INSTRUMENTATION

Cengkok for the Gender

by Ben Brinner

The primary method of learning to play the **gender** in Java was and still is direct imitation of other musicians. With the establishment of state-run conservatories and academies in the fifties and sixties, however, gamelan instruction was institutionalized and rationalized, sometimes following European and American conservatory methods. The notated exercises and gender part to Ketawang Puspowarna presented here are representative of the results of these processes.

The gender notation is adapted from a final exam paper written by Suprapto, a student at **Sekolah Menengah Karawitan Indonesia (SMKI)**, a high school level music and dance conservatory in Surakarta, Central Java. It was published in a collection of similar papers by other graduating students (Daladi, et.al., 1982:69-70). In actual practice the rhythm is more complex than indicated in the notation, but these patterns can be of use to Western students of gamelan if their relationship to actual performance is understood. [1]

Gender melodies are highly patterned. The term used to denote these patterns is **cenkok.** [2] Some musicans refer to particular cengkok by name, others do not. With the exception of a few common names such as "Putut Gelut" and "Ayu Kuning", there is little consensus about the names of particular patterns; most names derive from associated vocal melodies as shown in Martopangrawit 1975 (vol.1:70-80). These names are significant mainly as a means of communication and quick reference; the really important aspects of a cengkok are its musical characteristics.

The only way to learn to play gender properly is to study the performance of competent Javanese musicans, preferably through personal contact. There is no adequate substitute for this exposure. Gender notation cannot be correctly interpreted without it, but notation can augment such exposure if one keeps the following points in mind.

The skeletal representations of gender patterns shown here should not be learned or applied in a mechanical fashion. Rather they should be regarded as road maps or guides. They should be treated with as much flexibility as a figured bass is interpreted by a good harpsichordist, with the additional awareness that a particular sequence of patterns such as those presented in the collection mentioned above is merely one musican's way of playing a piece; it is not invested with the exclusive authority that resides in a composer's figured bass indications.

In order to play the gender well it is necessary to be familiar with the **lagu**, the melody, of the particular piece (see Sumarsam 1984). A gender player follows the rebab and vocal melodies and is not tied too closely to the balungan of the particular piece. The gender is not as well suited to indicating register as the rebab and gambang, but it is still possible and necessary to differentiate between high and low portions of a piece, as in the high and low versions of the pattern "Dua Lolo" used in Puspawarna.

Ketawang Puspawarna laras slendro, patet manyuro

balungan

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                -+-  -+-   -+-  -+-
umpak:          .2.3 .2.1) .3.2 .1.(6)

                .2.3 .2.1) .3.2 .1.(6)

ngelik:         ..6. 2321) 3265 165(3)

                ..32 5321) .3.2 .1.(6)

                .2.3 .2.1) .3.2 .1.(6)
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+  = ketuk
-  = kempyang
)  = kenong
( ) = gong
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gender part

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                . 2 . 3   . 2 . 1   . 3 . 2   . 1 . 6
irama I:        1/2 Gt3   1/2 DLB
irama II:1/2 Gt2, 1/2 Gt3   DLB       JK        Tum

                . 2 . 3   . 2 . 1   . 3 . 2   . 1 . 6
          1/2 Gt2, 1/2 Gt3   DLB       JK        NDk

                . . 6 .   2 3 2 1   3 2 6 5   1 6 5 3
                  Gt6       Dlk     K a c a r y a n

                . . 3 2   5 3 2 1   . 3 . 2   . 1 . 6
                  A y u   K u n i n g   JK      Tum

                . 2 . 3   . 2 . 1   . 3 . 2   . 1 . 6
          1/2 Gt2, 1/2 Gt3   DLB       JK        Tum
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A good player usually does not play a piece twice in exactly the same way. Variation ranges from slight differences of damping and rhythmic nuance to replacement of a cengkok with another cengkok that is also suitable for that particular point in the course of the piece. Between these two extremes the musician may change several pitches of either the upper or lower part, performing a different variation of the cengkok. [3]

1. The gender part is clearly audible in the recording of this piece on **Javanese Court Gamelan, Vol. II,** Nonesuch H-72074. Also see Vetter 1981 for a comparison of three performances of Ketawang Puspawarna.

2. See Sumarsam 1975, Sutton and Forrest 1980 for discussion of gender playing and cengkok.

3. See Sindoesawarno 1955 for a discussion of wiled and cengkok, and see Sutton and Forrest, in particular, for further discussion of variation in gender cengkok.

CENGKOK CHART

symbol		full name	cengkok
1/2 DLB	=	1/2 Dua Lolo Besar (low Dua Lolo)	6563 6561 653. 6121
1/2 Gt2	=	1/2 Gantungan 2	3.3. 3.56 .2.2 .612
1/2 Gt3	=	1/2 Gantungan 3	5.1. 6.61 .3.1 .123
DLB	=	Dua Lolo Besar	565. 5653 5651 6561 ..61 2.2. .535 6121
DLK	=	Dua Lolo Kecil (high Dua Lolo)	2126 2121 6562 6121 .12. 5323 212. 321.
JK	=	Jarik Kawung	6561 5616 1213 1216 .263 2126 .161 2352
Tum	=	Tumurun	5353 5651 5651 5616 ..16 5653 .535 6126
Gt6	=	Gantungan 6	535. 5.56 5.5. 5.56 ...2 16.. .3.2 16..
NDk	=	Nduduk	6666 1612 3.23 .216 6... 1612 3.23 .216
Kacaryan			6561 5612 .132 6532 565. 5653 2125 2353 .263 2352 .132 6535 ..23 5.5. 323. 653.
Ayu Kuning			...6 ...1 6561 5616 565. 5653 6563 6561 .216 .561 .263 2352 ..61 2.2. 653. 6121

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