

RECORDING

Homage to Tradition: music by Rahayu Supanggah

from the curator

In 1986 I attended the first International Gamelan Festival in Vancouver, Canada. I met there, for the first time, some of Indonesia's most active and innovative artists: I Wayan Sadra, Rahayu Supanggah, Pande Made Sukerta, B. Subono, Ketut Gede Asnawa, Sardono W. Kusumo, and many others (*Balungan* Vol. III, No. 1, November 1987 has an article on the group of artists at EXPO '96). The brilliant experimentalism of their work inspired me, and I left that festival determined to make their music better known outside of Indonesia. This CD is a continuation of that commitment.

Supanggah first produced this CD in a limited quantity in Indonesia, and gave it away to friends and colleagues. Soon there were no more, so I asked his permission to re-issue the CD through the American Gamelan Institute [as the beginning of an Indonesian Composers Recording Series].

This CD maintains the original graphics and format. The original notes were in Indonesian and English, only the latter are in this edition.

It gives me extreme pleasure to make Supanggah's music available, and I look forward to many more years of composition and collaboration with the artists of Indonesia.

jody diamond, director, agi
hanover, nh, june 2003

Homage to Tradition

The global era, with its extraordinary advances in the fields of science and technology, in particular, communication technology, facilitates human life. These advances, however, have negatively impacted the life of traditional arts. This is due to the changes in lifestyle of those in the art community, who are the main supporters of traditional arts. Indonesia, which has a wealth of traditional art forms (music), diverse and full of potential, is experiencing these negative effects. Many traditional art forms are being pushed aside by other arts that have the ability to make direct or indirect use of this era's technological advances. The strength and wealth of traditional music does in fact have a great potential to survive with a new vision, meaning, benefit, function and treatment.

This CD contains a collection of new compositions by Rahayu Supanggah, which some observers have referred to as "New Music Indonesia." The works selected retain a strong traditional nuance, and are presented in an attempt to strengthen and enrich the life of "traditional" music. The starting point for R. Supanggah's work as an artist is deeply rooted in these traditions, and these pieces show how he responds to modern times through the elements of traditional music.

1. Keli

Keli, meaning washed away, is an expression of Supanggah's concern for the disappearance of a number of traditional musical and gamelan ensembles, such as Santiswara, Monggang, Kodok Ngorek, and others, due to the predominance of pop music, including pop music for Javanese gamelan. This composition aims to show the potential of these traditional genres. Keli was first performed in Berkeley, and has subsequently been performed in New York, LaFayette, Philadelphia, Iowa, and Vancouver at the KIAS (Indonesian Culture in the United States of America) festival in 1991. Instruments: 4 rebab, female vocal, gong, gambang, slenthem, saron, gender, bonang, kempul.

2. Duet

Duet is the music for the Rama-Sita duet in *Realizing Rama*, a modern dance done with artistic director and choreographer Denisa Reyes from the Philippines. This was a collaborative production between ASEAN nations, and Duet has been performed on tour through ASEAN and European countries. The music uses a Javanese gamelan pathetan ensemble, enriched with a diatonic nuance through the addition of a viola. Instruments: viola, gender, gambang, suling, gong.

3. Kloning

Kloning does not have any connection with “cloning” in the genetic sense, but is an onomatopoeic sonic impression created by a musical composition using only bonang, balungan, and gong instruments. Kloning was composed for Sardono W. Kusumo’s dance/theater work, *Passage Through the Gong*, and performed at the Next Wave Festival at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York in 1993. Kloning was used in 1999 for *Realizing Rama*, with the addition of violin. The violin part was composed and performed by Purwa Askanta. Instruments: saron, demung, slenthem, bonang baru, kempul, violin.

4. Dandanggula Keli

Dandanggula is a kind of traditional sung poetry (macapat) of which there are approximately thirteen different meters. Macapat has always played an important role in the Javanese community as a medium of moral education. It is a means of conveying information, and a method of expressing one person’s feelings for another, through various forms of artistic expression: karawitan (traditional music), literature, wayang (shadow puppet theater), theater, and so on. Of the various kinds of macapat, Dandanggula is one of the most popular, due to its sweet nature and rich variations. Dandanggula was used in the dance music for *Realizing Rama*, and is presented with “Keli” style treatment in this recording. Instruments: Suling gambuh, water suling, vocal, 4 rebab, gambang, kecapi, slenthem, gong.

5. Balambang

Balambang is a combination of Balabak and Maskumambang, two vocal pieces, both of which are usually associated in Java with expressions of sadness, pathos, remorse and submission to God.

Balambang was used as the dance music for *Unraveling the Maya*, performed by the Sutra Dance Company, Kuala Lumpur, in 1997, with choreography by Ramli Ibrahim in collaboration with Denisa Reyes. Instruments: Balungan, gender and gender penerus, siter, gong, rebab, vocal.

6. Thongkleng

This composition was given the name Thongkleng because of its sounds: thong represents the sounds made by the knobbed instruments, known as pencon, and kleng represents the keyed instruments, known as bilah. In this piece emphasis is placed on the sound produced rather than the pitch or melody as the two groups of instruments attempt to engage in a dialogue. Thongkleng is part of the dance music for *Realizing Rama*, used for the scene in which Sita is seduced by the golden deer. The quality of the movents used by U Thein Aye, the dancer from Myanmar who played the deer, provided the composer with the inspiration for this composition. Instruments: pencon and bilah instruments.

7. Main Kayu

Although this composition also happens to be played on (main) instruments made from wood (kayu) or bamboo, Main Kayu means to do as one pleases, disregarding rules of law, ethics, and aesthetics. Since 1990, these attitudes have become prevalent in the Indonesian population. This composition aims to express simplicity irregularity, dissonance/noise and violence by using dichotomous elements, especially in indeterminate pitch choices and vocal character. This piece may be performed with any instruments, as long as these two elements are taken into consideration. The more players involved in a performance of this piece, the better the outcome. Main Kayu was first performed at the Indonesian Arts Summit in Jakarta in 1995. Instruments: Bamboo percussion instruments (kentongan), vocal.

8. Lincak Mubeng

Lincak means a seat (position) or small jump (fluctuation). Lincak mubeng is a small fluctuation occurring everywhere at once or shifting from place to place. The current situation in Indonesia has resulted in several regions of the country want to break away from the Republic, for reasons both rational and irrational. The intruments and the

affect of this piece tries to give an impression of this phenomenon. Instruments: gambang (played by 4 musicians) and balungan instruments in slendro and pelog tuning, played simultaneously.

9. Gambuh

Gambuh is another form of the vocal genre macapat. Gambuh means a compatibility or conformity between two or more elements. This composition aims to encourage a sense of hope for compromise between various elements: social, cultural, ethnic and religious, and was inspired by adzam, the Islamic call to prayer to kneel before God. This piece is part of the work Gambuh, which was performed at the first Young Composers Festival in Jakarta in 1979. Instruments: Suling gambuh, rebab, khen, balungan, bonang, gong, vocal.

10. Ganther

Ganther can mean either a straight or distinct line. Ganther is also an onomatopoeic sound with a nuance of tremolo. This composition is part of the dance music for Realizing Rama, played when Rama, Sita and Laksmna try to maintain their courage through the ordeals they encounter during their exile in the forest. Instruments: gambang, siter, kecap, gong, vocal.

11. Grombyang

Grombyang is a noisy sound created by friction between moving objects — a sound almost no one wants to hear. This composition attempts to capture the feeling of annoyance associated with this sound. Instruments: gambang, bamboo percussion (kentongan), vocal.

12. Bubaran Lear

As its name suggests [a bubaran signals the audience's departure], this composition is used as the final piece in a program. This bubaran was inspired by Undur-undur Kajongan, a traditional gendhing used to pay respect to the king in Surakarta on his return to the palace after holding a royal audience. Bubaran Lear was first performed for the curtain call for LEAR, a modern Asian production based on Shakespeare's King Lear. This collaborative work, which involved artists from more than eight different countries, was initiated by the Japan Foundation, and directed by Ong Keng Sen of Singapore. In 1998 to 2000, LEAR was

performed in several cities in Japan, as well as in Hong Kong, Singapore, Jakarta, Perth, Berlin and Copenhagen. Instruments: Bonang barung, bonang penerus, panembung, balungan, bedug, gong.

Note of thanks from the composer

I wish to warmly thank my fellow musicians for their cooperation and spirit of friendship, which made these compositions possible. They often work together in the Garasi Seni Benawa community, and include both lecturers and students from STSI Surakarta: Waridi, Rustopo, Joko Purwanto, Rusdiyantoro, Sukamso, Suraji, Kuwat, Sugimin, Supardi, Hadi Budiono, Rasita Satriana, Cucup Cahripin, Darsono, Suyoto, Al Suwardi, Sundardi, I Nyoman Sukerna, I Nengah Muliana, Prasadivanto, Dunung Basuki, Purwa Askanta, I Wayan Sadra, Lanjar, Rambat, Sukes, Retna, Warasi, Danis Sugiyanto, Bambang Siswanto, Darsono (B), and others whose names may not have been mentioned.

The CD was recorded and mixed at Studio Sembilanbelas, STSI Surakarta, by Tono Indiarso, Iwan Onone, and Esha Kandus, with graphic design by Putut H. Pramana and Arief Prasetyono

I would also like to thank Sundari, Bontos, Gandang and Wirid for their constant moral support and sacrifice. ▀