INSTRUMENTATION

I Gusti Bagus Nyoman Pandji

by Ruby Ornstein

First they were our informants. The informant would play—and play and play— while the researcher notated until he got it right. The researcher also asked a lot of questions to which only the informant as a "carrier of the tradition" knew the answers. The informant also offered his expert opinion on where to find the finest examples of a particular type of gamelan, dance or drama.

Once the tape recorder came into use the informant no longer needed to play the music over and over, but he was still needed to answer those questions and to find the best music. When ethnomusicologists began to learn how to play, the informants were our teachers. A few Balinese traveled abroad to be informants and teachers of gamelan at universities and as members of touring gamelan troupes.

By the second half of the 1960s the tables began to turn. KOKAR (*Konservatori Karawitan*), the first school for the arts, opened in 1959 in Denpasar with I G. B. N. Pandji as its first director. The system grew, slowly at first, and eventually expanded to provide high school and college level programs in the performing arts. Its most promising students began to pursue graduate degrees in ethnomusicology in the United States and Europe. Of the growing number of MAs and PhDs, some returned home to teach, traveling abroad again as visiting lecturers; others remained abroad as faculty members of music departments.

These scholar-performers can articulate for us what they have always known intuitively. We have only to look at their ever-growing list of publications and the proliferation of gamelan groups in the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia and elsewhere. So, in our never-ending quest to understand Balinese music, we now have available a plethora of pathways, ranging from the informant to the musician with a doctorate. Each has something unique to offer. *Vive les différences!*

Here we pay homage to I Gusti Bagus Nyoman Pandji from Bungkulan, Buléleng in North Bali, who died in early

Around the table: I Gusti Bagus Nyoman Pandji (far left), Michael Crawford, Lode Brakel, Edward Herbst, and Beth Skinner, photographed by Poedijono at Lake Bedugul on the way to Buléléng, 1972.

2006. The announcement of Pandji's death on the Gamelan Listserv prompted a stream of personal reminiscences—sometimes amusing, always affectionate—by researchers and students who had benefitted from his kindness, generosity, thoughtfulness, keen mind, and not least, superb culinary skills. The quotes below bear witness to the contributions this exceptional man made to the field of ethnomusicology and to those who practice it.

He was in Amsterdam in the early seventies, studying ethnomusicology and at the same time teaching Balinese gamelan…using the gamelan Semar Pegulingan…I still remember helping him fixing the instruments, drilling holes in the gender with my electric drill in order to make room for the sanggan…As a teacher he was excellent, he used to play the trompong, very impressive…A great musician. —Rob van Alba

[I]t was not until I was living [in Bali] as a performing musician that I realized his ability to smilingly cross between the worlds…I will always remember Pak Pandji with respect and warmth. —Douglas Myers

[He was] gracious and open-minded, with an ability to be incisive and critical when he thought that kind of honesty to be appropriate…[He] brought us along on numerous trips…introducing us to wayang wong in Tedjakula, gamelan-makers and the 5-tone gamelan angklung in Sawan …[H]e also introduced us to his preferred before-dinner records of kroncong…[In 2003…I benefitted] from one more illuminating discussion of North Balinese gong kebyar history along with a sumptuous lunch. —Edward Herbst

We got to know him well…in the early 1990s…He directed us to gamelan teachers within his family from whom we studied sekatian and other North Bali musical pieces…a warm and gracious host, a gentle spirit and genuine intellectual…his love of performing arts never faded…always willing to talk for hours about music, dance and religion, listening, speculating, philosophizing, open to new ideas and insights…He and his wife were also fantastic cooks. —Wayne Vitale

From Ernst Heins in Amsterdam we hear of Pak Pandji pursuing the same sort of knowledge as others of us wishing to explore an unknown part (or two) of the musical universe. We learn, for instance, that:

As part of his field training in ethnomusicology, this elderly Balinese gentleman climbed the Wester tower in Amsterdam to make a beautiful audiovisual documentary (including interviews) of the weekly carillon-playing by the City's leading carillonist. Pandji also visited the fish auction at Ijmuiden to record the auctioneer—singing a "work song."

Not surprisingly, Heins informs us, Pandji, being Balinese, had never learned to play Javanese gamelan. His chance came in Amsterdam where he played the *demung*, a metallophone whose principal role (to play the basic melody) he circumvented when he could get away with it, pretending it was really intended as an ornamenting instrument. Pandji played the *demung* in this way when Heins wasn't watching, and moreover, loudly! And Heins recalls his horror when Pandji stepped onto the stage as the male dancer in the famous Balinese duet, Tumililingan, "still wearing his glasses." We take Heins' word for it that Pandji enjoyed Dutch food.

The documents

Pandji wrote two sets of notes to provide an overview of Balinese *gambelan.* I found the first in the Dance Collection of the Performing Arts Library at Lincoln Center in New York City, where it is part of the Asia Dance Project; it was donated to the library by the John D. Rockefeller III Fund in a group of 365 manuscripts, interviews, films and books about Asian performing arts, most from the 1960s and 70s. Included as well are two brief films of I Mario; he performs in the first, and in the second, he gives a kebyar dance lesson.

In seven very condensed pages [retyped here for clarity] Pandji discusses the types of gamelan, their instruments, tuning, and in what religious or social context they are used. For each of five common scales he presents the diatonic letter names that approximate their pitches, thus providing a way for those unfamiliar with Balinese music to get some idea of how the different scales sound.

The manuscript was typed on a manual typewriter in need of a new ribbon. The document is undated, but it must have been prepared before 1972 when new spelling rules were established. Pak Pandji says the inspiration for this paper was his "Indonesian Motherland," but he uses the Balinese word "gambelan" throughout—his way, perhaps, of paying homage to a "Motherland" even closer to home.

Ernst Heins has generously contributed the second set of notes, dated 1973. He and Pak Pandji edited these together as classroom notes for Heins' introductory undergraduate course in ethnomusicology at the University of Amsterdam's Ethnomusicology Centre "Jaap Kunst." The information, condensed into two pages, is much the same as in the longer document. Pandji's Amsterdam notes do not include any historical background, but he does flag ensembles that are "also used (in slightly modified form) for organized tourist consumption."

Upon his retirement, Pak Pandji became a *pamangku*, a priest who serves a temple, unlike a Brahmin *padanda* whose primary allegiance is to a family. The duties of a *pamangku* during a temple festival are many and include the distribution of holy water, recitation of prayers, and the making of offerings. Under certain circumstances a *pamangku* may go into trance. Wayne Vitale, in an e-mail, suggests that Pak Pandji became a priest, in part at least, because of illness. Becoming a *pamangku*, Vitale says, was his "medicine."

We celebrate the life of this pioneering musician-scholar who crossed from East to West with such ease, and in doing so has given us the best of both worlds. ◗

Dr. Ornstein's biography is on page 34.