

TRADITIONS

The Angklung Ensemble of West Java: Continuity of an Agricultural Tradition ^[1]

by Randal Baier

Bamboo-tube percussion ensembles comprise some of the oldest genres of musical performance throughout Asia and the Pacific Basin. This article focuses upon one such ensemble, the Sundanese Angklung, a tradition in many of the cities, towns, and rural districts of West Java, the mountainous and somewhat isolated western province of the island of Java in the Republic of Indonesia.

An angklung is a framed bamboo instrument consisting of from two to four tuned bamboo tubes, graduated in length, that produce sound when shaken. Each angklung is tuned to one pitch, the tubes being separated by a one or two octave range. Ensembles using Western tunings also use angklung tuned as major, minor and seventh chords. Ensembles that incorporate the playing of angklung are found throughout the islands of Java, Bali, and Madura in Indonesia. Through their connection to rituals associated with the planting and harvesting of rice, they are related to other bamboo-tube ensembles in East and Southeast Asia.

It is perhaps in West Java that the largest variety of angklung ensembles and types of performance practice exist, and it is here that angklung has become a visible symbol of regional identity within the sphere of national Indonesian culture. The angklung seems ideally suited to a Sundanese performance style, and the purpose of this paper is to examine some of the cultural and performance factors that have contributed to making angklung so representative of West Java.

The Indonesian view of Sundanese angklung is determined by the overwhelming presence of Western tuned angklung ensembles in modern Indonesian life. Most Indonesians, including many Sundanese, know angklung as school and institutional ensembles that perform national or popular Western melodies. [2] Although these ensembles are an integral part of Sundanese and Indonesian popular music, they are outside the scope of this discussion. In order to present a more complete background to the genre, this article will focus on Sundanese angklung ensembles that perform in the traditional context of rural agricultural ritual. In general, these ensembles consist entirely of bamboo angklung and several *dog-dog*, a certain type of Sundanese drum, and use pentatonic Sundanese *salendro* tunings.

Angklung in Sundanese Culture

It is difficult to trace the origins of the word "angklung," but some musicians consider the *-(kl)ung* syllable to refer to the resonant quality of the bamboo sound, and they place angklung in a category together with other instruments such as *calung* (a struck bamboo-tube instrument similar to angklung), *kunclung* (bamboo stamping tube), or *celempung* (bamboo-tube zither),

that are made from the internodes of bamboo. [3] Saying the word is equivalent to imitating the angklung's sound, and upon hearing it in conversation many Sundanese will imitate the motions and vocalizations of angklung performers, much in the same way that they might mimic puppetry or popular dancing. In this way the word integrates sound, music, and performance into one term.

The Sundanese people comprise the second largest ethnic group in Indonesia, and they call their homeland Pasundan (Sunda), which for the purposes of this discussion is interchangeable with West Java. In Indonesia the distinction is an important one, because the Sundanese make a conscious, almost chauvinistic, effort to value those cultural elements that separate them not only from their Javanese neighbors, with whom they share many cultural and linguistic traits, but also that distinguish them as a separate entity within Indonesia as a nation.

The designation of various ethnic qualities as aspects of cultural identity is referred to by the Sundanese as *khas Sunda*, meaning original or unique. In relation to the Javanese, for instance, the importance of *khas Sunda* lies in its degree of opposition to stereotypical Javanese manners: where the Javanese are seen as refined and gentle, the Sundanese are coarse and brusque; where the Javanese look up to an aristocratic and intellectual court elite, the Sundanese glorify their rustic and egalitarian heritage; where some words in Javanese are considered coarse or even rude, the same word in Sundanese may be polite; and whereas the Javanese are said to be slow, deferential, and reticent to express their feelings openly, the Sundanese are quick tempered, opinionated, and justifiably proud. The angklung is "khas Sunda" both for its rural appeal and its lively performance style that expresses Sundanese ideals of social harmony, communal celebration and humor.

Satjidibrata (1950) provides two proverbial meanings for the Sundanese usage of the word "angklung": *ngadu angklung*, to batter useless thoughts back and forth; and *diangklungan*, to be flattered by someone so that one becomes loquacious, disclosing information that might better have been left unsaid. Qualities of performance are implied by the way in which these words are incorporated into everyday speech.

Ngadu angklung is used to describe the mock battles that angklung drummers create in order to entertain their audiences, the object being to outsmart one another with various feints and dodges so that one of the drummers responds with a miscalculated defense and hence loses his rhythm. Diangklungan has a more everyday meaning, often being used to describe a type of teasing that occurs among people; in this sense it implies a kind of aggravation that is likened to

fanning the flames of a fire.

Trickery, spoof, mockery, and foolishness are other aspects of angklung performance that can be drawn from daily life. The ensemble carries with it the idea of a boisterous letting go, as if the loudness of an event in some way pulls the audience into a partnership between the performers and the purpose of the ritual at hand. An ensemble tradition like angklung exhibits through performance many of the distinctive "character" traits that the Sundanese are so proud to proclaim.

The Sundanese Agricultural Tradition

It is this festive and boisterous world of angklung performance that the Sundanese look to as representative of the rural tradition: joyous entertainment that secures cosmological protection. In the rural context, angklung performance contributes to the completion of the ritual agricultural cycle; planting, cultivating and harvesting rice, and honoring the earthly presence of the Sundanese rice deity Nyi Pohaci Sanghyang Sri. (The deity is usually referred to as Dewi Sri throughout Java, Bali and other areas of the archipelago, but the Sundanese commonly refer to her as Nyi Pohaci.)

Typically, Nyi Pohaci is depicted as a female deity. In a general sense she is considered the "mother" of rice, yet specific rituals of the rice cycle often describe her in prenatal terms. In Sunda the rituals of the rice cycle are directly related to Pohaci's security and happiness. She is responsible for agricultural knowledge, and she is entertained in return with annual celebrations and the sounds of agricultural activity.

Mythological references to Nyi Pohaci abound in Sunda in the form of *pantun* (epic text recitation) and *wayang golek* (puppet theatre) tales; as songs sung for annual ceremonies intended ritually to cleanse the villages before the planting of rice (*sedekah bumi*); as themes for popular comic book series; and as songs and legends associated with the playing of angklung. Overall, myths about Nyi Pohaci describe the origins of rice and agriculture and establish a bond between the deity and the human world. In some cases legends are syncretic expressions that unify both indigenous and Islamic beliefs. [4]

The inhabitants of Cipining, near the regional city of Bogor, tell a story about Nyi Pohaci when discussing the origin of their angklung ensemble, known as *Angklung Gubrag*. This legend explains why the first angklung were made and how the relationship between Pohaci and the Cipining villagers developed. [5] The tale is told today by Pak Sahari, the village *kuncen*, or keeper of the angklung ensemble.

"As the story goes, at one time in Kampung Cipining the population was overcome by a great famine caused by sickly rice plants that remained empty of any grain. The people were convinced that Nyi Pohaci was not above the earth, moreover that she had flown away and refused to settle upon the fields. This happened because the goddess was upset that she was not being entertained enough, or so it was rumored. Perhaps she was even furious with the villagers.

"Every effort was made by the people of Cipining to please her. Offerings of many kinds were prepared, and she

was implored by all manner of appeals to return, yet Nyi Pohaci persisted in refusing to descend to earth. The proof of her dissatisfaction was the total failure of the rice crop. They attempted to entertain Nyi Pohaci with scruling (bamboo flute), but to no avail. Then they tried karinding (bamboo jew's harp), but the rice refused to fill out with grain.

"Finally there appeared a youth by the name of Muchtar who urged his friends to go to the nearby Mount Cirang-sang and cut down the large bamboo (awi surat) that grew there, saving it until it had dried. When the bamboo was dry, Muchtar isolated himself and made angklung while meditating. For forty days he worked, during which time he completed a set of angklung and two long bamboo drums. Upon finishing his meditation he taught his friends how to play the angklung and drums properly.

"With great enthusiasm the people of Cipining held a ceremony to mark the return of the planting season. With entertainment provided by Muchtar and his friends playing the angklung, the villagers beseeched Nyi Pohaci once more to present herself to the earth.

"Then it happened that the rice grew strong and healthy once again, with the stalks abundant with grain. The population was freed from the catastrophe that tormented them and they enjoyed a return to their former prosperity. The fertility that returned to the rice plants was proof that Nyi Pohaci had descended to the earth in order to bring prosperity to the people--in Sundanese, nga-gubrag.

"Because the angklung is capable of enchanting Dewi Sri and enticing her down to earth, we have given the angklung set the name Angklung Gubrag, and it has been that way up to the present day."

This spirit of frivolity, action, and festivity is precisely what Nyi Pohaci wants in order to bestow the earth with her favors. Essentially, a contract is established between Pohaci and the human world: her essence is imparted to the rice crop and humankind if she in turn is consistently entertained and cared for at all stages of the agricultural cycle. At one time in Sunda, for instance, water buffalo were decorated and ritually escorted back to their corrals by angklung ensembles to commemorate the preparation of the wet rice fields. Likewise, in some remote areas of West Java the daily pounding of unhusked rice is likened to the massaging of the rice goddess.

It is often the case today that local farmers will give a share of their harvest to a communal rice barn, and processions of bearers, led from the fields by an angklung ensemble and several *rengkong* players, will weave their way through the village to take the rice to its new home. *Rengkong*, a curious relative of angklung, is a specially shaped bamboo carrying pole that creates a loud, echo-like sound when the rice bundles it carries rub against its sides.

Because of these associations with Nyi Pohaci, angklung is both an agricultural tool and an musical instrument. Angklung, *rengkong*, and other bamboo implements can be seen and heard throughout the rural districts of Sunda: providing a vast array of noisemakers, irrigation regulators and bird scares, each with its own distinctive sound and agricultural purpose.

Attitudes toward Nyi Pohaci

Boisterous behavior is justified and required for Pohaci's satisfaction, but such performance-based attitudes are tempered by the seriousness with which Pohaci is attended. Villagers express their debt to Pohaci differently, often nurturing her image in the form of rice bundles decorated as newlyweds or new-born children. During the harvest in some areas, rice stalks are cut individually so as not to terrify Pohaci's spirit. Many villagers share the belief that rice, Nyi Pohaci, and the body and life of mankind are of one and the same substance.

This kind of sensitivity to Nyi Pohaci is well expressed by the Angklung Gubrag ensemble (referred to above). Gubrag performance involves the singing of a chant entitled "Sri Lima" (the five visions or shapes of Sri). "Sri Lima" is a strophic song of five separate invocations, each of which calls or praises a color of Nyi Pohaci—white, red, black, green, or yellow. According to Pak Daud, the leader of the Cipining ensemble, each of the colors corresponds to certain aspects of the human body and spirit.

He considers that the color explanations have to do with taking the spirit (expressed as *cahaya*, or light) of Nyi Pohaci into the body. White corresponds to the bones and sinews. Red represents the muscles and blood. Black concerns thought and understanding. Green represents an inner consciousness that shows through the eyes. Yellow refers to the clarity of sight. Daud also makes some associations between these characteristics and different kinds of rice, notably the white, red, and glutinous black varieties. By eating rice one ingests these qualities of Nyi Pohaci, and both the physical and

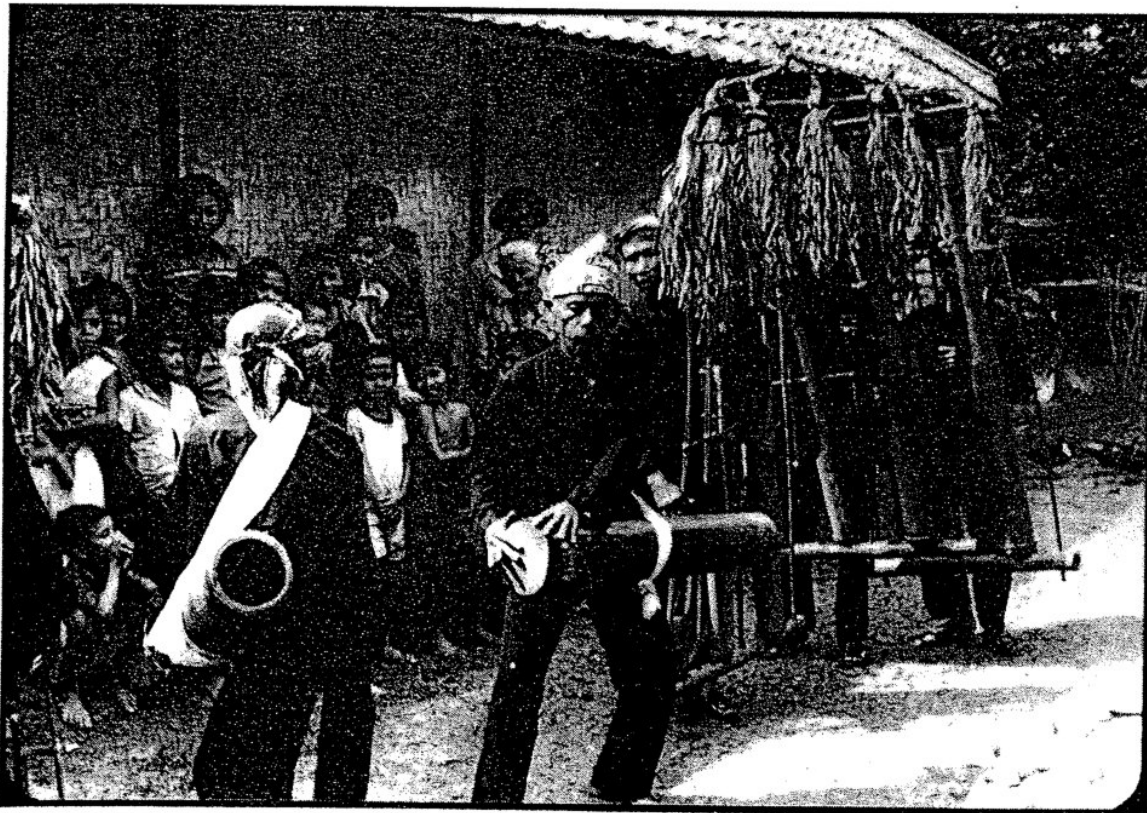
spiritual aspects of life are sustained and given power. Although the representations of green and yellow do not literally correspond to specific kinds of rice, the colors are those of the rice plant itself.

Overall, the connection between Nyi Pohaci and seasonal celebration represents a key motif in Sundanese agricultural ritual. This is due in a large part to the continuation of rural traditions that incorporate these associations. In some cases this may be due to the force of habit, or simply an opportunity to meet people and enjoy oneself. The Badui, however, adhere to seasonal ritual with complete conviction.

Angklung and the Planting Ritual of the Badui

The Badui, or Urang Kanekes as they prefer to call themselves, inhabit a remote mountainous area of West Java. They are a group of perhaps three thousand people ethnically Sundanese yet strictly non-Islamic. They are considered by most Sundanese to be descendants of the pre-Islamic kingdom of Pajajaran, which was located near the present day city of Bogor. The Badui practice dry-rice agriculture, and by dress and custom are distinctly separate from their Sundanese neighbors.

The Badui observe ritual and agricultural laws that restrict the performance of angklung to a five month planting and cultivation season. Among the Badui, Nyi Pohaci is invoked during the planting season, in contrast to the ritual practices in other areas of West Java [where Nyi Pohaci is associated with the harvesting of rice]. It is the angklung ensemble that is directly responsible for this invocation. Pohaci is called to impregnate rice grains that are placed in a special plot, the



Angklung Gubrag ensemble showing the *dog dog reog* drums. Notice the large size of the angklungs.



A Badui angklung ensemble of West Java.

pungpuhunan, from which all planting commences.

In a ceremony described as the marriage of Pohaci (*Pohaci Ngereremokeun*), angklung musicians circle the *pungpuhunan* while playing compositions that employ images of nurturing, peace and security. Many of the dancer/singers hold long blue sashes, swaying them to and fro in a motion called *ayun-ayunan*, like rocking a baby while singing a lullaby. As one Badui musician told me, "For us, this is not an art form, this is a religion." This is a statement of some political consequence since there are only five legally recognized religions in Indonesia. The Badui continue to practice an animism related to the spirit of rice and the greater natural world.

The anthropologist Robert Wessing (1977) suggests that the Badui are seen as the perpetuators of a pre-Islamic Sundanese tradition, too rigid to be adhered to by most of Sundanese society, yet too significant to be dismissed as archaic. It is extremely important to the Sundanese to know that these agricultural ceremonies are continuing. The Badui angklung tradition underscores the significance that angklung has throughout West Java.

Types of Sundanese Angklung Ensembles

Sundanese village musicians are fiercely proud of their particular songs and movement routines, and there is great pride in regional distinctiveness. Like other Sundanese performance traditions, angklung groups look to particular ancestor figures for their inspiration. The Cipining musicians are a case in point. They state that they play angklung as it was originally explained to them in the Angklung Gubrag legend by the youth Muchtar. Movement, costume, approaches to meditative preparation, and even political persuasion are factors that distinguish groups from one another. Angklung groups are known regionally and ensembles are occasionally invited to perform outside of their local area.

The two types of angklung ensembles already mentioned, Angklung Gubrag and Badui Angklung, and a third yet to be looked at—*Angklung Buncis*—each maintain distinctive performance features while sharing characteristics that unify them as a genre. The remainder of the paper will mention performance characteristics unique to each of the ensembles while focusing upon the Angklung Buncis ensemble of the village of Ujungberung. Several musical examples in both Sundanese cipher notation and Western musical notation illustrate distinctive aspects of each ensemble's style.

General Performance Characteristics

A typical rural angklung ensemble from the areas around the West Java capital city of Bandung, usually known as Angklung Buncis or *Reak*, consists of nine to fifteen angklung players, each shaking one or two instruments; four drummers; a double-reed oboe, or *terompet*, player; and any number of accompanying vocalists, masked clowns, and occasionally, trance specialists. In some other areas of Sunda, ensembles are not so extensive, employing only two drummers, at times only four angklung players, and without the use of auxiliary instruments or performers.

Occasionally angklung performances are complemented by instruments such as the *goong* and *kempul*—two types of hanging gongs—and *kecrek*, a group of small iron plates that are struck together with a wooden hammer. In almost all performances, whether they be associated with village celebration or national holiday festivities, angklung attracts large audiences and relies upon spontaneous shouting, singing, and movement mimicry to enliven the event.

Kinetic Emphasis in Angklung Performance

Because they are usually connected to processions, angklung performances take place in village plazas and along village alley-ways. A procession might begin in a rice field, proceed through a village, perform at a convenient intersection, and disperse after meandering around the houses. Ensembles are movement oriented, and many groups base their performance style on precise choreography and acrobatics. This is true of the Angklung Buncis groups from the Bandung and Sumedang areas.

Groups from Banten, the Western area of Sunda, often entertain by staging mock battles and chases among themselves, and the shape of such a performance is generally that of controlled mayhem. In a procession an angklung ensemble can resemble a strict military parade or, perhaps more commonly, an amorphous mob of fifteen to twenty shouting and gesticulating performers that is suddenly apt to disperse wildly into the onlooking crowd, only to re-group moments later and proceed onward. [6]

Angklung performances involve the collective dance and movement of all the players as they attempt to follow and imitate the lead drummer (*dalang*). Some groups, the Badui in particular, incorporate dancers (*paraglase*) who join the circle of performers but do not play instruments. Dance gestures are generally related to an ubiquitous Sundanese dance position known as *kuda-kuda* (lit., sawhorse). Other positions are borrowed from the martial arts or popular dance repertoires. Dalangs sometimes go to extremes to test the physical endurance of their followers. One of the most delightful and absurd aspects of an angklung "show" is the sight of an ensemble squatting down and walking like ducks, all the while making a concerted effort to keep both their angklung and their voices in rhythm.

Overall, circles and matrices are the shapes that ensembles explore during performances, given the spatial limitations presented by such diverse arenas as house yards, village plazas, or neighborhood badminton courts. The Badui ensembles use only one formation—that of a tightly packed circle of players walking counterclockwise—but other groups use various kinds of figure-eight patterns, interlocking circles and march formations to enliven their performances.

A brief description of the Reak performance style of Ujungberung and Rancaek villages, near Bandung, is useful for highlighting the kinetic activity of an angklung event. This is based on a performance witnessed by the author in Ujungberung in March, 1982. During this performance one of the angklung players became possessed, whereupon the ensemble circled him closely until he was drawn out of his trance by the concussion of the dalang's small dog-dog drum. The closeness of players prepared for such a contingency as well as the centripetal effect of the event itself are essential characteristics of angklung performance.

Reak achieves this kind of focus using some basic movement routines, imitative body postures and vocal activity. The basic group movement is as follows:

1. The players form two lines facing forward.
2. They circle in opposite directions.
3. The circles join into a figure-eight.
4. The figure-eight becomes a circle with players facing inward.
5. This circle expands and contracts.
6. The players form two double lines, alternately facing and turning from each other.
7. The lines become two circles, one within the other.
8. Return to full circle.
9. Return to two lines facing forward.

During this time there is continuous acoustic activity: the rhythmic ostinato of the angklung and dog-dog, verbal witticisms and songs from the dalang, spontaneous vocal interjections (*senggak*) from the angklung players, and the incessant melodies of the terompet player who is off to the side of the band.

Musical Description of Angklung Performance

The music of angklung is made up of interlocking angklung and dog-dog patterns that create a composite ostinato "melody." The ostinato figures created by the angklung and dog-dog are the hallmarks of angklung music, and they generally dominate a performance, although occasionally there are arrangements of popular folk songs, such as *Kacang Buncis*, or short songs from the Sundanese gamelan repertoire such as *Barlen* or *Bendrong*. The ostinato serves as a background to any number of vocal and terompet melodies that are concatenated until the performance is finished. *Senggak*, and *beluk*, a kind of mellifluous sung poetry, are additional vocal components that add to the overall musical texture.

The following illustrations use Sundanese ciphers to represent pitches, which has become standard practice in notating Sundanese music. The Sundanese salendro scale, which is a pentatonic scale of roughly equal intervals, is notated as in figure 1 (lower and upper neighbors are included to show the register markings). Note that whereas in Central Javanese cipher notation an increase in numerical value denotes a corresponding increase in pitch, the opposite is true with Sundanese cipher notation.

(approximate diatonic intervals)

CC	D	F	G	A	C	d
1	5	4	3	2	1	5
Low			High			

Figure 1. Cipher notation of Sundanese Salendro scale

In angklung playing, each player is responsible for playing one or two instruments, which are shaken according to the order of pitches in a particular pattern. For instance, if three

players want to play a three note descending ostinato figure they might play it as illustrated in figure 2.

Player 1	1 . . . 1 . . . 1 . . . 1 . . .
Player 2	. 2 . . . 2 . . . 2 . . . 2 . . .
Player 3	. . 3 . . . 3 . . . 3 . . . 3 . . .
resultant	1 2 3 . 1 2 3 . 1 2 3 . 1 2 3 .

A variation on this pattern could easily be created with the following:

Player 1	. 1 . . . 1 . . . 1 . . . 1 . . .
Player 2	2 . 2 . 2 . 2 . 2 . 2 . 2 . 2 .
Player 3	. . . 3 . . . 3 . . . 3 . . . 3 . . .
resultant	2 1 2 3 2 1 2 3 2 1 2 3 2 1 2 3

Figure 2. Interlocking melodies in angklung ensembles.

Not only is the original three-pitch figure evident but also, due to various shifts of acoustic focus, other configurations become prominent as well. Angklung ostinato arrangements are based on this principle of interlocking rhythmic and melodic patterns. To show this in more detail we can look at two angklung configurations from the Angklung Buncis repertoire of Ujungberung: the rhythmic ostinato *Badud*, and the song arrangement *Kacang Buncis*.

Angklung Buncis of Ujungberung

The Angklung Buncis of Ujungberung uses two sets of nine instruments, each of which has two tubes tuned an octave apart. The two groups share a middle register so that the complete ensemble has a range of just under five octaves (figure 3).

Group I	4 3 2 1 5 4 3 2 1
Group II	4 3 2 1 5 4 3 2 1

Figure 3. Range and register of Angklung Buncis, Ujungberung.

The angklung are named by function, from largest to smallest: *jlongjlong*, *ambruk*, *engklok*, *pancer*, and *roel*. With the exception of the *engklok*, which plays pitch 5, each name refers to two conjunct pitches that together form a unified "voice" in the polyrhythmic texture. *Jlongjlong* and *pancer* both refer to pitches 3 and 4 an octave apart while *ambruk* and *roel*, likewise, refer to pitches 1 and 2. For the *jlongjlong*, *ambruk*, and *pancer*, each part is played by two separate individuals, whereas the *roel* are usually played together by one musician (see figure 4).

Figure 5 shows a notated version of the ostinato pattern *Badud*, or *The Clown*. Most angklung ensembles include *Badud* or a similar composition of a different name, as their standard ostinato. This cycle, once started, continues at different tempos until another piece is called for or the performance stops altogether. To establish the ostinato cycle in *Badud*, the composition begins with a process of staggered entrances for

each of the short melodic patterns. In addition, the *roel* pattern is often varied for two or four cycles (see figure 6).

4	3	2 1	5	4 3	2 1
Jlongjlong I	Ambruk I	Engklok I	Pancer I	Roel I	
.
4	3	2 1	5	4 3	2 1
Jlongjlong II	Ambruk II	Engklok II	Pancer II	Roel II	

Figure 4. Instrument names and corresponding pitches. Angklung Buncis, Ujungberung.

	Introduction	Ostinato
Roel	.2.2	1..2 1..2 1..2 12.2
Pancer	3~4~3~4~	3~4~ 3~4~ 3~4~ 3~4~
Engklok	5.5.5	.5.5 .5.5 .5.5 .5.5
Ambruk		11.1 .11. 11.1 .11.
		22.2 .22. 22.2 .22.
Jlong-jlong	334.334.	334. 334. 334. 334.

Figure 5. Ostinato section *Badudu* Angklung Buncis, Ujungberung.

Roel	1..2 1..2 1..2 12.1
	2..1 22.1 2..2 .2.2
Pancer	3.4. 3.4. 3.4. 3.4.
	3.4. 3.4. 3.4. 3.4.

Figure 6. Two-cycle *Roel* variation for angklung ostinato.

I	1 . 4 3 2 1 2 2 .
Cis	ka - kang bun - cis nyengcle'
II	1 . 2 3 4 1 4 4 .
Di	ang - go la - tih ku - da
III	1 4 3 2 1 2 2 5
Nu	geu - lis an - cla' en - cle' Nga-
IV	1 . 2 3 5 4 5 5 .
jak	seu - ri ka ka - u - la

Figure 7. Ostinato section, Lagu *Kacang Buncis*

The popular folk song, or *lagu*, *Kacang Buncis* is also arranged for Angklung Buncis performance by dividing the melody into several interlocking angklung parts (see figure 7). The lead drummer sings the verses, joined by the other players and the audience if they recognize the words. The melody of *Kacang Buncis* has reached a wide Indonesian audience as the theme song for the popular Indonesian television puppetry series *Si Unyil*.

In the Ujungberung arrangement of *Kacang Buncis*, the roel, pancr, and engklok create a rhythmic configuration similar to that of *Badud* while the ambruk and jlongjlong state the basic melody (figure 8).

	I	II	III	IV
Roel	1 . 1 . . 2 . 2 . 2 2~	1 . 1 . . 2 . 2 . 2 .	1 . 1 . . 2 . 2 . 2 2~	1 . 1 . . 2 . 2 . 2 .
Pancr	3 . . 3 . 4 4 .	3 . 3 . . 4 . 4 ~	3 . . 3 . 4 4 .	3 . 3 . . 4 . .
Engklok	. 5 . 5 . 5 . 5	. 5 . 5 . 5 . 5	. 5 . 5 . 5 . 5	. 5 . 5 . 5 . 5
Ambruk	1 . 1 . . . 2 . 2 2	1 . 1 . . 2 . . .	1 . 1 . . . 2 . 2 2	1 . 1 . . 2 . . .
Jlong- jlong	. 3 . . . 4 3 . . . 4 . 4 4 ~	. 3 . . . 4 3 . . . 4 . 4 4 ~

Figure 8. Angklung ostinato. Lagu Kacang Buncis. 32 beat cycle in four sections

Kacang Buncis can be played by many different musical ensembles. It is often used for comedy because of the playful and flirtatious character of the verses. The final dyad of the first verse is often changed according to the whim of the singers, and other verses can be created spontaneously or borrowed from other songs (figure 9).

<i>Cis kacang buncis nyengcle' Di anggo latih(p) kuda Nu geulis ancla'-encla' Ngajak seuri ka kaula</i>	Buncis beans set up on top Used to train a horse A pretty girl comes swinging by Come to me laughing and smiling.
<i>Aya listrik di Masigit Caangna ka mana-mana Aya istri jangkung alit geulisna ka bina-bina</i>	There is electricity at the Mosque So the light shines everywhere There is a svelte woman Her beauty is overpowering.
<i>Hayang teuing angeun waluh angeun waluh di oncoman Hayang teuing geura wawuh Geus wawuh rek di oconan.</i>	I really want some squash soup waluh soup with oncom (fritters) I really want to get to know her 'Cause if I do I'll tease her.

Figure 9. Lagu *Kacang Buncis*. Angklung Buncis, Ujungberung. Verse order A B A C A.

Drumming and Temporal Aspects

Angklung drumming is specialized in its use of the *dog-dog reog*, a set of four conical single-headed drums that are graduated in size. Dog-dog reog generally accompany comic folk-theatre performances in West Java because they are so well suited to a small troupe of players. When combined with angklung, dog-dog create an extremely dense polyrhythmic texture.

The dog-dog are named, smallest to largest: *talingtit*, *tempas*, *bangbrang* and *dublag*. The *talingtit* is the "voice" of the ensemble, and all commands are given by the *dalang* using this drum. The other three drums combine to play an eight-beat rhythmic configuration, marked by medium and low pitched

dublag strokes, on which the angklung depend for a rhythmic base. The basic configuration along with two possible *talingtit* patterns notated above are shown in figure 10.

Talingtit A	$\bar{t}t . t . t . t t$	$\bar{t}t . t . t . t t$
Talingtit B	$t \bar{t}t . t . t t .$	$t \bar{t}t . t . t t .$
Tempas	T T T T	T T T T
Bangbrang	o o	o o
Dublag Med.	g	g
Dublag Low G G

Figure 10. Talingtit patterns.

Angklung troupes generally begin their performances with a fast ostinato introduction played while standing in formation. When this finishes, the main part of the performance begins with a *talingtit* signal from the *dalang*. The *dalang* controls the overall tempo of the event by changing the patterns of the *talingtit*, alternately accelerating and decelerating until closing the performance with a lengthy fast ostinato. Most ensembles use only fast and medium tempo variations, but the Ujungberung ensemble plays a composition called *Doclang* that is considered appropriate for slow tempo moods. The Ujungberung troupe plays two speeds of *Badud*, a slow *Doclang*, and occasionally a medium tempo piece such as *Kacang Buncis* or *Tonggeret*.

The Situation Today

Today there are several famous regional harvest festivals (*Seren Tahun*) in West Java that use the traditional performing arts to extend their popularity. They are attended by villagers from nearby farming districts, by chartered bus-loads of adventuresome, urban culture hunters, and by Indonesian government officials who claim Sundanese ancestry.

One village, Sirnaresmi, has become well known due to the increasing popularity of its annual festival. The village also has become an architectural attraction because of its high, stone house plazas and the orderly traditionalism of its rice barns. The high point of the Sirnaresmi festival is the performance of the angklung ensemble in the village plaza, the culmination of which is a massive procession of musical ensembles, followed by villagers bearing harvested rice, tall multi-colored banners, and agricultural implements such as hoes, plows, and harrows. The parade proceeds through the village to the rice barns, where the rice is ceremonially laid to rest.

Seren Tahun festivals are intended to cleanse the villages of any spiritual danger and protect against pestilence and sickness while paying tribute to Nyi Pohaci. Today, they are becoming well known in the public domain: well attended, popular, and referred to as representative of a living Sundanese ritual tradition.

Regional tradition is not only of popular concern, it is also important to the provincial government of West Java. Two agencies located in Bandung—the National Office of Education



Angklung ensemble showing the *dublak* (largest of the dog dog reog drums).

and Culture (*Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan*), and the Provincial Project for West Java Cultural Development (*Proyek Penunjang Peningkatan Kebudayaan Jawa Barat*)—directly influence the way in which traditional, or folk, performance (*kesenian rakyat*) is experienced by urban Sundanese populations. Both agencies sponsor large and visible public festivals, some of which are nationally significant. The provincial project, which acts to "upgrade" the traditional arts, sponsors juried folk performance contests in which village ensembles either compete with urban groups or with each other. Criteria such as the authenticity of certain movements, the condition and appeal of costuming, or the inventiveness of stage blocking are established for these contests by panels of judges.

The "folk show" in Indonesian government circles is one of the major ways in which rural performance groups attain visibility. At one such weekend folk festival in 1981, angklung groups from each of the seventeen West Java regencies, called *kabupaten*, presented staged performances that ranged from relatively modest demonstrations of infrequently played compositions to elaborate recreations of village ritual. Each group condensed a village performance into a staged product that lasted between twelve and fifteen minutes.

Traditional village ensembles are not alone in performing at these official festival events. Many diatonic angklung ensembles, some with as many as 200 players, perform for opening ceremonies or parades as well as weekend contests. In 1976 a national celebration in Jakarta involved 10,000 angklung players performing at Senayan Stadium. Invariably, Bandung conventions close their meetings with diatonic angklung accompaniment, and the angklung are presented as

mementos from West Java for visitors to take home.

The angklung traditions of West Java draw their strength from a rich agricultural heritage. Although many Sundanese rural traditions are obscured by the pressures of an increasingly modern Indonesian life, and the rural ensemble tradition is not represented within a popular musical culture which is dominated by a large scale cassette industry, the angklung tradition remains a contributing factor to a vital Sundanese presence within national Indonesian culture. Though less popular than many other Sundanese performance genres, the rural angklung tradition is an essential part of the Sundanese agricultural complex, and an important link between the traditional and the modern in Sundanese society.

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Notes

1. This article is a revised and expanded version of a paper originally presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology in 1984.
2. A distinction should be made here between the Balinese *gamelan angklung* and the Sundanese angklung ensembles. The gamelan angklung is predominantly a metallophone ensemble, so named because of the inclusion of bamboo angklung in

multiple sets of four instruments: See McPhee (193:322-324). In most Gamelan Angklung today bamboo angklung are not included in the ensemble.

3. The Sundanese celumpung is different altogether from the zither of the same name played in the Central Javanese gamelan ensemble.

4. Falk (1978)

5. Translated from the Sundanese by E. Kushad Wiradinata (1978).

6. In the 1930s, angklung groups around Sumedang became quite competitive, imitating the formality and regimentation of the colonial military. Angklung troupes often dressed in uniforms and wore the *slako* (the Dutch soldier's hat). Pigeaud (1938) considered this an outgrowth of the groups' increasing seriousness, but the Dutch authorities at the time were concerned that it was some kind of political mockery. Most likely both were correct.

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