials and tribulations the final leg of the voyage brings the female adventurers to Indonesia where they are at last reunited with their men. This last scene begins with Indonesian servants and musicians waiting on the Japanese men, who have been invited to the Sultan’s palace for a birthday celebration. Abruptly another Indonesian character (described using the derogatory term, “*dojin*” or “dirt person”) arrives on stage and announces
the arrival of a pirate ship (the ship carrying the eight women). The Indonesian characters express initial fear and worry in a kind of broken, pidgin Japanese.⁴⁹

NATIVE: Pirates have landed. They come to the island.
ALL: Attacks! Violence!! I am scared.
GUARD: What should we do? These pirates are all very strong.
ALL: What to do? What to do? Pirates have landed! What to do?
NATIVE: Japanese swords cut good! Kill People!
NATIVE: They start fire!
NATIVE: They burn villages! Take things!
ALL NATIVES: Scary! The pirates are scary! (ibid: 55)

Noticing that their servants have become upset, the Japanese men try to console the natives with the following reassuring words:

JAPANESE MAN 1: Wait! Just wait a minute... Relax!
JAPANESE MAN 2: Getting upset will not help at all. It is not going to solve any problems. You are worrying too much! These pirates are not all evil and violent. Just calm down and see what happens (ibid: 56)

Once the Japanese men have consoled the worried natives they greet the ship. As their lost lovers emerge, there is a joyous reunion. However, the women also bring word that the Shogunate government has outlawed travel between Japan and Indonesia. Hardly displeased with this news, the men vow resolutely to, “bury their bones” in Indonesia. In a curious reversal of opinion towards their new Japanese residents, the natives happily proclaim: “What a joyous occasion! Here we drink! We sing, play music and dance as well! Such a celebratory occasion this is! You happy! Me happy! We all happy!” (ibid: 58)

At this point, the Indonesian Sultan graciously invites the newly reunited couples to celebrate at his residence. Upon meeting the women, he is so impressed by their beauty and sophistication that he cordially invites them to settle permanently in his Indonesian kingdom.

⁴⁹ I would like to thank my friend and colleague Maho Ishiguro for preparing this translation of Onnabahansen.
Having received blessings from the native populace, the dramatized occupation of Indonesia is nearly complete.

**SULTAN:** Oh yes, they are truly beautiful! We welcome you and thank you for traveling such a long way to get here from Japan. Please stay for a long time.

**NAMIJI:** Thank you. We wish to stay here for the rest of our lives.

**ALL WOMEN:** We wish to stay here for the rest of our lives!

**TOKUEMON:** As we built the bridge across the ocean between Japan and this land, I hope there will be a bridge between the hearts of the natives and the Japanese here.

**OHAMA:** We will help each other for a brighter future for both countries. (ibid: 58)

In a final gesture, the women offer to perform a traditional Japanese dance. While witnessing this dance, the Indonesian leader lets out a resounding cry, “Long live the king of Japan!” Amused by his innocent mistake one of the Japanese women kindly corrects the Sultan, “We do not call him King. We call him emperor”. And in one final breath of nationalist fervor, all characters (including the Sultan) proclaim, “Long live the emperor of Japan!!” The curtain closes and the story ends. (ibid: 58)

*Onnabahansen* imagines the inevitable conquest of East and Southeast Asia as a slightly coercive, but primarily innocent pursuit. The ideological message aims to quell anxieties about the moral and material costs of colonial aggression. It acknowledges the fact that various indigenous groups will express initial reticence. However, such fears are shown to be irrational in that they are based solely on misperceptions of the Japanese army. The joyous conclusion indicates that once initial fears subside, native populations and their indigenous governments will happily consent to colonial domination. Historically speaking, *Onnabahansen* eerily foreshadowed coming events. Less than one year after its theatrical run, the invasion and colonial occupation of Indonesia had been achieved.

As mentioned above, Takarazuka’s propagandizing function was not limited to *Onnabahansen*. During this period, the company often produced works that both mirrored,
and fantasized Japan’s imperial aspirations. Oftentimes this theatrical propaganda was promoted as authentic, ethnographic entertainment (Robertson 1998: 117). The troupe often sponsored research expeditions to parts of Asia in search of costumes, music and other cultural material in addition to hiring music scholars and ethnographers to teach traditional Asian musics (Van Bremen 2003: 27). As the script indicates, *Onnabahansen* was presented to the public as the first-ever Japanese performance of Indonesian *gamelan*. It goes on to specify that the instruments were “purchased directly from a Javanese nobleman” (Takarazuka 1941b: 58). Thus the construction and marketing of ethnographic authenticity was a key strategy in selling Japanese imperial ideology. According to Takarazuka scholar Jennifer Robertson, the effects of this ethnographic “infotainment,” were:

A fantastical vision of us-ness and (Japanese inscribed) other-ness. The Japanese audience was thereby able simultaneously to set itself apart from the rest of the world, and to recuperate the rest of the world within its collective imagination. (Robertson 1995: 983).

Robertson discusses two additional shows from this period that were intended to incorporate Indonesian cultural elements. The first of these, *Only One Ancestral Homeland*, adapted “Indonesian *gamelan* and dances” and placed them in a Thai setting (ibid: 985). The other production, *East Asian Bouquet* was not actually produced but comes from the writings of a Takarazuka administrator. This hypothetical show would have incorporated a series of ten songs set in the each of the ten cultural areas occupied by Japan at the time (ibid: 985). The show would have included one song set in Indonesia.
CHAPTER 5: Edomae *Gamelan*: Balinese Fusion Music in Japan

Balinese Music as World Music

After World War II, Japan’s political, cultural, and economic attitudes towards Asia and the West changed dramatically. Their defeat and subsequent political and economic decimation forced Japan to re-focus its attention inward. While Japan’s wartime doctrine of racial superiority led to the aggressive occupation of several Southeast Asian countries and European colonies, Japan’s post-war national and cultural identity was, “Articulated predominantly by its subordinate position to the United States” (Iwabuchi 2002: 56). Japan’s defeat at the end of World War II allowed for a claim to the status of “victim” rather than “oppressor.” To a certain extent, this enabled Japan to, “Forget its colonizing past” and, “Construct a new national identity based on claims of racial purity and homogeneity” (p. 57).

The US occupation of Japan led to dramatic lifestyle changes and the rapid acquisition of western and specifically American modes of cultural communication\(^5\). During this intense period of economic development, Japan’s dependence on the United States led to the adoption of foreign cultural models in a manner unprecedented since the Meiji restoration (Tsurumi 1984: 11). Thus, war-era conceptualization of minzoku as pan-Asian cultural heritage was temporarily abandoned while a new link with American consumer culture was established.

The development of Japan’s first world music programs were a direct result of this major cultural shift. From 1967-1968, Professor Fumio Koizumi was a visiting assistant professor at Wesleyan University. There he was introduced to North American ethnomusicology as well to the *gamelan* traditions of both Java and Bali. Upon his return to Japan, Koizumi would found a world music program at Tokyo University of the Arts based

\(^5\) As an example, Tsurumi (1984) reports at between 1957 and 1969 the percentage of TV ownership in Japan went from 5.1 percent to almost 92 percent.
explicitly on Mantle Hood’s notion of “bi-musicality.” At this time he also began teaching Central Javanese *gamelan* to musicology students at the school. Afterwards, this program was expanded by a visiting Javanese artist and scholar, Saptono along with the Japanese performer Fumi Tamura (Morishige and Nakagawa 1998).

Japanese ethnomusicologist Genichi Tsuge founded Japan’s first Balinese *gamelan* at the Kunitachi College of Music in 1981. Tsuge was also exposed to both ethnomusicology and Indonesian music while serving as a visiting professor at Wesleyan University. In 1979, Professor Tsuge returned to Japan and began teaching at Kunitachi. The following year, in 1980, he purchased a small *gamelan* angklung but had no experience playing the instruments. It was at this point that Tsuge travelled to Bali with his mother-in-law and his young stepson, Makoto Torii.\(^5^1\) While at Wesleyan, Tsuge and Torii had made close friends with the Balinese teacher and dalang, I Nyoman Sumandhi. Makoto recalls his first lessons learning Balinese music, with I Nyoman Sumandhi at the *Konservatori Karawitan* in Denpasar:

“I was just waiting for Pak Sumandhi… but, its very strange. There are *three gangsas* (Balinese metallophones). It should have been that two is enough for Pak Sumandhi and Professor Tsuge. I don’t know why there was one more…I was just waiting there with the recorder and Pak Sumandhi was like, ‘Hey you, come here!’…and so I have to, you know.” (Makoto Torii, personal communication, Dec. 2010)

Despite his initial reluctance, Torii remembers the pieces coming easily. He had already played Javanese *gamelan* for several years with Wesleyan Youth *Gamelan*. Due to his aptitude, Pak Sumandhi focused most of his attention on Torii and not on Professor Tsuge. After that first rehearsal, Tsuge decided that Torii could learn most of the pieces while Tsuge went sightseeing with Torii’s mother and grandmother. Thus Torii spent each day with Sumandhi from morning until night, for the duration of their trip. For Torii this was formative.

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\(^{5^1}\)Torii is also the webmaster for, “Bali Gamelan Club” ([http://www.kt.rim.or.jp/~maktori/gamelan/](http://www.kt.rim.or.jp/~maktori/gamelan/)), an important online resource about Japanese gamelan groups and upcoming performances.
musical experience that altered the course of his life. During his interview, he could still sing some of old Tunjuk-style pieces that Sumandhi had taught him.

Once, they had learned a few pieces, Tsuge and Torii returned to Japan and began running small workshops in Balinese music. The very first performance of Balinese gamelan musicians in Japan was at a New Year’s celebration in 1981 by a group of classically trained koto players from the Yamada School.\(^{52}\) The following year, Balinese gamelan angklung became a regular class for music students at Kunitachi. And as students became more interested in performing outside the academic community, the gamelan group gradually evolved into a community ensemble. This community ensemble would later evolve into Japan’s most famous Balinese gamelan group, Sekar Jepun.

Their fame began after several success tours to Bali from the 1980s through 2000. Their first tour in 1987 was directly influenced by Sekar Jaya’s 1985 performance at the Bali Arts Festival. Balinese gamelan scholar Koichi Minagawa was still at Tokyo University of the Arts.\(^{53}\) He was living in Bali on a Japanese government scholarship, studying at the conservatory (ASTI, at the time) and taking private lessons. He was in the audience during Sekar Jaya’s performance. Minagawa, states, “We were very impressed…amazed that Americans could also play gamelan and dance and be well-received by the <Balinese> community.” (Minagawa 2007: 4).

The Sekar Jepun’s program for the Bali Arts Festival consisted of a large number of traditional dance pieces as well as a fusion bebarongan piece, Sisi Maya, combining music for gong kebyar with a type of Japanese traditional lion dance known as, “Shishi Mai.” Sekar Jepun’s focus on having an all-Japanese ensemble that performs predominantly traditional Balinese repertoire highlights an intriguing difference between the American and Japanese

\(^{52}\) Makoto Torii, Personal Communication, Dec. 2010.
\(^{53}\) Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku
ensembles. Both American and Japanese *gamelan* artists share an intellectual heritage with university-based world music programs. However beyond this, each group chose to relate Balinese culture to their own cultural heritage in very different ways. In fact, in many of the fusion examples that we will examine, Japanese artists often consciously create tangible associations between Balinese tradition and Japanese tradition rather highlighting the gaps between the two. This may be partially due to the sustained relevance of a “pan-Asian” link between Bali and Japan. As mentioned in the previous chapters, American fusion works by contrast focus almost exclusively on Balinese music’s radical alterity, as well as its incommensurability with notions of Americanness.

Figure 6: *Gamelan Sekar Jaya* (Photo by Scott Purdy)
Figure 7: *Gamelan Sekar Jepun*. (Photo by Scott Purdy) courtesy of Jeff Purmott.

With *Sekar Jepun’s* presence at the Bali Arts Festival at the heels of *Sekar Jaya’s* 1985 performance, one may say the two groups share a good-natured rivalry. This rivalry was played out during a *mebarung* at the Bali Arts Festival in the year 2000. While in Japan, I had the opportunity to speak to several *Sekar Jepun* members about the performances. Conversations were illuminating. Not only did they shed a new perspective on American performance practices but they helped clarify some interesting, and broad conceptual differences between American and Japanese Balinese *gamelan* performance aesthetics.

In a *mebarung*, two groups enter the stage in succession. The *gamelans* face each other on opposing sides. The groups alternate, playing pieces in roughly the same genre enabling a reasonable comparison. While one group performs, the other remains silent in partial darkness as the stage lights shine only on the group that is currently performing. Musicians frequently make eye contact with one another. It is much like a mirror. When one stares across the stage, one looks directly into the eyes of the player occupying the same
position on the other side. It is not uncommon for musicians to try and intimidate their “Other” while playing, through various displays of showmanship.

Koichi Minagawa was shocked when sat down at the kendang (lead drum) for Sekar Jepun (Minagawa interview). On the opposing side, playing lead drum for Sekar Jaya was the Balinese master drummer and composer, I Dewa Putu Berata. While this was only an exhibition and not a juried a competition, according to Minagawa it did feel a bit like they had cheated. Sekar Jepun was primarily interested in showing-off the ability of an all-Japanese group to perform classic Balinese repertoire. However Sekar Jaya placed a master Balinese artist as a “ringer” in a key position, thus prematurely subverting the implied terms of the mebarung format. Also, rather than perform Balinese classics, Sekar Jaya focused on new works. They premiered several new works including a new dance piece by Berata and a fusion work for Balinese gamelan and tabla by Michael Tenzer (Talakalam).

Because contemporary Balinese gamelan performance in Japan was largely introduced through world music programs, one could argue that Balinese gamelan is partially mediated through the humanist ethics of Mantle Hood’s “Bi-Musicality” (Minagawa 2007). According to Hood, world music programs provide a dual function. On one hand, they preserve folklore by maintaining the performance practices of a given culture. On the other, they sensitize non-native performers to a range of different cultural behaviors, which “like language,” provide insight into other domains of culture (Hood 1960). Presumably, this leads to greater human compassion and empathy as formerly unintelligible (following the linguistic metaphor) musical behaviors become interpretable and perhaps even translatable. If becoming “bimusical,” really was similar to becoming “bilingual,” one might assume that both American and Japanese artists would reach similar conclusions about the meaning of Balinese performance practice as examples of, “cultural behavior” (after Merriam 1963). While there
are some similarities, the above encounter between Sekar Jaya and Sekar Jepun hints at a multitude of differences in the ways American and Japanese gamelan scenes interpret Balinese music. Again, units of cultural knowledge and meaning may be better conceptualized as immanently repeatable but highly volatile “memes” rather than coherent “structures.” These multiple differences in interpretation also offer an opportunity to reflect on ways in which “source material” is reinvented through our unique personal, political and cultural histories. In doing so, we may partially trace evolving perceptions of cultural difference and similarity, which are complexly conditioned by Japan’s own political relationships with Asia and the West. By looking more closely at Indonesian culture in contemporary Japan we get a better sense for how their economic, cultural, and historical relationships set the terms for intercultural interaction and Japanese approaches to Balinese music fusion.

Balinese Fusion Music in the 1970s-80s

Balinese fusion music in Japan is not really a new thing. As in Europe and the United States, Japanese composers and ethnomusicologists have been borrowing techniques and aesthetics of Indonesian musics since the 1970s. And like early European and North American experiments with gamelan music, these artists primarily use gamelan to expand their own sonic palette. Some well-known early examples include the music of Ryuichi Sakamoto and the Geinoh Yamashirogumi music collective. Sakamoto first became acquainted with gamelan music while studying composition and ethnomusicology at Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku in the late 1970s. Sakamoto went on to become one of Japan’s most famous and most successful composers. Sakamoto’s works defy genre boundaries. His work evokes aesthetics from popular and classical musics as well as jazz, rock, experimental, and electronic musics. Sakamoto uses electronic samples from both Balinese and Javanese gamelan in many of his
pieces. He was also the host of a well-known radio program in late 1980s. According to ethnomusicologist Ako Mashino, this program was very influential for musicians of her generation. It was also on this program that she first heard Balinese music.

One of the first and most famous examples of Balinese music fusion from Japan is the soundtrack to the 1988 anime film, Akira. The Akira soundtrack makes extensive use of the Balinese gamelan instruments from the ensembles gong kebyar and the west Balinese gamelan jegog. The music was composed and orchestrated by the Japanese artist and composer Shoji Yamashiro and performed by his ensembles, the Geinoh Yamashirogumi music collective. Yamashiro’s group is unusual in comparison to many if not most Balinese gamelan ensembles in Japan. The collective began in the late 1960s as an “experimental community” of amateur artists, where music was only one of its many artistic concentrations. Initially the group performed Bulgarian and Georgian choral music. However in the mid-1970s, they began to study Balinese kecak.54 In 1974, their founder Shoji Yamashiro renamed the group Geinoh Yamashirogumi. Yamashiro’s idiosyncratic philosophies about human nature and mysticism permeate their aesthetic. According to Yamashiro, much of their music is written using recurring sixteen-beat cycles. He describes this cyclic meters as “written” into human DNA, and are thus endowed with a universal appeal.55 He finds similar cycles in the music of Aka pygmies, Balinese gamelan, and Japanese traditional Noh. For Yamashiro, gamelan instruments themselves are endowed with a certain pan-cultural appeal. In particular, he describes the instruments jegog and gangsa as “overflowing with a global universality that connects to the future.” A utopian, “nostalgia for the future,” is common to many transhumanist philosophies. In the context of Akira, this appears partially enabled by Bali’s own nostalgic resonances within Japanese popular culture. Balineseness evokes a sense

54 http://www.bunmeiken.jp/
55 Yamashiro interview taken from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zdSjCBUg8yY
of primordial Japan. These elements are then projected into the future as the model for an idealized, Japanese society. There certain parallels between Yamashiro’s philosophy and the neo-primitivism of Taylor Kuffner’s *Gamelatron* project.

![Cover for the Akira (1988) soundtrack](image)

**Figure 8: Cover for the Akira (1988) soundtrack**

*Geinoh Yamashirogumi* still performs regularly throughout the Tokyo area. One of their most popular recurring events is the annual *kecak matsuri* (*kecak festival*) in Shinjuku. The festival features live performances of their own original music including pieces from the *Akira* soundtrack as well as traditional Balinese *legong*. While *Geinoh Yamashirogumi* has remained active, most of Japanese musicians that I spoke to have little interaction with the musical collective. I have heard them described as eccentric and even a little, “cult-ish.” The group also rarely performs with other Balinese groups in the Tokyo area, further isolating them from the Balinese music scene in Japan. However, despite being outsiders, they remain one of the more internationally recognized examples of Balinese music in Japan. They have

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56 Video from the 2011 Kecak Matsuri can be seen here [http://www.vimeo.com/27394574](http://www.vimeo.com/27394574)
recorded several more albums since 1988’s *Akira*, although their output seems to have declined over the last ten years.

**The 1990s: Tourism and the Japanese “return to Asia”**

In the early 1990s, there was a dramatic increase in the number of privately run Balinese music studios. Nowadays, these studios greatly outnumber university-run Balinese *gamelan*.\(^{57}\) According to most of those interviewed, Javanese *gamelan* is still largely taught and performed through academic channels. The remainder of this chapter investigates changes in cultural and economic history facilitated this trend. I also provide a glimpse into wide and varied world of contemporary Balinese *gamelan* performance in Japan. At the time, there was also a shift in Japan’s economic and cultural position towards the rest of Asia. Scholars describe this in terms of a cultural and economic “return to Asia.” (Iwabuchi 2002: 50). This shift in the flow of economic and cultural resources is evident in the global appeal of Japanese cultural commodities that emerged during Japan’s economic boom in the 1990s. Following the economic boom, Japan made a concerted effort to reassert itself as a dominant power in the region. This was also followed by a reemergence of nationalist discourses that reclaim a notion of Japanese superiority (Iwabuchi 2002: 50).

Koichi Iwabuchi describes this as a “re-centering,” rather than a “de-centering” of globalization. While the flow of intra-Asian cultural commodities is asymmetrical, it is not entirely one-sided. Japan’s pan-Asian appeal also results from the narrowing of perceived temporal and developmental lags between Japan and other Asian countries. Therefore, the transnationality of Balinese performing arts in Japan is enabled through the successful

\(^{57}\) According the musicians that I have spoken to, Javanese gamelan remains largely a university-sponsored tradition.
distribution of Asian cultural commodities, a phenomenon which is in itself the result of
diversely formed Asian modernities. The general increase of intra-Asian transcultural
circulation has led to the creation of an “Asian dreamworld” in the Japanese consumer
imagination. In this respect, it may be more productive to view the popular appeal of the
Balinese performing arts as reclaiming Asian-ness not through the rejection of American
culture (as it was during the colonial occupation), but through the, “articulation of native
culture into a capitalist narrative,” (Dirlik in Iwabuchi 2002: 14-15).

“Capitalist nostalgia” is a primary marketing tool in the creation of this “Asian
dreamworld” and contemporary Japanese representations of Bali are a prime example.
Frederic Jameson writes that nostalgia in contemporary art or film does not refer to a “genuine
historicity.” Rather, it evokes the “past through stylistic connotation, conveying ‘pastness’
through the glossy qualities of the image” (Jameson 1991: 19). Similarly, Balinese travel
brochures and internet ads sell neo-colonialist images of Bali as an unspoiled version of pre-
modern Japan. According to Minagawa, the production of such cultural imagery developed
notably during the late eighties and early nineties. 58 As such the commercial development of
neo-colonial touristic imagery coincides with the reemergence of nationalistic Japanese
discourse concerning Asian superiority.

In Japan, economic relations with Indonesia have remained consistently tight since the
early 1970s. The Balinese government reported that over 350,000 Japanese tourists visited
Bali in 2009. 59 This comprises over 20 percent of the total tourist arrivals for that year
(Americans make up about 3 percent). Out of the one million tourists who come to Bali each
year, one out of every five is Japanese. These numbers are even more striking when compared

58 Personal Communication: 12-22-2008
to the total resident population, which is only 4 million. Japanese tourism to Bali increased steadily through the 1980’s. However, they rose dramatically during the 1990’s and have been rising steadily ever since.  

The privatization of Balinese gamelan pedagogy and performance has created complex web of associations between Balinese gamelan, tourism and Japanese consumer culture. For example, guiding companies may hire Japanese gamelan artists as consultants or guides. Japanese artist Koyano Tetsuro has worked with H.I.S. for several years and through their sponsorship has been able to regularly invite Balinese gamelan artists to perform throughout Japan. Also, Indonesian companies may hire Japanese dancers or musicians to perform Balinese music and dance at trade shows. The Indonesian cigarette company Gudang Garam has hired Japanese musicians and dancers to perform for product exhibitions at trade show events. This confluence of interests forces complex negotiations for many Japanese performers of Balinese gamelan. While tourism literature evokes nostalgic imagery of Bali as a pre-modern paradise, these Japanese artists are highly critical of the Balinese stereotypes imported through such media on a personal level. However, Bali’s status as a viable commodity allows for these same artists to perform regularly throughout the year and in some cases make a living solely as a performer and teacher of Balinese dance or music. Japan’s most active gamelan teachers run several studios at a time and are able to travel to Bali several times per year.

Balinese gamelan scholars and performers like Koichi Minagawa and Motoko Sakurada have also published non-academic books on Balinese music and culture (Minagawa

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60 The terrorist attacks in 2002 and 2005 caused a noticeable drop in tourist arrivals only during the year immediately following the attack and two years after each attack (2004 and 2007 respectively) tourist arrivals from Japan were already exceeding pre-bombing arrival numbers.

61 Shoko Yamamuro p.c.
1994 and Sakurada 2008). Intended for popular audiences, these books are written like travelogues, which chronicle their experience of living, travelling and studying music in Bali. Minagawa’s work describes his experiences as a *Dharma Siswa* student at a Balinese music conservatory. Sakurada’s focus is the beauty of the Balinese landscape.

The appeal of Bali’s natural environment appears to be an important theme for Japanese *gamelan* artists. Koichi Minagawa’s album uses a multilingual (Balinese/Indonesian) title, *Peteng Bali Membisik Kepada Anda* (The Balinese Night Whispers to You). Minagawa’s album presents a series of Balinese soundscapes. Interspersed throughout the recording are improvised *suling* (bamboo flute) solos by Balinese artist, Gusti Suanji. The soundscapes paint a serene and idealized aural portrait of Bali’s natural environment. While the real soundscape of contemporary Bali is rife with chattering TV sets, and the omnipresent buzz of 120 cc motorbikes, these elements are intentionally absent from the mix. The result is a partially, “sanitized” version of Bali’s natural environment. The environment is such a primary focus that any traces of human presence are almost entirely absent, save one small picture of Suanji.

The rest of the album photos are vivid color portraits of Balinese skies at dusk. In most pictures, only fragments of man-made structures are present. The liner notes consist of classical Balinese poetry. The album itself seems to represent the natural Balinese environment poetically rather than an ethnographically. The recorded sounds have also been aestheticized to accentuate their “natural” beauty. The aesthetic focus on nature and Balinese ecology is also often present in albums artwork for recent fusion works by Motoko Sakurada, Mariko Adachi and Kohei Kawamura.

*Southern Cross*

Generally speaking, nostalgia permeates Japanese touristic images of Bali as the unspoiled remnant of Japan’s past (Iwabuchi 2002: 174 after Kondo 1997). The cultural
imagery produced through the tourism industry has led to dramatic increases in Japanese
tourism to Bali. This sentimental, and ethereal quality is exemplified in many kinds musical
theater featuring Balinese influences. The following section describes, Shiki Theater
Company’s 2004 production, *Southern Cross (Minami-Jujisei)* as a prime example. Taken as a
discourse on pan-Asian identity, *Southern Cross* reinforces the cultural memory of Japan as
“victim” during the colonial invasion of Southeast Asia. This fictional story set during the
Japanese occupation of Indonesia focuses on the doomed romance between an Indonesian
dancer, Nina and a Japanese military official who is wrongfully sentenced to death by an
American tribunal. These charges are based on false reports from Dutch POWs who were
themselves interested in reclaiming colonial control of Indonesia from the Japanese. As such,
the two Asian characters are united by a shared victimization at the hands of Western forces.

*Southern Cross* was co-written by Keita Asari (president and director of the Shiki
Theatre Company) and Hiromitsu Yukawa, (*nom de plume* for Tetsuhisa Matsuzaki, a member
of the Japanese Diet). Matsuzaki’s interest in Japanese history has led him to a profitable
second career as an author of historical fiction. He has either written or co-written several
plays and novels, including three full-length plays based on the history of Japan’s “Showa” era
for the Shiki Theatre Company (Hani 2005). Asari served as the show's director. In reviews,
Yukawa and Asari's script was praised for its balanced presentation of the Japanese
occupation of Indonesia, as well as its reliance on historical accuracy (Ushimura 2005: 160).
Some aspects of the play are based on actual events many of which are well known to the
Japanese public. These events consistently highlight both the naiveté of lower level Japanese
soldiers (B and C Class) and their cruel mischaracterization by Dutch POWs and the
American tribunal system.
The play’s core thematic elements are dramatized during the opening scene. It begins with an idealized portrait of the Indonesian landscape. Scantily clad, bronze bodies glide across the stage mimicking rice farming with abstract dance movements. A Balinese gamelan then enters the stage and the audience is given a medley of traditional Balinese dance repertoire. After this display of exotic indigineity, the lights darken as two imposing figures dressed as Dutch officers enter and indiscriminately murder the Indonesians on stage. Then, in a show of cultural perseverance in the wake of oppression, the Indonesian characters perform several pieces based on Cirebonese masked-dance, and Javanese shadow-puppetry that portray the slaughter of Indonesians by hulking, white-faced monsters.

Throughout the production, Southern Cross presents a pastiche of Balinese and Javanese cultural imagery. In one scene, iconic genres of Balinese dance such as baris, barong, and legong are referenced through a mixture of modern and Balinese-inspired choreography. During the scene, the female love-interest, Nina brings the protagonist, Hisao to a traditional religious ceremony where she performs her first, legong dance after returning from a long stay in Japan (see photo). By setting the scene within the context of a Balinese temple ceremony, or odalan, Southern Cross reproduces a popular trope in representations of “traditional” Balinese culture.

Foreign productions of Balinese music and dance have long fixated on odalan as the quintessential Balinese cultural event, wherein elements of community, spirituality (in the form of nature-worship), and artistry are understood to converge. In film, representations of the odalan go back as far as 1928’s Legong: Dance of the Virgins. Recent touring productions such as Cudamani’s Odalan Bali (2005 and 2007) remind us that this cultural event remains an iconic site for the representation of Balinese identity.
While the *odalan* scene borrows heavily from Balinese influences, other visual elements and plot points suggest that Nina is Javanese. She is the daughter of a prominent Indonesian nationalist and when engaging in nationalist activities she wears, “modern” Javanese attire. Thus, while her “exotic native” identity is coded Balinese, her “progressive nationalist” identity is coded Javanese. By relying on certain stereotypes of contemporary Indonesian culture (Java as the seat of Indonesian nationalism and modernity and Bali as the home of the exotic, but consistent indigeneity) her character is not granted a definitive ethnic identity. Her pan-Indonesian, “hybrid” identity is instead crafted to later enhance the image of her Japanese love interest as a victim of Dutch and American cruelty. Also, her feminity, “otherness,” and engagement in a progressive, humanist fight for political recognition become a way for the viewer to relate to Japan’s infatuation with Indonesia as fragile and endangered. And through the virtue of her romantic connection with the Japanese soldier, Nina’s innocence
is transferred to our understanding of Hisao as well. The overwhelming purity of both characters eventually serves as the primary locus of tragedy, when he is wrongly executed by the American tribunal.

The protagonist’s innocence is further demonstrated through his support for the Indonesian independence movement. This aspect of his character plays on the popular understanding that the Japanese occupation was a major contributing factor to Indonesian independence. This is symbolized through several performances of the well-known Indonesian song, *Bengawan Solo* (Solo River). It is first sung as a duet when the couple announces that they are leaving Japan for Indonesia. The song lyrics paint a nostalgic picture of the Solo River and thus express the character’s shared longing and admiration for the Indonesian landscape.

The song also has a broader cultural significance. *Bengawan Solo* was one of Java’s big radio hits in the years leading up to and during the Japanese occupation. As such, it became an emblem for Indonesian patriotism (Kartomi 1998: 91). It was during this time that Japanese officers brought recordings back to Japan. Within several years Japanese singers had translated and recorded *Bengawan Solo* with great commercial success. To this day, the song is widely known in Japan. This popularity enables the song to function as a potent signifier of Indonesian nationalism that is rooted in a sense of Japanese pop culture nostalgia.

There is also a significant narrative function to these duets at the beginning and end of the play. In the first duet, the protagonist and his love interest are eagerly awaiting their voyage to Indonesia, thus expressing a naïve optimism towards the coming occupation. The last duet occurs during the protagonist’s “execution”. The protagonist has been wrongly charged with human rights abuses and is awaiting execution. During this reprise, the song memorializes their prior naivety, thus heightening the sense of injustice at his untimely death.
In terms of staging, the execution is less of a murder scene, and more of a martyrdom. While Nina sings, the unjustly accused Hisao silently ascends a long staircase leading into the cosmos as if to symbolize a transformation from human to divine.

Figure 10: Hisao’s “execution.” (Photo: Shiki Theatre Company, 2004)

It is worth mentioning that this idealized, nostalgic remembrance of the Japanese occupation overlooks several historical details. It is well documented that the Japanese army trained thousands of Indonesians in military exercises and supported Indonesian independence after their defeat. However, such selective memory negates the brutal and desperate reality of the Japanese regime during the war. With Japan’s material reserves tapped, Indonesians were forced into corvée labor for the Japanese. Japanese soldiers freely raided villages for metals, and other precious items.\(^62\) The Japanese were also particularly brutal and violent to the

\(^{62}\) See Robinson 1995 for a more detailed description of Japanese brutality during the occupation.
aristocracy, who were regarded as collaborators with the former Dutch regime (Vickers 1997: 155).

However, *Southern Cross* erases these negative aspects by focusing on the protagonist’s love of Indonesian culture, his support of independence, and finally his martyrdom at the hands of a US military tribunal. Nina and Hisao’s relationship functions as an idealized memory of Japan’s colonial interest in Indonesia as a whole. By reinforcing Japan’s status as “victim,” in the global World War II narrative, the protagonist’s wrongful conviction presents a moral justification for Japan’s continued denial of its wartime atrocities. In *Southern Cross*, Japan is only guilty of loving its other too naively and too blindly. And thus by identifying with the object of its imperial conquest, Japan willfully adopts the position of the innocent but easily duped, as a means of escaping judgment. In its place, *Southern Cross* offers “the West” as the greater imperialist. It is the Dutch and American characters’ corrupt and misinformed sense of universal morality that enacts cruelty and retribution on the show’s Asian characters.

In both of the plays discussed in this chapter, we have seen evidence of Japan’s fascination with Indonesian culture as performed through representations of Indonesia in popular theater. However, *Onnabahansen* and *Southern Cross* respond to the Indonesian occupation from radically different historical perspectives. *Onnabahansen* looks ahead with optimism towards an inevitable, yet unforeseeable future, while *Southern Cross* glances back with eyes half closed, as if the traumatic events are still too raw and immediate to take in. With *Onnabahansen*, Japan engages the notion of Pan-Asian identity in order to bind Asian nations within an imperial hierarchy of cultural difference. While such discourses disappeared following their defeat, Pan-Asian-ness reemerges in *Southern Cross* with a dramatically
different outlook. What was born as an optimistic tale of a new world order now rests as a doomed romance where naiveté and desire lead to tragic ends.

Private Studios

Bali’s enhanced profile in Japanese consumer culture has also generated considerable interest in the Balinese performing arts outside of academic contexts. As a result, privately run Balinese *gamelan* studios now greatly outnumber university-run ensembles. As mentioned above, this is an apparent contrast to most Javanese ensembles, which remain connected to universities. The following section examines how the contemporary approach to Balinese *gamelan* pedagogy in Japan has influenced contemporary manifestations of Balinese *gamelan* fusion by focusing on several Balinese *gamelan* studios in the Tokyo/Yokohama area. Generally speaking, these studios deemphasize cultural context in favor of musicality and technique. I do not mean to imply that the two are mutually exclusive. I merely wish to illustrate a difference in emphasis between *gamelan* taught in private studios and *gamelan* taught through academic institutions. Studio classes are encouraged to learn more about Balinese and Indonesian language, history and culture outside of the class however the classes themselves are focused solely on learning traditional Balinese music. I argue that decontextualization allows Japanese artists to creatively adapt Balinese music to uniquely Japanese cultural contexts.

Unlike university courses, private studio instructors are not required to possess an advanced degree in music performance or ethnomusicology. Instead, the quality of a teacher is predicated solely upon their performance experience and overall reputation as a *gamelan* player. Private studios follow a variety of trajectories ranging from ongoing private lessons, to month-long courses, to regularly rehearsing performance ensembles. These groups often
feature annual and semi-annual recitals. These same musicians and dancers also perform regularly throughout the year with professional groups in diverse concert settings from cultural centers, to restaurants, shopping malls, and bars.

One of Japan’s longest-running private studios is the Otonomori gamelan studio (formerly known as, Otokoba). Otokoba was founded by Makoto Torii, Fumi Tamura, and Yukitoshi Morishige and offered classes on Balinese, Javanese, and Sundanese gamelan. Currently, Otonomori focuses exclusively on Balinese gamelan and offers private lessons and class instruction on semar pegulingan, angklung and gong kebyar. Gong Kebyar is far and away the most popular of their courses offerings. It is so popular that there are at least four different classes each taught by different instructors. These courses may run for a series of several weeks to several months. While classes often focus on building repertoire, occasionally, teachers will offer special courses on one particular composition. Recently, Otonomori’s only Balinese, Balinese gamelan teacher, I Gede Putu Setiawan offered a three-month course devoted solely to I Nyoman Windha’s gong kebyar classic, Jagra Parwata. Studio performances are usually open to the public and because the musicians are still considered “students,” they are often free of charge. Students are often expected to cover performance expenses, including fees for moving instruments and renting the performance space. Some students liken this model to that used by teachers of Japanese traditional music and dance.

Another such group is the Yokohama Gamelan run by Motoko Sakurada out of her home just outside of Tokyo. Sakurada began studying gamelan with Sekar Jepun while she was a student at the Kunitachi College of Music. By 1999, she had saved up enough money to buy her own gamelan. With these instruments she founded two groups, Yokohama Gamelan,

63 Current gong kebyar instructors are Koichi Mingawa, Motoko Sakurada, I Putu Gede Setiawan, Hideharu Umeda and Yasuko Watanabe.
and *Terang Bulan*. *Yokohama Gamelan* was founded on the private studio model, where students pay to study either privately or as part of a class. *Yokohama Gamelan* performs only once per year at the end of their spring semester. While there are no formal grading systems or levels, students who wish to perform more regularly are expected to stay in the group for a number of years in addition to making regular trips to Bali in order to augment their studies. For Koichi Minagawa, the frequency with which Japanese students go to Bali is one of the most prominent differences between North American and Japanese students of Balinese performing arts.64

Aside from larger ensembles such as *gong kebyar* there are several studios, which focus solely on repertoire for Balinese shadow play known as *gender wayang*. In addition to her own *gender wayang* studio, Ako Mashino also runs her own group specializing in *Balinese geguntangan*. Studio performances are less frequent than professional concerts, typically only occurring once every few months. They are free and open to the public, and may feature several performances of the same work played by different students. In such a way, studio recitals are principally a chance for amateur students to gain valuable performance experience.

## Performing Groups

Performing groups, rehearse less regularly than studio classes. Usually, these groups only meet when there is an upcoming performance. Most members of performing groups have been studying Balinese music for several years and have travelled to Bali several times in addition to studying and making connections at private studios. The *Barong Club* is one such group.

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The *Barong Club* is unique when compared to most Japanese *gamelan* groups. If we may consider private studios as the Japanese equivalent of Balinese *Sanggar*, the Barong Club is very clearly modeled after a Balinese *Sekaa Gong*. In Bali, a *Sekehe Gong* is community-owned *gamelan* ensemble run and managed by members of the *banjar*, an organization with representatives from each household. *Sekehe’s* instruments are typically housed in a communal space and its musicians are often required to perform for local temple ceremonies as well as for lifecycle ceremonies of village residents. While there is no *banjar* in the Fukagawa area, the Barong Club has made arrangements with a local Shinto shrine to house the instruments and rehearse free of charge. In exchange, Barong Club members are required to assist the shrine’s staff with temple maintenance as well as to perform without compensation at temple ceremonies.

However, Barong Club’s desire to fuse Balinese and Japanese “traditional” aesthetics goes beyond organizational structure. Their goal is to create a new “Japanese,” or “*Edomae*” style of Balinese *gamelan*. This process involves a total overhaul of their instruments and performance attire. At the moment, they are re-building all of their instrument cases, or *plawa* using traditional Japanese wood-carving motifs as well as custom designing special *kimonos* for their performances.
Figure 11: Japanese Style calung (Photo courtesy of Makoto Torii)
Figure 12: Barong Club performance at the Fukagawa-Tamioka Shrine. (Photo by Makoto Torii).

It is worth noting that Barong Club’s notion of “Japanese-ness” is evoked through the nostalgic use of pre-modern, “edo” era Japanese imagery. As such Barong Club uses Balinese gamelan to inject new life into Japanese tradition. I have spoken to many Japanese gamelan artists who express embarrassment in knowing so much about Balinese tradition while knowing almost nothing of their own. For Barong Club member, Makoto Torii, Japan’s
rampant modernization has created cosmopolitan citizens who are anxious to participate in a global community, yet they remain apathetic towards their own cultural heritage. For Torii, Japanese gamelan artists must first reconnect with Japanese traditional culture if there is to be a so-called, “Japanese Gamelan.” As such, Barong Club provides a way for its members to connect not only with a “foreign” culture but with one’s own “culture” which has been made foreign through industrialization. Barong Club presents an interesting twist on Hood’s bi-musicality model. In its classical sense, “bi-musicality” suggests that learning another culture’s music will provide insights into that “Other” tradition. For members of Barong Club, learning and performing Balinese music is equally a means for Japanese artists to engage with Japanese cultural heritage.

*Terang Bulan*

In addition to running her own private studio, and teaching classes at Otonomori, Motoko Sakurada also runs a professional group, *Terang Bulan.* They perform regularly throughout the year and all participating musicians and dancers are paid for their participation. Most of Terang Bulan’s members also teach Balinese music or dance at other private studios and have their own performance ensembles. The emergence and increased prevalence of these professional ensembles marks a turning point in the development of the Balinese performing arts in Japan.66 These groups appeal to audiences that are savvy to Bali and the aesthetics of

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65 Sakurada cited three inspirations for the name of the group (which translates as “clear moon”). First, she likes the moon. Second, there is another by Javanese composer Gesang Martohartono of the same name, and third they also a popular roadside dessert of the same name in Indonesia.

66 By professional, I do not mean that the musicians rely on this as their primary source of income (although some do). I simply mean to say that these musicians are paid regularly to perform Balinese music or dance.
Balinese music. This expansion has created a niche for the Balinese performing arts community.

*Barong Club* understands fusion as a way to reignite interest in traditional Japanese culture by creatively forging analogies with Balinese traditional culture. Many Japanese artists are experimenting with Balinese aesthetics through contemporary and globalized forms. In 2009, *gamelan* teacher and composer Motoko Sakurada began collaborating with Japanese rock musician Atsushi Sano on a Balinese fusion project that blends elements of Balinese music with J-Pop. Their first album, *A Small Box of Gamelan*, self-consciously merges aspects of traditional Balinese music including intricate and technically challenging interlocking figurations with Sano’s evocative accompaniments on guitar, cello, and vocals.
While some Japanese pop artists have approached Balinese music as a means to diversify their sonic palette, for Sakurada, *gamelan* is her primary mode of artistic expression. She views her work as an exercise in cultural translation. For Sakurada, fusion works have the potential to soften the “otherness” of Balinese music for uninitiated listeners. As a music educator, Sakurada also feels a responsibility to teach audiences about Balinese traditional music during performances. Thus her concerts are often balanced between new fusion works with Sano, traditional instrumental pieces and well-known Balinese dance works like *Telek*, *Cendrawasih*, or *Teruna Jaya*. 
**Gender Padma**

Motoko’s fusion strives to make Balinese music relevant to Japanese audiences by creating new works with Japanese pop aesthetics. However, artists like Ako Mashino approach the notion of fusion from a subtler perspective by performing traditional Balinese works in novel ways. Mashino, an ethnomusicologist with a PhD from Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku has been teaching and performing gamelan since the mid-1990s. Mashino is undoubtedly convinced that Japanese-Balinese Gamelan has evolved into a style in and of itself.

However, according to Mashino her penchant for reimagining Balinese traditional works is often misunderstood by Balinese and non-Japanese audiences. “They just asked me, why did you use pre-existing tunes? Why not compose something new? I don’t know, maybe we were too traditional for them” After a pausing to think about for a few seconds she resumes, “ But the way different pianists interpret tunes by Bach, I think pieces from Sukawati (village) can be reinterpreted…But maybe that’s too different from Balinese thinking.” (Ako Mashino Dec. 2010)

In discussing the matter, she is visibly disappointed. Her teachers seemed to feel that the lack of new melodic material meant a general lack of creativity. At last she says, “maybe its not good to just try and satisfy them.” Mashino’s experience points to an awkwardness in intercultural relationships between Balinese artists and their non-Balinese students. It is an awkwardness that reminds both teacher and student that the “other” isn’t quite getting the message.

**Pesta Kesenian di Asagaya**

Despite instances of intercultural miscommunication, Japanese gamelan artists continue to forge unique associations between Balinese music and Japanese society. Like the
Barong Club example, these events exhibit fusion at a level beyond the musical aesthetics, by drawing analogies between Japanese and Balinese cultural practices. One of my first experiences with such a performance was in August of 2007. That year I was invited by Motoko Sakurada to perform with Terang Bulan at the sixth annual Pesta Kesenian di Asagaya (Asagaya Arts Festival) hosted by a Shinto shrine in the Tokyo area. Each year, the shrine hosts this Balinese performing arts festival as a way of drawing attention to their holiday celebration, tanabata matsuri. The festival features two full days of Balinese music and dance. In 2007, the festival included performances from nearly 20 different groups including one full gamelan gong kebyar, a gamelan joged, and the rarely performed flute ensemble, gamelan gambuh. Of the nearly one hundred performers, nearly all of them were from the Tokyo area and only four were non-Japanese (this includes myself and three Balinese artists).

On this particular year, the two-day festival ended with an hour-long performance by Sakurada’s gong kebyar. In keeping with the sacred context of the event, the group’s founder and director, Motoko Sakurada chose to perform the sacred Balinese dance, rejang dewa, which is typically performed in the devotional contexts at Balinese odalan. This particular rejang is considered so sacred that just thirty years ago, a secular performance by Balinese musicians precipitated a sizable scandal among several Balinese cultural conservatives.

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67 The Indonesian title of the festival playfully refers to the annual Pesta Kesenian Bali or Bali Arts Festival, which is Bali’s most prestigious international performing arts festival. The ethnographic portion of this project was carried out over five trips to Japan between 2007 and 2009. Unless otherwise stated my interviews were conducted in a mixture of Indonesian and English.

68 七夕祭り. Literally, “festival of the seventh evening” this holiday celebrates the annual reunion of two celestial deities on the seventh day of the seventh month on the Japanese calendar.

At a Balinese odalan, rejang may be performed by trained dancers, as well as by women of the community as a form of ritual prayer. In that spirit, the audience members at Asagaya were invited to join the dancers on stage. Surprisingly, nearly one hundred Japanese dancers, dressed in a mixture of Japanese kimono and Balinese pakaian adat (traditional Balinese ceremonial attire) joined the rejang performance. It was clear by the synchronicity of their movements, that they all had studied the dance previously.

In 2007 and 2008, I performed at the Asagaya Arts Festival with Sakurada and was fascinated by the ways in which the whole occasion wedded Balinese and Japanese religious and performance traditions. Like the practice of ngayah at a Balinese odalan, the performers play for free as a form of devotion to the temple. Just as a Balinese group prays before each temple performance, all of the Japanese performers were blessed by a Shinto priest before the show. Having never seen this many non-Balinese performers performing together, I was struck not only by the sheer quantity and quality of the musicians and dancers present, I was also struck by the degree to which performers, audience members, and Asagaya staff were savvy to Balinese performance traditions and aesthetics. The audience members were particularly attuned to the dancers. Of the eighteen groups that performed in 2007, fifteen of them were dance groups. Many of these groups chose to perform rare and esoteric works seldom seen in Bali, outside of one or two villages. The Pesta Kesenian di Asagaya is now in its twelfth season and is a striking example of how the Balinese performing arts are manifesting with a complex awareness of Balinese cultural origins while also striving to make them locally relevant.

70 Some examples from 2007 are Topeng Nikko, and lesser-known versions of Legong Condong (Bedulu), and Jauk (Bualu).
Because of my own background studying Balinese music in the United States, I presumed that most of the musicians and dancers at Asagaya had encountered Balinese music and dance through world music programs at their universities. Surprisingly, only a small minority of them had. Nowadays, the majority of students encounter the Balinese performing arts through privately run studios that are generally not affiliated with a particular academic institution. This aspect of gamelan performance in Japan contrasts sharply with gamelan performance by non-Indonesians in other countries. The aesthetic dimensions of this new pedagogical context are re-shaping the meaning of these art forms in the Japanese popular imagination.

As the tourism industry’s usage of nostalgia suggests, it is both the familiarity and the alterity of the Balinese performing arts that make it so appealing. The relationship between perceptions of cultural distance and a shared cultural past, are manifested complexly in
performances like the Asagaya Arts Festival. The analogy of a Shinto festival as a Balinese odalan is clear. Also, in this performance context, the Balinese concept of devotional performance ngayah, becomes consonant with the Japanese concept of devotional performance, hounou. Yet at the same time it is precisely the festival’s Otherness, its ability to import a domesticated sense of Balinese exoticism that is its largest selling point. While these large-scale economic and cultural shifts are critical to understanding the development of the Balinese performing arts in Japan, it is important to keep in mind that such priorities are absent from the minds of many of its practitioners.

**Gendering Balinese Music**

Further study into this vibrant and idiosyncratic musical sub-culture would necessitate a more detailed ethnographic approach in order to capture the varying perspectives and motivations of Japanese performers. This might also help us understand more about the particular Japanese communities, that are most inspired to study Balinese music and dance. Many of the groups, I visited and performed with the vast majority of performers are women. Their ages typically range from the early twenties to late-forties. What makes the Balinese performing arts compelling to this particular demographic? In casual conversation, many performers (female and male) indicate that because Japanese men are expected to work full-time, they do not have time to pursue the arts as seriously as women. This provides interesting counterpoint to gamelan practice in Bali, which remains a largely male-dominated arena.\(^7\)

In fact, I initially postulated that the “masculinity” of Balinese gamelan may be an element of its appeal to Japanese female performers. At the time, I was travelling to Japan, many if not most female Japanese performers of chose to dress and perform in Balinese male

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\(^7\) For more detailed discussion on gender and Balinese music see Willner 1992, Susilo 1998, Bakan 1999, and Downing 2008
traditional clothing or *pakaian adat* (a literal form of “ethno drag”). One might argue that in doing so they are trying to recreate Balinese performance aesthetics. However this is not the case in Bali. In Bali, female musicians perform in female *pakaian adat*. My initial reaction was to posit that these women enjoyed performing in a male gendered persona because it allowed them to embody certain attitudes and behaviors that may not be deemed culturally appropriate otherwise. In doing so, I was taking cues from Deborah Wong’s classic article on *taiko* and the “Asian-American body,” implying that Japanese women use Balinese *gamelan* performance as a means of subverting the restrictive cultural roles handed to women in contemporary Japanese society.

While I was quite convinced that my argument sound, this thesis was met with little enthusiasm by the Japanese women I interviewed. Most female performers insisted that they perform in Balinese male clothing for purely practical reasons, citing that female *pakaian adat* is prohibitively constrictive. Female *pakaian adat* includes a corset and a relatively tight blouse, called *kebaya*. Also, a woman’s *kain* is typically worn so tightly that sitting cross-legged is nearly impossible. In one email conversation, *gamelan* teacher and ethnomusicologist Ako Mashino commented that Japanese women’s use of male *pakaian* may have less to do Japanese gender roles and more to do with Japanese views of *gamelan* as gendered male.

... *gamelan* players might regard male *pakaian adat* as <a> costume for *gamelan* performance, rather than as <a> ‘costume for men’. I just remembered how I felt when I wore *pakaian* for my first performance. Most of the Japanese *gamelan* players including beginners (such as me 20 years ago) know that it is for men, but almost all Balinese *gamelan* players are actually men. At that time, I had never seen any female *gamelan* musicians. It was so natural for me to wear male costume as "*gamelan* costume." I wasn't conscious that I was "disguised" or "wore drag," as a man. Rather, I felt I was in "drag" as a *penabuh* (*gamelan* player) in the male *pakaian-adat* costume.” (Ako Mashino, email communication, Dec 27, 2010)
For Mashino, the real disguise is assuming the identity of a *gamelan* musician. In doing so, she illustrates two important points. The first is that for many Japanese students as “beginners” Balinese *gamelan* is perceived as a predominantly masculine tradition. The second is that the identity one assumes through Balinese *pakaian adat* is coded more by race than by gender. As an ethnomusicologist, Mashino is aware of the kinds of discussions these performance practices are likely to inspire. When interviewed, she quite deftly anticipated the conclusions that I was hoping draw by picking up on cues from my line of questioning. For example, when asked if there was an additional appeal to performing as a man beyond the Balinese context, she quickly acknowledged Deborah Wong’s work and remarked that the *pakaian adat* situation is not comparable. In Wong’s argument *taiko* is a means for Asian-American women to combat negative cultural stereotypes through the embodiment of a “masculine” Japanese art-form (Wong 2000). In Wong’s case, the masculinity of *taiko* takes precedence over its *Japaneseness*. For Mashino however, to abstract “masculinity” from the “Balineseness” of *gamelan* would be to remove its defining component.

I asked many Japanese performers if they felt that Balinese music was inherently masculine. A few said yes. Most ducked the question. While few were willing to say it outright, many women described feeling “marked” when studying and performing in Bali. Many felt that as women, they could not participate fully in the social world of *gamelan* performance. This has literal as well as figurative manifestations. For example, when menstruating women are not permitted to attend *odalan or ngayah*. However, in Japan, they are free to create a musical/social environment that places femininity at the center rather than the periphery.
There were Japanese female performers who describe tapping into an intangible masculine power when they perform in male *pakaian adat*. Motoko Sakurada described this sense of power as form of *taksu* (Balinese spiritual energy). Sakurada is also the first non-Balinese musician to create an all-female Balinese music and dance group (*Terang Bulan-f*). They completed a successful tour Bali in the summer of 2009, which included only Japanese female performers and was one of the first Japanese *gamelan* performances to perform entirely in Balinese *female pakaian adat*.

**Conclusions**

Japan’s performance-based approach to *gamelan* studies contrasts with the world music program model in that it deemphasizes context. This decontextualized approach to the Balinese performing arts allows for its application to cultural contexts that are typically inaccessible to academic musics. For example, a Japanese promoter recently commissioned Balinese composers to create *gamelan* versions of popular Christmas carols for distribution in record stores throughout the country. In another example of Japanese indigenization of the Balinese performing arts, Japanese dancer and musician, Koyano Tetsuro was in negotiations with a well-known Japanese gym franchise to design an aerobics class based exclusively on the movements of Balinese dance. In this case, individual movements would be abstracted not only from their performance contexts but also from the context of the dances themselves. These movements would then be reconstituted into an effective workout.

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73 This project was organized by I Dewa Ketut Alit and his wife Aya Sakuma in December of 2007 in Bali. It is still in production.
74 For financial reasons, the project never materialized.
These and similar projects are occasionally understood as crass imitations by musicians in Bali and abroad. Such projects are often met with a kind of “B-movie” curiosity among North American gamelan musicians. These affective responses may speak to lingering stereotypes in American culture about Japan as a “weightless artificial satellite;” (Buell 1994) with a, “genius for simulacra” (Baudrillard 1988). This perpetuates an assumption that Japanese artists appropriate musics, traditions, and cultural practices without any apparent concern for the “authenticity” of cultural origins.\(^{75}\) As an example, some interpret the Japanese emphasis on musical accuracy and technical precision as a focus on the mechanical. This assumes that high performance standards represent an indifference towards intangible Balinese musical concepts like rasa (feeling) and bayu (energy). The fact that Japanese studio classes on Balinese music and dance do not explicitly teach culture and history of Bali might appear to support such an understanding.

My experiences in Japan tell a different story. Nearly all of the students both in the Yokohama Gamelan and Otonomori had begun travelling regularly to Bali after only one or two years of study. In conversing with these musicians, my lack of proficiency in Japanese was a non-issue because almost all of the musicians had a working knowledge of the Indonesian. The relative ease with which Japanese artists can travel to Bali perhaps makes up for any lack of formal education on Bali as a place. Although most performers are hobbyists, more serious students may begin studying the intricacies of the Balinese language, Balinese calendar and Hinduism.\(^{76}\) It is also not uncommon for dancers to study making daily offerings. For such people, tapping into the extra-artistic realm of Balinese experience augments their understandings of Bali and of “Balineseness”.

\(^{75}\) This has also been discussed with respect to Japanese jazz artists see Atkins 2001.

\(^{76}\) I have met several serious gamelan hobbyists whose knowledge of Balinese culture, language, and religion could easily put an ethnomusicologist to shame.
While performers are unified in their commitment to Balinese arts, their approaches to Balinese music are multiple. As Japanese artists’ lives become increasingly engaged by the performance of Balinese music, they must wrestle with both internal and external perceptions that assume a basic inauthenticity to performances of Balinese music and dance by non-Balinese. Therefore artists, audiences, and promoters must position themselves within a particular relationship to the notion of a Balinese “authentic” that is always-already separate from their innate “Japoneseness”.

There are various means by which artists cope with this relationship. Some Japanese artists commit themselves to more than the study of Balinese music and dance. In many cases, they commit to a range of social, symbolic and non-musical behaviors understood to be meaningful parts to, Balinesness. Such extra-musical endeavors may be expressed through varying degrees of formality. This is further complicated by issues of gender and performance. The majority of Balinese gamelan musicians in Japan are female. Yet, the Balinese “identity” to which many artists aspire is clearly gendered male. As many female artists admit, all of their musical “idols” are male. This tension is negotiated in various ways through differences in codes of dress and demeanor in Bali and in Japan. In this way, female musicians also express an ambivalence towards the perception that Balinese music is endowed with inherently masculine qualities.

However, to make sense of how Japanese performers creatively interact with the Balinese performing arts, it seems incorrect to assume that Bali is always the “original.” Such an interpretation demeans variations or creative understandings of Balinese music and dance as “mistakes” dilutions and perversions. This is perhaps one disadvantage to academic models of world music study because it relies on assumptions that endorse a certain configuration of ethnic or local propriety over the music being studied. In university
performance classes, there is an assumption of geographic fixity. We assume that music and
dance traditions belong to a specific place and as if they are inherent qualities of a specific
people. Furthermore it is assumed that these places and peoples are different from you.

This is the major disadvantage to approaching world music through academic
contexts, or indeed any context, which claims a certain authenticity. With any claim to
authenticity, there is an assumption of fixity. The music belongs to another place. As such,
students are alienated from the music they perform, a priori. Scholars like Amy Gutmann and
Charles Taylor (1994) describe this as a double bind produced through the ideology of liberal
multiculturalism. Individuals are told to identify with traditions, cultures, and musics as
equals while remaining persistently cognizant of cultural difference. Thus we are handed a
seemingly paradoxical injunction of simultaneous identification and alienation.

This is not necessarily the case with the Japanese examples. In many ways, Balinese
music and dance are made more accessible and thus more local meaningful through their de-
contextualization and commodification. The relationship of the tradition to an “other” place is
deemphasized and hence allows the performers to create their own meaningful connections
between the art form and their unique social and cultural background. Balinese dance is great
exercise. Why not teach it at a local gym?

Looking at the development of the Balinese performing arts in Japan from colonial era
cabaret revues of the 1940’s to present day Balinese dance aerobics, we see how in some ways
the more things change, the more they stay the same. The ability of Japanese tourism to
sustain a massive presence in Bali, as well its ability to consume and indigenize Balinese
cultural commodities is at least partially enabled by Japan’s renewed desire for cultural and
economic prominence in Asia. However, zooming in from these supercultural movements, we
notice musicians and dancers of varying skill sets and artistic backgrounds drawn to the
Balinese performing arts as something that begs to be made compatible with their local identity.

In Japan, the transplanting and redevelopment of Balinese cultural forms operates with an idiosyncratic history that manifests in complex, multivalent ways. I mentioned at the beginning of this article that the emergence of Balinese music and dance in Japan could be understood as a local music gone global. However, it should also illustrate that such binaries limit our understanding of how music operates within and across cultures. While certain Japanese understandings about “Bali” come to bear on the performance of Balinese music and dance in Japan, the culture of the Balinese tradition also changes as it moves to new geographic contexts and in this sense becomes “relocalized”. In Bali, the performing arts carry powerful resonances that are intimately related to experiences of religion, social order, as well as history and cultural identity. In the same way, the Balinese performing arts carry very different resonances for Japanese performers as it is connects to a unique social and political history. Beyond Japan, musicians from around the world are being inspired by the Balinese performing arts. This inspiration compels musicians to bring their own localities to bear on the tradition in form of eclectic compositions and intercultural collaborations. In this sense the Balinese performing arts are now infused with diverse localities that each relate to an idea of “Bali” in different ways. Together these relocalized gamelan traditions spawn new works that are at once beautiful, personal, and strange.
CHAPTER 6: Hybridity and *Kebalian* in the Balinese Arts: Historical Debates

**Ubud**

Present day Ubud storefronts behave with the indeterminacy of a loosely tended garden. If viewed through time-lapse photography, the cityscape would show a waxing and waning kaleidoscope of spas, boutiques and *warung* (food stalls) reacting in dialogue with the changing winds of the tourist climate. Yet while businesses come and go, storefronts tend not to remain empty for very long. Droves of naïve tourists (I was once myself among them) arrive to Ubud with dreams of the pre-modern paradise seen in films and popular media. Many are sorely disappointed with the view. Or perhaps through a willful suspension of disbelief, they imagine the Bali of their dreams still playing itself out deep in the recesses of an anonymous alleyway or in the faraway mists of a neighboring village. On Ubud’s main street (*jalan raya*) near the central market, the streets are nearly always congested, over-packed with both domestic and international tour buses. Recently such congestion persists whether it is high tourist season or not. Ralph Lauren, Billabong, and Starbucks line the sidewalks and tourists are pursued by the incessant call of freelance taxi drivers (“Transpoort!!”) while being offered polite invitations to several of the over forty nightly tourist performances.

At one level, Ubud might appear littered with contradictions where tradition and tourism based consumer culture collide. However, beneath the consumer-driven façade, Ubud residents take great pride in the maintenance of a stalwart “Balineseness” (*kebalian*). Despite the excesses of a demanding and unpredictable tourist economy, Ubud remains one of few urban centers where Balinese youths, teenagers and young adults still speak Balinese (*basa*)
By comparison, bahasa gaul (trendy, urban slang spoken by Jakartan youths and promulgated through popular media) has become the dialect of choice among younger Balinese living in urban and suburban areas.

While Bali has maintained a thriving tourist economy since the 1920s, the tourism infrastructure grew exponentially following two economic restructuring initiatives by the Suharto regime during the late 1960s and early 1970s. During this “New Order” period, Balinese tourism grew nearly twenty-fold. And from the end of the New Order to the present, the industry has continued to expand yet another twenty times. This growth was temporarily halted in 2002 after two terrorist bombings in the resort city of Kuta. As mentioned earlier, these terrible events led many to reflect upon the unintended cultural, environmental, and spiritual consequences of nearly forty years of rampant development. From these sentiments, emerged the “Ajeg Bali” movement which, as we will see, presents a loosely connected set of discourses calling for a return to “traditional” Balinese values while also warning of the dangers of outside influence (akulturasi).

Bali’s simultaneous openness to tourism and defensiveness against encroaching foreign ideologies has led some scholars to describe 21st century Bali as an “open fortress.” (Schulte-Nordholt 2008). This ambivalence sheds some light on the ambiguity of contemporary cultural performance in Bali. It illustrates that touristic Bali and the “real” Bali are not mutually exclusive. Or at the very least, they are not as mutually exclusive as theories of “boundary maintenance” suggest. Bali for itself and Bali for the ‘Other’ are inextricably intertwined. Within this context, fusion performance emerges as a contribution to ongoing debates concerning Balinese cultural identity. They posit Balineseness as a complex hybridization of tradition and modernity informed by political and economic interests at local, national and transnational levels.
The following two chapters bring this examination of Balinese musical hybridity back to its geographic origin. In it, we explore Balinese fusion musics, which cover a broad range of aesthetics from market-driven, popular musics (*pop Bali*) to academic and elite forms like *musik kontemporar*. While radically different in form and intent, all of these musics self-consciously wed notions of “Balinesness” to the “foreign.” Diverse motivations inform these processes. However I argue that the emergence and prevalence of contemporary Balinese fusion musics is enabled in part by shifts in political authority brought on at the end of the New Order following Indonesia’s political and economic reformation (*reformasi*). The *reformasi* altered the ways in which cultural identity is engaged in social discourse in both direct and indirect ways. Specifically, discourse on Balinese identity has moved away from the nationalist (stressing a unified Indo/Malay heritage) and regionalist (stressing a uniform, Hindu-Balinese identity) rhetoric. Instead, in both public cultural discourse and performance, Bali is now celebrated for its culturally diverse and cosmopolitan roots. This discourse presents a road map for successfully negotiating the politics and pitfalls of intercultural encounters in the 21st century.
The Case For Identity

This chapter discusses the role of “hybridity” in Balinese cultural discourse from the early 20th through the first decade of the 21st centuries. This is meant to provide political and historical context for Chapter 7, which looks at contemporary Balinese fusion music by Balinese composers. As forms of cultural discourse, fusion works present a reflexive commentary on the evolving role of hybridity and cosmopolitanism in contemporary Balinese culture. As we will see, recent political changes have dramatically altered the ways in which Balinese artists are able to conceptualize “the hybrid” in public discourse. While notions of hybridity and intercultural interaction were actively policed by various regimes from the colonial era through the end of the Suharto presidency, there is now an increased emphasis on
Bali’s inherent multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism. While the state of contemporary Balinese culture is still hotly contested by both artists and Balinese cultural pundits, the growing popularity of “intentional” hybrid musics indicate that Bali’s inherent hybridity is becoming an accepted and popularized ideal.

This chapter deals extensively with indigenous discourse on Balinese “identity.” Recently, some have argued that ethnomusicologists take identity for granted “as a category of social life and social analysis” (Rice 2007: 20). In response to these criticisms, I feel compelled to clarify my own usage of the term before moving on. Rice critiques the tendency for ethnomusicologists to engage “identity” without first situating it clearly within the discourse. He cites numerous examples from the society journal, *Ethnomusicology* wherein authors employ the term “identity” without any reference to its prior usage in the field. Although authors occasionally cite sources outside of ethnomusicology, for Rice this is nevertheless indicative of a “structural weakness” in our discipline (Rice 2009: 324).

Generally, I use the terms “identity” and “Balineseness,” to maintain continuity with my Balinese counterparts. However, I also use the term following its usage by scholars in cultural studies and ethnomusicology, namely Stuart Hall and Tom Turino. Stuart Hall defines cultural identity as unstable “the points of identification” made “within the discourses of history and culture” (Hall 1997: 226). As such, Hall frames cultural identity as both politically and historically motivated. In this respect, discourse on cultural identity emerges in response to particular political and historical issues and ought not be treated as a universal or abstract phenomenon. Borrowing from Hall’s description of identity, I discuss how Balinese cultural pundits position ‘identity’ in accordance with and opposition to specific political, social, and economic concerns.

Following Turino, I also understand identity as an inevitably idiosyncratic. Turino
describes identification as a dialectical process between the individual and their social experience (Turino 2008: 3). He describes this process as both voluntary and involuntary. It is voluntary in that individuals may ‘self-edit.’ We may self-select what musics to enjoy and what musics we allow to represent our “selves” to the larger public. However at the same time, identity is involuntary because we cannot control how such “edited” identities will be perceived. Roles and responsibilities are often projected upon individuals, irrespective of their explicit intentions.

Turino’s description of voluntary and involuntary identity formation runs parallel to two prominent ethnomusicological arguments about hybridity and intercultural interaction. For example, Slobin’s “affinity group” model highlights voluntary aspects of music subculture identification. This voluntary status is conditioned, in part by economic privilege, which grants individuals the financial freedom to participate in certain musical scenes. Viewed through postcolonial studies, musical identities are also policed by powerful interests, be they corporate, governmental, or academic. In Bali, political conditions have greatly influenced the role of hybridity in Balinese cultural discourse. Under certain political and ideological regimes, hybridity has been conceptualized as incommensurable with an “authentic” Balineseness. Efforts to preserve this authenticity can be found in innumerable attempts to shield Bali from the “corrosive” influences of outsiders.

In past chapters, I have focused on the myriad ways in which European, North American and Japanese scholars have interpreted, appropriated and reconstructed “Balineseness” in their work. As discussed in both Chapters 1 and 2, foreign scholars often rely on an assumed coherence of Balinese cultural identity and Balinese cultural authenticity. This Balineseness is presented in opposition to similarly reified constructions of “Western” culture. However, in Balinese cultural discourse, pundits frequently express diverse opinions
concerning the function, purpose, and indeed the very substance of *kebalian*. As we will explore, there is rarely a unified definition for Balineseness that all parties can agree on. Local discourse on Balinese identity is contentious subject in both formal and informal contexts, ranging from late-night discussions to political debates. However, in most cases, identity discourse emerges in response to specific cultural and political issues. From the colonial era to the present day, the definition and reification of Balinese identity can be viewed as an overtly political act. These conversations wax, wane and resurface periodically. And they often reach a crescendo as Bali struggles for incorporation into wider polities (Hough 2000: 88).

Emma Baulch locates two “dichotomous” modes by which members of the Balinese community engage a discourse of *kebalian* (Baulch 2007). The first of these modes describes Balinese identity formation with respect cultural tourism during the 1970s (see also Vickers 1989 and Picard 1999). Picard describes this *kebalian* as a “reflexive essentialization” which is aimed to meet touristic demand. Picard traces the roots of this discourse to colonial-era publications by Dutch-educated Balinese living in north Bali during the 1920s. Through these publications and in dialogue with other streams of nationalist thought, Balinese intellectuals developed a contemporary concept of “culture” (*kebudayaan*). In earlier work, nationalist intellectuals preferred the term “*perabadan*” (civilization), which itself was an indigenization of the Dutch word “*cultuur*.” It is important to mention that in all cases, early versions of the “culture” concept were associated with forms of “high art” and thus reinforced class-based assumptions concerning “civilized” and “uncivilized” cultural forms (Picard 1999: 16).

Vickers locates another stream of discourse on *kebalian* that emerged following the mass murders of 1965, during which many Balinese were killed for allegedly supporting “communist” agendas including land reform and ending the caste system. In the wake of
these murders, discourse on *kebalian* emerged as an elite discourse emphasizing both Hindu religiosity and conservative social values. Thus, according to Vickers, *kebalian* emerged as a “symptom of terror” experienced by Balinese too afraid to voice their opposition to the ruling classes (Vickers in Baulch 2007: 43). There are some meaningful parallels between this discourse and the contemporary *Ajeg Bali* movement. *Ajeg Bali* also encourages a return to conservative social values and likewise emerged in response to acts of terror.

**Hybridity in Precolonial and Colonial Bali**

Scholars often define the history of Balinese performing arts traditions through three epochs, each characterized by intercultural interactions. They are defined as *Tua* (old, pre-Majapahit), *Madya* (Majapahit) and *Baru* (colonial, and post-colonial). 77 Each epoch is defined by Bali’s relationship to another foreign body. *Tua* musics were performed prior to the installation of Majapahit rule. *Madya* refers to Majapahit-era traditions and *Baru* describes musical developments from the Dutch colonialism to the present day. Read this way, fusion and hybridity are intrinsic to Balinese music history and is not simply a recent product of modernity and globalization. This is not a new point, but it is worth mentioning because Bali’s inherent hybridity is often deemphasized. When acknowledged, it is more often framed as “resilience” in the face of acculturation. This also relates to colonial-era ethnography that describes Balinese culture as self-contained and apolitical. This thesis of cultural solipsism belies the continued importance of intercultural interaction in developing Balinese cultural forms.

A few scholars have addressed hybridity in Balinese “traditional” music indirectly. Michael Tenzer uses the term, “*topic class*” to describe ways in which composers mix and

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match references to different Balinese musical genres in *gamelan gong kebyar* (Tenzer 2000: 163). McGraw has discussed the ways in which Balinese experimental composers engage in cosmopolitan musical aesthetics (McGraw 2005). There has been less discussion concerning Balinese appropriations of Western and other non-Western musics in the early 20th century and before. These examples help illustrate the extent to which Balinese arts were already blended with other musical forms prior to Dutch colonization and globalization.

The *gambuh* composition, *Sumambang Jawa* may be one of the earliest examples of a Balinese “proto-fusion.” The piece overtly evokes otherness through its title (a reference to the neighboring island of Java). *Gambuh* is considered one of Bali’s oldest theatrical traditions, emerging under the patronage of Balinese courts following the establishment of *Majapahit* rule. In the *gambuh* drama, *Sumambang Jawa* accompanies the *Raja Putri* (King’s Daughter) and as such, it is clearly meant to evoke a highly refined, or “alus” sensibility. The association of Javaneseness with “refinedness” aligns well with other alus characters in Balinese theatre. The *Majapahit* empire was centrally located in Java before it came to Bali. As such, Java was the “homeland” for the *Majapahit* aristocracy.

This piece is well known in Bali and is exceptionally long and difficult to learn.\(^{78}\) The core melody (*pokok*) is considered an archetypal example of the rare Balinese mode, *lebeng* (Vitale 2002: 13). While most pieces in both the *gambuh* and *semar pegulingan* repertoires make use of five-tone modes, *lebeng* is the only mode that does not conform neatly to any of the others. *Lebeng* melodies may even use all seven pitches of the *tetekep* system.\(^{79}\) In this

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\(^{78}\) In its *gambuh* form, the piece is attributed to “Pedungan” style. In dramatic contexts it is used to accompany the king’s daughter (Formaggia 2000).

\(^{79}\) While the *Majapahit* tuning system uses five tone modes known as *tetekep* (referring to the closing of holes on the bamboo flutes). There is another “pre-Majapahit” system that consists of five-tone modes known as *saih* (rows). This is the modal system associated with *selonding* and *gong luang*. I Wayan Sinti has done some work reconstructing ancient Balinese tuning systems with his ensemble, *Gamelan Manikasanti* (Sanger and Sinti 2007).
way, *lebeng* is a kind of “anti-mode” because it is defined negatively by its lack of adherence to other modes. As Vitale mentions, such pieces are rare. And some Balinese artists have speculated that its rare and “unclassifiable” modal structure may be a reflection of the otherness it is meant to evoke. Of course, it is impossible to know beyond speculation as the piece has been in circulation for several hundred years.

The Dutch colonial conquest brought swift and dramatic cultural change to Bali in the mid-19th century. The effects of Dutch rule were evident in north Bali as early as 1849. After entering north Bali, Dutch authorities initially deposed the Balinese courts. From there, came a rapid “democratization/decentralization” of culture and the arts (Herbst 2011: 7). This also spurred an intense period of artistic experimentation that extended well into the 20th century. These experiments culminated with the genesis of the now iconic, *gamelan gong kebyar*. Balinese scholar, I Wayan Simpen describes some of these innovations in a letter to the Bali Post. According to Simpen, several north Balinese villages were locked in fierce competition, each trying to outdo the other’s virtuosity (Simpen 1979). He describes multi-day performances of music, dance, and intoned liturgical recitation (*kekawin*). Over time, groups began to experiment with tuning and instrumentation, gradually expanding the melodic range of the instruments. Such innovations allowed for more expansive melodies and more “impressive” *kotekan* (ibid).

In political terms, some contemporary Balinese composers characterize the birth of *kebyar* as a “rebellion,” against the austerity of court musics. For artists like I Dewa Ketut Alit, north Bali’s increased interaction with foreign traders and colonists led to musical changes in terms of both instrumentation and orchestration that reflect an enhanced sense of

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80 I Made Bandem p.c.
81 See Herbst 2011 for a detailed description of *kebyar* during the early 20th century.
82 Thanks to Ed Herbst for kindly forwarding me a scanned copy of this letter.
83 I Dewa Ketut Alit p.c.
individuality. He cites the emergence of a lead *gangsa* instrument “ugal” as well as new orchestrational conventions meant to highlight each family of instruments with the ensemble (*reyongan, kendangan, gegenderan*, etc) particular examples.\(^\text{84}\) According to Alit, *kebyar* was radically different from earlier musics. For example, *Tua* era ensembles like *selonding, gambang*, and *gender wayang* do not have separate, “lead” instruments at all.\(^\text{85}\) Earlier court musics, also make use of the “lead” instruments but their prominence was greatly increased with the advent of *kebyar*. By contrast, *kebyar* famously displays both exuberance as well as an almost militant reliance on certain musical “leaders” who are often featured as soloists.

Read politically, *kebyar* was a radical statement against the hegemony of the feudal courts made possible through cultural and political changes brought on through the advent of colonialism. This interpretation posits the birth of the *kebyar* genre as a powerful moment where musical hybridity opened a new space for Balinese artists to incorporate new cultural influences, inspired by major political changes brought on through intercultural interaction.

In 1906 and 1908, the Dutch completed their conquest of Bali with their attack on the Balinese courts in Klungkung and Badung. Rather than face military defeat, the royal families from each court famously met the encroaching Dutch forces and summarily committed mass suicide. These two *puputan* marked the end of the *Majapahit* dynasties and the beginning of total Dutch control over Bali. During the early years of the occupation, the Dutch justified their military intervention as a philanthropic gesture meant to preserve Balinese culture and prevent further “contamination” by outside influences. The Dutch accomplished this by effectively separating Bali into two ethnicities, one that was “authentic” and one that was not. This perception of Balinese culture was strategically reinforced by Dutch anthropological

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84 I Dewa Ketut Alit p.c.
85 Of course, in performance these ensembles often rely on a single player for cues. However the stratification of these roles becomes less relevant within groups of experienced musicians of similar skill.
work from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Dutch scholars (particularly H.N. Van der Tuuk and F.A. Liefrinck) were instrumental in creating a vision for Balinese culture that alienated the Balinese aristocracy.

Van der Tuuk and F.A. Liefrinck were both in Bali in the late 19th century. Adrian Vickers describes Van der Tuuk as an eccentric intellectual born in Malacca (Malaysia), and who spent much of his life in the colonies (Vickers 1989). He travelled to Bali in 1870 to study Balinese culture. Afterwards, Van der Tuuk argued staunchly against missionary attempts to convert the Balinese to Christianity. His greatest concern was that the Dutch missionary presence would slowly erode the unique culture of the island (Vickers 1989: 83). Van der Tuuk’s emphasis on Balinese cultural “uniqueness” remains present in contemporary discussions of Balinese identity by both Balinese, and foreigner’s alike.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, F.A. Liefrinck, following the work of English explorer Thomas Stamford Raffles, posited Bali’s “true” societal structure as a network of autonomous and egalitarian “village republics” (Bali Aga). Several contemporary historians have critiqued Liefrinck’s scholarship for its political ramifications. According to Vickers, Liefrinck’s village republic helped justify the Dutch dissolution of the court system by framing it as a “foreign” relic of Javanese colonization (Vickers 1989: 89). The Hindu-Balinese courts were thus placed at odds with “authentic” Balinese character and the Balinese royalty were caste as foreign (Javanese) usurpers. This also provided a rationale for Dutch intervention. Liefrinck writes, “A Balinese kingdom, especially one not under Dutch control was… ‘nothing more than an agglomeration of villages’ (Liefrinck in Vickers 1989: 90). In Liefrinck’s view, the village republic needed Dutch rule to protect them from the non-indigenous Balinese kings. Liefrinck’s recommendation was for further Dutch intervention.
‘to simplify the village administration and return it to its original state.’ (Lefrinck in Vickers 1989: 92).

However, the Dutch soon realized that a democratic and rapidly modernizing Bali would eventually destabilize Dutch hegemony throughout the region. As Robinson writes, “Bali was important not only in itself but also as a force to be employed in the larger colonial effort to staunch the flow of political change in the Indies.” (Robinson 1995: 38) As such, the Dutch later reinstated the aristocracy during the 1920’s by offering them manageably high positions within the colonial bureaucracy (Robinson 1995). Through these interventions, the Dutch also strengthened the boundaries of the caste system. This was done to keep the majority of Balinese citizens from seeking social empowerment. Again, the Dutch were able to accomplish this through a discourse of “returning” Balinese traditions to their “original” state.

It is important to note that this “manufactured” Balinese tradition was aggressively debated by Balinese citizens. Differences of opinion were drawn starkly along caste lines. Lower caste (sudra) largely protested the Dutch provisions outlawing inter-caste marriage, and fines for the inappropriate use of the Balinese language while high caste (triwangsa) Balinese tended to support them. This polemic was comprehensively documented in political debates between the sudra newspaper Surja Kanta and the triwangsa newspaper Bali Adynana (Putra 2011: 33). These fierce cultural debates raged throughout the 1920s. Not surprisingly, the sudras were heavily outspent by the Dutch-sponsored triwangsa. Eventually the sudras relented.

There was a second Dutch initiative to “Balinize” Balinese society in 1935. This infamous Baliseering project was again initiated under the guise of “restoring” Balinese tradition to its roots by weeding out the invasive foreign influences. As one Dutch official
wrote, “Bali would not be defenselessly exposed to the influences from outside.” (Robinson 1995: 42). In particular, the Dutch government was increasingly concerned that nationalist, Islamist, and communist ideologies were seeping in from the neighboring island of Java. During Baliseering, Dutch officials placed strict regulations on inter-caste marriage, as well as language use. These policies forced rigid codes of conduct in an effort to curb the tide of Balinese modernization partially introduced by the Dutch themselves.

Music and the Colonial Period

Aside from the emergence of kebyar, there are several known examples of Balinese hybrid musics from the colonial period. These fusions range from simple melodic borrowings to the creation of new performing arts genres based on European models. The Malay theatre genre **stamboel** was reportedly first performed in Bali during the late 19th century (Putra 2008: 88). While **stamboel** was quite popular in other parts of the archipelago, documentation implies that most Balinese performances were confined to the North. According to Putra, there was also at least one troupe operating in Bali around this time, located at “Stamboel Hall” in the Balinese city of Singaraja (ibid: 94). This contemporary theatre genre emerged along with several other European-inspired theatrical forms combined with traditional Balinese gamelan as the primary musical accompaniment. The Dutch-inspired, **Tonil** also involved scripted plays and incorporated “modern” Indonesian codes of dress including pants for men and kebaya for woman.

The Balinese theatrical genre, **janger** also experienced widespread popularity with both Balinese and foreign audiences from the 1920s through the mid-20th century. According to foreign scholars, **janger** like the famous kecak has roots in the vocal accompaniment to religious possession rituals called sanghyang (Spies and DeZoete 1937). However recent Indonesian scholars place equal if not greater emphasis on **janger**’s relationship to genres of
Malay theatre inspired by European theatrical forms (Dibia 2004). During the colonial period, foreign scholars wrote critically of janger’s “European” influences. For example, Spies and DeZoete write,

“Djanger, which has as respectable a religious origin as any dance in Bali, has been caught up in the train of the Malay opera, and made to serve as a frame for a curious oriento-european bastard known as Stamboel, which has introduced various very ‘modeeren’ features to the Balinese stage, stockings, football shorts, and jerseys, spectacles, the reach-me-down with all its accessories.” (Spies and DeZoete 1938: 214).

In speaking of one particular performance they critique Balinese appropriations of purportedly ‘modeeren’ techniques more broadly.

“This curious spectacle, fascinating in its absurdity, raises rather acutely the question of style. The Balinese, deprived of his tradition, seems to have no style at all. He is not left with Nature, but simply inexplicable gaucherie which is the more unnerving since no Balinese in life is ever gauche. The curious hybrid called Komedie is certainly rehearsed and must correspond to a conception of something fitting to the characters who take part in it. Why are they so entirely without emphasis, as limp as a bit of unstarched linen? They can neither sit nor walk nor stand still. Their limbs seem not to belong to them. They speak in muted lifeless tones. They have, in short not the faintest idea of producing themselves” (ibid: 215-216).

While touristic performances of janger aimed to meet touristic demand with an emphasis on the sacred, community performances were raucous, hybrid affairs. These events with their overt political ramifications, apparently fell on the relatively deaf ears of foreign scholars at the time, who were too preoccupied with their own conceptions of Balinese character to notice that this “gaucherie” was in all likelihood, a mockery of Dutch authorities and Westerners in general. For example, the “master of ceremonies” in many janger is the daag, a clown-like character dressed a mock military uniform. Janger reached the height of its popularity in the 1950s and early 1960s when it became an influential platform for both the nationalist (PNI) and communist parties (PKI).
Following the Japanese occupation of Indonesia (1941), Japanese officers sought to eradicate the Dutch influences present in theatrical genres like *stamboel* and *tonil*. They were thus replaced with *sandiwara*. *Sandiwara* was largely developed as a form of cultural propaganda, in order to reinforce and disseminate pro-Japanese ideologies. Rather than use *gamelan* or Western music (as in *stamboel*), *sandiwara* was a combination of Japanese military bands, acrobatics, improvised Balinese comedy and Japanese folksongs (Putra 2008: 96). The Japanese imperial government also commissioned well-known Indonesian nationalists to write popular songs in support of the Japanese war effort (Yuliantri 2010: 421). While it is clear that modern performing arts genres were both nurtured and directed by political interests, these art forms were also powerful vehicles for negotiating cultural changes brought about through concomitant processes of colonization and modernization (Putra 2008: 86).

![Figure 16: Kecak performers in a Balinese janger wearing tennis shoes (Covarrubias 1937: 253)](image)

During the Second World War, several Balinese composers adapted Dutch and Japanese musical elements into their *gamelan* compositions. Because many of these works
are now canonic gamelan pieces, their hybrid roots are largely unacknowledged by Balinese audiences in contemporary performance. For that reason, they are perhaps more remarkable because their “hybrid” nature has blended so seamlessly into Balinese tradition. During the 1920s and 1930s, composer and choreographer I Nyoman Kaler incorporated Japanese military songs into the musical accompaniment for the Balinese dances Candra Metu, and Panji Semirang. Due to the popularity of sandiwara during the Japanese occupation, it is likely that Kaler picked up these tunes while either watching or performing with sandiwara troupes.

I Wayan Lotring was another composer to blend foreign material with Balinese gamelan. Lotring work for gamelan pelegongan is acclaimed throughout Bali. Many of this works consciously evoke otherness through stylistic imitation. While some of his works borrow locally by imitating the melodic contours and elaboration styles of other Balinese gamelan ensembles (as in Gambangan, Sekar Ginotan), some pieces look further abroad. During the 1920s, foreign scholars widely reported that Lotring had taken the Westminster Abbey chimes (heard on an alarm clock) and written them into an instrumental composition. He also sought to evoke Javanese gamelan through his piece Solo (alternately known as Gonteng Jawa). Lotring’s stylistic appropriations were neither as severe nor as threatening to Europeans as the hybrid theatrical forms. Nor were they as radical as kebyar. However Lotring’s hybridization of Balinese and non-Balinese source material is no less significant. These intentional cultural borrowings illustrate the ways in which Balinese artists were making sense of cultural change. Lotring integrates foreign elements into Balinese music rather seamlessly, despite fact that colonial discourse at the time stressed an inherent incommensurability between Balineseness and the foreign.

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86 I Wayan Sinti personal communication.
In summary, the Dutch aggressively sought to curb the spread of nationalism with direct intervention into Balinese cultural life during the colonial period. These interventions relied on a core belief that intercultural interaction was ultimately destructive to the sustained preservation of Balinese cultural identity. However, as was illustrated by the polemic between the *Surya Kanta* and *Bali Adnyana* newspapers, these politically motivated, colonial mandates about Balinese identity were hotly contested by Balinese intellectuals. Throughout this period, Balinese artists simultaneously appeased colonial authorities through the public performance of “otherness” in tourist performances, while carving out a space for resistance and dissent in hybrid theatrical forms like *stamboel* and *janger*. Finally, in spite of colonial oppression, several well-known Balinese composers were consistently borrowing sound material from European and Japanese sources as a means of enriching the contemporary sonic palette of *gamelan* music, a tradition that continues to the present day.

**Bali’s “Indonesianization”**

Indonesia initially claimed independence in 1945. However Bali did not officially join until 1950 and was not given *propinsi* status until 1958. After Bali was incorporated into the Indonesian nation-state, there were efforts to establish a national Indonesian culture rooted in the Malay-based Indonesian language. Benedict Anderson describes how language and the printed word helped to foster a sense of Indonesian cultural unity during these early years of Indonesian independence (Anderson 2006 [1983]). During the colonial era, Balinese nationalists fought hard against Dutch desires to cultivate Bali as a “living museum” of pre-modern, Hindu-Buddhist societies. They protested Dutch efforts to “reshape Balinese culture according to a romantic image that appealed to outsiders but not to the Balinese” (Robinson 1995: 48). Thus, with Bali’s incorporation into the Indonesian nation-state, there was another
shift in public discourse on Balinese cultural identity. During the colonial era, discourse on Balinese culture was crafted to explicitly discourage interaction between Bali and Java. However, the post-independence era began an extensive process of “Indonesianization,” in order to incorporate Bali and “Balineseness” within the newly formed, “imagined community” of the Indonesian nation-state.

Cultural hybridity was at the forefront of the debate on national identity during the early years of Indonesian statehood. In particular, several debates emerged surrounding the adoption of overtly European cultural models. Many leading figures of the Indonesian independence movement were Dutch-educated and wanted to adopt a progressive agenda that abandoned certain aspects of “traditional” culture including feudal social structures and the use of caste-based language systems. Instead they argued for state-sponsored education and an emphasis on individual liberties. As Sumatran intellectual, Sutan Takdir Alaskahbana argued in 1935,

“The Indonesian brain needs to be developed toward the Western brain!
Individualism must be full enlivened!
The awareness for importance of individualism must be enlightened!
Indonesians must be encouraged to gather wealth as much as possible!
Indonesia must be advanced in all directions!”

(Alaskahbana in Raden 2001: 164)

Intellectuals like Alaskahbana argued that Indonesia must forge a pan-Indonesian cultural identity rather than focusing on the “static” feudal traditions of the past. This position was largely a reaction to the “Java-centric” ideologies of Boedi Oetomo, who sought to elevate

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87 Otak Indonesia harus diasah menjamai otak Barat!
Individu harus dihidupkan sehidup-hidupnya!
Keinsjafan akan kepentingan diri harus disadarkan se-sadar2nya!
Bangsa Indonesia harus diandjurkan mengumpulkan harta dunia sebanyak2 mungkin!
Kesegala djurusan bangsa Indonesian harus berkembang!
(translation by Franki Raden)
Javanese court tradition to the status of a national model for Indonesian cultural identity. Members of Boedi Oetomo believed that Javanese culture could serve as a model of “high culture” that had evolved entirely outside the sphere of “Western” influence. The elevation of Javanese cultural traditions, including wayang and gamelan was structured as a postcolonial, anti-European position (Raden 2001: 169).

In the years following independence (1945), Indonesia struggled to create a unified cultural identity among its diverse cultural groups. The invention of a nationalist Indonesian music was integral to the process (Raden 2001, Sumarsam 1995, Lindsay 2012). According to Raden, this was largely enabled through the Taman Siswa school system. According to Raden, “The idea of teaching ‘national’ music in Taman Siswa created new awareness in other nationalist private schools i.e. the possibility of developing their own music for the purpose of forming a national system of education, hence forming national culture.” (Raden 2001: 155).

Prominent figures of the Indonesian nationalist movement waged intense debates over the types of music should best represent this new Indonesian identity. In the years preceding independence, Dutch-educated nationalist composers had used genres of Western-inspired vocal music (musik seriosa), and other forms of “art music” (musik seni) as a “political tool” against Dutch oppression (Raden 2001: 172). The government began several large-scale initiatives to support musics of a nationalistic, “revolutionary” character. These art forms often combined local musics (called musik rakjat, or “People’s music”) with militaristic Western-style art songs written by prominent nationalist composers. However, genres that explicitly evoked a “European” sensibility fell out of favor.

During the 1950s, the government established several cultural organizations in order to facilitate the growth of newly created nationalist art forms. These included LKN (Lembaga
Kubajaan Nasional, or “The Institute of National Culture), LESBUMI (Lembaga Seniman Budajawan Muslim Indonesia, or the “The Institute of Indonesian Muslim Artists and Cultural Figures). In 1959, LEKRA, the “Lembaga Kubudajaan Rakjat” (Institute of People’s Culture) was founded in order to promote the creation and preservation of nationalist musics that reinforced Indonesia’s “revolutionary” spirit. Some have argued that LEKRA was the single most influential cultural organization in Indonesia prior to 1965 (Putra 2012: 315).

LEKRA was predominantly a left-wing organization with close political ties to the Indonesian communist party, PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia).

Following the 1959 national congress, LEKRA’s primary responsibilities were to:

1. Organize the registration of People’s music [-dance] in all regions.
2. Spread and intensify music education [and dance] through:
   a. Publications and broadcasts;
   b. Seminars and discussion circles;
   c. Competitions and performances.
3. Encourage the prevention and elimination of indecency and other symptoms of decadence in music [and dance].
5. Organize music [and dance] exchanges both between regions and internationally.
6. Encourage selectivity and creative work in the field of music [and dance].
7. Call to attention the rediscovery, development, and improvement of People’s music [and dance] along with their instruments.

(Harian Rakjat 1959 in Yuliantri 2012: 424-425)

LKN was another influential cultural organization at the time. While LEKRA’s politics leaned towards the PKI, LKN was more closely aligned with the nationalist party (the Partai Nasionalis Indonesia or PNI). While LEKRA was not officially established until the 1959 Solo congress, LKN’s Bali branch was in operation as early as 1956 (Putra 2012: 322).

From what little research has been done on LKN Bali, it appears as if there were several branches that sponsored gamelan music, dance, drama, literature, visual arts and film. In Bali, the connection between LKN and PNI was especially strong. In fact, the head of LKN Bali
was also a prominent member of the PNI. As tensions between PNI and PKI escalated in the 1960s, both LEKRA and the LKN were extremely active in waging ideological warfare through artistic performances, and through the media of janger and drama gong. Drama gong was a particularly influential national music genre that replaced sandiwarra post-Independence. However, rather that using military band music, drama gong used local gamelan music to accompany their performances.

As part of Indonesia’s plans to promote indigenous musics free from the “decadence” of Western music, Indonesian gamelan traditions and particularly those of Java and Bali were elevated to the status of “high art.” This notion was further indigenized through the Javanese philosophical concept, adi luhung. To the contrary, some had argued that the hybrid, pan-Indonesian genre kroncong better embodied a unified, national culture and that gamelan traditions reflected a Javanese cultural hegemony. However it was eventually decided that gamelan could serve as a symbol of a refined and dignified alternative civilization that owed fewer debts to the colonial legacy (Sumarsam 1995: 120).

In the political discourse against Western influence, the concept of “Western music” often referred specifically to Western “popular” music. Thus, while Indonesian composers were composing nationalist songs as well as band music using tertian harmony, by contrast rock’n’roll was considered corrosive to national morality. American popular music was considered particularly decadent and imperialist and both LEKRA and LKN actively discouraged its consumption by Indonesian youths (Yuliantri 2012: 430). As one LEKRA official wrote:

> We must be more vigilant, more tenacious, and more persevering in opposing imperialist culture, especially US imperialist culture, which in reality continues to threaten us in every shape and way. Crazy songs and whiny songs have appeared these days as a result of the vicious attacks of American imperialist culture in the form of reproducing the ‘dive-rhythm-music’ ala Elvis Presley and ‘sex
dream’ songs a la Tommy Sands. They spread this decadent musical
bait in step with their attacks on our People in politics, the economy,
and in step as well with their press that immorally desires to
tarnish the good name/character of our Great Leader of the Revolution, Bung
Karno. (Sudharnoto in Yuliantri 2012: 430)

As a means of promoting Indonesian culture abroad, the Indonesian government also
sponsored a series of cultural missions to promote Indonesian culture to the international
community. These missions were profoundly meaningful experiences for the young Balinese
artists who participated. For most of these artists, it was their first experience travelling
abroad. These missions also introduced the Balinese artists to other Indonesians. They
learned each other’s repertoire and performed as a single citizenry on international stages.

**Hybridity and Tabuh Kreasi Baru**

As discussed above, the process of establishing an “Indonesian” musical tradition
involved explicitly banning forms of musical hybridity that evoked Western (read ‘colonial’)
aesthetics. Yet at the same time, the Indonesian government knew that new composition
would have to be encouraged. According to Raden, this was one way that *gamelan* was sold
to the non-Javanese public as a modern, musical form capable of representing the interests of
the nation as a whole and not just the Javanese (Raden 2001: 237). Music and dance genres
*tabuh* and *tari kreasi baru* (new creation) were established to encourage a kind of guided
popularity through the work of Javanese *gamelan* composer Ki Wasitodipuro. Wasitodipuro
wrote music for Central Javanese *gamelan* that made use of both new formal structures and
musical idioms. In theory, this would help create a new tradition with broad national appeal.
To aid in this process, composers of *kreasi baru* were also encouraged to incorporate songs
and styles from other Indonesian musical traditions. One prominent example is Wasitodipuro’s *Jaya Manggala Gita*, commissioned for the Indonesian Independence Day celebration in 1952. According to Raden, the piece also self-consciously borrows “Western” compositional concepts including, “bi-tonality, linearity, and polyphonic voice writing.” (Raden 2001: 241).

In looking at the history of *tabuh kreasi baru*, it is important to note that musical hybridity was tacit to its very definition. Initially, it was conceived as an indigenous alternative to Western music in opposition to “Westernized” Indonesian musics like *musik Indonesia baru*. By contrast, *tabuh kreasi baru* allowed for musicians and composers of *gamelan* to innovate and thus “modernize,” within culturally acceptable boundaries. Since the beginnings of *tabuh kreasi baru*, innovation has frequently been expressed through the self-conscious and selective appropriation of Western musical traits. This can be found in early examples of Wasitodipuro’s music (who according to Raden also spent time in the 1920s as a jazz drummer), to contemporary works which self-consciously use “Western” concepts like canon (*kanon*) and diatonicism (*diatonis*) on a regular basis. When viewed this way, *tabuh kreasi* began as an “intentional hybrid,” (after Bakhtin 1981) that has since been naturalized into tradition through its consonant relationship with political authority. The notion of *tabuh kreasi* as a form of hybrid music also establishes a parallelism between new Indonesian music and the nationalist construction of Indonesia’s as inherently diverse cultural identity (as summarized in the nation’s motto, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* or ‘Unity in Diversity’).

Initially developed in Java, *tabuh kreasi* was later introduced to Balinese *gamelan* following the establishment of the Balinese conservatory system in the late 1960s (Tenzer 2000: 100). This process required that the Balinese arts be standardized in accordance with nationalist principles. During the Sukarno presidency, Balinese artists were encouraged to
write music that expressed themes of national interest in a social realist style. Pieces like *Tari Tenun* (Weaving dance), *Tari Tani* (Farmer’s Dance), and *Tari Nelayan* (Fisherman’s Dance) are products of this era and are still performed often to the present day.

**Religiosity during the New Order**

The 1960s were a particularly tumultuous decade in Bali. The attempted *coup d’état* of 1965 and Suharto’s subsequent rise to power instigated an extensive restructuring of Indonesia’s cultural and political orientations. The resulting economic changes had dramatic consequences on the ways in which Bali and the Balinese discussed cultural identity. In the years leading up to the coup, both music and dance had been increasingly caught up in political tensions between the Indonesian Nationalist (PNI) and Communist (PKI). As mentioned earlier, *Drama gong* and *janger* troupes were often allied with specific political parties through sponsorship by LEKRA and LKN. Performance was thus a crucial vector for advancing their political agendas (Ramstedt 1992: 70). In the aftermath of the *coup*, performance troupes were often targeted for their alleged ties to leftist organizations. Many agree that the communist purges robbed the world of countless Balinese artists as a result.88

Suharto led his economic reforms through several five-year plans. These economic initiatives aimed to rebuild Indonesia’s infrastructure and sought to reestablish a sense of national stability. With his second “five-year plan,” Suharto targeted local cultures for national development (Hough 2000: 60, Yampolsky 1995: 707). This was framed in terms of a “revival” of local culture with strong guidance from both the regional and national governments. Immediately following the coup, Suharto had explicitly banned performing arts

88 Ornstein mentions one such artist from northwest Bali, I Gede Merdana. Merdana is now believed to have written many of the *kebyar* classics taught to the gamelan from Peliatan and originally attributed to, I Wayan Gandra (Ornstein 1971: 53-54).
organizations from having any overt political affiliations. Depoliticized versions of local 
“culture” (broadly defined) were thus institutionalized to distract from the trauma of political 
violece as well as to ensure that performing art forms supported nationalist ideologies 
(Pemberton 1994, McGraw 2005: 38). The aim was to support and occasionally invent new 
artistic forms that were overtly devoid of partisan political content, but also tacitly supported 
nationalist themes. Balinese performing arts during the first half of the 20th century drew from 
a myriad of abstract and secular topics. They expressed pure concepts (Teruna Jaya, 
Pengeleban, the modern Baris Tunggal), themes of social realism (Tari Tani), and drew 
freely from outside influences (stamboel, janger). These practices largely ceased during the 
Suharto’s “New Order” (Orde Baru).89

Suharto’s policies differed from his predecessor in several significant ways. While 
Sukarno had made it difficult for foreign investors to buy land and own businesses in 
Indonesia, Suharto encouraged both tourism and foreign development. During the Sukarno 
years, Bali’s first governor, Ida Bagus Mantra had developed Bali’s initial tourism 
infrastructure. This involved the development of the Bali Beach Hotel in the seaside village 
of Sanur as well as the renovation of several formerly Dutch-owned hotels (Vickers 2011). 
With financial support from Suharto’s first five-year plan, Bali’s Ngurah Rai International 
airport opened in 1969. As a result, Balinese tourism doubled from 10,000 visitors annually 
to around 23,000 during the 1960s (ibid: 474). Since then, the number of annual tourists has

89. The relationship between the Balinese arts and politics remains tense to the present day. 
During recent gubernatorial elections (2009), the Bali Arts Festival ended what had been a 
three-year tradition of adjudicated competition between regional gong kebyar groups (Lomba 
Gong Kebyar or ‘Gong Kebyar Competition’). It was replaced by a similar festival, the 
Parade Gong Kebyar or ‘Gong Kebyar Exhibition,’ where groups still perform in a 
competition-style format but individual performances are not evaluated. When asked why this 
change was made in 2009, many artists stated that regional politics might somehow seep into 
performances and that voting on a winner might incite anger from rival factions.
continued to rise exponentially. Currently, Balinese tourism arrivals are nearly forty times what they were in the 1960s. These developments were largely structured by Suharto’s 1971, “master plan” for Balinese tourism. In line with his policy of cultural “revival,” the master plan placed Balinese-Hinduism at the center of Balinese culture and its cultural tourism (Picard 1996: 119). From this point onward, discourse on kebalian has been synonymous with a particular type of Hindu religiosity.

According to some scholars, Suharto’s mixture of politics and culture was similar to Dutch strategies of codifying local law as a means of more effective governance (Pemberton 1994). Suharto effectively erased political content from artistic performances while simultaneously allowing the government to shape the aesthetics of artistic output. From a tourism perspective, there were clear financial benefits to portraying Bali as an apolitical environment. The safer, more tranquil and more docile Bali appears, the more palatable it will be for tourists. As discussed earlier, there are several parallels between the contemporary commercial images of Balinese culture and colonial stereotypes. According to Adrian Vickers, “The marketing of Bali since the 1960s has taken the paradise image of the 1930s and blown into an extravagant display of hyperbole.” (Vickers 1989: 189). Since the New Order, this imagery has been used to strategically reinvent Balinese cultural identity during the last quarter of the 20th century.

Suharto’s swift development of Balinese tourism caused a great deal of anxiety among many of Bali’s inhabitants. Balinese scholar I Nyoman Putra describes these reactions as expressed through Balinese short fiction in the mid-twentieth century (Putra 2011). Putra’s work reveals deep-seated suspicions that were largely suppressed during the early years of tourism development. This less comfortable interpretation of Balinese tourism presents an important contrast to more optimistic assumptions of Balinese “boundary maintenance,”
which as discussed earlier capitalize on a prevailing ethnographic stereotype of the resolute Balinese persevering despite the presence of a corrosive, foreign, “Other.” Putra’s analysis also takes into account that less than a decade prior to the “master plan,” Balinese discrimination and harassment of Americans and Europeans was commonplace (Vickers 2011: 467).

Putra situates Balinese reactions to tourism along a spectrum from severe xenophobia to one of reluctant acceptance. Like some of the fusion examples discussed earlier in this dissertation, these writers express skepticism towards the possibility of a positive intercultural experience. The most pessimistic works depict tourists travelling to Balinese villages and convincing young men to ignore their familial and community obligations while seducing them with drugs, alcohol and prostitutes. Some works depict romances between Balinese men and foreign women. As Putra notes, they often exhibit a patriarchal reverse-Orientalism by feminizing the Western “Other” (Putra 2011: 228). Aside from that, foreign tourists are most often portrayed as ultimately unknowable and thus untrustworthy. He cites several stories that represent foreign tourists as covert corporate spies, murderers on the lam, or worse. All of these works reflect reticence and anxiety towards Bali’s rapidly developing tourism infrastructure. Similarly sentiments themes appeared in the Balinese performing arts rarely, if ever during the New Order. It would appear, that with so much of the tourism industry built around Balinese music and dance, there would be too much at stake to allow the performances of overtly critical works.

The development of Bali’s arts education institutions and governmental offices of “culture” embody many of the tensions resulting from Suharto’s large-scale initiatives (Hough 2000). During the New Order, the Balinese performing arts emerged as an immensely profitable public spectacle. And to this day, Balinese arts and culture remain at the
cornerstone of Bali’s international image. These public images of Balinese culture present Balineseness as a unified, racial and religious category, which was partially enabled by the political authority vested in various national and regional governmental organizations.

These offices had antecedents in the Sukarno era. Ramstedt describes the extent to which the offices KanWil, RRI, LEKRA, LKN and LISTIBYA accelerated a socialist “secularization” of the Balinese arts in the 1950s and 60s, mainly through new pan-Indonesian genres like tari and tabuh kreasi baru (Ramstedt 1992: 70). However, this changed dramatically in the New Order. LISTIBYA (Majelis Pertimbangan dan Pembinaan Kebudayaan) emerged as a particularly influential office in crafting Balinese public performance. Tourist groups required permits for “quality control.” However many also view LISTIBYA as a means controlling aesthetics as well.\(^90\)

Established during the Sukarno-era, state-sponsored educational institutions were the dominant means of educating a new class of professional Balinese artist in the New Order. Western pedagogical models were adapted for the first generation of students at the Balinese performing art high school (KOKAR). Many of these artists (among them, I Made Bandem, I Wayan Sinti and I Nyoman Sumandhi) later became leading figures in the Balinese arts education system.

Suharto’s intervention into local traditions demanded that Balinese artists working in government offices develop and institutionalize local “culture.” This was done in way that presented obscure, or even new Balinese concepts as “already-ancient” discourse. According to anthropologist John Pemberton such initiatives were part of an effort to, “recuperate the past within a framework of recovered origins that would efface, for the sake of cultural continuity, a history of social activism from the late 1940s to the mid-1960s” (Pemberton

\(^90\) I Dewa Ketut Alit, p.c.
1994: 9). As such, policy makers hoped to create a new continuity between the diverse cultures of Indonesia’s ancient past in the newly formed nationalist culture of the present.

In Bali’s case, the emphasis on Hindu religiosity meant locating the bulk of Balinese music theory and aesthetics in religious discourse. Bali’s primary religious organization, the Parisada Hindu Dharma (PHD) was responsible for cultivating and codifying Balinese Hinduism during the 1960s. This involved refocusing certain aspects of Balinese tradition in order to gain official recognition from the central government. For example, the Indonesian government would not recognize any polytheistic religions, thus the PHD emphasized the important of Sanghyang Widi Wasa as a supreme deity that encompasses all of Balinese Hinduism’s minor gods. Wakeling speculates that this renewed religiosity inspired a host of tri-partite cultural and musical inventions. These were based on the three-part division of deities known as trimurti (Wakeling 2010: 162). The tripartite formal convention kawitan, pengawak, pengecet (or KPP), and the now standardized separation of Balinese arts into three categories (wali, bali, bali-balihan) are listed as some examples (ibid).

This focus on recovered origins also de-emphasized non-Hindu sources of inspiration in the arts. There are several well-known examples of this. Both Wakeling (2010) and McGraw (2005) discuss the development of tema (theme) in tabuh kreasi at the Balinese conservatories. Both scholars interpret the pedagogical emphasis on tema as a means of policing new works. In particular, works were expected to be non-representational, thus further distancing new art from politics and social realism. The written requirement for composition students (skripsi) was meant to,

“cement or close works’ alleged meanings: students became increasingly aware that compositions were expected to reflect and uphold ‘traditional Balinese values’ and that any ambiguous rendering of ‘meaning’ could be misconstrued as potentially disloyal or seditious. Têma was one attempt to break down an oblique relationship between a work’s interpretation and its musical content.” (Wakeling 2010: 169)
Formal conventions like *jajar pageh* and *tri-angga* were adapted from ancient court genres, codified and developed into compositional criteria for what is now at least three generations of conservatory-educated Balinese artists. Both Tenzer (2000) and McGraw (2005) cite *jajar pageh* as important concepts in Balinese composition. However, according to Wakeling this term emerged rather suddenly into Balinese discourse (Wakeling 2010: 13). The *tri-angga* concept is similarly puzzling. Conservatory educated composers are expected to adhere to these formal divisions in order to write aesthetically “good” music. The term itself refers to a tri-partite division of Balinese pieces. These divisions are *kawitan* (introduction), *pengawak* (main body), and *pengecet* (closing section). The term has even been retroactively fitted to older genres of Balinese music outside of the *gong gede* repertoire from which it derives. In recent times, new music composers of *tabuh kreasi* and *musik kontemporer* have expressed frustration over the conservatory’s continued desire to propagate such restrictive, outdated, and possibly artificial musical forms.91

In 1986, the emergence of the purportedly ancient Balinese manuscript, *Prakempa* was of great significance to Balinese musicians in the New Order (McGraw 2005). The *Prakempa* became an effective tool for aesthetic governance when it was translated into Indonesian by then conservatory director, I Made Bandem. McGraw describes the *Prakempa* as a form of “power/knowledge” (after Foucault), endowed with the political and institutional authority of the conservatory, Bandem’s version of the *Prakempa* remains required reading for all composition (*karawitan*) students at ISI Denpasar (the Indonesian Institute of the Arts, formerly ASKI, ASTI, and STSI). Bandem’s *Prakempa* may also be considered a prime example of local discourse reconfigured as a “recovered origin” for Balinese music in the

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91 I Dewa Ketut Alit p.c.
New Order.

By some estimates, the contemporary status quo for the Balinese performing arts was codified under during the New Order. While there is neither time nor space to explore the issue fully, I hope to have sufficiently described how the Balinese arts were institutionalized with focused political goals in mind. Historically, those in power have tended to portray Bali as a devotedly religious but apolitical society. Much of this was constructed during the New Order as Suharto sought to restabilize the nation following the 1965 massacres. Arts offices and educational institutions have functioned similarly to “ideological state-apparatuses” (after Althusser), by domesticating and obfuscating the political conditions that surround the production of indigenous discourse on Balinese music.

This chapter has looked at the discursive and political histories of cultural hybridity from pre-colonial times through the New Order. As we have seen, hybridity has largely been conceived as corrosive and antithetical to Balineseness. The Dutch engaged this discourse to alienate the Balinese from nationalist trends in Java. Later, the Indonesian government engaged a similar discourse in order to maintain a stable, touristic image. The “nature” of Balinese identity has been manipulated by colonial, regional and local governments and academic institutions repeatedly in order to police cultural aesthetics. But in each, the discourse on Balinese identity has emphasized different origins at different times. These differing origins overtly reflect Bali’s shifting political affiliations. In each instance, Balinese identity is structured by new political circumstances. In 1998 and again in 2002, Bali’s social and political landscape changed dramatically. During the last section of this chapter, we will examine the role of the reformasi and the Bali terrorist bombings in reshaping discourse on Balinese identity in the first decade of the 21st century.
**Kebalian Post-Reformasi: Ajeg Bali vs. Multikulturalisme**

As mentioned above, two events greatly impacted the terms of debate on Balinese identity in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. In some ways, they have since led to contrasting views on contemporary kebalian. The first of these, Ajeg Bali (Bali Stand Strong) arose in printed news media and television following the 2002 bombing of two nightclubs in the heavily touristed city of Kuta on the Bali’s southern coast. Invented and largely promulgated by the Bali Post Media group, Ajeg Bali argues for a return to “traditional” Balinese values. The phrase “Ajeg Bali” was extremely prevalent in both the news media and in cultural performance in the years immediately following the bombing. The Bali Post Media Group also sponsored public events including the seminar, *Menuju Strategi Ajeg Bali* (Towards a Strategy for Ajeg Bali) (McRae 2010: 14). During the Gong Kebyar Festival the following year, all groups were required to perform *sandya gita* (gamelan and mixed gender choir) on the theme of Ajeg Bali. The Bali Post frequently published editorials on the state of Balinese culture after the bombing. They now have an entire series dedicated to Ajeg Bali, where they profile individuals in the community who are engaged in various aspects of community service. The head of the Bali Post, Satria Naradha describes the goal of the movement to, “protect the identity, space and process of Balinese culture. This remedy will flow towards raising the capacity of Balinese people so that they do not fall subject to the hegemony of global culture.” (Naradha in MacRae 2010: 15).

As the term spread, Ajeg Bali discourse quickly evolved to express a wide variety of cultural issues. It was, since the New Order the first socially acceptable way for many Balinese to reflect critically on touristic development. In addition to its call for a return to

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92 The term has been translated variously as “let Bali stand strong,” “Bali Stand up.” Balinese cultural pundit Degung Santikarma (2003) translates the term as “Bali Erect” to highlight the movement as socially-conservative and masculinist.
“traditional” Balinese values, Ajeg Bali highlights a moral imperative to defend Bali from corrupt (usually foreign) influences (Allen and Palermo 2005). As a form of regionalist politics, the movement also seeks to reinforce Balinese regional identity as a Hindu province within a predominantly Muslim country. As such Ajeg Bali is not a unified discourse on Balinese identity. Instead it presents complicated and often contradictory perspectives.

While Ajeg Bali supporters call for a return to traditional values, some Balinese writers criticize the movement for advocating a xenophobic “Bali for the Balinese” mentality. Some view Ajeg Bali as an excuse to stereotype non-Balinese residents of Bali and to use them as scapegoats for Bali’s ills. Relations between Balinese, non-Balinese Indonesians, foreign investors and ex-patriots have been tense since the 1970s. Allen and Palermo call attention to the subtle ways in which non-Balinese residents are “othered” by the Balinese population. For example, many Balinese use the term “pendatang” to describe both foreign and non-Balinese Indonesian residents instead of the more common, penduduk (settler). While the meanings are similar, pendatang (visitor) has a very different connotation. It implies that those who are not ethnically Balinese are only temporary inhabitants, even if they own property and maintain local businesses (ibid).

Aside from expressing cultural xenophobia, Ajeg Bali also has masculinist overtones. ‘Ajeg’ literally means hard or stable or fixed. According to Balinese anthropologist, Degung Santikarma, the term has a distinctly macho sound to the ears of many Balinese. It resonates with “military bravery, unbroachable barricades, and “unflagging erections” (Santikarma 2003: 13). Santikarma’s criticism introduces another facet to “Ajeg.” For Santikarma, “Ajeg’ also implies a kind of cultural stasis.

However some Balinese cultural commentators glorify the notion of this unchanging “eternal” Balinese cultural identity. The famous puppeteer and choreographer, I Made Sidia
claims, “Ajeg is stable ...eternal... everything that we have must come from our ancestors, and we must continue it so that it is Ajeg, so that it will endure.” (Sidia in Allen and Palermo: 9). As a discourse on the eternal “stability” of Balinese identity, Ajeg Bali presents an interesting parallel to Bateson’s earlier notion of the Balinese “steady state.” As described at length earlier in the text, politically motivated Dutch colonial discourse presented the unique and unchanging qualities of Balinese character as perpetually under threat from foreigners. However, this carries a different weight following the 2002 and 2005 terrorist bombings. The terrorist attack against Balinese culture was neither vague nor metaphorical. Balinese people could now point to two specific instances in time where their way of life was violently assaulted by outside forces.

Multikulturalisme

Before moving on to discuss Balinese fusion musics in depth, it is necessary to explore another recent stream of discourse on Balinese cultural identity. Since 2007 or so, Balinese multikulturalisme has emerged as popular topic of discussion both in and beyond the arts. The topic generally has two meanings. In governmental contexts, it can refer to Bali’s integration within Indonesia’s multicultural fabric. This includes recent initiatives to weave narratives of Indonesian multiculturalism into the Balinese tourism infrastructure (Bali Post 2009). Discourses on Balinese multikulturalisme can also refer to Bali’s own cosmopolitan history and composition. In the following discussion, I focus mainly on the second topic as it shifts the emphasis away from “boundaries,” and “cultural uniqueness” to focus on Bali’s long history of contact with and inherent similarity to a variety of cultures throughout the world. Take the following statement as an example:

"Balinese culture is open. Interactions and collaborations have been taking place since time immemorial. That’s why we have Chinese, Indian, Malay and even Dutch elements in our traditional performing arts and cultural heritage. Cultural openness and creativity, continuity
and change, are the very reasons why Balinese culture has evolved into a rich, diverse and majestically beautiful culture." (Bandem 2012: 1)

While the above statement is not dramatically different from New Order discourse promoting Bali as a particularly rich and hospitable environment for foreigners. There is a subtle shift in emphasis by acknowledging of Bali’s *inherent* cosmopolitanism (a diversity which is inspired through intercultural contact with Chinese, Indian, Malay and Dutch elements). As described above, such hybrid origins have been selectively suppressed since colonial times. Rather than highlighting some foreign influences and eschewing others, there seems to be a greater emphasis placed on *all* of these historical affiliations simultaneously.

This important shift in tone has been enabled, in part by political and administrative changes following the social and political reformations of 1998-1999 (*reformasi*). The resulting decentralization (*desentralisasi*) freed regional governments from intense regulation at the national level. As a socio-political moment, Indonesia’s 1998 *reformasi* galvanized the cultural landscape in ways that dramatically reconfigured the performing arts. From the late 1960s through the late 1990s, the strongly centralized “New Order” government held a hegemonic aesthetic influence over arts production. We have already discussed how these governmental bodies effectively policed the codification of “traditional” Balinese performing art forms and the production of new art (McGraw 2005, Wakeling 2010). Presently the monolithic, aesthetic authority of Bali’s state-run conservatories has waned while numerous private institutions have emerged as new centers of musical innovation. With the emergence of private musical organizations, contemporary Balinese musicians are now experimenting with and combining local and global musical traditions in order redefine Balineseness in a new social and political climate.
Following the *reformasi*, there was an explosion of artistic creativity and experimentalism in *tabuh kreasi baru* performance (McGraw 2005, Sandino 2008). Sandino points to several radical changes in both form and composition in the years after the *reformasi*. Examples of this are found in late 20th century works by composers like I Wayan Gede Yudane, I Dewa Ketut Alit and others. I Dewa Ketut Alit’s *Geregel* is a particularly iconic work from this time period (Vitale 2002). In fact, the initial incarnation of *Geregel* was composed as a reaction to the violent protests following the 1997 financial crisis.\(^93\)

As a result of decentralization, artists are under less political pressure to rationalize Balinese tradition within explicitly nationalist models. The ramifications of this are just beginning to be explored by ethnomusicologists. McGraw discusses an evolving "cosmopolitanism" in *musik kontemporer*. Both McGraw (2005) and Wakeling (2010) touch on Balinese representations of non-Balinese musics. The waning aesthetic authority of the arts conservatories and the rising profile of privately-run arts studios or, *sanggar* is a prominent example of the social and cultural impact of decentralization. Both McGraw (2005) and Downing (2009) discuss the contemporary Balinese *sanggar* as a source for progressive values and musical experimentalism. The international success of private groups like *Sanggar Cudamani, Mekar Bhuana* and many others suggests that *sanggar* have potentially eclipsed the authority of government-run arts institutions as centers for musical innovation. The conservatories failure to adopt major administrative and educational changes following the *reformasi* is another important contributing factor (McGraw 2005: 45). In fact, some younger Balinese artists feel that the conservatory has grown more conservative over the last five years. In some cases, students are actively discouraged from composing

\(^{93}\) I Dewa Ketut Alit p.c.
experimental (kontemporer) works and are told that their grades will suffer if they do. They are instead encouraged to emulate a homogenous tabuh kreasi baru model, similar to those works performed at the annual Bali Arts Festival.\(^{94}\)

At the administrative level, regional autonomy as also caused new problems. Political and economic reforms quickly reignited old power struggles and instigated political infighting. It also handed a burden of administrative responsibilities to regional governments without the infrastructure to adequately manage it (Schulte-Nordholt 2007: 3). According to one Balinese artist, “It is ironic, no? The moment we are given the power to make our own decisions, we revert to fighting like savages.” (I Dewa Ketut Alit interview). With the above comment, Alit compares post-reformasi power struggles to the centuries of political instability that plagued many pre-colonial Balinese kingdoms.

With decentralization and privatization there also comes an increased emphasis on Bali’s inherent multiculturalism. Bali’s multicultural identity has been the focus of recent Balinese publications such as Masyrakat Multikultural Bali (Ardhana 2011), and several cultural seminars. In public seminars, multiculturalism has been engaged as a response to recent problems with Bali’s overpopulation and unsustainable development (Erviani 2012). Concerns over recent increases in Bali’s migrant population have placed significant economic and environmental stress on Bali’s indigenous population and spurred resentment as a result. By emphasizing Bali’s multicultural past, Balinese intellectuals and policy-makers hope to alleviate tensions between Bali’s indigenous and ex-patriot populations.

In some ways, this strategy is not dissimilar from New Order techniques of mining the past to find congruencies with the politics of the present. At a recent symposium on multiculturalism, participants focused on archeological and anthropological evidence of

\(^{94}\)Anonymous Balinese informant p.c.
“longstanding harmony” between Balinese Hindus and their Chinese, Muslim and Christian population (ibid). I do not mean to uncritically endorse this rosy assessment of inter-race and inter-faith relations in Bali, I do however wish to call attention to the public desire to embrace Balinese identity as inherently diverse. This stands in contrast to previous political/historical epochs when Chinese, Christian and Muslim minorities within the Balinese Hindu majority were either ignored or discriminated against.

An emphasis on Bali’s similarity to non-Balinese societies is also emerging in indigenous scholarship in the performing arts. ISI professor, I Nyoman Sedana’s 2010 paper, “Multiculturalism in Balinese Arts” describes the myriad ways in which Balinese tradition owes a debt to foreign and particularly Chinese influences. Sedana’s tone is markedly different from past scholars (including Kunst and before) who acknowledge Chinese elements, but instead focus almost exclusively on Bali’s Indic cultural roots. This affinity between China and Indonesia is stated firmly in the introduction, “Broadly speaking, the people of Indonesia originated from Yunnan in southern China.” (Sedana 2010: 1). Sedana’s paper focuses on the origin story surrounding the Balinese ceremonial dance, Barong Landung and the well-known Baris Cina. According to Sedana, the female figure Jero Luh represents China/Buddhism, which is intimately integrated with Balinese spirituality. In theatre, these ideals are embodied in the love story between the Balinese king Jayapangus and the Chinese princess, Kang Ching Wie.

Following this newfound celebration of Bali’s multicultural and Chinese origins, the Kang Ching Wie story has served as inspiration for several prominent theatrical works. The largest and most spectacular of these is the touristic music and dance drama, Bali Agung: The Legend of Balinese Goddesses, which is performed four nights a week at the Bali Safari and

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95 See Collier 2007.
Marine Park. The show features over 180 performers as well as live animals, including snakes, elephants and tigers. The show is billed as a collaboration between Balinese dalang, I Made Sidia and Australian director Peter Wilson. The show presents a maximalist retelling of the Kang Ching Wie story as an idealized romance between Jayapangus and Kang Ching Wie. Aside from the multiculturalist themes, the show is also billed as a cosmopolitan, postcolonial collaboration between the Balinese and non-Balinese members of the creative team.

The show is designed and marketed for tourists almost exclusively. And for that reason, there are various ways to read the Kang Ching Wie story. On one level, it could be read as an idealized hybridization between China and Indonesia. From an Indonesian perspective, one could speculate that both Sedana’s work and Bali Agung highlight Bali-China connections in response to China’s recent emergence as a global superpower. Both Sedana’s paper and Bali Agung were produced in 2010 just two years after the Beijing Olympics.

However if one considers the prominent Orientalist imagery employed in Bali Agung, another interpretation emerges. Rather than a postcolonial product meant to shore up local relations with an emerging superpower, one can interpret Bali Agung as conflating Bali within a larger palette of Orientalism. Elements of mysticism and exoticism permeate the promotional material for Bali Agung. The lavish costuming and make-up, combined with orchestrated pentatonic melodies enhance Bali’s age-old image as the quintessential Orientalist paradise, rife with mystery, magic, love and live elephants.
Figure 17: Bali Agung. Photo taken from Bali Safari And Marine Park website (www.balitheatre.com).
Chapter 6: Musik Bali Mendunia

Introduction

In the preceding chapter, we examined the historical and political relationship between hybridity and Balinese identity (kebalian). Through this history, we may begin to understand the political ramifications of Balinese fusions in both popular music and in tabuh kreasi and musik kontemoper. The following chapter looks at several examples of Balinese fusion music. My analysis of these works is based on ethnographic observation, interviews and music analysis. Several prominent Balinese artists and intellectuals have written eloquently on the subject of Balinese fusion and its relationship to tourism and cultural commodification. Thus, I also present a synthesis of their arguments, highlighting their various points of agreement and disagreement. As previously discussed, Balinese fusion musics comprise a wide range of musical genres. In Bali, this covers everything from gong kebyar festival formats like tabuh kreasi baru to musik kontemoper as well as pop Bali, jazz, rock, classical, avant-garde, minimalism and more. However these genre boundaries are permeable and are not mutually exclusive. In most cases, I opt to describe these projects using the specific terminology employed by artists themselves. As shown in the previous chapter, new modes of Balinese composition often arise as a means of coping with an “ever-widening array of others” (McGraw 2005: 138). As such, these projects represent non-Balinese musics as a commentary on contemporary notions of Balineseness. My decision to emphasize the processes by which artists represent cultural identities “as,” is informed by Wakeling’s assertion that:

Analysis of representation should focus not on evaluating the finished object but must consider it a series of practices performed on a given occasion, which must accordingly be carefully situated. If we are to ascribe these composition practices as acts of ‘representation’, the analyst must assess what material has been selected for transformation, and often more crucially, what has been omitted. (Wakeling 2010: 184)
I profile several composers whose works respond to post-reformasi political changes. These projects are also viewed in light of contemporary discourse on Ajeg Bali, multikulturalisme, and commercialization. In looking at several unpublished essays by Balinese artists, I aim to capture the breadth of Balinese arguments for and against certain forms of fusion. In exploring the selective aestheticization of Balinese and Western musics, we are able to gauge the varying means by which Balinese artists conceptualize Balineseness as a cosmopolitan entity.

Generally speaking, I argue that contemporary processes of hybridity disrupt a pattern of binaries that has plagued Balinese scholarship from its inception. Scholars have shied away from discussing representations of the West in Balinese works for fear that they indicate traces of an insipid Western “influence.” It remains difficult for scholars to discuss Balinese appropriations of global music genres without statements that defend the maintenance of Balinese “tradition” in spite of innovation. I argue that these fusion works demonstrate self-conscious awareness of “Western” musical aesthetics both in accordance with, and in contrast to the aesthetics of “tradition.” As such, Balinese fusion musics operate with an awareness of Balinese music as a global musical entity. In Balinese fusion music, Balinese artists become the ethnographer imagining the West imagining themselves. They are thus able to repatriate borrowed visions of cultural identity through the creative hybridization of musical and cultural aesthetics.

In Bali, performance is an especially powerful and public form of cultural discourse due to its longstanding connections to religious practice as well as regional and national politics. As such, the aesthetically disparate representations of “Balinese” and “Other” present in Balinese fusion projects articulate disparate visions for contemporary Balinese culture.
Tensions between these various genres and their respective visions of “hybridity” have recently risen to polemic levels. This polemic is spurred in some ways, by the recent regional success of artists like, Agus Teja Sentosa. These projects self-consciously appropriate touristic imagery and cultural stereotypes in their marketing. Balinese composer, I Wayan Gede Yudane writes that while “fusion” offers great potential to revitalize the arts, it must be handled carefully. He is largely critical of commercial fusion projects that capitulate to touristic imagery. Yudane argues that such fusions are facile and superficial. He likens these projects to “audio-wallpaper,” which function as mere decorations in primarily touristic spaces (Yudane 2012, see Appendix 2).

Lastly, we will consider a third perspective which attempts to “liberate” *gamelan* composition from the restrictive cultural associations embodied in codified forms such as *gending* (song or melody) and *tabuh* (composition). With the development of his own compositional system called, “*sistem bunyi*” (literally ‘sound system,’ although I think ‘sonority’ is probably a more accurate translation), I Dewa Ketut Alit hopes to free *gamelan* composition from the “longstanding discrimination” levied towards *gamelan* music as politically and ideologically crafted propaganda that homogenizes an idealized vision of Balinese culture.

**Balinese “Muzak”**

In a colloquial sense, Balinese “fusion” music often refers to jazz or world music genres that incorporate Balinese musical influences. In Bali, these musics are a relatively recent phenomenon. According to Sudirana, the aesthetics of contemporary Balinese “pop” fusion Javanese popular musics *langgam Jawa*, *dangdut*, and *campursari*, all of which combine *gamelan* instruments and aesthetics with Western instruments (ibid). While they
have antecedents dating back to the 1990s, they have recently become popular among Balinese audiences over the last several years (Sudirana 2011:1).

At Balinese record stores, “fusion” is often interchangeable with descriptors like, “world music,” or “etnik.” Most of these fusion musics are marketed to tourists and comprise the ubiquitous background muzak to spas and restaurants in heavily touristed areas. Many of these albums are produced electronically using sampled gamelan sounds and other synthesized instruments. Currently, the Balinese-owned Maharani label produces the bulk of such fusions. One of the most prolific examples is the ambient-techno series known as the “See New Project.” Many of these albums are marketed for specific tourist locations such as spas, bars, and restaurants. Some See New Project albums include, “Bali Spa: Piano and Gamelan,” “Bali Relaxation Lounge,” and “Bali Romantic Dinner.” These commercial records are played on a near endless loop at touristy restaurants and bars. In fact, some albums appear to be marketed specifically for commercial use. As such, these albums function similarly to American forms of “programmed music” or muzak. Like “programmed music” they “produce consumption” by establishing an affectively desirable environment at a given business (Sterne 2006: 35). Yudane criticizes these musics as “audio wallpaper” meant only to enhance a touristic atmosphere (Yudane 2012). Like muzak, these musics are meant to unobtrusive while producing calculated effects. For an individual walking down Ubud’s Monkey Forest Road, these musics sonically divide the infrastructure of a Balinese tourist district. From their respective clubs, retail stores, and restaurants, these musics “hail” customers off the streets. Increasingly broad mixtures of musical style increase the likelihood that the music will attract a broader demographic of tourists.

These albums are often marketed as a type of intercultural encounter, titled in a “Bali meets X” format. “Bali Meets Japan and China,” “Bali meets India” and “Kecapi meets Koto”
are some examples. In some cases, the value of a given fusion project appears to rely on the volume of music-cultures represented. “Bali meets Africa and Java” is one example. This collaborative work was produced jointly by gamelan Jegog specialist I Ketut Suwentra (founder of Suar Agung) and the Jazz artist “Django Mango.” Other fusion projects incorporate idioms and timbres from traditional Balinese music through the use of “band” instruments, electric guitar, keyboard and drum set. Komang Layang and I Wayan Balawan’s Sekehe Bali Funk is one example.

Figure 18: Two Balinese Fusion albums: “Bali Meets Japan Spa: Gemelan and Sakuhachi <sic>” and “Bali meets Africa and Java.”

While some Balinese music critics and scholars dismiss these musics as mere exotica, produced solely for consumption by non-Balinese tourists, Balinese fusion musics also reflect changes in the aesthetic desires of the Balinese community. Balinese artists like Bona Alit and Gus Teja World Music are known for the proficiency in Balinese traditional idioms and enjoy considerable popularity amongst the Balinese. However debates over the ramifications of Balinese fusion works are wide-ranging. Some argue that the recent local popularity of “pop” music fusions represent a “dumbing-down” of Balinese musical aesthetics. This and
other “market-driven” products are seen by some Balinese artists to “spoil” the ear (memanjakan telingga) with simple, catchy songs and paired-down (minimalis) orchestration.\textsuperscript{96} Others critique Balinese fusions artists for using foreign musical instruments in order to, “elevate their social status” (Sudirana 2011: 1).

Generally speaking Balinese artists and academics understand “fusion,” “world” and \textit{etnik} (ethnic) musics quite differently from \textit{avant-garde} musics like \textit{musik kontemporer}. In scholarship, \textit{musik kontemporer} has been traced to elite, conservatory-based artists and intellectuals working in Solo in the mid-1970s (McGraw 2005). This awareness of aesthetic distinctions between pop fusion and \textit{kontemporer} is also one reason that Balinese musicians found Sentosa’s move to “world music” so jarring.\textsuperscript{97} However, Balinese \textit{audiences} tend to conflate the two. For example, the Bali Arts Festival regularly features a number of so-called “\textit{kontemporer}” performances that also rely heavily on “pop” aesthetics.

Another common format for fusion projects is “\textit{kolaborasi}.” \textit{Kolaborasi} may apply to \textit{kontemporer} or pop concerts alike. Despite its morphological similarity to the English term “collaboration,” \textit{kolaborasi} has different connotations. In almost all cases, \textit{kolaborasi} implies a collaborative project between Balinese and non-Balinese artists. However, in some cases I have seen (as well as participated) in several performances where the term \textit{kolaborasi} was used to describe a performance that simply included non-Balinese musicians as performers. These concerts were still billed as \textit{kolaborasi} even the program consisted entirely of standard \textit{gamelan} repertoire.

For I Made Subandi, the term “world music” implies a “global” form of Balinese music targeted for a mass-market appeal \textit{beyond} Bali’s shores (Balinese music “\textit{mendunia}”). Gus Teja World Music is one prominent example. A frequent composer and performer at the

\textsuperscript{96} Anonymous Balinese informant, p.c.
\textsuperscript{97} I Dewa Made Suparta p.c.
annual Gong Kebyar Festival, Agus Teja Sentosa was formerly known for his works in tabuh kreasi and kontemporer. The irony in Teja’s case is that by sculpting a sound/image for foreign audiences, his first album Rhythm of Paradise (RoP) became a local bestseller. Subandi speculates that while many Balinese artists and composers periodically reinvent themselves for a broader, transnational appeal, they rarely achieve the international profile they strive for. Paradoxically, Balinese musicians with the greatest international profiles typically garner their fame and recognition performing Balinese traditional music. During the summers of 2011-2012, Sentosa’s album was ubiquitous in his home regency of Gianyar. His success has even inspired imitators. In 2011, there was at least one Gus Teja cover band that had learned and arranged all of the songs from RoP by ear, and was making a decent wage performing these songs at weddings throughout southern and central Bali.

It is worth, for a moment, considering the subtle distinctions between “world music,” as a market category and its usage in Balinese contexts. “World music” emerged as an industry category in the early 1990s following a confluence of changes including the Grammys decision to replace the award category, “primitive and folklore recordings” with “world music.” (Feld 2000: 150). In North American record stores “world music” describes both a wealth of regional musics and heavily produced “fusion” and “worldbeat” projects. However, in Bali the term “world music” typically has the latter connotation only.

Feld writes that mass-produced “fusion” and “worldbeat” genres deploy a combination of sonic effects and visual imagery. These “virtual worlds” evoke a fictionalized microcosm of their representative cultures of origin. There is a distinction between these North American definitions of “worldbeat” and its use in Bali. While North American world musics refer to a “virtual world” beyond the global mainstream, the Balinese interpretation describes a type of local music that is self-consciously “de-localized” in an effort to become
integrated within the global mainstream as “musik Bali mendunia” (Balinese music for a global audience).

Having discussed the various genres of Balinese fusion music and the debates surrounding them, remainder of this chapter examines several specific case studies. The first set of projects focuses on Balinese fusions, inspired to varying degrees by American jazz. The first of these artists, I Wayan Balawan is a formally educated classical and jazz guitarist, renowned for his virtuosic playing and for developing a unique, “eight-finger tapping” technique. The second, I Nyoman Windha is an established composer of tabuh and tari kreasi, with a Master’s degree in composition from Mill College. While Balawan comes from a jazz background, Windha intuits various musical characteristics of jazz, inspired more from listening rather than through performing. These characteristics have been reinterpreted in a Balinese musical context. However I am less interested in evaluating the authenticity of their “jazz,” aesthetics. As in previous chapters, I discuss the ways in which the artists position the concept of jazz as a musical idiom in dialogue with Balineseness in their work.

I Wayan Balawan

Through a mutual friend, I Made Subandi, I was able to set-up a brief meeting before Balawan’s set at the Ubud Jazz Café. Subandi himself seemed nervous about the meeting, calling me several times in the days leading up to the meeting to make absolutely sure I was there on time. Anyone who has tried making an appointment in Bali can attest to the unusual circumstance of needing to be on time. So I made sure to get there early, unsure of what to expect.

Formal occasions and social hierarchies in Indonesia quickly seem excessive to the foreign eye. But Subandi is rarely impressed by these pervasive forms of schmoozing. He
once climbed over the fence from the VIP section at the Bali Arts Festival mainstage (an area filled with government officials, professors, and local royalty) in order to join my wife and I eating corn on the cob, during the premier of one of his own works. So I interpreted his nervousness about this meeting as an indication that Balawan was not only a famous musician, he was somebody that Subandi truly respected.

Balawan is one of few Indonesian artists to be signed to a major, international record label (Sony) and is a pioneer of Balinese “fusion” music. He formed his first band, Batuan Etnik Fusion in the late 1990s. Balawan is widely regarded as Indonesia’s most gifted living guitarist. Balawan grew up in the village of Batuan, in the regency of Gianyar. Batuan village is itself renowned for its arts. It is also home to a unique style of traditional painting as well as several famed lineages of topeng dancers including the houses of I Made Jimat, I Wayan Kantor, I Made Bukel and others. Above all, Batuan is famous for its preservation of the Majapahit-era music and dance tradition known as gambuh. Like most Balinese children, Balawan grew up studying and performing traditional Balinese music. At the age of eight, he began studying the guitar. Balawan never received formal guitar training in Bali, learning mostly from friends and “senior” musicians while playing the bar and hotel circuit in Kuta. Soon afterwards he formed his own band, performing mostly hard rock covers from the 1980s. In the early 1990s, he received a scholarship to study for three years at the Australian Institute of Music where he earned his degree. While he recalls his experiences in Australia as “quite boring,” he was able to gain valuable performance experience playing jazz and rock in local clubs.

After returning to Bali, he began thinking of ways to distinguish himself as an artist and as a jazz guitarist. While his skills as a virtuoso were undisputed, he realized that in order

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98 I Wayan Balawan p.c.
to distinguish himself within the crowded market of guitar virtuosi, he would need something more. Reflecting upon his unique musical character, he realized that his cultural heritage could serve as a defining feature for branding his musical identity to a wider audience. He formed *Batuan Etnik Fusion* in the late 1990s with a clear eye towards a global audience. Soon afterwards he was signed by Sony Records and released, *GLOBALism* in 1999. Balawan was also one of very few Indonesian artists not to be dropped by the Sony label following the Bali terrorist attacks (Harnish 2012).

As an artist and composer he characterizes his own music as, “technically entertaining.” He views this in contrast to other forms of Indonesian popular and fusion musics like *campur sari* and *pop Bali* which may be entertaining, but “teknik nggak ada” (there’s no technique). In terms of his tastes in *gamelan*, he prefers faster, more virtuosic music, claiming to get “sleepy” when he hears the *suling gambuh* from his native Batuan. His sets often feature gratuitous displays of technical mastery, which include mock “battles” between himself and his percussionists in a game of musical “Simon Says.” His drummer, I Ketut Lanus is also a well-known composer of both fusion and *kontemporer*.

Harnish situates the Indonesian appeal of Balawan’s transcultural aesthetic as a product of cultural shifts occurring post-*reformasi* (Harnish 2012: 4). These cultural changes spurred new interests in “creative spontaneity.” Yet despite these cultural transformations, Balawan claims a certain frustration with Balinese audiences. In conversation, Balawan critiques Balinese audiences for their lack of appreciation towards challenging forms of non-Balinese music, citing that the Balinese market is largely geared towards pop, rock and *campur sari*. Generally speaking, the majority of Balawan’s following exists abroad, in Australia and Europe. For *gamelan* projects, he prefers to work in Jakarta and Solo, citing that the “market” for traditional music in Bali has significantly “narrowed” since the 1990s.
He speaks with great admiration about musicians with a strong background in Balinese traditional arts (mentioning Subandi, and composer I Ketut Lanus specifically) that are making efforts to sustain its relevance to audiences that are uninitiated or uninterested in studying traditional music and dance.

Figure 19: Balawan with guitar. Photograph taken from http://newamericantopmodel.blogspot.com/2012/02/balawan-biography.html

In many ways, Balawan’s aesthetic represents an ideal hybridization of tradition as folklore and modernity (Harnish 2012: 7). He operates within global world music market with aplomb, selectively emphasizing aspects of his Balinese heritage to his advantage yet he does not rely on it solely. During one performance, he may perform one set as a jazz trio, playing jazz standards, American pop and R&B followed by a set of “fusion” featuring Balinese and Sundanese kendang, Balinese gangsa, ceng-ceng, and reyong. When performing for foreign audiences, Balawan often includes brief lecture demonstrations on Balinese traditional music. He understands his role as a Balinese artist in a global market, and recognizes a responsibility towards educating foreign audiences about his musical roots. It
also provides him with a convenient musical *niche*. Balawan is also active in his local community. He runs a guitar school for Balinese youths, the Bali Guitar Club.

Balawan’s work comments on a tension between the various types of “market-driven” fusion music in Bali. On one hand he wants to connect with Balinese audiences, through “jazz” arrangements of Balinese traditional *gamelan* pieces like *Penyambrama* and folksongs like *Meong-meong*, and yet he feels compelled to look abroad in order to make a living as well as to find an audience that can appreciate his diverse and eclectic aesthetic interests. His affinity for technically challenging music, and rapid-fire guitar solos recalls the brash virtuosity of the *kebyar* aesthetic. Yet, given Balawan’s critique of traditional music in contemporary Balinese life, it would appear that local appreciation for these aesthetics beyond the ever-narrowing aesthetic confines of festival *tabuh kreasi* is waning. Thus Balawan’s work strives on one front to acclimate Balinese listeners to the foreign musics which most inspired him (rock and jazz) while simultaneously allowing for creative interpretations Balinese traditional music in relationship to it.

**I Nyoman Windha’s JES Fusion**

In some ways, there are clear aesthetic parallels between Windha’s JES and Balawan’s Batuan Ethnic Fusion. Both incorporate diatonically tuned *gamelan* instruments with elements of rock and jazz combos. Both arrange traditional Balinese material, and both strive for a combination of technical virtuosity and an immanent tunefulness. However they approach their respective projects from opposite ends. While Balawan came back to Balinese music after spending the majority of his musical education studying jazz and classical musics, I Nyoman Windha is one of Bali’s most prolific and celebrated composers of *gamelan* music. Many of Windha’s works are now canonic, taught alongside classical repertoire such as *Baris*
and Legong Lasem. Nearly every American student of Balinese gamelan has played one of Windha’s compositions. He is best known for his work in tabuh and tari kreasi as well as his musical accompaniments for Balinese dance dramas (sendratari). From the late 1990s to early 2000s, his works were so widely taught that conservatory students have claimed the ability to predict the melodic course of a piece after only hearing the first few lines.\footnote{Sukaryana p.c.}

Windha as one of the first Balinese artists to compose for Wayan Beratha’s gamelan semarandana. As described in previous chapters, Windha’s works for tabuh kreasi have been of tremendous influence to North American and Japanese composers writing for Balinese gamelan. There is even a studio class in Tokyo where students dedicate an entire semester to one of his most famous works, Jagra Parwata.

Windha’s international profile was partially solidified through his relationship with the American group, Gamelan Sekar Jaya. Sekar Jaya first invited Windha in the early 1990s. It was at this point, he first interacted with an American artists.\footnote{Windha p.c.} For Windha, these experiences were formative. He later applied and was accepted into a two-year master’s program in composition at Mill College. While at Mills, he was able to subsidize his living expenses through a residency at Sekar Jaya and a grant from the Asian Cultural Council.

For his graduation recital from Mills in 2003, Windha composed Jaya Baya (Victory over Disaster), for gamelan angklung, Balinese vocals (kidung) and an ensemble of Western instruments (guitar, violin, clarinet, and tabla). Like Tenzer’s Puser Belah, the piece was written in response to the 2002 terrorist bombings (in fact, Jaya Baya was also performed at the Puser Belah premiere). The work is decidedly more optimistic in tone than Tenzer’s Puser Belah, despite being “born of worry” (Windha 2005: 1). Also like Puser Belah, Windha’s Jaya Baya also speaks to many of the cultural concerns that arose after the
bombings. However, rather than focus on the bombings as a parable for Balinese over-development and cultural interaction gone wrong, he elects to use these events as a teachable moment. Windha argues that Balinese people can use the tragic bombings as an opportunity to reflect critically on the spiritual impact of rampant touristic development.

_Jaya Baya_ premiered soon after Windha’s return from Mills. For Windha, the experience of living and working with American gamelan students was inspired both a sense a cultural pride (bangga) and anxiety (kegelisahan) (Windha 2005: 1). While teaching in the United States, Windha recalls being both proud of the intensity with which foreign students studied the Balinese performing arts (ibid). However it also raised concerns as to why younger Balinese musicians were not so eager. He was honored to see so many American students committed to the study of Balinese music, yet he writes that this kind of discipline is waning in Bali. In his 2005 essay on JES, Windha writes, “Why don’t we, as Balinese people possess the same excitement to study or feelings of curiosity like those foreign peoples who study our art?” (ibid). I have heard this and similar sentiments echoed by countless more Balinese artists and composers. As Subandi once jokingly confided in me, “Maybe I’ll have to send my daughter to Tokyo if she wants to learn how to dance.”

While some artists are reluctant to point to a singular cause, tourism is a clear issue for artists in Ubud and the surrounding areas (including Windha’s village of Singapadu). As mentioned earlier, Balinese artists and intellectuals have expressed concern that extended contact with tourists would distort or otherwise “dumb-down” the arts. And since the 1970s, a great many pieces that were truncated to fifteen minutes or less for tourist performances are more often performed in their abbreviated form for non-touristic performance. For example, the classical dance _Legong Lasem_, which is now rarely performed in its “complete” form

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101 I Dewa Ketut Alit p.c.
Balinese artists are also bored to play the same five or six pieces day after day, year after year for small, largely uninitiated audiences. For Balinese artists, the issue is not whether these performances are cheapening pieces, through truncated arrangements or over-saturation, it is that touristic performances are gradually lowering Balinese musical standards. According to Alit, “the problem is not whether pieces are longer or shorter, the issue is why they perform.” (Alit interview June 2012).

The system of patronage for Balinese arts has been polarized into “tourist” performances and ngayah (performance for ritual). In both cases, aesthetic appreciation of performance itself is not the primary focus. When artists play for tourists, they do it for money. When they ngayah, they play for deities as well as out of a sense of communal obligation. Thus, any space for the appreciation of Balinese arts for its own sake as been effectively marginalized. Alit reminisces longingly about musicians from the sekehe gong in his village (Pengosekan) practicing Topeng Arsa Wijaya with a single dancer for an entire evening, prior to a ceremonial performance. Nowadays dancers rarely rehearse such standard repertoire at all. Not only are men too busy working multiple jobs to spend that kind of time on a low-stakes performance (the kind that occurs every few months), but according to Alit, today’s artists are not interested in fine tuning their work to such a degree. In many cases, musicians who are not yet familiar with standard works simply “ngawur” (fake) their way through them in performance until they have it figured out. Finely sculpted changes in tempo and dynamics, as well as an intimate fusion of dance movements with gamelan are rarely sought after in present times. I have even heard Balinese teachers confess to a preference for
non-Balinese students over Balinese students because not only are they, “more disciplined” (rajin), but they study Balinese arts out of a pure appreciation for the arts.\textsuperscript{102}

Perhaps the single most popular contemporary forum for showcasing traditional Balinese arts is the annual \textit{Pesta Kesenian Bali}. Yet many artists the criticize the ways in which the PKB dominates the economy for traditional artists. For Balinese composers not regularly employed by arts conservatories, it is their only form of regular income. As Balawan notes, “it is all shoved into one month…this is fatal [for Balinese artists], what are they supposed to do for the other eleven months?” (Balawan interview June 2012). After spending most of the year picking up freelance gigs, composers like I Made Subandi spend three sleep deprived months travelling to different areas of Bali composing as many as seven pieces a year, just to make ends meet. For these musicians, the schedule is exhausting and their creative work suffers as a result. In describing the mad scramble to fill all of his commissions in time, Subandi once exclaimed to me “\textit{Ide saya sudah habis!!!}” (My ideas are all used up!).

These issues, combined with more general concerns about the state of Balinese identity in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century, inspired Windha to generate a new genre of Balinese music fusion built on a hybrid ensemble of Balinese and Western instruments. The ensemble combines the court-based ensemble \textit{semar pegulingan} with a relatively younger, secular bamboo ensemble from west Bali, \textit{jegog}. The resulting ensemble \textit{JES (jegog semar pegulingan)}, combines these Balinese instruments with a host of non-Balinese instruments and musical genres including, drum set, jazz piano, \textit{djembe}, and hip-hop.

\textsuperscript{102} I have heard this sentiment expressed by a few teachers who have spent considerable time teaching both Balinese and non-Balinese. I Dewa Ketut Alit, I Made Subandi, and I Gusti Komin Darta are a few that have gone on record. Many Balinese teachers also enjoy, light-heartedly “ranking” their students by ethnicity. In almost all cases, Japanese students are considered the most dedicated by far.
The premiere concert was billed as a “Konser Kolosal Gamelan Non Gamelan” (Colossal Concert of Gamelan and Non-Gamelan) and was performed at the Bali Arts Festival in 2006. Performed when Ajeg Bali was still at its peak, Windha’s concert also evoked nostalgic images of Bali’s past. During the concert, he used a projector to display colonial-era, black and white video footage of the Bali from the 1910s-1930s. In addition to featuring almost 30 musicians, Windha employed also 20 Balinese puppeteers (dalang). The famed Balinese comedian, I Ketut Suanda (aka Cedil) provided a guest appearance on saxophone for the Rap/Pop fusion piece, “Cecimpedan.” Since this initial experiment in 2006, Windha has expanded the ensemble. His most recent incarnation of Jaya Baya was arranged for JES, a massive chorus of Balinese flutes, bamboo angklung, harp, steel drums and the Indian clay drum, ghatam. He now frequently collaborates with non-Balinese artists, including drummers, pianists and harpists.

The JES ensemble also frequently performs works by the American composer and developer of the first “American gamelan,” Lou Harrison. For the 2006 performance, they opened with Harrison’s, Threnody for Carlos Chavez. Windha cites Harrison as a major influence on his work. Windha was largely exposed to Harrison’s work at Mills (where Harrison once taught and where one of his American gamelan still resides). Many of Windha’s pieces borrow from Harrison in both subtle and not-so-subtle ways. In his 2003 tabuh kreasi Lekesan, Windha adopts a prominent melodic theme from Harrison’s Philemon and Baukis (originally scored for Central Javanese gamelan and violin). Windha uses this theme as the melodic basis for the entire mid-section of the piece by exporting a modified version of the violin part to the Balinese suling. Lekesan is quite well known in Bali. It was written to represent the Gianyar regency at the annual Gong Kebyar Festival and was
awarded top honors at the competition. It is also frequently performed by Ubud’s first semarandana ensemble, Semara Ratih.

It appears that Windha’s experiences working with North American artists and students have had a profound impact on his artistic output. For much of his career, his works have been the gold standard in kebyar music over the last two decades of the 20th century, no small part of which owes a debt to foreign inspiration. His more recent project, born out of an anxiety about the future of Balinese musicality has taken a radical turn. While many artists of Windha’s stature work to preserve traditional forms, he has tried to bring Balinese definitions of musicality into a larger frame of reference through collaborations with Indonesian, and Australian artists. JES compositions are at once immanently melodic, but also musically complex. His experiments with rhythm, tempo and melodic stratification are particularly evident in works like Jaya Baya and Bima Kroda.

**Bona Alit and Gus Teja World Music**

It appears that many Balinese artists view fusion projects along an axis of technical virtuosity. On one side, groups like Batuan Ethnic Fusion and JES maintain techniques of virtuosity on both Balinese and non-Balinese instruments as core elements to their aesthetic. On the other, there are “lighter” musics (described by some in Bali as “easy listening”) which also incorporate Balinese and non-Balinese performance codes but through shorter, simpler tunes. This music is often compared to campur sari (‘mixed essence’) a genre of Javanese popular music combining Javanese gamelan with keyboards, drums, and other non-Indonesian instruments (Sudirana 2011: 1). As mentioned above, these musics are often criticized by composers of more “serious” and aesthetically challenging musics. Some artists view these forms of fusion as pandering to audiences and inculcating an ideology of consumerism. These critics argue that Balinese creativity suffers as a result.
One of the earliest examples of Balinese campur sari comes from Sanggar Bona Alit. Bona Alit was founded in 1996, by Balinese artist and composer, I Gusti Ngeurah Adi Putra (Agung Alit). Alit comes from a celebrated musical family. He is the son of I Gusti Gede Rai famed for developing the modern, touristic forms of kecak and the “Fire Dance.” Rai is perhaps best known for his hypnotic performance as the lead kecak performer in Ron Fricke’s Baraka.  

The sanggar itself is located in the village of Bona and supports a large rehearsal space, as well as a small recording studio. The compound also serves as a museum, showcasing dozens of Alit’s custom-built instruments. Many of Alit’s custom instruments are derived from East Asian instruments like the Chinese erhu and the Japanese shamisen. Alit is perhaps best known for his hybrid rebab/erhu. Rebab is a two-stringed lute indigenous to Bali and Java and may be performed with or without gamelan. Alit’s rebab/erhu follows the same basic design principle as the rebab but is nearly double in size, giving it a sonic volume and depth of tone akin to the erhu.

Similar to his music, Alit’s musical and philosophical aesthetic draws from a variety of cultural sources. His discourse in many ways, parallels multiculturalist discourse from the mid-1990s, evoking tropes of human universalism, and a triumph over difference through the adoption of a pan-ethnic aesthetic. According to Alit, “My music is about uniting all people, about the universal brotherhood of mankind. Regardless of our ethnicity, our professed beliefs, our nationhood and many other things that we use to separate ourselves, deep inside we are just fragile, insecure human beings, loving for love and to be loved” (Alit in Juniartha 2007: 2). Alit explores these issues through his series of albums entitled, Kishi-Kishi (Whispers). While the instrumentation varies, Alit’s music often combines Indonesian genres

(Balinese, Sundanese and *kroncong*) with East Asian instruments as well as keyboards, drums, bass and other Western instruments.

_Gus Teja World Music_ was founded in 2009 by the Balinese artist and composer Agus Teja Sentosa. Prior to reinventing himself as a performer of “world music,” Sentosa was well-known as a composer and performer of Balinese traditional music. He often performed lead _trompong_ for the Gianyar regency at the annual _Gong Kebyar Festival_ and later built up a profile as a composer of _tabuh kreasi, kreasi beleganjur_ and _musik kontemperor_. He is well known for his proficiency on a variety of woodwind instruments including Balinese _suling_ and Indian _bansuri_. He is also the co-founder of _Gamelan Nritta Dewi_, an Ubud-based _semarandana_ ensemble. _Nritta Dewi_ quickly set itself apart from most other Ubud tourist groups by focusing almost exclusively on new and improvised music and dance. For several years, their staple _tabuh kreasi_ was I Made Subandi’s _Ceraki_, itself a reconfiguration of Subandi and Andrew McGraw’s _Cara Landa_. Several of Sentosa’s _kontemperor_ works have been profiled in Western scholarship.¹⁰⁴

Because of Teja’s reputation as a first-rate performer and a celebrated composer of intricate, cutting-edge new music, many Balinese artists were shocked when his first album _Rhythm of Paradise_ (2010) was released. As mentioned above, the album went on to be a local bestseller. During fieldwork in the summers of 2010-2011, the album was inescapable. It dominated the playlists of every major spa, restaurant, and record store in the Ubud-area, and was heard frequently at touristic locations throughout the island.¹⁰⁵ Following his success, Teja quickly released a second album in 2011, _Flutes for Love_.

¹⁰⁵ While working for a study abroad program with Northeastern University, I once had a student exclaim, “I can’t get a massage without hearing than damn CD!”
The accompanying imagery for each album capitalizes on several of common touristic tropes. The cover features Sentosa shirtless and playing the flute as if in meditation under a *banyan* tree. The pieces are instrumental, and their titles conjure equally idyllic imagery (“Morning Happiness,” “Beauty in Colors,” “Hero”). While Sentosa had earned a strong local following it is clear that his shift in aesthetic gears was aimed towards a global audience. Album titles, liner notes and most track titles are all written in English, rather than Balinese or Indonesian. The tracks themselves are all instrumental, and thus mitigating any translation issues.

![Figure 20: Gus Teja’s “Rhythm of Paradise.” CD Cover.](image)

Sentosa’s promotional materials describe Gus Teja World Music as a fusion of “traditional” Balinese music “enriched” by “modern instruments” including guitar, bass and drums.106 This seemingly hackneyed description belies both the passion and creativity that Sentosa has invested into the project. In crafting Gus Teja World Music, Sentosa invented

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several new Balinese instruments, and tuning systems. His slokro (short for slonding kromatik) and tingklik baro (‘out of tune’ tingklik), are two massively long idiophones instrument tuned to a twelve-tone scale and are designed for use with equal-tempered instruments. Each instrument is played by multiple musicians who perform in a melodic style idiomatic to forms of Balinese traditional music.

Sentosa is famously secretive of these instruments. On several occasions, I have heard Balinese refer to Sentosa as a “fanatik” concerning his own intellectual property. McGraw recalls that Sentosa would not leave his instruments at Windha’s rehearsal space over night when they rehearsed for a joint performance in 2009 (McGraw 2009). In 2011, Sentosa’s group performed at the Bali Arts Festival in Gedung Ksirarnawa, a space typically reserved for musik kontemporar and kolaborasi. Oftentimes, when performing at the PKB artists must bring their instruments down for a soundcheck the night before, and because of the cost and logistical complications of moving a large-scale gamelan ensemble, musicians usually leave their instruments at the venue until the performance the following day. However in this instance, Sentosa was concerned that some individuals might steal or copy his instruments, promptly packed them back up and brought them back to his home in Gianyar following the soundcheck.

Sentosa’s desire to exert complete control over his musical aesthetic is apparent in his methods of promotion and management. Teja makes extensive use of social media in order to promote his music. He has released three music videos from each album and as of December 2012, his first music video “Morning Happiness” has over 150,000 views in a little over one year, while his more recent videos (5 and 3 months old respectively) have over 50 and 10 thousand views each. He also maintains an online presence through websites like, Facebook, Twitter, Soundcloud, Tumblr and more. Both of his albums were independently produced
through the website CDBaby.com. Within the last five years, several Balinese artists have
gone to CDBaby to produce their albums. While the albums incur a steeper initial investment,
artists retain full rights to the music as well as earning 100 percent of sales from several
online vendors, as well as partnership opportunities with all several major online distributors
including iTunes and amazon. As such, Sentosa is able to remain fully independent while
seeking out a global audience.

Viral marketing is new phenomenon in Bali. In the past, Balinese artists sought
recording deals through Balinese record labels or through partnerships with foreign recording
engineers. Most Balinese record labels pay a flat-fee at the time of recording however the
record company retains all further rights to the recording.\(^{107}\) Other Balinese artists have
sought sponsorship from non-Balinese investors, musicians and recording engineers. Wayne
Vitale has recorded and released several such albums through his personal label Vital
Records. Sentosa’s ability to record and manage his music completely on his own terms
represents a turning point in the ability for Balinese artists to represent themselves in the
global market economy. His widespread success in Bali and growing international profile are
further testament that “culture brokers” may be an endangered species as Balinese artists take
greater control over their creative destiny.

\begin{center}
\textbf{I Dewa Ketut Alit’s Salukat}
\end{center}

 Scholars of \textit{musik kontemporer} tend to actively discourage comparisons between the
American and European \textit{avant-garde} and Indonesian experimental music (McGraw 2005,
Miller 2006). Although the musics possess certain aesthetic similarities, concrete links
between the musical scenes are few and far between. As such, it is not always to relevant to

\(^{107}\) One artist quoted me a price of 5,000,000 rupiah or approximately 6 hundred US dollars.
explore the role of “Western influence” when looking at Indonesian kontemporer (Miller 2006). And any preoccupation with Western influence unfairly characterizes musik kontemporer as a facsimile of pre-existing European musical aesthetics rather than as an original, creative and locally meaningful tradition. This is important to consider when looking at the broader cultural implications for musik kontemporer. However one can still find there are several meaningful examples of Balinese artists representing Western “Others” in their work. And these Western “characters” have been immensely influential in shaping their artistic output. These cases are important to consider as creative reflections on the foreign aestheticization of Balinese music. One recent, poignant example is I Dewa Ketut Alit’s *Salju*.

I Dewa Ketut Alit is one of the most important figures in Balinese music in the 21st century. In the late 90s and early 2000s, he composed a large number of *tabuh kreasi* for *gamelan semarandana*. Alit’s compositional aesthetics have influenced countless composers since. The music for *Cudamani’s tari penyambutan* (welcoming dance), *Pengastung Kara* has been imitated in several conservatory recitals and serves as the inspiration for *penyambutan* for at least two other prominent Ubud-area *semarandana* ensembles (*Chandra Wira Bhuana* and *Nritta Dewi*). These works have also been the subject of several scholarly analyses (Vitale 2002, McGraw 2005, Steele 2007). Wayne Vitale credits Alit’s modal innovations in his *tabuh kreasi* “Geregel” with “breaking the five-tone barrier” in unprecedented ways (Vitale 2002). Many of Alit’s works for *semarandana* feature frequent and sudden “modulations” (*modulasi*) through multiple five-tone modes (*patet*). These older works for *semarandana* also make extensive use of “polymodality,” with several different instrument sections performing in different *patet* simultaneously (Vitale 2002, McGraw 2005).
However, as Alit’s artistic influence spread, he himself began searching for new aesthetic inspiration. His most recent works for *gamelan* disrupt the established roles of melody and elaboration in Balinese music. For Alit, this represents a radical break from widely accepted and codified terminologies in Balinese music theory. He argues that these concepts were largely a post-nationalist invention reflecting a pervasive, hegemonic influence from the (Javanese) political center. Among these imported concepts are the tuning systems *pelog* and *slendro* and the terminology for mode, *patet*. In Balinese contexts, the terms *patet* and ‘*patut*’ are used to describe the Balinese modal system attributed to court genres, *gamelan gambuh* and *gamelan semar pegulingan*.

Wakeling convincingly provides historical and ethnographic evidence for the 20th century “invention” of *patet* in Balinese music theory. The term first appeared in a Dutch-sponsored publication *Taman Sari* (Djirme and Ruma 1939). It was later codified by the first generation of Balinese music scholars I Nyoman Rembang, I Gusti Putu Griya, and Nyoman Kaler in 1959. It was then further indigenized through the invention of “*titilaras dingdong*” (1960). Several students from KOKAR also attest that theoretical concepts of mode, and even whole syllabi were taken from Solo and applied to Balinese music education *ad hoc* (Sinti in Wakeling 2010: 132). However with the hegemonic rise of state-run institutions in the New Order and the bureaucratization of the performing arts in the 1970s-80s, these constructed notions of Balinese tonality have since been naturalized into common discourse on seven-tone music. This includes discussions about modal usage in *gamelan semarandana*. Currently, Alit rejects the idea that any of his work for *semarandana* used *patet*. He argues

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108 I Dewa Ketut Alit p.c.
109 In an interview he states, “Sebenarnya, saya tidak pernah pakai patet” (Actually, I’ve never used *patet*.)
that using Javanized musical terminology reflects a pattern of political dominance stretching backwards more than half a century.

Also embedded in Alit’s critique is a lament over the loss of kebyar’s revolutionary, anti-establishment character do to its appropriation by bureaucratic and political entities. He argues that the institutionalized aesthetics of tabuh kreasi have sterilized and ossified the development of Balinese music. The pressure placed on composers to replicate the crowd-pleasing aesthetics of the Bali Arts Festival has made it difficult for composers to gain support for projects without mass appeal. This also makes it difficult to find musicians with the time and energy to pursue such projects. Alit describes the aesthetic confines of tabuh kreasi as a form of discrimination (diskriminasi) towards gamelan music.\footnote{I Dewa Ketut Alit p.c.}

Alit is thus constantly searching for new compositional possibilities within the gamelan idiom. In 2007, Alit developed his own seven-tone ensemble, Gamelan Salukat. While similar to semarandana (the ensemble also performs Alit’s older work), each instrument in Salukat features an expanded range (gangsas and calung are a full two-octaves and the jegogan an octave and a half). The ensemble also makes use of multiple sets of “colotomic” instruments allowing for extended experiments in rhythm and temporality. The ensemble is also tuned using a four-part ombak. With these new instrumental resources, Alit is working to create a new musical aesthetic that is not tied to contemporary Balinese theories of formal and melodic composition.

In Salju, Alit makes use of his expanded colotomic instruments to illustrate a common ethnographic comparison made between Balinese and Western music. The section features two simultaneous gong patterns which offer contrasting metric interpretations of the melodic material. According to Alit these two gong patterns reflect, Balinese and “foreign”
ways of hearing Balinese gamelan music. Inspired by his numerous residencies abroad, Alit is intrigued by the ways in which non-Balinese musicians intuitively rationalize Balinese melodies. In particular non-Balinese musicians tend to hear strong beats as new beginnings rather than as explicit endings.

Contrary to many Western musical forms, both Balinese and Javanese traditional musics are perceived as “end-weighted.” In practical terms, this means that melodic material in the upper registers (played by “elaborating” instruments) is determined by the impending core melody pitch.¹¹¹ For example, in many types of Balinese kotekan (interlocking parts), if the impending core melody tone is above the core tone that came before it, the kotekan pattern leading to arrival of that tone will consist of the goal tone itself and the two adjacent scale degrees below it. This is the exact inverse of tertian harmony where bass provides the harmonic foundation for the material to come (for example, a C chord is played on the downbeat of a bar, followed by a measure of melodic material based on C). This simple, but deeply ingrained difference in the perception of musical meter and harmonic rhythm has been an object of fascination for Western scholars and composers. Scholars have even critiqued non-Indonesian composers of gamelan music for writing idiomatically incorrect, “front-weighted” melodies.¹¹² Windha’s score for Jaya Baya also gives detailed notes for performers to “feel” the gamelan phrases in comparison with the phrases written for Western instruments (see Appendix 1).

Alit first encountered this issue as a gamelan teacher working abroad. While he and his family live in Bali, Alit spends much of each year travelling and teaching. In recent years, he has had residencies at the University of British Columbia and frequently teaches gamelan during the spring semester at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He also has a regular

¹¹¹ balungan in Javanese music, pokok in Balinese.
¹¹² Spiller 2009.
teaching appointment at a high school in Australia, and has also worked several times with Gamelan Singa Murti in Singapore. He also frequently works with Japanese artists, both teaching gamelan and collaborating with jazz artists and Japanese traditional musicians.

These myriad experiences have exposed Alit to non-Balinese hearings of Balinese music. In trying to teach Balinese musicians to non-Balinese students, he trains himself to think like an outsider. This has allowed him to approach composition with a unique perspective. I have heard other Balinese artists speak jealously about Alit’s extensive resume of international collaboration. Many credit his ability to invent new sonorities for gamelan instruments as a product of his international experience.¹¹³

Reversing the ethnographic lens, Alit makes the Western imagination of Balinese music his object in Salju. As mentioned above, the last half of the piece features two simultaneously performed gong patterns. Each of these patterns is coordinated by a syncopated 15-beat timeline performed on the instrument kajar. The six gongs and two kajar are pitched slightly differently, thus allowing the different patterns to emerge aurally as well as visually in performance. Then a gong pattern is arranged in accordance with each separate kajar pattern. A single horizontal gong, kempli plays in even durations unifying the two perspectives within a single metric framework. In doing so, Salju takes the core identities of Western-ness and Balinese-ness transposed as gamelan music and maps them onto one another simultaneously. Thus the two patterns fuse like two halves of a Rorschach image super-imposed. Salju also presents a postmodern spin on the “two gamelan” aesthetic as presented in Michael Tenzer’s Puser Belah. Not only does it invert the ethnographer’s gaze, but it superimposes these incongruous perceptions of musical meter as a means of generating an entirely new sound aesthetic. It should also be mentioned, that Alit worked with Tenzer for

¹¹³ Anonymous Balinese informant p.c.
several years in Vancouver, was UBC’s artist-in-residence leading up to the *Puser Belah* performance and also performed on *rebab* during the premiere of Tenzer’s piece. For Alit, foreign (mis)understandings of Balinese music provide rich fodder for reflecting on new possibilities for Balinese music, which can also serve as a powerful political statements about reclaiming a sense of collective ownership over the tradition.

![Figure 21: Salju interlocking kajar patterns](image)

Alit’s most recent project with *gamelan Salukat* is perhaps his most radical musical experiment to date. *Genetik*, is a large-scale, multi-movement work in that represents Alit’s attempt to create a new “independent” style of *gamelan* music (Alit 2012). Alit argues that Balinese music, has long suffered under the hegemonizing and homogenizing influences of government authority. He writes,

> From independence through the *reformasi* and today, I see that discrimination towards *gamelan* music still exists. *Gamelan* is only considered as a musical medium, in severely limited circumstances. It is bound to the idea of “living tradition.” Rules, which at root are merely guidelines, have come to frame composition of *tabuh*. These are then modified in non-musical ways. The tendency is that such changes are made to more effectively control political power. Musical development has been housed under one roof, colored by the shades of politics. (Alit 2012: 2)

> It is no secret that Balinese music has been extensively cultivated for political as well as commercial reasons. For Alit, this rigorous over-codification of Balinese music for political reasons has placed artificial restrictions on Balinese artists who are now forced to

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write works within a very limited aesthetic range. First and foremost, he takes issue with competitive “mebarung” format at the annual Bali Arts Festival. This government sponsored event remains one of few opportunities for Balinese artists to seek sponsorship for new music with the hopes of reaching a wide audience. The two other most common Balinese performance contexts, performance for ritual (ngayah), and tourist performance are equally insufficient for showcasing new music or making a living wage. These rigid performance expectations also bring certain aesthetic expectations as well. There is a set formula to which all three performance contexts are expected to adhere. At ngayah musicians must perform works that fit aesthetically with the circumstances of the ritual. In some cases, this may even dictate the exact pieces one is expected to perform. Tourist performances follow a very narrow setlist consisting mostly of Legong, Barong, Oleg, and older instrumental pieces like Kapi Raja, Jaya Semara, and Kosalia Arini. While the arts festival commissions dozens of new works per year, as Alit explains they are all designed to create regionalist fervor and are thus expected to be perpetually boisterous and tuneful.

Alit thus attempts to create a new work that does not conform to any existing aesthetic practice, so that it may not be coopted by any extant political interest. He refers to this new compositional system as konsep bunyi (literally, “sound concept”). This system itself involves the manipulation of four primary sonic parameters which he calls, “Core sonority, Layering, Directionality, and Registral distribution” (see Appendix 3). As such, he has self-consciously abandoned traditional concepts of Balinese karawitan such as gending or tabuh. In fact, he writes that any sounds which appear “melodic” in these works is simply an epiphenomenon of their being performed on melodic instruments. After breaking down the sonic potential of a gamelan ensemble into these basic units, he then sets about constructing “motives” based on minute pieces of musical material, which he calls “genes.” These genes
are then assembled and recombined in ways which are sometimes systemic and sometimes not. During my conversations with Alit in the winter of 2012, his “sistem bunyi” was still very much a work in progress. However he describes it as a way of conceptualizing melodic material in terms of their ‘direction’ (arah) as well as their individual acoustic properties (bunyi) as opposed to thinking of them in terms of discrete pitches, or scale tone belonging to a certain mode. Genetik represents his first large-scale experiment with sistem bunyi.

At the time of writing this thesis, the piece is composed in five movements each structured around a particular musical concept, motive or idea. For example, the first section “GEN I” is structured around a single performance technique known as “noret.” Noret involves “scratching” the mallet over two keys while quickly muting the first and letting the second ring out. The event is that of a quickly executed grace note followed by a single, sustained pitch. Alit then sculpts the musical form by creating patterns based on the directionality of the various noret strikes (to the left, right, or center). These patterns are grafted onto a fifteen beat meter that is articulated by the breath of the musicians, following the tempo set by their own heartbeat.
Figure 22: Pattern of noret strokes in part I of Genetik.

The resulting music is quite unlike anything written for Balinese gamelan in the past. While this work is not a “fusion” per se, it clearly is an attempt to “melt down” the compositional confines of contemporary Balinese artists. Alit’s desire to break Balinese music from its aesthetic rigidity has lead him to a compositional model which, like 20th century spectral composers aims to transcend notions of melody and harmony (or pokok and kotekan) to consider the sonic properties of the instruments themselves. And it is likely no coincidence that Alit’s favorite Western composer is Gyorgy Ligeti, one of the Europe’s pioneering composers of spectral music.
As mentioned earlier, I Made Subandi is one of Bali’s busiest contemporary musicians. During the annual arts festival, he regularly composes works for several regencies simultaneously. These events are presented in a competitive (*mebarung*) format, which has led some to joke, “Even if it’s Gianyar versus Bangli (another regency), it is still Subandi versus Subandi.” However despite being such an accomplished, and famously affable artist, he admits that it is still challenging to find work during the other eight months of the year. And he also recognizes that he is luckier than most, when it comes to this fact. During PKB season Subandi is rarely home, spending several days travelling from regency often stopping home only to rest, eat and shower. However, during the rest of year, he may go days, weeks, or perhaps even months without a major commission. And the boredom clearly makes him listless. For over a decade, he has been an adjunct composer with the local performing arts high school (SMKI), composing works when they have a competition but claims that the school will not hire him full-time as a cost cutting measure. In 2007, he earned a monthly salary of approximately $40 US. This is his only regular job. Not surprisingly, he picks up whatever extra work he can get in order to fill in the gaps As such, Subandi has made himself into the archetype of the contemporary Balinese composer, able to bend his musical aesthetics at will in order to fit the needs of any project, and most of all to make ends meet.

Subandi’s *Sanggar Ceraken: Tradisi Radikal* focuses on music education for local children as well as providing a platform for Subandi’s own musical experiments. However, in order to support his own creative work, Subandi also frequently takes freelance gigs with other Balinese and foreign artists. These kinds of projects may be one-off recording sessions or performances, or they may develop into a regular gig. I lived with Subandi from the fall 2007 through the summer of 2008, as well as during the summer 2009. At the time, he was
frequently engaged in a project called, “Gender Fusion” with the Australian guitarist and
songwriter, Richard Kaal with musicians from Yayasan Suardana, led by I Ketut Suardana
from the village of Celuk. At the time, they were developing a set-list based on characters
from the Hindu epic, Ramayana as depicted through Balinese shadow puppetry (wayang).
The group performed at local music festivals. I rode with them during in the fall 2007 when
they performed at the “Kuta Karnival,” a multi-day festival that arose post-bombing as a
“recovery” initiative in order to attract business and build a sense of community solidarity.

Kaal was the group’s primary songwriter and lead singer. He worked out the chords
and lyrics on guitar, and then asked the Balinese musicians to devise accompanying parts.
Subandi is credited as the primary arranger. At the time, the group also included I Ketut
Suardana and I Komang Mustika on gender wayang, Dewa Made Wijana on electric guitar, I
Putu Gede Marbawa on bass, and Nyoman Suarjaya on gong. Their live performances also
featured the dalang I Gusti Mahardika. At the performance, Kaal stood in the front at center-
stage, flanked at each side by the electric guitar and bass. All of the traditional musicians
played behind them, barely visible amid a wash of blue light. The mix is similarly unbalanced
both in the live shows and in their studio recording. Kaal’s voice and guitar appear
prominently in the musical foreground while the all of the Balinese instruments perform in
the background.

At the time, I did not feel comfortable asking Subandi whether or not the group’s
power dynamics were as unbalanced as they appeared. However, several years later the
project dissolved and Kaal and Suardana parted ways. I then asked Subandi about his
experience working on projects of this nature. While he was grateful for the opportunity, he
also described Kaal as, “terlalu idealis” (too idealist). When pressed, he revealed that
Subandi himself had little creative input on the overall direction of the collaboration,
implying that Kaal’s own imagination of Balineseness dictated the extent of the Balinese contributions. He described these dynamics as relatively common in his experiences working with non-Balinese artists on musical collaborations for recordings and Arts Festivals performances.

These asymmetric power dynamics were indicative in other areas as well. Subandi recalls one “tour” to Australia, where musicians were expected to perform for free. The Balinese musicians had even paid for their own plane tickets under the misunderstanding that they would later be paid after the performance. To recover the money he lost on the trip, Subandi helped Suardana sell Balinese jewelry on commission. Unfortunately these kinds power asymmetries are too common in intercultural collaborations between Balinese and non-Balinese artists.

In previous chapters, I have gone to great lengths to describe American and Japanese artists who take great care in negotiating intercultural performance in an ethical manner. However, for all of their efforts, there are perhaps as many foreign artists who come to Bali as self-appointed cultural curators, hoping to “preserve” Balineseness through their own invention of an idealized Bali that will live up to the touristic fantasies sold to them in books. Many Balinese artists are forced to take work where they can get it. With steady income a luxury for most, people like Subandi elect to join as many projects as possible and hope for the best.

**Issues of Tuning**

In looking at Balinese fusion musics, tuning is a particularly contentious area. Scholars have written lamentingly about the decline of non-standardized tuning and the subsequent rise of certain geographic styles (south Bali, or the conservatory) and diatonic *gamelan* (*gamelan diatonis*). McGraw’s sophisticated analysis of several new *gamelan*
tunings defines recent Balinese approaches to tuning along two axes: “introspective,” and “extrospective.” (McGraw 2009) Introspective experiments engage, “self-consciously” with imaginings of earlier Balinese ensembles and thus strive for an “unbroken extension of tradition” (ibid: 7). In “stark contrast to the sound world of intonational variety” extrospective experiments are attempts by Balinese composers build *gamelan* instruments using some variant of equal temperament (ibid: 15). In most cases, these experiments are designed to combine Balinese instruments with Western instruments. Windha’s JES and Balawan’s Batuan Ethnic Fusion are two ensembles that use diatonically tuned *gamelan* in their performances. Evoking the work of Marc Perlman (2004), McGraw describes these changes in “intonational ideologies,” as by-products of a postcolonial process of globalization and that Balinese artists are only partially aware of the acculturation that belies such changes (ibid: 23).

In presenting a comparison of tunings from the 1950s, he argues that Bali is experiencing a prolonged and gradual, “intonational grey-out.” It is also important to note that Balinese scholars as well as non-Balinese, Balinese scholars speak of *diatonis gamelan* as well as *akulturasi*, as a negative by-product of globalization. Many argue that non-standardized and “paired” tunings are “especially unique” (*sangat khas*) to Balinese music and thus ought to be preserved (Asnawa in Wakeling 2009: 208). There are certain overt parallels between these concerns and anthropological discourse of the “vanishing native” which adopts the patronizing viewpoint that Balinese artists have been tacitly corrupted by their prolonged contact with the Western “Other.” In these critiques, the Balinese appear to be without agency, as if “Western” modes of knowledge are too subtly invasive for the Balinese cultural intellect to resist.
Also tacit to such arguments is the metonymic status of non-standard tuning as a marker of Balinese cultural uniqueness. Ethnographers have prized the non-standardized tunings of Indonesian *gamelan* since the very beginnings of comparative musicology. John Alexander Ellis in his *On the Musical Scales of Various Nations* used Javanese *gamelan* tunings as an integral part of his argument against Helmholtz’s theory of universal consonance and dissonance (1889). Ever since, “the non-standardness” of Indonesian tunings has been integral to its ethnographic identity and is a signifier of both otherness and global musical diversity. This in turn has led to a general appreciation both in Bali and abroad of tuning as “*sangat khas.*” Thus the “loss” of intonational variety is devastating as the loss of a long treasured ethnographic “object” as much as it is the loss of a domain of musical experience.

As Walter Ong observes, sound more than any other sense is defined by its “interiority.” (Ong 1982: 71). Like communication and consciousness, the interpretative experience of sound happens at an individual level. Rather than consider the use of standard tunings as an objective form of intonational “grey-out” it would be more productive if we considered equal temperament “as.” Rather than conjecture about the subconscious motivations of Balinese artists, it is equally important to consider how these artists self-consciously rationalize the both the need and desire for well-tempered *gamelan*.

The diatonic *gamelan* of Nyoman Windha, Bona Alit, and I Wayan Balawan have little to do with emulating a “foreign” sound ideal. When they want to emulate non-Balinese musics they more than willing to do so through *kolaborasi* with non-Balinese instrumentalists, such as guitarists, drummers and pianists. Moreover their usage of diatonic tunings has arisen out of a creative desire to explore new sonic terrain and a practical need to create consonance between equal tempered instruments and *gamelan*. It is considerably more
difficult for pianists, and even Western or Jazz trained string players to continually retune their instruments to a new gamelan. For Windha, the sacrifice between moving from a non-standardized tuning to equal temperament is negligible. He claims that if you play traditional semar pegulingan repertoire on his diatonic gamelan (in the key of B) it will sound percis (exactly) like semar pegulingan. Unlike some diatonic Balinese instruments, Windha’s diatonic semar pegulingan also uses ngumbang/ngisep, meaning that the pitches are necessarily “off” from equal temperament to create the desired acoustic affect. Artists like Balawan, Bona Alit, and countless others argue that these tunings are necessary for their music and do not necessarily come at the expense of other tunings. And they certainly would not claim that diatonically tuned gamelan sound “better” than older tuning styles. The belief that one necessarily detracts from the other is only reinforced by prevailing ideological discourse which assumes a fundamental distinction between Balineseness and non-Balineseness.

One might even consider the resurgence of seven-tone Balinese musics a precursor to gamelan diatonis. I Wayan Beratha’s gamelan semarandana arose out of a practical desire to perform both semar pegulingan and kebyar music on a single gamelan, while Wayan Sinti’s ambitious Manikasanti was an effort to preserve and contemporize older seven-tone repertoire (slonding, luang, gambang, gender wayang) by combining all within a single seven-tone ensemble (Sinti and Sanger 2009). In many ways, the desire to perform Balinese music with equal tempered instruments arises from an identical cultural necessity. And I challenge that the discursive tendency to separate the two is rooted in a sentimental desire to preserve the discursive commodity of Balinese cultural “uniqueness”.

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114 McGraw cites at least two artists who claim that Windha’s gamelan sounds “duller” due to a markedly slower ombak.
PART V: Conclusion

Chapter 8: Balinese Music as Global Phenomena

Introduction

We are approaching the end of this transnational fantasia on Balinese fusion musics. In describing Balinese music as “global phenomena,” rather than as the growth of a single “phenomenon,” I call attention to self-conscious processes of replication and variation of Balinese musical aesthetics by artists from around the world. I argue that this multiplication of Balinese musical aesthetics does not describe a “fracturing” of a single cultural ideal (as is often implied by the term diaspora). Moreover, I have tried to present Balinese music as inherently multivalent both in Bali and beyond. Throughout modern history, the defining characteristics of “Balineseness” have been in constant flux through an ombak of self-empowerment and self-censorship. Political and commercial processes of globalization and hybridity in Indonesia have not scattered the discourse on Balinese music, moreover they have spawned an infinite series of variations on a single theme.

I have tried to illustrate several ways that these variations are produced through each area’s unique cultural and political histories. And so, I have thus focused on the eclectic particularity of Balinese fusion musics up to this point. In the remaining chapter, I will endeavor to look broadly at these case studies in an attempt to glean insight into the nature of musical hybridity in general. In particular, I examine the transnational multiplication of Balinese musics through two complementary but contrasting theoretical paradigms. I use each with full knowledge that no one can describe the situation fully. However each offers meaningful insights into the most prevalent themes described throughout this dissertation.

Early on, I discussed various ways that musical hybridity has been approached by philosophers, cultural theorists, and ethnomusicologists working both in and out of Indonesia.
I described texts which through the work of Homi Bhabha to glorify the hybrid as an archetypal postcolonial cosmopolitan able to transcend binaries of North and South and the asymmetric power trappings inherent to them. As an example, artists like I Wayan Balawan are characterized as an “ideal” hybridization of Balinese tradition and modernity (Harnish 2012: 8). The work of Arjun Appadurai has also been influential in characterizing the global distribution of culture and capital in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Slobin’s use of Appadurai has been central to ethnomusicological discussions of music sub-cultures in the global marketplace (Slobin 1993). Some scholars pursue hybridity and intercultural performance through metaphors of cultural “dispersion,” or “diaspora” (Hadley 2007, Slobin 2007, Miller 2008). Rather than focus on the products of cross-pollination, some of these studies focus on the transnational “lives” of musical instruments. Such studies focus on instruments as travelling material culture (Slobin 2007, Bates 2012). Scholarly analyses of contemporary Indonesian music have tended to follow this approach. As an example, Andrew McGraw describes Balinese experimentalism as the product of “idea diffusion” (McGraw 2005: 151).

This study takes a different tact. Rather than examine the globalization of Balinese music as “diaspora,” “dispersion,” or “diffusion,” I view the cumulative effect of Balinese musical discourse as a transposition from lived tradition to a set of ideas or “memes.” As “memes” (units of cultural imitation) Balinese musical aesthetics are infinitely reproducible and infinitely variable. This avoids the connotations of “dilution” implied by terms like “dispersion: and “diffusion.”

As a means of conceptualizing culture because, the notion of meme avoids the scholarly tendency to treat discrete cultures, subcultures or topics there within as discretely bound properties. The pressure for novelty; to find and in some cases invent new genres tied
to new geographic areas has the detrimental potential to reduce our field into a “land grab.” In a similar vein, one ought to be wary of the motivations that reinforce narratives of musical hybridity as a form of idealized transcendence. Richard Wolf argues that academia has invested notions of musical “transcendence,” with its own sort of “capital.” (Wolf 2009: 6). Following the work of Anna Tsing, Wolf cautions that doing so generates a single anthropological globalism described as, “a hierarchy of locals, whereby some ethnographic examples are more important (because they forward *au courant* globalism discussions) than others (that do not)” (ibid: 9). For these reasons, the preceding analysis of Balinese fusion musics deals mainly with Balinese music’s role in local history. I do not purport to elevate Balinese music fusion as a quintessential “example” of a specific brand of hybridity. Moreover I endeavor to simply but adequately characterize the constituent phenomena themselves.

We have seen several projects that critique perceived incongruities between Balinese music and various other “global” art forms. As a theme, the mutual unintelligibility of Balinese and Western musics can be interpreted as a riff on the classic binary of “local versus global.” Tensions between the two have been central to postcolonial theory throughout the 20th and 21st centuries (Tsing 2005: 1). Anna Tsing explores this precise dynamic in her 2005 monograph, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (2005). In it she looks at the “discontinuities and awkward connection” incumbent upon bringing “universal” ideals to culturally specific locales. She focuses on the production of “friction” in intercultural interactions as fundamentally incongruous ideologies are brought into confrontation with one another. For Tsing these awkward interactions “give grip” to universal aspirations. Aspirations, which in many of the cases presented here, have been to overcome the facile
boundaries that have defined the discourse on Balinese music and culture for more than a century.

**Balinese Music as Meme**

Scholars have long sought theoretical and conceptual frameworks to describe the transnational distribution of capital and ideas. For many scholars, postcolonial modes of cross-cultural interaction form “exemplary communities of the transnational moment.” (Tololyan 1991: 3). In the postcolonial era, the so-called “first world” has retained a global hegemony through both subtle and overt means of economic and cultural control. However direct human-to-human relationships and their associated power dynamics have become less relevant in the global distribution of ideas. Through means of electronic mediation, “culture” as the sum of its discourses has been reified, and fractured into infinitely reproducible and transmissible units of information which may be shared at ever-increasing speeds. Of course, the ability to mass-reproduce and disseminate one’s own (and another’s) culture has been conditioned by asymmetries in the global distribution of wealth and thus technology. However in the second decade of the 21st century, it is now widely recognized that Europe and the United State are no longer at the cutting edge. The recent rise of developing economies in India and China, have tipped the old scales of global distribution.

In the first two chapters, I argued that in order to look at Balinese music as global phenomena, one would have to recognize its transposition from the lived tradition of a specific place and of a specific people to an idea. In this text I have considered “Bali” as a place and as a place *in the mind* of artists and composers. This idea of Bali is what has multiplied and spread throughout the world. For this reason, I have chosen to characterize the spread of Balinese music through Richard Dawkins’ notion of “meme.” Dawkins defines a meme as a, “unit of cultural transmission or imitation” (Dawkins 1976: 192). Memes are
commonly known in pop culture as an image or idea that is spread rapidly through the internet forums and social media. As a set of memes, or a “meme-plex” Balinese music has literally, “gone viral” spiraling off into an infinite series of variations.

Of course, there are certain aspects of Balinese fusion music that meme theory fails to capture. For example, as units of “cultural imitation” the term meme is meant to describe the intracultural transmission of signs, symbols, ideas and narratives. Thus to some degree, they must rely on a shared set of experiences, and beliefs. And yet, as we have seen a defining feature of Balinese fusion musics is the self-conscious blending of two entities represented as mutually incompatible. In many ways, the incongruous nature of “Balineseness” with “modernity” is a unifying thread in fusion projects, in colloquial as well as scholarly discourses. Keep in mind, I am not arguing that Balineseness and modernity are incongruous, I am simply stating the fact that they have been represented as such ad infinitum.

These changes require new modes of evaluating cross-cultural interaction. In the following section, I look at the transnational phenomena of Balinese fusion musics through the interpretive lens of “memetics.” The concept of “meme” (a combination of memory, mimesis, and gene) was first coined by the atheist philosopher Richard Dawkins in his book, The Selfish Gene (1976). The term also takes cues from Roland Barthes notion of “seme,” which he describes as a fragment of a given signifier (Barthes 1975: 17). Dawkins developed Barthes idea to describe a “new replicator,” which operates as a “unit of cultural transmission or “imitation.” (Dawkins 1976: 192). Taken together, the meme describes a unit of cultural information too small to be considered a full-fledged idea or tradition. Dawkins describes, melodic fragments, catchphrases, and architectural styles as examples of “memes.” These may be copied and transformed in infinitely variable configurations. Their most iconic
characteristic is their tendency to replicate, as units of “cultural imitation.” In Dawkins’ work, he emphasizes the meme’s similarity to genes in a Darwinist sense. Residing largely in the mind, memes like genes operate in competition with one another. Those memes that benefit the “host” are likely to thrive and multiply, while others are more likely to be forgotten.

Following Dawkins, memetics grew into its own with contributions from scholars representing a wide-range of disciplinary backgrounds. Since Dawkins, the most influential contributions to the field of “memetics” have been by sociologist J.M. Balkin (1998), psychologist Susan Blackmore (1999) and biological anthropologist Robert Aunger (2000). Meme theories are useful for analyzing processes of social learning and cultural transmission, however as science they have been heavily critiqued. For example many memeticists argue that memes exist as biological structures within the brain. This is of course, exceedingly difficult to observe directly. In the humanities, literary theorists have critiqued the concept of meme as a mere simplification of the linguistic Sign. I am not interested in proving the existence of memes as scientifically observable physical structures of the brain. And while semiotics is primarily concerned with the Signs triadic structure of meaning (signifier, signified and interpretant), meme is preferable to Sign in my case because of its focus on variation and replication. The notion of memes as highly contagious, easily variable micro-ideational structures transmissible through direct human-to-human contact and through media, for my work, offers a preferable framework for the analysis of Balinese fusion musics to diaspora, dispersion, or diffusionary theories.

115 There are disagreements over whether memes are “internal” structures of the mind or “external cultural artifacts.” This analysis treats Balinese fusion musics as “internal memes”. 116 McNamara (2011) attempts to observe “memes” as such.
Memetics has been used in musicology and performance studies. In performance studies, Davis uses memetics to describe the performance history of wild animal shows (Davis 2007). Various musicologists have taken the definition of meme as a small, repeated unit of cultural information as synonymous with the notion of musical motif, looking at interrelated meme structures, or “memeplexes” in classical music (Jan 2003).

A memetic interpretation of cultural transmission suggests that culture functions like an “ecology of ideas” (Blackmore 1999). The connection between memes and culture was further developed through John Balkin’s book, *Cultural Software* (1998). Balkin argues that memes are significant as “variegated mechanisms” in the transmission of ideology. Borrowing equally from evolutionary biology and Levi-Strauss, he investigates the ways in which cultural change occurs in response to changes in the surrounding environment (ibid: 27). Balkin argues that memes function like “building blocks to cultural software” that are replicated through processes of social learning, either through direct human contact or through passive media consumption (ibid: 45). However unlike processes of genetic transmission, memes rarely produce identical copies of themselves. They exhibit an exceedingly high degree of variation. Balinese fusion projects similarly reproduce Balinese aesthetics with an extreme variety are created equally through unintentional misunderstanding and individual innovation. For example, we saw both phenomena in I Dewa Ketut Alit’s *Salju* where Alit has taken the American “mishearing” of Balinese meters and used it to generate novel gong structures.

One of the more fascinating aspects of meme behaviors, is its ability to go “viral.” While human beings consciously design and determine the usage of certain memes, others may replicate despite being deemed harmful or proven false. Balkin cites negatively reinforced behavior as an example. We tend more vividly recall what we have been told *not*
to do rather than those we are encouraged to (ibid: 74). This bears some similarity to the notion of “cognitive dissonance.” Cultural phenomena such as fads, mass hysteria and collective suicide have been implicated as evidence of negative, contagious memes. Balkin attributes this to the “recursiveness” of human thought.

Colonial stereotypes exhibit a similar persistence. Despite their proven inaccuracy they persevere in vestigial forms in Balinese fusion projects the world over. While memes are “selected” they also shape modes of discourse. Thus while individuals are consciously aware of that certain ideas or harmful and untrue, they persist nevertheless as if “serving their own ends.” (Aunger 2000: 1). This is similar to Hayden White’s notion of “narrativity.” (White 1987). He argues that the form of narrative (the historical representation) gives meaning to its content (the events themselves). Without the narrative, events simply occur without a particular relationship to the social order and thus have no significance (ibid: 27). A memeticist could argue that colonial-era tropes like “harmony,” “balance,” and “religiosity” are memes which order Balinese history into a cohesive narrative. Despite having been proven untrue, these tropes nevertheless set the terms for a variety of intercultural projects.

Take for example, intercultural projects that mirror the conditions they aim to critique. Tenzer describes the uncomfortable position of making Balinese into “mercenaries” or artists like I Dewa Ketut Alit speaking in general terms about the treatment of Balinese artists as “objects.”117 We may also consider the reignition of colonial tropes in touristic representations of Bali in Japan.118 There is a periodicity to the way in which these tropes recur in new historical and political climates. However like memes, they emerge in mutated forms, readapted to current politics as vestiges of their former selves. In the Japanese case, they are as much a product of nostalgia as much as they are a reflection of sociopolitical

117 I Dewa Ketut Alit p.c.
118 See Chapter 3.
reality. However, perhaps in the case of other intercultural projects (Tenzer, Ziporyn and countless others) they emerge as reminders of socioeconomic asymmetries which persist despite our desire to overcome them through artistic collaboration.

Taken as whole, Balinese music as global phenomena form a “memeplex.” This disparate transnational “community” of artists and composers united by their shared interest in Balinese music might also be described as a “memepool.” While the term normally describes the sum total of memes within a given culture, one could simply shift the frame of reference to have it describe the sum total of humans affected by a single memeplex. This eliminates the need to search for unifying commonalities of experience. One may examine certain similarities between various fusion projects, but there is no need to invest them with the kinds of experiential determinism that diaspora models imply (Balinese fusion artists may or may not feel alienated from Bali as a “homeland,” for example).

In contemporary popular culture, memes are widely known as small, mass-produced, and humorous combinations of images with captions. As products of the internet culture, they often refer to elements of “geek” humor, including science fiction books, movie and video games. These cultural artifacts are often deeply inter-textual, self-referential, and make extensive use of irony. 4chan and Reddit are two of the internet’s most popular forums for memes. Mapping these memes is often a difficult task because of the speed at which they replicate.

While Balinese music travels and reproduces itself with the speed and unpredictability of a Dawkinsian meme, in North America it has also surfaced as a pop-culture meme on several occasions. These memes treat Balinese music as a kind of “inside joke” for members of the memepool. Here are two examples:
Figure 23: Balinese Gamelan Memes, “ERMAGERD GERMELERN” (submitted by reddit user flyingoctopus) and “Captain Amerigong” (submitted by reddit user Karangawesome)

The first is an incarnation of one of the internet’s most popular memes “Ermahgerd.” According to “know your meme,” the meme began in late March 2012, by June the meme had over 5,000 variations spread across several different websites. The actual number of total variations is unknown. The second is a tee-shirt designed by members of Jogyakarta-based, Facebook group “gamelanlovers.” This design features the Marvel Comic’s character “Captain America,” with a gong rather than a shield. Gamelanlovers designs have also shown up as graffiti “tags” on the streets of Jogya. A Flickr user’s photograph of one of these designs also served as the basic design for the American group Gamelan Dharma Swara on the 2010 Bali tour. This featured an image of The Statue of Liberty holding a gong mallet rather than a torch.
Meme-Mapping: Geguritan Basur

Another advantage to meme theory interpretations of transnational phenomena, is that it allows us to isolate a single trope and trace its divergent reinterpretations through a variety of sources, without forcing hierarchies of originality and authenticity. During the course of my fieldwork and in writing and researching this dissertation, I have encountered a single fragment of Balinese poetry again and again. This poem fragment, in some instances is held as a cultural standard for moral behavior in others it is described as a reflexive metonym for Balinese character and in others it is the basis of inspiration for Balinese fusion works. This stanza of poetry is widely known throughout Bali. It is taught to children and is commonly referred to in colloquial conversation (Putra 2009: 263). Taken from the poem Geguritan Basur, the excerpt states:

Eda ngaden awak bisa
Do not think yourself too capable

Depang anake ngadanin
Let others name you

Geginanne buka nyampat
It is like the work of sweeping

Anak sai tumbuh lu hu
Waste is produced constantly

Ilang lu hu buke kata h
Once the dirt is cleaned away dust remains

Yadin ririh
Do not think yourself clever

Liu enu pelajahang
There is much you need to learn

(This version Putra, translation by the author 2009: 263)
In its abbreviated form, the song is frequently taught to Balinese children and is referred to as *Tembang Ginada* or *Pupuh Ginada*. The stanza contains seven lines. The first five lines and the seventh line have eight syllables while the penultimate line has four. The rhyme scheme is a palindromic ABACABA.\(^{119}\) While this stanza is an extremely common cultural trope, many of those familiar the song may not know its poetic origins (ibid).

There are many extant versions of the poem written on several Balinese lontar. In 1978, the poem was transcribed by I Wayan Jendra and published by the *Departemen Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan* (Department of Education and Culture). Thus as a cultural artifact during the New Order, the poem was widely circulated for use in schools, and is widely performed in secular and ritual performances including *arja* (Balinese opera), *drama gong*, *wayang* (shadow puppet theatre), *topeng prembon* (masked dance-drama)(Natih 1998: 2).

*Kidung, Kakawin* and *Geguritan* are all genres of Balinese sung-poetry, many of which have received little scholarly attention.\(^{120}\) The term “gurit” refers to narrative poetry and may have an etymological connection to *goret*, which means “to croak” (Shadeg 2007). While the genres are porous and are best thought of along a linguistic continuum, they are frequently parsed into three categories. *Kakawin* is composed in the ancient Javanese language, *bahasa kawi*. *Kidung* is written in a mixture of Javanese and Balinese languages, while *Geguritan* is written in poetic Balinese (*bahasa Bali*). These poems may be realized in following melodic conventions in any one of a number vocal styles including *tembang alit*, *macapat*, and *sinom pangkur* (ibid).

The full text describes the Balinese concept or “law” of *karmaphala* (*hukum karmaphala*). *Karmaphala* is often described as the “root” of Balinese Hindu teachings, or

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\(^{119}\) This is determined by the vowel sound of the last syllable in each line: a-i-a-u-a-i-a.

\(^{120}\) For more on genres of Balinese vocal music see Wallis 1979 and Herbst 1997.
While these songs are frequently transmitted through formal performing arts practices, another important context for Balinese vocal performance is the *mabebasan*. *Mabebasan* are a combination of performance and literary discussion. Participants realize various lines of poetry as *tembang* (song) while another offers an interpretation of the text. *Mabebasan* occur in a variety of formal and informal contexts, including temple ceremonies (*odalan*), life-cycle ceremonies (*otonan*), or personal entertainment (*pesantian*). *Pesantian* clubs may form in local communities as well as over short-wave, CB radio. In 1991, the Indonesian radio station RRI started a call-in television show aimed at preserving and contemporizing *mabebasan*. On it, participants from around Bali would call in and perform various *tembang* live, over the phone while the host offered the interpretation. Balinese literary scholar I Nyoman Darma Putra cites *Geguritan Basur* as one of the most commonly sung poems during these call-in shows (Putra 2009: 260).

Putra offers two analyses of *Geguritan Basur* which comment on its sustained relevance to Balinese contemporary life. One of these interpretations relates directly to Balinese attitudes towards intercultural interaction. Firstly, the poem exists as an archetype for what may be understood as outdated or irrelevant cultural values. For example, in many *kidung interaktif* performances, callers frequently parody the line, “do not think yourself clever,” with “do not think yourself stupid.” Putra describes this as a way that Balinese are able to critique the contemporary relevance of the poem without undermining the moral importance of the tradition (ibid: 263).

Such sentiments have been echoed in online blogs and forums aimed primarily at Balinese and Indonesians. For example, Balinese blogger I Made Yanuarta posted his own transcription and interpretation (in Indonesian) in May of 2006. The post elicited a variety of responses most, but not all of which were positive. According to one respondent, “*Pupuh*
Ginada is no longer relevant. Without promoting yourself, no one will know whether you are smart or an idiot. Most Balinese people still harbor these beliefs” (Gusady 2009). Critics of this discourse argue that it reflects an old-fashioned, feudal mind-set, one that elevates “knowing your place” in the presence of your superiors into an archetypal, cultural ideal.

The poetic glorification of self-effacement may have both positive and negative consequences for Balinese as they interact with foreign cultures and global ideologies. Gusady claims that without self-promotion it is nearly impossible to succeed in the contemporary workplace. The socioeconomic situation of Bali during the feudal era was radically different from the free-market, competitiveness of contemporary Indonesia. Nowadays it is almost impossible to get a job without some degree of self-promotion. Thus, while Ginada promotes certain high ideals, they may be an unaffordable luxury for those in the trenches of the working class.

This culture of humility also poses complications for the contemporary performing artist. Artists striving to create bold, individual aesthetics or who incorporate social commentary may be criticized as arrogant and thusly “un-Balinese.” This also makes it exceedingly difficult for Balinese artists to critique governmental bureaucratization of culture, because criticism is treated as culturally inappropriate a priori. This is one area in which intercultural interaction provides a meaningful solution. Putra cites intercultural interaction in Balinese literature as a vehicle for circumventing Balinese cultures of conformity. Rather than critique cultural policy directly, Balinese authors are able to use foreign characters, already believed to be “outspoken” and “gauche” in their demeanor. He

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claims that strategy of, “using an ‘Other’ to present such views is much more meaningful and appropriate, so foreigners provide a vehicle for saying what Balinese characters cannot say.” (Putra 2011: 264). Similarly in the performing arts, Balinese musicians may use foreign collaborators as a way of speaking their own criticisms in a socially acceptable vein.

As an iconic and nearly ubiquitous Balinese cultural artifact, Pupuh Ginada has also been incorporated into several Balinese fusion projects. Bona Alit featured an arrangement of the song in their 2011 album Kishi-Kishi III. The song features traditional Balinese singing blended with stylistic elements from kroncong and degung. Several YouTube users have uploaded home-spun arrangements of the tembang in a wide and eclectic variety of vocal and instrumental styles. It seems that Balinese vocal music makes prolific use of social media, like YouTube and Facebook more so than any genres of instrumental music. Users may upload videos where they realize tembang in traditional modes, or they may create intricate multi-tracked arrangements of these pieces in rock, reggae, hip-hop and other popular music styles.

I first heard Pupuh Ginada in the summer of 2006. It was my second summer in Bali and in addition to studying and taking lessons I was involved with Michael Tenzer and members of the UBC gamelan ensemble Gita Asmara for a Bali Arts Festival concert featuring new and traditional music performed in collaboration with Pengosekan’s Sanggar Cudamani. Tenzer was rehearsing the second piece in his three-part triptych, Buk Katah (however, it was at this point, unnamed). The rehearsal process was arduous. The Balinese musicians were memorizing Tenzer’s music by rote during three-hour rehearsals (more or less standard fare for Balinese musicians). While at the same time Western musicians were reading from scores and waiting while Cudamani inched their way through the piece measure-by-measure, beat-by-beat.
Like *Puser Belah*, a core polemic of the work is the commensurability of Western and Balinese musics. Tenzer upped the ante in *Buk Katah* by incorporating a more or less complete Western chamber orchestra minus the strings in addition to a full *gamelan semarandana*. While *Puser Belah* represents Balinese and Western music metaphorically with two *gamelan*, *Buk Katah* brings them together in a more direct, literal confrontation. In an effort to highlight sonic and intonational difference between the two ensembles, the wind and brass players were asked to play in equal temperament as much as possible. The Western players adhered to a more or less “Balinese” rehearsal schedule, which was much more work than they were accustomed to. However, the cost of their stipends and accommodations were comparable to Canadian standards and thus astronomical in direct comparison with the individual stipends of the *Cudamani* musicians.

The piece remained untitled for much of the rehearsal process. Finally, Tenzer sought guidance from the Balinese *dalang* I Wayan Sija, a famed artist from the village of Bona and father to I Made Sidia. Sija is one of very few artists to have received the title “*maestro*” from the Indonesian government, an distinction that carries a several material benefits including a cash award and health insurance. I happened to run into Tenzer just as he was about to leave for Bona. In the car, he explained that he was searching for a title to his piece and that he felt he needed, inspiration or guidance from a recognized master artist. Balinese *dalang* are often sought out for sound moral judgement in such cases.

The first thing I noticed at Sija’s compound was clocks. The place was full of clocks. Some worked, some did not and no two were set to the same time. I remained at a distance, sitting on *bale* near the entrance while *Sija* and Tenzer spoke. He tried to explain, why Western music and Balinese music resided like oil and water within himself, how feeling deeply about one seemed to take him further away from the other. Tenzer explained that he
did not know how express these two feelings simultaneously. Sija answered with *Pupuh Ginada*. He explained it as a Balinese children’s song, sung to help put them to sleep. Then he sang it for us. He explained it to Tenzer and went over the verse until he had memorized it. Talking it over in the car, with some of the Cudamani members who had come along, he decided to take a portion of the fifth line: *ilang luhu buke katah* (sweep the dirt away and the dust remains). He adopted the English translation “Underleaf” to describe that which remains underneath despite all efforts to integrate and assimilate. For Tenzer, *Ginada* describes an indivisible remainder that cannot be erased. This remainder persists despite all attempts at reconciliation, and thus must be left for others to judge. For the individual, one’s identity is out of one’s hands, and thus the effort to name oneself is a futile task better left to others.

**Conclusion**

This dissertation has explored Balinese music as a collection of locally rooted musical aesthetics that have spread far beyond their point of origin and taken root the world over. I have attempted to analyze the multifarious cultural, political, and historical mechanisms that have facilitated its growth. In evoking the concept of “meme” I do not wish to call attention away from the many brilliant Balinese artists who are collectively responsible for creating such an admired music. Moreover, Balinese music’s status as multiple and dispersed global phenomena is further proof of their enduring legacies. While both Balinese and non-Balinese artists and scholars make it a habit of fretting over the future of the Balinese music, its enduring global popularity should come as some comfort regarding lasting value and its continued relevance.

As Tsing notes, “It has become possible for scholars to accept the idea that powerless minorities have accommodated themselves to global forces. But to turn that statement around and argue that global forces are themselves congeries of local/global interaction has been
rather more challenging.” (Tsing 2005: 1). The 1990s anticipated the decentralization of global authority with celebratory theories describing the new ease global interaction of which, Appadurai’s “global flows” are an archetype of the aesthetic. However Tsing argues that since 1990s, the dominant characterization of transnational communication has shown itself to be “too smooth.” The now iconic concept of, “global flow” which wrote of global interaction as an “amassment of individual desires,” now appears oversimplified. It fails to take into account “the idiosyncrasies of regional histories and persistent issues of violence and racial stratification” (ibid: 12).

Power is central to most if not all contemporary discussions of intercultural performance. And power in this context, often boils down to the power of representation. Who has the power to represent whom in Balinese fusion musics? There are no simple answers. Throughout this text we have seen examples from Japanese colonial representations of Indonesia to contemporary Balinese musings on Americans. If one were to keep count, one would likely notice that non-Balinese tend to represent Balinese more so than vice versa in international collaborations. The transnational flow of capital facilitates this structural asymmetry. However as scholars have explored, Balinese artistic representation of the foreign go back centuries.\(^{122}\) The Balinese have always been keen ethnographers. And only recently, have foreign audiences become savvy enough to notice.

We have examined the extent to which each region’s cultural history influences the aestheticization of Balinese music. These histories likewise condition the symbolic and cultural efficacy of a given fusion project. In looking at Japan’s relationship with Indonesia, we see that Japanese colonial imagery mixed with contemporaneous discourse on cultural identity carries strong, yet metamorphosed resonances in contemporary performance. In

\(^{122}\) See Collier 2007.
America, the association of Balinese music with musical modernism has defined many of its aesthetic and ideological parameters. In some ways, the fundamental differences between American and Japanese relationships to “Atianness” greatly color the shape and significance of Balinese fusion music in each place. However in both places, gamelan music has served as an ideal vehicle for bimusicality in academic institutions. In Bali, cultural discourse on Balineseness reflects Bali’s shifting political alliances. And Balinese fusion projects present disparate interpretations of these constantly evolving dispositions. Each of these examples represents less a “perversion” of Balinese music, but an account of the messiness in trying to wed it to various global ideologies. These tense, messy but also productive negotiations were all facilitated through the friction of asymmetric power relationships. The Japanese imperial hegemony in Bali, the post-War American hegemony in Japan, and the hegemony of the Balinese tourism infrastructure have all been catalysts for the creation of new Balinese hybridities.
Appendix 1:

An unpublished essay by I Nyoman Windha entitled, “Mulih ke Bali” (2004-2005), with excerpts from the score. Translated by Peter Steele.

“Return to Bali”
A Colossal Concert of Gamelan and Non-Gamelan Music
With: Gamelan JES Fusion
Directed by: I Nyoman Windha

Background (Born of Worry)

This concert was born out of worry as well as a concern that Balinese identity is the process of disappearing. It was also born of a desire to invite all layers of society to reflect for a moment on ways we can return to the true essence of life.

To see Bali from outside is so very different from seeing Bali for Bali itself. Feelings of fear, sadness, misgivings and anxieties all blend into one. That is what I encountered while I was in California for two and a half years. My presence there was as an arts ambassador in order to promote Balinese arts with Gamelan Sekar Jaya as well as other arts groups in the United States. I also enrolled in an MA program in composition at Mills College in California.

My work there as a student in the music department, teaching gamelan and giving lectures about Balinese cultural arts made me proud, envious and worried. Proud because the Balinese arts are so loved in other countries. This is proven by the enthusiasm with which they study Balinese arts both in practice and in theory.

On the other hand, I also had feelings of jealousy. Why aren’t Balinese as passionate to study or as curious as the foreigners who study our art? From these observations, I became worried about Bali’s future. And the question that always arises is, “where will our Bali be taken?”

From this worry, I wanted to actualize a potentially crazy idea, purely meant to show how deeply I love Bali.

This idea grew from feelings of concern as well as my observations of Bali from afar and are supported by my experiences teaching several American groups and most importantly from my experience studying composition at Mills College for two and a half years.

Aside from these reasons above, my experience collaborating with Indra Lesmana in a konser kolosal Megalitikum Kuantum gave me the motivation to form this group.

Only with sure assets would I attempt to form a collaborative music ensemble that I have named JES (jegog, semar pagulingan) GAMELAN FUSION.

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This group has no less than 27 musicians, 20 puppeteers and 3 managers. The members are a mixture of Balinese arts lovers who are both participants and non-participants. There are committed alumni from ISI who also have experience composing, some students from ISI Denpasar who are looking to get experience with this new kind of music, as well as some professors from ISI Denpasar.

The fundamental idea here is to support new talented graduates who have yet to find steady work. Involved with these energetic students and professor is one representative from Tri Darma College dedicated to community service. Bali displays a rather unique connection between the community and government institutions, and this is clearly visible in our daily lives.

**Musical Aspects**

In terms of its music aspects, Jes *Gamelan* Fusion is built upon several deeply thought-out considerations. Joining the ensembles Jegog and Semara Pegulingan was not as simple as just putting the two together. Rather it was based upon careful deliberations in choosing primary pitches that are based upon diatonic scales, with the desire to more easily facilitate the adaptation of Western instruments. *Semar Pegulingan* from bronze, *Jegog* from bamboo and using a system of seven pitches yields a arrangement of pitch placement that is not like their original. The sum sound does not bear the complete tonal color. This was done out of an explicit consideration for the musical models and genres that it will produce. Jes *Gamelan* Fusion fuses with non-*gamelan* musical instruments through the idioms of JAZZ music.

*Jazz* is one musical flow that emerged in the southern United States, New Orleans specifically. Why do I need to use Jazz? This is the implementation of a class I took on improvisation at Mills College. The more I studied about Jazz, the more I felt that its connection to the feeling of Balinese music. One can see the connections between Jazz and Balinese *gamelan* through improvisation. Improvisation, in this context is not simply free. In fact, it is precisely the opposite. An improviser needs both the skills and the technique to listen to the other musicians that one has been invited to perform with. This is similar to techniques in Balinese music as well. A good musician needs more than technical skill. They need both the experience and the talent to listen to other musicians to the extant they can use their partner’s material to develop their own playing on the fly.

**Program**

1. **Threnody for Carlos Chavez (1978)**  
   By: Lou Harrison

This piece was originally created for viola and Sundanese *Gamelan* Degung. In this piece, Lou proves the melodic interest of *gamelan* degung through contour of the viola which beautifully interacts with the *gamelan*. However, in this concert the beautiful sound of the viola will be provided by *gamelan* Semara Pegulingan saih pitu (seven tone). Lou Harrison first became interested in *gamelan* when he first saw Balinese *gamelan* in 1939 when participating in the “Golden Gate Exposition On Treasure Island” in San Francisco, United States.

In my opinion, the melody from the “Threnody for Carlos Chavez” possesses unique meaning. This piece was formative in my journey to become a composer. When I first heard
this piece in 1982 and witnessed it live at a concert in San Francisco in 1989 it truly touched me. The touch of that melancholic melody stuck with me and immediately planted a seed within my soul. This seed kept growing and multiplying like trees without a care for changing seasons.

I never studied directly with Harrison, but through his music I received an extraordinary education. He was a professor of Javanese *gamelan* at Mills College in 1953 where I received my Master’s degree in music composition. I greatly admire his work, especially the work combines *gamelan* music with non-*gamelan* music. As a show of appreciation and with feelings of respect towards his passing in 2003, I with my group, *Jes Gamelan Fusion* am attempting to perform the “Threnody for Carlos Chavez.” With this opportunity I, with my group JGF give thanks to Robert Brown as a viola player in this performance.

By: I Nyoman Windha

Jaya Baya means “victory over disaster.” It was made in October 2002 in the US with *Gamelan* Sekar Jaya. The idea emerged after hearing about the terrorist bombing. Coincidentally, at the same time on October 12th, 2002 Sekar Jaya had a performance in California’s capital city of Sacramento at Sacramento State University. As usual, before the performance the entire group in a circle to pray for a good performance and to receive holy water just as in Bali. Before the prayer began, I as the artistic director would give advice, and this time I also conveyed to them that there had been a bombing in Bali that killed 200 people. How surprised they were to hear this news. Many of them cried. At the time, I felt the need to create a memorial concert in honor of the victims of the bombing. From there, came the idea to create a work which I now call “Jaya Baya,” (Victory Over Disaster).

By “Victory Over Disaster” is that the Balinese community is both resilient and wise enough to address this tragic incident. Usually after such a large disaster, many people utilize this an opportunity to jail and punish those through uncommendable means. However as it happened in Bali, people came out in droves to help those victims in show of collective humanity. For some days, afterwards there were ceremonies in Bali, but also in New York and San Francisco. On November 23, 2002 Sekar Jaya gave a memorial concert for the victims of the Bali bombing in Mountain View, CA which was also the premier of Jaya Baya.

This piece has also been performed at the Bali Arts Festival in 2003 at Natya Mandala at ISI Denpasar at the International *Gamelan* Festival. Also, this piece has been performed at several Sekar Jaya performances in several American cities, and also became the basis for my MA thesis at Mills. The piece also received the award of “excellent composition” for a reward of $500.

This piece was originally written for *gamelan* angklung with Western instruments such as viola, violin, table, clarinet and trumpet. However, this time with JGF, it has been adapted to Semar Pegulingan saih pitu and viola, violin jimbe and tabla.

3. Bali Pop Rapp “Cecimpedan”
Lyric and Rhymes by I Wayan Sugarta
Musical arrangement: I Nyoman Windha
Cecimpedan is a type of Balinese children’s game which we seldom see these days. In this piece, Sugarta who cares deeply about Bali hopes to invite the community to preserve and return parts of Balinese culture which are almost extinct. “Ajeg Bali” cannot simply be written about, it must be proven in real life. One such effort has been to elevate this kind of game into a Balinese pop song which also involves rapp. The emphasis in this song is not only lyrics but the musical accompaniment that was made using gamelan jegog and semar pegulingan saih pitu, combined with Western instruments such as guitar, bass, saxophones, and drums. Musical director, I Nyoman Windha is attempting to create a new identity through contemporary Balinese pop. This renewal is accomplished through the prominence of Balinese gamelan within this musical arrangement. The song is played as a duet, which is performed by Anak Bu Ratna……? And I Ketut Suanda (Cedil) who is also the saxophonist.

4. Jes Fusion One
By I Nyoman Windha

Jes (Jegog Semar Pegulingan) One was designed to utilize all of the instruments in JGF such as: keyboard, djembe, saxophone, guitar, drumset which have been blended with gamelan Jegog and Semar Pegulingan. Jes Fusion One has been composed using Jazz concepts, where all instruments attempt to show their ability through various Jazz rhythms. In this way, the skills of each individual musician are truly tested. Aside from skill, musicians are charged with playing energetically following the character of the piece which is both loud and dynamic.

5. Manusia Dalam Bayangan (Human in Shadow)
Art Director: I Made Sidia
Music Director: I Nyoman Windha

This is an artistic piece in the form of Wayang Lebar (Expansive Shadow Play) that was specifically designed for the Ardha Candra Art Center. The large screen used here has been specially made so that the musicians (gamelan) can interact playfully with the shadows through the use of advanced lighting.

The accompaniment was also designed to fuse both Javanese and Balinese musical nuances, for the reason that wayang kulit in both Java and Bali still perform the epic tales from the Mahabharata and Ramayana.

JGF Supporters
Musicians:
1: Agus Cahyadi, drum and trompong
2: Ketut Sumerjana, keyboard, bass
3: Wahyu Indira, bass, trompong
4: Saito, lead guitar
5: Kadek Wahyu Dita, gangsma
6: I Gede Suparka, gangsma
7: I Made Gede Mandra, jublag
8: I Made Indra Sadguna, jublag
9: Ni Putu Hartini, jegogan
10: Ni Luh Trisna Dewi, jegogan
11: I Made Subandi, djembe, tabla, vocals, kendang
12: Agus Teja Santosa, suling, djembe
13: I Nengah Ari Astika, kantil jegog, suling
14: I Gede Arsana, kantil jegog, trompong
15: I Nyoman Mariana, undir jegog, suling
16: I Wayan Berata, undir jegog
17: I G. Ng. Hari Mahardika, djembe, vocals
18: I Wayan Sugarta, cengceng, vocals
19: I Ketut Suanda, vocals, saxophone
20: Suminto, vocals
21: Tri Arianto, siter, vocals
22: Saptono, kendang ciblon
23: I Ketut Artika, gong
24: Robert Brown, viola
25: I Nyoman Windha, djembe, vocals, kendang
26: I Nengah Rai Seteja, jegog
27: Paula, violin

**Artistic Support**

1: I Made Sidia, Director of Puppetry

Notes: All of us, the artists of JGF who care so deeply about Bali, through art, desire to make something that will easily restore the faith to Bali in the eyes of foreigners and the international community

Hopefully our efforts, through this concert so named RETURN TO BALI can restore the Bali of our collective hopes and dreams.

**Production Staff JGF**

Managerial: I Nyoman Eriawan, Kadek Suartaya, Ni Putu Ratna
Production Leader: I Nyoman Windha.

Excerpts of “Jaya Baya” (used with permission)
Excerpt 1: mm. 1-10
In memory of the many victims of the October 2002 bombing in Bali

Jaya Baya
("Victory in Adversity")

Very slow
Very freely, not in unison with the voice. Ornaments can vary greatly.

Clarinet in B♭
Mandolin
Violin
Stair
Kantilan
Pemade
Voice

Fra · ka · tut · mu · ni A · ngung · gul

Kendang
Jegogan
Gong

Cl.
Mand.
V.

Men · cok · ning · ta

Jaya Baya

2002

I Nyoman Windha
Faster, in tempo

Jaya Baya
Excerpt 2: mm. 44-87

Faster, in tempo three times
Jaya Baya
Very fast (Tempo I)
three times

Kendi solo (details not shown)
Then J three times (in tempo every time), I twice, J once (in tempo), and K twice
Then continue:
Excerpt 3: Composer’s Notes

NOTES

All unmetered (and some metered) sections marked “Freely” are only very rough approximations to the actual rhythmic values, and when the clarinet mirrors the voice, it is not supposed to be in rhythmic unison.

The voice and clarinet parts at the beginning are based on the following melody. In the score, the notes which are added are shown as grace notes or other small notes, but their value should be full (but, of course, free).

Phrases should be felt as leading up to the last note of the phrase, rather than as beginning on the first note of the phrase. Thus a rhythm like this (shown with Western counting):
Should be thought of as this (with Balinese counting):

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Cl} \\
\text{Mand.} \\
\text{Vln}
\end{array}
\]

and a notation more illustrative of the Balinese conception of rhythm (but harder to read) might be:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Cl} \\
\text{Mand.} \\
\text{Vln}
\end{array}
\]

Jaya Baya
Appendix 2:

Two unpublished articles by Balinese composer I Wayan Gede Yudane. The first is titled “Fusion” and the second is titled, “New Music for Gamelan vs. New Music Pop Gamelan.” Both were written in 2012. Translations by Peter Steele

Fusion
2012

By: I Wayan Gede Yudane

Fusion music is not a new concept. However we ought to clarify our thoughts on the subject. The term begs for discussion in order to avoid confusion, as well as to instigate critical reflection concerning the direction of “fusion” as an emerging trend. At the moment, fusion’s potential has yet to be revealed. As such, we may hope that it can take a larger role on the world stage. In popular music, fusion is often described as a “crossover,” that involves a combination of different musical genres. Of course, popular musics are often purposefully crafted so that this aforementioned, “crossover” will break cultural boundaries (or at least push them). In traditional music, culture tends to flow in ways that allow for these boundaries to co-exist with a minimum of awkwardness. At its root, fusion provides us with an opportunity to connect differing musical ideas through differing means in order to create something new. Sometimes this happens naturally, and sometimes it does not.

Some worry whether “new art” is a good thing especially when considering whether the “core” of one’s tradition is ruined by the mixture of foreign ideals. A simple optimism can refute the second concern without diminishing concerns about the first. Through the history of Western music from the last one hundred years, we can trace both instruments and melodic motives borrowed from one tradition or another. But these borrowings are often both naive and isolated. As such, they cannot truly be called “fusion.” In my opinion, fusion implies taking the character of two or more traditions, combining them at a fundamental level in order to create a new works that are still connected, at root, to their respective traditions. If such music is proven to have greatness, then as it should, it will flourish while remaining in constant connection with its roots. So grounded, are the majority of traditional and classical musics available to us now throughout the world. Because of this, fusion music holds great potential. However, the sheer variety of available options can also diminish this potential. Too many choices may also lead to confusion. And thus, fusion should only be handled in limited ways.

Although, fusion has been rather instrumental in prodding Western music, it has been most significant in shaping and continuing the modernist tradition. Fusion may be viewed as a truly postmodern phenomenon, where ideas are collected and deployed dynamically in order to create a true culture of creativity. Indeed, postmodernism as a “parasitic” worldview constantly demands reinvigoration from new ideas and as such, is temporarily supported by the introduction of fusion. However, this suggests that there is something “wrong” with concept of fusion, which brings us back to the aforementioned concern of whether or not fusion destroys tradition or serves as its foundation. While I still say that this point of view is excessively pessimistic, at the very least these basic ideas are what truly enable a tradition to defend itself. There myriad ways in which our tradition is strong, so we need not worry. But the process of information exchange needed to form a strong sense of tradition cannot be instantly established in the form of a fusion work. So, in most cases fusion is not that
interesting. Although this is the case, it does not mean we should be any less passionate in our experimentalism. We just need to have more reasonable expectations.

The key to successful fusion is in creating an organic harmony between the ingredients one wishes to use. Classical music is often problematic in this case. But musicians who have been educated in special ways, have raised their repertoire so that it may be accepted by broader audiences if they force their work a little. Fusion, in other ways connects educated musicians of differing style. There is another way, ultimately we need to create a definition for fusion as an individualized musical entities in the minds of these musicians, not just as an abstract external concept. Concept itself plays an important role in the formation of new artistic styles, but its ability to do so is hit-or-miss. In the future, I would like to implement this in more specific ways, and would happily take advice on how to do so. The basic idea behind fusion, is actually quite simple, and many examples of it can be found throughout the world’s musics. But in the course of analyzing its potential or its acceptance its intricacies are soon apparent. The question of area is relevant as well. Because fusion may occur between similar or contrasting styles. Western music may be a productive topic in this respect.

In order to discuss fusion music in explicit detail, I feel it is easier to speak about the issue with respect to a few separate instances and their issues without speaking about fusion itself substantially. After speaking about whatever has happened I am able to consider this subject with more perspective. Fusion will happen, fusion has already caused some so-called “pure” traditions to disappear. Call it, knowledge which has been subverted, if you will. But the reality of it remains constant, that tradition itself changes and develops and knowledge from other cultures always forms a part of that change. If we equate purity with stupidity then immediately we will find ourselves in a bad situation. Then the problem becomes how to maintain the freshness and strength of each tradition in fusion music rather than letting them dissolve into one another like porridge served to sick people. Fusion is inevitable and cannot be undone.

Essentially, it is a process of entropic generation, like an object releasing its energy. Its former existence has been destroyed by the internet itself. The internet, like artistic fusion itself is just one part of larger phenomena. One that makes the world smaller and one that in the end, diminishes diversity. This overall decrease in diversity can lead to a decrease in musical potential. That is how the cycle perpetuates itself, thus taking away our ability to recognize fusion’s potential for development. We cannot fight this process, but we may harness its energy in positive ways and locate better opportunities. At the moment, we occupy a specific point in this cycle where uncalculated actions can have terrible consequences.

This is followed by an irrefutable truth, which was first recognized by postmodernism and was later immortalized on the web. “Content” will change, that even the “medium” itself will change. Postmodernism, first recognized the idea that we can combine whole substances into a larger frame while leaving the individual pieces in tact. This gives us a way beyond the complications of cultural relativism. It provides a kaleidoscopic commingling, a small gem that retains its original color. Collage is the fundamental postmodern form, which cannot be observed directly. However it is also shaped by history. In reality, this is the vision we are headed for, once we realize that media itself will change. In order to revitalize our ideals they must be mixed at their deepest levels, and imbued with new emotion. They cannot just sit in a cage, or at least not in a cage by themselves. I will admit, that I do enjoy some museum musics, but they are do not comprise the whole of art. Not even the majority. Because interpretation needs to be freed in order give music its validity. We already have a means to consider free improvisation, as well we accept the merger of
composers and musicians, this is a kind of fusion that is appropriate to rebuilding the foundations of traditional music. We now need to address the possibility that fusion facilitates a purer form of expression. In the case of using gamelan music as a platform for the mixture of other ideas, we must remember that traditional forms derive their strength from formal limitations.

The problem now, is that we must take musical gestures together with their spirit. We need not problematize which cultural perspectives we wish to appropriate at this time, but whether or not these gestures really mean something in the context of their appropriation. When a piece possess adequate musical potential, it cannot inhibit the formation of larger meanings nor hinder direct expression. The fusion of these energetic, small worlds as well as the explosive development of technology aids the development of new art, but the exact forms these will take have yet to be decided. It does not make us optimistic to see fusion created through random and chaotic methods. But that is the situation we are in and history has shown that great things can still be born from these circumstances. While gamelan has been a pioneer of merging styles there is another developing pole of creativity which has emerged. “Komplexitas bunyi” (lit. sound complexity) presents an approach to sound organization as a reinvention of external sonic events, which is tied to another tradition. The mind receives its order from chaos. As such, over and over again, free forms become stable and are governed by rules (as in the Xenakis scale, for example). If that which has emerged chaotically as a result of such processes is captured and identified retroactively, can I call that fusion? I say NO and maintain the position that fusion is the self-conscious combination of different styles, not a post facto rediscovery which akin stumbling upon a room full of typing monkeys. I call refer to this process as “coalescent.” Allow the tension of opposing forces to co-exist in fusion. Coalescent music will likely be well-received in the future, but it cannot be immediately appreciated. We can imagine that source of such music resides in “coalescent” activity in all of its significance.

The examples presented in this paper are not comprehensive. In general, I feel too uninformed, too close to practice, and too confused to give commentary. However, I still hope to compose fusion in a detailed manner within this space (or in another piece of writing), this proves how unstable the situation is. This chaotic situation, caused by unintentional collisions of knowledge cannot be avoided. If one hears a certain way within the context of fusion, they automatically assume it to be the truth. What they hear at first, may not be as it happens, for time is diverse as well. We can be sure that the dominant form (the mainstream), will inevitably involve fusion but its motivation, especially in those activities which are not evaluated in this field make it almost impossible to determine the cause. Even the medium of conveyance cannot be ascertained, though we hope that acoustic performance will still somehow be involved. Such fusions are also limited by the pressure to describe the masterpieces of old in a way that reflects the changes in social priorities. As a result, such fusion might be tied to political interests. I don’t mean to suggest that art and politics should always be segregated, but because current politics are generally destructive, it constitutes a weak footing for harmonious fusion. An awareness of politics might overshadow world music experiments with anxiety. I mean to suggest that fusion must result from real choices rather than simple, and derivative variations. Indeed, the question of what new choices we have with fusion is a good question and we can at least offer these preliminary answers.
New Music for Gamelan vs New Music Pop Gamelan
By: I Wayan Gde Yudane
Translation by Peter Steele

“in the presentation of hermeneutics, we need artistic erotica”

WHAT IS THE “NEW CONSONANCE” IN GAMELAN MUSIC?

However – these two descriptors- “new” and “consonance” may be misleading to those unfamiliar with the above quote. However, it cannot be denied.

By “new” we need not refer to the discovery of novel and revolutionary aesthetics. This is not what “new” means. In this context, the idea of revolutionary would immediately stifle further discussion concerning the production of new modes of composition and prevent existing styles from further development. “Consonant,” may be misunderstood if one only considers its use in the most visible aesthetic forms, where awkwardness or dissonance (meaning non-harmoniousness) have been removed from the auditory field. This is not what I mean.

The new consonance in gamelan music is instead an outlook - a silence and civility resulting from art music’s encounters with the crises of the past century.

Music history may be summarized- albeit crudely- as an ongoing battle between two interests: One hand, there are those who wish to consolidate what which has already been proven aesthetically valuable within the bounds of formal structure, and on the other, those who push, those who cannot be destroyed, who go beyond the formal structures and create freedom of expression that breaks the boundaries of form.

So, with the passing of the last century and in the form of a thrilling battle, the second trend has become more prominent than the first- but without the first giving in entirely. There are some works which advance both perspectives to the best of their ability.

The core of it is that throughout this century music has been enriched by sounds which allow the composer to express the inner and the exterior, but not through a discourse of universality, but through contemporary and locally relevant meanings. Because of that, we must position our art in a way that is connected to the past that also treats both music and sound through calculated means, including the potential for technical acoustics which in part can overshoot the power of human hearing. It is without a doubt extremely useful for us now to be able to hear everything.

And with this explosion of spectacular potential also comes responsibility. The reality is that listeners can become saturated and lose interests in arts that have been over-promoted. More so as a composer, an individual who is “tamed” to not make pieces spontaneously, because such impromptu compositions seem insignificant and lack interest. Has not this been said before? This is attitude we observe with the “New Consonance” in gamelan music.

Therefore this style possesses a unique aesthetic propose…not to say that aesthetics are everything! But indeed there is an “outrage” in working towards something that is founded solely on the desire for fame. We do not accept it. The New Consonance cannot embrace that
which is “interesting” without mystery, complexity and discovery. This thesis is skeptical of commercialism or music “made-to-order.”

The New Consonance hopes that each composer is devoted to creating nuanced works with reflect individual truths, in whatever form or language it is composed.

Something that is left behind in commercial music, made for mass consumption, both mediocre and excessive (and without value!), so different from music meant for a few chosen, rare individuals, environment which breathes freely, the New Consonance should be approached openly but with taste – in whichever shape or style. Of course this music creates a communicative event between the listener caused by “formal dimension” and in connection with the performance, the composer, musicians and listeners.

As such, innovation and opportunity are not the end product. But is not this innovation really at the foundation, remember our kreasi must be different, as we ourselves are different.

NEW MUSIC POP GAMELAN
The general idea

Pop gamelan music has been standardized such that it has been “gnawed to the bone” Anyone can listen to it. Accordingly, it does not require any real intellectual work to be heard. It neither challenges nor promotes ideas. It is simply taken as it is.

Moreover, the habits taken from pop gamelan music have grown friendly in a world that is not. It pleases the ear, in the same way that stores and shopping malls use popular music like home furnishings (audio wallpaper). This has already been proven (with research to back it up) that pop music relaxes customers in order to make them shop more easily. As such, pop music functions as a tool of economic control. Such music may be considered, “a replacement for music that listeners do not understand” namely the freedom to choose and the ability revise the world of music. This music has power to bind and dazzle those who are married to their work. It diverts attentions and convinces listeners that they are complacent and productive within the economic system.

This is not the case, with “Musik gamelan baru” which does not rely on standard forms but utilizes form in creative and unique ways. Each musical fragment is a statement on the human condition, each brings its own unique perspective towards human existence. Resistance towards classical music is the cause of our embarrassment. Any music refers to itself with doubt over its own existence will inevitably embarrass itself. That they indeed have already squandered their own potential. And afterwards make excuses as to why they must always remember the arts.

The slippage of pop gamelan music is caused by a few things. First and foremost, the connection between larger cultural industries (like the fashion industry) and so-called “modern music” within systems of economic organization. While this is termed “flow,” it operates with calculated effects that mask its primitive standards. The problem with popular music like this is that it is too often tied to other social elements such as fashion or language.

FORM AND STANDARDIZATION
The most important aspect of this article is the problem of “standardization.” It is here that critics and commentators believe that the above description is in fact correct. Before they analyze these songs based on form we should connect our “standards” to our assumptions about “industrialized nations.” There is not actually anything which is truly “new” that may enter, except for those whose effects may be calculated and which add spice to that which already is.

In art music, “all things acquire real meaning from such processes, and this meaning is provided by the connectedness of details, which challenge, extend, and surpass one another until it is revealed.” That classical music can sculpt in parts from construction following the way in which a composer creates. This connection is the “life” which gives meaning. It allows art to develop to deeper levels of detail. In popular music, this basic form does not change. It does not develop but is closed off by layers of ornamentation which mask its similarity. This is intentional, because both its fans and its listeners do not desire interpretation or analysis, nor do they need a standard response.

PSEUDO-INDIVIDUALIZATION

This term highlights the contradictions that are faced by producers of popular music. Namely, their music must be impressive enough to be remembered but must be too average, to be ordinary and banal. This gives the impression of a breadth of facets, where for consumers it is as though they have choice, and as such, it also seems as though they have the freedom to choose. This means that they feel as if they are expressing individualistic traits. As such, what is the difference that is shown by popular music (and popular culture more generally?) reality or simply illusion? Does this mean that consumer individualism is false? The term, “pseudo-Individualization” above is an effort to describe this notion.
Appendix 3:

Unpublished essay on and “transcript” of I Dewa Ketut Alit’s *Genetik* (2012), by I Dewa Ketut Alit. Translation by Peter Steele.

**GENETIK**

Musical Independence For Balinese *Gamelan* in the Global Era

Dewa Alit

Genetik is a new music composition whose media are the instruments of *gamelan Salukat*. This piece has emerged from *konsep bunyi*, a musical framework based on the directionality, layering, and registral distribution of sonority. The idea began through my own intellectual explorations concerning the relationship and influence of genetics in creating = natural and sustainable change from generation to generation. Something considered different from or even destructive towards the existing conditions (DNA, sound, or the source of ideas) may not necessarily be detrimental. In fact, such differences may become more advantageous when put into contact with other ways of life, and may accidentally yet serendipitously connect immediately with this new context. These encounters cannot be predicted, and yet they create favorable circumstances in natural accordance with our fundamentally human need for a sustainable way of life (gene, frame, motives or form). Over the course of time, from generation to generation that which cannot find integration from such encounters will become extinct of its accord. The forms that support new life are often first considered destructive, but then later revolutionize existing frameworks with new forms and attitudes (genetics; the process of transformation).

Genetik finds its expressiveness in artistic freedom. However expressiveness does not necessarily connote, “emotion.” Also, it is not simply an unfocused exploration of imagination. It is not only meant to articulate a simple and concise cultural perspective. It is in the process of moving forward. In order to find itself, it struggles for self-reliance, vying for a position in the face of global culture, which tends to funnel all things towards a single, dominant model. It espouses values of equality, and penetrates the dichotomy between “east” and “west.” It aims to sever the networks of discrimination towards *gamelan* music in the belief that Balinese *gamelan* music is ready to vie elegantly and independently with the musics of the world.

New art which fights for principles of independence and authenticity is a crucial catalyst to stimulate and grow our community as appreciators, participants and evaluators of art. If we, as Balinese grow apathetic towards the core issues involved in the development of our own artistic forms, then should we just hope that non-Balinese will take care of that which we have forgotten?

The solution is that Balinese *gamelan* music needs to maintain a close connection to ideals of equality in order to sustain itself passionately as an independent musical form amid the rest of global musics. It needs to be ever-changing and without borders. This mission has also motivated me to design and built *Gamelan Salukat* and form a sekehe (arts club) to perform new music on these instruments. This strategy has enabled me to more freely realize new musical ideas in a strongly traditional environment. It is a situation analogous to
contemporary Bali itself. This gives my work meaning not only because it retains a traditional identity. Much more importantly, it empowers and positions gamelan music to be the “master of its own house” until it can give birth a musical lifestyle that is resilient against the increasingly pervasive onslaught of global capitalism.

Tradition – Contradiction: The Issues behind Genetik

Bali is extremely lucky to have a form of traditional gamelan music of such depth and meaning. This cultural wealth begs to be well-cared for and is the foundational to the future sustainability of traditional music. It is part of our cultural design which gives Bali its unique reputation. Cultural preservationists must be aware that this does not happen on its own. It is born of a lengthy process from generation to generation, which creates a consonant disposition between the music itself and the community of inhabitants. This engenders is a deep connection which remains until the music emerges as a highly valued tradition.

However, on the other side, with “living traditions” there is an inevitable contradiction. From independence through the reformasi and today, I see that discrimination towards gamelan music still exists. Gamelan is only considered as a musical medium, in severely limited circumstances. It is bound to the idea of “living tradition.” Rules, which at root are merely guidelines, have come to frame composition of tabuh. These are then modified in non-musical ways. The tendency is that such changes are made to more effectively control political power. Musical development has been housed under one roof, colored by the shades of politics. One example is the now routine competition model for the Gong Kebyar festival at the PKB. At a structural level this festival is designed by the Balinese provincial government. Its primary orientation is to allow audience members to support groups from their home regencies. It has become habitual for audience members at such performances to join the fray, making noise and using foul language. There are also audience members who, while the performance is happening casually chat with each other about the music performed onstage. These audience members often think themselves smarter (sok tahu) than the musicians. They do not come to listen. They come to talk. Is it so that these phenomena are purposefully maintained and that we lack the audacity to change. Is it appropriate to hold on to such stale traditions in the 21st century?
Genetik: “A Transcript”
By: I Dewa Ketut Alit
(diagrams renotated by Peter Steele)

Genetik is a new music composition for Gamelan Salukat based on my understandings of “genetics” as a study of processes of change as applied to pre-existing models or forms.

Through Genetik, the composer struggles to find his own way in order to more deeply understand the processes by which he may alter the characteristics of Balinese gamelan music while allowing for the music’s identity to remain both unique and of high quality.

By notating elemental particles as “genes,” I have created embryonic versions of melodic patterns whose motivic content feels “new”. Here, the “genes” go on to form molecules of complementary, interwoven sounds in the form of “cecandetan” or “kotekan” on the small-scale and on the large-scale provide the, “gending” or “tabuh.”

The establishment of tone color which serves as the principle trait throughout the development of Genetik is realized through the following modes (saih) found on Gamelan Salukat. Panji Cenik (123-56-), Panji Gede (-234-67), Panji Miring (-23-567), Mayure Cenik (1-345-7), Mayure Gede (12-456-), Wargesari (1-34-67), Kartika (12-45-7), Lebeng (1234567). With the exception of saih Lebeng, the names of these saihs have been taken from gamelan Gong Luang.

My goal is to explicate the complexity and newness of Genetik in both conceptual and rational terms. Also, more generally, this is an effort to inspire new thoughts and theories of Balinese gamelan music as “independent” music.

The piece is composed of five parts. Each part is labeled GEN. My usage of the term gen is taken from the word, “gene,” which serves as small within component within a larger genetic sequence.

GEN I

In Gen I, sonority is expressed through individual pitches, because of course each keyed instrument produces a pitched sound. However the organization of these pitches is based upon the aforementioned treatment of “sonority”.

The tempo in the first and second sections is based on the theatrical expression of one’s heart rate which is connected to the frequency of one’s own breath. This is expressed by a bodily, up-down motion done by the performers in accordance with their breath and the desired tempo. Breath, in this case serves as the basis for the tempo of the music played.

This is section is comprised of four parts, which are:
Part 1

Concept: The performance technique noret as performed between two adjacent notes functions as the Core sonority, The Layering of sonority is based upon scale-height at the octave, the Direction of sonority is expressed through the ways in which a musician performs noret, (either to the left, to the center, or to the right). It begins with a simple and slow pattern. The jegogan and jublag play every 15 beats (15 x 6).
The fourth core idea refers to the scale.

This section cover four whole octaves, comprised of:

![Diagram of pitch order and direction]

The order of pitches with instrument names from high (right) to low (left) are:
Kantilan, Pemade, Jublag and Jegog

The direction for each noret motive in the pemade and kantilan parts as well as the jegogan and kantilan are:
Kantilan players 1 and 2 – to the right
Kantilan players 3 and 4 to the left (high) + pemade players 1 and 2 – to the left
Pemade players 3 and 4 – to the right (low)
Jublag and jegogan to the right and left towards the center (middle)
The form for *noret* patterns in the *pemade* and *kantilan* is as follows (15 beats x 6):

Part 2
Concept: Enter *gong* and *reyong*, played with a sweeping motion with the intention of widening the sonic palette. The coincidence of all sounds emerging from the sound layers and sound directions with the sound register of the gong occasionally creates a single, holistic sound event.

Instruments: *Kit, Pd, Jb, Jg, Gong, Kpr, Ry*.

Motives: Same as part 1, add *gong* and *kempur* to the 15 x 6 beat structure, plus *reyong* which challenges which its dominating and unified sound.
Form for gong and kempur, 15 beats x 6.

Part 3
Concept: Melodic development using pemade and kantilan following a kerep pattern coupled with the reyong playing ocek-ocekan. The tempo gradually rises into the following section.

Motives: The gong and kempur are the same as the previous section. Jegogan and jublag each begin from their outermost points and move towards the center and then vice versa in multiples of five within the 15 beats x 6 framework.
Directionality shown over the jegogan and jublag.

Form for Jegogan and Jublag in 15 beats x 6 form:
Part 4
Concept: Intensity increases – Enter rhythmic reyong. Kantilan, pemade, jublag, jegog, gong and kempur are played louder and at a faster tempo leading into the final gong.

Motives: Six times 15 beats, Kt. 1,2,3,4 + Pd. 1,2,3,4, with reyong alternations every 15 beats, jegogan and jublag play in multiples of 5 within 15 beats times 6.
Instruments: kantilan, pemade, jublag, jegogan, reyong, gong, and kempur.

Form for gong and kempur.
GEN II

Idea: Motivic Transformation comprised of three parts:

Part 1
Concept: Change motives to produce a new sonic fabric.

Motive: Reorder the pemade and kantilan motives from Gen I, part 3 (lines 1 through 6) which become four parts: a, b, c, d using techniques of either parallel or diagonal exchange. The jegog and jublag start on part b = 1.1, c= 1.3, d= 1.4. Gong and kempur are played by “scratching” the body (tehnik menggores) beginning from part b = 1.2, c=1.4, d=1.2, until it forms a new basic texture.

Form:
- a. Kantilan 1&2 + Pemade 1&2
- b. Kantilan 3&4 + Pemade 3&4 + Jublag and Jegogan 1.1 + Gong and Kempur 1.2
- c. Kantilan 1&2 + Pemade 1&2 + Jublag and Jegogan 1.3 + Gong and Kempur 1.4
- d. Kantilan 3&4 + Pemade 3&4 + Jublag and Jegogan 1.4 + Gong and Kempur 1.2

Part 2
Concept: Create an alternate road towards to the next section while using the previous motives. The tempo and intensity gradually rise, step by step until it creates fusion of complex, unified sonorities played at high speeds.

Motive: Begin with reyong motives from 1.3 and 1.4 fused with the following rhythm: kentuk 1 then followed by kentuk 2 in a 15 x 6 structure played two times.
Rhythmic interplay: kentuk 1 and kentuk 2 are played at the same time, to create an interwoven texture. Kentuk 1 starts on 1,2,3,4,5,6 (numbers correspond to the patterns below) in one cycle Kentuk 2 starts on 2,3,4,5,6,1 in one cycle
The basic pattern for the *kentuk* patterns are as follows.

Form:

a. *Kentuk* 1 – 15x6 + *Reyong* 1.3 + *Jublag* and *Jegogan* 1.3 + *Gong* and *Kempur* 1.2
b. *Kentuk* 1 & 2 – 15x6 + *Reyong* 1.4 + *Jublag* and *Jegogan* 1.4 + *Gong* and *Kempur* 1.4
c. All on 1.3 with *Kentuk* 1&2
d. All on 1.4 with *Kentuk* 1&2

**Part 3**
Concept: Tension decreases – return to *Gen 1* part 2 as a bridge to the next section

Motive: Return to motives *Gen 1* part 2
*Kantilan, Pemade* plus *Jublag* and *Jegogan* plus *Gong & Kempur*
Gen III
Idea:
1. Connect different modes (saih) within a single, unified framework that is determined by the structure of the gong and kempur.
2. Fusion between Direction of sonority and interlocking ketukan as the melodic basis for the jublag and jegogan.

Comprised of seven parts:

Part 1
Concept: Sudden modulations at each melodic phrase. Phrases are comprised of interwoven kotenakan which move either from right to left (low to high), or vice versa from left to right (high to low) over the three octaves in the pemade and kantilan. Phrases are constructed according to total number of beats played by the jublag and jegogan.

Motives:

a. Jublag and Jegogan = 7.5 + 7.5 beats in saih Wargasari. Kotekan added to the pemade and kantilan proceeding from their lowest to highest notes using all seven tones following the pattern of beats given by the jegogan and jublag.

b. Jublag and Jegogan = 7.5 + 7.5 beats in saih Panji Miring. Kotekan added to pemade and kantilan from their highest note to their lowest using all seven tones following the patterns of beats given by the jegogan and jublag.

c. Jublag and Jegogan = 2.5 + 2.5 + 1.5 + 2.5 + 2.5 + 2.5 + 1.5 beats, saih Mayure Cenik. Kotekan given to the pemade and kantilan from the lowest to highest notes using all seven tones, following the pattern of beats given by the jublag and jegogan.

d. Jublag and Jegogan = 2.5 + 2.5 + 2.5 + 1.5 + 2.5 + 2.5 + 2.5 + 1.5 beats, saih Kartika. Kotekan given to pemade and kantilan from the highest to the lowest notes using all seven notes, following the jublag and jegogan.
Gong form:

1. Gong 2
2. Kempur 2
3. Gong 4
4. Gong 2

Form for the direction of pemade and kantilan kotekan - 3 octaves, one direction and vice versa:

Part 2
Concept: Kotekan starts from the center and moves outward (left and right), and then from the outermost points inward. This is performed using all seven tones – using three-
octave range of the pemade and kantilan combined following the pattern of beats laid
down by the jublag and jegogan phrases.

Motive:
a. and b. repeated twice creating four phrases (a, b, c, d)

Form for gong (repeated twice)
a.  

\[\text{Form for the direction of the pemade and kantilan kotekan} \quad \text{– three octaves, from center outward or from outward to center}\]

\[\text{Part 3}\]

Concept: Insert reyong with a rhythmic motive following the jublag and jegogan parts from
part 1. a, b, a, b (a-b repeated twice) with the kotekan moving from the center-outward,
moving the right and left, and the inverse from the left and right sides towards the center, thus
traversing the two-octave range of the reyong in gamelan Salukat. The reyong is divided into
four parts ry-1, ry-2, ry-3 and ry-4. Ry-1= lowest, Ry-2= highest.

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Motives:

a. *Jublag* and *Jegogan* = 7.5 + 7.5 beats in *saih Wargasari*. *Kotekan* added to the *ry*-2 and *ry*-3, using the notes which are played at the center of the instrument, using all seven pitches following the pattern of beats given by the *jegogan* and *jublag*.

b. *Jublag* and *Jegogan* = 7.5 + 7.5 beats in *saih Panji Miring*. *Kotekan* added to the *ry*-1 and *ry*-2 plus *ry*-3 and *ry*-4 where the notes that are played move outward both to the left and right by one more note from the center using all seven pitches following the pattern of beats given by the *jegogan* and *jublag*.

c. *Jublag* and *Jegogan* = 2.5 + 2.5 + 1.5 + 2.5 + 2.5 + 2.5 + 1.5 beats, *saih Mayure Cenik*. *Kotekan* added to the *ry*-1 and *ry*-2 plus *ry*-3 and *ry*-4 at the outermost notes of the instrument (highest and lowest), using all seven pitches following the pattern of beats given by the *jegogan* and *jublag*.

d. *Jublag* and *Jegogan* = 2.5 + 2.5 + 2.5 + 1.5 + 2.5 +2.5 + 1.5 beats, *saih Kartika*. *Kotekan* added to the *ry*-1 and *ry*-2 plus *ry*-3 and *ry*-4 at the outermost notes of the instrument (highest and lowest), using all seven pitches following the pattern of beats given by the *jegogan* and *jublag*.

Form for part 3, *kotekan reyong* using two octaves:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pitch Range</th>
<th>3</th>
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<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
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<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>ry-1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>ry-2</td>
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<td>ry-3</td>
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<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>reyong-1</td>
<td>ry-2</td>
<td></td>
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<td>ry-3</td>
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<td>ry-4</td>
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<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>reyong-1</td>
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<td>ry-3</td>
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<td>ry-4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Part 4

Concept: Combining the *pemade* and *kantilan kotekan* from Part 1 with the *reyong kotekan* from Part 3.

Motives:

a. *Jublag* and *Jegogan* = 7.5 + 7.5 beats in *saih Wargasari*. *Kotekan* added to the *pemade* and *kantilan* proceeding from their lowest to highest notes using all seven tones following the pattern of beats given by the *jegogan* and *jublag*. This is combined with the *kotekan* added to the *ry*-2 and *ry*-3, using the notes which are played at the center of the instrument moving outward, using all seven pitches following the pattern of beats given by the *jegogan* and *jublag*.

b. *Jublag* and *Jegogan* = 7.5 + 7.5 beats in *saih Panji Miring*. *Kotekan* added to *pemade* and *kantilan* from their highest note to their lowest using all seven tones following the patterns of beats given by the *jegogan* and *jublag*. This is combined with the *kotekan* added to the *ry*-1 and *ry*-2 plus *ry*-3 and *ry*-4 where the notes that are played move outward both to the left and right by one more note from the center using all seven pitches following the pattern of beats given by the *jegogan* and *jublag*.

c. *Jublag* and *Jegogan* = 2.5 + 2.5 + 1.5 + 2.5 + 2.5 + 2.5 + 1.5 beats, *saih Mayure Cenik*. *Kotekan* given to the *pemade* and *kantilan* from the lowest to highest notes.
using all seven tones, following the pattern of beats given by the jublag and jegogan.
This is combined with the kotekan added to the ry-1 and ry-2 plus ry-3 and ry-4 at the outermost notes of the instrument (highest and lowest) playing inward, using all seven pitches following the pattern of beats given by the jegogan and jublag.

c. Jublag and Jegogan = 2.5 + 2.5 + 2.5 + 1.5 + 2.5 +2.5 + 1.5 beats, saih Kartika. Kotekan given to pemade and kantilan from the highest to the lowest notes using all seven notes, following the jublag and jegogan. This is combined with the kotekan played by the ry-1 and ry-2 plus ry-3 and ry-4 at the outermost notes of the instrument (highest and lowest) playing inward, using all seven pitches following the pattern of beats given by the jegogan and jublag.

Form for the directional kotekan after being combined:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kantilan</th>
<th>Low register</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pemade</td>
<td>Low register</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitch Range</td>
<td>3 4 5 6 7 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parts</td>
<td>←ry-1  ry-2</td>
<td>←ry-1  ry-2  ry-3  ry-4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kantilan</th>
<th>Low register</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pemade</td>
<td>Low register</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitch Range</td>
<td>3 4 5 6 7 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parts</td>
<td>←ry-1  ry-2</td>
<td>←ry-1  ry-2  ry-3  ry-4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kantilan</th>
<th>Low register</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pemade</td>
<td>Low register</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitch Range</td>
<td>3 4 5 6 7 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parts</td>
<td>←ry-1  ry-2</td>
<td>←ry-1  ry-2  ry-3  ry-4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kantilan</th>
<th>Low register</th>
<th>High</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pemade</td>
<td>Low register</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitch Range</td>
<td>3 4 5 6 7 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parts</td>
<td>←ry-1  ry-2</td>
<td>←ry-1  ry-2  ry-3  ry-4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part 5**

Concept: Playing with irama (rhythmic density) at each phrase using diagonal motives and ending with symmetrical motives

Motives:
Phrase A = short 1.5 x 1
Phrase B = long 1.5 x 2

Form for changes in *irama* (six beats per line):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><em>kantilan</em> A</th>
<th><em>reyong</em> 1,2 A</th>
<th><em>pemade</em> A</th>
<th><em>reyong</em> 3,4 A</th>
<th>All B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td><em>kt</em> and <em>ry</em> 3,4 A</td>
<td><em>pd</em> A and <em>ry</em> 1,2 A</td>
<td><em>Kantilan</em> B and <em>reyong</em> 3,4 B</td>
<td><em>Pemade</em> B and <em>reyong</em> 1,2 B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td><em>all</em> A</td>
<td><em>kantil</em> and <em>reyong</em> 1,2 B</td>
<td><em>pemade</em> B and <em>reyong</em> 3,4 B</td>
<td><em>all</em> A</td>
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<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td><em>kantilan</em> B</td>
<td><em>reyong</em> 1,2 B</td>
<td><em>pemade</em> B</td>
<td><em>all</em> A</td>
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<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td><em>reyong</em> 3,4 B</td>
<td><em>all</em> A</td>
<td><em>all</em> A</td>
<td>*All B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part 6**
Concept: Playing with rhythm at each phrase with diagonal motives

**Motives**

Phrase A = *kantilan* and *reyong* 3, 4
Phrase B = *pemade* and *reyong* 1, 2
Phrase C = *pemade* notes are played from the lowest and *kantil* begins from their highest notes, playing in consecutive order following the number of beats allotted.

**Form:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C (3 beats)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>A+B</td>
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<td>C (6 beats)</td>
<td></td>
<td>A+B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>C (9 beats)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part 7**
Concept: Intensity increases, churning towards a climactic peak – return to the motives from *part 2*, with additional rhythmic bursts by the *reyong* (*ocek-ocekan*) and *kendang*.

**Motives:**

The motives here are the same as *part 2* (a, b, c, and d) followed by *ocel-ocelan* by the *reyong* and the *kendang* following their own framework that is determined by two repetitions of the beat structure articulated by the *gong* and *kempur*. One repetition of the *gong* cycle consists of *ketuk* strokes marking 2.5 beat units x 12.
GEN IV.

Idea: Connect various saih into a single, continuous melodic phrase played by various instruments. Each phrase is made up of elemental motives which together, comprise the entire form.

Concept: Kendang using an 18 beat pattern times nine, outlines a single repetition of the melodic form. The structure of gong and kempur strokes follows the basic pattern of the kendang. The suling melody, reyong, jublag and jegog are comprised of two parts which are: A, B, and C. Also, each phrase follows the same measurement of beats (18 x 9).

Each group of instruments plays in a different mode with an independent melody, however each mode is connected with the following phrase at each gong and kempur also organized within an 18 beat framework.

Form for gong and kendang:

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<tr>
<th>Ktk</th>
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<th>16</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>18</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>G1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The modes that are played by each group of instruments are:

* Suling A - saih Wargasari
* Suling B - saih Mayure Gede

* Jegog A - saih Wargasari
* Jegog B - saih Wargasari
* Jublag A - saih Panji Gede
* Jublag B - saih Mayure Gede
* Reyong A – saih Mayure Cenik
* Reyong B – saih Panji Gede
* Pemade A - saih Panji Miring
* Pemade B - saih Panji Miring
* Pemade C - saih Panji Miring
* Kantilan A - saih Kartika
* Kantilan B - saih Kartika
* Kantilan C - saih Kartika

The whole form for this section is made up of five repetitions of the *kendang*’s basic pattern which is, in itself made up of nine lines. With each repetition there are elemental phrases which are reversed and inverted in order to produce a transformation from form to new form.

Each instrument has one or more motives:

* Kendang - one motive
* Suling - two motives
* Reyong - two motives
* Jegog and jublag - two motives
* Pemade and Kantilan - three motives

These phrases are combined into five patterns which comprise the whole section:

1. \( \text{kendang} + \text{suling} A + \text{jegogan} A + \text{jublag} A \)
2. \( \text{reyong} A + \text{kendang} + \text{suling} B + \text{pemade} A + \text{kantilan} A + \text{jegogan} A + \text{jublag} A \)
3. \( \text{kantilan} C + \text{pemade} C + \text{kendang} + \text{suling} A + \text{jegogan} A + \text{jublag} A \)
4. \( \text{kendang} + \text{suling} B + \text{jegogan} B + \text{jublag} B + \text{reyong} B + \text{pemade} B + \text{kantilan} B \)
5. \( \text{suling} \text{ transition from B then A} + \text{reyong} A + \text{kantilan} C + \text{pemade} C + \text{jegogan} B + \text{jublag} B \)
Irama 1
Comprised of Kendang + Suling and Gong A + Jegogan and Jublag A
Suling A= Saih Wargasari
Jegogan A = Saih Wargasari
Jublag B = Saih Panji Gede

Kendang=yellow, jegogan and suling = orange
Form for Irama 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kendang (beat)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Line 1: Kendang</td>
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<tr>
<td>Line 2: Kendang Jg/SI</td>
<td>Jg/SI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Line 3: Kendang Jg/SI</td>
<td>Jg/SI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Line 4: Kendang Jg/SI</td>
<td>Jg/SI</td>
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<td>Line 5: Kendang Jg/SI</td>
<td>Jg/SI</td>
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<td>Line 6: Kendang Jg/SI</td>
<td>Jg/SI</td>
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<td>Line 7: Kendang Jg/SI</td>
<td>Jg/Jb-SI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Line 8: Kendang Jg/SI</td>
<td>Jg/Jb-SI</td>
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<td>Line 9: Kendang Jg/SI</td>
<td>Jg/Jb-SI</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Form for Irama 2:
Comprised of: Reyong A + Kendang + Suling B + Pemade A + Kantilan A + Jegogan A + Jublag A
Reyong A= Saih Panji Gede
Pemade = Saih Panji Miring
Kantilan = Saih Mayure Cenik
Jegogan = Saih Wargasari
Jublag = Saih Panji Gede
Pemade= blue, kantilan=green
“→” indicates the direction of the melodic contour

Form for Irama 2 (reyong plays throughout)
Motive 3:
Comprised of Kantilan C + Pemade C + Kendang + Suling A + Jegogan A + Jublag A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ketukan (beat)</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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<th>15</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Line 1: Kendang</td>
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<td>Kd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Line 2: Kendang</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jegogan Pemade</td>
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<td>Line 3: Kendang</td>
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<td>Jegogan Pemade</td>
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Motive 3:
Comprised of Kantilan C + Pemade C + Kendang + Suling A + Jegogan A + Jublag A

Pemade = Saih Panji Miring
Kantilan = Saih Mayure Cenik
Form for *Irana*, motive 3:

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Motive 4:
Comprised of: *kendang + suling* B+ *Jegogan* and *Jublag* B + *Pemade* and *Kantilan* B + *Reyong* B

*Suling* B = *saih Mayure Gede*

*Pemade* B = *Saih Panji Miring*

*Kantilan* B= *Saih Kartika*

*Reyong* B= *Saih Panji Gede*

*Jegogan* B= *Saih Wargasari*

*Jublag* B= *Saih Panji Gede*

*Jublag* = red, *reyong* = purple

Form for *Irana* motive 4 (*suling* starts on line 2, *kendang* plays throughout):

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Motive 5:
Comprised of: Sl B-A + Kt C + Ry A + Kd + Pd C + Jg B + Jb +B

Suling = Wargasari  
Kantilan = Mayure Cenik  
Reyong = Panji Gede  
Pemade = Panji Miring  
Jublag = Wargasari  
Jegogan = Panji Gede

Form for Irama motive 5:
Same as motive 3 except with reyong playing throughout
Gen V
Idea: Create a sequence of melodic and rhythmic patterns in a meter that is not constant. The melodic and rhythmic patterns played by the pemade and kantilan use two panggul for each player.

Concept:
- Gangsa are struck using two panggul, from the outermost points of the instrument towards the middle and vice versa. The jegogan and jublag use all seven notes.
- Gangsa play using reyong technique and vice versa, the reyong perform using gangska technique.
- Treat the sonority of the suling as rhythm.
- Formed into a single cycle that concludes a rhythmic pattern that suddenly cuts-off.
- Comprised of two irama patterns, which are played by the jegogan and jublag.

Comprised of two irama patterns which are repeated twice.

Motives: Melodic sequences, rhythm and technique, created out of two formal patterns. The first pattern is comprised of six lines, with rhythmic and melodic phrases played by the gangsa, while the reyong plays rhythmic pattern throughout.

Formal pattern Irama I (reyong plays rhythmic patterns):
- ketuk strokes = yellow
- gong and kempur = orange
- gangska = blue

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