

## Recollecting Resonances

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# Recollecting Resonances

Indonesian–Dutch Musical Encounters

*Edited by*

Bart Barendregt and Els Bogaerts



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*Cover illustration:* The photo on the cover is taken around 1915 and depicts a Eurasian man seated in a Batavian living room while plucking the strings of his instrument (courtesy of KITLV Collections, image 13352).

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In loving memory, Hans Teeuw (12 August 1921–18 May 2012)

Multifaceted scholar

Specialist in Old Javanese, classical Malay and modern Indonesian literature

Lexicographer

Translator

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Fostering mutual cooperation among Indonesian and Dutch scholars



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## CHAPTER ONE

### RECOLLECTING RESONANCES: LISTENING TO AN INDONESIAN–DUTCH MUSICAL HERITAGE

Bart Barendregt and Els Bogaerts

#### *A Mutual Heritage?*

Recent years have seen an increased involvement of music scholars not only with postcolonial theory, but more generally with the topics of memory, heritage and the workings of nostalgia.<sup>1</sup> Coinciding with such interests is a re-evaluation of historical materials of all sorts. Accounts of travellers, explorers, government officers or colonial linguists have been mined to understand the meaning of music in those colonial days; to show how the Other and his music have been presented and represented, and how such practices persist into the present.

Researchers are increasingly aware of how music, and the performing arts more generally, may offer possibilities to study colonial life. Musical practices cast a light on the customs of both colonizer and the colonized, and the very fabric of everyday life in those days; matters that otherwise might be difficult to untie. Likewise, it offers a useful prism through which to study the often perverse mechanisms of control and suppression so typical of colonial society. Music's meanings, in absence of 'any denotative back-up' need to be constantly established (Born and Hesmondhalgh 2000: 46) and thus may be instrumental in hiding the traces of representational violence; even more so than the literary or visual arts. Consequently, it seems a perfect tool for naturalizing such power imbalances. In respect of music's workings within the colonial project, important insights have lately been derived from postcolonial theory, highlighting techniques and forms through which power is deployed in and through Western music, but also how such techniques and forms may, on the other hand, be

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<sup>1</sup> Especially the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the heydays of the imperial era, have proven to be a fertile ground for such postcolonial flavoured music studies. One can think here of, among others, the work of Agawu (2003), Taylor (2007), Bloechl (2008) and Farrell's (1997) account of *Indian music and the west*.

appropriated and inverted by the colonized themselves. Some of the more oppressive practices continue to exist in the present era, due to the rise of an increasingly economically exploitative mass entertainment industry, with modern composers, popular music celebrities and the world music industry now using 'primitive' and 'exotic' sounds as raw materials for their musical explorations into the unknown. Curiosity for the alien and the foreign is not harmful in itself and may even be applauded in a world where many increasingly seem to lack the willingness to understand the other. It may become awkward though once such curiosities are subjected to a late capitalist music industry, the structures of which are at once powerful and potentially exploitative.<sup>2</sup>

One wonders why, to date, so few of the aforementioned insights have been used in studies on Indonesian-Dutch musical encounters. This has much to do with historical particularities and the ways in which the near (colonial) past is remembered in both Indonesia and the Netherlands, by both academics and the society at large.

Oostindie (2010: 261) argues that, in contrast to the Anglo-Saxon and, to a lesser extent, French-speaking countries, a postcolonial dialogue has hardly developed in Dutch society.<sup>3</sup> He blames this absence of a broadly shared reflection largely on the lack of feeling of shared origin or destiny among those Indisch repatriates – at least a hundred thousand migrants of Eurasian descent and born in the Indies – who arrived in the Netherlands after 1949. A number of these repatriates had belonged to the lower echelons of colonial society. Others, mostly detained during the Japanese occupation of the Dutch East Indies, belonged to the European elite, some of whom had been born in the Indies, while others had only stayed there for a brief period. An anti-colonial discourse or unpacking of imperialistic mechanisms and their after effects was hardly to be expected among the Indisch or Indo community that had newly settled in the Netherlands. It was similarly absent among the later wave of Moluccan repatriates who would be in a different position all together, as many of them in the near future hoped to return to a newly independent Moluccan motherland, seeing their stay in the Netherlands as an *intermezzo* only.

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<sup>2</sup> See Feld (2000) but also some of the excellent essays compiled in the volume by Born and Hesmondhalgh (2000).

<sup>3</sup> Oostindie even wonders if the Dutch will live to regret this. In other countries such a discussion has been mostly fuelled by a society more polarized and racialized than the Dutch.

Opinions differ on the question of whether such a postcolonial debate should take place. Some, including the renowned Dutch writer Rob Nieuwenhuys (1981), perceive the Dutch East Indies to be ‘a bygone place and era’ (*een verzonken wereld*) in no need of scrutiny. Others see the process of decolonization as only just beginning, arguing that the past must be relived in order to give perspective and place to its events.<sup>4</sup> Certainly, longing for the beautiful and ‘lost Indies’ remains a conspicuous part of Dutch arts and popular culture, although its forms and expressions have changed considerably over the years (Van Leeuwen 2008; De Mul 2010).

Remembrance of the Dutch era in contemporary Indonesian society is quite a different story as is clearly reflected also in the contributions to this volume, most of which deal with the Dutch or Indische side of things. This is partly due to the historical materials available but also a matter of which episodes of the past are deemed worthy of remembrance into the present and which are to be largely ignored. Indeed, especially among the younger generation, the Dutch legacy is barely an issue. Indonesia has moved on and, fuelled by its economic successes and its central role in the Muslim world, traces of the colonial past surface rarely and only when it is politically opportune. Culturally the previous relationship is deemed to be of little significance.

However, there may be a sea change here, with the making of history in post authoritarian Indonesia now seemingly being revised and democratized, and a young Indonesian middle class arising that is keen to learn about its own history.<sup>5</sup> In coming to terms with both the near colonial past and their own recent turbulent history, the new historiographers of the post 1998 period are faced with the challenge of how to remove the often suffocating nationalist grip on history. At the same time, they cannot fail to ignore just how much continuity prevails between Dutch rule and subsequent regimes. While historians are busily rewriting the modern Indonesian past, young urban kids, in a sudden upsurge of historical sentiment, are taking to the streets to survey the old cityscapes of Jakarta, Yogyakarta and other Indonesian cities riding on old Dutch bikes and dressed-up as Dutch and Javanese colonial servants (Albert 2008; Sastra-midjaja 2011). Similar colonial flashbacks have dominated for a number of

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<sup>4</sup> Hence, literary critic and specialist in Indies literature Pattynama (2011) sees those writing, longing and singing about the lost Dutch East Indies as working towards ‘the future of the past’.

<sup>5</sup> For some examples, see Bambang Purwanto (2005 and 2006); Jaarsma and Bogaerts (2006); and Taufik Abdullah and Sukri Abdurrahman (2011).

years in other areas, such as interior house design and the '*tempo doeloe*' architecture of upmarket health spas (Barendregt 2011). Presumably, these are the first signs of a wider trend that is yet to trickle down and that some have dubbed 'colonial nostalgia'. With such interests hanging in the air, it may only be a matter of time before this newly found nostalgia is also sonically expressed on a wider scale, such as the Orkes Sinten Remen, led by Djaduk Ferianto, has been doing for quite some time. This volume, then, is as much a prelude to the possible emergence of such interests as it is a critical interrogation of how such a shared musical heritage may be read and listened to.

There are a number of reasons why we consider music to be a particularly useful prism through which to study mutual forms of Indonesian-Dutch heritage. Much of the shared Indonesian Dutch history was silenced, ignored or expressly forgotten after 1945 (cf. Stoler and Strassler 2000). Prior to Indonesian independence the mutual aspect had been neglected or omitted. Indeed, there has been relatively little space for exchanges on and about the cultural dimensions of the colonial past, with the exception of the mutual care for monuments deemed to be of extreme historical importance to both nations, or scholars working hard to salvage threatened archives (see Oostindie 2010: 258). In contrast to other Dutch colonies, such as Suriname and the Antilles, the newly independent republic had no desire for the former mother country to remain involved with its view of history. It has even been pointed out that the mention of the Dutch is conspicuously absent from many Indonesian history books. Where they are mentioned, in the nation's museums, school books, dramatic performances and films, they are portrayed as cruel, stereotypical oppressors. Any potential to explain contrary attitudes of Indonesian individuals or communities towards the former oppressor is glossed over (McGregor 2003). Likewise, in Dutch society, the colonial past in Indonesian studies has too often been abridged to a version narrating only the last bitter episodes, leaving little room for other dimensions. Until now, little attention has been paid to the culture of the colonizer, in which the musical arts are but one aspect. The Dutch empire has come to a halt, but not all of its cultural practices have faded away and a number of these practices are, in fact, found to persist in new niches. Ignoring such practices prevents us from developing a more thorough analysis of how Indonesian society has coped with the realities of decolonization in various domains of public life. Through music difference has been composed, performed and enacted. At the same time, the power of music has sometimes resulted in a smoothening over of the differences.

Music may provide a means by which to articulate collective identities; it marks ‘us’ versus ‘them’. Yet, under certain circumstances it can also contribute to sociocultural integration and reconciliation (Bohlman 2000). Thus, music – a seemingly innocent practice – can be an arena for starting a dialogue as a way to heal long open wounds (O’Connell and Castelo-Branco 2010).

In this volume we hope to put some of these negotiations with the past – remembrance, resentment and sometimes strategic forgetfulness – into a wider perspective by focusing on musical encounters. We realise the complexities of the term ‘encounters’, with many of the encounters central to this volume rife with inherent power imbalances. The musical encounters described by the authors in their subsequent chapters are many and often very diverse in both character and social impact.

They are shaped by the position of its main actors as well as the time and background to which such encounters were clearly set. It can be encounters of the harmonious kind, music lovers from both worlds seeking to respectfully learn from each other’s traditions, but such encounters can equally be the backdrop of confrontation and challenge such as is the case of musical nationalism or the (resistance to) reform of vernacular music education as advocated by colonial and indigenous elites. Musical encounters can be exclusive in character such as those between indigenous noble families, colonial officers or state-employed scholars, but they can very much also stem from the dark alleys of that very same colonial universe; its drinking locals, home bred cabaret troops or musical genres that due to their association with ‘the folk’ or ‘the people’ are much despised by the contemporary upper-classes. It can be the modern day art music practiced by a few, sufficiently initiated in order to appreciate the blending of musical vocabularies and the sounds of East and West, or *indorock* and *hawaiian*, musics that were widely adored by the masses. It’s difficult to say which musical encounters are also more lasting in character; a Sundanese scholar who inspired by the Western notation system sets out to develop an indigenous variant seemingly has as much impact on today’s musical performance as *kroncong*, a genre once despised for its lack of historicity and blatant syncretism but now increasingly becoming a nostalgic soundtrack of times long bygone both in Indonesia and the Netherlands. Whereas some of the meetings described in this volume have had little long-lasting impact; others, sometimes single encounters, still resonate today. This introduction, then, sets out some of the backgrounds that may imbue these encounters with further meaning.

*Upon First Contact*

In his account of German-born officer Morgenstern, Van Gelder (2010) describes how, in the eighteenth century Indies, the colonial VOC elite was not only extremely interested in performance and musical spectacle, but was also willing to spend a great deal of money on it. Slave performers and musicians, sometimes imported all the way from Europe, ensured that the Governor-General could entertain audiences weekly, with violin and harpsichord or other 'civilized' European music.<sup>6</sup> No mention is made in the Morgenstern letters of how indigenous authorities – presumably present at some of these events – may or may not have appreciated such musical performances. However, that these performances were indeed heard, and that some of these sounds had an enduring impact, is proven by the contributions of Sumarsam and Brenner to this volume. Both authors show how, from an early stage, VOC elements were incorporated into local genres, tapping into the power generally associated with VOC performance for their own benefits. Sumarsam argues that the musical materials introduced by the VOC were localized in different ways: either domesticated into local music genres, as in the case of *tanjidor*, used as a symbol as in the *gendhing mares*, or resulting in a hybrid Western-based Indonesian popular music. Brenner analyzes the interaction between the inhabitants of the island of Buton and VOC officers, and the traces this left in terms of both the physical shape of the Butonese drums and in the drumming patterns.

With the VOC on the wane, it was a new colonial apparatus and the church that brought new musical forms, techniques and instruments to the Indies. Jaap Kunst (1934), in his *Westersche Lieder en uit Oostersche Landen*, describes how centuries after the first Dutch seamen had come ashore, one could still find traces of not only fortresses, chapels and markets, but also of the folk songs those early visitors had brought with them. In Larantuka, in Eastern Indonesia, he listened to a couple of songs that 'a man's life ago had been imported by traders from Solor' (Kunst 1934), and which reminded him of the sixteenth and seventeenth century Old European *Valerius song* repertory. The songs, which by then had already

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<sup>6</sup> Such practices endured deep into the 19th century and into the heydays of colonialism. In the 1880s, Van Doren (1854) describes how several wealthy Dutch landlords entertained private ensembles that performed military and festive music. These orchestras often consisted of musicians from various parts of the archipelago.

faded into obscurity in the Netherlands, had been given new lyrics in the local language, but otherwise had survived intact far away from home.

In contrast to other former colonies, there has been little substantial research on the impact of music and its use for proselytizing in the Dutch East Indies, with some positive exceptions, such as (again) the early work of Jaap Kunst.<sup>7</sup> It is likely that the Victorian concept of ‘voice culture’, so present in the British colonies, and distinguishing the cultivated from the uncultivated vocalist (Damousi 2010) in the Dutch East Indies, was an instrumental part of the civilizing mission. Olwage (2004) explains how the introduction of Victorian choral techniques, both in the motherland as well as in some of the colonies, worked to discipline the citizen subject; and, by working on the body, audible differences could be erased. However, as postcolonial critics such as Bhabba have argued, while such bodily practices may render the Other ‘almost the same’, they never achieve parity; and, the process may, in fact, emphasise the differences (Olwage 2004: 209). Still, many a Western account of that era expresses astonishment at ‘primitive people’ being able to make such eloquent music, further adding to the hope of music’s instrumentality in the civilizing mission. Thus, as Gerard Persoon demonstrates in his essay on the Dutch national anthem in the music culture of Siberut, German missionaries to the Indies applied religious songs in their efforts to educate the Mentawaians.

Kunst and other early musicologists have likewise commented upon the import of foreign instruments, and how their arrival often coincided with new musical hierarchies of both genres and their dominant instruments.<sup>8</sup> Yet, still, little is known about how local people made these foreign sounds their own. It is likely that most of these new musics were selected and appropriated by local elites who – often no longer politically in charge – now turned to outward spectacle in order to prove that they were cosmopolitan and able to cope with the challenges of the modern era (cf. Pemberton 1994: 124, n25).<sup>9</sup> In their *Migrating music*, Toyne and Dueck (2011) deal with some of the colonial contexts in which indigenous

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<sup>7</sup> But see Bos (1999) on the Pater Rozing Collection in the KIT, and Prier (2008) on the development of Catholic Church music in Indonesia.

<sup>8</sup> For a comparison, see the works of Sutton (1996) on Javanese sound ideology and his dealing with foreign elements, again Farrell (1998) on Mughul emperor Jahanker’s import of the European harpsichord, and Moffat’s (2009) description of the prestigious status of the colonial piano in New Zealand.

<sup>9</sup> See also the work by Boonzajer (2000) on the incorporation of military brass music into local musical practice throughout Asia, as well as Irving (2010) on the Hispanization of Filipino music.



communities appropriated European music and dance genres, arguing that acts of copying are not only a means to accommodate the foreign and new into existing cultural categories and practices, but that indigenous people were just as capable of employing such (European) technologies as the colonizer. As Brenner shows in her contribution, mimesis, or acts of alterity, work two ways and, in the process of appropriating such foreign musical practices, transgress boundaries that the 'colour conscious' power holders were often keen to uphold (Toynbee and Dueck 2011). And yet, paradoxically – and with these practices often being restricted to ritual circumstances – they also affirmed indigenous difference. Thus, in its encounter between nations, civilizations and communities, musical performance may become a contest of the modern, although its effects are often unpredictable.

With all this focus on power play, one must be careful not to lose sight of the genuine interest taken by some European visitors in local music and its practitioners, as well as the sheer aesthetic pleasure often derived from newly found musical sounds (and this works two ways). In his contribution to this volume, Wim van Zanten describes how Dutch landlords discovered local Sundanese music and entertained their own ensembles, frequently having themselves pictured with local performers. But also among the intelligentsia there was a certain interest for local performing practices. Exemplary of these interests is the 1927 visit of Rabindranath Tagore to the Dutch East Indies, where Dutch musicologist Arnold Bake (who happened to stay at Tagore's Ashram) acted as a mediator and introduced the poet to Javanese courtly and musical traditions. Needless to say, and much in accordance with Dutch archaeological emphasis on the past legacy of the archipelago, it was mostly Hindu Buddhist inspired traditions that were stressed, and the Muslim traditions of the majority of the population were largely ignored. Indeed, Hindu Buddhist heritage was seen to act as a buffer against the 'Muslim threat'. This can be considered an ongoing and extant theme in Indonesian Dutch musical encounters, reinforced by a strong interest on the side of performers in the courtly traditions of Java and Bali, at the cost of Islamic traditions such as *salawat* (see also Rasmussen 2011: 127).<sup>10</sup> The Dutch stronghold on Java also meant

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<sup>10</sup> This seems in line with colonies elsewhere where 'folk traditions' mostly were perceived of as a secondary source of language, culture, and customs to be collected for administrative purposes. Postcolonial approaches to such underresearched traditions turn out to shed a light on things as contemporary attitudes towards the division of labour, women's language, or music's relation to religion.



that most interest was automatically directed to Javanese traditions, and the courtly traditions were recognized as coming close to the equivalent of European high art. As always there are exceptions. Liesbeth Ouwehand's essay describes the early expeditions of A.W. Nieuwenhuis to what was then called Borneo. In her essay, Ouwehand compares the scholarly studies of local musicians and dancers by Nieuwenhuis and Groneman with commercial photographs of performers and performances, made at fairs and in studios. Whereas Nieuwenhuis aimed at enabling an encounter between the interested European observer and the performer by means of the photographic representations, the latter in particular appealed to European consumers because of their focus on the exotic.

In spite of this photographic legacy, and occasional reference to the contents of songs or drama, little is known of how such music sounded, with early descriptions such as those by Nieuwenhuis proving how collecting folk music in those early days primarily meant collecting lyrics. Music may not have been deemed worthy of attention, but equally it may have been that during those first encounters there was simply a lack of expertise and/or resources to do musical transcriptions (cf. Farrel and Sorrell 2007). Besides, most of these early explorers were not musicologists by profession and relatively few of them were musical practitioners. Appreciation of local music clearly changes with the coming of recording technology and the long term residence of music scholars in the colony, such as Brandts Buys and the previously mentioned Jaap Kunst, who in 1929 was appointed a government musicologist. In their contribution, Djajadiningrat and Brinkgreve describe how soon after arrival in the Indies, Kunst developed an interest in the Javanese gamelan and how he strove to take tonal measurements determining the exact pitch and absolute vibration numbers of all keys and gongs of the Mangkunegaran gamelan. His thorough work was much appreciated by generations of ethnomusicologists and inspired musicians and composers, including Dutch composer Ton de Leeuw.<sup>11</sup> Kunst never succeeded in making extensive fieldwork recordings and an eventual trip to do so in 1940 was cancelled as the outbreak of World War Two made it impossible for him to undertake a new journey to the Indies. However, as early as 1909, representatives of the early entertainment industry had started to collect recordings by local performers in parts of Southeast Asia, including Java and Bali (see Gronow 1983;

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<sup>11</sup> On Ton de Leeuw and his ideas concerning the meeting between European and Asian music, and the musical acculturation between East and West, see Sligter (1995).

Tan Sooi Beng 1996; Suryadi 2006). Musicologists and other academics were now able to use these recording devices to transcribe and represent local Indonesian music and, in the process, as we will see below, they transformed the ways local people would listen to and experience their own music.<sup>12</sup>

### *Collecting Otherness*

In her chapter for this book, Ouwehand refers to so-called *cartes-de-visite* (visiting card photographs) that in the nineteenth century were commercially exploited by photo studios. Depicted on these cards are anonymous portraits, Indonesian craftsmen and different types of people, including musicians and other performers. European interest, as Ouwehand argues, was not so much in musicians doing musical performance, but rather in the subjects as ‘ethnological specimen’. Such depictions were as much in line with the then current fad for fairs and exhibitions (cf. Bloembergen 2006; for a larger history, see Hendry 2000) as they were structured by 1920s scientific paradigms legitimizing the idea of race (and thus also racializing music). An example of evolutionary ideas of race in relation to music is also found in the 1928 experiments of Milton Metfessel, who chose ‘the Negro Voice’ as laboratory specimen in order to dissect the physicality of African-American sonic renderings (in Radano and Bohlman 2000: 22). The popular visiting card photographs and, to a lesser extent, the academic accounts of Nieuwenhuis and his ilk, proved how, once disciplined, the colonial subject may not be that wild after all and, indeed, able to have a culture of his own.

Such ideas and interests in indigenous worldviews and practices were further amplified by adherents of what was to be the ‘ethical policy’. The ethical policy ‘was meant to be an optimistic fresh start, initiated in response to a barrage of criticism voiced in the late nineteenth century, when journalists, scholars, and politicians had begun to reproach the systematic and successful Dutch exploitation of its Indonesian possessions’ (Gouda 2008: 24). In the aftermath of this renewed appreciation of indigenous culture, Indonesian music increasingly came to be accepted as a source of inspiration for Western composers, the gamelan-inspired works by Debussy being a case in point. Whereas non-Western influences on

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<sup>12</sup> See Weidman (2003) for an Indian case of how recording technology changed music perception.

his compositions, but also on the work of Saint-Saëns and Bartók, have received ample attention, little is known of the musical exoticism in the work of the Indisch composers treated in this volume by Henk Mak van Dijk (but see the work by Cohen 2011 and Mak van Dijk 2007). Mak van Dijk focuses here on Indisch composer Van de Wall who, twenty years before Debussy, ventured into oriental music and decided to use the Javanese *pelog* tuning in his rhapsodies and verses. Van de Wall's music challenges the musical boundaries that hitherto had existed, with him even going as far as performing the Islamic conviction of faith set to music; something that by today's standards is controversial, but back then could easily pass for an oriental tune. At the same time, Van de Wall remained convinced of Western superiority. His songs are predominantly set in a Western musical idiom, and are somehow illustrative of the exotic picture of the beautiful Indies that was so much in fashion among belletrists and painters of that era. Interestingly, Van de Wall's career is also characteristic of how attitudes towards orientalist productions began to differ in the 1920s. Van de Wall's opera *Attima*, for example, was received differently in Batavia and the motherland. As a matter of fact, the audience for 'Indisch compositions' was increasingly to be found not in the colony, but at home. Through its music, the colony and its citizens could be presented and represented in the Netherlands, although such representational practices immediately triggered debates on the authenticity of what was performed, with some critics doubting if composers such as Van de Wall were truly equipped with the knowledge to perform 'genuine' Javanese music. This schism is very much represented in Mak van Dijk's allusion to the papier mâché gamelan featured in the *Attima* opera, which is sonically imitated by Western instruments.

Music writer Dresden was sceptical about Van de Wall's knowledge of Javanese music, denying him the status of pioneer. At the same time, hybrid music, such as that of Indisch compositions, aroused more widespread anxieties. Europeans and Eurasians acting as indigenous Javanese obviously have their equivalent in vaudeville, jazz and minstrelsy traditions of the same era, in which 'sounding black' (Strass 2007) is here substituted for simulations of Javaneseness. This coincided with the profound technological changes that took place, such as the emergence of the gramophone industry and early popularity of the radio, both of which resulted in the separation of sound and the performing body, leaving the voice with the possibility to represent another class or other race. Consequently, not only Eurasians, but also Europeans recorded *kroncong*, new hybrid songs often sung in Malay, with Dutch artists passing for Asians (and vice versa).

This was much to the disdain of many elites, both indigenous and European, and the increased debate and claims about authenticity may be interpreted as the need to uphold racial and class order and an anxiety about losing sound as a marker of such differences. While technology seemingly erased all differences, it was also used tactically by the Indies government to keep the worlds of the colonizers and colonized apart. First launched in 1918, Radio Kootwijk, a shortwave transmitter station, would facilitate the communication between the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies, broadcasting programmes targeted at Europeans in the colony. Jennifer Lindsay (1997) and Philip Yampolsky (forthcoming) dwell on how, deep into the 1930s, several of the Java based radio stations, continued with a separate European and Indigenous programming, in which the East and the West were supposed not to meet. In general, the fear of pollution by the other may explain the interest in pure authentic musical forms, an obsession that still characterises much Indonesian and Dutch musicology today. While things are changing to the better over the past few years and recently popular and hybrid music enjoyed by masses of Indonesians has received the attention it deserved, the majority of performing arts studies have for long dealt with gamelan or any of the other more refined courtly arts that were mostly produced in a few cultural centres known for its 'long traditions'.

### *Studying Music*

Into the 1930s, both Dutch purists and Indonesian nationalists would fear the import of what they saw as Western 'kitsch', caused by the dissemination of global musics by radio and gramophone. Living side by side meant that fears for the degeneration and pollution of indigenous 'traditional' and 'classical' European music in the colony, and the perceived need to uphold hierarchies, was felt more strongly than back in the Netherlands. It explains why both nationalists and the Europeans had very little affinity with new hybrid and urban genres such as *kroncong*, which to many, including government musicologist Kunst, was an outright degradation of local arts (Heins 1975). Also among educated Eurasians – the main performers of the genre – there was a general disregard of such hybrid music. Mak van Dijk explains how *kroncong* was associated with the light-hearted morality of wandering troops and musicians, and how, as an Indisch man, one preferred to pass for European. In her chapter in this book, Mutsaers examines the Dutch contribution to the world of *kroncong* between 1893

and 1913. She uncovers personal encounters between people of different origins and backgrounds, which enriched the genre and whose popularity transcended regions and ethnic groups.

Ironically, back in the Netherlands, *kroncong*, and later *hawaiian* music, was the latest craze, especially in places such as The Hague; a popular retreat for those on leave from the Indies. Restaurants and other facilities there were accustomed to the desires and needs of the ‘Indiëgangers’. But it was the city’s many jazz cafes and clubs that encouraged those on leave to hang on to the Indies atmosphere (Möller 1987). Many musicians from the Indies would play there with and in Dutch ensembles, some deciding to move to the Netherlands permanently, such as the Syncopated Java Serenaders (Bennink 2008).

The aftermath of the ethical policy also resulted in circumstances in the colony being more favourable for the performing arts. Here, however, it was not new danceable sounds, but rather traditional and courtly traditions that were to be much cherished. Purists and conservatives, both European and indigenous, teamed up to protect Indonesian musical traditions – much in the vein of 1930s salvage anthropology – and aimed at safeguarding and preserving what was left of ‘traditional culture’. Few saw the irony that much of these traditions had actually first been threatened upon encountering imported, mostly Western, art forms (an irony captured in Rosaldo’s descriptions of ‘imperialist nostalgia’; see Rosaldo 1989). Despite efforts to ring fence Indonesian music from the West, increasingly Western institutes and forms were being imported. The Java Institute, with a programme for enhancing culture in Java, was founded in 1919. In 1921 it launched a contest to develop a notation system for local music, which resulted in the Javanese *kepatihan* cipher notation. In his contribution, Wim van Zanten describes the contradictions contained in these efforts to safeguard local tradition, in this case in reference to Kusumadinata’s two relative notational systems for Sundanese music. Van Zanten reflects on how the fruitful encounter between Jaap Kunst and Machjar Kusumadinata resulted in the development of these two relative cipher notation systems for Cianjuran music by Kusumadinata, which he elaborated in the course of time. Despite much criticism by foreign scholars, such as the Dutch Brandts Buys, Kusumadinata’s theory continued to be in use in academic circles in Indonesia, however confusing it was for music practitioners. The author discusses some of the recent criticism as expressed by a young generation of Bandung musicologists. He pleads for the development of a new modal theory and the use of an absolute cipher

notation system, in view of the present day international communication on the topic. In the second part of his essay, Van Zanten discusses how his encounters with West Javanese musician Uking Sukri gave an impulse to the performance of Cianjuran music in the Netherlands.

Kunst's encounter with Kusumadinata was given impetus by a shared interest in hard facts, the description of instruments and pitch measurements, but, after a while, even Kunst doubted the reliability of Kusumadinata's work. Olwage (2004) has previously commented upon the 'impossibility of the transcriptive act', but during the May 2010 workshop entitled 'Musical encounters between Indonesia and the Netherlands', organized by the Professor Teeuw Foundation, in cooperation with the KITLV and Leiden University, the Indonesian composer Franki Notosudirdjo also expressed his doubts on whether tuning systems and notation could truly capture the soul of Indonesian music. Nevertheless, the encounter with Dutch music and Dutch musical traditions would forever change the Indonesian musical landscape, in particular the way music was to be taught. Whereas music had mostly been taught by means of oral transmission, now notation became the ultimate mnemonic device, at least in 'modern' settings. Notosudirdjo sees enrolment of Indonesian performers in Dutch vocational schools as the point of departure for Indonesian musical modernism. These schools emerged as social institutions capable of producing modern indigenous composers and intellectuals. It was in this context that Indonesian composers began to engage themselves in the pursuit of cultural expression by means of an individual musical language and aesthetics that was associated with the style of 'modern music'. Addressing the issue of musical exchanges between Indonesians and Dutch, Notosudirdjo argues that they contributed significantly to the birth of highly distinctive new idioms and aesthetics in the global history of twentieth century music. The personal encounter between these pioneers offered a new dynamic cultural perspective on the issue of colonialism, and eventually brought benefit to both Indonesian and Dutch musical practitioners.

Also in other ways the Indonesian education system of music in schools has been impacted. Today's musical education in schools appears much inspired by a Dutch booklet entitled *Als je nog zingen kunt, zing dan mee* (If you can sing, then sing-a-long), a collection of popular as well as religious songs that was first published in 1908. In his contribution, Persoon describes how the book, initially meant to be a key element in the musical education of Dutch children, was later introduced in the Dutch East Indies, where it would become the main source of instruction. Some of

the songs in this volume were far removed from the daily realities of the colony, and it took until 1939 for a modified ‘Indisch’ version to be published. Today, song books, now representing music from all regions, are still much in fashion in Indonesian primary and secondary education. These song books fitted the New Order government’s essentialist approach of multiculturalism, which was conceived in official Indonesian historiography in order to unify the multicultural society and construct a national identity (see Yampolsky 1995; Acciaioli 2001). Based on a ‘standard notion of shared archipelagic culture’ (Acciaioli 2001: 16), the government stimulated the production of ‘official art, parallel to but divorced from the true artistic life of Indonesians’ (Yampolsky 1995: 719).

Western-style music education was also the inspiration for Indonesian music institutions, the first of which was the Konservatori Karawitan Indonesia, established in Solo, Central Java, in 1950. The aim of these institutions was to study, teach and preserve traditional music using contemporary methods, within the framework of the building of a national culture after independence (Bogaerts 2012: 233). Books, articles and music transcriptions by Dutch researchers were used as reference works for several educational and political aims. Ki Hadjar Dewantara, for instance, referred to the writings of the Dutch Jaap Kunst, J.S. Brandts Buys and his spouse Linda Bandara, and the German Walter Spies in order to prove the international recognition of certain Indonesian music forms, such as Javanese gamelan music, viewed in the 1950s by some Indonesians as being part of the national cultural heritage (Ki Hadjar Dewantara 1950: 4). Likewise, his opponents, music specialist J.A. Dungga and composer L. Manik, in their educative articles on music in Indonesia (compiled and published in 1952), based their ideas on Dutch (and other foreign) standard works.<sup>13</sup>

### *Musical Nationalism*

In spite of, and even with support of alien educational methods European and indigenous elites were thus preoccupied with pure and authentic cultural forms, in fact ignoring the age old custom of Javanese syncretism, a tradition that absorbed and transformed whatever musical element would come from afar.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, music aficionados in the Netherlands, often

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<sup>13</sup> For more information on music education in Indonesia, see Mack (2004).

<sup>14</sup> The 1930s saw the so-called Cultural Polemic (*Polemik Kebudayaan*), a fervent dispute in newspapers and journals between those adherents of pro-Western ideals of modernity



Indonesians who went there to study, were less obsessed with preserving traditional music identities, instead hoping to use music to help shape a Javanese identity that was new and modern. Matthew Cohen's chapter in this book describes the phenomena of 'Indische Avonden' (Indies evenings). These performances by Indonesians and Eurasians from the Dutch East Indies, who had come to the Netherlands for educational purposes, developed from inward looking events into demonstrations of pan-Indonesian unity, and thus functioned as workshops for the formulation of Indonesian national culture. Cohen also describes how, after the Youth Pledge (*Sumpah Pemuda*) of 1928 and its affirmation of the primacy of Indonesian over Javanese or other ethnolinguistic affiliations, such cultural evenings tended to focus less and less on the ethnic modern, but instead promoted all-Indonesian experiments with modernity. The *Indische Avond* thus nurtured the emergent nationalism far away from home, increasingly making music a vehicle for nationalism.

A different, though related, form of musical nationalism is described by Persoon in his chapter when he refers to how early nationalists, once imprisoned by the Dutch, refused to sing the national anthem, the *Wilhelmus*, on the occasion of the Dutch queen's birthday. The so-called 'little *Wilhelmus* rebellions' even led dissidents to write an alternative '*Digoel*' version of the *Wilhelmus*, named after the camp in which these nationalists were detained. Not surprisingly there is an abundant Indonesian literature on revolutionary songs.<sup>15</sup> Many songs that now belong to the nationalist repertory, and which served to express independence from political and cultural oppression by the colonial powers, are, to a large extent, influenced by the cultural traditions and educational system that the very same powers put in place. The same diatonic music taught at the Dutch vocational schools inspired nationalist composers such as W.R. Supratman – a journalist and former jazz musician – to write a new national anthem for the nation in waiting (Mintargo 2008). During the Japanese occupation this anthem was performed by the Japanese symphonic orchestra *Nippon Hosyo Kanri* and broadcast at Radio Tokyo in order to win the hearts and minds of the people of Southeast Asia

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and progress, including the likes of Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana, and those intellectuals who sought inspiration in ethnic traditions. Some of them advocated full hybridity. Similar debates would resurface well into the 1950s; for the actual discussions, see Achdiat Mihardja (1986); for a summary of the debate, see Holt (1967); Teeuw (1979: 35–38); and Jurriëns (2004: 39–42).

<sup>15</sup> For a Dutch take on such revolutionary songs or *lagu perjuangan* see Van Dijk (2003).



(Mintargo 2003). This Japanese support for nationalist songs coincided with a ban on all songs in Western languages.

Musical nationalism was to have its heyday in the 1945–49 period. Van Dijk (2003) describes how many of the songs from this period still belong to the Indonesian nation's collective consciousness, although at times old songs are given new and different meanings. But it was not only on the Indonesian side that music was mobilized to boost the morale. Gelder (2005) reports on the so-called NIWIN commission (*Nationale Inspanning Welzijnsverzorging Indië*; a welfare organization aimed at the care of Dutch soldiers in the Indies) that was to select artists visiting the 'liberated' Indies to entertain Dutch soldiers defending their colony. He gives the explicit case of the Red White and Blue Stars (chauvinistically named after the colours of the Dutch flag) who, after a long and hard journey, arrived in Buitenzorg to perform at the New Year's Eve concert. Elsewhere, a family website comments on the post 1945 years as a terrific time in musical terms: 'imagine, we had to catch up with four years of jazz and swing. Through Radio Colombo, Australia Calling and later the common local radio stations swing, jazz and bebop, but also country and boogie woogie was brought to us. Somewhat later there were swing and jazz films. Records obtained from Singapore and the NIWIN brought us orchestras such as the Miller Quartet with the unforgettable Sanny Day'.<sup>16</sup>

Most of the Dutch ensembles invited by NIWIN had little idea of what was going on in the colony in that period. That said, they were eager to earn a decent wage now the liberation parties at home were waning and people were confronted with everyday reality and the hardships of the postwar era. Apparently there was plenty of time and space for musical entertainment while being in the service. The chapel of the marines stationed in Surabaya regularly performed in canteens, local clubs and even live on air via Radio Soerabaja (Dragtsma, Van Deth and Salomons 2009). Similarly, military bands would later play in Biak on the occasion of the Queen's Birthday to 'entertain' the local Papua population. For many soldiers this proved to be a musical encounter of some sort. Not only did they operate local military radio stations playing Western nostalgic music, often classical in character, but they also inserted the new stars of the global entertainment industry, including army sweetheart Vera Lynn, into their programming. These soldiers had come for a war but found

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<sup>16</sup> See <http://www.pesulimahistory.com>, last accessed January 2012.

themselves learning how to play an instrument, with some even performing for audiences in venues such as the Bandung Cathedral.

*Listening to the Indies and Other Forms of Auditory Memory*

Kartomi (2002) describes, in relation to the Indonesian republican fighters detained in the prison camp Boven Digoel, how music has a certain escapist dimension, enabling its practitioners to withstand the hardships of imprisonment. In Boven Digoel, a gamelan was made entirely from scavenged materials, including kitchenware and old materials. The sounds it produced gave moral support to its players who were alone and far away from home. Similarly, Somers and Schreuder (2005) provide us with portraits of well-known performers and revue artists, whose skills emotionally supported their comrades in the Japanese camps. However, music may also intentionally evoke memories of places of conflict. A special issue of the military veteran journal *Checkpoint* in 2009 features a former Indies-based soldier remembering the song *In mijn klamboe* (Under my mosquito net), a record his wife found for him in a second-hand market after years of searching. On listening to it again, the song instantly triggers the memory of another place and another time 'when Indonesia and the Netherlands were still bound by fate'. There is something about sound that evokes the past in a spectacular and often overwhelming way. Everyone is familiar with that particular childhood song that represents a time now inaccessible and distant both in time and place, but that somehow makes one feel comfortable, as if its sounds represent something better, purer, a safe haven to return to. Music has an undeniable mnemonic function. The idea of a record reiterating the same content each time it is played, is subconsciously transposed onto the experience attached to hearing the music. 'People's expectations to feel the same response each time the record is played, stems from a craving to relive the past as it was – as if the past was a record' (Van Dijck 2006).

Once the colony was lost, it's now distant sounds of gamelan and *lesung* became the stuff of memory work among those forced to leave for the Netherlands. In his chapter, Cohen describes how the longing for our '*mooi Indië*', the paradise lost, started as soon as the Japanese occupied the archipelago. After 1945, nostalgia for the Indies is cultivated in Indisch literature, ego documents, films, and popular novels that together form an 'imaginary space' (Pattynama 2011) for those forced to leave. This nostalgia generates memories today that are amplified by family reunions, local fairs

and online *Indië* sites in which music features prominently and serves to sustain the faraway place the Indies has now become. In Indonesia, on the other hand, one can still find those trained to sing Dutch songs, although with every passing year this becomes increasingly exceptional. Persoon describes how during his fieldwork he encountered a strong, middle-aged Mentawaian man who, sitting on his veranda in Maileppet Village (Siberut Island, West Sumatra), sat upright and announced that he would sing a song that was taught to him by his teachers in the late 1930s. Minutes later he sang a localized version of the Dutch national anthem. Some of us doing research in present day Indonesia can recall similar experiences, with Dutch songs often triggering a discussion on the pros and cons of the colonial era, an era that at least for some of the older generation was far more comprehensible. But even music does not manage to bring back what is lost, with musical memory functioning as selectively as other mnemonic forms tend to do; consciously singling out some musics, while ignoring others. Well remembered are the nostalgic Dutch TV series such as *De Stille Kracht* or *Kris Pusaka*, with their subliminal soundtracks of gamelan and other orientalist sounds. However, this comes at the cost of other, often more pervasive traditions, such as the arts and performances of the Muslim majority of today's Indonesia, and of those ethnic groups whose cultural expressions have been neglected by Dutch and Indische audiences alike. Seemingly, there are at least two versions of the past at play here, as Oostindie illustrates when he refers to the Dutch anxiety about dealing with their colonial experience. They now conspicuously divert the attention away from colonial sensitivities, emphasising nationally the image of a '*mooi Indië*' once found, now lost and longed for.

### *Diasporic Sounds*

Until the 1930s taste in the colonies tended to reflect either European high art or the masculine nationalist music of the military brass bands (Shope 2008). Both filled European citizens of the colonies with nostalgic sentiments, and it was also the music that upheld the colonial and racial hierarchy. This changed with the emergence of new popular genres that were to be distributed by a newly emergent entertainment industry, on record, via radio and later through film. Popular genres, such as jazz, emulated Western aesthetics but its performance was also usurped by Eurasian and indigenous performers. In Indonesia musical genres such as foxtrot and rumba were mixed with the sounds of *kroncong* and *hawaiian*, already

hybrid genres in themselves. Ironically, it was these very music genres, often despised for their hybrid origins and smell of otherness, that were to be emblematic of the longing or trope of the lost tropical paradise. Spooman describes in this volume how, after the war and during the Dutch struggle to keep their colony, there was a boom in so-called Lowland *hawaiian* (also Nederhawaiian) music. In particular, the arrival of the Moluccans in the Netherlands from the 1950s onwards would contribute to what was to be a genuine revival of the genre. However, the contribution of the new Indisch and Indonesian communities to Dutch music in the post-World War Two years is encapsulated in the fame of what, in retrospect, has been dubbed 'Indo rock'.<sup>17</sup>

After the war, repatriates were often met with hostility and suspicion by larger Dutch society. This small European minority in the archipelago had, hitherto, hardly been on the radar, and few in Dutch society understood the position and culture of 'the Indo'. As a result, much of the typical Indisch culture was doomed to stay indoors and in the Netherlands was restricted to family life. In particular, loud music and other forms of low-brow culture did not fit the emancipatory direction opted for by many among the Indisch elite. Whereas some called for emancipation, signalled by the launch of the Tong Tong Foundation in the 1950s, overall the Indisch community wanted to be complimented for the ease with which it had adapted to Dutch cultural life (Van Leeuwen 2008). The emergence of *indorock* shocked both the wider Dutch society and its own Indisch community. This was partly due to the genre's association with youth gangs hanging around in the streets of cities like The Hague (Bennink 2008). *Indorock*, the first European rock-and-roll style, which initially began as imitation, soon found its own ways and sound. Having its roots in three continents, America, Asia and Europe, 'it contained the best of danceable rock elements, the newest of guitar sounds and echo equipment, the loudest drums, wildest guitar licks and sax solos combined with most amusing thievery of film tunes, radio jingles and international hit songs' (Mutsaers 2001: 682). During its heyday, in the period 1956 to 1964, *indorock* was mostly associated with the fame of the Tielman Brothers; four brothers who as children had been celebrities in Indonesia with their band Timor Rhythm Brothers, named after their place of birth

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<sup>17</sup> For the most thorough historical analysis, see Mutsaers' *Rockin' Ramona* (1989).

(Tielman 2006).<sup>18</sup> After 1964, the role of these early rock innovators was soon forgotten, with bands such as the Beatles, the Stones and the Mersey Beat in general inspiring a new sound in the Dutch music scene. According to Bennink (2008: 348), it would take until the 1980s before their key position in the Dutch music scene was acknowledged by both the own Indisch cultural elites as well as the larger Dutch audience.<sup>19</sup> Many of the Indo bands would be (financially) more successful in Germany where they played at night- and army clubs, where many black US soldiers were stationed.

With the decline of *indorock*, Indisch performers would, for a time, be less visible and many of them were absorbed into ordinary *Dutch Beat* (Nederbeat) bands. What remained was the soft pop of female singers such as Lydia and Anneke Grönloh. Grönloh was not only popular in Germany, but also in Asia, with the newly founded nation of Malaysia even willing to use her hit song *Brandend Zand* (Burning Sand) as a national anthem (Van Leeuwen 2008: 80). Together with the Blue Diamonds, Grönloh would even undertake a Southeast Asian tour during which they were used by the new state propaganda machine of the Suharto regime. The 1960s marked a rapprochement between Indonesia and the Netherlands. A reconciliation that had previously been noted by the pianist Alex van Amerongen who, in 1964, visited Indonesia for the first time to give some concerts. He experienced a heartfelt welcome in the new republic and met with (especially Chinese Indonesian) music lovers who, in spite of their recent experiences, still felt a continuity in the cultural relationship with the Netherlands. In the tumultuous years after the war, a number of orchestras had been disbanded and many musicians had gone abroad, as Van Amerongen remarked, but he also noted the well-intended efforts by Jakarta's governor Sadikin, who founded the new arts centre Taman Ismael Marzuki, named after the freedom fighter and renowned composer Ismael Marzuki.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> It is no coincidence that Van Leeuwen (2008: 96) brands the fame of Indo rock, with its firm roots in the colony, as a typical postcolonial phenomenon and in fact (part of) the last outburst of Indisch orientalism.

<sup>19</sup> Van Leeuwen (2008) describes this revival of Indische nostalgia in the 1980s, which again would not pass without controversy. Wieteke van Dort had a hit song with 'Arm Den Haag', but was accused by many in the Indische community of cheap exploitation of Indische sentiments; heated debates over her minstrelsy act Tante Lien added to the schism between *totok* and Indo.

<sup>20</sup> See the *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant* of 28 June 1969.

*Travelling Sound*

Many have commented on how the recognition of an Indisch identity in the Netherlands has, in fact, hindered reconciliation with present-day Indonesia, preferring to deal with sentiments at home rather than to keep in sync with modern day developments in the former colony. As a result, the current fourth generation of repatriates in the Netherlands still has, as Oostindie (2010: 241) notes, a nostalgic longing for what had been Indië and a 'vague Asian sentiment', rather than an engagement with contemporary Indonesia. Another often ignored engagement is that of people of Javanese–Surinamese descent. This group, the majority of whom are Surinamese Asians, identifies more with the source regions (India, Java), rather than with Suriname itself, and it has a somewhat neglected status both in scholarly work on Indonesia and the West Indies. Consequently, its musical contributions to Indonesian Dutch musical encounters has been little studied (but see the extensive bibliography by Gieben and IJzermans 1990).

Javanese–Surinamese are a separate ethnic group, present in Suriname since the 1890s, ever since they first arrived as contract workers from what was then still the Dutch East Indies. Whereas nowadays part of their descendants live in the Netherlands, and a few have returned to Indonesia, estimates suggest that the Surinamese-Javanese population currently numbers over 70,000 people, with a similar amount of people being of mixed Javanese descent. The performing arts are indispensable in terms of making sense of Suriname's melting pot of cultures, as Annika Ockhorst illustrates in her description of the Surinamese Doe Theatre. Exploring the multicultural practices of the Surinamese Doe Theatre Company, and in particular the recurring Javanese cultural elements in the group's performances, she demonstrates how the company promoted mutual understanding and Creole cultural nationalism.

Among the Javanese–Surinamese, *krontyong* (as it is spelled here) is still popular; but importantly, its lyrics are not in Malay, but rather in Javanese. Different from Indonesian or Indo renderings of the genre, in Suriname it has evolved from relaxed easy listening music into music to dance to (Cotino and Karijopawiro 2000: 112).<sup>21</sup> In the 1970s, the popular-

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<sup>21</sup> This is due to the multiple use of electronic instruments, but also to a lack of knowledge among Surinamese sound technicians, as some Javanese complain. Thus, the genre is said to lose subtlety, but gains in sensual pleasure as couples are seen to embrace each other on the dance floor dancing to *krontyong*'s sounds (Cotino and Karijopawiro 2000).

ity of the genre intensified, partly due to its coverage by the newly established Surinamese TV and, importantly, tours by the Indonesian artists Waldjinhah and Mus Mulyadi to the South American country. The Indisch dancer Indra Kamadjojo, famous from the Dutch TV series *De Stille Kracht*, also toured Suriname in those years. However, from the 1970s onwards, and different from the Indisch community in the Netherlands, the Indonesian motherland would increasingly become a source of inspiration. A 1999 show by a local Javanese celebrity, Didi Kempot, paved the way for a new commercial genre of pop Jawa; a style lately referred to as *Surja pop* (sometimes spelled ‘suryapop’), acknowledging both its Surinamese and Javanese roots. *Surjapop* shows how musical encounters are no longer favouring purist approaches, but instead are increasingly favouring new hybrid genres. Of course, this is hardly a novel phenomenon and the search for ever new articulations of old and new, the traditional and the familiar, with alien and new sounds may be seen as inherent to the music industry.

Indonesian musicians, and especially those of Moluccan descent have, as Spoorman argues, always been at the forefront of the Dutch music industry, starting with the *kroncong* fame of George de Fretes and Lou Lima in the 1970s and 1980s, and the success of Moluccan ensemble Mas-sada and pop singer Daniel Sahuleka, whose 1978 song ‘Don’t Sleep Away the Night’, topped the Indonesian charts for weeks. Spoorman describes how these successes resulted in a new found Moluccan pride and a call for emancipation that was often sonically articulated. The late 1970s quest for a new Moluccan identity can be found most clearly in the Amsterdam Moluccan Moods concerts of the early 1980s, which propelled Spoorman’s own Moluccan Mood ensemble into the public eye.

Moluccan emancipation took place against a wider sociocultural background. The 1979 Rock Against Racism concerts sparked interest in the new niche market of world music, which had been founded in London by those involved in the recording business (see Frith 2000). Moluccan artists, including the likes of Maurice Rugebregt and Monica Akihary would successfully make use of this new marketing label, experimenting in combining traditional and new pop sounds with a definite Moluccan appeal. Fridus Steijlen’s account of the H-Gang musical collective should likewise be situated against the new sociocultural and political climate of the 1980s. This was an era that saw massive demonstrations against the nuclear bomb, the emergence of the multicultural movement and the organization of a broad Leftish social movement that sympathized with those oppressed in countries such as Palestine, South Africa and



Indonesia. By examining some of the H-Gang's lyrics, Steijlen explains the shifting political and emancipatory interests of a new Moluccan generation, which no longer aspired its own independent republic, but finally seemed to have settled in the Netherlands. It was food, poetry and particularly music which reminded the Dutch audience of its colonial legacy that was now fully celebrated in Eurasian festivals such as the *Pasar Malam Tong Tong* or *Winternachten*, but was increasingly also contested by a new generation that refused to be stuck in the past and self-consciously restyled themselves as Indo 2.0 (Van Leeuwen 2008).

### *An Open World*

Much has happened since the first VOC elites set foot on the Indonesian coasts, bringing with them their musicians from the West. The days that Javanese and Butonese court performers mimicked the newly discovered musical spectacle are long gone and other powerful and modern sources of inspiration are now being tapped. At the remains of Fort Vredenburg, a Dutch fortress built in colonial times in Yogyakarta, techno, trance and so-called tripping parties, that have little to do with the historical setting of the place, are organized.

Returning to some of the questions raised at the beginning of this introduction one may wonder what has happened to Dutch music and its appreciation in present day Indonesia. A quick glance at the entry for 'Dutch Music' on the Indonesian language version of Wikipedia is as sparse as it is telling.<sup>22</sup> Included among the groups mentioned here are the Golden Earring and Kayak, both of 1970s fame, and surprisingly enough, Dutch thrash metal band Pestilence, which shows how musical taste has moved on over the last few years. Among those individual 'Dutch' artists still known to Indonesians are Yogya-born Frank Noya, who starred as the bass player in the Dutch children's television series *Ome Willem*, and Dinand Woesthof, Indo lead singer of the famed Hague rock band Kane.

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<sup>22</sup> And yet it is not the whole story as one of our reviewers rightfully pointed out. The interest of Indonesian youth in contemporary Dutch culture may be bigger than acknowledged in the Netherlands or generally and goes beyond the impact of specific individuals, such as some of the Indo musicians mentioned here. Consider, for instance, the interest in studying in the Netherlands and learning Dutch language and culture through institutions such as the Erasmus Huis. We are also well aware that new technologies, especially the Internet, currently provide a platform for new ways of intercultural collaboration, of which the impact on music in both countries remains as a focus for further research.



Not surprisingly, the list also includes Jos Cleber, the Dutch musician who in 1948 left for Indonesia to establish the Cosmopolitan Orkest at the Radio Batavia premises; a unique ensemble that lived up to its name as its members stemmed from ten different nationalities. It was Cleber who was approached in 1950 by the then director of RRI Jakarta Studios to arrange the Indonesian national anthem, much to the disdain of Soekarno who had hoped for a new musical heritage unspoilt by colonial influence (Van Putten 2008). And then there is a wide open world of music that is more marginal to the mainstream entertainment business, such as jazz, dance music (with Dutch DJ Tiësto regularly performing in Jakarta clubs) or punk, all genres with an outspoken outward look.

It may seem a poor harvest, but then one has to remember that most of the musical encounters described in this book have never been an exclusively Indonesian Dutch affair.<sup>23</sup> Van de Wall's songs were played in Germany, France, the UK, and by French Canadian Eva Gauthier (Cohen 2011). Jaap Kunst, who coined the term ethnomusicology and made the performance of gamelan music an inherent part of his students' training, inspired his most famous pupil, Mantle Hood, to engage in similar bi-musical practices in the US, triggering in its wake a new tradition of gamelan in US academia. Much of the work by Indonesian, Dutch and Indisch musicians dealt with in this volume has always been torn between Indocentric performance and a cosmopolitan syncretism, both of which are characterized by many of the popular entertainment genres in early Java, Bali, Sumatra and elsewhere.

In a world of increased traffic, migration and tourism, fed by constant media flows, Indonesian Dutch musical encounters are no longer restricted to many of the places mentioned throughout the introduction. Indeed, Stokes (2004) mentions gamelan music, probably due to its use of universally graspable interlocking techniques, as one of the musical genres that has proven to travel very well across cultural boundaries. Early encounters have internationalized and a new tradition has blossomed, resulting in an international gamelan network with its own journals and festivals. These musical encounters can be seen as 'contemporary articulations of cosmopatriotism' (De Kloet and Jurriëns 2007: 17), referring to the interplay 'between (being pushed toward) globalism and (being tugged at by) residual particularism' (Chow 2007: 292). The cosmopatriotic point of

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<sup>23</sup> See the radio programmes Joss Wibisono made on this topic for the Indonesian broadcasts of Radio Netherlands Worldwide (Wibisono 2010a and 2010b).

view forces us to focus on the different spaces that such music engages with, as Jurriëns and De Kloet insist on ‘thinking and feeling simultaneously beyond and *within* the nation’ (De Kloet and Jurriëns 2007: 13). The concept is also applicable to the comparable openness to both cosmopolitan and local musics in Indonesia in the 1920s and 1930s, and again in the early independence period.

Attending the 2010 workshop were a number of representatives of the new international gamelan scene such as Klaus Kuiper and Jurrien Sligter, both of the internationally-renowned ensemble Gending, radiophonic and electronic music composer Jos Jansen, Sinta Wullur, who experimented with both a chromatically tuned gamelan as well as a fusion of gamelan, Sundanese music and Indian sounds, and cross-cultural fusion specialist Renadi Santoso. These individual performers and composers and their groups not only tour the world, including Indonesia, but also regularly invite Indonesian artists to visit the Netherlands in order to share their musical knowledge.

Download and digitization, combined with an interest in cultural heritage and history, increasingly leads to more frequent and increasingly complex musical encounters. Illustrative is a YouTube video named *Desaku* (My Village of Birth);<sup>24</sup> a ‘white man’s rendering’ (*versi Bule*) of an Indonesian children’s song of the same name, showing three Dutch girls and set to a background of the atmospheric Dutch countryside. They sing and perform the Indonesian lyrics, much to the amusement and admiration of Indonesian surfers who leave their often enthusiastic comments about the clip. Many musical encounters, varied in sort are yet to come and scream for our attention.

Music acts as a sonic monument, resonating encounters. It offers a window to vibrant presents and longed for pasts, and through its study we claim attention to now often scattered cultural contacts, proving them to be at once inspiring and enriching. This book then bears witness to the dynamics of this mutual heritage – and aims at broadening discussions on colonial and postcolonial migration and its legacies and the role culture, more specifically musical encounters have played in all of this.

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<sup>24</sup> [www.youtube.com/watch?v=HkTgAYUjQHE&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HkTgAYUjQHE&feature=related), last accessed January 2012.

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## CHAPTER TWO

### PHOTOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATIONS OF THE PERFORMING INDONESIAN

Liesbeth Ouwehand

#### *Introduction*

Colonial-era images of Indonesians making music, or performing, usually depict recognizable 'exotic' themes, such as a 'the' *ronggeng* dancer in front of a gamelan orchestra or children playing *angklung* in the vicinity of Lake Bagendit. Photos that are categorized as so-called type photography. Generally, in the nineteenth and early twentieth century these type images were made by professional European photographers, since the average inhabitant of the archipelago did not own a photo camera. The images were sold to European and Eurasian 'consumers'; tourists, for example, who bought photographic souvenirs at photo studios. From around 1920 onwards we also find snapshots taken by the spectators of performances themselves, amateurs who had their own camera. However, the focus in this paper will be on photos taken between 1870 and 1910 and therefore the snapshots have been left out. Images of the performing Indonesian were also made in aid of research. These photos ended up in books and articles and some were even published as separate volumes. These images are the visual result of a musical encounter. The images seem unbiased, and therefore very helpful in the support of research reports. However, photos are not as objective as they seem: personal choices, technical limitations and physical circumstances determined how the performing Indonesian was photographed.

The photographs of musical acts tell us something about the appreciation of the performing Indonesian by the viewers. How highly the performing Indonesian was appreciated was strongly linked to the context of evolutionism prevalent at that time. In short, evolutionism postulates that societies develop from savageness through various intermediate stages to a more civil or modern society (Kuper 1993: 1–5). European societies were considered civil and therefore taken as a frame of reference. As Hight and Sampson (2002: 1) note, the images of colonial subjects envision racial



inferiority and fascination. Racial inferiority is strongly linked to the idea of evolutionism. In photography, 'exotic' subjects are portrayed as primitive and thus inferior. Mydin (1992: 249–252) describes the fascination of Europeans with, for example, type photography, as a fascination for the culturally different or the exotic. Through this exoticism European consumers and photographers culturally distanced themselves from the portrayed subjects. In short, photos of 'exotic subjects' showed the savageness and picturesqueness of inhabitants of the Netherlands Indies. Early examples of photos of primitive inhabitants as study material are the so-called anthropometric images; people photographed standing next to a measuring staff. Anthropometric photos did not depict any features of the subject's environment.

For different reasons, performers in the Netherlands Indies were not depicted next to a measuring staff. Instead, their pictures were taken either in studios or outdoors, in their own context. Usually, the performing Indonesians were photographed fully attired. In general, the images were taken by European photographers. As a result, they determined what aspects of (musical) performances were included and what was left out.

The encounter with the 'exotic subject' could be a hazardous undertaking. According to Portman (1896: 77), a photographer always has to ask the following question: 'In what grade of civilization and friendliness are the people he is going to study?' He even gives some photographic advice:

With regard to the photographing of savage races the following hints may be of use. It is absolutely necessary to have patience with the sitters, and to be in no hurry.

If a subject is a bad sitter, and you are not using a hand camera, send him away and get another, but never lose your temper, and never show a savage that you think he is stupid, or, on the other hand, allow him to think that, by playing the fool, he can annoy you, put off your work, or that to stop him you will be willing to bribe him into silence (Portman 1896: 76–77).

As mentioned above, photos of performing Indonesians were used by both consumers and scholars. I will focus on the encounter between the performing Indonesian and the European and/or Eurasian observer (embodied by the scholar), consumer and photographer. Unfortunately, there is little information available on how the musician or performer between 1870 and 1910 experienced the interest from the European world. However, reports and comments by Europeans and/or Eurasians relaying the reception of the performances do exist. The topic of appreciation will be approached from two angles: scholarly interest in local musical



performances and the consumption of music by a broader public. As will become clear later, the cultural context of the performances was important in research reports in order to make a musical encounter easier. The photographs in these reports show lesser-known performances and are meant to support the scholarly descriptions. Whereas in musical shows for a broader public, the cultural background was hardly touched upon, the cultural distance between performer and public was maintained. These encounters resulted visually in anonymous performing type photographs.

In 1942, ethnomusicologist Jaap Kunst gave a lecture entitled 'The appreciation of exotic music through the ages' (*De waardering van exotische muziek in den loop der eeuwen*). According to him, music from the Far East was not widely appreciated among western listeners, since their ears were not used to these 'strange' or exotic musical expressions (1942: 6). In his lecture, Kunst focused on the reception of Indonesian performing arts, mainly in Java. Kunst cited many Dutch comments on Javanese music and dance. The earliest quotes date from the end of the sixteenth century. Often the performances were looked down upon and were not positively received. The gamelan, for example, was described as soporific (Kunst 1942: 24). Thus, in general, scholars were not very interested in these performances. Up until around the 1880s, the performing arts in the Archipelago were not systematically studied. Moreover, handbooks on the history of music hardly paid any attention to 'exotic' music (Kunst 1942: 25–26). According to Kunst (1942: 28), Isaac Groneman was one of the first scholars and observers who, together with the musicologist J.P.N. Land, studied the gamelan and its tonal system in Yogyakarta extensively and systematically. The result of this study was published in 1890. In the appendix of the book, transcriptions of gamelan pieces in western musical notation are given. The first publication by Groneman on performing arts was published two years earlier. It is a photographic album on court performances in the *kraton* of Yogyakarta. This album can be seen as an early example of an encounter between a scholar and performing Indonesians.

#### *Fascination for the Kraton Performances*

Groneman worked as a physician for the sultan of Yogyakarta, Hamengkoe Boewono VII. He was greatly interested in Javanese (court) culture and history and published many books and articles concerning these

topics. Groneman was one of the founding fathers of the *Archaeologische Vereeniging* (Archaeological Association) established in 1885 in Yogyakarta. In the *kraton*, he met the Javanese court photographer Kassian Céphas. The publication of the album *In den kĕdátan te Jogĵákártâ; Oepâtjârâ, ampilan en toneeldansen* in 1888 was one of the first projects that Céphas and Groneman worked on together. The sultan gave Céphas permission to make a collection of photographs on the court dances. In the introduction to the booklet that accompanies the album, Groneman mentions that Céphas made more than sixteen images; however, due to high production costs only sixteen pictures are included. Because of these financial restrictions, Groneman chose to give a general overview of court dances rather than a complete review of a few performances (Groneman 1888: 6).

Groneman carefully described the various types of court dances. He divided the dances into three groups, namely dances of the *bedoyo*- and *serimpi*-dancers, the *ringgit tiyang* (*wayang wong*) and the *beksan* (a type of dance with a martial theme). The dances were accompanied by a gamelan orchestra. During festive occasions, court performances were held and some were even attended by European guests (Groneman 1888: 17–19). Each of the sixteen plates is individually described. In his explanations, Groneman paid attention to the mythical themes, sequences of the dancers, fine costumes, symbolic items used on stage, the gamelan and singing, etc. Groneman set out to document the Javanese court performances as objectively as possible in order to understand performances in Java. These performances, according to Groneman (1890: 25), had reached the highest level of development in Yogyakarta.

Even though Groneman described the performances as objectively and neutrally as possible, we can read between the lines of a number of comments, which tell us something about the appreciation of the Javanese court performances. Interestingly enough, Groneman's evolutionistic and subjective remarks are rather positively expressed. In the introduction of the booklet he stated that, even though the plastic arts in Europe are more highly developed than the arts in the Netherlands Indies, the music in the Netherlands Indies is more sophisticated than is generally assumed in Europe (Groneman 1888: 3–4). This was caused by the fact that people in Europe had problems understanding Javanese music, since it differed so greatly from music by Bach or Beethoven. Groneman admitted that although he had been living for more than fifteen years in the vicinity of the *kraton*, he still preferred music by Bach. However, this did not mean that Javanese music was less developed than music in the west

(Groneman 1888: 4). Groneman does not use the term 'exotic' in his books, probably because he was used to the sounds of the gamelan, since he had been working in the *kraton* for such a long time. However, by comparing Javanese music to European musical highlights he was clearly distancing himself culturally from the Javanese performing expressions.

With the publication of the book, Groneman hoped that readers would be more interested in attending Javanese performances. According to him, it was impossible to show the impassioned movements of the dance in photographic stills. In addition, it was also impossible to see the way that the dancing and the singing form a unity. Therefore, in order to appreciate and understand these performances, watching a live show was essential (Groneman 1888: 55–56).

Going back to the photographic sources, it would be interesting to see whether the appreciation described by Groneman is shown in the portraying of the performances. Obviously, Céphas was limited by the technological photographic possibilities of his time. For technical reasons, such as a longer shutter speed, it was not possible to photograph the performers in action. Consequently, we only see a scene of action. In his booklet, Groneman mentioned twice that for technical reasons yellow *boreh* paste was not applied to the face, neck and feet of the dancers (Groneman 1888: 9, 26). Usually the dances by the *bedoyo* and *serimpi*-artists were performed in the throne hall of the *kraton*. In order to avoid the use of magnesium light, photographers had to take pictures outdoors. Groneman (1888: 21) mentioned that for photographic reasons the musicians and dancers were shot in a more spacious part of the courtyard. The gamelan [image 2.1], for example, was shot in the part of the court that was called *pelataran*, east of the dining hall and south of the southeast corner of the *tratag bangsal kentjana* (Groneman 1888: 21).

The descriptions of plate VIII and IX [image 2.1 and 2.2] show that Groneman was very decisive on what was to be included and which aspects were to be excluded. Plate VIII shows the *serimpi poetri Tjina*. The moment of the fight between Adaninggar and Kelwaswara was chosen because the Chinese costume was shown well. In addition, Groneman mentioned that this dance in particular shows the eloquence of Javanese art (Groneman 1888: 31–32). Plate IX [image 2.1] depicts the gamelan *salendro*. Groneman (1888: 37) wrote that the food and incense offerings, usually offered before the start of a performance, were not included in the image. This is probably because the photos were not shot at the time of an official performance, but rather were set at a different moment.



Image 2.1 The gamelan *salendro* in the kraton (plate IX) (KITLV 11569).



Image 2.2 Serimpi's dancing the story of Adaninggar (plate VIII) (KITLV 11568).

It is striking that the photos are very staged and aesthetic. One might even compare the photos in the courtyard, where the courtyard functions as a neutral background, with photos shot at studios. Each image was carefully composed by Céphas; the performing dancers and musicians are portrayed in an artistic manner. This way of portraying seems to underline the appreciation Groneman had for Javanese dance and music. The album, together with the booklet, gives the impression that Céphas and Groneman show 'authentic' and objective images. However, it becomes clear from Groneman's photographic comments that the photos are not objective representations of court performances. The photographs depict, for European consumers, the unknown world of court performances; the images show 'exotic' dancers and musicians. In this sense, Groneman and Céphas emphasized the exoticness and difference – the picturesque. However, it would be interesting to know whether the way the performers were depicted is in accordance with Javanese aesthetics at that time, since Groneman and Céphas could only work with permission of the sultan. In addition, as a Javanese, Céphas probably worked within a Javanese aesthetic framework.

With the publication of the album, Groneman aimed at a broader European and Eurasian public, both in the Netherlands and in the Netherlands Indies, in order to make the encounter between the European viewer and Javanese performer easier, so that the viewer would get a better understanding of the Javanese dance and gamelan music. Groneman's album was published in Leiden, but it is not known how it was received in the Netherlands and in the Netherlands Indies. I have not found any articles in Dutch newspapers on the publication. The *Java-Bode* from the 21st of November of the same year announced the publication of the album. According to the newspaper, the album is a marvellous piece of work in which Groneman makes clear that the performances are highly developed and of which 'we' do not have the slightest notion. In one of the regions outside Java, the so-called Outer regions, scholars also documented performing arts. A.W. Nieuwenhuis was one of the first to make a systematic study of various Dayak groups. Music and dance were one of the topics that were studied.

#### *Nieuwenhuis' Musical Explorations*

Nieuwenhuis worked as a physician for The Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (*Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger*; KNIL). In 1893, he was a



participant in an expedition to Borneo, in which he combined his medical background and his interest in anthropology. However, due to hostilities in the inner lands the expedition was cancelled. A new attempt was made in 1896, this time with Nieuwenhuis as the expedition leader. This expedition was more successful. Between 1898 and 1900, Nieuwenhuis led a second expedition in Borneo. He recorded the results of both these expeditions in two books entitled, *In Centraal Borneo: Reis van Pontianak naar Samarinda* (In Central Borneo: A journey from Pontianak to Samarinda), published in 1900. A more extended German-language version of the publication came out between 1904 and 1907, with the title *Quer durch Borneo: Ergebnisse seiner Reisen in den Jahren 1894, 1896–1897 und 1898–1900* (Across Borneo: Results of his journeys in 1894, 1896–1897 and 1898–1900).

The aim of the exploration was to undertake a research study of the customs and traditions of the Borneo people and to collect scientific material. The study was sponsored by the *Maatschappij tot Bevordering van het Natuurkundig Onderzoek der Nederlandsche Koloniën* (The Society for the Promotion of the Physical Research of the Dutch Colonies). Nieuwenhuis also tells us that there were political and economic grounds for the expedition (Nieuwenhuis 1904: 1).

The expedition travelled from the west to the east, since Nieuwenhuis expected difficulties in the east with the Malay people living in Kutei. They travelled up the Kapuas and then moved to the river basin of the Mahakam (Nieuwenhuis 1904: 7). Nieuwenhuis' respectful approach to the Dayak guides and people in the inner lands probably helped him gather the data and made the explorations successful. Nieuwenhuis, for example, did not ignore Dayak beliefs in bad omens.

Most of Nieuwenhuis' writings focused on activities and religious ceremonies that were closely connected to the agricultural calendar. Dance and music played a role in the rituals, held during religious feasts and celebrations. Nieuwenhuis set his observations of Dayak groups within an evolutionistic framework. In the introduction to the German edition, he stated that his experiences in Borneo did not correspond with general European assumptions that the character of the Dayak people was bloodthirsty and wild. On the contrary, they belonged to the most 'kind-hearted, peaceable and fearful people of the world' (Nieuwenhuis 1904: 3). He linked the stages of development of the various groups to their natural environment. Some habitats, such as swamp areas, had a negative influence on the development. Despite the fact that some of the natural circumstances were unfavourable, Nieuwenhuis was impressed by the artistic level which manifested itself in their feeling for form, colour

and decoration (Nieuwenhuis 1907: 279–280). Moreover, he recorded that the Borneo people's sense of art (*Kunstgefühl*) was more developed than 'more civil societies'. Nieuwenhuis found proof for his statement in the decorative ethnographic objects that he had collected (Nieuwenhuis 1907: 235–236).

The observations in Nieuwenhuis' report were relatively unbiased; he gave a descriptive and systematic account of his experiences. In his publications we find numerous photographs made by Jean Demmeni during the travels. The images underline the observations. In the Dutch edition of the publication there are a few photos of ritual dances and some pictures of musical instruments. The images depicting musical instruments,



Image 2.3 Man playing the *kledi* (mouth organ) (KITLV 25720).



Image 2.4 Kayan women dressed as men dancing during a sowing feast (KITLV 25674).

such as image 2.3, are not explained in the text. Demmeni's photos of the dances, however, are explained. Image 2.4 for example depicts Kayan women dressed as men performing a mask dance during sowing feasts (Nieuwenhuis 1900b: 37). In the German edition of the report Nieuwenhuis added some personal comments on these dances. Even though the 'shapeless figures hid some very important women', the European observers were distracted by the young women in *hudo adjat* costumes (Nieuwenhuis 1904: 328). On another occasion, Nieuwenhuis mentioned that only two or three women of the group knew how to dance. They were the only ones who made good movements. These motions were understood by the observer, who was used to *Indische* (as in Javanese) dances (Nieuwenhuis 1900a: 187). Javanese dances are mentioned more than once as a term of reference. According to Nieuwenhuis, Uniang, a Kayan woman, danced the *Hudo lakeuj* (a mask dance) in 'the real Indies way' (Nieuwenhuis 1904: 330). The fact that Nieuwenhuis apparently had seen Javanese dances helped him appreciate the unfamiliar 'exotic' performances in Borneo.

Demmeni encountered photographic problems on more than one occasion. It was preferable to photograph during the day. However, that was not the time when the dances were performed and/or music was



made. This implies that the images we find in the reports were made at a different moment. But, as Nieuwenhuis (1900b: 36–37) explained, it was virtually impossible to take photos of dancers in action, since they would not stand motionless for a moment. Other photographic problems that they had to overcome had to do with people's fears. In the Bahau area, for example, inhabitants were afraid that if they were photographed their soul would leave their body, which would cause illness and death. Or that the soul of a person and the soul of the image would be swapped. The soul would travel with the explorers and, as a consequence, Nieuwenhuis could somehow influence the photographed person (Nieuwenhuis 1904: 314). In addition, factors that could not be influenced, such as the weather, spoiled chances to take useful photographs. Thus, the possibilities of making photos in order to illustrate Nieuwenhuis' observations, had more to do with chance and coincidence than with a well thought-out plan.

When we look at the images depicting people making music, the images are either portraits [images 2.3, 2.5, 2.6] or they are part of a scene illustrating daily activities such as cooking or shaving [images 2.7, 2.8]. The *kledi* (mouth organ) is an instrument that is frequently depicted. Nieuwenhuis clarified (1907: 143) that the *kledi* is only played by men. Image 2.3 shows how the *kledi* was held (Nieuwenhuis 1907: 143). The instrument accompanied, for example, the weapon dance [image 2.5] (Nieuwenhuis 1907: 132). But, as can be seen in the photo, the young man holding the *kledi* does not hold the instrument in the same way as the player of image 2.3. It is probable that the *kledi* player is sitting in a squatting position for the sake of the photographic composition, so that attention is drawn to the well-dressed dancer. The young Kayan woman depicted in image 2.6 holds a stringed shield. According to Nieuwenhuis (1907: 141), this woman was very talented and greatly admired. Nieuwenhuis (1907: 141) did not give the indigenous name of the instrument. He explained that the shield was used while reciting stories. Recitals usually took place on the big veranda of a house. Brief descriptions are also given of the bamboo flute, the mouth harp and the guitar [image 2.9]. However, only the mouth harp and bamboo flute were photographed 'in action' by Demmeni [image 2.8].

The ways the performing inhabitants are portrayed correspond with the sober and relatively neutral way in which Nieuwenhuis described the performances. Although it was a first musical encounter for him, he refrained from any subjective remarks. As previously mentioned, Demmeni had to deal with technical photographic limitations. The fact that dances were shot during the daytime makes this very clear. In addition,



Image 2.5 Man performing a weapon dance accompanied by a *kledi* player (source: Nieuwenhuis 1907, opposite page 132).



Image 2.6 Young Kayan woman playing a stringed shield while reciting stories (KITLV 25661).





Image 2.7 *Kledi* player in front of a pot in which rice is cooked (KITLV 25799).



Image 2.8 Man is being shaved, while a man and a woman are playing the flute and the mouth harp (on the left) (Nieuwenhuis 1907, opposite page 146b).

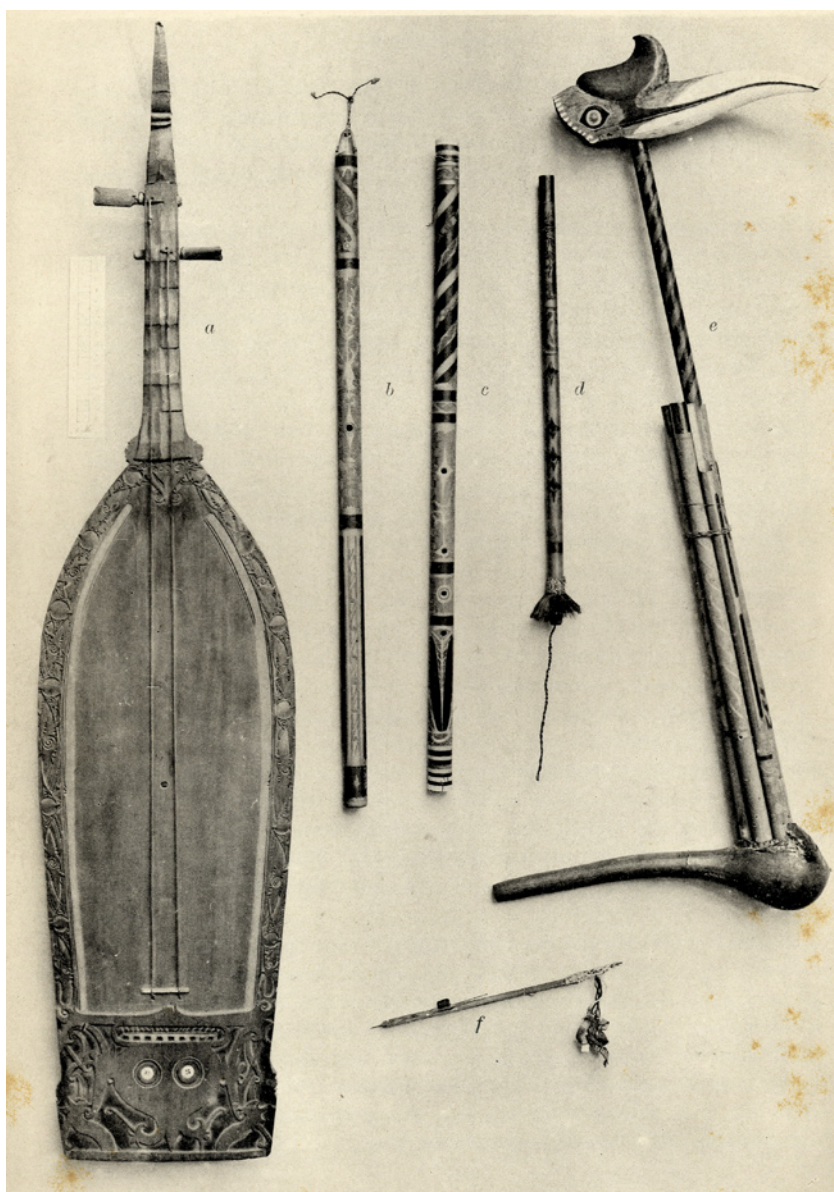


Image 2.9 Musical instruments from the Bahau region (source: Nieuwenhuis 1907, opposite page 145).

when we look at image 2.3 it becomes apparent that it is probably not an actual performance of a weapon dance accompanied by a *kledi* player, since the *kledi* player does not hold the *kledi* in the right way. Thus, the photos depicting performances were staged and not as objective as they seem. Just like the photos by Céphas of court performances, Demmeni showed the 'exotic' and 'unusual' Borneo inhabitants. The picturesque-ness in Demmeni's photos goes even further than that of Céphas' depictions. Demmeni portrayed disciplined colonial subjects, who were not as wild as was generally assumed. The publication of the photos in Nieuwenhuis' books provided Europeans with an opportunity to become visually acquainted with exotically portrayed inhabitants of Borneo.

Commercial photographs of Indonesians making music aimed at Eurasian and European consumers. These photos were bought as souvenirs at photo studios, and ended up in private collectors' albums.

#### *Collecting Commercial Representations*

*Cartes-de-visite* (visiting card photographs) are a nineteenth-century example of photos that were bought at commercial studios. Depicted on these *cartes-de-visite* are anonymous portraits, Indonesian craftsmen and different types of people. For the interested buyer, the images were timeless. According to Mydin (1992: 250), they showed ideal-types in pure form.

There are also *cartes-de-visite* with a musical theme, bearing images of *gambang* and *rebab* players and gamelan orchestras [image 2.10, 2.11]. In general, these type photographs were taken in a studio and were sold to, for example, travellers. These images are not linked to live performances on a specific date; tourists did not buy these *cartes-de-visite* as a souvenir of a musical encounter at a certain event.

Commercial photographs that were made in connection to a specific performance do exist, such as photos that were taken at world exhibitions in Europe and the United States. Images of performing Indonesians were also made at fairs, or *pasar malam*, in the Netherlands Indies. The atelier of the late Kurkdjian<sup>1</sup> made various photos of Indonesians performing during the *pasar malam* held in Surabaya in 1905 and 1906.

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<sup>1</sup> Armenian photographer Onnes Kurkdjian, based in Surabaya, opened a studio in 1890. After his death in 1903, his atelier continued as a limited company (Wachlin 1989: 122).





Image 2.10 Man and woman playing the *rebab* and *gambang* in Java (KITLV 32145).



Image 2.11 Dancer posing with a small orchestra in Java (KITLV 32147).



The fairs in Surabaya were organized on the initiative of a civil servant, J.E. Jasper, who worked as an inspector of police (*controleur voor de politie*) in the same city. Jasper published many articles on different subjects and was very interested in the development of indigenous arts and crafts (Brinkgreve and Van Hout 2005: 112). The organization of the fairs was connected to the so-called ethical policy (*ethische politiek*) which aimed at improving the economic position of Indonesians. As Jasper (1906a: 3) stated in the introduction to the report of the *pasar malam*, the fair aimed to enlarge the consumer market for various crafts and to encourage craftsmen to produce objects on a regular basis.

The fairs were held from 14–21 May 1905 and 6–13 May 1906 at the military terrain in front of the Kemajoran mosque. Products made by various local craftsmen from different regions within the Archipelago were exhibited and sold at both fairs. In order to exhibit the arts and crafts in a systematic way, Jasper classified the various submissions by material, such as copperware, batik, pottery, etc. Recreational activities were also organized, in order to attract a lot of visitors. In the report by Jasper and in various newspaper articles these activities were called *volksspelen* (folk games). For the most part, these games consisted of performing arts. It was at the Surabaya fairs that European and Eurasian visitors were entertained with ‘exotic’ forms of music and dance and had the opportunity to become acquainted with these forms.

Javanese gamelan, *topeng*, *wayang* and *kuda kepang* were performed at these fairs. From Madura a *sanduran* troupe was sent in. A *gandrung Bali* group and Balinese *gambuh* played too. At the fair in 1906 a Sundanese and a Minangkabau martial arts group were added to the *volksspelen* program. And a *cakaiba* group from Ambon also gave performances in the same year.

The annual reports and newspaper articles about the fairs provide us with extensive descriptions of the shows, which include explanations of the movements, costumes and musical instruments. Thus, the performances were ‘visualized’ in text. In addition, the various newspaper reports of both fairs were written down like a walk through the exhibition terrain. The performances were not so much reviewed; rather, the journalists took the readers on a tour of the exhibited products and various acts. This, of course, brought the events alive for those readers who were unable to attend the *pasar malam* in Surabaya, making it possible for them to visualize the celebrations.

Both the reports by Jasper (1906a and 1906b) and the newspapers are very positive about the performances originating from Madura and

the Outer regions, but less so of those of the Ambon *cakaiba*. This positive focus on shows from the Outer regions demonstrates that, in fact, more attention was paid to plays from these regions than to Javanese performances. The Minangkabau, Madurese and Balinese plays were the most frequently mentioned. This can probably be explained by the fact that the Javanese performances, like *wayang topeng*, were known by the average spectator. The *Nieuwe Soerabaja Courant* (13 May 1905), for example, used the words ‘ordinary *wajang* and *tandak*’, when reporting on the Javanese performance. According to Jasper (1906b: 135), the Minangkabau act was a great success. Their art of fencing performance, which consisted of a series of continuous movements, was very interesting and different to the Sundanese way of fencing (Jasper 1906b: 129). At the 1905 event, the two Balinese dancers of the *gandrung* drew a full house [image 2.12], largely because the dances were unknown (Jasper 1906a: 44). The daily paper *De Locomotief* (9 May 1906) reported that the instruments of the *gandrung* Bali ‘make a deafening sound, odd music, which is necessary for the accompanying of strangely dressed up dancers’. Thus, the novelty and the exoticness of the acts, such as the Minangkabau and Balinese groups, made the performances attractive happenings during the fairs. Interestingly enough, the descriptions of the performances suggest that the reporters are looking for recognizable aspects, especially in dance. Jasper (1906b: 130–134), for example, used the word *tandak*, a type of Javanese dancer, when describing the movements of the Minangkabau *mencak* (martial arts). The use of the word *tandak* helped to explain the lesser known movements of the Minangkabau *mencak* to the European reader or observer.

So, how were these performances received by the European visitor to the *pasar malam*? The daily *Nieuwe Soerabaja Courant* (8 May 1906) was the only paper to carry a report by an Englishman who visited the fair, O. Fitzwilliams. Fitzwilliams was most impressed by the Balinese *gandrung*; according to him ‘something special is performed, which cannot be compared to any other Eastern music or dance’. Fitzwilliams also noted that the Balinese dancers were clearly different from Javanese women, although women from both regions lived under the equator. The Balinese dancers and musicians showed a lust for life; ‘the dances are much wilder and the music is like a whirlwind’. Even though Fitzwilliams has never seen an Acehnese dance, he is convinced that there must be a similarity between the Acehnese and Balinese character; namely their independent attitude. It is not surprising that Fitzwilliams tried to explain the character of the Balinese *gandrung* in terms of retaining inde-



Image 2.12 Balinese *gandrung* at the *pasar malam* in Surabaya (KITLV 10834).

pendence. The Dutch government were still struggling to bring Bali and Aceh under their control at that time. In another Surabaya newspaper, the *Soerabaiasch Handelsblad* (8 May 1906), the differences between the Javanese and Balinese performances were also explained in terms of folk character. The Balinese reportedly played more passionately and with more temperament; whereas the Javanese *wayang*, for example, showed the calmness of the Javanese character.

As mentioned above, the newspaper articles on the fair in Surabaya were not written as reviews. Consequently, it is difficult to uncover exactly what the visitors thought of their musical encounter at the fair. In most instances it was probably a first encounter. The articles differentiate constantly between the European and indigenous (*inlands*) spectators. Before and during the fair, Europeans were encouraged to visit the *pasar malam* in order to watch the performances. Both the *Nieuwe Soerabaja Courant* and the *Soerabaiasch Handelsblad* (8 May 1905) mentioned that attending the folk plays would be interesting for the European visitor from an ethnographical point of view. During the fair days, however, it was so crowded with Indonesian visitors that it was very difficult for the Europeans to watch the performances (*De Locomotief*, *Soerabaiasch Handelsblad*, *Nieuwe Soerabaja Courant*); no special shows for European

visitors were held. As a result, it was decided that a separate evening would be organised at the theatre in Surabaya in the final days of the 1906 *pasar malam*, on 15 May, where all the musicians and dancers would perform for about ten minutes (Jasper 1906b: 14–15). The programme of this evening was published in the above mentioned newspapers. The *Soerabaiasch Handelsblad* (8 May 1906), however, was critical of this separate event; ‘an idea that we are not very keen on’. It is not known why the reporter was not fond of the extra performance. According to a reporter of the *Nieuwe Soerabaja Courant* (15–16 May 1906), the happening in the theatre was an occasion that should not be missed; not attending the performance would be a mistake. The *gamelan* and the dancers were described as something from another world. The dances, the martial arts and the music made an indelible impression on the reporter. The visitors to the theatre must have been deeply impressed, according to the journalist. ‘If someone failed to take his chance to see something authentic and naive, we would like to ask him what he longs for in order to experience some variation in life, if something like this leaves him cold’.

It becomes clear that there were various ways in which Europeans could ‘consume’ the ‘exotic’ performances of the fair in Surabaya. First, by reading the descriptive reports in the newspapers. Second, by taking in a live encounter at the fair or in the theatre. In order to hold on to the impression that was experienced during the fair, spectators could also buy images made by the Kurkdjian Studio. These images, which illustrated the official reports by Jasper (1906a and 1906b), confirm the success of the fairs, as it were. S.C. van Musschenbroek, administrator of the Tjomal sugar factory in Pekalongan, bought an album with a total of 33 photos at the Kurkdjian Studio. Possibly, Van Musschenbroek purchased the photo album as a souvenir, after visiting the fair. Twenty images depict Indonesian crafts and thirteen photos depict the various performances. The album is a photographic account of the fair, comparable to the walks through the *pasar malam* terrain reported in the newspapers.

Some images were made in the studio; other performers were photographed at the site of the *pasar malam*. The photos taken at the studio depict Javanese *wayang topeng* [images 2.13–12.14] and the Bali *gandrung* dancers [image 2.15]. Image 2.12 shows the same Balinese dancers in action at the *pasar malam*. It is not known why certain performers were also photographed at the studio. One possible answer is that the focus in these images is clearly on the costumes, whereas the photos taken at the fair seem to focus on the act as a whole.





Image 2.13 Studio portrait of a *wayang topeng* player (KITLV 10857).



Image 2.14 Studio portrait of two wayang topeng players (KITLV 10859).



Image 2.15 Studio portrait of Balinese *gandrung* dancers (KITLV 10858).





Image 2.16 *Kuda kepang* performance at the *pasar malam* with the audience on the left (KITLV 10840).

The photo of the *kuda kepang* [image 2.16] gives a small glimpse of the Indonesian spectators attending the performance. The photo shows that the observers stood at a close distance to the performers. The dancers and musicians were not playing on a separate stage. The images taken at the *pasar malam*, such as the photograph of the *gandrung* Bali [image 2.12] or the Madurese dancers [image 2.17], give the impression that the performers were photographed while performing. However, for technical photographic reasons, this is not very likely. Thus, like the photos taken by Céphas and by Demmeni, the images of the Kurkdjian Studio are also staged. Unfortunately, it has been impossible to find any information on the circumstances in which the photos of the *pasar malam* were made. However, the photos seem to underline the known and the exoticness of the performances and, therefore, appear to connect with the way in which the acts were reported in the newspapers. The photos of the *pasar malam* are like the *cartes-de-visite*; they do not depict individuals, but rather types of craftsmanship and performing arts. Themes that had commercial value. In order to make the photos saleable objects, the Kurkdjian Studio had to make depictions that would appeal to the European buyer, such as Van Musschenbroek. The photos of the performances, therefore, are not objective representations; they show the picturesqueness of the





Image 2.17 Madurese dancers at the *pasar malam* (KITLV 10833).

‘exotic’ dancers and musicians. It was possible for the European visitor to buy souvenirs of their musical encounters, by collecting photos depicting the various performing arts.

### *Concluding Remarks*

Images made in the aid of research, such as the photos by Demmeni and Céphas, as well as photographs of the popular *pasar malam*, presented the performing Indonesian to the outside world. When the various photos of performing Indonesians are compared, it becomes clear that the images are the result of a one-way encounter. The photos are either a result of a meeting between a European scholar accompanied by a professional photographer or the product of an encounter between a professional photographer who made commercial photos of popular acts. The commercial images are aimed directly at European and Eurasian consumers, whereas photos such as the images by Céphas and Demmeni became visible to the outside world after publication.

The *cartes-de-visite* and the photos taken at the fairs depict stereotypes or recognizable ‘exotic’ themes, which would appeal to European

consumers. The images by Céphas, however, portrayed the less known 'exotic' court performances. These court performances were not open to everyone; they could only be attended at certain times and only at the invitation of the sultan (Groneman 1888: 19). The photos by Demmeni depict unknown 'exotic' Borneo dancers and musicians.

The performing arts and music in both the scholarly studies and the newspaper articles about the fairs are documented in a descriptive way. The descriptions of the plays at the fairs are like taking a walk through the *pasar malam* terrain, with a focus on movements and costumes. No background information or cultural context was given on which performances were attended. Dance and music were systematically described by Groneman and Nieuwenhuis. They believed that this allowed them to determine the level of development in the societies concerned. Interestingly, even though both Groneman and Nieuwenhuis set their reports within an evolutionistic framework, they both strike an optimistic tone. Groneman stated that the Javanese music was more highly developed than was generally assumed in Europe (Groneman 1888: 4). Nieuwenhuis made similar remarks when describing the artistic level of the Dayak groups (Nieuwenhuis 1904: 3). The reports on the shows at the fairs were less clearly embedded within an evolutionistic framework. In part, this has to do with the fact that the performances were not systematically studied; they were not part of a scholarly report. Moreover, the entertainment aspect was more important. The positive statements had more to do with the fact that performances such as the acts of the Minangkabau and Balinese dancers and musicians were rare in Java. As stated above, the 'consumption' of an 'exotic' performance at the *pasar malam* was largely seen as a special chance for Europeans to watch various plays. Both Jasper (1909: 49) and Groneman (1890) stated that one had to learn to appreciate Javanese performances, like *wayang wong*; the more Europeans attended these plays, the more they learned to appreciate them.

With his study, Groneman aimed at making the musical encounter between the European viewer and Javanese performer easier, so that the viewer would better understand what he saw. Groneman focused on one aspect of court culture. Nieuwenhuis aimed at a better understanding of Dayak groups in general. Music and dance were one of the many topics touched upon. The performances were described as part of a wider context, the context of the agricultural calendar in which rituals played a big part. Nieuwenhuis devoted only seven pages in the two German volumes to describing the singing and musical instruments. Europeans were sup-

posed to have a greater understanding of the inner lands of Borneo after reading the richly illustrated reports by Nieuwenhuis. An actual encounter between Europeans and Dayak was only possible for Europeans working in Borneo at that time. Moreover, attending performances in the inner lands was almost impossible.

The musical encounters are also visually represented. The way the performances are portrayed by Céphas, Demmeni and the Kurkdjian Studio seem unbiased. However, the images emphasize the exoticness and otherness of the dancers and musicians, thus the picturesqueness. The photographers decided how the performing subjects were to be photographed, which concrete aspects of an act were to be depicted, and which aspects were to be left out. The photos by Céphas in particular show that each photographic representation is carefully composed; it is not unimaginable that the sultan had a say in this process, since Céphas and Groneman could only work with his permission. However, whether the sultan influenced the portraits of the album or not, is not known. As can be read in the reports by Nieuwenhuis (1900a, 1900b, 1904 and 1907) and by Groneman (1888), the photographic choices that were made had to do with, among other things, personal preferences, technical limitations and physical conditions. As mentioned above, I could not find any information on the circumstances under which the *pasar malam* images were made. However, since the photos had to have commercial value, these images also had to meet certain requirements, such as a focus on cultural difference and the picturesqueness, both of which were appealing to European and Eurasian consumers. These requirements and choices make the photographic representations of the Indonesian performers less objective.

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## CHAPTER THREE

### 'QUEEN WILHELMINA, MOTHER OF THE MENTAWAIANS': THE DUTCH NATIONAL ANTHEM IN INDONESIA AND AS PART OF THE MUSIC CULTURE OF SIBERUT

Gerard A. Persoon

#### *Introduction*

On the 10th of May 1932, the *Wilhelmus* officially became the Dutch national anthem. Before this date, in addition to the *Wilhelmus*, the song *Wien Neêrlands bloed* was also widely used as a kind of national song. The Dutch government took the decision to end a long debate about the status of the two songs, both of which were being used as national anthems during official occasions. In fact, for some time, *Wien Neêrlands bloed* had been more popular than the *Wilhelmus*, particularly among Catholic people in the country. The official decision, taken in The Hague, not only had implications for the Netherlands, it also changed the position of the song in the Dutch East Indies, as well as in Suriname and the Dutch Antilles. Indeed, from 1932 onwards, the *Wilhelmus* also became the official national anthem in the colonies. Before that time, the song was well known in the Dutch East Indies in a variety of versions and it was often sung on the anniversary of Queen Wilhelmina.

Surprisingly, little has been written about the life history of the song in the colonies. In general terms, the song was never controversial in Suriname or in the Dutch Antilles because of a general sympathy for the monarchy and the lack of strong nationalistic feelings before World War Two (Oostindie 2006). In the Dutch East Indies, however, this situation was radically different. Here, the status of the *Wilhelmus* became a 'hot' issue and a lack of respect for the Dutch national anthem was punished. Consequently, the song became a crucial element in the struggle of Indonesian nationalists.

The life history of the *Wilhelmus* is quite complicated. Its wording, melody and its official status has changed over time. There is a substantial amount of literature on the history of the *Wilhelmus*, including its controversial status. In fact, the biography of the song is a fascinating story (Grijp 1998). At the same time, it is somewhat surprising to note that little

is known about the use of the national anthem in colonial times or in specific local contexts within the Dutch East Indies.

Along with the establishment of colonial government structures, including its military power, the Dutch introduced aspects of their music culture into the Dutch East Indies. Numerous musical encounters have taken place between Dutch people and Indonesians over time. They occurred within diverse contexts ranging from showing off military force supported by impressive and powerful march music during parades, to classroom settings, religious gatherings and informal encounters between individuals. It is clear that these encounters have influenced the various musical traditions of Indonesia, including its songs and musical training, in a number of ways (Gommers-Dekker 2011). I want to begin this contribution on the 'social life' of the *Wilhelmus* in Indonesia with an account of one such unexpected encounter, which happened long after Indonesian independence.

#### *A Musical Encounter*

It was some time in the early 1980s when a strong, middle-aged Mentawaiian man, sitting on his veranda in Maileppet (Siberut Island, West Sumatra), sat upright and announced that he was going to sing a song for me, which had been taught to him by his teachers in the late 1930s.

He sang:

Bilemurai Nasau  
 Jermani asangku  
 Ku kasi blandari  
 kau seinga asangku  
 Ku tuani orang  
 demerdeka branila  
 Selalu rajaku  
 kasi blandari  
 Rimata Bilelimi  
 kau seingga asangku  
 Ku tuani orang merdekaan lai  
 Ku kasi blandari<sup>1</sup>  
 [My translation]

*In translation:*

Wilhelmus of Nassau,  
 I am of German origin  
 I surrender to the Dutch  
 And to them I belong  
 I respect the people  
 of freedom and courage  
 I will always respect  
 the queen of the Dutch  
 To *rimata* Wilhelmina  
 I will belong  
 I respect the people of freedom  
 I will surrender to the Dutch<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Track can be found on CD *Songs from the uma* (Persoon and Schefold 2009) as track 22 on CD1.

<sup>2</sup> My translation. Some of the original words in the Mentawaiian translation must have been changed over time. The word *Bilemurari* in the first line is most likely a corruption of the word *Wilhelmus*. The Queen's name *Wilhelmina* was transformed over the years into *Bilelmi*.

After the first few tones, I recognized the Dutch national anthem. Surprised by hearing this song at that time and at that place, I started to wonder: How did this song survive for more than forty years on an isolated Indonesian island, which the Dutch had left in 1942? How can a man, who never learned to read and write, still sing the song in such an articulated way? Was he singing the song especially for me, because of my Dutch origin?<sup>3</sup>

I had never realized that there were localized versions of one of the core symbols of another people's national identity. And, if the song had been locally adapted on Siberut, was this also true of other places in Indonesia? Finally, why would someone even try to remember a song that had almost certainly been forced upon him by colonial rulers?

### *The Singer: Asak*

The singer of the *Wilhelmus* was a man called Asak. He regularly sung the song during my various periods of fieldwork on Siberut between 1979 and 1998. I have made numerous recordings of his songs, including several versions of the *Wilhelmus*. Asak was an elder of the Maileppet group, an hour's walk from Muara Siberut. He was a well-respected medicine man (*kerei*) and a key figure in the community. Though he and his wife did not have any children of their own, he had raised five children belonging to his brother, who had passed away at a relatively young age.

Though Asak had attended a missionary school for a couple of years, he never practiced the reading and writing that he had learned at this time. He informed me that he had learned the song when he went to the missionary school in Malupetpet near Muara Siberut during the late 1930s and until the Japanese occupied Indonesia in 1942. The Japanese also established a military post on Siberut, which ended the Dutch occupation. Asak had been recruited as a kind of local policeman by the Japanese, who also taught him some Japanese words and a couple of songs, which are still part of his repertoire.<sup>4</sup> The Dutch never returned to Siberut after the end of the Japanese occupation in 1945.

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<sup>3</sup> From 1979–1982 I worked on Siberut for the implementation of a project for Survival International aimed at the improvement of livelihood opportunities for the local population. Since then, I have worked and conducted anthropological fieldwork during extensive periods.

<sup>4</sup> Song 23 of CD1 on the album *Songs from the uma* (Persoon and Schefold 2009) is an example of a Japanese song.





Image 3.1 Asak performing a ritual after construction work at his house (photo by author, 1981).



Asak always recounted how this song was sung during flag raising ceremonies at the open field in Muara Siberut. He would sit upright and change his voice as if this was a song from a different world and a different era. As one of the few living former pupils of the missionary school, it was always a remarkable moment when he sang the *Wilhelmus*. Though Asak had an enormous repertoire of songs to sing, he could always be heard singing the *Wilhelmus* during a gathering, when people would just sing their favourite songs, despite it constituting a somewhat strange element of the music culture of the island.<sup>5</sup>

### *Music Culture of Siberut*

Siberut has an interesting music culture. It has a variety of musical instruments, including a number of drums, flutes, shells, bells, gongs and Jew's harps. The wooden dance floor of the communal house is also used as a rhythm instrument. Most of the instruments are locally produced and are made of wood, bamboo, animal skins, and triton shells. Bells and gongs made of brass had to be imported through relations with Minangkabau traders because the Mentawaians never developed the art of metallurgy. The Jew's harp was originally made of bamboo, but the Dutch brought metal versions to the islands, which have now completely replaced the original ones.<sup>6</sup>

Songs are the most important element in the music culture of the people of Siberut. There are various genres of song texts. First, there are the *urai silange* or *urai siokko*, literally boys' songs or girls' songs. They are self-created songs about daily matters, about social relations, about love and love affairs. Frequently, they are about special events that inspire young people to compose a song. The lyrics can be about almost anything: the arrival of a new trader or teacher in the village, the sight of a beautiful animal, the activities of the logging company or the misbehaviour of one of the *uma*-members, who are usually referred to by their own names. In

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<sup>5</sup> In June 2009, just a few weeks before we organized a big gathering in Maileppet to present two CDs of Mentawaiian music, to the original singers and other villagers, Asak passed away. He must have been in his eighties at that time.

<sup>6</sup> There are a few publications on the music of Siberut. See Schefold (1973) for an article on the slit drums and the drum language. Persoon and Schefold (1999) discuss a number of song texts from Siberut. The discography on the island's music consists of the following: 1. Duran (1989), 2. Yampolsky (1995), 3. Schneemann (2003) and 4. Persoon and Schefold (2009).

principle, anybody can compose such a song, but once a song is there, it can be sung by everybody, irrespective of age, gender or status. Songs are learned through careful listening and repetition, and only spread through oral transmission. If the theme, words, and melody of a song are appealing, it can spread rapidly across the island. In this way, songs tell a story or reflect on a particular event. In some cases, different songs texts are used with the same melody. The lyrics and the melody are composed by individuals. The songs are usually sung during the evening while smoking, chatting or 'just sitting in the wind' on the veranda of the communal house. But, they may also be sung while canoeing on the river, while working in the forest fields or while minding the pigs. Other people attracted by the song might pick up the lyrics and add it to their own repertoire. They learn the songs by listening carefully and learning the rhythm and lyrics by heart. Consequently, there is much improvisation in the texts and the wording is often slightly changed from one occasion to the next.

A second category of songs, the *urai turu* ('dance songs') are sung while dancing. One of the dancers sings along while the drums are played, and he and the other dancers move around the dance floor in circular movements, rhythmically stamping on the boards of the dance floor, which produces a counter sound to the beat of the drums. The songs, which are often difficult to hear with all the other noise going on, are about animals and animal behaviour in which birds and primates take a prominent place. Dancing is done by both men and women. Together with the beating of the drum, the stamping of the feet makes the dancing an inciting event which sometimes leads to a trance. Someone takes the lead in the dancing movement while the others follow, making the same movements.

A third genre of songs consists of the *urai kerei*, the songs of the shamans or *kerei*. These are complex songs because they are phrased in a special language of which many words are not known to the general audience. They are basically a medium for the shamans to communicate with the spirits, and not, as with the other songs, to tell a story or to communicate a feeling of joy, love or fear.

A fourth category of songs are songs that have been introduced by external parties, of which the *Wilhelmus* is a clear example. In the past, teachers working in the missionary schools introduced Dutch songs. Minangkabau traders and teachers have brought general Indonesian and Minangkabau folk songs to the island and, via radio and television, a great variety of modern songs have been brought to the local communities in more recent times. Radio/cassette players have become popular since logging companies became active on the island in the late 1970s. Young male

Mentawai workers were often paid in kind: radio/cassette players and Seiko 5 watches were among the most popular luxury items, in addition to cigarettes and foodstuff. More recently, video and karaoke-players have become very popular.

### *Colonial Influence on Siberut*

Dutch colonial rule was established on the Mentawai islands rather late. In the eighteenth and nineteenth century occasional visits were made to the islands but a military post was not established on Siberut until the beginning of the twentieth century, located about 90 kilometres from the mainland of Sumatra. Initially, the post was founded near the mouth of the River Saibi, but due to a lack of fresh water it was transferred to Muara Siberut. During this period, the main policy was to establish law and order in the area. The suppression of headhunting was among the major issues at that time. A small military garrison travelled across the island, ordering people to cease the practice of this custom. At the same time, the government appointed local headmen in each settlement, which usually consisted of only one extended (patrilineal) family group, called *uma*. These men received a jacket and a cap as symbols of their new position. In reality however, these positions had little effect and the village headmen never enjoyed a great deal of authority. Mentawai society was, and to a large extent still is, egalitarian.<sup>7</sup>

In order to start the civilization process, the German Rheinische Mission was invited to start its missionary activities on the island, as Dutch missionary organizations had expressed little interest in working on these islands. It all started on the southern Mentawai Islands of North and South Pagai. At the end of 1901, missionary A. Lett was appointed in Sikakap, the main village on the island. A few years later, another missionary F. Börger joined him. In 1909 however, missionary Lett was killed by local people when he tried to intervene in a conflict between the Dutch commander and some villagers. It would take until 1916 before the first Mentawaians were baptized as the first Christians on the islands. In a settlement nearby Sikakap, in Nenemleleu, the missionaries had started a school for local children. In the first phase, only boys attended

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<sup>7</sup> There is a large number of publications on the culture of the island. For a description of the traditional culture of the Mentawaians, see Schefold (1988). For an overview of processes of change during the last few decades, see Persoon (1994).



Image 3.2 Group of Mentawaians around 1910. The man in the front is wearing his official outfit after having been installed as village head (source: picture collection Mrs. Ruinen).

classes. The mission also hired some Christian Batak teachers to educate the Mentawaiian children in reading, writing, geography, Malay language and religion. These teachers were recruited from the Batak traders who had established themselves on the islands. At a later stage, when more schools were founded on the islands, Batak teachers were recruited from Tapanuli in North Sumatra through the close relationship of the Rheinische Mission with The Batak Protestant Church (*Huria Kristen Batak Protestan*, the HKBP), church in North Sumatra. Hansen, who was the military commander on the Pagai Islands for about ten months (August 1911–April 1912), writes favourably about the receptiveness of the young Mentawaians to education, who rapidly learn how to read and write. He also makes a remark about their singing: ‘One who has heard the screeching and off-key singing of children at other native schools, will be surprised how rhythmically and purely the children sing’ (Hansen 1914: 218 [my translation]).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> ‘En wie het krieschend en valsch gezang van kinderen op andere inlandsche scholen heeft gehoord, dien valt het hier op hoe maatvast en vrij zuiver de kinderen zingen’ (Hansen 1914: 218).

Already in the early days of colonial and missionary activities on the island, a large repertoire of religious songs in their original German version and a small number of Dutch songs were translated into Mentawaiian. In 1909, a hand-written compilation of 63 songs by missionary Börger was available in the mission centre in Nenemleleu, near Sikakap on the island of Pagai in the south of the Mentawaiian Archipelago (Börger 1909). All the songs were all translated by the Batak teachers who were brought to Mentawai by the German missionaries via the German missionary stations in North Sumatra.<sup>9</sup>

### *The Wilhelmus in Mentawai*

The songs that were taught at the missionary school by the German and Batak teachers were mainly psalms and other religious songs, as well as a number of secular songs translated into Mentawaiian. The latter included songs such as *Wien Neêrlands bloed* and the *Wilhelmus*. Under the guidance of missionary Lett and later Börger, the Batak teachers must have adapted the Dutch songs to the local setting in order to make them more understandable for the local people.

This is evident from the fact that references were made to the islands of Mentawai and concepts like *rimata*, which means the ritual leader of the clan, and which in this case was used to refer to the Dutch queen as *Rimata Wilhelmina*. The text also included reference to the Dutch flag, Queen Wilhelmina, described as Mother of the Mentawaiians, the villages on the Mentawaiians islands, and praying to God. In a hand-written document, missionary Lett described how the *Wilhelmus van Nassouwe* was sung for the very first time to celebrate the birthday of Queen Wilhelmina when Governor Heekler visited Sikakap in the early years of the twentieth century. From what has been described above, it is clear that the indigenous music culture of the Mentawaiians did not avail of these kinds of official songs. People were also not used to singing in chorus. The first song played upon the visit of Heekler, *Wien Neêrlands bloed* was most likely the most official song as it is described as the 'flag song'.

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<sup>9</sup> A copy of this hand-written document was kindly given to me by Prof. W. Wagner of Bremen University. Prof. Wagner is the son of one of the German missionaries who worked on Sipora in the 1930s and 1940s.

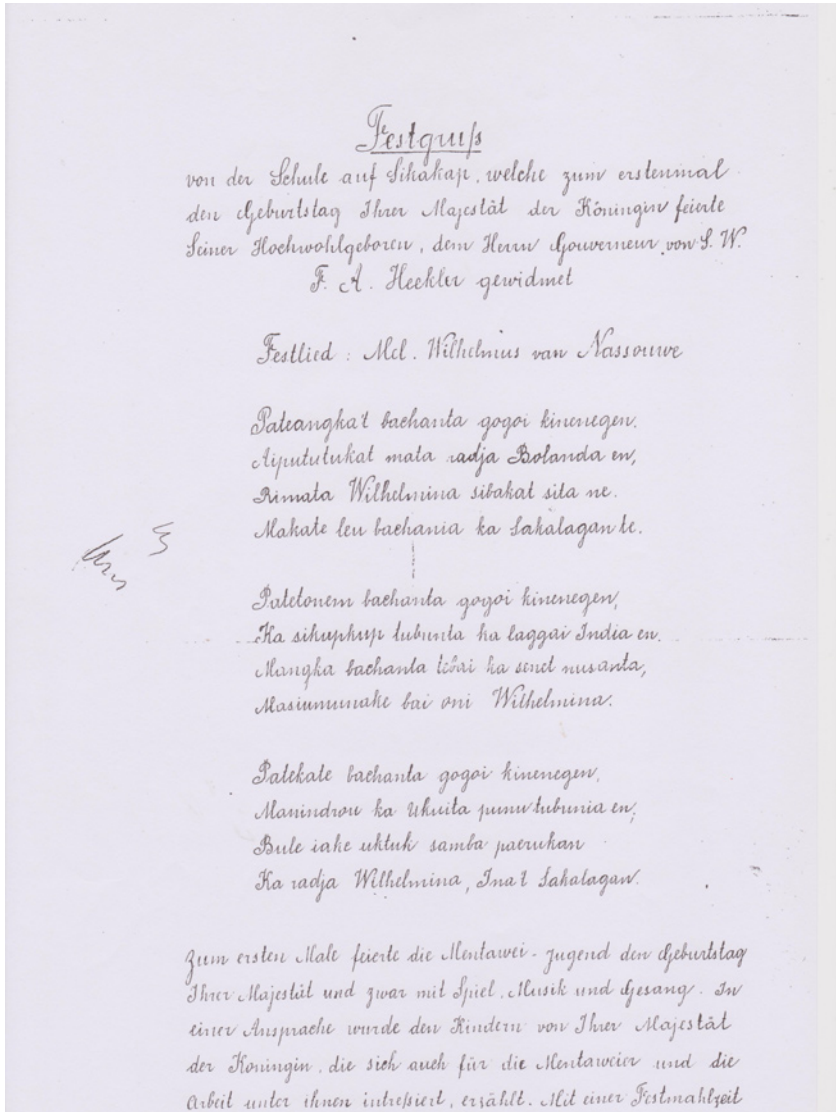


Image 3.3 A page of the account written by missionary Lett on the visit of Governor Heckler to Sikakap 1909.



Flag song (tune: *Wien Nederlandsch Bloed*)

| [Mentawaiian language]                                | [Dutch language]   | [English language]                                      |
|---|--|---|
| Kase si-itjo manderamai<br>Si teloe ngakomakan        | Wie onze vlag ziet<br>Met drie verschillende<br>doeken   | Whoever sees our flag<br>With three different<br>cloths |
| Boei ta iagai topitmai                                | Die wete, dat wij trouw<br>zijn                          | He will know, that we<br>are loyal                      |
| Masirendret tebai<br>ngantoman                        | Te gehoorzamen aan<br>de leer                            | And will obey the<br>teachings                          |
| Siaket kakai rimata                                   | Die ons geschonken is<br>door                            | That have been given<br>to us                           |
| Sipoeoni Wilhelmina<br>Sibakat sangamberi<br>noesa ne | Koningin Wilhelmina<br>Het hoofd van al deze<br>eilanden | By Queen Wilhelmina<br>The head of all these<br>islands |
| Sibakat Sakalangan te<br><br>Sibakat Sakalagan.       | Het hoofd der<br>Mentaweiers                             | The head of the<br>Mentawaians                          |
| Iangan te ne<br>manderamai                            | Dat is onze vlag   | That is our flag  |
| Sipoeoni Bolanda<br>Ke itjo ne sagakmai               | Ze heet Holland<br>Als onze vijanden die<br>zien         | She is called Holland<br>If our enemies see it          |
| Boei ta rapoeloto te nia                              | Zullen zij dezelve<br>vreezen                            | They will fear it                                       |
| Magege poi sidjago et                                 | Want sterk zijn hare<br>bewakers                         | Because her protectors<br>are strong                    |
| Salandroe sipoebetoeët                                | De soldaten met<br>geweren                               | The soldiers with guns                                  |
| Masikau loemoen<br>dili djondra et                    | Om straf te geven voor<br>hun slechtheid                 | To punish their evil                                    |
| Ka sipasiasa nene<br>Ka sipasiasa ne                  | Aan degenen die haar<br>bespotten                        | To those who mock her                                   |
| Tapoi ka kai<br>sipoenoesa ne                         | Maar wij die deze<br>eilanden                            | But we who live in<br>these islands                     |
| Samberi Skalagan<br><br>Koba kai koeitibai<br>nene    | bewonen, alle<br>Mentaweiers                             | All Mentawaians   |

| [Mentawaiian language]   | [Dutch language]   | [English language]  |
|--|--|---|
| Katet bacha ka<br>rimatakai  | Wij willen dit zeggen;   | We want to say this:  |
| Koetindrou kai ka<br>Oekoeita  | Uit liefde voor onze<br>Koningin   | Because of our love for<br>our Queen  |
| Sipoelaggai ka manoea  | Bidden wij onzen Vader   | We pray to our Father   |
| Masikau oektoek ka ina<br>laggai                                       | Die in den hemel<br>woont.<br>Dat Hij Zijn zegen moge<br>geven                         | Who lives in heaven<br><br>So that He will give His<br>Blessing                 |
| Siobanake noesamai   | [Aan de moeder van het<br>dorp – de Koningin –]<br>Die gegeven heeft aan<br>ons eiland | [To the mother of the<br>village – the Queen]<br>Who has given to our<br>island |
| Boele mabaoe aratmai.  | Vrede en nieuwe zeden.   | Peace and new customs   |
| Oto ke noe-itjo<br>maroembe  | Dus als ziet het<br>gedeelde (3 kleuren)   | So if you see the three<br>colours  |
| Manderata Bolanda  | Dat is onze Hollandsche<br>vlag  | That is our Dutch flag  |
| Boei ta noeroroi ma<br>Masikau tebai hormata<br>Ka mata't sibakat sita | Groet ze dan werkelijk<br>En bewijst haar eer<br>Want ons Hoofd is<br>namelijk         | Greet it sincerely<br>And pay respect to her<br>Because our Head is             |
| Radjanta et Wilhelmina   | Onze Koningin<br>Wilhelmina  | Our Queen Wilhelmina  |
| Sipoe-oekoe sangalio<br>Bolanda  | Die heerscht over<br>geheel Holland  | Who rules over the<br>whole of Holland  |
| Samba polakta India  | En over (onze aarde)<br>Indië  | And over (our land),<br>the Indies  |
| Sakalagan leuw bagai.  | En ook over de<br>Mentaweiers.   | And also over the<br>Mentawaians  |

Source: Hansen 1914, 147/8 [Mentawaiian and Dutch text in original, English text my translation].



The Queen's birthday (sung to the melody of the *Wilhelmus*)

| [Mentawaiian language] | [Dutch language]               | [English language]              |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Pateangkat bachata     | O, hoe vrolijk is ons hart     | O, how cheerful is our heart    |
| Gogoi kinenegan        | Op dezen dag                   | On this day                     |
| Ait poeioetokat mata   | Den geboortedag                | The birthday                    |
| Radja Bolanda en       | Van de Koningin van Holland    | Of the Queen of Holland         |
| Rimata Wilhelmina      | Onze Koningin Wilhelmina       | Our Queen Wilhelmina            |
| Sibakat sita ne        | Die ons Hoofd is               | Who is our head                 |
| Makate leuw bachania   | Die ook bemint                 | Who also loves                  |
| Ka Sakalangan te       | Der Mentaweiers                | The Mentawaians                 |
| Patetonem bochata      | Hoe vol vertrouwen in ons hart | Our heart is full of confidence |
| Gogoi kinenegen        | Op dezen dag                   | On this day                     |
| Ka sikoepkoep toeboeta | In degene die ons beheerscht   | In the one who rules over us    |
| Ka laggai Indoa en     | Die in Indië                   | All in Indonesia                |
| Mangka bachata tebai   | Vrolijk zijn allen             | Are happy                       |
| Ka senet noesata       | Op elk eiland                  | On every island                 |
| Masioe moenake bai     | Om te roemen                   | To praise                       |
| Oni Wilhelmina         | Den naam Wilhelmina            | The name Wilhelmina             |
| Patekate bachata       | Vol liefde in ons hart         | Our heart is full of love       |
| Gogoi kinenegen        | Op dezen dag                   | On this day                     |
| Minindrau ka Oekoeita  | Zodat wij onzen Vader bidden   | So that we pray to our Father   |
| Toenoe Toeboenia en    | Voor Haar                      | For Her                         |
| Boele iake oektoek     | Dat hij geve zegen             | So that he will give blessing   |
| Samba paeroekat        | En heil                        | And salvation                   |
| Ka radja Wilhelmina    | Aan Koningin Wilhelmina        | To Queen Wilhelmina             |
| Ina 't Sakalangan.     | De Moeder der Mentaweiers.     | The Mother of the Mentawaians   |

Source: Hansen 1914, 148 [Mentawaiian and Dutch text in original; English text my translation].

From the initial settlement in Sikakap, the colonial administration expanded its influence into the other islands of the Mentawai Archipelago, towards Sipora and Siberut. While the military commander took care of general administrative issues, including the suppression of headhunting, the Rheinische Mission started its missionary and educational work.

Little is known about the curriculum at the early missionary schools on Siberut. The general impression is that children never spent more than a few years in education. From what is known, one gets the impression that they never mastered reading and writing to any level of fluency and the Dutch language was not taught at all. The Batak teachers taught the children in Mentawaian and the Malay language. The songs that were sung were religious songs translated from German and a very small number of Dutch songs including the *Wilhelmus* and *Wien Neêrlands bloed*.

A school was built near Muara Siberut and children from there and nearby villages were ordered to attend. In the 1920s, an open prison was also established in Muara Siberut for criminals from Sumatra and Java. The risk of escape from Siberut was minimal. The movement of ships to Padang on the west coast of Sumatra was easily controlled by the colonial officials and fleeing into the interior was hardly an option as local communities would not welcome ethnic strangers in their midst. The layout of Muara Siberut at that time consisted of a quarter for the government buildings, with houses of the officials all along a straight lane lined with *kanari* trees, the prison complex, the missionary post (church, school and some houses), and finally a quarter close to the mouth of the river predominantly for Minangkabau traders and fishermen. A big open field was used for ceremonies, flag parades and the like. Old people on Siberut still remember such gatherings.

### *The Wilhelmus in the Dutch East Indies*

If the *Wilhelmus* was introduced in the Mentawai Archipelago in a local version at the very beginning of Dutch occupation of the islands, could it have a similar kind of history in other parts of the Dutch East Indies? And if so, how was it received and what has been the song's biography in those areas? These kinds of questions are easier asked than answered.

In the extensive bibliography on the *Wilhelmus* not much is found on its introduction and history in the Dutch East Indies (Grijp 1998). There is only one reference to the use of national anthem in the former colony and that is that it was strictly forbidden to sing the song in the Japanese camps. The Frisian anthem provided a good alternative because it was not known by the Japanese (Grijp 1998: 79). However, scattered in the extensive literature on the Dutch colonial era are some references to the *Wilhelmus* and the ways it was used. Sometimes the *Wilhelmus* is mentioned but only in passing (see for instance Coolhaas 1977: 76). Schulte Nordholt

refers a couple of times to the singing and playing of the *Wilhelmus* while passing through villages in Timor in the years after the end of the Japanese occupation.<sup>10</sup> But the song has rarely received explicit attention other than with regards to the resistance it met among Indonesian nationalists, as will be discussed later.

With the establishment and expansion of colonial occupation and the development of governmental structures, including its military power, the Dutch also introduced aspects of its official music culture into the Dutch East Indies. With the explorations and expansions of the VOC, the *Wilhelmus* travelled to distant destinations. Military attacks were often heralded with the powerful sound of trumpets blowing the *Wilhelmus*, soon drowned out by the sound of guns and canons (see for instance Knaap 2002: 272).

Brass bands, playing military music with their impressive and loud instruments were introduced in the Dutch East Indies, just as they were introduced in other colonies. Dutch music, songs, lyrics, rhythms, and instruments were also introduced into the archipelago through the educational system. A completely new religious music culture was brought from Europe to the archipelago via Catholic and Protestant missionary activities. So in the course of history, trumpets, a great variety of drums, cymbals, and organs were introduced into the archipelago. Initially, they were used mainly to accompany European music, but gradually they were also incorporated into more local forms of music. The reverse also happened. Local instruments were used to play music that originated from the West (see for instance Kunst 1994). It is mentioned, for instance, that during the celebration of the inauguration of Queen Wilhelmina in 1898 in Batavia, the *Wilhelmus* was played by a gamelan orchestra. Fifteen years earlier, when Wilhelmina was only three years old, a 'colourful group of Indonesians' played the *Wilhelmus* during the colonial exhibition in Amsterdam in 1883 on a gamelan and they sang in their 'native' language (Vis 1994: 66).<sup>11</sup> So apparently the *Wilhelmus* had been translated into

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<sup>10</sup> Mr. Nico Schulte Nordholt (personal communication) mentioned letters from his mother, which reference a number of occasions when the *Wilhelmus* was sung in 1947. See also Oostindie 2006: 100).

<sup>11</sup> Talusan (2004) describes an interesting parallel with the Philippine Constabulary Band performing successfully at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. 'Half-naked' Igorot tribesmen, often labelled 'headhunters', were juxtaposed with educated Filipino musicians who could apparently handle the military band instruments introduced by the Americans very well (Talusan 2004).

the Malay language, even though the exact wording of the translation is not known.

A crucial element in the 'ethical policy' of the colonial government, which was officially proclaimed in 1901, was the expansion of educational opportunities for the younger generation. Numerous schools were established throughout the country and because of the lack of qualified teachers in the East Indies, quite a number of teachers were recruited in the Netherlands to serve in the colony. By the 1940s, some 1.7 million pupils had passed through the various types of Dutch schools (De Jong 1984: 145). In terms of musical education in the early twentieth century, singing was an official part of the primary curriculum, in addition to Dutch language, reading, writing and arithmetic. A lot of attention was paid to the teaching of the Dutch language. Teaching in local languages and cultural traditions was allowed to some extent. Such teaching, however, should not be combined with nationalistic ideas. Teachers or students who promoted or were too outspoken about Indonesian nationalistic ideas faced punishment (Lelyveld 1992: 155).

The song book that was used in schools in the Netherlands was also introduced in the Dutch East Indies. This book, entitled *Als je nog zingen kunt, zing dan mee!* [*If you can still sing, sing along!*] was a collection of popular songs as well as some religious songs (Veldkamp and De Boer 1939). But it also included the official national songs, including the *Wilhelmus* and *Wiens Neêrlands bloed door d'aderen stroomt*. The book was published for the first time in 1908 and it initially comprised 50 songs. Over the years, the number of songs grew to more than 150. It was published in a large number of editions and it was the core element of musical education for Dutch children for a number of decades. Soon after its first publication it was also introduced in the Dutch East Indies. Thus, pupils attending the schools in the colony were taught the same songs as their peers in the Netherlands. Though not much has been written about musical education in the Dutch East Indies, the fact that this song book was the main source of instruction must have had an impact on the musical education of the Indonesian pupils: at the colonial school there was no room for Indonesian songs and no musical training in local instruments. It would take until 1939 before a somewhat modified 'Indische' version of *Kun je nog zingen, zing dan mee* was published. The aim of this special edition was to develop a collection of songs that would be more appropriate for the 'Indische school' than the version used in Dutch schools.

However, the number of songs which were considered more appropriate for the Indische school were limited. A number of songs refer to the landscapes in Indonesia, with its mountains and palms.<sup>12</sup> In some songs an Indonesian word is inserted in originally Dutch songs (examples include *kali* [river], *sawah* [rice field], *banjir* [flood], *senang* [happy], and *prahu* [dugout canoe] – written as *prauw*). Or, Indonesian names replace Dutch names in a rhythmic song like *Vier kleine kleutertjes* [*Four little infants*], which is now about Soemidjo, Soetidjo, Radiman and Sajidiman. Only one song refers directly to Indonesia. *Aan de Minahassa* is a song about the beauty of the Minahassan landscape: ‘*This is the land that I love.*’ Two songs deal with fire flies which do not exist in the Netherlands, but one of them is a modified version of a ‘Spring song’ about beetles. The last song in the book, called *Indië en Holland* is about the love for Little Holland (with the beauty of its flowering heath, its winter landscapes, but which lacks the splendour of the tropical vegetation and the rice fields). In spite of the splendour, the song refers to the intimate connection to ‘my country’. It is obvious from the text that the song is written from a Dutch perspective with a strong longing for the home country (Veldkamp and De Boer 1939).

In order not to change ‘too much at once’, a number of Dutch songs were kept in the ‘Indische’ edition, even though it was stated that they ‘belonged more to the Dutch environment’. In addition, the Educational Department issued an instruction that a number of songs were still compulsory material for pupils. Out of a total of 103, 11 songs belonged to this category. These songs (given with original authors’ names) were *Wilhelmus* (by Marnix van St. Aldegonde), *Neêrlands Volkslied*, *Vlaggelied* (Dutch Anthem, Flaggong by W. Smits), *Kent gij het land*, *De Zilvervloot*

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<sup>12</sup> For instance, song 103 is titled *Indië en Holland*. It compares ‘Little Holland with the Indies. Some lines read as follows: ‘Klein Holland, wat lig je daar verre, in streken van mistige kou. Soms weet ik niet, als ik mocht kiezen, wie of ik zou begunstigen. Klein Holland, je hebt geen vulkanen, geen bergstroom in gapend ravijn. Je ligt daar zo stil in de weide, vlak aan de rustige Rijn. . . . Klein Holland, je kent niet de weelde, de kracht van tropische groei. Je ziet niet de thee en de koffie, de noot en de peper in bloei. Geen bamboe met reuzige halmen, geen rijst op de sawah geplant. Toch denk ik hier onder de palmen, zo dikwijls terug aan mijn land’.

[In translation: Little Holland, lying far away, in misty cold regions. Sometimes I do not know, if I could choose, which I would favor. Little Holland, you do not have volcanoes, no mountain river in yawning ravine. You are lying there silently in the meadow, close to the quiet Rhine. . . . Little Holland, you do not have the abundance, the strength of tropical growth. You do not see the tea and the coffee, the nutmeg and the pepper while flowering. No bamboo with giant stalks, no rice planted in the fields. However I often recall my country while sitting underneath the palms (Veldkamp and De Boer 1939: 190)].

[Dost thou know the Country, the Silver Fleet by J.J. Viotta), *Een Draaiersjongen* (A Turner's boy, referring to the heroic deeds of famed Dutch admiral Michiel de Ruyter by R. Hol), *Een liedje van Koppelstok*, *Voor Nederland, Aan mijn Vaderland* (A Song of Koppelstok,<sup>13</sup> For the Netherlands, My Fatherland by G.H. Harting), *Wilt heden nu treden*<sup>14</sup> (Do come forward now, a so-called Valerius 'Gedenck-Clanck or Valerius Song), and *Hollands Vlag, je bent mijn glorie* (Dutch Flag, you are my glory, by J.P.J. Wierds). At the end of the preface, the editor states that in later editions more 'Indische' songs would gradually replace songs from the Dutch environment (Veldkamp and De Boer 1939). I have not come across later versions of this song book and it is unlikely that later versions were actually published in Batavia.

Finally, mention should be made of the very last page of the book. It is addressed to students who are about to leave school. They are urged to take good care of the book, which had now become their property. They should open the book often and sing the songs with their father and mother, with their brothers and sisters, and with their friends. They should sing them while at home or when in the fields. Keep singing them, for as long as you live, but most importantly... sing them beautifully! (Veldkamp and De Boer 1939). The question remains, to what extent this advice was put in practice.

### 1932: *Wilhelmus as National Anthem*

The little amount of attention for the *Wilhelmus* is somewhat surprising given that the song was a more or less compulsory element for the celebration of Queen Wilhelmina's birthday and after 1932, when the *Wilhelmus* also became the official national anthem in the Dutch East Indies, the song must have been played and sung many thousands of times during official occasions, at military parades, and so on. It was also taught in schools as part of the musical education of children, in which Dutch songs were often prioritized above local songs. In an interesting article by ethnomusicologist Jaap Kunst, it is stated that local singing cultures ran the risk of dying out completely as a result of a wrongly directed

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<sup>13</sup> Koppelstok was the name of a ferry man in the town of Brielle who helped the Protestants (the 'Geuzen') invading the town in 1572.

<sup>14</sup> This is a song to praise God for all the victories of Prince Maurits over the Spaniards (1597).

educational policy. 'Even in the public schools the children were taught exclusively European school songs. Dutch songs had taken root, like *Waar de blanke top der duinen* [Where the white top of the dunes], *Wij leven vrij, wij leven blij* [We live free, we live happy] and *Wien Neêrlands bloed door d'ad'ren vloeit* [Whose Dutch blood flows through the veins] (Kunst 1994: 73). The Japanese occupation in 1942 put an end to the teaching of Dutch language in schools. It also ended the singing of Dutch songs, and in particular the *Wilhelmus*, by Indonesian pupils. Their education was continued in the Malay language while Japanese language was introduced.

I have not come across any recordings of the *Wilhelmus* in the Dutch East Indies before the Japanese occupation. Indeed, the only recording of the *Wilhelmus* that I have found is one by a flute orchestra from Paperu, on the island of Saparua in the Moluccas, made in 1949 by a Dutch traveller named G. Hobbel, who recorded numerous songs in the area. The song had apparently survived the Japanese occupation and was played in combination with other Dutch songs (Spoorman and Kleikamp, CD Frozen Brass, 1993).

A remarkable moment in relation to the status of the *Wilhelmus* in the Dutch East Indies occurred during the World Championship Football in 1938 in France. Both the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies qualified for this tournament along with 14 other teams. Only three non-European teams participated (Dutch East Indies, Brazil, and Cuba). Both teams played only once as they were kicked out of the tournament after being defeated by Czechoslovakia and Hungary. At the beginning of both matches the *Wilhelmus* was played as the official national anthem of both 'football countries'.<sup>15</sup>

It is somewhat surprising to note that in spite of the official governmental decision taken in 1932 to select the *Wilhelmus* as the national anthem, *Wien Neêrlands bloed* continued to be referred to as the national anthem in the Dutch East Indies. Even as late as 1942, there was still a considerable lack of awareness in the colony that *Wien Neêrlands bloed* was no longer the official national anthem. It is also possible, of course that this decision had not been clearly communicated, or the decision may also not have been accepted as such by some parts of the Dutch community in the

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<sup>15</sup> J. van de Vooren, 'Nederlandse-Indië op WK Voetbal van 1938', <http://www.sportgeschiedenis.nl/2010/06/02/nederlands-indie-op-het-wk-voetbal-van-1938.aspx> (last accessed 30 December 2010).



East Indies. Even in the 1939 official version of the song book *Kun je nog zingen, zing dan mee*, the song *Wien Neêrlands bloed door d'adren vloeit* is still referred to as the national anthem, despite being placed after the *Wilhelmus*. Another example: 'Kring Batavia der Vaderlandse Club' published a small programme booklet on the occasion of 'Prinsjesdag'<sup>16</sup> on the 17th of September 1940 with five songs. The last of these songs was announced as the national anthem ('volkslied') but it referred to *Wien Neêrlands bloed door d'aadren vloeit*. The other songs were *Wilhelmus van Nassouwe*, *Mijn Nederland (Waar de blanke top der duinen)*, *Hollands Vlag*, and *Een Lied van Nederland (Alle man van Neêrlands stam)* (Kring Batavia der Vaderlandsche Club 1940). It appears that the *Wilhelmus* was kept as a national song of great importance in the Dutch East Indies, but it was not always referred to as the national anthem.

#### *The Wilhelmus and the Indonesian Nationalists*

For the Indonesian nationalist movement the playing of the *Wilhelmus* at the celebration of Queen Wilhelmina's birthday, during military parades, flag raising rituals and all kinds of other official celebrations, must have been a source of irritation and political frustration. In particular, the idea of nationalism was greatly stimulated among young Indonesians after a now famous meeting of the youth congress held in Batavia on the 27th and 28th of October 1928. The congress, which was organized by representatives of the main youth organizations, bridged narrow ethnic divisions. It was also during this congress that the famous 'Youth Pledge', *Sumpah Pemuda*, was proclaimed. This pledge stressed Indonesia's common history and the collective desire for nationhood on the basis of 'one nation, one people, one language' (Legge 1972: 97–98). It was during this congress that the Indonesian anthem *Indonesia Raya* was played for the first time. This song, composed by Wage Rudolf Supratman, was chosen as the national anthem for the nation-to-be by the entire congress. It was to replace the *Wilhelmus* or *Wien Neêrlands bloed*, the national anthem of the colonizers. Interestingly, President Soekarno is claimed to have insisted that *Indonesia Raya* should sound more or less like the *Wilhelmus*;

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<sup>16</sup> 'Prince's Day is the day on which the reigning monarch of the Netherlands addresses the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament. The Speech from the Throne sets out the main features of government policy for the coming parliamentary session (<http://www.minbuza.nl/en/you-and-netherlands/about-the-netherlands/>, last accessed February 2012).

it needed to sound ‘plechtstatig’ (solemn) (Winarno 2003: 56–57).<sup>17</sup> Later, the Indonesian national anthem was reorchestrated by the Dutchman, Jos Cleber, who was sent to Indonesia in 1948 (Gommers-Dekker 2011).

From that moment onwards it must have been increasingly frustrating for the nationalists to be repeatedly confronted with the Dutch national anthem. Over the years, more and more people refused to sing the anthem at official occasions. The revolutionary thinker and writer Jef Last is one of the few people to explicitly write about this phenomenon. The suppression of the communist rebellion on Java and Sumatra in November 1926 and January 1927 and the way some of those involved were punished made a great impression on Last. Some of the rebels were executed for their part in the insurgency and thousands of communists from all over the archipelago were sent to the Boven-Digoel prison camp, deep in the jungle of Southwest New Guinea. Those prisoners who refused to sing along with the *Wilhelmus*, on the Queen’s birthday were exiled to an even more severe location. These events led Last to write the so-called Digoel version of the *Wilhelmus*.

*The Digoel Wilhelmus*

Wilhelmus van Nassauwe  
Zing ik omdat ik moet,  
Den vaderland getrouwe  
Dat dronk mijn broeders bloed.  
De knechten van Oranje  
Lieten mij ongedeerd,  
De rechter zei, ‘k verban je  
Opdat je ginds krepeert.

Wilhelmus van Nassouwe  
I sing because I must  
Loyal to the homeland  
That drank my brothers’ blood  
The servants of Orange  
Left me unharmed  
The judge said, I exile you  
So that you suffer there.

In Blanda’s vrees te leven  
Heb ‘k niet genoeg betracht,  
Daarom ben ik verdreven  
En werd ik hier gebracht.  
De heerschers, die regeeren,  
Kozen als instrument  
In dienst der suikerheeren  
Van Rhemrev’s regiment.<sup>18</sup>

To live in fear of (the) Dutch  
I did not sufficiently obey  
That’s why I was exiled  
And I was taken here  
The rulers, who govern  
Chosen as instrument  
In service of the sugar kings  
Van Rhemrev’s regiment.

<sup>17</sup> It is claimed that Supratman is among the few people who have composed both the lyrics and the melody of the national anthem. Other cases of single authored national anthems include France, Canada and Sri Lanka (Winarno 2003: 9).

<sup>18</sup> Captain W.R. Rhemrev’s regiment was put in charge of the suppression of the revolt in West Sumatra in 1928. His regiment committed many atrocities during this mission which were never made public (Poeze 1994: 100).

|                                |                                 |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Mijn schild ende betrouwen     | My shield and my trust          |
| Zijt gij niet, 'grootte heer', | That is not you, 'my lord'      |
| Voortaan zou wil ik bouwen     | In future I will just count     |
| Slechts op mijn volks verweer, | On the resistance of my people  |
| Dat het toch vroom mag blijven | That it may stay loyal          |
| Vol strijdlust t' aller stond, | And full of spirit at all times |
| De tyrannie verdrijven         | To expel the tyranny            |
| Die mij het hart doorwondt.    | Which wounds my heart.          |

[Adapted from Marnix van St. Aldegonde] (Last 1994: 63. My translation).

Other poems, too, demonstrated a lack of respect for the *Wilhelmus* and the refusal to stand up or to sing along to the anthem gave rise to the so-called '*Wilhelmusrelletjes*', 'little *Wilhelmus* rebellions', which were widely publicized in the European press (Poeze 1994: 105–106; Vanvugt 1996: 19). There can be no doubt that similar incidents occurred in other parts of the Dutch East Indies. Sympathizers with the Indonesian nationalist movement would have been hesitant to show respect for the Dutch national anthem. The degree to which this resistance was openly expressed or hidden is hard to determine as there is little written about it.

The great Indonesian author Pramoedya Ananta Toer mentions in one of his books the story of his father who refused to join in the celebrations for the wedding of the Crown Princess Juliana and Prince Bernhard in 1937. His father, who had nationalist sympathies, was determined not to give in, despite the fact that such an act could end his dream of becoming the head of a school.

The government had ordered all schools to take part in the big celebration. My father, however, kept refusing to sing the *Wilhelmus* and to raise the flag, and he would not join the parade either. There were endless discussions between my father and the local authorities. However, my father insisted on his rejection of the *Wilhelmus* and the tri-coloured flag. Then they came with threats, which my father simply ignored. Finally the assistant-resident gave in: they would allow him to refuse to sing the *Wilhelmus* and to use the flag as long as he took part in the parade and as long as he displayed an adequate symbol of the royal wedding (Toer 1990: 33–34 [my translation]).<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Translated from the Dutch: 'Alle scholen moesten van de regering meedoen aan het grote feest. Mijn vader bleef echter weigeren om het *Wilhelmus* te zingen en de driekleur te hijsen, en hij zou dus ook aan geen optocht meedoen. Er volgde een eindeloos overleg tussen vader en de plaatselijke ambtenarij. *Wilhelmus* en driekleur wees mijn vader echter pertinent af. Zij kwamen met dreigementen, die mijn vader voor kennisgeving aannam. Toen gaf de assistent-resident zich gewonnen: het *Wilhelmus* niet zingen en de driekleur

The history of the nationalist movement in Indonesia is complicated. Various parts of the country were much more involved than others and, in addition, the resistance against the Dutch was not uniform. Case studies suggest that the movement enjoyed differing degrees of support in isolated communities than in parts of Java and Sumatra. One particular group needs to be mentioned here and that is the people of mixed Indonesian-Dutch origin or the so-called Indo-European community. At various stages they have occupied ambivalent positions towards both the Dutch colonial rulers and the Indonesian nationalists. They often claimed an intermediate position because they, more than others, were able to bridge the gap between the rulers and the Indonesian population. In fact, this self-defined position was often closer to the Dutch governing institutions, which meant that they did not always enjoy the full confidence of the Indonesian nationalists. But, in terms of the choice to use either Dutch symbols of political power on the one hand or the symbols of the Indonesian nationalists on the other hand, there simply is no intermediate position. The choice is either for the *Wilhelmus* or the *Indonesia Raya*, it is either for the Dutch or the Indonesian flag and so on. This lack of compromise played a significant role in the complex position of the Indo-community in Indonesia (Nomes 1992).

Given the resistance of the Indonesian nationalists and the controversial status of the *Wilhelmus* as the national anthem, it is somewhat surprising to see that similar situations did not occur in the other Dutch colonies of Suriname and the Dutch Antilles. In these areas, the populations have always been more sympathetic to the Dutch royal family compared to Indonesia and, to a certain extent, the *Wilhelmus* and the royal family were considered to be somewhat differentiated from the Dutch colonial administration (Oostindie 2006).

### *Conclusion*

In the history of the musical encounters between a colony and its ruling country the national anthem occupies, by definition, a special position. In the initial phase of colonization the national anthem is introduced into a very different context. It is forced upon the colonized people who must accept it as an inherent part of the ruling authority. There is little room

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niet voeren, dat mocht, als hij maar meedeed aan de optocht en daarbij voor de dag kwam met een zo goed mogelijk zinnebeeld van het koninklijk huwelijk’.

for the development of local adaptations and variations. Together with other symbols of the ruling power like the national flag and the official language, respect for the national anthem is seen as a crucial element in relations between the colonizing authorities and the colonized people.<sup>20</sup> The situation in Indonesia was no exception to this general rule. After the emergence of a strong nationalist movement obligatory respect for the national anthem of the colonizing country becomes controversial. The history of the *Wilhelmus* in Indonesia during the colonial period clearly shows this. Resistance to the Dutch national anthem grew, in particular once the Indonesian nationalists had adopted '*Indonesia Raya*' as their own national anthem. During the Japanese occupation the Dutch national anthem was officially silenced and replaced by the Japanese national anthem. After Indonesian independence was declared in 1945, and officially recognized a few years later, one would expect the Dutch national anthem to be completely forgotten.

Within this context, it is remarkable that a translated version of the *Wilhelmus* survived for such a long time on the island of Siberut. This can be explained partly by the fact that nationalism never played a role in local politics in the Mentawai Archipelago and also because, apparently, nobody on the island felt offended by people singing the national anthem of the former colonizers. At the same time, it is also an indication of the type of musical culture on the island. The fact that the *Wilhelmus* had been introduced by the Dutch governmental authorities did not prevent it from being added to the repertoire of some local singers. That the *Wilhelmus* survived for so many years after Indonesia's independence can only be attributed to the personal taste of the singers and the respect that they received from their audiences for having such an historic song in their repertoire.

There can be no doubt that the formal education system in the Dutch East Indies played a crucial role in the musical training of Indonesian pupils. The *Wilhelmus* and a number of other songs were compulsory elements in formal musical education, which included hardly any instruction in local musical traditions in the form of songs or instruments. In this

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<sup>20</sup> In the British Empire the national anthem, *God Save the Queen*, was used as a symbol of unity. This was not done by simply having the same song played throughout the entire empire, however. In the nineteenth century, on the occasion of Queen Victoria's golden jubilee, the lyrics of the national anthem were sung in five languages from the Indian subcontinent. An effort was also made to 'translate' the music into 12 musical styles of India. Later, at the Queen's diamond jubilee, the lyrics were translated into 50 of the most important languages spoken in the Queen's Empire (Scott 1998: 119–120).

respect, the Dutch-Indonesian musical encounter was largely one-sided and left little room for local variation.

Indirectly, however, this fact has contributed to the emergence and the position of the Indonesian national anthem. Even though the *Wilhelmus* was a symbol of Dutch power and authority, it had a distinct influence on the creation of the Indonesian national anthem which sounded equally solemn.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### PAST AND PRESENT ISSUES OF JAVANESE–EUROPEAN MUSICAL HYBRIDITY: *GENDHING MARES* AND OTHER HYBRID GENRES

Sumarsam

The history of Indonesia encompasses a succession of interactions with foreign cultures. Hindu, Islamic and Western cultures, in particular, have had the most significant impact on the development of Indonesian culture. Trade, followed by religious conversion and colonization, characterize the course of Indonesian history. The interactions have influenced the growth of Indonesian cultural tradition considerably; a growth epitomized by localizing and hybridizing foreign elements.

The development of music and musical culture in Indonesia also followed this general scheme. Whereas each of the Indonesian regions has a distinct socio-cultural tradition, the interactions have produced a rich variety of localized/hybridized forms of Indonesian music.

This chapter<sup>1</sup> focuses on the development of *gendhing mares*<sup>2</sup> ('marching' gamelan pieces)<sup>3</sup> in the court of Yogyakarta. *Gendhing mares* requires the incorporation of European brass instruments and drums and is used to accompany the exit and entrance of *serimpi*, one of the most refined dances in the court of Yogyakarta. Aside from the sound structure of the music, this chapter addresses the history and meaning of the genre. In so doing, I will take into account other hybrid genres, in particular *tanjidor* and certain contemporary music genres.

Following Geertz's explication of the meaning of symbolic action (Geertz 1973: 363–364), Rice sees the importance of understanding the 'formative

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Prof. Margaret Sarkissian of Smith College for her comments and suggestions.

<sup>2</sup> *Mares* is derived from the Dutch *mars* (march). During the Japanese occupation (1942–1945) the use of the Dutch words was suppressed and so the word *gati* was used (Subuh 1986). *Gati* is a Sanskrit-based Old Javanese word, which means, among other things, 'coming' and 'to be in motion' (for example, *magati*) (Zoetmulder 1982: 500–501). In modern Javanese, it also connotes a sense of 'important' (for example, *wigati*) and 'in a hurry' (for example, *gati-gati*). I would like to thank Els Bogaerts for her suggestion to trace the etymology of the word *gati* and its relevance as a substitute for the term *mares*.

<sup>3</sup> *Gendhing* means gamelan composition.

processes' in music in terms of how people historically construct, socially maintain and individually create and experience music (Rice 1987: 473). This is, indeed, an important and encompassing perspective. Viewed from this perspective, *gendhing mares* becomes an intriguing subject of inquiry. In the first place, the genre was composed during the time when Javanese courts became vassals of the Dutch colonial government, signifying a complicated power (im)balance between the two sides. The fact that this genre was used to accompany *serimpi* dance – an important cultural expression of the concept of *alus* (refinement), one of the hallmarks of the Javanese world view – means that the symbolic meaning of *gendhing mares* deserves closer investigation. The issue becomes even more intriguing given the fact that, more recently, *gendhing mares* has been used to accompany the entrance and exit of the dancers of the most sacred and refined ceremonial dance in the court of Yogyakarta, *bedhaya Semang*.

This leads us to a series of pertinent questions: if we believe that the gamelan ensemble was 'endowed with a special aura that forged the link to figures of authority' (Becker 1988: 385), and that *bedhaya* and *serimpi* ceremonial dances are considered emblems of the ruler's power, how do we explain the incorporation of European sounds into the gamelan ensemble? Is this incorporation a kind of Javanese-European intercultural sonic dialogue, a subversive act of European authority, or the domestication of an exotic sound? What was the thinking behind the use of *gendhing mares* to accompany *bedhaya Semang* in the context of a contemporary Indonesian musical scene?

### *European Marching Bands in Java*

To address these questions, I would like to begin with a brief history of the European marching band in Java. Three types of Western music were introduced to Indonesia by the Portuguese in the 16th century: church, secular, and military music (Sumarsam 2001: 284–285). Slave musicians were instrumental in introducing these last two types of European music to the homes of rich European traders. Subsequently, European military bands flourished alongside the establishment of the Dutch East Indies Company in the seventeenth century. Thereafter, the localization of European music and the hybridization between European music and traditional Javanese music occurred. The 'Babad Giyanti' chronicle gives us a hint of Javanese-European hybrid music in the court of Kartasura in the eighteenth century. The poem describes a royal procession that

moved the court capital from Kartasura to Surakarta in late 1745 or early 1746.<sup>4</sup>

Upon the appearance of the King,  
the Dutch Company and the Javanese troops  
saluted with a loud salvo,  
and were answered by the great cannon's  
shattering thunder.

The musicians (*musikan*) playing *selompret* (the trumpets), *tambur* (the drums), *suling* (flutes), *bendhé* (a hand-held gong) together with the loud sounding of *monggang*, *kodhok ngorèk*, and *carabalèn* gamelan, beautifully sounded. Tumult was among the people of the capital.<sup>5</sup>

*Slompret* (trumpets) and *tambur* (drums) were European instruments, as confirmed by the word *musikan*, a term derived from the Dutch *muzikant* (musician, referring specifically to a European music troupe);<sup>6</sup> *suling* and *bendhe* were Javanese instruments; hence, a hybrid music. Other passages confirm this hybrid practice, like the one mentioning that the Company's musicians jointly played the trumpets, drums, *suling*, *bendhe*, and *kendhang*.<sup>7</sup> Most likely, *suling* in this passage refers to European fifes, while the last two instruments were clearly Javanese. Similar hybrid marching bands still exist in the courts of Yogyakarta and Surakarta. Groneman (1890: 80–87) mentions a number of them, including an ensemble consisting of a European drum, a pair of traditional wind instruments called *puwi-puwi*, two small *kendhang*, and one *bendhe*.

Other Javanese-European hybrid music involving brass band instruments can be found outside the courts of central Java. For example, a genre called *tanjidor* can be found on the outskirts of Jakarta. The term *tanjidor* is said to derive from a Portuguese word *tangedor*. According to Paramita Abdurachman (2008: 48), the root of the word *tangedor* is *tanger*, which means to play on musical instruments. She also says that *tangedor*

<sup>4</sup> For the difficulty determining the move of the capital court to Surakarta, see Soepomo Poedjosoedarmo and Ricklefs (1967: 89).

<sup>5</sup> *Dhandhinggula / Tedhakira kangjeng kang siniwi | pra prajurit kumpeni lan jawa | urmat drel atri swarane | sinauran mriyem gung | magenturan anggegeteri | slompret tambur musikan | suling bendhe barung | munggang kodhok ngorek nganggang | cara balen pradangga munya ngrerangin | horeg wong sanagara* (Yasadipura, quoted in Soepomo Poedjosoedarmo and Ricklefs 1967: 101). Javanese spelling and English translation have been adapted by the author of this chapter.

<sup>6</sup> I would like to thank Els Bogaerts for her suggestion of the origin of the word *musikan*.

<sup>7</sup> *Binarungan musikan kumpeni | slompret tambur suling bendhe kendhang* (Soepomo Poedjosoedarmo and Ricklefs 1967: 103). Spelling adapted by the author.

means a musician who plays a string instrument, usually outdoors. Subsequently, *tangedor* can refer to a brass band for accompanying military and religious processions. In the case of the ensemble called *tanjidor* in Indonesia, it is not well documented how, when, and in what context this music as we know it today developed.

The assumption is that *tanjidor* originated in the eighteenth century when leading European households in and around Batavia (now Jakarta) maintained civilian wind ensembles staffed by house-slaves or soldiers (Yampolsky 1994). Several authors have mentioned such slave orchestras in their writings (Boxer 1965; De Haan 1910/12; Van de Wall 1932; Haryadi et al. 1980).<sup>8</sup> These orchestras performed European marches and dance tunes (waltzes) for the entertainment of their wealthy landowning masters. The life of Augustijn Michiels, an early nineteenth century estate owner in Citeureup (near Bogor), gives us a picture of music in the homes of wealthy European landlords. As reported by Doren (quoted in Van de Wall 1932), who visited Citeureup in 1822, this wealthy landowner liked to throw lavish parties for his guests, with a number of music genres performed for the occasion. He had four music ensembles in his household: a European ensemble, an army marching band, a Chinese ensemble, and a gamelan.<sup>9</sup> Van de Wall notes that when Michiels died in 1833, his family had to auction 30 slave musicians and their instruments. They included players of the clarinet, viola, trumpet, harp, horn, bassoon, bass, trombone, and drums. With a few exceptions, these instruments are pretty much the same as those used in contemporary *tanjidor*, although we do not know if the term *tanjidor* was already in use at the time.

When the institution of slavery and the era of lavish estates died out in the mid-nineteenth century, native Batavian musicians continued the tradition of band playing. This led to the development of a Sundanese-European hybrid ensemble as bands incorporated Sundanese musical instruments and repertoire. By the turn of the twentieth century, these bands functioned as street ensembles, playing in well-to-do neighbourhoods of Jakarta, especially during the Chinese and European New Year

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<sup>8</sup> The last reference, Haryadi et al. (1980), is a report of fieldwork on *tanjidor* carried out by a group of faculty members of the Jakarta Institute of Arts Education: Frans Haryadi, Yulianti Parani, Mona Lohanda, Siswandhi, and Suwandi Mangkudilaga. This is the most extensive report of the history, function, and musical practice of the genre.

<sup>9</sup> It is noteworthy that European music, gamelan, and Chinese music were present together in Michiels' house. Had musicians of these three genres exchanged their musical repertoire or idioms? Perhaps, but there is no evidence to support this assumption.

celebrations. As the bands found employment accompanying various functions in villages on the outskirts of Jakarta, they began to play more Sundanese music. Interestingly, *tanjidor* musicians considered European marches and waltzes as signature pieces and played them as overtures to performances regardless of the performance context of the band (Haryadi et al. 1980: 103).

It appears that by the mid-nineteenth century, *tanjidor* became an established term for the brass band and its use spread to other parts of Java. In his chronicle ‘Babad Krama Dalem’, Atmadikrama (1865–1866: 61–62) describes the wedding celebrations of King Paku Buwana IX (r. 1861–1893) as follows: ‘After the Dutch Resident offered a toast for the well-being of the marriage of the king, then they, who were in attendance at the celebration, replied ‘hurrah’ repeatedly and very boisterously. They all drank at the same time; the sound of *tanjidhur* honoured [the toasting] at once. *Tanjidhur* ended, and was followed by the soft sound of gamelan [...]’. The poem continues, describing the last round of toasts in which the Resident called for words of safety for the land of Java. All the guests replied ‘hurrah’ and then stood up to disperse for eating, during which ‘gamelan and *tanjidhur* were played. Gamelan Pelog, Slendro, and Senggani were played simultaneously [with *tanjidhur*] without pause [...]’.

The simultaneous sounding of European musical instruments and gamelan described in the poem does not represent a syncretistic form of musical production since each ensemble performed in their own style and space. However, there is an example of a musical synthesis in the court of Yogyakarta that represents musical hybridity; namely, the *gendhing mares*. Although this genre is an exception within the Yogyakarta court, it has a prominent function.

As mentioned elsewhere (Sumarsam 1995), as social interaction between the Javanese courtiers and Europeans became a fact of life in Javanese courts, the band and other genres of European music were incorporated into their musical life. In addition to accompanying European social dances, the bands gradually began to accompany all sorts of court ceremonial events. For these reasons, Javanese courts had to maintain European ensembles, staffed by Javanese musicians under the tutelage of European bandmasters. It was in this atmosphere of Javanese-European social intercourse that *gendhing mares* emerged. The *gendhing mares* are all in the *pelog* tuning system, presumably because *pelog* is the closest tuning to the Western diatonic system (see the contribution by Wim van Zanten in this volume).



The creation of *gendhing mares* is not well documented. Some leading musicians and dancers in the court of Yogyakarta have suggested that the genre was associated with *gendhing sabrangan* (Subuh 1986).<sup>10</sup> The musicians also say that the use of the term *gendhing mares* – implying the beginning of the incorporation of brass band in the gamelan – occurred during the reign of Hamengku Buwana (HB) VII (r. 1877–1921) or HB VIII (r. 1921–1939) (Subuh 1986). Another musician suggests HB V (r. 1825–1855) was the creator of *gendhing mares* (Vetter 1986: 281).

The only evidence of the existence of *gendhing mares* is the ‘Serat Pakem Wirama’, a court manuscript containing a list of gamelan pieces, information about their use and a description of the instruments (Serat Pakem Wirama 1889). The manuscript, which was written, copied, and recopied from 1898 to 1921 (Lindsay 1991: 207), lists some thirty *gendhing mares*, but provides no specific information about the year in which the *gendhing mares* was listed. Indeed, we can only speculate that the genre was composed between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century.

### Comparing Gendhing Mares and Tanjidor

It is commonly thought that many incompatible musical elements (e.g. linear versus horizontal orientation, a cyclic versus a through-composed structure, and the particularities of the *slendro-pelog* tuning system) have kept gamelan and European music apart. However, the evidence provided by *tanjidor* and *gendhing mares* reveals that compatibility (or incompatibility) of musical systems should be discussed in conjunction with (a) social and political relationships between cultures and (b) the reactions of a particular society towards cultural and historical development. Furthermore, the distinctive style of particular hybrid music embodies the socio-historical significance of the region in which the music developed.

*Tanjidor* has passed through many different socio-historical contexts, from the eighteenth-century slave orchestra to Betawi music of the early twentieth century, and from entertainment for wealthy masters to military music, street music, and music for rites of passage. Throughout these evolutions, *tanjidor* was cultivated and developed by members of the

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<sup>10</sup> *Sabrang* means ‘overseas’; *sabrangan*, ‘the foreign one’. *Sabrangan* also refers to the name of the drumming pattern of some *gendhing* for accompanying the lance dance (*lawung*). All *gendhing mares* use *sabrangan* drumming.

lower class (slave and native Betawi folk musicians). It is a kind of music that served emotional needs in their difficult lives. The result is a genre in which European musical instruments were domesticated by being played in an exuberant style of Sundanese music. The suppleness of *tanjidor* is commensurate with the character of folk music generally. Folk musicians are both skilled and creative artists in the true sense of the words – they have the flexibility to execute a piece of music in the most creative way possible. By examining two repeated cycles of a *tanjidor* piece, we can see the different ways in which the clarinet, helicon, and horn render the same melodic phrase by adding passing notes, lengthening principal notes, and altering rhythms. In addition, the clarinet, like the singer or the *rebab* in Sundanese gamelan, also defines this lively genre. The clarinet player shifts from one tuning system to another (from *slendro* to a *pelog*-like system) with ease by cleverly flattening certain notes. Elaborate drumming, whose rhythms directly related to animated dance movements, adds to the musical liveliness of *tanjidor*. In fact, *tanjidor* often accompanies a male dance party in which guests take turns dancing with professional female dancers.

In *gendhing mares*, we find a more limited contribution from European brass instruments and drums to the gamelan. The reason for this constraint lies in the choice of the treatment (*garap*) of the piece. Sundanese and Javanese gamelan compositions comprise several layers of melodic lines and are composed within a fixed formal structure (i.e. a *gongan* cycle). What is distinctive about Javanese court gamelan is the prominent execution of a steady, pulsed melodic skeleton (*balungan*) of a *gendhing* by a group of several *saron* (metallophones of various low and high octaves). In a certain playing style, the playing of the *balungan* produces very loud sound indeed, as the melodic skeleton is performed in unison by at least seven and as many as sixteen *saron*.

Another factor that determines whether a piece (or section of a piece) should be performed in a soft or loud playing style is the concept of *irama*. The *irama* involves the shifting of both temporal flow (fast, medium, and slow) and temporal space (the expanding and contracting of the *gongan* cycle accompanied by the rise and fall of density level of the elaborating instruments). There are four levels of *irama*: *tanggung*, *dadi*, *wilet*, and *rangkep*. Each *irama* determines both the playing style and the treatment of the melody for elaborating instruments: e.g. whether a piece should be played in soft or loud playing style. *Gendhing mares* is played in *irama tanggung*, in a loud playing style, featuring the *balungan* instruments and without the participation of soft-sounding, elaborating instruments. One

repercussion of *irama tanggung* is that it constrains the melodic treatment of a *gendhing*. The absence of elaborating instruments does not allow the ensemble to project the kind of musical complexity that would be possible if these instruments were present playing elaborated forms of melodies.

One can only ask why European instruments were not engaged more actively in gamelan (as they were in *tanjidor*). An answer can be found in the historical and cultural background of *gendhing mares*, a history that revolves around the interactions between the Dutch colonial government and the courts in central Java. It follows that tolerating the presence of European music in their courts enabled Javanese rulers to demonstrate their acknowledgment of the political realities of the day – court life in the context of European colonialism.

What is intriguing is that *gendhing mares* appeared at a time when the conflict between Javanese courts and European colonialism had reached its peak. This is a period when, after much European interference in the state affairs of Javanese courts, and especially after the Javanese revolt in 1825–30, true colonialism was established. According to Ricklefs, '[f]or the first time the Dutch were in a position to exploit and control the whole island, and there was not to be any serious challenge to their dominance until the twentieth century' (Ricklefs 1993: 119). What was the reaction of Javanese royal culture toward the consolidation of colonial control in Java? One common interpretation is that, faced with political impotency, members of the royal family focused their energies inward towards cultivating and refining art and culture.<sup>11</sup> In the words of Ricklefs (1993: 113), the Central Javanese courts 'became ritual establishments and generally docile clients of the Dutch'. This position, however, serves to ignore evidence of the dynamics of court culture during the domestication of non-Javanese elements. Pemberton (1994: 70) explains that it is:

[...] misleading to dismiss Central Javanese palaces from 1830 on simply as ritual establishments, as ornate signs of powerlessness or tokens of docility, no matter how docile their regal inhabitants might have been. Beyond the conventional historiographical point that Dutch rule in Central Java was maintained until the end through a typically colonial alliance with the indigenous aristocracy, the power of endurance exhibited by ritual

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<sup>11</sup> Commonly, historians point to the period after the permanent division of Mataram kingdom into two major courts and two minor courts in 1755 as the beginning of this inward looking activity of the courts.

establishments, whether in the concrete form of the Kraton Surakarta, two hundred plus years, or in discursive form, “Java,” is most ominous.

The reaction of Javanese courtiers to the penetration of colonial culture was to re-establish a well-ordered cultural landscape in the courts, taking into account outside elements by ritually situating the Dutch not as intruders, but as respected guests (Pemberton 1994: 69). In other words, both the presence and superiority of the Dutch were domesticated into Javanese court culture. *Gendhing mares* and other Javanese-European cultural hybrids were the products of this domestication. Musically, the European brass band in *gendhing mares* was fitted to the basic rules of gamelan composition while constraining melodic disposition, i.e. the treatment of *irama tanggung* with the absence of melodic elaboration. Yogyakarta court musicians, unlike the Betawi street musicians, were reluctant to incorporate fully European brass instruments into a gamelan ensemble. In any event, the fact that *gendhing mares* was created to accompany one of the most important royal cultural expressions, the *serimpi* dance, proves its powerful symbolic significance.

What has emerged from the two instances of hybrid musical practices described above is the heterogeneous nature of the localization process and its resulting European music. The process involves the roles of regional history, power relationships, and the attitudes of the musicians as shaped by historical and cultural circumstances. Oftentimes, this locally/historically constructed hybrid music persists as a marker of regional identity. Even during the period of Indonesian independence, the music still lives on as a legacy and marker of a distinctive feature to a particular manifestation of the local.

Due to the development of other popular music in Indonesia, with which the band must compete, *tanjidor* has been marginalized in recent decades. This marginalization worsened in the 1950s when the local government banned the bands from performing in front of stores along the streets of Jakarta. This was done, according to Yampolsky, because the mayor of Jakarta was displeased to see native Betawi musicians being treated like beggars by the Chinese (Yampolsky 1994). Abdurachman (2008: 48), however, says that the ban was imposed because the loud sound of the music disturbed people from their afternoon rest. Later the ban was relaxed, although the musicians had to seek letters of permission from the government. This rule caused the continuing marginalization of *tanjidor*. Nonetheless, the historic and distinctive features of the music make *tanjidor* one of the important Jakartan musical identities of today.

Oftentimes the local government puts up workshops and symposia on *tanjidor*, assigning cultural activists, scholars, and performers to find ways to support and revitalize the genre.

### Gendhing Mares and the Reconstruction of *Bedhaya Semang*

The current royal family of the Yogyakarta court only occasionally sponsors the performance of *serimpi* dance with the accompaniment of *gendhing mares*. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, a notable use of *gendhing mares* emerged in a recent project to reconstruct the most sacred ceremonial dance of a long-defunct, four-hour *bedhaya* Semang. This dance and its counterpart, the *bedhaya* Ketawang in the court of Surakarta, are considered the most sacred dances in their respective courts, the ruler's emblem of power, and the court's official insignia. Its connection with the story of the most powerful spiritual entity, the goddess of the Southern Ocean (Ratu Kidul) confirms the special status of this *bedhaya* (Hostetler 1982).<sup>12</sup> The story goes that in preparation for becoming king, Sultan Agung had to become familiar with the true scope of his realm, including Ratu Kidul, the goddess of spiritual beings of considerable power and danger.<sup>13</sup> The young Agung accompanied the goddess to her beautiful palace beneath the Southern Ocean. There, in the goddess's palace the *bedhaya* Semang was created for him. The mystery surrounding the origin of this *bedhaya* enhances the ethos of the power of this dance.

*Bedhaya* Semang had not been performed since the second half of the reign of Hamengku Buwana VII (1877–1921). In 1972, the court wanted to reconstruct the dance. The reconstruction failed to materialize, however, because of the lack of resources necessary for the project. Theresia Suharti, then a student of the Indonesian Art Institution (*Akademi Seni Tari Indonesia*, ASTI)<sup>14</sup> in Yogyakarta and also a court dancer, used the material of this reconstruction for her thesis. After Suharti became a faculty member of the institution and a senior teacher/dancer of the court in 2002, she became interested in continuing the reconstruction. Under the supervision of a 70-year-old court dancer/teacher, Bandara Raden Ayu

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<sup>12</sup> The following story is based on Hostetler's essay. She based the story of the origin of *bedhaya* Semang on the 'Serat Babad Nitik', a manuscript about Sultan Agung.

<sup>13</sup> The myth from the court of Surakarta names Panembahan Senapati, the founder of Mataram and Sultan Agung's grandfather, as a figure who met Ratu Kidul, who created *bedhaya* Ketawang for him.

<sup>14</sup> Now Institut Seni Indonesia, ISI.

Yudanegara, she led the project. She gathered old documents about the dance and its music, organizing and leading rehearsals, and raising financial support from different agencies and individuals. She also wrote an article about the reconstruction process (Suharti 2002). The reconstruction was completed in 2006 and was performed before Sultan HB X and his families. It was properly documented in an audio and video format. As far as I know, there has not been another performance of this dance since the event in 2006.

In the course of the reconstruction, questions about musical accompaniment for the entrance and exit of the dancers surfaced.<sup>15</sup> Should they be accompanied by a refined *ladrang* piece or *gendhing mares*? The *ladrang* piece was suggested by the musicians and dance teachers; the *gendhing mares* was the preference of a higher-ranking courtier. Eventually, the dance teachers and musicians had to accept the decision made by the high-ranking courtier; hence *gendhing mares* accompanied the entrance and exit of the dancers in the final performance in the presence of the Sultan. However, during the rehearsals, a refined *ladrang* piece was often used. The courtier in question was a young prince, who preferred *gendhing mares* because of its *sigrak* (lively) character.

I would suggest that, aside from the distinctive feature of *gendhing mares* as a Javanese-European historic/hybrid music, the choice of *gendhing mares* to accompany *bedhaya* Semang can be linked to a contemporary trend of gamelan music in Indonesia. This trend can be illustrated by discussing music performed in the Yogyakarta Gamelan Festival (YGF) and the music of *campursari*.

### *Contemporary Hybrid Music*

Let me begin with the Yogyakarta Gamelan Festival. The sole organizer of the festival was the late Sapto Rahardjo (1955–2009), the programme director of Geronimo Radio station and, in the 1990s, a member of the Yogyakarta Arts Council. He was also a composer in his own right. The seed of the festival can be traced back to gamelan concerts in 1993 and 1994 at the annual Yogyakarta Art Festival (*Festival Kesenian Yogyakarta*, FKY). One aspect of the festival featured new compositions for gamelan by Cokrowasito, Wasisto Surjodiningrat, and Sapto Rahardjo himself.

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<sup>15</sup> The following account is based solely on my personal communication with Suharti in 2009.



In the following year, the festival presented the works of Ben Pasaribu, Slamet Abdul Sjukur, Djaduk Ferianto, and Sapto Rahardjo – all renowned Indonesian composers. In 1995, the gamelan part of the FKY was called Yogyakarta Gamelan Festival.

In spite of its name, the festival programme included non-gamelan music. Sapto explains this contradiction philosophically: ‘gamelan is a spirit, not an object. The instruments are just the medium’. This statement became a motto of the festival. Beside performances, other related events, such as lectures, panel discussions, radio talk shows, and a special time slot for gamelan broadcasts from Sapto’s radio station were part of the festival. Participants in the festival included groups and individuals from abroad. The groups came to the festivals with funding from their own institutions, state governments, or private institutions. The festival organizers only provided local accommodation.

Concerts in the YGF tended to be ‘spectacular’ presentations of various music genres: traditional gamelan, hybrid Western-traditional music, and new music for gamelan or other ensembles. They used a very elaborate sound system with large, multiple speakers, and two large screens for video projections on the left and right sides of the stage. Typically, the stage backdrops were very elaborate, employing billowing, machine-made smoke, fancy and colourful lighting, and sometimes slide projections.

The festival attracts a primarily young, urban, and educated audience interested in musical performances that feature traditional and Western elements in modern, hybrid synthesis. Traditional gamelan was not excluded from the festival, but presented as exceptional, featuring, for example, gamelan performances by very young children, gamelan groups from abroad, and a Javanese gamelan group from Singapore whose members consisted of Javanese people who have settled there during the past century. There were also traditional gamelan groups, such as a group from the Institute of the Arts in Yogyakarta, and groups from Yogyakarta or its vicinity, performing traditional pieces or *kreasi baru* (new creation). In any event, the festival tends to emphasize the presentation of *musik kontemporer* (new or experimental music) that conveys a hybrid character. It has become apparent from discussions and newspaper coverage that the most important reason for creating hybrid music is to overcome the dichotomy between so-called ethnic music and Western music. This is in line with the desire of younger generations among the audience who see the mixture as a way to modernize traditional gamelan.

From its debut to its demise after the death of Sapto Rahardjo in 2009, the YGF presented a repertoire that could broadly be categorized into

three types: *kreasi baru* (new creations for gamelan drawn from traditional instrumentation and idioms); *musik kontemporer* or experimental music; and music that leans towards popular genres. More importantly, what emerged from the festivals was an emphasis on musical hybridity; namely, a mixture of different musical ensembles, idioms, and styles. To illustrate this point, I would like to discuss four influential Indonesian composers: Djaduk Ferianto, Sapto Rahardjo, Cokrowasito and Slamet Abdul Sjukur.

Djaduk Ferianto's ensemble Kua Etnika consists of a mixture of traditional musical instruments (including Balinese and Javanese gamelan), Western instruments, and sometimes certain 'non-musical' objects. A son of the well-known choreographer and painter Bagong Kussudiardja, Djaduk is a self-taught composer with an affinity to both traditional Indonesian and Western music genres. Typically, Kua Etnika's repertoire encompasses both the playful and serious character of his music. It often contains social commentary and criticism. The following statement from the group's liner notes conveys the concept and sensibility of Djaduk and his music:

A self-taught musician very familiar with ethnic music, Djaduk creates music that is based on a discipline called "*ngeng*": a traditional musical concept (i.e. sensitivity toward sound, pitch and rhythm), which is innate to any person. *Ngeng* is also used as "conditional mood" of the music. For Djaduk and his community, the potentiality of *ngeng* is an important factor in their treatment of the music. *Ngeng* also becomes an "abstract score" to be used for the basis of creating music.

The discipline of *ngeng* is then fused with the discipline of *Nang Ning Nong*, which is drawn from Balinese traditional music. *Nang Ning Nong* is a key word (i.e. sound/symbol) for the Balinese to teach and communicate melody. It is through *Nang Ning Nong* that the exploration of sound, tone, and rhythm evolves. Each musical instrument has potentials to form [a] structure of tones, rhythm and meaning. *Nang Ning Nong* is used for orientation, because in their musical exploration Djaduk and his friends use Balinese gamelan, along with Western music instruments, percussion and other objects [...] (Djaduk Ferianto 1997).

This quotation highlights the hybrid nature of Djaduk's conception of his music by combining three elements: Javanese sensitivity toward inner experience as manifested in the concept of '*ngeng*'; the articulation of percussive sounds (*Nang Ning Nong*) of Balinese music; and his readiness to incorporate Western musical idioms. Additionally, Djaduk explicitly states that his music reflects the dynamics of society with which it tries to be in close contact.

Because of the hybrid nature of its instrumentation, the ensemble can refer to different genres, such as gamelan music, jazz, rock, *kroncong*, and so forth, in the course of playing a piece. The point here is that, in creating new compositions, Djaduk explores traditional musical idioms and values. Other composers have followed in the same spirit: they cannot leave behind traditional music in creating their new works.

Sapto Rahardjo began performing Javanese gamelan and dance and rock music during his junior and high school years. He studied at the Yogyakarta academy of drama and film (Asdrafi). His position at the Geronimo Radio station gave him access to all sorts of new technology, including computers. A self-taught composer, his work conveys an amalgamation of his life experiences. One of Sapto's works emphasizes the use of computers to generate samplings of gamelan sounds and patterns. In a performance that I saw at the 1996 festival, he performed his piece, standing up and hopping around the front of the stage, playing an electric keyboard to retrieve or respond to sampled gamelan sounds, which emanated from a computer in front of him. Behind him was a complete set of gamelan. While Sapto was playing his electric keyboard, other musicians entered the stage, one by one, each sitting down and starting to play an instrument of his choice. Playing *kendhang*, *demung*, *kenong*, and *kempul*, each musician responded 'freely' to Sapto's melodies.

The late Cokrowasito (1909–2007), known intimately as Pak Cokro, was teaching gamelan at the California Institute of the Arts from 1971 until his retirement in 1992. When he lived in Yogyakarta, he was known as one of the most active musicians, directing the gamelan ensembles at the Radio of the Republic of Indonesia (*Radio Republik Indonesia*, RRI) and the Paku Alam court, and composing traditional and new gamelan pieces. His work is sometimes categorized as *kreasi baru* (new creation), the new work drawn largely from traditional musical idioms. At the 1994 FKY, he presented *Jaya Manggala Gita* (JMG, Song of triumph). This piece portrays a history of Java from the 12th-century King Erlangga until the independence of Indonesia in the 1940s.<sup>16</sup> The ensemble for JMG comprises a complete gamelan plus the archaic Monggang and Kodhok Ngorek ensembles. The combined ensemble has more than one *rebab* and *gender*. The music consists of a sequencing of different *gendhing* and/or different

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<sup>16</sup> JMG is an important topic of Becker's seminal work (Becker 1980). She points out that through his works, Cokrowasito can be seen as a modern *pujangga* (poet and chronicler in Javanese court) in modern Java.

ensembles. Each period of history is portrayed by different pieces or different ensembles. In this sense, JMG is a narrative with song-texts describing each historical period. Although JMG includes new pieces composed by Cokrowasito, several traditional *gendhing* are also an integral part of the composition. Whether new *gendhing* or not, all are composed in traditional gamelan structure and idioms. There are only two non-traditional elements in JMG: a Western-style chorus with multiple parts, and a conductor, who conducts the ensemble in the manner of a Western conductor. In a previous performance of JMG that I saw in 1970, Cokrowasito himself conducted the ensemble.

Slamet Abdul Sjukur is one of the most prominent Indonesian composers today. He began in the 1950s as a student at the Indonesian Music School (*Sekolah Musik Indonesia*, SMI) in Yogyakarta before continuing his musical training in Paris in the 1960s. His teachers there included Messiaen and Dutilleux (Mack 1995: 552). In 1972, Sjukur returned to Indonesia to teach and direct a music programme at the Jakarta Institute of the Arts (*Lembaga Pendidikan Kesenian Jakarta*, LPKJ), and compose. In 1982, he became an independent composer living in Surabaya. He defines his music as 'Minimax', music that uses minimal sources maximally (Mack 1995: 570). He comments: 'It seems that not too many people in the musical circle are interested in this kind of approach. We are already used to aiming at high [complex] aspirations, and it is not possible anymore for us to understand about things as they are, let alone to cultivate the kind of potential that is inherent in the plainness and simplicity' (Sjukur, quoted in Mack 1995: 570).<sup>17</sup>

As exemplified by the works of the composers described above, hybrid music of various genres typify YGF programming. Hybridizing 'ethnic' with Western music is the main feature of the festival's music. Such mixtures raise the interest of the younger audience, who think of traditional music such as gamelan music as old fashioned, conservative, and 'out of step with the world'. For them, music will be 'in step with the world' if it is mixed with Western music.

The presence of music groups from abroad increases the prestige of YGF. These foreign groups also offer a variety of hybrid genres. For example, the Australian GengGong ensemble blends musical idioms from Java, the

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<sup>17</sup> My own translation.

Middle East, Bulgaria, Sumatra, and Turkey<sup>18</sup> – the diverse backgrounds of its members reflect this regional variety; the group is led by a former Indonesian rock star, guitarist Sawo Jabung. In a performance I saw at the festival in 2007, their use of *bonang* to play excerpts of Javanese folk melodies, and their featuring of Sundanese drumming performed by Ron Reeves (one of the group's percussionists) were of special interest to the audience.

Ensemble Gending from the Netherlands also presents hybrid music of a different character. The group was founded in 1988 and is named after a composition of the same name, composed in 1975 by Ton de Leeuw. The piece uses a *slendro* gamelan but, following the tradition of Western art music, de Leeuw wrote a complete score for different parts of the gamelan, and a conductor was employed for the performance. In this case, the hybrid nature of the music lies in the use of Javanese gamelan instruments to play a composition composed and performed in the manner of Western art music. This seems to follow De Leeuw's desire 'to write new music, with respect for the instrumental organism, but without leaning on traditional Javan ways of thinking' (Van der Vliet n.d.). However, he also recognizes the intentional or unintentional borrowing of Javanese musical concepts (De Groot and Sligter 1995).<sup>19</sup> In the performance I witnessed at the 1997 festival, the audience was delighted by the dynamics of the music, which was conveyed by changes of musical textures (e.g. from playing a thin texture produced by one or two instruments, to a thick texture of several instruments played together). A couple of times the Javanese audience broke into excited applause when a sudden and drastic textural change occurred.

To sum up, the emphasis on the hybridizing of different music ensembles, instruments, idiom, genres, and music technology, especially between Indonesian and European kinds of music, is characteristic for the YGF. This emphasis characterizes the other hybrid music.

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<sup>18</sup> *GengGong's* website, <http://home.iprimus.com.au/wot/intro.htm>.

<sup>19</sup> De Groot and Sligter point out that in composing *Gending*, De Leeuw lists a three-level process of acculturation: material, structural, and mental. The material level is a result of the use of eastern instruments, while the structural level is a consequence of an intentional borrowing of Javanese structural principles. He considers the mental level the most important. It is derived from a cyclic conception of time, a slow musical respiration, a tendency to not dramatize.

### *A Controversy: Campursari*

Another recent type of Javanese-Western hybrid music is *campursari* (a mix of essences). The *campursari* ensemble consists of both gamelan and Western instruments. Featuring electronic keyboards, *campursari* performs light pieces from the gamelan repertoire and pieces from other genres of popular music. Although it developed in the 1960s, it experienced a surge in popularity in the mid-1990s.

There has been a great deal of positive and negative discussion about *campursari*, which attempts to understand its domination of Javanese musical life. The debate often intensifies in light of noticeable musical conflicts found in the genre, in particular an incompatibility between Western diatonic-based pentatonic scales and a pentatonic gamelan tuning system. Although a few *campursari* groups tune their gamelan to match a diatonic Western scale, other groups are not concerned about this tuning incompatibility (which results in a musical presentation in which the instruments and singers are not in tune with one other). Mrázek (1999: 67) suggests that this incompatibility, combined with other elements, is a kind of metaphor for conflict in the present world. In *campursari*, many people 'listen to gamelan instruments and techniques, and they listen to the keyboard and other non-gamelan instruments at the same time, but not to their not-being-in-tune. They try to ignore the wholeness of the whole, because the whole lacks wholeness. The result is a kind of selective listening, listening that separates and often does not put things together, but rather keeps them separate, and enjoys them separately, though at the same time.'

Similar to Mrázek's suggestion, Rahayu Supanggah (2003: 15–16) sees the 'clashes' in *campursari* as a reflection of larger socio-cultural problems caused by modernization. Supanggah explains:

Interestingly, the mingling and clashing of cultural and musical conventions, and the number of different people involved is not such a problem for the community of *campur sari* artists, nor for the supporting community of audience, listeners and sponsors. They do not feel disturbed or uncomfortable with these clashes. The *campur sari* community accepts the music openly, and with pleasure and sincerity. They consider that everything happens naturally. Some people recognize that *campur sari* is a work of art, a product of creativity of a group of artists. *Campur sari* can also be considered as a collective attempt to save one or more musical genres. Without (the help of) *campur sari*, it is believed that one of the above musical genres could die out (Rahayu Supanggah 2003: 14).



Sutton (2002: 27–28) observes that, according to a number of younger musicians, *campursari* ‘is helping to preserve Javanese gamelan tradition by incorporating Javanese instruments and singing styles in a genre that is modern and popular. As they see it, vast numbers of Javanese, particularly younger ones, enjoy and consume this music (live and through the media) who would otherwise be listening to Western pop or its Indonesian imitations. Better a compromised Javanese music than none at all, perhaps?’ But Sutton’s older teachers and acquaintances offered just the opposite interpretation. They claimed:

[...] that *campur sari* is as great a threat to the gamelan tradition they know as is Western-style pop music. For *campur sari* emphasizes a pop, commercial ethos and takes the place of more traditional gamelan playing (of much higher artistic value, they would say) in village and family rituals, not to mention in the regional cassette industry. Thus, in the opinion of these knowledgeable and concerned individuals, *campur sari* does popularize some aspects of the indigenous, but at the same time severely compromises the indigenous tradition on which it draws. While it may sustain a certain repertory of light pieces, an appreciation for a distinctly Javanese vocal style, and an acceptance of Javanese gamelan instrumentation and timbre, it transforms and quite literally replaces other indigenous practices – rather than popularizing them (Sutton 2002: 28).

Perlman (1999: 10) suggests a different view on *campursari*. He says that ‘[c]ampursari may prove to have little to do with tuning systems. Campursari may be more interesting as a symptom of the emergence of a broad musical borderland, where the lightest parts of the *gamelan* repertory mingle with *kroncong*, *langgam Jawa*, *dangdut*, and even Indonesian pop songs’. Certainly, this is the primary reason for the widespread fame of *campursari*, i.e. its focus on light, popular pieces; so much so that the conflict in tuning systems is largely ignored by its fans.

The many views on *campursari* reflect the intrigue surrounding this genre. In the last three decades, this music has experienced an astonishing development; it has earned its fame from live performances within wide-ranging contexts. *Campursari* is also a mass-mediated music. It has been widely disseminated on cassette, CD and VCD. There have been many *campursari* festivals and competitions. Television programmes periodically broadcast *campursari* in the form of a music programme that includes audience members and the viewers at home making musical requests. These all contribute to the strength of the genre in generating economic wealth for its creators and producers. This success has created a feeling of resentment among traditional gamelan players. They complain

that, with the capital of only a few instruments and a repertoire of light pieces, *campursari* produces wealth and fame.

My discussion of music performed at the YGF and *campursari* suggests that since the 1980s Indonesia has been saturated with the notion of modernizing gamelan through hybridizing it with Western music. I suggest that this atmosphere of modernizing gamelan indirectly contributed to the decision to use *gendhing mares* in *bedhaya* Semang.

### *Conclusion*

In discussing the Hinduization of Southeast Asia, Wolters (1999: 55) states that ‘Indian material tended to be fractured and restated and therefore drained their original significance [...]. The materials [...] had to be localized in different ways before they could fit into various local complexes or religious, social, and political systems and belong to [a] new cultural “whole.” Only when this happened would the fragments make sense in their new ambiances.’

The localization process referred to by Wolters fits any process of localization in any historical period. It should be kept in mind, however, that in each region (or even within a region) the process bears out quite different results; hence, the heterogeneity of both the result and process of cultural domestication. In the case of *tanjidor*, a Western brass ensemble was localized to the extent that European music had become Sundanese music. On the other hand, *gendhing mares* played out differently than *tanjidor*. Here, the Javanese did not substantively localize European music, but the end-result is symbolically very rich. The development of these cultural performances was interdependent with the life of European traders (for *tanjidor*), central Javanese courtiers (for *gendhing mares*), and colonialism. Beginning in the mid-twentieth century, Indonesian government and private institutions took over these tasks.

In the early part of the twentieth century, we learn of the increasing exposure of Indonesian people to Western music, especially popular genres. Films, radio, and the phonograph contributed to the wide dissemination of Western music and cassette technology expedited the expansion of Western popular music. These developments inspired the emergence of different forms of Western-based Indonesian popular music. Although the spread of Western popular music was temporarily halted during the Sukarno regime, during the New Order period under Suharto’s regime Western commercial popular culture and all kinds of Western music

genres flooded Indonesia. Indonesian popular music was reinvigorated, and new popular musical genres emerged.

This development shaped the character of hybridization, pushing toward the mixing of traditional music with Western music; hence, the emergence of all sorts of Western-Indonesian music styles and genres, such as *campursari* and music presented at the Yogyakarta Gamelan Festival. Regarding *gendhing mares*, this musical genre marks a special distinction in the repertoire of Yogyakarta court gamelan, a source of pride to the courtiers there. The prevalent atmosphere of Javanese-Western musical hybridity since the 1980s has contributed to the decision of using *gendhing mares* in the performance of *bedhaya* Semang in 2006. In this sense, *gendhing mares* is conceived as both a special musical distinction of the court of Yogyakarta and a genre that is in step with contemporary musical development.

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## CHAPTER FIVE

### DRUMMERS OF THE SULTAN OF BUTON: THE LASTING INFLUENCE OF THE DUTCH EAST INDIA COMPANY ON LOCAL MUSIC TRADITIONS

Miriam L. Brenner

*Bau Bau, 2007*

In 2007, while doing my Bachelor of Arts in musicology, I chose to do fieldwork in a faraway place, gathering my own field data, and above all having a firsthand experience of music in context. I was fascinated with Indonesia and after listening to the 20 CD-series of Indonesian music recorded by Philip Yampolsky for Smithsonian Folkways I got in touch with him. He introduced me to Bandung-based musicologist Endo Suanda and his Tikar Media Budaya Organisation,<sup>1</sup> and together we decided to carry out research on the music of one of the most ‘unrecorded’ areas in the archipelago: Southeast Sulawesi. We narrowed down the scope of my fieldwork somewhat and decided to make an inventory of the music of Buton and its surrounding islands, and to what later proved to be my encounter with a rich drumming tradition. While Buton had rarely been visited by researchers, I was not the first to have paid attention to its musical traditions. In fact, my own experience could be placed in a genealogy of musical encounters in which visitors from elsewhere had come into contact with local musicians; encounters which obviously left their mark on some of the islands’ musical traditions.

In this chapter I will focus on several of such historical encounters with the music and musicians of Buton, starting with the first interactions between the VOC and the inhabitants of the island in the sixteenth century, moving on to the account of Swedish ethnographer Walter Kaudern, who in 1927 (80 years before my own encounter) wrote a book on the musical culture of Sulawesi. In his book Kaudern also briefly touches upon the ‘Drummers of the Sultan of Boeton’. Furthermore, in 1937 government linguist Van den Berg described some of Buton’s musical richness, making

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<sup>1</sup> Suanda was the project director of the local partner organization that was founded specifically for this recording project; MSPI (*Masyarakat Seni Pertunjukan Indonesia*).



explicit mention of the very same drummers of the Sultan and the flag his guards carried along in procession, which resembled the splendour and might of the former Dutch East Asia Trading Company (VOC). The last of these encounters then is my own visit in 2007.

Aside from describing how this peculiar drumming tradition has transformed over time, I will explain which aspects of Dutch imperial tradition were mimicked, musical or otherwise. I will begin with Homi Bhabha's (2005) concept of 'spheres of activity', coined in 1994, referring to those cultural aspects through which the colonizer can exert its power, with music being one, though often neglected domain. How has the musical sphere functioned in processes of Othering, both on the side of colonizers and the colonized? Which musical features have been selected to do so, and which ones have been left out? And, most importantly, what may have been the primary drive for Butonese musicians to adopt imported musical elements? Before getting to these questions and the encounters from which they arose, let me first introduce some of the islands musical richness.

#### *Buton Island, a Musical Context*

The Isle of Buton, located off Southeast Sulawesi's coast, is strategically positioned between the port city of Makassar and the spice islands of Maluku. The islands situated off the coast were deemed important to the Southeast Asian maritime trade and, consequently, became part of an ongoing power struggle (Evers 1988; Evers and Heallquist 1991). Until the 1960's, Buton was also the centre of the Kingdom of Wolio, its capital being the city of Bau Bau, from where a sultan had ruled over the surrounding islands of Muna, Kabaena and the Tungkang Besi Islands.

In 1542, Buton became a Sultanate when Buton's sixth monarch, Raja Mulae – Sultan Murham came to power (Pigeaud 1960: 17). The Sultan had converted to Islam under the influence of Abdul Wahid who, according to local tradition, brought the religion to the island (Zahari 1977, I:46, 1980: 40). Other sources mention the implementation of Islam in 1580 under the rule of Ternate Sultan Baaboellah, although it is clear that some of the inhabitants were already practicing Islam by that time (Ligtvoet 1878: 31; Schoorl 1986: 1). Other Arabic elements subsequently found their way to the islands, including novel musical elements.

Much of the commonality between instruments in the region can be explained by having a closer look at centuries of trade and ongoing power struggles within the region. Gong chimes and bamboo instruments are found throughout Sulawesi, Borneo, the Moluccas and the Philippines

(Maceda 1998; Hilarian 2003). From the 13th century onwards, when the Buton area was subjugated by the Majapahit Empire, and its monarchy presumably came under Hindu-Javanese influence (Schoorl 1986: 1), Javanese gong makers are thought to have introduced their craft to the island. Other instruments, as well as forms of poetry that still feature prominently in Buton's music life, similarly originate from a foreign source and thus clearly reflect the islands socio-economic and religious past (Brenner n.d.). In the aftermath of the introduction of Islam, the frame drum *ganda maludu*<sup>2</sup> was introduced, named after the celebration of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (*Mawlid an-Nabi*), one of the primary ceremonies it was used in. In addition, the Sultan's prominent position and the musicians' affiliation to his *kraton* (the residence of the Sultan and his court dignitaries)<sup>3</sup> explain one of the most iconographic forms of music, which will be discussed below. Lastly, from the initial arrival of the VOC, the Dutch presence has had a lasting impact on Butonese music. Influences range from the self-styled bamboo versions of foreign brass instruments, a practice more commonly found throughout Southeast Asia (Boonzajer Flaes 1993: 48–49), to the tradition of the so-called *o-ore* buzzing wand that today is a regular feature of diatonically-tuned ensembles. However, this chapter focuses more specifically on the *tamburu* drum, which is mainly played during (military) processions, and can be considered the most obvious foreign influence on the island.

### *Sixteenth Century Contacts*

Schoorl (1986: 27) describes how The Netherlands considered itself to be 'master' of Buton and territories as far back as 1776.<sup>4</sup> Initially, the Dutch presence had been in name of The Dutch East India Company that first arrived on the island in 1612. At that stage, sovereignty over Buton was disputed by the Sultanates of Ternate and Makassar, but its strategic position had not gone unnoticed by Dutch Governor-General Both. In order to

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<sup>2</sup> In other parts of the archipelago the *ganda maludu* or *gendang maulid* is referred to as *rabana* or *kompang*.

<sup>3</sup> Much of the former Sultanate's hierarchical subdivisions still exist today, in spite of the Sultanate having been dissolved in the 1960s. Of the four existing social strata, two resided within the *Kraton*. This was the Sultan and his relatives (the so-called *Kaomu*) and the members of parliament and their families (the *Walaka*) (Fontijne 1949). This system was overthrown during Japanese occupation, disrupting social, economic and political life in the area (Madleven et al. 1947/48).

<sup>4</sup> See also Ligtoet (1878: 84, 105); Rudyansjah (2009).

secure a monopoly over the spice trade, Both ordered his troops to 'ally' with the Butonese, to ward off the Makassar and other competitors in the region. He also got the Butonese to agree to a prohibition on growing certain crops and spices themselves for which they were to receive compensation (Kielstra 1908: 465). Sultan La Elangi (1597–1633), fearing Makassar's aspiration to expand, signed a treaty in 1613, thus ensuring protection by the VOC (Kielstra 1908: 465). La Elangi and his people made a favourable impression on Pieter Both, who wrote to his commanders about their good manners and wit (Tiele 1886: 34–35). Unfortunately, not everyone shared Both's sense of urgency to be based in Buton and bring in troops for protection, often leaving the Butonese at the hands of the Makassarese. As a consequence, one of Buton's prime dignitaries, the *sapati*, decided to defect and join these very same Makassarese. It was with this background of increased animosity between different parties, that the Butonese would first hear the sounds of Dutch military music.

Three years after the court city (*kraton*) in 1634 had been fortified and the first hostilities had taken place, the new Governor-General Van Diemen arrived in Buton demanding retaliation money. The Butonese did not comply and further hostilities were inevitable. After initial success withstanding the Dutch, the Butonese could not cope with a second siege of their city. Eventually they were defeated due to intelligence provided by locals (Schoorl 1991: 35). Van Diemen's report of his victory is the earliest account of European drums sounding over Buton. He refers to their prominent role in the battle:

And our braves – with flags flying and drums beating as they should – marched alongside the city at the foot of the mountain to look for suitable access, intimidated the enemy so, that no one dared to show themselves outside of the city (see Tiele 1886: 337).<sup>5</sup>

Likewise, the intimidating effect of the drums must have impressed the Sultan who decided to use the instruments to his own advantage to frighten others.

Originally, Western drums were more than just musical instruments, gaining much of their importance from the military context in which they were initially embedded. Along with other instruments such as cymbals

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<sup>5</sup> Translated from the Dutch '[...] ende heft de couragie van d'onse, die in geode ordre met vliegende vaendels endo trommelslgh, opden voet des berghs, langhs de stadt marcheerden, omme bequaem acces te soecken, den vijant sulx g'intimideert, dat sich niemant buyten de stadt dorste verthoonen [...]'].

and horns, drums were implemented in European military companies, after seeing how they had been used by Turkish military bands in early Ottoman times. In an Asian context, drums were used not only in battle but also in military processions for both formal and informal occasions. They helped maintain a consistent marching pace, they could signal what to do, but they also struck fear in the hearts of the enemy, impressed and intimidated. The Sultan's choice to mimic European drum patterns seems to have been based on their awe-inspiring potential in particular.

In the mid-seventeenth century, all Sultanates east and west of Buton surrendered to the Dutch East India Company and the 'Pax Neerlandica' was established. From this point onwards, the Sultanate of Buton would be appointed with a local ruler to exercise 'self governance'. However, the Dutch presence would be continuous and in reality the Sultan's power was reduced to that of administrative status only (Ligtvoet 1878: 31; Kielstra 1908: 452–465).

*Kaudern's 1920s Quest through Celebes*

After its bankruptcy in 1798, all VOC lands were declared to belong to the new Dutch National Colony. But while the Dutch would be present in the region for almost 300 years, it was only from 1906 onwards that intervention in all spheres of activity would become manifest and an objective in itself. Although in name still self-governing, Buton would from then on become part of a colonial system. Schoorl (1986: 2) comments upon how, in this period, the foundations were laid for an entirely new system. Whereas there is substantial literature on the first military and economical interests in Buton – often written by Dutch administrators, VOC officials or missionaries – accounts that deal with this transformative period starting in the late-nineteenth century are far fewer in number (but see Martin 1894).

Things changed with the publication of a 1927 book that deals with the musical instruments in what was then still called Celebes, and which is written by Swedish ethnographer Walter Kaudern. Kaudern described only two musical instruments for the area of Buton: a double clarinet and a drum.<sup>6</sup> Minimal explanation is provided by the Swedish ethnographer, but one of the photographs included (image 5.1) is telling as Kaudern (1927: 138) states:

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<sup>6</sup> Only evidence of the latter could still be found during my own visit in 2007.



Image 5.1 Drummers of the Sultan of Boeton by Walter Kaudern (1927).

In [this figure] are represented the drummers of the Sultan of Boeton with their instruments. They are of European pattern, presumably relics from the sixteenth and the seventeenth century when the Dutch East India Company ruled the Malayan Archipelago. The bracing of the membranes is that of the old European drum [...].

Mention of the Company seems to suggest that what we are dealing with is a military drum, and one that is often referred to as a 'field' or 'guard's pattern drum'. Generally, such instruments consist of a cylindrical wooden shell, the height of which is slightly greater than the diameter. Both ends are covered by a membrane made from animal skin and tensioned on a ring. Indeed, the black-and-white photo entitled *Drummers of the Sultan of Boeton* seems to prove this as it shows three European-style cylindrical drums with a method of rope lacing that is characteristic of military drums. The Sultan's drums are worn on one side, hanging from a shoulder strap, and appear to have been influenced by what is known as a 'side drum'.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> It can be argued that it is both a formal as well as an informal feature, since the position is a stylistic part of the uniform, but in practice it is worn this way for technical reasons.

Less discernible on this photo are the long, thin sticks held by the drummers, which seem to echo European drumsticks. Nothing is documented on the rhythms and if they were of European derivation, but if they were quick and consisted of meticulous ruffles, one indeed needed such European sticks. One may wonder to what extent these musical details were copied from the colonizer. Image 5.1 shows seven men standing in a row, separated by upright flags. They wear a variety of headdresses, clothing and are holding several objects in their hands. Three men wear a turban-type headdress; three others have extra-fabric ornaments and one other type of headdress is also shown. Four flags and three drums are accounted for, but the four men are not uniformly dressed. At least the most important element in the photograph – the drum – is consistent in appearance, since all the turban-wearing men carry a drum. Are these the same drums that intimidated the Butonese back in 1637, when Van Diemen attacked the city? Are the flags reminiscent of VOC times? And what is the function of these men in the photograph whose attire seems to imitate that of the former colonizer?

*Van den Berg's 1930 Visits to the Kraton and Beyond*

E.J. van den Berg (1908–1942) was born into a missionary family on the East coast of Sumatra. His father was an authority on the Karo-Batak language (Cense 1954: 154). From 1937 Van den Berg spent four years as a government linguist at the court of Buton, during which time he produced meticulous notes on the culture and customs of the Bau Bau Kraton. Unfortunately, most of these notes were destroyed during World War Two, but part of them were published before the war started and may tell us something of the everyday and, in particular, the musical life of the *kraton*.

While studying ceremony at the *kraton*, Van den Berg witnesses similarly clad men as Kaudern had done previously. In one of his publications, Van den Berg (1937: 658) explains the functions of these men and their costumes in more detail after observing a celebration of *raraja hadji*:

At the opening of such a dance the *alifirisi* elegantly waves the flag and whereupon he dances simple steps with the *loetoenani*. The *alifirisi* holds the wooden flagpole in one hand, while holding the flag itself in the other, so it cannot dangle during the dance. The *loetoenani* produces several swinging movements with his gala [...]. The *saraginti*'s do not dance, yet remain in formation close to the dancers while holding their *sapinggara*'s. While



playing the drum the *tamboeroe's* take a few dance steps as well. After the dance, the *alifirisi* continue waving the flag (Van den Berg 1937: 659).<sup>8</sup>

During a sultan's procession, *tamburu* drummers, as Van den Berg calls them, are always accompanied by flag bearers (*alifirisi*) and spear bearers (*letunani*). The latter a two, are dancers. But how does this relate to Kaudern's photograph? Some of these men are also clearly depicted in image 5.1, with additional men presumably being the *saraginti*, or Sultan's bodyguards.<sup>9</sup> These are the more formally dressed figures depicted in the right half of image 5.1. with a sickle ornament on their headdresses. The men depicted in images 5.2 and 5.3, taken some ten years later, seem to have long hair, although Van den Berg (1937: 657) describes them as having a wig, part of a dancer's regular attire. The *tamburu* seem to refer to the '*tamboer*' drummer, or '*tamboer-majoor*' drum-major. This '*tamboeroe* drum' is described by Van den Berg (1939: 488) as a 'wooden drum of rather common type, on which two drumsticks are struck'.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the lack of proper knowledge about which rhythms were played, something can still be reconstructed from Van den Berg's remarks on the *tamburu*. They were played while hung from a shoulder or strapped around the waist and could be identified by '*het roffelen der trommels*', '*tromgeroffel*' and '*op de maat van de trommelslagen*' (Van den Berg 1937: 658–659, 1939: 488, 496, 504). The words Van den Berg uses (respectively: the roll of the drums, drum roll, and the beat of the drum) are illustrative as they seem to refer to the characteristic rhythms and timbre of military or snare

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<sup>8</sup> Translated from the Dutch: 'Bij het begin van een dergelijke dans zwaait de alifirisi eerst op sierlijke wijze het vaandel en danst vervolgens met den loetoenani eenvoudige danspassen. De alifirisi houdt den vlaggestok in de eene hand, en de vlag zelf in de andere, zoodat zij onder den dans niet kan uitzwaaien. De loetoenani maakt onder het dansen ook eenige zwaaiende bewegingen met zijn gala [...]. De saraginti's dansen niet, doch blijven staan in de nabijheid der dansers opgesteld met hun sapinggara's in de hand. De tamboeroe's maken onder de trommelen ook eenige passen. Na afloop van den dans zwaait de alifirisi weer met het vaandel'.

<sup>9</sup> Kielstra (1908: 465) describes how planting certain crops, such as nutmeg, were prohibited but that the Sultan received compensation in return. In 1824, this resulted in an allowance to the Sultan, including the assignment of soldiers as honorary guards, possibly the *Saraginti* bodyguards.

<sup>10</sup> The word '*tamburu*' is translated in Anceaux's dictionary (1987: 176) as a 'Western type (army) company drum'. The *tamboeroe*-type drum, therefore, must have been recognizable to the Dutchman as a 'general instrument' and, we can conclude, was not an indigenous object. I conclude, therefore, that it must also be the same drum in Kaudern's photograph, which he speaks of as being a 'drum of European pattern'.



11. 'Alifirisi (p. 527).

Image 5.2 Alifirisi by Van den Berg (1937).



10. Detail van afb. 9.

Image 5.3 Loetoenani by Van den Berg (1937).

drums.<sup>11</sup> Within a ceremonial context, three extra musical features are further highlighted by Van den Berg, who states that a) the drums are played during a procession, however short it is;<sup>12</sup> b) they are played when the Sultan's insignias are collected and shown to him (Van den Berg 1939:496); and c) these drums are played at specific moments during the procession, when, according to *adat* customs, an honorary dance must be performed to the beat of the drums (Van den Berg 1937: 659, 490).<sup>13</sup>

The dance observed by Van den Berg does not give an impression of being a combat dance, even when the *letunani* swing their spears around. Nevertheless, the performance may be reminiscent of a war dance once meant to intimidate and enforce respect. The military connotation of the drums in this ceremony seems to signal such a function and so are the assigned ranks and the overall military character of the performance troop. Van den Berg (1939: 470) writes: '*Loetoenani, Alifirisi, Tamboeroe*, four *Saraginti*': these men form one of the eleven *kompanjia*'s, of which five belong to the Sultan [...].'<sup>14</sup> The word *kompanjia* is obviously derived from the Dutch *compagnie*, and originates in French military terminology, meaning 'a subdivision led by a captain' (Van der Sijs 1994: 72). The words *saraginti* and *letunani* have similar military resonances and can be linked to the ranks of sergeant and lieutenant. *Alifirisi* (according to Van den Berg, situated between the previous two in rank order), is possibly a local rendering of the Portuguese *alperés*, and refers to a rank below a lieutenant (Zahari 1977; Stevens and Schmidgall-Tellings 2004: 26). Anceaux translates it as a warrant officer, enlisted to the former Butonese army

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<sup>11</sup> Taking into account his detailed writings, which include a description when a previously unknown instrument is mentioned, it is safe to assume that he would not use such terms for an indigenous rhythm. During the Sultan's initiation ceremony within the *Kraton* walls, eight different *dala* rhythms are played. They are not referred to as 'common' or '*tromgeroffel*', implying explicitly that European rhythms have not been implemented in this traditional ceremony.

<sup>12</sup> Van den Berg (1939: 490) also describes how during this walk of only a few minutes the drums of some *kompanjias* sounded, while having arrived at the palace the *Loetoenani*s and *Alifirisi*s danced for a long time.

<sup>13</sup> Translated from the Dutch: 'dan wil de *adat*, dat zij als *erbetoon* een dans gaan uitvoeren, op de maat van de *trommelslagen*' (Van den Berg 1937: 659).

<sup>14</sup> From these observations, we may conclude that Kaudern's photograph seems orchestrated and misrepresents the actual *kompanjia* structure. This is usual for colonial photography (see the contribution in this volume by Ouwehand). Four flags reflect four *alifirisi* and, subsequently, four full *kompanjia* (numbering a total of 21 men) according to the *kompanjia*'s set up. But only eight men are present in fig.1. For each *kompanjia* group there is one bodyguard (*saraginti*), plus one. Three *saraginti* stand in the line, without their signature hooked spear. Only one dancer is present, and presumably the *letunani* is missing here.

(1987: 2). These *kompanjia*, then, are a sphere of activity that has been clearly impacted by colonial presence, with names and ranks mimicking those in the European military system.

There is one other occasion on which the *tamburu* is beaten. The military drum makes one (albeit very brief) cameo appearance within a ritual that is often inserted between processions. This orchestral composition very much resembles, if we are to believe Van den Berg (1939: 488), one that was usually performed at the installation of the Sultan:

The Pata Limbona and some other dignitaries also took a seat inside the tent, where they listened to a small orchestra consisting of two drums, both double membrane of slightly conical form, two gongs (*mbololo*) and a *tamboeroe* [...]. [...] Eight different rhythms (*dala*) were played, and to this repertoire the Pata Limbona would listen. After finishing all eight rhythms, the Pata Limbona returned home but the orchestra had to continue playing all night, with the exception of the *tamboeroe* (Van der Berg 1939: 488).<sup>15</sup>

As this ritual takes place within the procession, the drum may have been included for rhythmic reinforcement. Since the *tamburu* do not participate further after playing the rhythmic sequences and do not take part in playing dance music, we may conclude that the *tamburu* is not a regular member of the cast. There are no further sources to even indicate the *tamburu* was or is used for other purposes than the procession or this rhythmic ritual. Although the *tamburu* has clearly taken root in the Butonese processions, its use is likely to have been restrained to playing within a processional context, whether during the dance, while walking, or while presenting the Sultan's insignias during an initiation ceremony. Typical of these customs and ceremonies of the Sultan is the playing of a series of specific rhythms or sequences (*dala*). Van den Berg described how the *tamburu* was included in the regular ensemble during such an initiation service. In terms of construction, the *tamburu* remain very different from other traditional instruments, including other Butonese drums.

What happened to the Kingdom of Wolio in those centuries after the Pax Neerlandica was established? After a period of self-governance, the

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<sup>15</sup> Translated from the Dutch: 'De Pata Limbona en eenige andere waardigheidsbekleeders namen ook binnen de tent plaats, waar zij luisterden naar een klein orkest bestaande uit twee trommen, [...] twee gongs (mbololo) en een tamboeroe [...]. Er werden acht verschillende rhythmten (dala) gespeeld, en naar dit repertoire bleven de Pata Limbona zitten luisteren. Toen de acht dala eenmaal afgewerkt waren, gingen de Pata Limbona weer naar huis terug, doch het orkest moest den gehelen nacht blijven doorspelen, uitgezonderd de tamboeroe.'

Sultan's authority increasingly diminished and in 1906, following the signing of a mutual treaty, the Dutch were officially empowered to intervene in all of Buton's internal matters. The Dutch power play, from VOC times onwards, was presumably not only despised but also admired by the Butonese, which perhaps explains why its splendour and ceremonial display was incorporated into the little true authority the Sultan still had left; the power to impress in the realm of performance and spectacle. Thus, at a time when the Dutch East India Company was long declared bankrupt, Van den Berg (1939) could report how the dancers' or soldiers' attire seem to have been copied in meticulous detail from those worn in the times of the Company, as were other details of the procession. The uniforms in the procession consisted of 'fancy shirts with tight fitting jackets and were almost that of the VOC, as was its flag'; a yellow flag similar to that carried by Van Diemen's troops in 1637 and now used by Butonese dancers as Van den Berg (1937: 504) observes elsewhere (see image 5.3).<sup>16</sup>

#### *My 2007 Bau Bau Visit*

The 1906 contract between the Dutch and the Butonese 'was one (more) step towards the complete integration in the social system of the Indies', Schoorl wrote in 1986. Fast forward to 2007, when I set out to do my own fieldwork on Buton: It has been over half a century since the Sultanate was discontinued, following the passing away of the last ruler in the 1960s. Sulawesi officially became part of the Indonesian Republic.

Although the Sultanate's days ended over a century ago, present day *kraton* residents can still remember some of its former splendour. They were also able to point out what was happening on the photos made by Kaudern that I showed them, thus providing additional information on the *Drummers of the Sultan of Boeton*. So, for example, I learned that the head gear worn by the three men are named *kampurui* and are only supposed to be worn by the *tamburu* drummers, whereas the individual wearing what is called a *kalu* headdress is supposedly a dancer (Alifirisi or Letunani), judging from the uniform he wears.

Interestingly, in 2007 there was still one group of people who occasionally dress as depicted in Kaudern's photos. It is a dance group affiliated to the officially dismantled *kraton* that performs the traditional *galangi* dance. The *galangi* and the procession it was originally part of enabled

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<sup>16</sup> 'The Alifirisi all carry a flag, of which four are yellow of colour, fitted with the emblem of the VOC (in red)'.

the Butonese to re-establish local hierarchies. These ceremonies were vital in retaining the sense of a common ruler and the religious health of the inhabitants. The group leader explains that there is more to their appearance: 'It might seem as if the dancer has long hair, but actually,' he says, 'these are fibers from the pineapple plant'. The pineapple is a symbol of the Kraton of the Sultanate of Wolio. Although absent from the flags described by Van den Berg, wearing its fibres was a sign of respect and loyalty to the Sultan. Both *Alifirisi* and *Letunani*, in images 5.2 and 5.3, are wearing such a symbol emanating the power of the Sultan.

Practices seem to differ little from those described by both Kaudern and Van den Berg 70 years ago, and some of the elements performed here seem to echo a 400 year old past, from Company times onwards. The dancer's still wear *kalu* with pineapple-fibre wigs; their shiny, colourful shirts are decorated with a broad, white lace collar. When the *alifirisi* brings out his flag (see image 5.4), it is still a yellow one, but now the VOC emblem is absent.<sup>17</sup>

No new sultans have been installed after the inclusion of Sulawesi into the Indonesian Republic, making the *raraja hadji* initiation ceremony obsolete. With discontinuation of the sultanate a cultural manifestation is on the wane, and we lose a performing art, an expression of local identity and a platform for the *tamburu* to beat their drums. Fortunately the Galangi dance remains. The Wolio Dictionary describes the *galangi* as a 'kind of war dance' (Anceaux 1987: 36), the word itself being derived from the Wolio word *gala*, meaning 'spear'. The spear dance is mostly performed by the *letunani*, who function as the spear bearers. Today, the *galangi* has lost much of its warrior-like spirit and is mostly used in processions as to pay homage to high ranking officials.

But what about the drum itself, once being played by the Sultan's musicians? From my 2007 fieldwork, it soon became clear that the *tamburu* is not often played anymore, unlike other drums present on Buton and neighbouring islands.<sup>18</sup> Very few old *tamburu* are conserved in Bau Bau

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<sup>17</sup> The *Alifirisi* is not wearing a pineapple headdress, because one could not be made in such short notice. Neither is the lace collar displayed, because it had to be ironed properly, which could not be done at that time.

<sup>18</sup> Most common are the double membrane cylinder drums *ganda* and the double membrane, cylinder drum *ganda dimba*. The latter has two membranes, which differ in diameter, producing different tones, explaining the instrument's name *dim-ba* (Mekuo 1977/8). The manner of bracing in both drum types, points to an important discrepancy. The membranes of the larger *ganda dimba* are kept in place by (and tuned with) large pegs. In case of the *ganda*, both membranes are rolled around hoops, connected and tensioned by rope. *Dimba* are utilized during the seven-day bridal initiation ceremony *Posuo* and in dance accompanying ensembles.





Image 5.4 Alifirisi in Bau Bau Kraton (photo by author, March 2007).

today. Fortunately, I found one that was owned by the *galangi* group's leader. From this drum we can learn that the *tamburu's* cylindrical body was once made from *wola* wood. The shell is reinforced by hoops on the inside and an air hole is drilled halfway for resonance. Both of the drumheads' membranes are rolled around a rattan ring, and its goatskin dried and torn (see images 5.5 and 5.6).<sup>19</sup> The manner in which this old drum was constructed, confirms Kaudern's 1920s statement that the bracing of the Sultan's drums is similar to that of old European, perhaps Dutch, military drums. However, such drums have not been assembled for years, maybe even decades. Due to its complex manufacturing process, particularly in terms of putting the skins and the rattan ring in place, traditional membranes have now been replaced by factory-made versions. Presently, all *tamburu* consist of wooden shells covered by synthetic drumheads and include snares on the bottom, a previously unknown practice (see images 5.7 and 5.8) (Zahari 1977). By adapting to modern standards and seeking for new contexts the *tamburu* continues to be part of the Wolio culture.

<sup>19</sup> Two wooden hoops of this extant drum (30 cm in diameter and 3 cm wide) show ten holes at one third the width, to enable the lacing. Colour variations where the hoops used to be attached to the body, are visible on both ends of the shell.



Image 5.5 Old *tamburu* drum just outside of the Kraton (photo by author, March 2007).



Image 5.6 Membrane of old *tamburu* drum in image 6 (Photo by author, March 2007).



Image 5.7 New *tamburu* with factory made membranes and snare (photo by author, March 2007).



Image 5.8 *Tamburu* played from the side adorned by the Kraton's pineapple (photo by author, March 2007).

### *Conclusion*

The history of Buton has overt musical resonances. The musical instrument most affected by the encounter with the VOC is the military drum called the *tamburu*. The drum, once adopted from a military practice of a foreign power, was inserted into a ritual that was to uphold local strength. Formal elements of its performance were meticulously copied, ranging from the uniform worn by the *tamburu* drummers and other *kompanjia* members, a yellow flag featuring the VOC emblem, and the ranks of the *kompanjia* itself. Informal musical features were to be found in the European style of playing the drum, the position in which it is placed to play (very similar to that of the military) and the 'roll of the drum' that is so familiar to the Western ear. These drum rhythms appear to have been chosen intentionally and selected for their intimidating and march-like character.

In his writing of Butonese history, Schoorl (1986) describes how the Sultanate's position weakens with the Company gaining power within the region, forbidding its ruler and his subjects from growing or trading spices. New hierarchies are established, which are affirmed by both colonizer and the colonized. Schoorl argues that before and after the implementation of Islam, certain ceremonies prevailed that functioned to express the power of the Sultan and to unite his realm. Instrumental in this were the idea of the Wolio *kraton* being at its religious-cultural centre (see Ligtoet 1878) and the Sultan's position as representative of God on earth. With the Company's star rising, however, the status of the palace soon weakened and fewer public appearances and processions by the Sultan had a severe impact on the unity of his realm.

Some type of ceremony or power display may have been in place before the Dutch arrived. It may have included royal bodyguards or soldiers as well. But the Dutch presence altered such processions for ever more, with the Butonese now clearly copying both informal and formal elements of foreign power display. Ironically, one motive for doing so is to affirm the Sultan's power, both in relation to his own people and towards the colonizer, thus ensuring the (political) stability of his realm. He did so exactly by using those elements that publicly represented the powerful Other, its intimidating drum and colourful spectacle figuring prominently. But was it enough to translate European elements into an indigenous setting? Did adding a drum and a Dutch flag to traditional display truly prevent a sharpening distinction between colonizers and colonized?



As mentioned above, even Van den Berg, otherwise impressed by local musical traditions and especially traditional drumming practices, was somewhat derogatory in his description of the *galangi* performance. When visiting the northern village of Kalinsusu on 30 October 1940 for an end-of-the-fasting-period celebration, he encountered dancing *kompanjia* members, referring to them as ‘those fading remains of a little group of soldiers from the Company’s era’ (Van den Berg 1940, 1941).<sup>20</sup> By that time, the *galangi* had changed in meaning and character, its use resembling that of today’s welcoming dance to meet high-ranking guests. What Van den Berg describes is indigenous practice, but he judges it by colonial standards – referring to its former use and it being just a copy of what it supposedly once was. Importantly, this act of appropriation and copying the colonizer in performance could well trigger more differentiation; because the copy is still deemed inferior to the original by the colonizer. Bhaba would, presumably, see this as a case of ‘power-resistance’, through which the labelling of the old versus the new, the original versus the imitation, only intensifies and re-establishes such dichotomies in the long run, ultimately weakening, in this case, the Sultan’s power. History appears to confirm this fate, as ‘self-governing’ Buton began losing its power towards 1906, a process that was final with the passing of the last Sultan.

From an instrument of war in VOC times, the *tamburu* has evolved and is now part of a local welcome dance. In the process, new elements have been added to this once foreign instrument and the musical context in which it is presently embedded. Initially a direct copy, it later would be adorned with the pineapple emblem of Wolio. Its company’s spear and flag have survived not only the VOC, but also the colonial apparatus of which both Kaudern and Van den Berg were once representatives. Once a symbol of Dutch might and intimidation, the Butonese now preserve a tradition that is hard to find in the Netherlands today.

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<sup>20</sup> ‘Die verwaterde overblijfselen uit den Compagniestijd van een groepje van krijgs-knechten’.

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## CHAPTER SIX

### MUSICAL MODERNISM IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

R. Franki S. Notosudirdjo

This chapter addresses the issue of musical exchange between Indonesians and Dutch. This exchange contributed significantly to the birth of a new idiom and aesthetics prevalent in what was to be the global history of twentieth century music. Composers involved in this exchange were, on the Indonesian side, R.M. Soewardi Soerjaningrat, R.M. Soerjo Poetro, R. Atmadarsana, R. Soehardjo and R. Machjar Angga Koesoemadinata; and, on the Dutch side, included the likes of Mrs Hoffman (Linda Bandara), Dirk Schäfer, Emiel Hullebroeck, Bernard van den Sigtenhorst, Henk Bading, Fred Belloni, Constant van de Wall and Paul Seelig, some of whom are also referred to elsewhere in this volume.

By the end of nineteenth century, an urban mestizo lifestyle, which had developed the European music culture in the Archipelago for several hundred years, had deeply penetrated the life of local elites. In the case of Java, the role of the local nobility was crucial, as they were among the groups of people who had access to the education provided by the colonial government. As a result, the nobility received a considerable introduction to European music through public schools, especially the Dutch *Kweek-school* (vocational school). In the early twentieth century, the *Kweekschool* emerged as a social institution capable of producing modern indigenous composers and intellectuals. It was in this context that Indonesian composers began to engage in the pursuit of cultural expression by means of an individual musical language and aesthetics that was associated with the style of 'modern music'. Hence, it indicated the birth of Indonesian art music or *musik seni*.

#### *Ki Hadjar Dewantara and the Birth of Indonesian Art Music*

The pioneer composer, responsible for the genesis of twentieth century Indonesian art music, is R.M. Soewardi Soerjaningrat, better known as Ki Hadjar Dewantara. He was a member of the Paku Alaman court and an alumnus of the Yogyakarta *Kweekschool*. In 1916, Ki Hadjar composed a piece of music for soprano and piano called *Kinanthie Sandoong*. Although

*Kinanthie Sandoong* was derived from a Javanese *Macapat* verse form with the same name, Ki Hadjar's score bears his own (free) interpretation and new musical ideas similar to the practice of art music in the Western world.

First, the piece was written for soprano and piano, a musical form and instrumentation unknown to the gamelan tradition. Second, the piano transcription was based on the *gender* part, a metallophone gamelan instrument that functions in a quasi-improvisatory way in *gendhing* and relies on a somewhat personal expression. Third, Ki Hadjar employed a concept of harmony (triad chord and a bass line) that is also unknown to gamelan tradition. Hence, Ki Hadjar transformed *Kinanthie Sandoong* from a traditional *gendhing* into a Western model of art music composition. What makes this piece intriguing is that, in performing it, the composer demands the vocalist sing by employing *cengkok-wilet*, a traditional pattern of improvisation and melodic embellishment in gamelan. As a result, although *Kinanthie Sandoong* was inspired by European art music, its melodic structure, compositional texture and performance style of the vocal parts still very much work in the manner of Javanese traditional music. Hence, it harmoniously blends Western and indigenous (music) cultures, an ideal which was soon to be pursued by both indigenous and Dutch intellectuals.

In addition to its unique compositional idea, *Kinanthie Sandoong* also posed a serious challenge to musicians. By employing two musical systems together it could only be performed by a singer who had mastered both Western classical as well as traditional Javanese music. At the time when *Kinanthie Sandoong* was written, it is hard to imagine how Western musicians or indigenous musicians could resolve such a challenge.

Ki Hadjar was, in fact, the first composer to introduce this problematic new aesthetic endeavour. Drawing his inspiration from *Sastra Gendhing*, he stated that music should be able to express the innermost soul of a human being (see Ki Hadjar Dewantara 1967: 194–200). For this reason, Ki Hadjar insisted that music should come from a human being who has freedom in performance. A piece of music that employs full notation, according to Ki Hadjar, will not be able to express the innermost soul of a human being, because the player does not have freedom while playing. Notation, in his opinion, should be employed only as a general scheme of composition. It was for this reason that Ki Hadjar demanded that the vocal part of *Kinanthie Sandoong* should be executed by employing the unnotated *cengkok-wilet* of gamelan that bears a personal freedom.

In so doing, Ki Hadjar could avoid what he thought of as the weakness of European classical music. He suggested that (new) Indonesian music

should not employ full notation, but rather leave room for musicians to directly and spontaneously express their own innermost feeling while they are playing (Ki Hadjar Dewantara 1967: 194–200). This is basically the teaching of *Sastra Gendhing*: a man who does not understand *gendhing* (music) is an imperfect man (Ki Hadjar Dewantara 1967: 194–200). Music, according to *Sastra Gendhing*, is the only art form that is capable of expressing the innermost soul of human beings. Therefore, music, in addition to knowledge (*sastra*), has a very important role for mankind.

An article entitled ‘Toonkunst in de toekomst’ (The future of music), which appeared in the journal *Wederopbouw*, discussed *Kinanthie Sandoong* as one of the models for music of the future, albeit in a critical manner (*Toonkunst* 1920: 75–76). The problems that this anonymous critic had with *Kinanthie Sandoong* – having heard the performance – was that this piece sounded ‘too Western’, for it employed the Western diatonic scale and instrumentation (piano and voice). Consequently, from the strict Javanese point of view advocated by the critic, this piece lost its ‘Javanese essence’. Hence, to the critic, the music ‘[...] did not satisfy us. Gave us no originality, did not impress us, and did not move us’ (*Toonkunst* 1920: 75–76). The critic even accused this piece of being political, for it was conceived with the spirit of Indonesian nationalism. The author goes on to say:

The mistake made by this Indonesian-nationalist is that he tried to Europeanize the Javanese Eastern cultural product. Culture demands other creational values than government and politics.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, in addition to aesthetic motivations, Ki Hadjar composed his *Kinanthie Sandoong* with a certain political agenda in mind. Let me discuss further Ki Hadjar’s background and the political situation behind the birth of the piece.

### *Nationalist Aspirations*

Many members of the Paku Alaman family, who received high levels of Western education at local Dutch schools or abroad, became deeply involved in the nationalist movement of the early twentieth century.

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<sup>1</sup> Translated from the Dutch: ‘Een fout van dezen Indisch-nationalist, dat hij de Javaansche Oostersche cultuurruiting verindischen wilt op Europeesche leest. Cultuur eischt teneenemale andere scheppingswaarden dan staatkunde en politiek’ (*Toonkunst* 1920: 76).

Ki Hadjar Dewantara is no exception to this. By the time he enrolled in STOVIA, a medical school in Batavia, Ki Hadjar was already active in writing and presenting his nationalist views in various newspapers. STOVIA was a school for the cream of Indonesian society. It was at this school that Ki Hadjar met nationalist colleagues, such as R. Soetomo and Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo, and developed his nationalist ideology.

Ernest Douwes Dekker (grandson of Multatuli), one of the most influential leaders of the Indies nationalist movement, also had regular contact with STOVIA students. Douwes Dekker was the first to introduce the idea of forming the East Indies as an independent country (Surjomihardjo 1979: 448). When Soetomo founded *Boedi Oetomo* in 1908, Ki Hadjar joined this first Javanese nationalist cultural organization. However, as *Boedi Oetomo*'s view on nationalism developed towards conservative Java-centricism, Ki Hadjar left the organization (Hatta 1977: 8). He was, thus, one of the first Javanese intellectuals to conceive the East Indies as an independent nation-state and to devote himself to realizing such an objective. In 1912, when he joined *Sarekat Islam* – the largest Islam-based social organization in the East Indies – and became the leader of the Bandung (West Java) branch, Ki Hadjar even ‘challenged the central leadership and proposed dropping the Moslem qualification from the membership requirements’ (Shiraishi 1990: 59).

Finally, in 1912 Ki Hadjar Dewantara, Douwes Dekker and Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo founded their own organization, the *Indische Partij*. This organization turned out to be the first political party in the East Indies, bearing a radical East Indian nationalist ideology. The *Indische Partij* was the first political institution with a vision of the East Indies as a fully independent nation-state. Their political aims included: (1) to establish a nation consisting of all ethnic groups in the Indies; (2) to eliminate racial discrimination within the Indies; (3) to fight against sectarian attitudes and to develop collaboration among ethnic groups; (4) to establish the Indies national defence; and (5) to develop the East Indies economy (see Surjomihardjo 1979: 448–489).

As a journalist-activist, Ki Hadjar's role was central in pursuing this entire political agenda. In his writings in the 1910s, he was also the first person to use the word ‘Indonesia’ in a political sense, rather than an ethnographic one. Based on this evidence, I disagree with Jennifer Lindsay who argues that Ki Hadjar Dewantara's view on nationalism is Java-centric (see Lindsay 1991). In fact, Ki Hadjar was among the first Indonesian intellectuals to perceive the people of the East Indies as one nation, and he struggled to gain Indonesian independence through various paths,

such as journalism, politics, education, but also prominently through arts and culture.

In 1913, Ki Hadjar published an article entitled '*Als ik een Nederlander was*' (If I were a Dutchman) that resulted in his exile to Holland by the colonial government. This article was written in response to the colonial government's appeal to people in the colony to celebrate one hundred years of Dutch independence. As the Indonesian people were themselves colonized, Ki Hadjar reacted strongly against this idea. Ki Hadjar cynically said:

According to my opinion, it is rather impolite, shameful, and uncivilized that we – as I imagined myself a Netherlander – ask indigenous people to happily celebrate our independence as a nation and country. First and certainly, we will hurt their feeling because we, in their country that we have colonized, celebrate our own independence day. We are happy because one hundred years ago we were liberated from foreign colonizers; and how will this be seen by those whom we have colonized, who certainly also hope that someday they will celebrate their independence day? Or do we think that these indigenous peoples do not have feelings any longer as a result of our politics of colonization having oppressed and destroyed their feeling? If that were what we really thought, our politics had certainly failed, for each people, even those who are uncivilized, in fact, refused any form of oppression. If I were a Netherlander, I would never celebrate Independence Day in a land where we do not give its people independence. Based on this thought, it is not only unfair, but it is also inappropriate to ask funding from the people of this land to fund parties. We have already humiliated them by celebrating our independence day and yet we also want to exploit their money. What an act of spiritual and material humiliation!<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Translated from the Dutch: 'Daar ligt dunkt me, zoo iets van onwelvoegelijkheid in, het lijkt me zo ongegeneerd, zo ongepast, indien wij – ik ben nog altijd Nederlander in verbeelding – den inlander laten mede juichen bij de herdenking onzer onafhankelijkheid. Wij kwetsen hen eerstens in hun fijn eergevoel, doordat wij hier in hun geboorteland, waar wij overheerschen, onze eigen vrijheid herdenken. Wij jubelen thans, omdat we honderd jaren geleden verlost werden van een vreemde heerschappij; en dit alles zal nu plaats hebben ten aanschouwe van hen, die nu nog steeds onder onze heerschappij staan. Zouden wij niet denken, dat die arme geknechten ook niet snakten naar het oogenblik, dat ze evenals wij nu, eenmaal zulke feesten zouden kunnen vieren?! Of meenden wij soms, dat wij door onze lang doorgezette, geestdodende fnuik-politiek den inboorlingen alle menselijke zielsgevoelens hadden gedood? Dan zouden wij toch zeer zeker bedrogen uitkomen, want zelfs de onbeschaafde volken verwensen allen vorm van overheersching. Als ik Nederlander was, zou ik dan ook geen onafhankelijkheidsfeest vieren in een land, waar wij het volk zijn onafhankelijkheid onthouden. Geheel in de lijn van dezen gedachtengang is het onbillijk niet alleen, maar ook ongepast, om de inlanders te doen bijdragen ten bate van het feestfonds. Beledigt men ze reeds door de idee der feestelijke herdenking zelf van Nederlands vrijheid, thans maakt men ook hun beuren ledig. Voorwaar een morele en stoffelijke belediging!' (Ki Hadjar Dewantara 1952: 251–252).



In this article, Ki Hadjar also strongly demanded that the Dutch liberate his people from colonization. As a result of the insults that he and his close relatives had often received since childhood from Dutch children, both in school and in public, Ki Hadjar had developed a spirit of resistance against the colonizers (see Bambang Sokawati Dewantara 1979, 1989a and 1989b). This had now become an open political attack on the Dutch occupation of his land. As a consequence, Ki Hadjar was considered a very dangerous person who directly threatened Dutch colonial policy in the East Indies. For this reason, Ki Hadjar – at just 24 years old – was sent to prison and, later, exiled in Holland.

Since his struggle in the political sphere had encountered coercive Dutch power, Ki Hadjar switched to culture. As an intellectual, he was quite aware that one way to fight against the colonizers was to demonstrate that indigenous people and culture were equal to the Dutch. As a musician, Ki Hadjar believed that art music signified the highest form of European musical expression. Therefore, in order to demonstrate that indigenous culture, in this case Javanese culture, could be viewed as highly as European culture, Ki Hadjar ‘transformed’ *Kinanthie Sandoong* from a traditional *gendhing* into a piece of modern art music.

*Kinanthie Sandoong* was created with this idea as a background. The piece was composed for the First Congress for Colonial Education (*Eerste Koloniaal Onderwijscongres*), and performed by students of the Koninklijk Conservatorium Den Haag (The Hague Royal Conservatory) on this occasion in The Hague, 28th–30th August 1916 (Poeze 1986: 107–112). The score was then published in the prestigious Dutch East Indies periodical *Nederlandsch Indie Oud en Nieuw* (*NION* 1916: 378–379). *NION* had become a vehicle for Indonesian intellectuals to express their ideas and studies. This event was a crucial moment for Ki Hadjar to expose his politically grounded musical ideas. By showing the Dutch and other Europeans, both in Europe and in the colonies, that Javanese music could be rearticulated and performed in the manner of modern European art music, Ki Hadjar was principally saying ‘even those who are uncivilized, in fact, refuse any form of oppression’, let alone the Javanese who were as civilized as Europeans.

By employing Western notation, Ki Hadjar was also able to speak to the international community. Hence, Western notation functioned not simply as a musical notation, but as a political narrative as well. By using the colonizer’s cultural code, i.e. Western notation, Ki Hadjar effectively introduced the problematic ‘modern’ Javanese music culture to European society. He used musical expression as resistance against the European cultural hegemony present in the Dutch colonization of the Indies. In so

doing, Ki Hadjar turned music into – using Wallerstein’s term – an ideological battleground, treating music as a political narrative against colonial power. By the same token, he was also able to speak to Europeans as a subject who controlled his own narrative, not simply as an object of European orientalism. It was only within this mind-set that Europeans could pay attention to and became aware of the problems of Dutch colonialism.

*R.M. Soerjo Poetro and the New (National) Music*

In pursuing the idea of music as a cultural resistance against colonialism, Ki Hadjar was not alone. His colleague composer, R.M. Soerjo Poetro was also seriously engaged in the idea of creating new music within the framework of a ‘nationalist’ ideology. Soerjo Poetro, in fact, was the son of Paku Alam V and Dewantara’s uncle. He was sent by his parents to the Netherlands in 1909 to study civil engineering in Delft. In the middle of his study, Soerjo Poetro developed a strong interest in music and became the first Javanese music theorist-composer.

Upon his return to Yogyakarta from the Netherlands in 1921, Soerjo Poetro helped Ki Hadjar Dewantara found *Taman Siswa*, a school for indigenous people, based on a nationalist ideology and local cultural system. Here he was in charge as a music teacher (for both gamelan and Western music) and director of Taman Siswa’s MULO-Kweekschool (junior high school-teachers’ college), until he passed away in December 1927 at the age of 35 (see Ki Hadjar Dewantara 1933: 26–29 and *Oedaja* 1930: 141). Among his pupils was the late Tjokrowasito (known as Ki Wasistodiningrat), a renowned master of Javanese traditional gamelan music and innovative composer.

Viewed from a musical perspective, Soerjo Poetro pursued the idea of a new ‘national’ music even further than did Ki Hadjar. In addition to creating compositions that blended Javanese and European classical music, Soerjo Poetro also strove to develop a theory that justified his experimentation. Moreover, he also tried to construct a modern *rebab* (bowed lute) that could incorporate his musical ideas (Ki Hadjar Dewantara 1952: 90). Soerjo Poetro believed that the most important task for the development of new Javanese music was to conduct research on the aspects of melodic formation, theory of *pathet* (mode), and construction of instruments. He felt the urge to find a system of notation suitable for the new music. In pursuing all these ideals, he was quite aware of the need to encourage

people's participation. It was in this context that he strongly emphasized the need for the development of music education for Indonesian society (Soerjo Poetro 1918: 91).

Soerjo Poetro was clearly the most articulate and productive Javanese music theorist of his generation (see Image 6.1). In my opinion, he can even be considered as the first Indonesian musicologist in the strict sense of the word. In his efforts to develop a theory of Javanese gamelan, Soerjo Poetro conducted extensive studies of Western classical music and Asian music cultures. Most of his scholarly articles were published in Dutch periodicals such as *Wederopbouw*, *Mudato*, *Nederlandsch Indië Oud & Nieuw*, *Weekblad voor Indië*, and *Hindia Poetra*. Indeed, Soerjo Poetro was one of the pioneers in the field of ethnomusicology who engaged in comparative musicology as early as in the 1910s, before the Berlin School of Comparative Musicology was established by Hornbostel and his followers (see Christensen 1991: 201–209).

By the time Ki Hadjar composed *Kinanthie Sandoong*, Soerjo Poetro had composed a piece of vocal music called *Rarjwo Sarajo* and had it published in *Nederlandsch Indië Oud en Nieuw (NION)* in 1916. This piece was composed with ideas similar to *Kinanthie Sandoong*. *Rarjwo Sarajo* was originally a *gendhing dolanan* (children's song) (Sumarsam 1995: 132). Soerjo Poetro transliterated this piece into a new art music composition for violin and voice, employing his own interpretation and new musical ideas. The texture was designed in heterophonic manner, similar to gamelan. The melodies written for the voice and violin are basically the same; only the one played by the violin has embellishments added, similar to the style of *rebab* (string fiddle) played in gamelan. In supporting his compositional ideas, Soerjo Poetro wrote an essay on how to perform his piece on the violin or violoncello (see *NION* 1917–18: 317–323).

*Rarjwo Sarajo* was written with a new notation developed by the composer himself. In his effort to transform the oral tradition of gamelan into Western written musical system, Soerjo Poetro created a four-line staff notation in which he accommodated the Javanese fixed pitch of a pentatonic equidistant *slendro* and heptatonic *pelog* scales. This 'new' interval device certainly created fingering problems for the violinist, who usually employs the fixed pitch of the Western tuning system. In his essay, Soerjo Poetro gave instructions on how to adjust a violinist's fingering in order to perform a *slendro* scale with the violin. In addition, he also explained how to read his four-staff notation in relation to *slendro* and *pelog* scales. This composition not only challenges the violinist to readjust his or her conventional practice, but also challenges the conventional musical system,

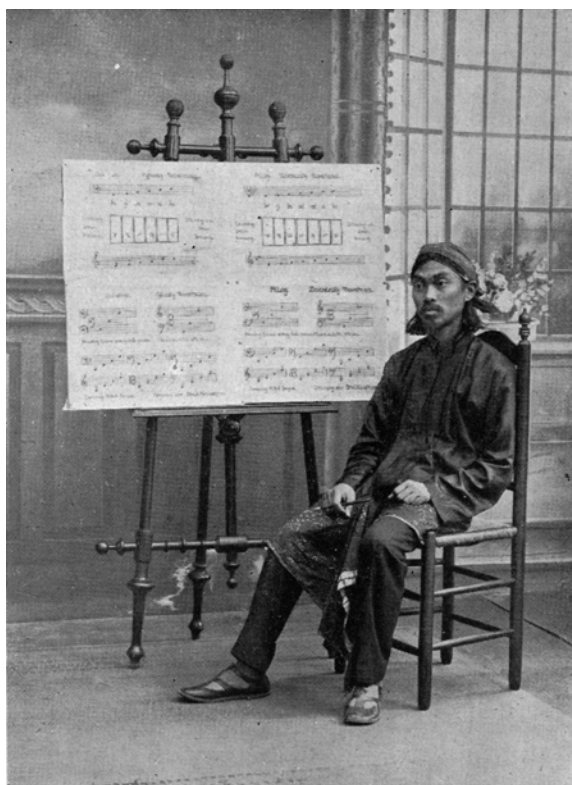


Image 6.1 *R.M. Soerjo Poetro in the Netherlands in 1916* (source: *Nederlandsch Indië Oud en Nieuw* 5<sup>e</sup> jaargang, no. 9, 1920, page 259).

which was based on Western classical music. In this way, I would argue that both Ki Hadjar Dewantara and R.M. Soerjo Poetro were among the pioneers of new musical ideas in the world history of twentieth century music.

By the 1920s, there were other composers emerging and working on similar ideas to those employed in *Kinanthie Sandoong* and *Rarjwo Sarjo*. Among them were Atmadarsana, R. Soehardjo and R. Machjar Angga Koesoemadinata. These composers were affiliated with and actively performed in Kweekschool circles. Koesoemadinata was a teacher at Bandung Kweekschool (HIK, see also the chapter in this volume by Wim van Zanten), Atmadarsana was a graduate of Poerworedjo Hoogere Kweekschool; and R. Soehardjo was a student of the Muntilan Kweekschool. A Catholic priest known as Pater van Lith S.J. founded the Muntilan School in 1904. With its strong music programme, the Muntilan Kweekschool

became the most prominent music institution in the colonial era. It produced prominent indigenous composers, critics and players for several generations (Budi Susanto 1990).

Atmadarsana's piece *Wirangrong* (1922) for two and three-part choir was composed using a traditional *gendhing* with the same name for his melodic material. According to Hadiwidjana, this piece was written for a *slendro* scale (Hadiwidjana 1925: 342–343). The treatment for *Wirangrong* employed a simple counterpoint technique. Two years later, R. Soehardjo, known as Hardjosubroto, composed a piece of music called *Birvadda Warawidya* (1924), which employed similar ideas and treatment as *Wirangrong*. Here, Soehardjo employed three traditional *gendhings*, i.e. *Tarupala*, *Pangkur* and *Celunthang* for melodic material (Hadiwidjana 1925: 342–343). This piece was composed for three-part choir; yet, it employed more sophisticated counterpoint techniques than *Wirangrong*. Although both pieces were composed using Western notation, both composers, as was the case with *Kinanthie Sandoong* and *Rarjwo Sarajo*, also demanded that the singers sing the piece in its original *slendro* scale and employing *cengkok-wilet*. Atmadarsana and Soehardjo did not simply 'transcribe' the entire *gendhing* into new Western notation in these compositions, as was the case with *Kinanthie Sandoong* and *Rarjwo Sarajo*. Instead, they treated these *gendhing* as new melodic materials and developed it into entirely new compositions. Hence, the traditional *gendhing* employed in *Wirangrong* and *Birvadda Warawidya* is situated in a new aesthetic realm that bears the composers' stamp more strongly. Therefore, I would argue that compared to *Kinanthie Sandoong* and *Rarjwo Sarajo*, both *Wirangrong* and *Birvadda Warawidya* embodied more advanced ideas in 'transforming' gamelan concept into art music compositions.

In the case of Machjar, his piece *Ladrang Mardi Goeroe* or *Ladrang Pagoeron* (1939?) was composed employing seemingly more complex polyphonic texture and counterpoint techniques than the four compositions mentioned earlier. This piece was written for four-part choir (SATB) in a Sundanese *pelog* scale.<sup>3</sup> However, in his effort to transform *pelog* into a Western tuning system, Machjar recreated a new set of *pelog* scales based on a concept of equidistant intervals, similar to a Western chromatic scale. Here, Machjar divides one octave into nine equidistant

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<sup>3</sup> The copy of microfilm from which this material was taken is already in bad shape. However, the textural design of this piece can still give some ideas about the counterpoint techniques employed here.

intervals of 133 cents (Machjar Koesoemadinata 1941: 60–73). In so doing, Machjar created even more difficulties for the singers, since they have to sing in a whole new *pelog* scale. By the same token, Machjar can also be considered as the pioneer of ‘just intonation’, which was developed later by a new generation of American composers such as La Monte Young.

Based on these facts, I surmise that this is a period when a new musical tradition, which I call *musik seni* or art music, was born in Indonesia. In this context, I would argue that Ki Hadjar Dewantara, R.M. Soerjo Poetro, Atmadarsana, R. Soehardjo and R. Machjar Angga Koesoemadinata can be considered the pioneers of Indonesian art music. It was through the idea of *musik seni* that the Indonesian and Dutch musical exchange occurred at the deepest level and in a highly productive manner. Since these composers were living in a bi-musical world, their works were strongly characterized by an endeavour to synthesize indigenous and Western musical tradition, an idea that has dominated the most recent contemporary art music movement in the global context.

Let me now discuss how the Dutch composers who were living in East Indies in the early twentieth century also came up with similar musical ideas, i.e. combining the aesthetics and materials of Eastern and Western music in their works.

### *Indies Composers and Musical Life in the Colony*

Driven by economic growth, by the turn of the twentieth century colonial society had developed a significant market for Western classical music. According to H. van de Wall, a prominent music critic at that time, in the first couple of decades of the twentieth century an enthusiastic musical life had developed among the European communities living in all urban centres of the Archipelago. As a result, this intense musical life enriched the spiritual life and culture of colonial societies substantially (see Van de Wall 1923). Wright also writes:

The residents of Batavia have a keen appreciation of good music, and these musical treats, for so they may be called, are always largely attended by the members of the club and their friends (Wright 1909: 451).

Nieuwenhuys (1982) explained the significance of musical activity for colonial society in the East Indies as follows:

‘A society without art, a society without culture’, wrote Frenchman Chailly-Bert in 1900. Indeed, one should not bother about things too enlightened in



the old Indies, it does not mean that there were not many music activities; a clear advantage of being isolated. Playing music was in the first place a way to socialize, a part of social education. However, playing music for them can also become a serious activity (see Image 2).<sup>4</sup>

In the twentieth century, many foreign musicians came to the East Indies as immigrants. The influx of foreign musicians to the Archipelago can be divided into several phases (see Amir Pasaribu 1986: 80–88; Van de Wall 1923: 275–276; Ido 1949, I and II). The first phase was the arrival of Italian street musicians. These musicians travelled around the streets of Batavia with their violins, flutes or harmoniums. Small local opera or circus companies also employed some of these musicians. The second phase was the arrival of Russian musicians who had fled the Bolshevik revolution. This group of musicians came in several waves. The first wave was the arrival of music instructors from the Russian conservatory in 1915. Among them, according to Amir Pasaribu, was the ‘well-known’ Moskwa Trio who resided, respectively, in Solo, Yogyakarta and Bandung and became music teachers. The second wave was the arrival of an opera troupe led by Feodorof in 1920. Then a group of musicians, including Shevchuk (clarinetist), Neudachin (clarinetist), Vondracek (cellist) and Varfolomeyef (cellist-conductor), came in 1925.<sup>5</sup> The last group of Russian musicians to come to the East Indies was a Balalaika orchestra in 1930.

In 1929, an Italian opera troupe also arrived in the East Indies. Among the musicians who stayed in Batavia were Ms Boskin, Mulloni (clarinetist) and Pelegati (cellist). A year later, a number of musicians also came from Holland. However, according to Amir Pasaribu, the only name his informants recalled was Nek Heim, a violinist. In 1932–33, a large group of musicians came from Hungary to live in the East Indies. Among these musicians were Vidor von Jechim (violinist) and Setet (violinist), whose virtuosity became a legend among indigenous classical musicians. The next phase was an influx of musicians from the former Czechoslovakia in

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<sup>4</sup> Translated from the Dutch: ‘*Une société sans art, sans culture*’, schreef de Fransman Chailly-Bert in 1900. Inderdaad, met al te verheven dingen moest men in het oude Indie niet aankomen, maar er werd wel heel gemusiceerd. Een voordeel van de isolatie, Musiceren was in de eerste plaats een gezelschapsspel, behorende bij de sociale educatie, maar soms ook was de muziekbeoefening een serieus bedoelde bezigheid’ (Nieuwenhuys 1982: 138).

<sup>5</sup> These musicians mostly lived in Central Java and had a significant role in providing musical training to indigenous music students at the local music conservatory in Yogyakarta (SMIND) in the 1950s.



Image 6.2 Indies family with their music activity (KITLV 31931).

1937. Among them were Rosenberg (pianist) and Renner (violinist) who were also well-known among the indigenous musicians. In the same year, yet more musicians arrived from Holland: Arie Noteboom, who worked at the well-known Homan Hotel (Bandung) and Wiener Schramelorkest.

The largest numbers of musicians who came and lived in the East Indies, according to Amir Pasaribu, were musicians from Manila, Philippines. However, most of these were jazz musicians rather than classical. It was these musicians, who were responsible for the development of jazz and dance music in Indonesia, and who dominated the urban musical scene in the Archipelago until the 1940s. In 1948, the Dutch colonial

government officially brought a large symphony orchestra consisting of 65 members to Batavia. This orchestra was called the Radio Philharmonic Orchestra and was led by Ivan Baarspul.

In addition to these large influxes, there were also musicians who came to the East Indies alone. Among them were Willy van Swers, Ms van de Wissel and Frans Wiemans, all of whom taught piano in Bandung, and James Zwart who taught composition in Jakarta. Amir Pasaribu himself was one of Zwart's students. Among these immigrant musicians were also instrument makers such as Belle (Amir Pasaribu 1986: 83). In addition to providing private music lessons, some of these immigrant musicians had positions such as conductors and music instructors at the courts of Surakarta, Yogyakarta, Langkat (East Sumatra) and Kutai (East Kalimantan). Others became staff musicians in clubs, hotels, and the military.

As a result of this long and steady influx of musicians from abroad, the musical scene in urban centres in the Archipelago was very active. These immigrant musicians were also able to enhance the quality of local musical performances. For instance, travellers considered a symphony orchestra in Batavia, associated with De Concordia and led by Nico J. Gerharz (1905–1916), to be the best symphony orchestra in Asia (see Van de Wall 1923: 275–276). Buitenweg also writes:

Up to 1904, there were not many works being performed except for dance music pieces, opera fantasies and airs. Gerharz had the courage to break this convention and performed music specifically written for symphony orchestra and featuring soloists. He was the man who first introduced works written for symphony orchestra in 1905. This was a fundamental change in the musical life in the capital. *Finally, this raised the quality of the orchestra to a higher level that allowed them to compete with European orchestras* (italics are mine). In the next few years they also performed works such as Berlioz's *Carnaval Romain*, Charpentier's *Impressions d'Italie*, Tchaikowsky's *Symphony Pathetique*, Dvorak's *New World Symphony*, and RimskyKorsakoff's *The Scherezade*. These concerts had a significant role in Concordia's activities and were very important to all music lovers of Batavia, including all the members of the social clubs in the city.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Translated from the Dutch: 'Waren tot aan zijn optreden in 1904 niet veel anders dan dansmuziek, operafantasieën en parafrasen ten gehore gebracht, Gerharz durfde met deze sleur te breken en voor orkest geschreven werken te doen uitvoeren, waarbij ook solisten optraden. Hij was het, die de symphonie-concerten invoerde, die in 1905 begonnen, als het ware een omwenteling brachten in het muzikale leven van de hoofdstad en uiteindelijk de Stafmuziek op een hoogte brachten, dat zij me Europese orkesten van naam kon wedijveren. In de loop der jaren werden onder meer stukken ten gehore gebracht als *Carnaval Romain* van Hector Berlioz, *Impressions d'Italie* van Charpentier, Tsaikowski's

News of the popularity of this symphony orchestra reached the Netherlands and became one of the most striking aspects of the colony for the Dutch who had just arrived. Moreover, in his book, Wright mentions that the outdoor concerts in Surabaya always attracted a large audience because of their high standard of performance (Wright 1909: 515).

One of the most significant developments in the colonial musical life in the twentieth century was the foundation of an organization called *Kunstkring* ('Art Circle') in many urban centres. One of the main activities of this organization was to bring foreign music groups to the colony to give concerts in many cities in the Archipelago. This was made possible due to the strategic location of the East Indies and the availability of Dutch sea transportation, which, since the 19th century, could bring people from Holland to the Dutch, French and British colonies in the Pacific and elsewhere. In the early twentieth century, each group of musicians that came from Europe to Australia, their main destination, had to go through the East Indies. Therefore, colonial society's art organizations in the Archipelago could invite them to come and perform in their cities.

The first *Kunstkring* was founded in Batavia on the 17th of September 1901 and was led by Carpentier Alting (Van de Wall 1923: 271). In 1914, all of the *Kunstkring* in the colony were connected under the name of *de Bond van Kunstkringen* ('Art Circle Association') (see Pino and De Boer-Pino 1998: 41).

In addition to *Kunstkring*, new theatre halls and clubs were established, such as *Schouwburg* and *De Mangkunegaran Sociëteit* in Surakarta. According to Buitenweg, in Central Java, Yogyakarta with its *sociëteiten* became a barometer of cultural activity. The Art Circle in this city was also active in inviting foreign musicians to come and give concerts.

Stirred by the new interest in Asian music in the late 19th century Europe, foreign musicians came to the colony not only to perform their music but to learn about indigenous music as well. Charles Wehle, a European pianist-composer who visited the colony in the 1860s, had already tried to incorporate indigenous music into his compositions (Notosudirdjo 1990:109). However, this idea was not popular before the turn of the twentieth century, when gamelan influence was recognized in the music of Claude Debussy. There were Dutch composers and (ethno) musicologists

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Symphonien Pathétique, Aus der neuen Welt van Dvorak en de Scherezade van Rimsky-Korsakoff. Deze concerten hebben in belangrijke mate bijgedragen tot de roem van Concordia en alle Bataviaase muzikliefhebbers waren dan ook lid van de sociëteit' (Buitenweg 1966: 106).

interested in *kroncong* and gamelan at this time. Among them were Dirk Schäfer, Emiel Hullebroeck, Bernard van den Sigtenhorst Meyer and Henk Bading (Grooss 1972: 122–132). This cultural contact encouraged van den Sigtenhorst Meyer to use Noto Soeroto's poem for his compositions.<sup>7</sup>

The development of the colonial musical scene at the turn of the twentieth century also produced prominent critics and composers who made significant contributions to the emergence of contemporary East Indies musical life. Among these critics and composers were Hans van de Wall (critic), Otto Knapp (critic), van Geuns (critic), Paul Seelig (composer), Fred Belloni (composer), Constant van de Wall (composer) and W.F. Siep (composer-conductor). Born into a bi-musical context, Seelig, Belloni, and Van de Wall developed their interests in *kroncong* and gamelan in their childhood (Grooss 1972: 128).

Seelig, for instance, grew up in Semarang and used to attend gamelan concerts in the houses of the Bupati's (regents) of Semarang, Jepara, and Demak. In 1890, Seelig went to Leipzig to study violin, piano, theory and conducting at the local conservatory founded by Mendelssohn. In 1894, he returned to Java and joined his father's orchestra. In addition, he also taught violin and piano. In 1897, he went back to Europe to study composition with Felix Weingartner. Here, Seelig had an opportunity to pursue his career surrounded by prominent European composers such as Hugo Wolff, Gustav Mahler, Richard Strauss, Max Reger, Claude Debussy, Manuel de Falla and Maurice Ravel. It was at this time that he corresponded with Ravel about gamelan (Grooss 1972: 128).

In 1900, Seelig came back to his homeland and became the music director for the Kasunanan court symphony orchestra. Here, Seelig learned how to play gamelan. Equipped with this knowledge and skill, he began to employ elements of gamelan in his compositions, among others *Gendhing Djawi*, *Lagu-lagu Opus 34*, *Bimo Koordho*, *Marche Javanaise*, *Opus 14* and *Trois Danses Javanaises*.

Like Seelig, Constant van de Wall (born in Surabaya in 1861) also went to Europe to study music along with his brother, Hans van de Wall. In 1882, he went to The Hague to study with J.A. Ackerman, and subsequently with Friedrich Gernsheim in Berlin. According to Grooss (1972: 122–132), in 1917 van der Wall returned to Surabaya and became an important music figure in town. While Seelig used gamelan elements as his compositional

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<sup>7</sup> Noto Soeroto was a Javanese nationalist poet who resided in the Netherlands in the early 20th century.

materials, C. van de Wall was more interested in using Malay songs for his compositions (see the contribution by Mak van Dijk to this volume).

Fred Belloni (born in Bukit Tinggi, West Sumatra in 1891), on the other hand, was interested in employing *kroncong* in his works.<sup>8</sup> Trained as a violinist during his youth, Belloni played in the Wilhelmina Orchestra that belonged to his own school, the Batavia Kweekschool and Concordia Respavae Crescunt or CRC orchestra. He also often performed in a piano duo with an Ambonese pianist, Willy Adeboi.<sup>9</sup> Belloni can be said to be the first composer of popular music in the colony. He was known as a composer of *oud indische liedjes* (songs of the old Indies), a genre of old Dutch popular song (see Amir Pasaribu 1986: 64–67). Many of his works were based on these Old Dutch songs. According to Amir Pasaribu, his most interesting orchestra work is entitled *Legende de Borobudur*.

In 1922, Belloni moved to Bandung and lived there until 1928. Seelig, who also resided in Bandung at that time, sometimes performed Belloni's compositions with his orchestra (Grooss 1972: 127). Most of his compositions, according to Amir Pasaribu, were recorded during this period. In the 1930s, Belloni had an opportunity to record his music with the Columbia Symphony Orchestra in London. Among his soloists were Sophie Haase-Peineman (soprano) and Freddy van Kroon-van Drunen (tenor). Since *kroncong* was popular at that time, Belloni's works were more widely performed in the colony than those of his other two colleagues.

The practice of incorporating Indonesian indigenous music as an element of composition seemed to be characteristic of Indies composers' works in that era. If the three abovementioned composers were interested in utilizing the Javanese gamelan, Malay songs and *kroncong* music as their melodic materials, W.F. Siep, the Batavian composer, utilized Sundanese gamelan. His composition entitled *Uit Preangerdrevén* (for piano and orchestra) treated melodies appropriated from *Angklung* (bamboo rattle music), *Ronggeng* dance music, and gamelan (*Kebo Giro*) as motifs of the composition.<sup>10</sup> Siep's music, along with that of his colleagues, appeared to represent contemporary Indies music in concert repertoires in the era.

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<sup>8</sup> Due to its Portuguese origin, until the 1960s *kroncong* was the only indigenous popular music genre to employ the Western diatonic scale and the concept of functional harmony, albeit in a very basic form (see fig. 15). The typical instruments employed in *kroncong* today are the ukulele, melodic guitar, pizzicato cello, violin and transverse flute.

<sup>9</sup> He happened to be my first piano teacher.

<sup>10</sup> *Deli Courant*, 24 September 1924.



Since the initial stage of creative musical activity in the twentieth century East Indies, the local composers' bi-musical environment seemed to be able to produce a unique musical hybrid that combined the aesthetics of Eastern and Western music. Within the same period, both groups of the aforementioned Indies composers and indigenous composers such as Ki Hadjar Dewantara, Soerjo Poetro, Atmadarsana, R. Soehardjo and R. Machjar Angga Koesoemawinata arrived at the same musical idea, albeit through different ideological paths.

Based on this fact, I would argue that the encounter of indigenous Indonesian music and the 400 year history of Dutch musical practice in the Archipelago was able to produce a new music aesthetics that later contributed significantly to the evolution of musical modernism in the twentieth century. This new aesthetics drew, particularly, on the elements of gamelan and European classical music. In the global perspective, it has strongly influenced composers such as Colin McPhee, Benjamin Britten, Lou Harrison, John Cage, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Iannis Xenakis, Toru Takemitsu, Jose Maceda, Ton de Leeuw, Louis Andriesen, Paul Gutama Soegijjo, Peter Sculthorpe, Jack Body, Steve Reich, Paul Dresher and entire new generations of North American, European, and Asia-Pacific composers who have developed experimental gamelan ensembles and compositions internationally over the past three decades.

### *The New Musical Synthesis in the Global Context*

Among the most important musicians responsible for generating this new global musical development in the twentieth century were Dutch ethnomusicologist Jaap Kunst and Canadian composer Colin McPhee. Based on his extensive research, Jaap Kunst, a Dutch bureaucrat who defined his professional career as a music scholar by studying gamelan, produced a seminal book entitled *De toonkunst van Java* in 1934 (see Kunst 1934, 1973, and the chapter by Djajadiningrat and Brinkgreve in this volume). Impressed by his work, a young American composer turned ethnomusicologist, Mantle Hood went to Holland and studied with Jaap Kunst. In the 1960s, along with Colin McPhee, Mantle Hood introduced lessons on gamelan music and composition at UCLA. During this period, Hood and his student, Robert Brown, brought Javanese as well as Balinese gamelan instructors to the United States. As a result, many young generations of American composers such as Terry Riley and Steve Reich spent time in the West Coast and studied gamelan.

Several years later, Terry Riley came up with a composition entitled *In C*, which indicated the birth of a new aesthetic in music called minimalism or repetitive music. In due course, Steve Reich's works brought this new musical aesthetic and movement into maturity. *In C*, and many of Reich's works, were strongly influenced by Balinese gamelan and McPhee's composition called *Tabuh-Tabuhan*, which also drew heavily on Balinese music. As it turned out, Riley's and Reich's works have inspired and influenced many other composers from across the globe, including Dutch composer, Louis Andriessen in his composition called *De Staat* and his works for Hoketus ensemble.

On the other hand, the late senior Dutch composer Ton de Leeuw received influences directly from his gamelan study with Jaap Kunst. In 1975, de Leeuw composed a piece for gamelan called *Gending*. Today, two of his former Indonesian students, Paul Gutama Soegijo and Sinta Wulur developed this new musical tradition extensively in Germany and Holland. In Germany, Soegijo founded an experimental gamelan group called *Banjar Gruppe*. Sinta Wulur also did the same thing in Holland. Her group is called *Multifoön*.

Through their compositions, the new musical tradition that was developed in the early twentieth century, both by indigenous Indonesian composers and Indies composers, have continued to flourish in fruitful ways on the European continent. Yet, in the archipelago itself, gamelan music has never ceased to be transformed into a new musical expression by the younger masters, such as I Nyoman Windha, AL Suwardi, I Wayan Sadra, and Rahayu Supanggah who, direct and indirectly, drew their musical inspirations from the West.

### *Conclusion*

To conclude, I would argue that the encounter of the Indonesian and Dutch musical practices during the colonial time bears significant results for the development of musical modernism in the twentieth century. Driven by two different agendas, indigenous Indonesian composers and their Indies counterparts arrived at the creative endeavour that synthesized Eastern and Western musical aesthetics. The encounter, I would argue, has proven that both indigenous Indonesian and European musical traditions were capable of providing solid musical foundations, ingredients and inspiration to nurture contemporary music theory and practice for the future generations. The most recent worldwide musical movement involving

gamelan and Western instruments, generated by composers such as Greg Schiemer and I Nyoman Windha, along with music ensembles such as Kronos Quartet, Bang On A Can, Multifoon, and the Indonesian National Orchestra provide strong evidence for the above contention.

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONSTANT VAN DE WALL, A EUROPEAN–JAVANESE COMPOSER

Henk Mak van Dijk

[English translation by Wim Tigges]

When starting my research on the lives and works of Dutch composers in 2004, in collaboration with the Nederlands Muziek Instituut, I had no idea that so much unknown yet extraordinary music was to be uncovered. Here were compositions in which a Western, romantic or impressionistic idiom were, to a greater or lesser extent, mixed with elements of the music indigenous to the then Dutch East Indies: *Indisch* classical music.<sup>1</sup> These pieces were written from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards by a small group of Dutch composers who were either born and bred in the Indies, or else had lived or worked there for some time: Constant van de Wall (in Surabaya and Batavia), Paul Seelig (Bandung), Linda Bandara (Bandarjaya and Yogyakarta), Berta Tideman-Wijers (Batak), Hector Marinus (Deli), Theo Smit Sibinga (East Java), Frans Wiemans (Bandung), Dirk Fock (Batavia), and Fred Belloni (Bandung).<sup>2</sup> They felt connected with Europe as well as with the Indies: on the one hand they were rooted in a Western musical tradition and participated in the Western musical world, on the other hand for new ways of composing and were inspired by indigenous culture, which included gamelan music, *wayang* (shadow-play), dance, *Indisch* opera and *kroncong* (a small guitar), classical Javanese poetic forms and Malay quatrains (*pantun*). Certainly, they were not unique in paying attention to oriental music, but their specific interest in music from the *Indisch* archipelago was shared with, at most, a handful of

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<sup>1</sup> *Indisch* is a specifically Dutch term, commonly but often confusingly applied. Originally a person of mixed blood with one Indonesian parent or ancestor would be called *Indisch*, hence Indo(–European). Later on, *Indisch* was also used to indicate people who were born in the Dutch East Indies or who had lived there for a considerable time, irrespective of their skin colour. In this paper, *Indisch* is mainly used to refer to the cultural mixture or combination of European and Indonesian music. There is no unambiguous translation for this word. Applying these definitions to Van de Wall you could say he is three times *Indisch*.

<sup>2</sup> Extensive information about *Indisch* composers can be found in Mak van Dijk (2007).





Image 7.1 Constant van de Wall, The Hague 1907 (collection: Henk Mak van Dijk).

foreign composers from the West. If there are many examples of exotic<sup>3</sup> compositions, there are only a few of specifically *Indisch* music.

Constant van de Wall (Surabaya 1871–Nice 1945) occupies a prominent place in the above list of composers because of a number of uniquely European-Javanese compositions: songs, pieces for piano and for orchestra, chamber music, and the opera *Attima*.<sup>4</sup> From these, it is evident that his eyes and ears were open to the country where he was born and raised. According to Van de Wall, ‘Java’ could support Western music, give it momentum and lead to brilliant compositions. He considered Western romantic music, with its sequences of harmonies providing tension and relaxation, to be most appropriate to this end and, according to him, it should continue to dominate in the blend of East and West. He positioned himself as the ‘only representative of the oriental element in music’<sup>5</sup> and as ‘*compositeur javanais*’,<sup>6</sup> and he received favourable reviews in the Dutch, *Indisch*, and French press alike. Yet, he felt unappreciated by his colleagues, because they so often failed to notice or to value ‘the work of *Indisch* composers’.<sup>7</sup> After his death, Van de Wall was soon consigned to oblivion.<sup>8</sup> Nowadays, international textbooks on exoticism or orientalism – out of ignorance – fail to show any trace of his *Indisch* music.

### *Singular Indisch Compositions*

In this paper, I want to discuss Van de Wall’s most important works that were inspired by Java: compositions in which the Malay and Arabic languages, the *pantun*, Islam, *wayang*, Javanese dances and gamelan music

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<sup>3</sup> I will use a definition by Taylor (2007: 2): ‘Exoticism’ in music refers to manifestations of an awareness of racial, ethnic, and cultural Others captured in sound.’

<sup>4</sup> For a biographical sketch of Constant van de Wall, see Mak van Dijk (2007: 117–150).

<sup>5</sup> See Van de Wall (1917a: 292).

<sup>6</sup> As mentioned on his concert programme 4th of April 1921 in Hotel Negresco in Nice. Coll. H. Mak van Dijk.

<sup>7</sup> Constant van de Wall, in ‘Causerie over Indische muziek en Indische componisten’, *Het Vaderland*, 27 april 1928.

<sup>8</sup> A headline in the daily newspaper *Haagsch Dagblad* ran: ‘Forgotten composer from The Hague’ (18 December 1948), and ten years later Van de Wall remained ‘unrecognized as a composer’. In the Fifties, his works would occasionally appear in programmes of concerts performed in The Hague. In 1962, the music publicist Wouter Paap wrote an interesting analysis of Van de Wall’s oeuvre, and the Hague daily *Het Vaderland* offered a second complete post-war outline of the composer’s life, ‘inspired by the East, connected by the spirit of France’ (2 January 1965). Since then, very little was heard about Van de Wall until the Nineties. His life story was not published until 2007. See also note 2.

3

## Doodenzang.

(Prière arabe pour les Morts.)

Grave ma non troppo lento. Constant van de Wall, Op. 41.  
(Ernstig, niet te langzaam.)

Canto.

Al - lä - ho, al.lä.hö — Ak.bar! A - sja - do an

Pianoforte.

*mp*

la il.lä.ha il.lä, il.lä.ha, il.lä - ha, — il.lä.ha, — il.lä.

ha — Al.läh! A - sja - do - an - na - Mohamma.

*p* *r.H.*

\*) Kan ook zonder piano worden voorgedragen.  
Eenige slagen op een Oostersche trom of tamboerijn dienen dan tot begeleiding.

Gravoorwerk en Druk van Breitkopf & Härtel te Leipsig. C. v. d. W.

Image 7.2 Song of Death (collection: Henk Mak van Dijk).

were first introduced on the concert stage. Surprisingly, he did not write these in the Indies, but rather in Europe, in The Hague between 1898 and 1907, and in The Hague and Nice in the period 1914–1921. A final *Indisch* composition dates from 1929. As has been said, the Western, romantic or moderately modern idiom is dominant and the specifically Javanese element is subsidiary. The works in question: Two Javanese Rhapsodies (*Rhapsodies javanaises* I and II) for solo piano, the first from 1904 and the second written in 1930; two Islamic songs for voice and piano: *Arabische Doodenzang* (the Arabian Song of Death) from 1905 and *Mohammedaansch Gebed* (the Mohammedan Prayer) from 1915; (*Maleische liederen* (the Malay Songs), written before 1906); the songs *Schimmenspiel* (Shadow-play) ( ) from 1918 and *Tropische Nacht* (Tropical Night) from 1919, for voice and piano, and *Een Wajang-Legende* (A Wayang Legend) (for string orchestra (1917)); finally, the opera *Attima*, which features a complete gamelan performance. The first ideas for *Attima* probably date from as early as 1902.

#### Rhapsodies Javanaises, *Opus 19 and Opus 51*

Opus 19 is the first *Indisch* piano piece by Van de Wall, and opus 51 his last one. Both rhapsodies are good examples of his mixed style, and they are two of the few Dutch compositions for piano from that era to contain sounds imitating the gamelan. They have been written in a Western tonality, feature great dynamic variation, and remain caught in a traditional Western musical form, that of the rhapsody. In this respect, Van de Wall followed in the footsteps of composers who created rhapsodies with an exotic or ethnic timbre. To mention a few examples: the *Rhapsodie maurisque* (Saint-Saens), the *Rhapsodie cambodgienne* (Bourgault), the *Rhapsodie norvegienne* (Lalo), *Romanian Rhapsodies* (Enesco) or the *Rhapsodies javanaises* by the Dutch composers Paul Seelig and Dirk Schäfer. They followed Franz Liszt, who had used this form in order to combine gipsy music, which to his ears sounded exotic, with a romantic idiom. The results of this were the enormously popular and virtuoso Hungarian rhapsodies.

What makes Van de Wall's pieces for piano so singular is the imitation of the sounds of the gamelan. This cannot be found in Dutch compositions of that period. Audiences had not been particularly impressed by the performances of Javanese gamelan orchestras, which could be attended at exhibitions in Arnhem (1879), Amsterdam (1883) and The Hague (1898). In 1879, for instance, only one composer had been captivated by the ensemble of instruments and its natural pitches: Daniël de Lange. After 1900, originally only Van de Wall, Seelig and Bandara showed any interest. In

France matters were different (see also the chapter by Matthew Cohen in this volume); French composers, including Debussy, were fascinated by the Javanese gamelan, which performed in Paris at the World Exhibitions of 1889 and 1900.

In the colony, appreciation of the gamelan was virtually non-existent. For a long time Europeans were rather dismissive of this type of music. In contemporary thought about progress, Western culture and Western music were held to be superior, and gamelan music – often experienced as monotonous and soporific – was considered the inferior music of natives. Moreover, to play a gamelan instrument was literally a down-to-earth matter. Therefore, hardly any Europeans did so, and for a long time there was no mutual musical interaction.

When he was still a boy Van de Wall will undoubtedly have heard gamelan in the town where he spent his youth, Semarang, a centre of gong-smiths; most likely, he will have visited the Kampong Insulinde in The Hague; maybe he went to Paris in 1900 to visit the *Exposition*. Was it there that a girl by the name of Attima had danced in a gamelan ensemble, a girl he might have noticed and whose name he used for his opera? Or, was it his brother Hans, who kept him informed about musical life in the Indies through letters, newspaper articles and art reviews from the colony? Whatever his sources, gamelan music became his inspiration for the first Javanese rhapsody, written in a romantic idiom, combined with *pelog* and *slendro* scales. Particularly remarkable was the use of *pelog*; never before had such a scale been applied in Western classical music. Indeed, Debussy's famous 'gamelan' piece for piano *Pagodes*, published around this time, only uses *slendro*. Opus 19 was given its opening performance in The Hague in 1905 by the renowned pianist Steven van Groningen. On 4 April 1921, the rhapsody shone forth at a presentation, which was entirely devoted to the *Indisch* work of the '*compositeur javanais*' (see image 7.3), in the prestigious Hotel Negresco, a conspicuous building on the Promenade des Anglais in Nice. The piece was announced in the programme with the subtitle: '*melodies populaires et thèmes du gammelan (orchestre javanais)*', and was performed by the French pianist Marie Panthès.

Opus 51 was written by Van de Wall in Nice in 1930, probably in response to severe criticism of his work from The Netherlands, to which I will return. Both rhapsodies were greatly appreciated in his time and, in addition to Van Groningen and Panthès, a number of renowned pianists included it in their repertoire: Carel Oberstadt, Marinus Salomons, Johannes Röntgen, Dirk Schäfer, José Iturbi and Elo Moussard. Years later, Oberstadt's wife Anna wrote to the Van de Walls: 'We are so delighted





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SALLE DES FÊTES DE L'HOTEL NEGRESCO

*Lundi 4 Avril 1921, à 2 h. 1/2 précises*

=====**CONCERT**=====

**Constant van de Wall**

COMPOSITEUR JAVANAIS

*dont les œuvres seront interprétées par*

**Marie PANTHÈS**

Pianiste

**Maria van de Wall**

Cantatrice

**Mirah Srikandi**

Danseuse Javanaise

.....  
L'Entrée de la Salle sera rigoureusement interdite pendant l'exécution des morceaux  
.....

**Prix des places ; Fauteuils réservés, 15 fr.; 1<sup>re</sup> série, 10 fr.**  
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de la Victoire, Legresle 24, Avenue de la Victoire et à l'Agence Théâtrale  
et Musicale, 34, Rue de France.  
.....



Image 7.3 Negresco, announcement concert of the Van de Walls 1921 (collection: Henk Mak van Dijk).



that that Javanese Rhapsody [I] is so very successful still. What a pleasant and interesting time it was when it was first performed – What pleasant memories of youth we do have' (4 April 1940).<sup>9</sup>

Arabian Song of Death, *Opus 11* and Mohammedan Prayer, *Opus 9*

*Song of Death*, in Arabic, for voice (choir) and piano, was first performed on 25 January 1905 in the Diligentia concert hall in The Hague, at a 'Van de Wall recital', together with the first *Javanese Rhapsody* and excerpts from the music drama *Attima*. A large audience had flocked to the performance and it was given a favourable press. In all likelihood, the *Song of Death*, with its Arabic text *Allâho Akbar! Asshaddo an la illâhaIllâh Allâh!* is one of the first compositions by a Dutch composer in the Arab language. It is a prayer for the deceased, recited by his bed or by his grave to accompany the soul to heaven. The text is identical to that of the *Adzan*, the *muadzin's* call to Islamic prayer, even the confession of faith by every Muslim. However, the *Adzan* for the deceased is slow and *khidmat*, serene, in character. It has a piano accompaniment, but the song can also be performed without, or with a percussion instrument.

*Mohammedan Prayer*, for voice and piano, in Malay, was published in 1915. The text of this song dates from the 8th century and is by imam Abu Abdallah Mohammad bin Ismael, also named El Bokhari. It is about the greatness and omnipotence of Allah. This monumentally composed song rises towards a grand climax; its mysterious and introverted opening with its Arabian-style arabesque tone is related to *tabirkan* or inward prayer; the ecstatic ending to *talilkan*, extraverted avowal. The *Prayer* was sung at one of the popular National Song Evenings in Zaal Diligentia in The Hague, by the then (1918) well-known concert singer Tilly Koenen, together with *Song of Death*. 'Both songs are surely the most powerful works of this evening. They testify to a deep passion as well as to a meekness, piety and fantasy such as can only be expressed by an oriental soul. Tilly Koenen understands this oriental soul splendidly', reported The Hague weekly *De Hofstad*.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Letter from Anna Oberstadt to Constant van de Wall in Nice, 4 April 1940. Coll. H. Mak van Dijk.

<sup>10</sup> *De Hofstad*, 26 February 1918.

In the present-day field of tension between Christianity and Islam, these pieces with their unmistakable religious message acquire a new charge, which is why they have become a daring choice in a classical concert programme: Who would bring these ‘texts’ as a performance in a concert hall out of their religious context, for example in Indonesia? How will they be received?

### Six Malay Songs, *Opus 6*

These simple diatonic songs for voice and piano or orchestra have not been dated, but they must have been written before September 1906. They were published in 1913, by Alsbach (Amsterdam) in an album with a fine batik cover and a large photograph of the composer inside. Later, in Nice, Van de Wall would compose two new Malay songs, opus 37: *Tjari sobat* (In search of a friend) and *Tidak seneng* (Not happy). They were intended to be collected in one volume with the others, but such a publication never materialized.

In an explanatory preface to the score, Van de Wall pointed out that he had been touched, not so much by the *kroncong* or *stambul* melodies, which were well-known in the Indies, as by the beauty of the French translations of so-called *pantuns*: short four-line poems in the Malay language that were very popular in the Indies, and in which love and eroticism played a major part. Yet, he had aimed at *couleur locale*; the first song was loosely based on a *pantun* melody, and the melody of the final song was that of the already existing and universally known *Nina bobo*. As an example of a ‘charming, simple and serious’ *pantun*, he cites the fourth poem:

|  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| <i>Apa goena pasang palita</i>         | Why light a lamp            |
| <i>Kalok tidak dengan soemboenja?</i>  | if it does not have a wick? |
| <i>Apa goena bermain mata</i>          | Why flirt                   |
| <i>Kalok tidak dengan soenggoenja?</i> | if you are not sincere?     |

To understand why Van de Wall did not wish to be associated with *kroncong* at this time needs a little explanation. On Java, *pantuns* were often used by wandering musicians as texts for their *kroncong* melodies. With song, *kroncong*, violin and flute play, they serenaded in sultry tropical nights, singing about love and seducing nice girls. The *kroncong* musicians, however, had a bad name because they were regarded as a nuisance, as fighters, and as a threat to morality. ‘Therefore, if as an *Indischman* you

wanted to be as European as possible, *kroncong* was taboo – a decent *Indisch* boy or girl did not listen to this kind of music' (Tangkau 1995).

*Kroncong* music had blown across from Portugal and was much loved by Indo-Europeans in the Indies (see the chapter by Mutsaers in this volume). Originally, the genre was known as street music with a doubtful reputation. It was played in the criminal districts of the big towns. Around 1900, however, *kroncong* benefited from the success of the so-called *Indisch* opera, the *Komedi Stambul* (Stambul Comedy). In the songs that served as accompaniment to the comedy, *kroncong* elements were gradually introduced and, in turn, *kroncong* players started to use the well-known *stambul* songs. Little by little, the genre became enormously popular in wide circles of the native community, being spread by means of musical boxes, musical scores, gramophone records and radio. Only a small top layer of the (Indo-) European élite qualified it as 'indecent', 'tasteless' and 'sentimental'. Dutch ethnomusicologists such as Bandara, Kunst and Brandts Buys even spoke of degenerate music. They also saw the threat of gamelan music having to yield to simple songs in the popularity of *kroncong*.<sup>11</sup>

A fine example of a *kroncong* scene ending in a brawl is provided by Constant's brother Hans van de Wall, in his well-known novel *The Paupers* of 1912. The aforementioned song *Apa goena passang palita* plays a role in it. The protagonist is Boong portalis, a handsome *Indisch* boy and a brazen fighter. He is adventurous and possesses 'a sensual nature'. Together with two friends he goes '*kronconging*' to chat up a cute Chinese girl. They set off in a dogcart:

So, on they went, at a moderate trot, along the moonlit, deserted roads, towards the Chinese camp, while accompanied by Krol's guitar and Lammer's violin, Boong's warm and sensual baritone sounded through the quiet night. He sang the Malay love song '*Apa goena passang palita, kaloek tidak dengan soemboenja?*' with a rich and tender voice, which quivered with unrestrained passion in the moonlit night. His lovesick, voluptuous nature betrayed itself altogether in the sentimentally heartfelt way in which he sang the pantun. And the warm sound of that amorous masculine voice

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<sup>11</sup> At a later stage, foreign musicologists rose to the defence of *kroncong* as a worthwhile musical blend with an interesting history. For instance, in her article 'In defence of *kroncong*' from 1978, the ethnomusicologist Bronia Kornhauser speaks of a successful artistic heritage of a mixture of Portuguese, Indo-European and Javanese musical culture. Other fine recent articles on *kroncong* are Yampolsky (2010) and Keppy (2008). Matthew I. Cohen (2006) wrote about the *Komedi Stambul*. In The Netherlands, *kroncong* as an expression of Indo-European culture gained ample interest once again at the Pasar Malam in The Hague from 2006 onwards. However, a standard work on *kroncong* music has not yet been written.

seemed to belong with the broadly lit landscape, creating an operatic scene in a natural setting [...].<sup>12</sup>

Because the girl is not at home, they slink off in a restless mood to run amuck in a nearby *kampong*.

In Holland, *kroncong* was less burdened with such connotations and it fairly rapidly became popular through the arrival of *Indisch* students. Various *Indisch* fraternities liked to play this music and at artistic evening parties, *kroncong* songs were often combined with gamelan playing. In the Netherlands, recordings of the genre were made as early as 1904 by a Dutch female singer, to be followed somewhat later by ensembles such as Eurasia, Insulinde and the Indische Club Amsterdam.

Evidence that in composing his songs Van de Wall blazed a trail can be found in the *Encyclopedie van Nederlandsch-Indië* (The Dutch East Indies Encyclopaedia) under the heading of 'Musical Art in the Netherlands Indies': 'He was one of the first to transform the Malay Pantun into Art Song and to introduce Malay and Arab songs into European concert halls, were they were sung in their original languages' (Van de Wall 1921: 405–406). Certainly, Van de Wall had written this piece himself, but that he was one of the first is definitely true. Especially the *Malay Songs* were, in those days, an original, modern and unsophisticated choice of repertoire.

The composer was very fortunate that one of Holland's best known female singers, Java-born Tilly Koenen, included some of his *pantun* songs in her repertoire. Early in 1906 she wrote from Berlin: 'Now that I have begun to work at your songs, I just have to tell you that these little musical pieces are growing ever dearer to me. Every song bears a different character, but the *Indisch* type which you so admirably represent is never lost out of sight'.<sup>13</sup> She also asked for the exclusive right to be allowed to perform them, and announced that she would first present them to an audience in The Hague on 26 January. Eventually, she was to sing the songs with

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<sup>12</sup> Ido 1912: 68–69. The original Dutch text: 'En voort ging het, op matige draf, over de maanlichte, verlaten wegen, naar de Chinese kamp, terwijl onder begeleiding van Krol's gitaar en Lammers' viool de warme, sensuele bariton van Boong door den rustigen nacht klonk. Hij zong het Maleische minnelied 'Apa goena pasang palita, kaloek tidak dengan soemboenya?', met volle, weeke stem, die in den mane-nacht lichtelijk beefde van onbedwongen passie. Heel zijn minzieke, wellustige aard verried zich in de sentimenteel-innige wijze, waarop hij de pantoen zong. En dat warme geluid van die verliefde mannenstem scheen te behoren bij het klaarverlichte landschap, vormde een opera-scène met natuurlijke décors [...].'

<sup>13</sup> Letter from Tilly Koenen to Constant van de Wall. Berlin, 9 September 1906. Van de Wall Archives, NMI.

great success in European capitals, as well as in a number of American cities. Having attended one of her recitals, Queen Wilhelmina asked her to perform the *Malay Songs* as part of the programme for a *soirée musicale* at court in the Hague, as well as at the court of Mecklenburg-Schwerin.

Years afterwards, the songs would still shine in Koenen's repertoire. On 19 October 1931 she reports from London about her concert in Wigmore Hall, four days earlier, to Maria van de Wall:

Just have to tell you and your husband that I have had an enormous success with the Malay songs in my most recent recital over here. I was so happy to be able to let people hear them once again. The Mohammedan Prayer went very beautifully, indeed it is a splendid composition, I have always had a special affection for this song. Enclosed I am sending you the programme with texts, it may interest you how neatly everything has been translated into English, so that everybody could easily follow the meaning of the song.<sup>14</sup>

The Dutch press extolled these unsophisticated songs to the skies. A little promotion volume accompanying the third impression cites a number of reviews in an occasionally florid prose, which definitely resounds with admiration of the exotic Indies.<sup>15</sup> *De Vlaamse Gazet* writes: 'In our arts, the Indies are slowly but surely taking up more space. Only the day before yesterday I heard five Malay songs; Beautiful! Delightful! Those Malay songs! They breathe forth an enchantment similar to that of an oriental flower, an orchid in the quite unfamiliar golden light of the divine Indies'. And *De Avondpost*: 'The soft melodious sounds of the eastern language appear to lend themselves eminently to song. In addition, the melodies and the harmonic arrangement of these songs possess a truly original exotic tone, and this music radiates an extraordinary charm'.

The *Malay Songs* had a surprising march of victory in the United States, where from 1914 onwards they became part of a Javanese promotion tour undertaken by the French Canadian singer Eva Gauthier. She had lived on Java for a number of years, had made the acquaintance of Van de Wall as well as of the *Indisch* composer Paul Seelig, and had been fascinated by the indigenous music. Back in the New World, she intended to propagate 'Java' in song and dance. Thus, for instance, she performed in a vaudeville

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<sup>14</sup> Letter from Tilly Koenen to Constant and Maria van de Wall. London, 19 October 1931. Coll. H. Mak van Dijk.

<sup>15</sup> The following press citations are mentioned in a volume promoting the *Malay Songs*, compiled by Constant van de Wall, probably dating from 1921. Van de Wall Archives, NMI.

show in which among other things she executed some songs by Van de Wall and Seelig, in an act named 'Songmotion'. She also included the *Malay Songs* in other programmes she called 'From Java to Jazz'.

In France, a highlight was the successful presentation of the songs, together with other *Indisch* work, in Hotel Negresco in Nice, already referred to. Van de Wall was announced as a Javanese composer, Maria Panthès played his pieces for piano, and Maria van de Wall sang the eight *Malay Songs*. The programme also included the dancer Mirah Srikandi, who was to perform *Indisch* dances from *Attima*. Who could that be? It was Maria van de Wall herself, dressed in traditional Javanese dancing costume, probably the first acquaintance of the city of Nice with Javanese dances.

Other female singers of renown included the songs in their programmes as well and they generally scored a triumph with them. By multiple requests, in the Thirties Van de Wall even made an instrumentation for a small orchestra, inserting brief preludes, interludes and postludes, which do not occur in the original version. They are now executed once more, for instance, at the *Pasar Malam* in The Hague, which recently devoted a lot of attention to *Indisch* classical music. In 2001, the Indonesian composer Sinta Wullur made contemporary adaptations of Van de Wall's *pantuns*, including them in the repertoire of her Duo Merpati (voice and piano).

Tropical Night, *Opus 13*, Shadow-play, *Opus 26* and A Wayang Legend,  
*Opus 28*

Van de Wall's interest in Javanese art appeared from a series of informative and wittily written discussions of the Javanese Orchestra dating from 1919 and 1920 ('Out of six million Dutch people there must surely be six who care a little for Javanese music') (Van de Wall 1919 a and 1919b), and on the Javanese shadow-plays, the *wayang*, in *Caecilia en het Muziekcollege* (Van de Wall 1920a, 1920b and 1920c). These publications certainly reinforced his reputation as an *Indisch* composer. The stories about *wayang* had a musical counterpart in his compositions *Tropical Night*, opus 13 (1919), *Shadow-play*, opus 26 (1918) for voice and piano, and the *Wayang Legend*, opus 28, for string orchestra (1917). The Dutch song texts are by Van de Wall himself.

*Shadow-play* (subtitled: *In popular tone; Javanese*) gives musical expression to an episode from the *Mahabharata* epos, and relates the adventures of the Javanese hero Arjuna who combats the wicked Raksasa (giant). The song opens in *pelog* tone with a piano accompaniment representing the sounds of a gamelan. The text opens as follows:



The sun has plunged away in flames.  
 The evening spreads its darkness round the silent grey desa  
 And there it brings sweet scent of distant, ancient times ...  
 The Dalang [story-teller] speaks with singing voice, proudly moved;  
 The people squat and watch and listen: . . . . .  
 Arjuna, Çiva's chosen one, combats Raksasa, Titan, enemy of Indra's realm.<sup>16</sup>

In the song *Tropical Night* the young princess Angreni, a character from Javanese mythology, dances 'stately as a lotus flower', a traditional dance. The song is written in long pentatonic lines, supported by the piano with a mostly pentatonic accompaniment; bass tones imitate Javanese gongs, and in the interludes the piano imitates a gamelan orchestra. The singer sings: 'The deep note of a gong breaks through the silence of the dark night. Tones of the kenong follow in a compact row of pearls, and soon resounds, in thousand beauties, a full orchestra in tender pomp of sounds [...].'<sup>17</sup>

A *Wayang Legend* for string orchestra was given the subtitle 'Arjuna's wedding feast'. The story is derived from the Minta-Raga legend. The information explaining the title reads: 'Arjuna – the noblest figure from Javanese mythology – has been elected by the gods to save Indra's Realm which is threatened by destruction from a powerful enemy. Arjuna succeeds and is rewarded with a kingdom and the most beautiful nymph (*widadari*), as his bride'.<sup>18</sup> This work was first performed in The Hague on 8 March 1917, played by the Euterpe string orchestra. After Van de Wall's death, the work still continued to feature in concert programmes in The Hague. Director Dirk Balfourt performed the piece on several occasions with the Museum Chamber Orchestra in Zaal Diligentia, for the first time in December 1949, and lastly in December 1961.

The abovementioned songs have been given a new lease of life: in the Netherlands by Dutch soprano Renate Arends and Javanese baritone Joss Wibisono in song recitals with *Indisch* music,<sup>19</sup> and in Indonesia by the

<sup>16</sup> The original Dutch text: 'De zon is vlammend weggedoken. / De avond spreidt zijn duisternis om de stille grijze desa / En brengt er zoete geur van verre, oude tijden ... / De Dalang spreekt met zangstem, fier bewogen / De menschen hurken neer / En zien, en luist'ren: / Ardjoena, Çiwa's uitverkoorn', / Bekampt Raksasa, den Titaan, / Die vijand is van Indra's rijk.

<sup>17</sup> The original Dutch text: 'Daar breekt een diepe gongtoon de stilte van de donkere nacht. Kenongtonen volgen in dichte paardenrei en dra klinkt, duizendschoon, een vol orkest in tedere klankenpracht ...'

<sup>18</sup> The original Dutch text: 'Ardjoena – de edelste figuur uit de Javaanse mythologie – is door de goden uitverkoren om het Rijk van Indra te redden, dat een overmachtige vijand dreigt te vernietigen'.

<sup>19</sup> See the CD *Angin timur gelumbang barat; Indische klassieke liederen* (Arends and Mak van Dijk 2006).

youthful Jakarta-born singer Bernadeta Astari, who on her tour of Java in 2008 included *Tropical Night* in her repertoire.

### Deuxième Rhapsodie Javanaise, *Opus 51*

Opus 51 for solo piano, from 1930, is the last composition coloured by Java, and it shows a complex design: in it we can hear romantic harmonies and impressionistic sounds as well as the atmosphere of the gamelan. The fifths and fourths in the overture, imitating the grand sound of gongs, and the pentatonic scales suggesting *slendro* and *pelog*, are clearly recognizable. It also includes passages reminiscent of Debussy by their use of the whole-tone scale. The slow movements sound like gamelan music because of a melody in *pelog* in the middle register with swift figurations in the descant.

The piece seems to have been written in reaction to a polemic between Van de Wall and the authoritative Dutch composer Sem Dresden who, in 1928, had expressed forceful criticism of his work. The controversy originated in some denigrating reflections Dresden made in the third edition of his *Ontwikkelingsgang der muziek van de oudheid tot onze tijd* (The growth and development of music from antiquity to the present day, 1928 [1923]), regarding the quality of the work by Dutch composers in the Dutch East Indies. Van de Wall had felt himself to be uncommonly unappreciated, because ever since February 1925 he had exerted himself by means of correspondence to have his name included in this survey. In the first two editions *Indisch* music was not even mentioned at all.

A heated debate ensued, whereby Van de Wall referred to his knowledge of the country and its people as well as to his familiarity with Javanese music. This baggage, together with the romantic idiom, could definitely result in a fine ‘European-Javanese’ composition, whereas most modern harmonies were less appropriate to this end, Van de Wall argued. Dresden, adept in modern French music, failed to be impressed: in his opinion, the composer lacked true knowledge of Javanese music and, even worse, made use of an old-fashioned type of harmony, which did not do justice to oriental music. In short: Debussy could do it, but Van de Wall could not.

The latter replied by admitting that he did indeed belong to the old romantic school. However, at one time he too had been modern, namely by incorporating gamelan music into his own style, in which few others had followed him. Moreover, the new harmonics of the ‘Young French school’ he thought to be more suitable for a generally exotic composition

than for a specifically 'European-Javanese' piece of music. He also pointed out that he had written his *Indisch* oeuvre between 1904 and 1921, that is to say, some ten to twenty years before. Was it not curious to blame a composer that his work of a quarter of a century ago was not modern enough? Altogether, Van de Wall questioned Dresden's affinity with gamelan music as well as his expertise in judging European-Javanese pieces.

Dresden concluded the polemic with a venomous response. His commentary on the value of Van de Wall's music seems to reflect great anger about the fact that his experience and expertise had been put in doubt: 'Really, your music is not ultimately insignificant as it may or may not be congenial to the eastern psyche. By itself and apart from any poetic considerations it is, page by page, *greatly below the normal level* (...) You speak a musical jargon which is no longer understood in the modern world' (Dresden 1928: 478). Thus the debate came to an end.

It is not known whether or not Van de Wall responded to this, but from a letter by Carel Oberstadt in October 1928 it is clear that he had put the aforesaid discussion before his musical friend. The latter answered:

If originality is a hallmark of value, your compositions are already approved for that reason alone. For at a distance of ten paces I could already tell from the notes that the music was yours. Equally so from hearing them. Actually, as a composer you are a most remarkable phenomenon. On one hand you are very modern, even though it might not seem so at first. But you just move more diatonically than those later ones who rather seem to find their special enjoyment in sharp harmonies, and that is why on the other hand yours show a touch of moderation.

Possibly, the second Javanese rhapsody from 1930 – a piece in which romantic, impressionistic and Javanese idiom contend for the mastery – was an artistic reply to Dresden's critique and a satisfaction to Van de Wall.

#### *Attima in The Hague*

Particularly successful was the performance of the music drama *Attima, Episode from the Life of the Javanese People*, which Van de Wall had originally composed as a long one-act piece in the years between 1903 and 1910, but which he later expanded into three acts. Because of the occurrence of a complete gamelan performance in the first act, *Attima* is the first and only Dutch opera prior to 1945 to use gamelan motifs and to include Javanese dances.

Various companies were interested in putting this work on stage. The first to come forward was Cornelia van Zanten, who led a singing academy in The Hague and under whom Maria van de Wall had actually studied. Presumably it was the high cost of production that caused her to abandon the idea after all. Subsequently, both the French and the Dutch Operas showed interest. Eventually, *Attima* was performed by the Théâtre de l'Opéra Royal Français de la Haye, directed by Leopold Roosen. The composer himself had made the Dutch libretto, but the opera was presented in a French translation by the Belgian Léon Paschal. The first night of *Attima* was in the Royal Theatre in The Hague on 8 January 1917, followed by four more performances. Arrangements were made for performances in the new season, but in the next year the French Opera was dissolved.

The story is that of a young girl, Attima, lead dancer in the gamelan troupe of Prawiro. She has promised to marry the Javanese Kartono, who plays the *rebab* in the orchestra. When the troupe dances and plays at a party at the Regent's palace, she meets the white, fair-haired Armand, a non-commissioned officer in the Royal Dutch *Indisch* Army, with whom she falls in love. Three days later they arrange to meet in the market place. Her rival, the dancer Aïssa, who actually desires to have Kartono to herself, hears about this affair, seizes the opportunity and informs him. In a fit of rage, Kartono kills both Armand and Attima.



Image 7.4 Scene from *Attima* (collection: Henk Mak van Dijk).

What makes this opera, which is written in a romantic style, so special, is the imitation, in the first act, of a gamelan performance with song and dance. The gamelan, made of papier-maché and imitated by Western instruments, plays the *Gamelan Prelude*, during which one of the dancers, Raden Mas Jodjana, a Javanese who was studying in The Hague at the time (see also the chapter by Matthew Cohen in this volume), performs a solo dance. Attima sings her sorrowful aria *The Little Golden Butterfly* and in three dances she impersonates characters from Javanese mythology: *Bingah* (Dance of Joy), *Bojong* (The Elopement) and *Bekso penganten* (The Bridal Dance). Although the titles suggest otherwise, these dances were written in a style that most resembles that of Grieg's music. In order to avoid monotony, Van de Wall had chosen to contrast the gamelan-inspired Prelude with romantic sounds.

### *Cohabitation*

The opera's theme was the (im)possibility of a relationship between white and brown, at the time a common type of relationship in the Indies, called cohabitation or 'concubinage', in which a native woman had a shorter or longer relationship with a white man. She would become his *njai* (literally 'sister'), his *Indisch* housekeeper/companion/lover. Such relationships had increased enormously in number as more and more single male Europeans arrived. In particular after 1870, cohabitation – 'he lives with his housekeeper' – had become a common option in all social layers of the colony's European community, much more free and attractive than marriage with a native woman, which was full of obligations, irksome, and experienced as problematic. It has been estimated that more than half, i.e. some 20,000 to 25,000, of the (Indo-)European men in the colony cohabited with a native concubine, and this was a common phenomenon, which was accepted by many (Baay 2008: 35–37, 62–64).

These *njais* were not only to be found in civilian society, but also on the plantations and in the barracks of the *Indisch* army. The children from such relationships were sometimes called pre-marital. Whether or not they were legitimized remained to be seen. If that was not the case, they would disappear into the *kampongs* often under needy conditions. Christian morality disapproved most strongly of cohabitation and emphasized official solemnization of Christian marriage. With this story, which of course had been written before 1904, Van de Wall not only broached a topical theme, but it also touched upon his personal history. After all,

there had once been such a native mother on his mother's side. Discussing such matters was generally held taboo, and people much preferred to keep silent about them.

Van de Wall did give the Javanese a voice of protest in his opera, for instance when the village elder sings to Attima: 'How can you do this, what affliction do you bring to us! All this about a strange man, utterly hostile to us. One of those men who once overcame our people in order to bend it to their will. By Allah! As a soldier, he will lodge you in barracks and suddenly dispose of you. Or else he will chase you away for another woman, or he will return to his own country'. And also: 'Never will he see his equal in you. Moreover, Attima, your child will be a bastard!' In her grand aria, Attima sings: 'Yes love warms me, yes love consumes me! Him I love, shining in his fairness, equal to a god'. Yet, she also expresses her uncertainty with regard to her lover Armand: 'you occidentals only care about the slender bodies of Javanese women'. And Kartono, the proud Javanese, is furious: 'a white mug instead of a real Javanese! A white dog!'

#### *Appreciation of Attima*

The press spoke of a deserved triumph and praised the melodious and original music, the intriguing drama, the excellent costumes and the picturesque scenery. A good impression can be obtained from the following review in the Hague daily *Het Vaderland*:

Yesterday Constant van de Wall saw his own opera – he modestly calls it *Episode from the Life of the Javanese People* – performed to a full house. It has definitely been a success and undoubtedly the opera, with its flowing music, its colourful oriental costuming, its painterly scenery and its very characteristic dances, will have many more performances. The way the orchestra sketched the gamelan was very artistic. The climax I consider to be the dances to gamelan music. These indeed breathed an extraordinary charm, which captivated the whole audience. The costumes were excellent in style, the scenery most picturesque (Van de Wall 1917b).

The Hague reviewer Louis Couturier (1917) added some critical words to his appreciation in *Het Muziekcollege*. The division into three acts he found to be disruptive – which naturally went at the expense of the arc of suspense – and the French opera singers' dances he considered but a meagre reflection of the real Javanese ones. This was all the more noticeable because of the authentic dancing skills of the Javanese dancer Jodjana, who had assisted with *Attima* by performing some dances himself. Moreover,



Couturier could not appreciate the often awkward and laboured Dutch text. Fortunately, the singing was in French, which according to this critic came across more 'readily' and hence more credible.

The composer himself provided some surprising little insights into the opera in the periodical *Caecilia*, at the same time revealing some of his private observations about 'the Javanese' (Van de Wall 1917b: 3–10). He concluded that the great gulf between East and West could hardly be bridged, in particular as regards the musical dramatization of Javanese scenes. The rift between the refined Javanese manners, which Westerners sometimes regard as incomprehensible and inexpressive, and the Western expression of emotion, would constitute a major obstacle. No matter how great the emotion a Javanese experienced, there would always be an apparent peace of mind, self-command and suppression of the passions. He also mentions the simplicity of the Javanese psyche. Kartono was unable to analyse the situation he found himself in and could only fly into a blind fury. That is why Van de Wall thought his opera was psychologically less complex than, for instance, Bizet's *Carmen*.

He continued his discussion by explaining, to some extent, the instruments placed on the stage. Although the audience thought it was a real gamelan, it was an imitation made of papier-maché, zinc and other materials, which the scene-painter of the French Opera had ingeniously put together. Once again, he emphatically pointed out that the reason he had not wanted a real gamelan to be played was that it would not show to full advantage in a closed space. On stage, the actors might make believe, but he thought that the music ought to be treated in a Western manner and had to be performed by a Western orchestra.

#### *Attima in Batavia*

On 8 December 1922, another performance of *Attima* took place, in the Municipal Theatre of Weltevreden in Batavia, this time by an amateur company led by Constant, and with Maria, aged 41 by now, in the lead as Attima. Once again, the couple worked with an accomplished Javanese dancer, Raden Kodrat, whose dancing guaranteed authenticity. Its success was even greater than had been the case in The Hague: the press reported lengthy acclamations, taking the form of an ovation – after every single act – and an enormous floral tribute. The composer was pulled onto the stage and received a glowing homage. The governor-general and his retinue were present at the performance as well. After the first act, Constant



Image 7.5 Raden Kodrat, in *Attima*, 1922 (collection: Henk Mak van Dijk).

was summoned by the governor, who conversed with him at some length, complimenting him upon his work.

Maria received favourable reviews as *Attima*; her 'pithy' stage-figure was praised and she was complimented upon her excellent costume, make-up, carriage and her fine, well-schooled, if not powerful, soprano voice. At the same time, the press pointed out the danger of executing a Javanese opera on Java: what in the West possessed the charm of the strange and the exotic lost power to a 'home' audience. The *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* (9 December 1922) mildly waived possible objections, but all the same it did mention the improbability of a romance between a *ronggeng* (dancing girl) and a military man, as well as mistakes in costume and the actors' un-Javanese behaviour. Working with dilettanti also remained problematic: although the performance of an opera by amateurs was called 'a risky enterprise' and 'an extraordinary achievement', the orchestral music turned out to be too loud for the voices of most singers, and the acting was often less than satisfactory.



Image 7.6 Front page music drama Attima (collection: Henk Mak van Dijk).

*Attima in Later Days*

*Attima* would also be discussed in appreciative terms somewhat later, in a biographical sketch of the composer by the musical publicist Wouter Paap in 1962. He thought it was composed with fantasy and professional skill, and in particular that the gamelan performance was an attractive and charming part of the opera, with ‘for those days a quite acceptable compromise between the eastern and the western musical elements’. Paap even extols Constant van de Wall as one of the few Dutch composers from that era with a pronounced talent for opera. *Attima* sometimes reminds him of Puccini, and he remarks that *Madama Butterfly* had been written only shortly before, in 1904 (Paap 1962: 76–80).

In May 2008, the opera was executed once again, with great acclaim and in the presence of a large audience, in the Royal Theatre in The Hague, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the *Pasar Malam Besar* in the city. This was a community project in which both professionals and amateurs participated. The stage-management emphasized the here and now, including all kinds of foreign tourists in the market scene, and put the accent on emancipation and the individual choice of the woman. *Attima* is forced into a marriage, but against the prevailing tradition she makes her own choice in favour of her love. The murder can be interpreted as revenge for the sake of honour, which is now a topical theme in the Netherlands.

A debate arose between critics about the quality of *Attima*: was it *couleur locale* on behalf of the *Pasar*, or an unjustly forgotten opera, deserving of inclusion in the repertoire again? Reviews, for instance, spoke of ‘a rare example of a Dutch romantic opera and a missing link in the history of Dutch music’. Also of the ‘heartrending verismo’, of ‘emotional and imposing music drama’, of ‘two cultures in conflict’, and ‘*Attima* demands a follow-up’.<sup>20</sup> The renowned opera periodical *Orpheus* devoted a sizeable article to Van de Wall’s ‘*vergessene Oper*’ (forgotten opera), thereby giving international publicity to *Attima* (Clarke and Mak van Dijk 2010: 11–13). It is not illusory that one of the many opera companies in Europe will perform this work once again. In any case, we may conclude with

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<sup>20</sup> *Attima* reviews: Mark Duijnste, ‘Hartverscheurend verismo in *Attima*’ (about verismo and ‘a missing link in the history of Dutch music’), *Opera Nederland*, 30 mei 2008; Paul Korenhof, ‘Mix van authenticiteit en eigentijds’ (about ‘emotional and imposing music drama’), [www.opusklassiek.nl](http://www.opusklassiek.nl), 30 mei 2008; Winand van der Kamp, ‘In opera *Attima* botsten twee culturen’, (about ‘two cultures in conflict’), *Algemeen Dagblad*, 22 mei 2008; Aad van der Ven, ‘*Attima* vraagt om een vervolg’ (‘*Attima* needs a follow-up’), *Den Haag Centraal Cultuur*, 30 mei 2008.





Image 7.7 *Attima*, The Hague, Royal Theatre, 2008 (collection: Henk Mak van Dijk).

certainty that *Attima* is the first Western opera to include Javanese dance and music, and in that respect it is unique. A prominent place in the international exotic canon seems justifiable.

### *Conclusion*

Constant van de Wall was pre-eminently a composer who allowed himself to be enchanted by the exotic East and especially by Java. Various characteristics of oriental musical style are to be found in his music: the free form of the rhapsody, pentatonic scales, specific intervals such as the fourth and the fifth, octave runs, melodies of limited range, appoggiatura in semitones, ground bass, the use of Malay and Arabic, the imitation of gamelan instruments, specific instrumentation and repetitions in order to suggest oriental monotony. This is why he became known as a composer of works with an oriental signature. Malay *pantuns* were heard for the first time in a concert hall, compositions like *Mohammedan Prayer* and *Arabian Song of Death* were unusual and original, and his opera *Attima*, which included a gamelan performance, could be admired in the theatre. Personally, he would refer to his *Indisch* music and his way of composing as the oriental element in his musical artistry. He knew the Indies: he had been born on Java, had spent his youth there, and in Surabaya and Batavia

he had had every opportunity to listen to indigenous music. The reason he gave for his specific manner of composing was that 'Java' ran in his blood, so that his music meant more than the usual fantasies of colleagues.

Yet, it is unlikely that Van de Wall made a thorough investigation of the Javanese gamelan. He may have regularly heard the gamelan in his boyhood, in particular in Semarang. In addition, he will have visited the Kampong Insulinde in The Hague, possibly Paris, or occasionally the princely courts of Yogyakarta and Solo, where he may have become familiar with Javanese court music. For sections of *Attima* he certainly made an effort to fathom gamelan music. Its *Gamelan Prelude* is a fine orchestration of the gamelan, suggesting *pelog*, and an early, original example of exotic music in the Netherlands. Informative as they are, his publications about the Javanese orchestra and shadow-play (*wayang*) appear to be no more than general introductions about Javanese gamelan and the art of dancing. Nevertheless, their musical counterpart, the songs *Tropical Night* and *Shadow-show*, are singular because of their rare musical expression of Javanese dance and *wayang*.

The Javanese element in his music plays a subordinate role because he was convinced of the rightness of western civilization and of the superiority of West European music. 'Where Javanese and European music associate, the western notion of composing will have to stand out strongly', Van de Wall (1928) stated. There is an obvious parallel with the concept in contemporary colonial politics of associative partnership, which meant that the Netherlands and Java were insolubly connected: Holland, superior and modern, dominates an indigent and primitive Java, which, however, can raise itself to independence under a just and strong leadership. A critical note by Van de Wall is found in just a single song, which is not, however, set on Java. This is *The Suez Coal-heavers*, which has a tinge of socialism in its text about the burdensome existence of coal-heavers in the harbour. In his music drama *Attima* he also ventured to raise a topical social theme, that of cohabitation. Other compositions rather indicate an exotic picture of the Indies: 'The beautiful Indies'. His in 1914 written piano pieces *Reminiscences of Java*, for instance, touch upon life in the *desa* (the village), pounding rice, weaving sarongs and the like. In other works, mention is made of sultry tropical nights through which the gamelan sounds mournfully, temples rising up in sound, Javanese *wayang* heroes, refined and gracious female dancers, sultans' daughters, and snake-charming fakirs. They refer to an exotic image of Java, which was then generally current: the island with its beautiful nature, its age-old civilization, and the refined culture of its court. It is quite possible that during his stay in the Netherlands Van de Wall saw the Indies more and more as his land



of dreams and as the paradise where he had spent his youth. After all, he lived in Holland from his eleventh until his thirty-sixth year. Only after his return from Surabaya did he start once more to compose in the *Indisch* style and was he able to profit from the popularity of *Indisch* culture in a city like The Hague in promoting his work. If there was not yet any interest in *Attima* in The Hague in 1904, in 1917 the cultural climate did favour its performance.

It is remarkable that whereas in the Indies he profiled himself as director and teacher of European classical music, and hardly composed at all, in Europe he distinguished himself as an *Indisch* composer. Here, his European-Javanese work was of course found to be singular and exotic, whereas in the Indies it was probably regarded as having a familiar colonial style. In The Hague, the market scene and the Javanese dances in *Attima* were definitely exotic to the audience; in Batavia, on the other hand, the spectators, used to colourful *pasars*, perceived nothing special in this scene from the first act and perhaps not even in the gamelan performance. The *Malay songs*, for instance, sounded familiar to colonial ears, and a comparison with *kroncong* was quickly made. In Europe they were perceived as surprisingly different, just because of the use of the Malay language. As was the case with other popular music (think of the tango), *kroncong* music was revalued: through Van de Wall's *Malay songs*, street music, which was popular with Indo-Europeans and had a bad name in the Indies, was performed in the Netherlands by a famous concert singer as art music, and was to be heard in all the big cities of Europe and at the courts of Queen Wilhelmina and her consort Prince Hendrik.

How different perceptions can be may appear from the following example. A Dutch singer may now wish to acquire the *Malay songs* because she wants to sing something original and exotic; an Indonesian singer because of the *pantuns* in her own language and the arrangements 'from Holland'; and the Indo-European because they remind her of *kroncong* and *tempo dulu*. An Indonesian audience would find the 'white' singer interesting because she is trying to sing in Malay; a Western audience embraces the Indonesian singer because of her authenticity and because she hails from the very country in question. I work with a male singer who lives in The Netherlands but was born on Java. Here, he is an exotic curiosity as a 'classically schooled singing Javanese', especially when he is in Javanese costume including batik.

Looking back on Van de Wall's music in 2010, what is particularly significant is its trail-blazing character, its originality and its (rare) European-Javanese idiom. Of course, the latter is an advantage to Indonesian

listeners, and the youngest generation of Indonesian musical students derive their identity from it. In fact, this is European music in which at last Indonesia plays a role, however small. There are instances of Indonesian musicians who want to perform this music in their recitals. Thus, for example, piano pieces and songs by Van de Wall have already been performed on Java, and in London the *Trois danses javanaises* (Three Javanese dances) by Paul Seelig. And in the Yogyakarta town hall, where in 2007 I was able to present my book *De oostenwind waait naar het westen* (The east wind blows west), the Javanese were surprised and proud that the Javanese element had already figured in European classical music so early in the twentieth century, and that it had been heard all over the world.

Similarly, Van de Wall's *Indisch* music has served by way of example to the Indo-European community which, by mouth of its leading man Tjalie Robinson, came to be aware of this composer's Indo-European roots. As early as 1955, Robinson had had plans to write Van de Wall's biography and to make him an example to his yet to be founded Art Club. From the Nineties onwards, Tjalie's relatives, meanwhile involved with the *Pasar Malam Besar* in The Hague, started to concern themselves with his life and works. Classical musicians were invited to play on their platforms during the cultural Tong Tong festival (part of the *Pasar* in The Hague), and on the occasion of their fiftieth anniversary *Attima* was performed anew in the Hague Royal Theatre. Last but not least: there is a Dutch public that considers itself often connected to the Indies and to Indonesia, and which generally lends *Indisch* classical music a willing ear.

To conclude: in an era in which many Europeans in the Netherlands and in the colony hardly appreciated gamelan, European scholars readily dismissed *kroncong* as being hybrid and inferior, and 'pure' European music was regarded as superior, Constant van de Wall (1928) ventured – with an appeal to his Indo-European roots ('the exotic runs in my blood') – as one of the first to introduce the *Indisch*-oriental element into his western compositions. Countless compositions concretely reflect his (musical) experiences in the Dutch East Indies, and testify to originality, professional skill and a love for the country.

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### Archives

The Van de Wall Archives can be found in the Nederlands Muziek Instituut (NMI, National Music Institute), The Hague ([www.nederlandsmuziekinstituut.nl](http://www.nederlandsmuziekinstituut.nl)).

### Discography

Music from Constant van de Wall can be heard on two CDs:

- Arends, Renate (zang) and Henk Mak van Dijk (piano). *Angin timur gelumbang barat: Indische klassieke liederen* (The east wind blows west: Indisch classical songs), for voice and piano. The Hague: NMI, 2006.
- Mak van Dijk, Henk (piano). *Herinneringen uit Java: Indische klassieke piano muziek (Reminiscences of Java)*, for piano solo. Veenendaal: Dutch Record Company (DRC), 2009.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### A MUSICAL FRIENDSHIP: THE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN MANGKUNEGORO VII AND THE ETHNOMUSICOLOGIST JAAP KUNST, 1919 TO 1940

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A special correspondence, in the form of a substantial collection of letters written between 1919 and 1940, has been the inspiration for this chapter. The correspondents were the Javanese Prince Mangkunegoro VII and the Dutch ethnomusicologist Jaap Kunst.<sup>1</sup> Although they came from very different worlds, they shared one common ideal: the study and preservation of the indigenous music of what was then the Dutch East Indies. This shared ideal is the reason for and essence of their sizeable correspondence, their ‘meeting on paper’. But what else can these letters tell us about both the correspondents and the period in which they lived? About their life, social circle, ideals and expectations? Our grandparents’ generation may not seem that long ago, but retrospective knowledge and a time difference of some 90 years make for considerable contrasts and give these letters their own character.

The date of a letter can be shocking in itself. This certainly applies to Kunst’s last letter to Prince Mangkunegoro, which was dated 12 April 1940. Kunst had been back in the Netherlands since 1934. In 1940 he was hoping to make another study trip to the East, this time in his capacity as curator of the Department of Cultural Anthropology at the Colonial Institute in Amsterdam. He wrote to the Prince in Solo (present-day Surakarta) of his plans to sail for Batavia from Genoa on the *Indrapoera* on 15 May. He had planned a stay of six months in order to collaborate with the NIROM<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Prince Mangkunegoro VII (1885–1944), also known as R.M.A. Soerjosoeparto, Prangwedono, was from 1916–1944 the ruler of the Javanese principality of Mangkunegaran. For more on his life, see Djajadiningrat-Nieuwenhuis (2006).

Jaap Kunst (1891–1960), a lawyer by training, left in 1919 for what was then the Dutch East Indies. Fascinated by the Javanese gamelan he stayed there and became a pioneer in the field of ethnomusicology. For an introduction to Kunst, his life and the new discipline he advocated, see Brinkgreve (2009), Van Roon (1995) and Proosdij-Ten Have and Van Roon (1992).

<sup>2</sup> *Nederlandsch-Indische Radio Omroep Maatschappij* (Dutch East Indies Radio Broadcasting Company).

to make recordings of 'the music of the principalities, and Sundanese, Balinese and possibly Madurese music'. After his arrival on 5 June he hoped to travel as soon as possible to Central Java. 'How I look forward to seeing all this back again!', Kunst wrote, full of expectation.

We now know that this journey would not go ahead. Even before the *Indrapoera's* planned date of departure, the Netherlands was occupied by the Germans and free travel was out of the question. Nor did Kunst return after the end of the Second World War in 1945. Firstly, the four-year Indonesian War of Independence made it too risky, if not impossible, to travel around and, after that, times had definitely changed. Field research into indigenous music by a Dutch musicologist was not exactly a priority in the young Republic of Indonesia. Furthermore, Kunst was not able to go back to meet his friend and supporter in musical matters, Mangkunegoro VII: the Prince had died in 1944 when the country was still under Japanese occupation. In short, with the knowledge we now possess, the letter of 12 April 1940 acquires an almost dramatic charge.

#### *1919 to 1921: The Beginning*

The two correspondents had first met 20 years earlier. Kunst, a young lawyer from the Dutch province of Groningen, had left for the Dutch East Indies shortly after the end of the First World War for a variety of more or less accidental reasons. A broken engagement, restrictive family ties, as well as great dissatisfaction with his job at a dull Dutch office had made him long for change and freedom. As an enthusiastic amateur violinist he had managed to persuade the singer Kitty Roelants-de Vogel and pianist Jan Wagenaar to travel with him to the Dutch East Indies to tour the archipelago as a performing trio. From August 1919 they performed no less than 95 times in different social clubs and artistic circles, not only in Java but also in Borneo, Sumatra and Celebes (present-day Sulawesi). The journey lasted a total of eight months. Unlike his travel and trio companions, Jaap Kunst decided not to return home in May 1920. He stayed: in the Dutch East Indies he had found a passion. Javanese gamelan music, which he first heard in December 1919 at the Palace of the Sultan of Yogyakarta, had captivated and fascinated him to such an extent that he wanted to know more about it. He wanted to research this magical, enchanting music.

Bep Schrieke, Advisor for Indigenous Affairs with the Colonial Administration, had presumably asked the Sultan if he could bring the young Kunst as a guest. Thanks to a family connection with the slightly older

and influential Schrieke, Kunst gained an ideal and natural entry into the world he wanted to explore musically. And so it was that Kunst, who at the end of 1919 was touring with his trio through the Central Javanese principalities, was also invited to a dance performance at the court of Mangkunegoro VII in Solo. Schrieke and the Prince from Solo had studied in Leiden together and stayed good friends ever since. This was the first occasion on which Kunst was the guest of the man who was to play such a crucial role in his life. On arrival in Surabaya on 28 December 1919 he wrote to the Prince about how impressed he had been by the performance: 'I do not recall ever seeing or hearing anything which, in all its different expressions, was so completely uniform, something in which music, song, gesture, colour and line were so in harmony with each other'. He only bitterly regretted that, as a Westerner, he was unable to understand the lyrics or meaning of the gestural symbolism. Kunst wrote that he had ordered a phonographic recording device in the Netherlands 'to record the overall sound of the gamelan and to help me where my hearing or the European notation might desert me'. He was already looking forward to returning to Solo after the tour and to having time for a more in-depth musical study. It is clear from this first letter that Kunst's intention of carrying out such a study had already taken shape, and so it is hardly surprising that on finishing the tour he was in no hurry to return to his home country. However, this was not Kunst's only reason for staying. By now he had met his future wife, the young teacher Katy van Wely, daughter of an ex-government administrator in Java. In order to make a living, he found himself a decent job as a lawyer with the Colonial Administration from the middle of 1920. In addition, in his spare time he tried to find out more about the music which so intrigued him.

In September 1920, Kunst had the good fortune to experience the very best of the music and dance of the country when he was invited to the wedding of Mangkunegoro VII (image 8.1).<sup>3</sup> To Kunst the large-scale celebrations were an overwhelming encounter with a world that was so different and, in his eyes, so magical. In a letter dated 9 September to his mother in faraway Groningen, he gave a detailed account of the festivities he had experienced 'as in a dream'. Everything was equally splendid and amazing; first of all, of course, the music: 'Gamelans everywhere as well as a European orchestra, which all play simultaneously: it is both barbaric

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<sup>3</sup> He was called *Prang-wedono* until 1924. To avoid confusion, we have referred to him only as Mangkunegoro. See the list of sources for an explanation.





Image 8.1 Official photograph of the bridal couple, Mangkunegoro VII and Ratu Timur, 1921 (photo in collection of authors).

and magnificent and at the same time refined. [...] Some twenty gamelans mix their tones. I just don't know where I am'. Despite the hectic festivities he had been able to speak to the Prince personally and clearly convey his admiration, interest and research plans.

#### *Who were these Gentlemen?*

Who was Jaap Kunst, this newcomer in the Dutch East Indies, and who was the Javanese Mangkunegoro VII, whose shared passion for the music of the country comes across so clearly in their substantial correspondence?

Jaap Kunst, born and bred in Groningen, was 28 years old when he set foot in the Dutch East Indies. Raised in a musical family – his parents were both pianists – and a very accomplished violinist himself, he nevertheless had chosen to study law. After his studies he worked for a number of years in various offices, whilst music remained central to his life. He enjoyed making music as much and as often as possible, and during a stay on the West Frisian island of Terschelling he became interested in

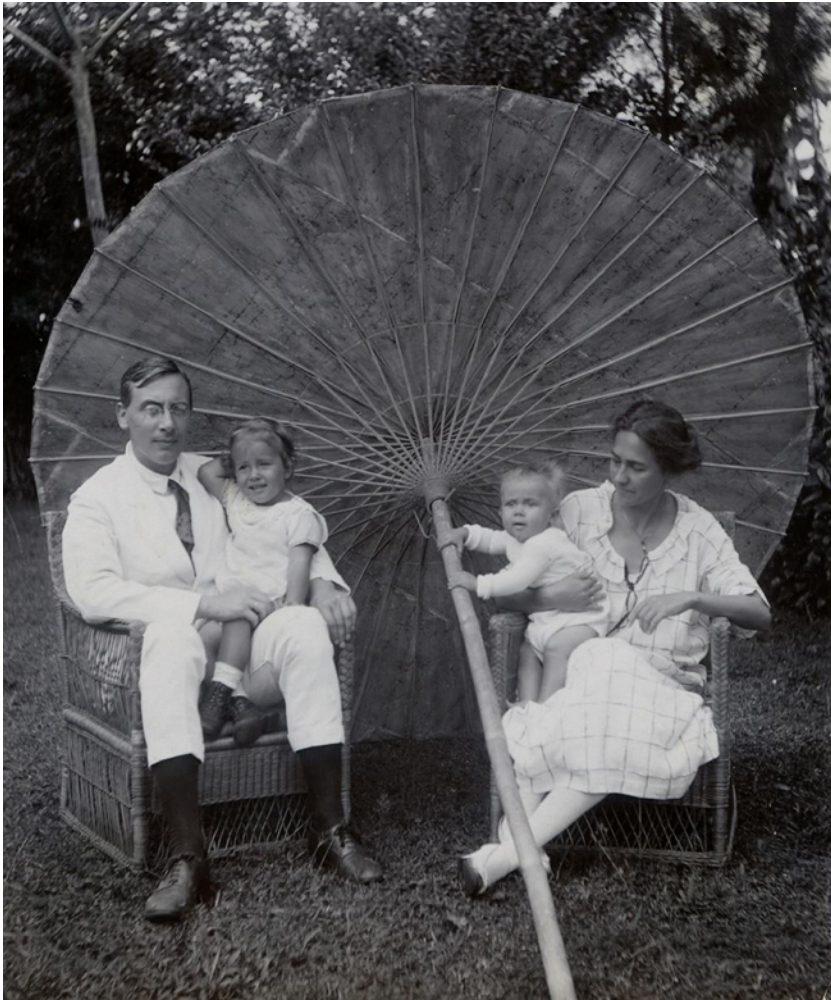


Image 8.2 Jaap Kunst and family. Bandung, 1925 (photo in collection of authors).

folk music and folklore. He carried out extensive research into the musical traditions of the island, which in 1915 resulted in the book *Terschellinger volksleven* (The folk life of Terschelling). Driven by this interest and with his violin under his arm, Jaap Kunst arrived in the new and exciting world of the East.

Mangkunegoro VII was the ruler of the Central Javanese principality of Mangkunegaran, which was similar in size to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. In 1913 Soeparto – as the Prince was called in his younger

days – had been given the chance to go to the Netherlands to enrol in a course of Javanese Literature at the University of Leiden as a non-examination student. There he met a number of students preparing for a career in the East. At the outbreak of the First World War, Soeparto joined the Dutch Army as a reserve officer. Again he came into contact with men he was to meet later in the Dutch East Indies. In 1915, he was called back by the Dutch East Indies Administration to succeed his uncle as local ruler. In doing so, the Colonial Administration was hoping to place a man on the throne who would govern the principality as a modern ruler. He would not disappoint them. On the contrary, in the eyes of the colonial administrators, his reign was sometimes a little too enlightened and self-willed.<sup>4</sup> Whilst the Mangkunegoro may have been an idealist, he was realistic enough to be aware of it. Increasingly, he would try to shape his ideals by striving to emancipate Javanese culture, a niche that the Colonial Administration did not deny him. In the area of music he would find an ardent supporter in Jaap Kunst.

The end of the First World War brought a number of the Prince's old friends from the Netherlands to the East, including his fellow student Bep Schrieke, his friend Beijnon, the archaeologist Stutterheim and many others. In Batavia, too, cultural and intellectual life began again. Writers and painters, such as Louis Couperus, Willem Witsen and Isaac Israëls, also visited the East: Israëls made an impressive portrait of the Prince.<sup>5</sup> Many of these visitors were warmly received at the Prince's palace. It seemed as if the Dutch East Indies was only truly discovered by the Dutch cultural and academic elite at this time.

All these birds of a different feather, full of ideals and plans, were looking for a meeting place where they could exchange their ideas on politics, religion and art without pressure from the rather meddling Dutch East Indies Government. For many, it was a source of inspiration for further collaboration. And what could be more natural than to visit their friend from the past, now Mangkunegoro VII, in order to debate together. These evenings were often enhanced by, as one of the guests expressed it, 'wondrously beautiful music and dance performances'.

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<sup>4</sup> See also Djajadiningrat-Nieuwenhuis (2006).

<sup>5</sup> Oil on canvas, 1921, Frans Halsmuseum, Haarlem.

*Striving to Preserve Culture*<sup>6</sup>

The desire to protect and preserve Javanese culture had led, in 1918, to the setting up of the Committee for the Development of Javanese Culture in preparation for a conference on Javanese culture. The conference was an unexpected success. Delegates from more than 50 organisations, both Javanese and European, came to Solo. 1200 people attended the conference, at which the Mangkunegoro acted as Honorary President. The Java Institute, founded a year later, was the direct result of the enormous success of this conference. The Governor-General, J.P. van Limburg Stirum, became its Patron, the Mangkunegoro its Honorary President, and Dr Hoesein Djajadiningrat its President. The Institute would flourish until the Second World War. Jaap Kunst, with his interest in the Dutch East Indies, struck lucky. It meant that there was an existing platform for him to shape his musical aspirations. And he wasted no time over it. On 15 March 1921 he wrote to the Prince that he would gladly accept his invitation to the court to ‘take measurements of your gamelans and notate the melodies’. In this letter, Kunst also reports that he has just examined the gamelan of the Regent of Bandung, and that as a translator the Regent had been the indispensable link between him and the exclusively Sundanese-speaking *nyogos*,<sup>7</sup> as a result of which his ‘tentative steps into the tropical musical landscape had gained somewhat in confidence’. For these first measurements Kunst had ensured himself of expert assistance. His good friend Jacob Clay, Professor of Experimental Physics at the newly founded Technical College in Bandung, helped him carry out the sound measurements. In a letter to the Prince, written two days after his return to Bandung, Kunst gave an account of his experiences. He wrote that he was delighted to have brought in such a ‘big harvest’ in two and a half days and announced that he was sending his findings in the hope that, in addition to the secretary and the *nyogo*, the Prince ‘[would] be so kind as to read through the notes on this occasion’. Kunst was polite, enthusiastic and unstoppable. With this first working visit the collaboration between the Prince and Kunst had indeed got off to a flying start, and many visits would follow.

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<sup>6</sup> Parts of this section are inspired by Larson (1987), reports in the *Djâwâ* journal, and the private correspondence of Mangkunegoro VII.

<sup>7</sup> *Nyogo* refers to a gamelan player.

Whilst Kunst was taking his first steps into music research on gamelans of the Mangkunegaran, preparations for a major conference of the Java Institute were in full flow. The planned dates were 17 to 19 June 1921 and the chosen location was Bandung. In addition to displays of traditional woodcarving and numerous music and dance performances, the agenda listed two themes 'for discussion'. On the morning of the second day of the conference the *Necessity of History Education* received much attention, whilst the third day was entirely devoted to an exchange of ideas on *The Possibilities of Developing the Music of Java*.

Prior to the conference, experts had been approached to write a preliminary advisory report on the said theme by answering a number of crucial questions. The experts on music included the composer Mrs S. Hofland, the musicologist J.S. Brandts Buys,<sup>8</sup> R.T. Djodipoero, musician at the court of Yogyakarta, the linguist J. Kats, and R.M.A. Soerjo Poetro from the House of Paku Alaman. Jaap Kunst also received such a request. It had all gone fairly quickly: he had been in the Dutch East Indies for only a year, nine months of which he had spent travelling around as a musician. Still somewhat reticent ('I have only been in the Dutch East Indies for a short while . . .'), Kunst nevertheless puts one or two things on paper in an extensive letter to Sam Koperberg, Secretary of the Java Institute, dated 20 November 1922. It reads like a kind of manifesto: 'Let the development of Javanese music take place exclusively with the use of, and supported by indigenous elements; let Western influence remain far removed from this art which is so very different in nature. [...] Western infection is threatening to destroy the indigenous music'. Kunst emphasises the enormous importance of support 'which makes good training of native musicians and good gamelan performances possible'. In this respect, he expected much from 'artistic and developed elements in the native population, from local rulers and *priayis*'.<sup>9</sup> He was thinking, undoubtedly, of the luminous example of the ruler from Solo, the Mangkunegoro. Moreover, he emphasised the urgency of studying and recording old compositions, and indicated that he knew who would be able to do this. 'It just so happens that there are at present a number of musicologically competent

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<sup>8</sup> J.S. Brandts Buys (1879–1939), descendent of a musical family, left for Batavia in 1919 as correspondent for the *NRC* newspaper. He published articles on the music of Madura in *Djâwâ*, the journal of the Java Institute. After an initially friendly working relationship with Kunst, the relationship was disrupted by the rivalry for the post of government musicologist. He died in Yogyakarta.

<sup>9</sup> *Priayi*: man of aristocratic status.



people in Java, who would like nothing better than to be able to devote their best efforts and time to the study of indigenous music'. Apart from himself, he was also alluding to the musicologist Brandts Buys, who had arrived in the Dutch East Indies one year before him and who, like Kunst, was fascinated by the music of the country.

It is clear from the report on the conference discussion on music – published in the journal *Djâwâ*, the publication of the Java Institute – that the delegates shared a general concern about the survival of indigenous music in the country. Although one or two people were still hopeful of a kind of fruitful synthesis of Eastern and Western music, the majority were in favour of nurturing, stimulating and studying the indigenous music and of scrupulously avoiding any Western influence. In conclusion, a number of recommendations were made with the following main points:

- to promote Javanese music in education under native guidance;
- to make an academic study of the music and instruments;
- to promote the development of an appropriate and usable notation (*Djâwâ* 1921: 300).

For the latter, a prize draw had been organised, which was entrusted to a committee under the chairmanship of the musicologist and researcher Brandts Buys.

#### *1921 to 1924: Intensifying the Contact*

The contact between the Mangkunegoro and Kunst, which had been firmly established before the Bandung conference where both had been prominent, developed at a rapid pace. Especially between 1921 and 1923 dozens of letters are sent to and fro. The main subject is, and will remain, music research – in particular that of the gamelan music at the princely courts of Central Java – and the tone remains extremely polite and somewhat distant, although now and again there is mention of private matters.

In a letter dated 27 July 1921, Kunst informs the Prince of his plans to go to Bali for two weeks in October of that year. He asks him for possible useful introductions, because, as he writes: 'I would, of course, also like to make use of this journey to become acquainted with the Balinese gamelan'. En route he wanted to pay another visit to Solo and 'ask your *nyogos* some more questions'. The Prince's reply – written within a week: 2 August – contains all kinds of accurate information about gamelans and



contacts in Bali, and once again the reassurance 'of all assistance from our side in your very important research'. Kunst's letter in reply (7 September), which provides a further report on the preparations for the journey to Bali, reveals that Kunst is about to get married. He writes to the Prince: 'We are looking forward very much to our journey, which at the same time is our honeymoon. [...] We propose to visit you on our way back to Bandung. [...] Would this be convenient for you?'

This is how the first working visit by Kunst and his wife to the Solo court is initiated: Katy will assist her husband in his research from the first day of their marriage. Even before the wedding on 4 October and their subsequent departure to Bali, the Prince responds with a short letter containing very joyful family news:

23 September 1921.

Dear Mr Jaap Kunst,

First of all I bring you the news that Ratoe Timoer has given birth to a daughter on Saturday the 17th of this month. If you were to visit us on 22 October it will be the *selapanan* (35th day) of the birth of our child and we will hold a *wayang kulit* performance which will last all night. [...] It will be our great pleasure to meet your young bride then.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely, Prang-wedono

The letter of congratulations is sent to Solo by return of post and the invitation to the *wayang kulit*<sup>10</sup> is gratefully accepted. But Kunst would not be Kunst if the largest part of this letter (26 September) was not devoted to research matters. Having only just returned to Bandung from his honeymoon and study trip to Bali – the account of which would appear in book form as *De toonkunst van Bali* (The music of Bali, with C.J.A. Kunst-van Wely,) in 1925 – culminating in both a festive and a very productive visit to Solo, Kunst thinks back with gratitude to those fruitful days. 'How wonderful it is to work when one feels assisted and supported from all sides', he writes on 25 October to the court in Solo. He includes a long list of questions which he hopes to be answered in connection with his dissertation *Over de Javaansche toongeslachten slendro en pelog* (On the Javanese tuning systems, *Slendro* and *Pelog*), on which Kunst is working tirelessly. After the information received has been incorporated, the Prince is asked

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<sup>10</sup> *Wayang kulit*: puppet theatre where the shadows of the flat puppets are visible on a screen.



Image 8.3 Gamelan orchestra in front of the pendopo of the Astana Mangkunegaran, 1923 (photo in collection of authors).

to read it again, provide advice, and so on. There is frequent contact by letter and the exchange is detailed and full of content. As soon as Kunst is able to take leave, he arranges another working visit to Solo. On Sunday 16 April 1922, for example, Kunst intends to take the well-known photographer Adam with him to Solo, he writes a week in advance. The tone of the letter is remarkably informal, almost bold: 'I understand from Dr Schrieke that you also have some excavated Hindu-Javanese *wilahan*<sup>11</sup> in your possession. Would it be possible to quickly measure the pitch of those, too?' Gradually, Kunst begins to see the gaps in his knowledge: 'A great many', he writes in the same letter, to which he adds that during the research, for which the available time is always limited, his wife's support has been 'better than any I could have wished for'.

Shortly afterwards (5 May), Kunst sent a comprehensive overview of different gamelan inventories drawn up by himself, thanked the Prince once again for all his hospitality and assistance, and expressed his hope

<sup>11</sup> Hindu-Javanese *wilahan* are keys; sometimes the term also means variation or manner of playing those keys.

that he would be able to receive him and his wife as his guests in Bandung. Whilst it may not have been a house visit, when the princely couple come to Bandung later that year, a meeting takes place nonetheless. Kunst and his wife are also on the list of invited guests for official festivities at the Solo court, but they do not always manage to attend. An evening party on 18 December 1922, for example, had to be cancelled because Kunst had no leave remaining. He had considered going on his own, since earlier notes were still raising so many questions and, he writes, he was also ready to 'hear some more beautiful gamelan music and breathe in the Central Javanese air'. Another visit to Solo was not in the offing for the time being. 'Unfortunately' he was tied to Bandung because of his job, but domestic duties and a lack of financial resources also played their part; the purchase of an instrument for their own collection regularly caused a deficit in their limited household budget. However, he did have time to write and work through the material, as he reports to his princely friend on 16 April 1923. A letter from Kunst dated two months later (9 June) shows that a personal visit from the Prince and his wife to the Kunst family residence in Bandung had taken place by then. Katy, too, mentions in her daughter's baby book that this was a very special and honourable visit: '12 June 1923. [...] It was a funny and extremely nice visit. Sjuwke sat on Ratoe Timoer's lap for ages and fiddled about with the beautiful glistening gems on her rings and bracelets'.

Later that year, they made plans to visit Solo again. At the request of Sam Koperberg of the Java Institute, Kunst, together with Katy, was working on a 'simple educational booklet on musical instruments' for which he wanted to take some pictures at the Solo court. 'And may we appeal once again to your hospitality during those four days in Solo?', Kunst writes on 6 August 1923. Evidently, this had become a habit by now. Kunst also expresses the hope that during his visit the first meeting of the musical prize draw committee will take place. He does not hide from the Prince his irritation with the committee's Chairman, J.S. Brandts Buys, 'who is not forwarding the entries'. Eventually, Katy has to forego her visit, much to her regret. The fact that she remains closely involved, however, is clear from a letter on his return from Solo (25 September): 'The photographs taken of the instruments of the KJ. Kanjoet Mesem<sup>12</sup> have all, without exception, come out well. [...] My wife is busy making prints. She will shortly send you a copy of each photo.'

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<sup>12</sup> *Kanjeng Kyahi Kanjoet Mesem*, the Mangkunegaran's most famous gamelan.

A month later (20 October), Kunst unveils a plan to gather the necessary information with fewer time- and money-consuming trips to Solo. He proposes to take in an experienced and intelligent *nyogo* for a few weeks at his house, but wonders how to deal with his social status: 'For example, will he want to eat with us, or on his own, or with the servants, on the chair or on a mat; does he want a bed or a *baleh-baleh*?<sup>13</sup> in short, how does he want to be treated and how will he feel most at ease?' The *nyogo* need not be afraid of being questioned for too long, Kunst wrote, because he himself would not be home from the Department until after two o'clock.

The Prince, however, disliked the idea: the costs would not be offset by the results, especially since *nyogos* 'are largely known for being very whimsical and volatile', he wrote on 22 December. He advised Kunst to gather his information in Solo and to try and stay a little longer next time, as there was much assistance available, 'for which I also make myself personally available to you'. Kunst took the advice and on 28 December wrote that he agreed it would be better for him to come to Solo and listen as much as possible. Moreover, he made it known, '[we are] expecting a reduction in income and an addition to the family'.

The confidentiality between the correspondents is also evident from the remainder of this letter, including the frank grumbling about the slow dealings of the prize draw committee – the Chairman in particular was criticized again – and Kunst's outspoken and harsh opinion about the work of the composer and musicologist P. Seelig. As a safety measure he added: 'Please regard these remarks as intended only for you'.

The extent to which the Prince trusted Kunst in musical matters is clear from a letter dated 11 January 1924. When Koperberg and Kats wanted to visit the Prince in Solo in connection with 'the judging of the entries for the Javanese music prize draw', he enquired whether it would be possible for Kunst to be present at this discussion. Kunst's reply (14 January) shows that he was not keen on this, because he would not be able to combine this visit with useful research. The Prince replied on 29 January that he understood his reasoning and hoped that Kunst would soon be able to take leave in order to carry out further research into the *patets*<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *Baleh-baleh*: wooden or bamboo resting couch.

<sup>14</sup> *Patet* means mode. Within each *laras* (tuning/scale, i.e. *slendro* or *pelog*) there are three *patets*. This does not apply specifically to the *gender* (instrument). Possibly, it concerns *pathetan*: mode-establishing musical pieces which are played on *gender*.

on the *gender*.<sup>15</sup> ‘The time shortly before or after the festivities to celebrate my birthday and my change of name will possibly be the most suitable’, he writes.

Preparations for the Prince’s elevation to Mangkunegoro had been ongoing for some time. On 26 July 1924 Kunst, in the throes of writing an article on the gamelans of the Mangkunegaran, requested further information; he very much wanted a speedy reply to his questions: ‘Would it be possible before 12 August?’ Apparently, the relationship between the two allowed this kind of impatience, as on 7 August the Prince sent a comprehensive reply.

*Extra Issue of Djâwâ, 4 September 1924*

For a number of friends and contacts at the Java Institute, the Prince’s elevation to Mangkunegoro was an occasion to issue a special edition of the journal *Djâwâ* in 1924. The list of contributors gives an impression of the diversity of the participants, such as the poet Noto Soeroto,<sup>16</sup> Dr Hoessein Djajadiningrat, the critical government administrator A. Mühlenfeld, Prince A. Hadiwidjojo, son of the Susuhunan, Chairman of the Committee for Popular Literature Dr A. Rinkes, R.M. Gondowinoto from the House of Paku Alaman, the *kraton* physician R.T. Wediodiningrat, the archaeologist Dr Martha A. Musses, the Secretary of the Java Institute Sam Koperberg, the linguist J. Kats, the missionary H. Kraemer, his friend and Advisor for Indigenous Affairs Dr B.J.O. Schrieke, the architects T. Karsten and H. Maclaine Pont, Professor B. ter Haar, the Regent R.A.A.A. Djajadiningrat and, last but not least, Jaap Kunst. Kunst’s article, illustrated with photos of instruments and players, takes up some six pages and concludes with an overview of *De stemming van eenige Mangkoe Nagarasche gamelans, weergegeven in absolute trillingsgetallen en in “cents”* (The Tuning of Some Mangku Nagaran Gamelans, Represented in Absolute Vibration Numbers and in ‘Cents’).<sup>17</sup>

Kunst is of the opinion that Java is undergoing an accelerated developmental process, resulting in ‘an imbalance taking hold of the mind’. He expresses his great irritation with and concern about the penetration of Western kitsch, which shows ‘how much the Javanese people in this time

<sup>15</sup> *Gender*: wooden or bamboo musical instrument with copper keys.

<sup>16</sup> On Noto Soeroto, see Djajadiningrat-Nieuwenhuis (1993).

<sup>17</sup> *Cents*: a measure for tonal intervals. Jaap Kunst himself did not play, but he was very keen to take tonal measurements: determining the exact pitch – absolute vibration numbers – of all keys/gongs of the Mangkunegaran gamelans.

of transition need the level-headed and loving guidance of the best from their midst in the struggle for the preservation of culture'. It is no surprise that he eventually points to the Mangkunegoro as the great example and as just the person to help revive Javanese literature, music, dance and *wayang*, and to promote the research 'into the essence, origin and development of the arts'.

The special issue of *Djawa* provides a good overview of the discourse during the inter-war period in the Dutch East Indies, a debate that took place amongst the artists and intellectuals where Jaap Kunst, with his ideas and aspirations, felt completely at home. Back in Bandung after the elevation festivities, he excitedly writes to the Mangkunegoro: 'The days I spent in Solo were unforgettable. I have thoroughly enjoyed it. Perhaps most of all of the *wireng* dances<sup>18</sup> on the third night. I am very grateful to you for allowing me to experience all this' (10 September 1924).

#### 1925–1928: *Intermezzo*

There now followed some years of sporadic contact between the two correspondents, partly due to the Kunst family's long period of leave. Only a few letters were exchanged. Naturally, Kunst sent a copy of the book *De toonkunst van Bali*, hot off the press on 1 May 1925, for which he and his wife had collected the material in 1921, and which was now published in both their names. The Mangkunegoro congratulated them warmly with this 'substantial and important work': 'Your aim of stirring interest in a hitherto practically unknown area of study [...] may certainly be considered a success' (9 May).

Kunst regarded it as less of a problem that there was no immediate prospect of an English or French edition, which the Mangkunegoro had so been hoping for. It presented an opportunity to incorporate any further comments on the Dutch edition later. Moreover, it made it possible to add the new findings collected by the painter and musician Walter Spies<sup>19</sup> during his travels through Bali.

There is only one letter from the year 1926. This is Kunst's reply to the Mangkunegoro's invitation for himself and his wife to attend the celebrations for the copper jubilee of his years in office. Much to his regret, Kunst

<sup>18</sup> *Wireng* dances: war dances for duets (two men or two women), often with weapons such as *keris*, bow and arrow or dagger.

<sup>19</sup> Walter Spies (1895–1942) was a Russian-born German painter, choreographer, writer, photographer and patron. In 1923 he arrived in Java, where he lived first in Yogyakarta and in 1927 moved to Ubud, Bali.



had to decline: his job did not permit him to go, as his superior was on leave. In the following year, at the end of April 1927, it was time for the Kunst family's long leave.

*1928–1929: The Appointment to Government Musicologist*

At the beginning of March 1928, when Kunst had only just returned from his long period of leave in Europe, contact with the Mangkunegoro in Solo was renewed. Subject and tone remained the same. In a letter dated 6 March the Mangkunegoro thanks Kunst for sending one of his publications, and tells him about an interesting visit to the court by an American musician, Van Eighem. According to the Mangkunegoro, the latter took the trouble 'to notate old and new melodies with which he plans to deliver a composition suitable for European instruments. At the Mangkunegaran he set to music an old gamelan melody, unsuccessfully I believe, as he was interrupted too many times by Mr Brandts Buys's comments and remarks'. Clearly, the same irritations had remained. At the very end of the letter is a postscript containing a not unimportant message, an urgent request, in fact: 'When are you coming to Solo? I would like to hear your impressions of the situation in Europe'. Kunst replies by return of post (9 March) to say that he is coming over that very month. During that meeting, a topic which would undoubtedly have been discussed at length was the possible post of government musicologist. This matter would dominate and divide the musical world of the Dutch East Indies for a good while yet, and Kunst, being one of the candidates, had an important friend and supporter in the Mangkunegoro.

In this respect, Kunst had made good use of his period of leave. Wherever possible, he had drawn attention to the importance of music research in the archipelago. He had tried to convince everyone, up to the highest level, that research into indigenous music was too important to leave to private initiative, and that it was high time that the Colonial Administration accepted its responsibility in this matter and appointed a musicologist to carry out systematic research. This fervent plea seemed to have struck a sympathetic chord. Influential scholars, such as the cultural historian Johan Huizinga,<sup>20</sup> became convinced of the importance of the

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<sup>20</sup> The historian Johan Huizinga (1872–1945) is considered to be the founder of Dutch cultural history. His most well-known work is *Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen* (The waning of the Middle Ages) (1919).

matter. Moreover, Kunst managed to persuade him and others that he himself was just the man for the job. But Kunst was not the only one: J. Brandts Buys was also in the race and this rival had supporters within the Java Institute.

Whilst the decision to appoint a musicologist in government service was taking its time, the Mangkunegoro encouraged Kunst at regular intervals: 'How is the music research going? So far I have not heard anything about the government's decision. I am still hoping that you will be appointed' (31 October 1928).

But there was hope in terms of the music research. In a letter of 2 September 1929, Kunst writes with relief that the decision to appoint a government musicologist had finally been taken: 'There [is] a good chance that I will enjoy complete freedom of movement in a couple of months. If that should become a reality, I have the feeling that I will have almost nothing more to wish for!' The question as to who would get the job remained uncertain, and therefore exciting, for a while longer. Due to the suspense surrounding the appointment, Kunst was even absent at the conference held in Solo at the end of December 1929 on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Java Institute. He told his princely friend why he and Katy had decided not to come: 'There are a number of figures in Solo who have become extremely unsympathetic to me, whom we would inevitably keep having to face at the conference. I would rather avoid this irritation' (30 November 1929). A week after the conference the decision about the appointment was finally made: Kunst was the successful candidate. One of the first to be informed by him was the Mangkunegoro (9 January 1930):

I have just received the news that I have been appointed as civil servant for the systematic research into Indonesian music. Such a relief. Now those two years of unpleasanties have not been in vain. I have to leave it at these few words, as it is already very late. But I did not want to neglect to inform you immediately, as you have always shown such interest. With kind regards, also to Ratoe Timoer and also from my wife,

Yours affectionately, J. Kunst

The Mangkunegoro congratulates Kunst enthusiastically on his appointment: 'Finally, then, the hope of many has been fulfilled', he writes on 14 January, and concludes the letter with a cordial question: 'May I expect you both in Solo shortly?' But travelling to Solo would hardly be possible.

*1930–1931: Research in the Outlying Districts*

After the Kunst family had moved to a larger dwelling, where the by now substantial collection of musical instruments could be housed, Kunst left on 11 March 1930 on his first big expedition as government musicologist. His travel destination and area of research was the island of Nias. Meticulously, Kunst kept the Mangkunegoro informed on a variety of matters. Thus, he let him know on 12 February that he wanted to come to Solo with Katy as soon as possible after his return: 'I hope I will then be able to tell you much about Nias and possibly also show you one or two things: presumably, the painter and drawer Rudolf Bonnet<sup>21</sup> will come with me.' He also told him that he would be taking a Kodak camera to record dances with song. Finally, he wrote that he hoped to be able to receive the princely couple at the Music Archive as soon as it was in an orderly state. Due to lack of time, the latter would not be achieved for the time being, but the exchange by post continued. Thus, the Prince enquired in a letter of 23 May when Kunst was intending to continue with the research into the music of the principalities, now that in his new job he had started research in the outlying districts. In his reply of 26 May Kunst defends his policy by pointing out the vitality and blossoming of Javanese music compared to the sad state of affairs in the outlying districts: 'In North Nias there was hardly anything left of the old culture; a collection of Christian psalm-singing little citizens, colourless and unimportant, is the result of 70 years of government interference and missionary zeal' (see also the chapter by Persoon in this volume). In South Nias the old culture and music would vanish within ten years as a result of 'contact with Western civilisation and closer contact with unadulterated Malaysian elements'. 'And this is how it is everywhere', he writes pessimistically: 'I should have ten bodies'. As government musicologist, Kunst travelled to and researched all kinds of islands and regions of the archipelago. After Nias came Flores, and the following year Bencoolen in Sumatra. The yield was enormous: musical instruments, sound recordings on wax cylinders, film recordings of dances, and series of photographs. Kunst kept his princely friend informed by letter as much as possible and visited him once or twice, usually en route. In between the travelling and working, Kunst had begun to write an extensive treatise on Javanese music. He was keen to show the Mangkunegoro

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<sup>21</sup> Rudolf Bonnet (1895–1978) worked closely with the German painter Walter Spies. In 1929 he settled in Bali, where he began to draw and paint.

his gratitude for all the support he had been given and asked him in a letter if he could dedicate this 'small work' to him, as it was through his personal assistance, criticism and encouragement that he had 'more than anyone made it possible to compile this small work' (26 September 1931).

1932–1933: *The Crisis Years*

By now the tide had turned. The news that the post of government musicologist would be cut on 1 January 1932 did not exactly come as a surprise – after all, the financial world had been in crisis since the Great Crash of 1929 – but it made it no less painful for those involved. As soon as Kunst heard that it was on the cards, he informed the Mangkunegoro (8 November 1931). His reaction was one of empathy and support: 'Your letter [...] that you too have been hit by the cuts [...] hurt me deeply' (1 December). The Mangkunegoro encourages him by stressing once more the importance of his musicological work and by expressing the hope that 'when times are better they will restore your post'.

The post may have been abolished, but the work with which the two men were so involved in, and that had brought them so close together – the protection and study of indigenous music – had certainly not disappeared from their sphere of attention or from their lives. Kunst, who had to move to Batavia in connection with his new job as Secretary to the Head of the Department of Education, Bep Schrieke, writes to the Mangkunegoro (16 December) that he still has a month to complete his musicological work: 'So I have the opportunity to come to Solo one more time. I'm looking forward to it very much: there are still so many things which I would like to hear or ask'.

How important the collaboration with the Mangkunegoro – and certainly this visit – was to Kunst is evident from a letter dating from this period, addressed to his parents in the Netherlands (9 December):

Next month I am going to Solo once more for 14 days, to Mangku Negro, who has offered to have his gamelans played for me every morning, so that I can test everything against reality which I recount in the book. The way in which I am being assisted in this work from the Javanese side really is exceptional.

After this, the two correspondents would see each other in person only a few more times, but the flow of letters would continue for much longer.

It was thanks to Schrieke that, in his new job, Kunst was initially able to carry out a great deal more musicological research. As Director of

Education, Schrieke travelled around the archipelago in order to see where it was possible to make education cuts in these stringent times, and Kunst accompanying him as his Secretary received every cooperation to research the local music and dance. In this period of travelling and double duties Kunst found little time to correspond, but contact with the Mangkunegoro certainly remained alive and important. Kunst apologises for still not having brought over his manuscript on Javanese music: he is 'in a manner of speaking, working on it day and night'. Should the Prince be coming to Batavia around Christmas, he would be able to see everything for himself. For the time being, it would not be possible for Kunst to visit Solo: 'It is a pity that the Department demands so much of my good time and zest for work' (16 December 1932).

#### *1934–1935: Music of Java*

The lack of available time only seemed to have increased the desire to write. In no other year did the two men correspond as intensively as in 1933: some 40 letters were exchanged. The main subject of most of these letters was the large work on Javanese music for which the Prince was constantly receiving new versions and additions, and on which he subsequently commented. There were several reasons why there was much pressure to complete this project, which was largely considered to be a joint effort. In the middle of 1934 Kunst was to go on a long period of leave, and he wanted to conclude this large piece of work by then. The Prince, from his side, was fervently hoping that the publication of the book would coincide with the celebrations for his 50th birthday on 19 May 1934, as he wrote on 5 January of that year.

It was not to be. The Kunst family went on early leave on 7 March, especially because his great help and support, Katy, was completely exhausted. 'My wife and children are in great need of their European leave', and he himself considered coming back on his own in November (8 January 1934). He doubted whether the book would be ready for the date that the Prince was so wishing for, but once in the Netherlands he would be able to chase the publishers, Nijhoff, daily to make haste with the matter. Just before his departure, however, he informs the Mangkunegoro in a PS to his letter of 23 February: 'Book not ready for middle of '34'.

Kunst would not return. He announced this as early as the beginning of 1935. In addition to private reasons, he mentions that there 'won't be any money anyway for further research in the outlying districts'. However,

Kunst informs him that not going back certainly does not mean the end of his study of Indonesian music: 'Of course, the music study will continue [...]. I have more material with me than I could possibly work through for the rest of my life' (17 January 1935). The Mangkunegoro's reply cannot conceal his disappointment: 'but one must not be so egoistic as to hope for your return. We wish you and your family all the best, also that you will soon find the post in Holland that you wish for' (16 February).

After a difficult initial period, on 1 January 1936 Kunst found a job to which he was infinitely suited: Curator at the Department of Cultural Anthropology at the Colonial Institute in Amsterdam. The Prince sends his warmest congratulations: 'We were delighted by your news that, thanks to your appointment, your concerns about the future have been wiped away' (13 January).

#### *1936–1937: The Mangkunegoro Travels to the Netherlands*

It is likely that around this time the Prince began making plans to go to the Netherlands. Rumours about the marriage between Princess Juliana and Prince Bernard had been circulating for some time. It would be convenient if he could combine a visit to his old friends with his attendance at the wedding. The Council of the Indies agreed and an official invitation was arranged from the Netherlands.

Naturally, the Mangkunegoro hoped that this journey would put his principality on the map not only politically, but also culturally. A splendid way to achieve this would be a radio broadcast of his gamelan orchestra directly from Solo, as well as a *Srimpi* dance<sup>22</sup> performed by his daughter Siti on the occasion of the wedding. The broadcast had become technically possible a year ago. In a letter of January 1935 Kunst had reacted enthusiastically to the news that 'Solo now broadcasts gamelan music with a bigger and better transmitter'. When the Prince and his family arrived in the Netherlands in December 1936 collaboration between the NIROM and Radio Kootwijk had ensured that everything was arranged to enable such a broadcast.

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<sup>22</sup> The *Srimpi* dance normally features four female dancers. Javanese folk etymology has it that *Sri* means king or queen and *impi* means longing, dream or wish. This dance acts out 'the longing to live in honesty and peace'.



On 17 December, the dress rehearsal took place in the presence of 40 guests. At a quarter past four in the afternoon the connection was established. Gusti Siti carried out her dance. The connection faltered only once. The names of the guests are not known, but it is highly likely that Kunst was present. To the Prince and to Kunst as musicologist the fact that this had been achieved and that it would be repeated at the palace of Queen Wilhelmina was a reward for their long and intensive collaboration. And it did not go unnoticed: the press was enthusiastic.

A week later, the Mangkunegoro and the Ratoe Timoer invited Jaap and Katy Kunst to lunch at Wassenaar Castle. They will undoubtedly have talked about the broadcasting experiment, since the dance performance for the Royal Family was yet to take place.

Just before the Prince and his family left Holland, Katy sent them a goodbye letter with good wishes, saying with how much pleasure she and her husband looked back on the lunch at Wassenaar. The Prince's reply ends with words that express his feelings of friendship: 'I sincerely hope that one day we may meet again at the Mangkunegaran. How I would rejoice at that and many others with me, both because of your presence and for the sake of Javanese music'.

### *Conclusion*

The Prince must have been pleasantly surprised when, some years later, in the Spring of 1940, he received the letter that has been the starting-point for this article, and which contained the announcement that Kunst was coming to Java. On 24 April 1940, the Prince replied to be delighted to be able to collaborate with him again 'in the interest of Javanese music, which is so close to both our hearts'. But the Prince was aware that the situation was unfavourable: 'Now we can only hope that events in Europe will not take such a turn as to make your departure to Java impossible.'

His hope turned out to be in vain. The journey was no longer possible: time and war had overtaken their plans. The Mangkunegoro must have been very sorry that his anxious suspicions were confirmed. He had already lost many friends. In the last years of his life he had to make do with memories of a richer and more hopeful time, a time when his palace was the focal point of discussion, exchange of ideas and meetings with like-minded people.

Jaap Kunst's two-part standard work, *De toonkunst van Java* (The Hague, 1934) (published in English in 1949 as *Music of Java*), is a piece of tangible

evidence from those days and of his very fruitful collaboration with the Mangkunegoro. The dedication at the front of the book speaks volumes: 'in respectful esteem and gratitude' to Mangkunegoro VII for his indispensable support for Kunst's research over fourteen years:

Despite the many worries and concerns which are part of the life of a self-ruler, [he has] nevertheless taken the trouble [...] to critically read through the paragraphs relating to Java and, relying on his own considerable knowledge of Javanese music and that of his nyogos, has provided corrections and notes in the margin.

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## CHAPTER NINE

### ENCOUNTERS IN THE CONTEXT OF INSPIRING SUNDANESE MUSIC AND PROBLEMATIC THEORIES

Wim van Zanten

In the 1920s, the Dutch musicologist Jaap Kunst (1891–1960) and the Sundanese music teacher and scholar Machjar Kusumadinata (1902–1979) started their cooperation in developing music theory for West Java. In this essay, I will discuss elements of their theories and show how the present generation of music scholars in Bandung is dealing with the shortcomings of these theories.

As regards musical practice and practical knowledge, I will describe and reflect on my encounters since 1980 with the well-known Sundanese musician Uking Sukri (1925–1994), who taught Cianjuran music<sup>1</sup> in the Netherlands for about half a year in 1988–1989. Uking Sukri has also performed on international stages, including the Netherlands. Finally, I will focus on the experiment by Uking Sukri's ensemble in combination with the jazz pianist Bubi Chen in 1989. The mere fact that this combination of instruments existed offers empirical evidence that the theory of tonal systems designed by Kusumadinata and Kunst does not hold for Cianjuran music. This experiment in West Java inspired my Dutch Cianjuran group, *Dangiang Parahiangan*, to start a similar experiment with the pianist Rob Agerbeek in 2009.

#### *Jaap Kunst*

Jaap Kunst is internationally recognized as one of the founders of the study of 'comparative musicology', for which he later introduced the term 'ethno-musicology' (Kunst 1950). His university training was in law, but he was an accomplished violinist. In 1919, he went to the Dutch East Indies

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<sup>1</sup> Also called Tembang Sunda or Tembang Sunda Cianjuran. It is solo singing and the accompaniment is provided by two zithers (*kacapi indung* and *kacapi rincik*) and a bamboo flute (*suling*), and sometimes also by a bowed violin (*rebab*). The instrumental form of Cianjuran, in which the bamboo flute takes the melodic part, is called *kacapi-suling*.

for a concert tour with a pianist and a vocalist.<sup>2</sup> Kunst was greatly inspired by the gamelan music of Yogyakarta and he decided to stay in the colony. He did administrative work for his living, gave violin lessons, but above all researched Indonesian music (largely in his spare time) until his repatriation in 1934.

From January 1930 until December 1931, Kunst held the position of 'government musicologist'. He competed for this post with the musicologist and researcher Johann Sebastian Brandts Buijs (1879–1939), who had also come to live in the Dutch Indies in 1919.<sup>3</sup> Van Roon (1995) describes the fierce competition for this post between the two scholars who, until this point, had been on friendly terms. The discussions about the ideal candidate for this job also took place in the Netherlands. Important scholars, like the historian Johan Huizinga and the composer Willem Pijper, gave their opinions. Both Huizinga and Pijper emphasized the relation between art and science. Huizinga wrote 'Here is a field where art and science may be most intimately linked together, with art being capable of being preserved only by science'. Pijper wrote that a candidate for this post should 'combine the temperament of a creative artist, hence "musical intuition," with the intellect of a scholar'. He considered Kunst's recordings of music to be very important, especially for museums and phonogram collections, however, 'only a born artist [...] with many years' European experience, [...] is likely to succeed in bringing Indonesian music to life for Western artists – and at the same time for the people of Europe. It is not just a codification of practices that is at issue: Indonesian musical research is much further-ranging than that' (Huizinga and Pijper, quoted in translation by Van Roon 1995: 70, 73; see also Van Zanten 2002: 938–943 and the chapter by Djajadiningrat and Brinkgreve in this volume).<sup>4</sup>

Due to budget cuts, the post of government musicologist was not continued and between 1932 and 1934 Kunst once again undertook administrative work in the Department of Education and Religion, which led him to move from Bandung to Jakarta (Batavia). Kunst left Indonesia in

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<sup>2</sup> See a photograph of this trio in Brinkgreve (2009: 143). Brinkgreve's book contains much personal information on Jaap Kunst and his 'co-worker' and wife Katy Kunst-van Wely (Brinkgreve 2009: 131–210).

<sup>3</sup> See Heins (2008) for a curriculum vitae of Brandts Buijs.

<sup>4</sup> These debates about the relation between art and science reflect ideas similar to those expressed in the nineteenth-century discussions concerning the Sundanese language (Van den Berge 1993, 1998; Moriyama 2005). For the Dutch in the second half of the nineteenth century, knowledge in prose was a better representation of reality than poetry, whereas for the Sundanese singer and his public poetry meant transmission of relevant knowledge (Van den Berge 1993: 205–209).

1934 and in 1936 he became curator of music in the Tropical Institute in Amsterdam. From 1942 until his death in 1960 he also taught comparative musicology at the University of Amsterdam. Kunst published many books and articles on Indonesian music and he played an important role in international organizations (Kunst 1994; Heins 1994; Den Otter 1994).

The Society for Ethnomusicology in the United States honoured Kunst by establishing the Jaap Kunst prize 'to recognize the most significant article in ethnomusicology written by a member of the Society for Ethnomusicology and published within the previous year' (*SEM* 2011). In the Netherlands, the ethnomusicology section at the University of Amsterdam was called the Etnomusicologisch Centrum Jaap Kunst.<sup>5</sup>

When in Indonesia, Kunst lived most of the time in Bandung, West Java. Although his research took place in many parts of Indonesia, it concentrated on Central Java and, to a lesser extent, West Java. He collaborated with Sundanese researchers, notably with Machjar Kusumadinata from Sumedang. Under the influence of the 'blown fifth' theory, Kunst tried to develop a system that could explain the tones produced by the different gamelan in Java.<sup>6</sup> In particular, he tried to make one theoretical system for the two tuning systems *pelog* and *slendro* (in West Java: *pelog* and *salendro*).

### *Machjar Kusumadinata and His Collaboration with Jaap Kunst*

Machjar Angga Kusumadinata (also written: Mahyar and Koesoemadinata) was born in Sumedang, West Java, in 1902. His father came from upper class families in Sumedang and Tasikmalaya and his mother from

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<sup>5</sup> Also, in 1991 the Jaap Kunst Foundation was established in the Netherlands and Mantle Hood, a former PhD student of Jaap Kunst and well-known ethnomusicologist, became its honorary chair until his death in 2005. In 1995, the Foundation granted the first and last Jaap Kunst prize to Rüdiger Schumacher (1953–2007) for his work on Indonesian music. After the death of Egbert D. Kunst, son of Jaap Kunst, in 2009, the Jaap Kunst Foundation was dissolved on 19 June 2009. The author, who had been secretary of the foundation for some years in the 1990s, became the *bewaarder van boeken en bescheiden* (keeper of the books and documents) for seven years.

<sup>6</sup> The blown fifth theory, developed by Erich von Hornbostel, is based on (1) a cycle of fifth intervals of 678 cent (a 'blown fifth' interval, supposedly produced by over-blowing a stopped flute, is 678 cent and a cent is one-hundredth of a Western semi-tone interval), instead of 702 cent for a Pythagorean fifth or 'pure fifth' for string instruments, and (2) the supposed 'tendency to equidistancy' that resulted in models to divide the octave in equal intervals. Already in the 1940s it was shown that the cycle of blown fifths was not very useful for understanding the different tone systems in the world. See further, for instance, Kunst (1948) and Van Zanten (1986: 100–102).



a family of merchants. His father was head of mosque officials and able to perform Sundanese solo singing. This interest in music was passed on to Machjar, who learned to play the two-string bowed lute, bronze gamelan instruments, solo singing and to tune gamelan instruments (Herdini 2007: 2–17). Herdini remarks that Kusumadinata was very eager to learn playing the bowed lute from his uncle, but that he was not considered to be a good player (Herdini 2007: 15).

Kusumadinata was educated as a school teacher. After primary school he went to teacher training colleges until 1924. He then started to teach at a primary school in Sumedang. From 1933–1942, and again from 1947–1950, Kusumadinata became supervisor of music education in schools of West Java. In 1958–1959 he became the head of the Sundanese music section in the music conservatory (then KOKAR, *Konservatori Karawitan*) in Bandung. He remained involved in teaching music, also at the Bandung and Surakarta (Solo) conservatories, until his death in 1979 (Herdini 2007: 23–25, 122–127; *Ensiklopedi Sunda* 2000: 390).

According to Kusumadinata, he started to study music theory in 1916, when he was 14 years old, and he mentions his Dutch school teachers as being the first ones to explain Western music to him. Later on, he published several books and articles. In particular, he became known for his books with Sundanese songs for school children, in which the music was written down in cipher notation, which he had developed in 1923. From 1926–1968, Kusumadinata composed at least eight music dramas and in 1969 he was honoured by the Indonesian government with an Arts Award, Anugerah Seni (Kusumadinata 1969: 5–11; see also Herdini 2007: 127 and *Ensiklopedi Sunda* 2000: 390).

Kusumadinata mentions that his music books for primary schools were published and distributed by the Department of Education and Religion because of ‘the recognition, confirmation and recommendation’ by Kunst (Kusumadinata 1969: 6). He describes the start of his collaboration with Kunst in December 1927 as follows:

[...] I was introduced by him [Van der Dussen, inspector of education in Bandung] to Mr Jaap Kunst, a well-known musicologist. Mr J. van der Dussen had also in mind that I would be taught musicology that was based on *pelog* and *salendro* by Mr Jaap Kunst. [...] But [...] After talking to each other for some time about the tone systems *pelog* and *salendro*, Mr Jaap Kunst felt that it was not he who should teach me, but I who should teach him. Hence, since that first day we met, Mr Jaap Kunst came to visit me each Sunday at my house in Sumedang to hear from my mouth a “lecture” about “musicology based on *pelog* and *salendro*.” That certainly sounds very odd:

I gave “lectures” to Mr Jaap Kunst, a well-known musicologist. He also gave me lectures about Western music (Kusumadinata 1969: 5).<sup>7</sup>

In their correspondence between 1927 and 1954 Kunst regularly asked Kusumadinata for clarifications about Sundanese music terms. Kunst was asked to comment on Kusumadinata’s theories and manuscripts for his books. Kusumadinata included some of his reports as supervisor of music education in schools of West Java in his letters and he regularly asked for Kunst’s support for his work (Correspondence Kunst-Kusumadinata 1928–1954).<sup>8</sup> In 1929, their collaboration resulted in an article about tone systems (Kunst and Kusumadinata 1929).

Kusumadinata initially followed Kunst’s ideas and, like Kunst, he used the cycle of blown fifths for explaining the musical intervals in the different Sundanese tone systems. To put it simply, Kusumadinata’s models were based on dividing the octave into equal intervals; he used models with 9, 10, 15, 17 and 23 equal intervals. In the 1950s, Kunst apparently became critical of the models developed by Kusumadinata, as these became ever more complicated (Van Zanten 1995: 230, n17). On 15 September 1953 Kusumadinata sent him the second print of his book ‘A short outline of music theory’ (Kusumadinata n.d.). In the accompanying letter he remarked that Kunst ‘[...] would find many new things, such as the *salendro* system with 17 steps, names of intervals, musical terms, etc.’ On 21 October 1953, Kunst replied:

Your announcement that you have come to distinguish a total of 17 steps in *slendro*, startled me. At first, *slendro* seemed so harmless with its five steps; then it became 10; now it is 17. Where does this lead us! (Correspondence Kunst-Kusumadinata 1928–1954).

In the same letter (21 October 1953), Kunst mentioned that Kusumadinata’s eldest daughter Lina, who was going to study sociology in Amsterdam, had given him the books the previous evening. Lina had promised to help Kunst with translating this theoretical book (Kusumadinata n.d.) from Sundanese, but

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<sup>7</sup> All translations from Dutch, Indonesian and Sundanese are mine, except when stated otherwise.

<sup>8</sup> It is interesting to note that before Kunst left Indonesia in 1934, Kunst and Kusumadinata addressed each other in their letters in a formal way: *Waarde Heer Koesoemadinata* (10 June 1933) and *Zeer Geachte Heer Mr. J. Kunst* (reply letter 13 June 1933). That changed after Kunst repatriated to the Netherlands: *Beste Jaap!* (3 August 1935, 9 September 1935) and *Beste Machjar* (reply 19 September 1935). In the later letters they also wrote more about personal matters.

It would be advisable to have it appear also in a Dutch, even better an English translation. These days there is much interest for this music outside Java, particularly in the Netherlands, Germany and the Anglo-Saxon countries (especially in the USA).<sup>9</sup>

In his reply (19 December 1953) Kusumadinata remarked that this theoretical book in Sundanese was a short summary of his English treatise 'Musical art of Sunda'. He was still revising and complementing this English manuscript and had also started on a Dutch translation. Eventually, this book appeared in Indonesian in 1969. In the introduction, Kusumadinata writes that he felt that the international world should know about music theory based on the *pelog* and *salendro* tone systems. He had started this work already in 1940 with a manuscript 'Our musical art' in English, but it was still unfinished at the time of writing, 2 January 1969. Because he had been appointed at the conservatory in Solo, Central Java (starting 1 January 1965), he had decided to publish this revised manuscript, together with some of his other writings, in Indonesian (Kusumadinata 1969: 3). As far as I know, English or Dutch translations never appeared in print.

In 1953 Kusumadinata was presumably unaware of international discussions on music theory. At that time he was worried about other things: his poor health, his problematic position in the independent Indonesia as former collaborator in the Dutch educational system and the possibility that the Indonesian government might replace Sundanese by Western music.<sup>10</sup> His last book on music theory (Kusumadinata 1969) does not have a list of references; in the text Kusumadinata only refers to Kunst and a few people in Java. In contrast, after leaving Indonesia, Kunst had become exposed to scientific discussions in the Western world and he was aware of the criticism on the blown fifth theory, also voiced by his friend Curt Sachs (Kunst 1948: 18–35, 1973: 45).

#### *Music Notation and Modal Theory as Developed by Kusumadinata*

The colonial setting was not favourable for studying Indonesian performing arts and literature. The Dutch colonizers were mainly interested in trade

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<sup>9</sup> In his letter of 17 February 1954, Kunst wrote again that it would be important to have Kusumadinata's book published in English. In the same letter he mentioned that his student Mantle Hood would defend his PhD thesis on a 'Javanese music-technical topic' in May of that year and he would ask him to send a copy to Kusumadinata.

<sup>10</sup> See, for instance, his letters of 23 January 1951, 21 January 1952 and 29 April 1952 to Kunst.

and economic revenue and for Indonesians, living in oral music cultures, the documentation of their musical knowledge had no priority. Around 1900 the situation became more favourable, mainly due to the 'ethical policy' of the colonizers and even more so after the Java Instituut, with a programme for enhancing culture in Java, was founded in 1919.

At that time, several Indonesian and Dutch scholars expressed fears that the existing forms of Indonesian music would soon be replaced by Western music.<sup>11</sup> As a result, attention was given to the protection and preservation of Indonesian music by introducing formal teaching, research and encouraging musical practice; the development of music notation was thought to be necessary for this (Van Roon 1995: 65–66). At the 1921 conference of the Java Instituut, it was decided to organize a contest for developing a notation system for music in Java. Brandts Buijs became the chairperson of the committee organizing the contest and he published a report (Brandts Buijs 1924). As a result of this contest, the Javanese *kepatihan* cipher notation was developed. This notation system is absolute, like the Western staff notation: for instance, the note called *nem* in a particular gamelan is always notated with cipher 6, although it is recognized that the pitch of *nem* is not exactly the same for all gamelan.

In contrast to the (Central) Javanese absolute system, Kusumadinata supplied two identical relative notational systems for Sundanese music of West Java: the *da-mi-na-ti-la* system and the cipher system (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) in which *da* ≡ 1, *mi* ≡ 2, *na* ≡ 3, *ti* ≡ 4 and *la* ≡ 5. The cipher system includes signs for sharpening (–) and flattening (+) tones, similar to the Western sharps and flats. These relative notation systems of Kusumadinata are still widely used in schools today.<sup>12</sup> In Kusumadinata's relative system, which cipher is given to a particular tone depends on the function of the tone in the modal theory: in different modes<sup>13</sup> the name *da* (≡ 1) is, for instance,

<sup>11</sup> Kunst mentioned negative influences, like popular music and Christian songs (Kunst 1973: 4; 1947: 14–16).

<sup>12</sup> See definitions of *da*, *na*, *ti* and *la* in, for instance, Atik Soepandi (1995: 53, 136, 206, 116), Herdini (2007: 99–101). See also Kusumadinata's letter of 23 January 1951 to Kunst, in which he writes: 'To prevent Pelog and Slendro from destruction I intend to change my cipher system in the following way: instead of 1 2 3 4 5, I will write D (da) M (mi) N (na) T(ti) L (la) [...] What do you think about this?' (Correspondence Kunst-Kusumadinata 1928–1954).

<sup>13</sup> When musicians consider two pieces of music to be different versions of 'the same musical structure', they distinguish two different modes of a piece of music. See Powers (1980) for an overview of the concept of mode in different music cultures and Van Zanten (1989: 131–134) for general remarks about modes in Sundanese music.

given to a different tone.<sup>14</sup> An example is provided in the Appendix. Further, Kusumadinata's relative cipher system runs from high or 'small' (*alit, leutik*, cipher 1), to low or 'great' (*ageung, gedé*, cipher 5) notes. This is in contrast to other cipher systems in the world, and in particular to the Javanese *kepatihan* system, which runs from low (cipher 1) to high (cipher 7).<sup>15</sup>

Hence, we need to know Kusumadinata's modal theory before we are able to read or write music notated with his relative *daminatila* notation. That causes great problems in communication with people from other music cultures, who do not know Kusumadinata's theories. Moreover, Kusumadinata's modal theory needs thorough revision.

#### *Foreign Criticism of Kusumadinata's Theory and Notation*

Kunst has always tried hard to prove that 'non-Western' music was worthwhile and of equal value to Western music. The emphasis on developing music theories, based on much fieldwork, was part of his attempt to discover musical structure. Kunst and Kusumadinata, like most other music researchers of that time, concentrated on 'hard facts', like the description of musical instruments and pitch measurement of the produced tones. There was less attention for the process of making music in a social setting. The emphasis was on developing theoretical music models and the practical knowledge of musicians was only used in a limited way. Kusumadinata, in particular, produced several theories, thereby inventing many terms,<sup>16</sup> but he often failed to check their relevance for musicians. We get the impression that Kunst and Kusumadinata tried to convince the general public that Sundanese music had to be taken seriously, also because it had an underlying theory.

Brandts Buijs was the first to point out that Kusumadinata's cipher notation did not reflect musical practice. He published a detailed survey of the proposed notational systems for Javanese music since the 1920s,

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<sup>14</sup> In Western music, an absolute system (C, D, E, F...) is used next to a relative sol-fa system (do-re-mi-fa-sol-la-ti-do) in which 'do' may be any note, depending on the musical mode. In scholarly work the relative sol-fa system is rarely used. A Sundanese absolute cipher notation system also exists (Barmara and Achman 1958: 8–9), however, this is rarely used in schools.

<sup>15</sup> Before the *kepatihan* cipher system was developed, some Javanese notation systems also ran from high to low notes; see Brandts Buijs (1924: 11) and Kunst (1973: 349–350, 442–443).

<sup>16</sup> For instance, in a letter of 17 March 1929 to Kunst he writes that he 'discovered new tones of the pelog system' (Correspondence Kunst-Kusumadinata 1928–1954).

including the cipher-notation system developed by Kusumadinata for Sundanese music (Brandts Buijs 1940). At that time, the *kepatihan* cipher notation for Javanese music had become firmly established, as it still is today. Brandts Buijs accepted the Javanese cipher notation as being practical and useful, but he was very critical of the cipher notation developed by Kusumadinata for Sundanese music. One of his major objections was that Kusumadinata did not take into account that Sundanese (and Javanese) musicians always give the same name to a string or slat, regardless of which musical mode they are playing in. For instance, the third string on a zither is always called *panelu*, although it is tuned differently in *sorog* and *pelog* (Van Zanten 1995: 214–217).

In the period between 1940 and 1965, there were few musical encounters between the Indonesians and the Dutch, due to the political circumstances: Second World War, independence war (1945–1949) and the tensions in the post-colonial period under Sukarno. It took until the 1970s for Brandts Buijs's criticism to be followed up by other foreigners, who also doubted the usefulness of Kusumadinata's modal theory (Kartomi 1973: 88; Heins 1977: 85, n2;<sup>17</sup> Tamura 1977: 64; Rahn 1979: 77). However, they did not provide any alternative theories. Hence, when preparing my PhD fieldwork on Cianjuran music in 1980, I was confronted with the problematic modal theories of Kunst and Kusumadinata, which seemed rather distant from musical practice. I decided that learning to play the music myself, measuring zither tunings, observing the tuning process of these zithers and interviewing the players<sup>18</sup> might throw some light on the tuning models and modes in Sundanese music.

In the 1980s, there was a general aversion to measurements and a 'positivistic approach' in ethnomusicology. In the United States, in particular, ethnomusicology research had almost become anthropology and omitted music-technical discussions. As far as I was concerned, I had no objections to measuring pitch and computer analysis, if done in a proper way. One of the reasons is that I had a background in theoretical physics and mathematics. I did not want to limit myself to symbolic meanings as represented by music, but also wanted to report 'tangible results, or "facts"' to zither players and Sundanese fellow researchers (Van Zanten 1989: 5).

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<sup>17</sup> After 1940, Ernst Heins was the first Dutch music researcher who did fieldwork on Sundanese music in 1967–68 (Heins 1977: i).

<sup>18</sup> I did most interviews in Indonesian, which I speak fairly fluently, after using it for teaching at the Universitas Indonesia in 1976–79. In some cases, I used my more limited knowledge of Sundanese.



However, in line with the general trend in ethnomusicology, I wanted to participate and learn to perform, in order to enhance the understanding of music concepts (Van Zanten 2002: 948–952). For me, scholarly work had priority and my skills in performing Cianjuran music have always been fairly limited.<sup>19</sup>

My emphasis was on learning from the practical knowledge of musicians, rather than on music theory from the conservatory staff. I therefore asked the well-known zither player Uking Sukri whether I could stay in his family's home in Ujungberung when doing my fieldwork and he agreed. I have learned much from his vast musical knowledge, his music lessons and also from the many conversations I had with him, his wife, the singer Nenden Asyani, and many other family members and visitors.<sup>20</sup>

On the basis of tone measurements of 56 zithers and observation of the tuning processes, I showed that none of Kusumadinata's (and Kunst's) theoretical models for tone systems hold for the tunings of zithers in Cianjuran music (Van Zanten 1986: 100–105). Simply said, playing the five basic intervals of the pentatonic systems on a piano would be a better approximation to the *pelog* and *sorog* tunings of the zithers than any of their theoretical models. I also showed that the *salendro* tuning of the zithers was conceptually considered to be equidistant, although the measurements showed a slight, but significant, deviation from equidistance.

During my fieldwork, I also learned that, in practice, if zither players use a notation system, it will mostly be an absolute cipher system as used by Barmara and Ida Achman (1958: 8–9; see also the Appendix of this essay), and not Kusumadinata's relative system (Van Zanten 1986: 107, fn 5; 1989: 120–122). I showed that Kusumadinata's relative cipher notation led to much confusion about, for instance, the notation of the family of *sorog* tone systems (Van Zanten 1995: 218). Kusumadinata's cipher notation was only used in schools. The musician Uking Sukri always used to write music with the absolute cipher system, although he had learned Kusuma-

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<sup>19</sup> See also Witzleben (2010) for a recent overview of how engagement with performance has shaped, and continues to shape, the ideas and theoretical perspectives of ethnomusicology and ethnomusicologists. Kunst never used musical participation as a means for understanding Indonesian music.

<sup>20</sup> The main musical structure of Cianjuran is supplied by the large zither (*kacapi indung*) player. My teachers included the *kacapi indung* players Uking Sukri, Bakang Abubakar, Rukruk Rukmana, Tjatjih Djakarsih, and further the instrumentalists Dacep Eddi (*rebab*) and Burhan Sukarma (*suling*). Earlier, from 1976–79, when teaching at the University of Indonesia, Jakarta, I learned to play the *kacapi* zither from Sulaeman Danuwijaya, who used older playing techniques.

dinata's relative *daminatila* system in school. However, after he became an honorary staff member at the conservatory, he published a book with songs in which he used the relative notation system of Kusumadinata (Uking Sukri 1989). When I questioned him about this, he answered that he had been asked by the publisher to adopt the Kusumadinata system.

In fact, the problem is not so much the existence of a relative cipher notation system, but the fact that music schools do not use an absolute notation system: the Western staff notation and the absolute cipher notation system by Barmara and Ida Achman are hardly used in publications. Jaap Kunst contributed to this. In his letter of 9 September 1936, Kusumadinata asked Kunst's advice on notating Javanese and Sundanese songs for people outside Java. 'For this it is urgent that they are notated in the international notation' [that is the Western staff notation], so how could he best represent the Javanese note *nem*, as B $\flat$ , A or C? Kunst replied in his letter of 19 September 1936 to Kusumadinata: he found it difficult to advise him, but thought that it would be better to stick to Kusumadinata's [relative] cipher notation and not to use the [absolute] Western notation. In his letter of 13 February 1937 Kunst repeated: 'I think it is better if you stick to your cipher system' (Correspondence Kunst-Kusumadinata 1928–1954).

One may wonder why Kusumadinata's theories and notational system are still in use today, although their shortcomings are recognized by Sundanese theorists and musicians. One explanation may be that Kusumadinata was systematic and diligent, and that the well-known Kunst leaned heavily on Kusumadinata's theories. Further, Kusumadinata wrote many books for primary and secondary schools in which his *daminatila* notation was used. These books have been widely used, partially on Kunst's recommendation. In a letter dated 2 February 1937, when Kunst was back in the Netherlands, Kusumadinata wrote: 'The dissemination of my cipher notation goes very fast. I have won almost the whole of West Java for my ideas. In my spare time I give presentations about music everywhere'. Earlier, on 3 August 1935, he wrote to Kunst that he was preparing a book with Javanese songs and hoped that his (*daminatila*) notation system would also be adopted in Central and East Java (Correspondence Kunst-Kusumadinata 1928–1954).

Another reason for the persistence of Kusumadinata's ideas might be that the Sundanese wanted to have their own cipher notation for music, one that was different from that commonly used by their Javanese neighbours (the *kepatihan* notation system), thus underlining that the Sundanese

were different from the Javanese. Weintraub (1993: 37) summarizes the reasons for the persistence of Kusumadinata's theories as follows:

The problem is not so much that Kusumadinata's theories were wrong or even a "mistranslation" of actual practice, but that there has been a lack of continuing debate and criticism within the conservatory. It is difficult for insiders to challenge a legendary figure such as Kusumadinata.

In the Sundanese (and generally, the Indonesian) educational system, an openly-critical approach to ideas of teachers is rarely encouraged. However, in 2001 Sundanese scholars began to criticise Kusumadinata's theories openly. One of them, Heri Herdini, underlined the difficulty of criticizing a musical forefather like Kusumadinata when he pointed to the 'hidden meaning' in Kusumadinata's *daminatila* notation system: '[...] the term "Daminatila" that was created by Radén Machjar Angga Koesoemadinata was truly based on concepts and extraordinary understanding of the essence of human life'. Implicitly, 'it contains the life philosophy for each human being by continuously reminding him/her of his/her creator' (Herdini 2007: 72–76).

*Critical Articles on Kusumadinata's Theories by Bandung Scholars  
in 2001–2004*

Musicians can ignore theories and just play the music they learned to play without knowing these theories. The theories of Kusumadinata about tone systems and modes did not become part of musical practice and only exist in music schools (see also Herdini 2007: 82). Staff members in these schools, most of whom also perform, seem to live in two worlds: their musical practice outside the teaching context is different from the theory they teach in the schools (Van Zanten 1995: 229–230). In 2001–2004 this issue was addressed in four articles that were critical of Kusumadinata's theory, and which appeared in the *Panggung* journal of the Bandung conservatory (STSI): Hermawan (2001), Hernawan (2002), Herdini (2004) and Priadi Dwi Hardjito (2004). Here, I will focus on Hermawan (2001) and Herdini (2004).

Heri Herdini (2004: 62–63) wrote that until that time the theory of Kusumadinata was considered a 'monumental work', and that Kusumadinata's books were still compulsory for the courses on Sundanese music. The experts and scholars of music seemed to feel that it was taboo to revise the music theory of Kusumadinata. However, there had been much criticism by foreigners (Tamura, Heins, Van Zanten) and therefore it seemed

necessary to him to prove whether there were shortcomings in Kusumadinata's theory or not. The foreigners 'limited their critical remarks only to comments that were not followed by results that proved their statements' (Herdini 2004: 54–55).

In the first of these four articles, Deni Hermawan (2001) investigated the extent to which the theory of Kusumadinata corresponds to existing practice. He measured three tunings of each of four players of the *kacapi* zither and listed the tone intervals in his publication. He concluded (Hermawan 2001: 83) that

the theoretical tone scales of Raden Machjar [...] were not in correspondence with the practical tone scales that originated from the "feeling for musical modes" [*rasa laras*] of the artists.

Dedy Hernawan (2002: 55) also remarked that the tone systems are a question of 'feeling' (*rasa*) of an individual player and that the theory of Kusumadinata did not lead to a standardization of tunings in practice. In the title of his article he stated clearly that 'there is no relation between the practice of tone systems and the theory of Machjar'.

Herdini confirmed the findings of Hermawan, but his results were based on more measurements. He presented mean intervals calculated from 52 instruments: 30 gamelan instruments, and 22 string instruments (Herdini 2004: 64–65).<sup>21</sup> These results of Hermawan (2001: 74–79) and Herdini (2004: 65) confirmed my conclusions about the *pelog* (*degung*) and *sorog* (*madenda*) tone systems in Cianjuran music: the Western equal-tempered model is better than any of the models suggested by Kusumadinata and Kunst (Van Zanten 1986: 102–103, 1989: 125).

Herdini's results for the *salendro* tone system differ in detail from what I had found earlier (Van Zanten 1986: 94, 1989: 125). This may have been caused by the fact that his measurements were taken from gamelan instruments, together with zithers and bowed violins, whereas my measurements concerned a homogeneous sample of *kacapi indung* zithers. Unfortunately, Herdini did not comment on these small but important differences. He did not supply the 52 individual measurements, or the results for the separate groups of gamelan and string instruments. Doing so, might have given us some clues about the difference between his and my mean *salendro* tunings.

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<sup>21</sup> The string instruments were: 10 'tarawangsa instruments (*rebab* and *kacapi*),' 7 *kacapi indung* and 5 *rebab*. No more information was given on the 30 measured 'gamelan instruments'.

*Towards A New Modal Theory*

The 2001–2004 publications are a necessary step towards developing a new modal theory for West Java. However, methodological issues should be carefully discussed and pitch measurements should be reliable.<sup>22</sup> We must take into account that the conditions under which the research at STSI is carried out are poor. Staff members do not have the same resources for their research as those in Western institutes. Although most of my publications have been presented to the libraries and to some individuals, relevant literature is often not available. Further, the level of English among most staff members is poor, especially among those older than 40 years. On the whole, the Indonesian tertiary level of education is below the level of neighbouring countries like Malaysia and the Philippines.

It is also a question of a changing balance between theory and musical practice. These days, staff members, mainly trained for and interested in music making and teaching, are put under pressure to publish articles and books. For the STSI and its staff it has become a question of 'publish or perish'. Very skilled performing artists are invited to become scholars, while their knowledge of the methodological issues involved in research needs improvement. It seems that there still is a large gap between their oral music culture and the international scholarly culture of written publications.

In their articles of 2001–2004 staff members of STSI Bandung have confirmed the flaws in Kusumadinata's theories, thereby concurring with my conclusions for Cianjuran (and *kacapi-suling*) music: in the *pelog* and *sorog* tone systems the musical intervals are almost the same as those found in the equal-tempered Western tuning. We also agree that the measured *salendro* intervals are not exactly equidistant. However, the Bandung scholars did not address my statement that in Cianjuran musical practice *salendro* is treated as an equidistant pentatonic system. In the future, the discussion on the Sundanese musical modes will have to take this into account: the measured unequal intervals of the *salendro* tone system coexist with the 'musical fact' that, in practice, *salendro* is treated as an equidistant system. In a cognitive sense, the Sundanese *salendro* tone system is equidistant (Van Zanten 1986: 95–96, 1989: 126; Cook 1993: 59, 110).

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<sup>22</sup> The results presented by Hermawan (2001: 74–79) for the separate tunings show that there is strong evidence that the measurements by Hermawan and Herdini were not statistically independent.

Hence, Sundanese musicians, singing a song with the accompaniment of a zither with a *salendro* tuning ('almost equidistant'), have no difficulties in moving the song one *salendro* step down or up. It remains 'the same' song, although the transposed melody consists of a sequence of intervals that is slightly different from the original sequence. This needs to be used in developing a new modal theory because it is an indication that the Sundanese modes are based on the structural, rather than on the melodic function, of the tones.<sup>23</sup>

The first steps, taken by myself (Van Zanten 1989: 156–159) and Simon Cook (Cook 1993) in the analysis of transformations of songs in the different tone systems need to be followed up. After discarding Kusumadinata's theories, at least to a large extent, scholars should develop a new modal theory, preferably based on experimental research. This will also mean that the *daminatila* notation system should be replaced in scholarly work by an absolute notation system, certainly if international communication is sought.

In the remainder of this essay I will discuss how my encounters with Uking Sukri inspired the playing of Cianjuran music in the Netherlands. In particular, I will discuss the combination of the ensemble consisting of zithers and bamboo flute with a Western piano, because this clearly shows that the theoretical models of Kusumandinata deviate from empirical evidence.

### *Collaboration with Uking Sukri*

On a modest scale, I have tried to involve practitioners in my scholarly work by inviting Uking Sukri and Yus Wiradiredja from the Bandung conservatory to teach in the Netherlands. Pa Uking<sup>24</sup> (see image 9.1) had been my teacher and main informant for my PhD research since 1981. In 1987–1988, he came to the Netherlands for about half a year, and together we developed a method for playing Cianjuran, including audio materials and transcribed music (see Van Zanten 1995: 220–227; Van Zanten and

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<sup>23</sup> Powers (1980: 123) formulated this structural-melodic continuum as 'the modal spectrum between abstract scale and fixed tune'; Indian modes (*raga*) are 'nearer to the tune end' and the modes of Javanese gamelan (*pathet*) are 'nearer the scale end'.

<sup>24</sup> 'Mr/ Father' Uking; in West Java often Mang Uking; that is, 'Uncle' Uking.





Image 9.1 Uking Sukri on the *suling* bamboo flute and the author on *kacapi indung* zither. Aarlanderveen, the Netherlands, 1988.

Uking Sukri 2004).<sup>25</sup> Pa Uking taught students in Leiden and Amsterdam<sup>26</sup> and since that time I have organized a Cianjuran music group: *Dangiang Parahiangan* ('the spirit of West Java'). Learning to play Cianjuran music also became an optional part of my Anthropology of Music course at Leiden University and it was based on the course materials developed in 1987–1988 (Van Zanten and Sukri 2004). In 1992, Uking Sukri came to the Netherlands again, for about one month, before he travelled to England for a series of concerts and workshops. Yus Wiradiredja, whom I first met during my fieldwork in Bandung in 1981, came to the Netherlands for two

<sup>25</sup> This research on the practical aspects of Cianjuran music was supported by the *Programma Indonesische Studies* (PRIS) project KA 109. In their letter of 27 November 1986, the chair A. Teeuw and secretary Ch.F. van Fraassen wrote to me that the Dutch steering group was 'in favour of a close and mutual Dutch-Indonesian research cooperation' as formulated in my proposal. I am very grateful for the understanding and support for this music-practical project.

<sup>26</sup> There were 30–35 participants who regularly attended these classes by Uking Sukri. Several of them (Jos Jansen, Jean Hellwig, Renadi Santoso and Sinta Wullur) continued in a variety of ways with musical encounters in West Java.

months in 1999, mainly to help me analyse the ornaments of Cianjuran singing in more detail.

For me this cooperation was of great academic interest, but it also supported the performing of Cianjuran music in the Netherlands. We can assume that for Pa Uking and Yus Wiradiredja the experience of living in the Netherlands for some time,<sup>27</sup> together with the increased prestige in West Java and the financial reward, was important. For instance, after his stay in the Netherlands in 1987–1988, Pa Uking used part of the money he had earned to improve his house. Yus Wiradiredja used the money he earned in 1999 to produce cassette tapes with his newly composed ‘ethnic music with an Islamic flavour’; see more on Yus Wiradiredja and this music in Van Zanten (2011).

Uking Sukri considered it important to support my documentary work: he wanted me to get every detail correct. He already expressed his willingness to come to the Netherlands in 1982 for further cooperation on the documentation of Cianjuran music (see image 9.2). Pa Uking often said that, in the future, people would need to visit Leiden if they wanted to find out about Cianjuran music. My reply would then be that this might become true only for the theoretical part, as in the Netherlands the students lacked the Sundanese soundscape: the people with first-hand experience of Cianjuran music lived in West Java. See a report in the weekly magazine *Manglé* (Hana Rs 1992: 46) for more about Pa Uking’s comments on my research and his stay in the Netherlands in June–July 1992.

Uking Sukri<sup>28</sup> was born in the centre of Bandung into a middle-class family in 1925. He finished primary school and three years of technical vocational training. As the child of an Islamic family, he also attended an Islamic school for one year. When he left school, because his parents could not afford the school fees, Uking Sukri started to work. From 1940–1942 he worked daily from 7 to 2 o’clock as a technician at the public works department of Bandung and from 5 to 8 o’clock in the evening in a shop, Toko Tokyo that had a Japanese owner. During this time he learned some Japanese. At an early age Pa Uking learned to play the *kacapi* zither and to sing Cianjuran songs in an informal way; at 15 he was accepted as

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<sup>27</sup> For instance, I attended a concert by the Residentie Orkest in The Hague with Uking Sukri; Bernard Haitink conducted, among other works, a Bruckner symphony. Pa Uking was always very interested in such new experiences.

<sup>28</sup> This section is largely based on the many discussions I had with Uking Sukri and also on the autobiographical notes that he wrote, on my request, when staying in our home in Aarlanderveen, the Netherlands (Sukri 1988).

player of the small zither by the music group *Rengganis*, which included the famous zither player O. Tarya.

From 1945–1947, during the struggle for political independence, he joined the Indonesian army in Bandung. After this period, he again worked as a technician, from 1948–1950 in a textile factory in Garut, and from 1950–1953 in a Bandung factory that made all kinds of products for the Post, Telephone and Telegraph office. During this last post in Bandung, Pa Uking also worked as an honorary musician at Radio Bandung. From 1953 onwards he was full-time employed as a musician at Radio Bandung, and he stayed there for 30 years, until his retirement in 1983. Initially, he played the small zither (*kacapi rincik*). In 1966, the player of the large zither, O. Tarya, died and Uking Sukri became the *kacapi indung* player in his place. From 1970–1984 he was leader of the radio group for Cianjuran music. After his retirement from the radio, Pa Uking became honorary teacher of the Cianjuran zithers at the Bandung music and dance conservatory (ASTI, now STSI) until his death in 1994.

Pa Uking was an all-round musician. When he became well-known he also taught Cianjuran singing and playing to amateur groups in Bandung and at tea estates near Bandung. During this period he made several overseas trips to perform in Europe. He started to learn some English, and managed to find his way in France, the Netherlands, England, and a few other countries. Pa Uking was also recognized as one of the best zither builders. He built about 10 sets of zithers (*kacapi indung* plus *kacapi rincik*) for me. See further information on Uking Sukri in Enip Sukanda (1996) and Van Zanten (1989: 53, 60–61; 2005).

#### *Kacapi-suling Ensemble with Piano in 1989–1990*

Musical experiments with Western instruments in Sundanese, and more generally Indonesian, music have been documented since the beginning of the twentieth century. One such experiment took place in 1989–1990 when Uking Sukri collaborated with the jazz pianist Bubi Chen in playing *kacapi-suling* music with piano. In 1989 the cassette tape *Kedamaian* (1989) was produced by Hidayat, and in September 1990 there were concerts in Jakarta (image 9.3). The owner of the Hidayat Company, Bill Firmansjah, was a jazz fan and instrumental in combining the *kacapi-suling* ensemble with a jazz pianist. Hidayat had already produced several cassette tapes with jazz, as well as several with Cianjuran and *kacapi-suling* music, especially by groups led by Pa Uking. The combination of

Jaris, 29 Juni 1982.  
 Kepada,  
 Yth: Sdr. Wim Van Zanten  
 di Negeri Belanda.

Dengan hormat,  
 Wim! Bagaimana khabar dengan keluarga  
 sehat? Saja dan bahagia? Kami dengan  
 group sehat semua walaupun bekerja  
 begitu azak cape, dengan pindah-pindah tempat  
 concert yang begitu jauh. Kami merasa  
 monyosal karena tidak dapat pergi ke  
 Negeri Belanda sesuai dengan permintaan  
 Wim, walaupun kami bersedia untuk pergi  
 ke Negeri Belanda, pihak Indonesia sebetulnya  
 tidak keberatan hanya harus melalui pro-  
 sedur pemerintahan, tetapi kalau Wim  
 dapat menemukannya itu lebih baik. Pihak  
 Perancis sama sekali tidak keberatan karena  
 concert telah selesai. Kalau kali ini tidak  
 berhasil, tetap saja kami bersedia pergi ke Negeri  
 Belanda sesuai dengan rencana Wim. pada  
 lain waktu setelah kembali ke Indonesia.  
 Sekian dahulu. Terima kasih.

Hormat kami  
 Uking  
 - Uting Sukri -

Image 9.2 Letter of 29 June 1982 to author by Uking Sukri when he was on a concert tour in France. Uking Sukri writes that the ensemble is healthy but a little tired, because they often had to travel long distances for their concerts. At this time, 1982, he already expressed his willingness to come to the Netherlands: if it cannot be arranged this time, he would like to come another time.



*kacapi-suling* with piano was, however, not a great success,<sup>29</sup> although in 2005 Bill Firmansjah told me that the cassettes had sold ‘normally’.

The title of the tape, *Kedamaian*, is derived from *damai*, peace, agreement. According to Pak Uking, this name refers not only to the peaceful combination of the different kinds of music, but also to the possibility of peaceful co-existence of different philosophies of life. The text introducing the cassette tape was written by the well-known Bandung jazz musician Harry Roesli (1951–2004) who had previously studied at the Rotterdam conservatory. He wrote (in my translation from Indonesian):

[...] if Bubi Chen, a master jazz pianist that we have these days, plays together with the *kacapi-suling* group of Mang Uking, it is not just a question of the combination of Western and Eastern, or traditional and modern music. It is more than that, it is an exploration of the aesthetical expansion and may be seen as the birth of a post-modern music. Imagine, the aesthetical world of *kacapi-suling* is beautifully infiltrated by Bubi Chen with forms of jazz improvisation and substitution. Imagine a sacral, almost minimalistic harmony and, evoked by the jazz idioms from Bubi Chen’s playing with wide [*luas*] chords, and even more by the modern technique of superimposing. [...] It is no exaggeration when I pay my respect to Bubi Chen and Pak Uking, and at the same time express my happiness about the birth of their spiritual child (their work) that I consider to be a “master piece” (*Kedamaian* 1989).

I would describe the playing style of Bubi Chen as an adoption of the syn-copations of the large zither in combination with improvisations on the patterns of the small zither with occasional trills. As has been explained above, the Western equal-tempered tuning of the piano can reasonably well reproduce the *pelog* and *sorog* tunings of the *kacapi* zithers. The piano tuning is close to the tuning of the zithers and the bamboo flute, although there remains some tension between the tunings and timbres of piano and the *kacapi-suling* ensemble. However, this was musically completely acceptable to these accomplished musicians.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> There were ‘no more than 40’ attendants on the first concert evening in Jakarta, 21 September 1990 (Ati 1990: 12).

<sup>30</sup> This combination of the *kacapi-suling* ensemble with a piano is a clear indication from musical practice that the tuning models of Kunst and Kusumadinata are less suitable for describing the *pelog* and *sorog* tunings of the *kacapi-suling* ensemble than the Western equal-tempered model used to describe the piano tuning (*pelog*: F, E, C, B $\flat$ , A, F and *sorog*: F, E, D, B $\flat$ , A, F; see above and a thorough analysis in Van Zanten 1986: 102–5; 1989: 124–7). Later, in 2002–2003, the same was demonstrated by Yus Wiradiredja, who used the *madenda* or *sorog* tone system in all songs on his cassette tapes with ‘ethnic music, inspired by Islam’ and he combined instruments like the *suling* and *kacapi* with a keyboard tuned in the equal-tempered Western tuning (Van Zanten 2011: 262, n18). Moreover, in pop music since

*Dangiang Parahiangan in the Netherlands*

Inspired by the recordings on the cassette tape, *Kedamaian*, the music group *Dangiang Parahiangan* from the Netherlands, also started experimenting in 2009. Our pianist was Rob Agerbeek, who is a jazz, boogie-woogie and blues performer (image 9.4). Rob Agerbeek was born in Indonesia but, unlike Bubi Chen, he did not know *kacapi-suling* music. Maybe, therefore, he took more freedom and his playing deviated more from the *kacapi-suling* idiom than Bubi Chen's. My impression was that his sound colours were more vivid. The zithers in the *kacapi-suling* group mostly played the usual, very strict, patterns of 2 or 4 gong cycles of 8 (or 4 or 16) beats. In contrast to the *Kedamaian* (1989) music, we rarely used the *suling* together with the piano. Instead, we experimented with percussion instruments. We first tried a Sundanese *kendang*, but later we found that the sound quality of the Indian *tabla* drums combined better with the other instruments.

At the concert on 22 May 2010 at the Tong Tong Festival in The Hague, the music with piano was alternated with 'common' Cianjuran singing and instrumental *kacapi-suling* episodes.<sup>31</sup> For instance, the last item in the *pelog* tuning was basically the piece *Catrik* with a solo introduction by the large zither and the bamboo flute. *Catrik* was then played by just the *kacapi-suling* ensemble, after which the flute stopped playing and the improvising piano came in, later joined by the *tabla* drums. After four to five minutes, the tempo was increased and it stayed this way until the end (about one to two minutes). The next item, which was the first piece in the *sorog* tuning, consisted of the 'usual' Cianjuran songs with a female vocalist: *Kapati-pati* and *Eros*, and was followed by one verse of the metric song *Gandrung Gunung*. After the singing, the improvising piano joined *Gandrung Gunung*, followed by the *tabla*. Consequently, our performance covered a wider range of possibilities than the tape *Kedamaian* (1989).

This performance seems to have been a success. I estimate the number of attendants to have been between 100 and 150. The *Dangiang Parahiangan* players and Rob Agerbeek are grateful to the Uking Sukri ensemble and Bubi Chen for their inspiring recordings.

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1960 Sundanese zithers and flutes have regularly been combined with keyboards and other instruments tuned according to the equal-tempered Western tuning.

<sup>31</sup> The musicians were Rob Agerbeek, piano; Ronald Bergman, *suling*, *kendang*, *tabla*; Igor Boog, *kacapi indung*; Tuti Hasanah, vocalist and *kacapi rincik*; Wim van Zanten, *kacapi rincik*.



The Jakarta International Festival of

# the Performing Arts 1990




**Bubi Chen & Mang Uking Trio**  
**Jazz with Kecapi Suling**  
 Indonesia

21, 22, 23 September 1990, 8.00 pm  
 Gedung Kesenian Jakarta

BDJA



Patron  
 H.E. Wiyogo Abmodarminto  
 Governor of Jakarta

Committee  
 The Management  
 of Gedung Kesenian Jakarta




Sudah berpuluh-puluh pemusik mencoba bermain diwilayah tradisi digabung modern, bahkan beberapa komposer dunia pernah bermain musik tradisi kita dalam idiom orkes barat. Jika Bubi Chen bermain bersama Mang Uking Trio ( pemusik tradisi, pemain kecapi ) bukannya latah atau eksperimen, apa lagi coba-coba ... bukan ! Sejarah mencatat dalam kaset " Kedamaian " yang diproduksi dan diedarkan oleh Hidayat Audio Bandung. Mereka bermain bersama, berbicara dalam bahasa yang sama, berjalan seiring tidak saling menuntun, menciptakan sesuatu yang enak untuk dinikmati ..... itulah seni.

Numerous musicians have tried thier best to present a combination of traditional and modern music. Some of the Internationally renowned among them have at one time even played our traditional music in the western orchestral idiom. Now, Bubi Chen appearing together with Mang Uking Trio ( Traditional kecap players ), does not mean that he is experimenting or just trying ... far from it ! History has proven such in the album " Kedamaian " produced and distributed by Hidayat Audio Bandung. The musicians form a team, speak the same language, walk side by side without hesitation and create something pleasant to be enjoyed ... that is art !.

Tickets Available : Gedung Kesenian Jakarta  
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 Phone (021) 380 8283  
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 Performance Time : 8.00 pm  
 Rp 15.000,- • Rp 10.000,-

Image 9.3 Announcement of the 'Jazz with Kecapi Suling' concerts by Bubi Chen and the 'Mang Uking Trio' at the Jakarta International Festival of the Performing Arts, 21–23 September 1990.



Image 9.4 Rehearsal of Dutch Cianjuran group *Dangiang Parahiangan* with piano at Ronald Bergman's home in The Hague, 22 July 2009. From left to right: Rob Agerbeek, Sinta Wullur, Wim van Zanten and Igor Boog (photo courtesy of Ronald Bergman).

### *Conclusion*

The musical encounters between Jaap Kunst and Machjar Kusumadinata were characterized by a shared desire to develop a music theory for West Java. During my own research in the early 1980s I was confronted with the obvious shortcomings in their theories, which were still being used in Bandung music schools. I therefore concentrated on the practical knowledge of musicians: music theory needs to be firmly based on the sound of music. In 2001–2004, Bandung conservatory staff members openly challenged Kusumadinata's theories and confirmed my findings of the 1980s. This has been an important step forward.

A new modal theory needs to be developed. The relevance of new modal theories should be checked with practitioners, possibly by methods using experimental research with perception tests. For this to succeed, music researchers in Bandung and elsewhere should receive better training in the methods and techniques of research and become exposed to international discussions in the field. If they want to have some international impact, they can no longer limit their discussions to the restricted area

of West Java or Indonesia. At the same time, I hope that fine Sundanese musicians, like Uking Sukri in the past, will continue to inspire people with their musical performances and experiments.

At several universities in the United States there have been 'artists in residence' for many years. It is a system where musicians from foreign music cultures transfer their practical knowledge and at the same time work on their dissertations. Mantle Hood, one of Jaap Kunst's students, has played an active role in implementing this system to stimulate musical encounters. In a situation where Bandung staff members wish to improve their theoretical knowledge and Dutch scholars want to improve their practical knowledge of Sundanese music, this is a stimulating example to be followed.

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*Appendix: Relative Cipher Notation by Kusumadinata*

In the table below, four Sundanese pentatonic tone systems are notated according to Kusumadinata’s relative cipher notation system (Herdini 2003: 30, 2004: 65). The last two rows give the corresponding approximate Western notation and the absolute Sundanese cipher notation as used by Barmara and Achman (1958: 8–9). In this table ciphers represent the different tones. The distance between the ciphers in the table is (approximately) proportional to the musical interval between the tones, given in Western equal-tempered semi-tones (one column difference ≡ one semi-tone ≡ 100 cent). Each row covers an octave of twelve semi-tones (or 1200 cent). The arrangement is from high notes on the left to low notes on the right. If we take the note in column 1 to be F, which is more or less standard in Cianjuran music, the first row of ciphers (*pelog degung, pelog*) represents the tones F, E, C, B $\flat$ , A, F and the second row (*sorog madenda, sorog*) F, E, D, B $\flat$ , A, F. Note that the *salendro* intervals are not all multiples of semi-tones; the *salendro* note 2 is between E $\flat$  and D, and note 5 between A $\flat$  and G; in the absolute Sundanese cipher notation these notes are notated as 2+ and 5+.

The problem is that, according to Kusumadinata’s relative system, on *kacapi* zithers tuned to *pelog* the cipher 1 would represent the tone F, produced by string 1; in *sorog* the cipher 1 would represent the tone

Table 1. Cipher notation by Kusumadinata

| Name tone system                                  | Tones in Kusumadinata’s cipher notation and approximate Western equivalents when note in first column is F; the last row gives the Sundanese absolute cipher notation (Barmara and Achman 1958: 8–9). |   |           |    |              |   |     |           |   |           |     |              |   |
|---|---|---|-----------|----|--------------|---|-----|-----------|---|-----------|-----|--------------|---|
| Pelog degung                                      | 1   | 2 |           |    |              | 3 |     | 4         | 5 |           |     |              | 1 |
| Sorog (madenda)                                   | 3   | 4 |           | 5  |              |   |     | 1         | 2 |           |     |              | 3 |
| Mandalungan                                       | 3   |   | 4         | 5  |              |   |     | 1         | 2 |           |     |              | 3 |
| Salendro  | 1   |   | 2         |    |              | 3 |     | 4         |   | 5         |     |              | 1 |
|   |   |   |           |    |              |   |     |           |   |           |     |              |   |
| Approximate Western note (when <i>barang</i> ≡ F) | F   | E | E $\flat$ | D  | [D $\flat$ ] | C | [B] | B $\flat$ | A | A $\flat$ | [G] | [G $\flat$ ] | F |
| Absolute cipher notation in West Java             | 1   | 2 | 2+        | 3- |              | 3 |     | 4         | 5 | 5+        |     |              | 1 |



B $\flat$  produced by string 4. To put it another way, the tone produced by the first string, as represented in the first column of Table 1 ( $\equiv$  Western note F in each of the four tone systems) would be notated with cipher 1 in *pelog* (*degung*) and *salendro*, but with cipher 3 in *sorog* (*madenda*) and *mandalungan*.

## CHAPTER TEN

### INDONESIAN PERFORMING ARTS IN THE NETHERLANDS, 1913–1944

Matthew Isaac Cohen

The history of Indonesian music in the Netherlands is sometimes assumed to begin with Babar Lajar (Javanese for ‘Setting Sail’), a youth gamelan founded in Haarlem in 1941 and active through the mid-1950s (Mendonça 2002: 115–150). This so-called ‘white gamelan orchestra’ (*blanke gamelan-orkest*) was avidly supported by ethnomusicologist Jaap Kunst (1891–1960) and often performed on Dutch media, giving radio concerts, accompanying classical Javanese dance in the dance documentary *Danskunst in Indonesië* (1947) and modern Javanese dance in *God Shiva* (1955), and providing music for the Philips LP record of Jaap Kunst’s children’s book *Begdja the gamelan boy: A story from the isle of Java* (1953). Babar Lajar offered an important precedent for other gamelan played by (mostly) non-Indonesians outside of Southeast Asia. The group’s influence was due, in no small part, to the talents of the ensemble’s leader, Bernard IJzerdraat (1926–86), a musician who later took the Javanese name Suryabrata and founded the influential *sanggar* (arts studio) Bakti Budaya (‘Servant of Culture’) in Jakarta in 1956. IJzerdraat offered practical gamelan instruction to American musicologist Mantle Hood while Hood worked on a PhD on musical modes in Javanese gamelan under Kunst’s supervision in the early 1950s. This experience directly contributed to Hood founding the first American university gamelan programme at UCLA in the 1950s. IJzerdraat later facilitated the research and practical studies of many foreign visitors to Indonesia. However, Babar Lajar’s legitimacy as a representative of Javanese culture was questioned by Indonesians living in the Netherlands; modern Javanese dancer Raden Mas Jodjana (1893–1972) notably expressed consternation at its monopolization of Dutch media time in the 1940s (Cohen 2010: 137). It is not my purpose to debate Babar Lajar’s significance in the history of gamelan’s internationalization. But, I would like to suggest that the attention given to it occludes an earlier history of Indonesian performing arts in the Netherlands, a lively art world, which involved professional and amateur artists of Indonesian, European and mixed race descent; multi-art collaborations (including music, dance,

drama, puppetry and film); scholarly and popular publications and recordings; and public performances of various scales and purposes.

This essay surveys the Indonesian performing arts 'scene' in the Netherlands during the late colonial period through the end of World War Two, looking particularly at Javanese dance and music associations, Indies drama, *kroncong* clubs, touring professionals and pan-Indonesian student groups.<sup>1</sup> The performing arts were initially inward looking. The first gamelan concert by Javanese students was organized to illustrate a lecture on music addressed to an academic audience. Indies dramas (*Indische toneel*) produced at the same time fastidiously avoided issues of Otherness in order to affirm the Dutchness of the Dutch Indies. However, with the first *Indische Kunstavond* (Indies Art Evening) in 1916, the performing arts were used by Indonesian students studying in Holland to make a political statement to the Dutch public. The refined arts were presented as a justification for a model of colonial relations in which indigenous and Dutch cultures were *associated*, rather than unified or assimilated (see Van Niel 1984: 36–38). The integrity of Javanese culture was to be esteemed for the sake of interracial tolerance and respect. Political advancement was conditioned upon cultural exchange on even terms.

With the exceptions of composer Fred Belloni (1891–1969) and playwright Jan Fabricius (1871–1964), artists did not journey from the Dutch Indies to the Netherlands anticipating making a living from art. Yet, Europe allowed new possibilities for some Indonesian dancers and other artists, starting with business student turned professional performer Raden Mas Jodjana. Increasingly, cultural organisations were interested in demonstrating pan-Indonesian unity through performance. One can see them as workshops for the formation of Indonesian national culture, enshrined in the constitutional mandate for the government to promote 'the peaks of culture' of the nation's constitutive ethnic groups. These Indonesian associations were not generally exclusive; they incorporated Dutch as well as Eurasian members. As such, they modelled inclusivity and presented alternatives to the ethnic segregation that came to dominate Indonesian culture in the 20th century. Yet, as shall be demonstrated, the progressive political agenda of early Indies art evenings was not sustained over the decades to follow, as Indonesian performances on Dutch stages came to confirm colonial stereotypes for Dutch audiences.

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<sup>1</sup> Sections of this chapter have been published in slightly different forms in Cohen 2010.

*Indies Drama*

European drama in the Indies had a long history before the 20th century, mostly undistinguished (Van den Berg 1881). The Netherlands fielded few international theatrical companies, and language barriers stood in the way of touring English or French dramatic ‘straight drama’ companies – though opera and musical theatre were appreciated. The large proscenium theatres, or *schouwburgen*, of Batavia, Surabaya and Semarang, and the smaller stages of European clubhouses occasionally hosted local amateur drama companies, which performed for their own enjoyment and the entertainment of European urbanites. There was also military drama – largely all-male affairs. Farce and light comedy dominated over serious drama. A list of a hundred play scripts available for purchase in a Batavia general store in 1892 includes one play by Henrik Ibsen and one by Molière. The rest is mostly Dutch-language comedies, some translated from French originals. Only a sprinkling of the scripts, such as Arie Ruysch’s (1797–1871) comedy *De oom uit Oost-Indie* (The East Indies uncle, 1865), appear to have Indies-related themes (Tooneelstukken 1892).<sup>2</sup>

The success of Hans van de Wall’s (1869–1948) production of W.G. van Nouhuys’ three-act play *Eerloos* (Dishonourable, 1892), about a government tax collector who is robbed by his son, in the Batavia *schouwburg* in 1900, revealed an audience for serious drama in the Dutch language. This encouraged European tours by professional companies and encouraged Indies-based writers, including van de Wall, to write and produce serious plays drawing on their own experience of life in the Indies. The years 1900–1925 have been described as a period of blossoming of the *Indische toneel*, Dutch-language realist drama set in the Indies (Baay 1998). The Indies drama was the correlate of the Indies novel (*Indische roman*), a popular literary genre in the colony and the Netherlands at the time. Playwrights who were born or lived in the Indies penned numerous social dramas dealing with issues confronting Europeans in the Dutch Indies,

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<sup>2</sup> ‘Tooneelstukken voor dames en heeren’, *Java Bode*, 8 October 1892, p. 7. This advertisement targeted dramatic companies, listing the number of acts, parts (male and female), genre (for example: farce, comedy, drama) as well as price. An advertisement from 1891 in the same paper promotes 50 playscripts ‘without roles for women’. Among the very small number of published Dutch-language plays about the Indies written before 1900 is Onno Zwier van Haren’s five-act *Agon, Sulthan van Bantam* (1769). The tragedy is noteworthy for its critique of corruption in the Dutch East India Company and sympathetic portrayal of Banten’s sultan.

such as class strife, prejudice towards men of mixed race, the *nyai* or unofficial wife of a European man, unfettered capitalism, social isolation and generational conflict. Many of the Dutch-language plays written in the Indies were highly ephemeral and of strictly local interest. Rob Nieuwenhuys (1978), in his survey of colonial literature, identifies three playwrights of enduring interest: Jan Fabricius (1871–1964), Henri van Wermeskerken (1882–1937) and Hans van de Wall, who wrote and directed under the *nom-de-stage* Victor Ido. The work of all three was popular in the Indies, and performed internationally as well. Here, I will focus on Fabricius.

Fabricius was born in the small town of Assen, in the north of Holland, the son of a printing press foreman and proof-reader of the town paper.<sup>3</sup> He received only an elementary education before going to work as a printer. He went to the Indies in 1892 as a printing press foreman, worked himself up to reporter and by 1898 was editor-in-chief of a newspaper in Bandung. Fabricius returned to the Netherlands in 1902. His first sign of involvement in theatre was in 1905, when Dutch actor-manager Frits Bouwmeester (1885–1959) commissioned Fabricius to write a play for him on an Indies theme for his company's tour to the Indies in 1905–6. While Fabricius was unable to complete the play before the troupe's departure, he continued to work on the script and published the play, titled *Met den handschoen getrouwd* (Married by proxy) in 1907, along with another Indies drama and an historical romance commissioned to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the municipal charter of Assen. Fabricius returned to the Indies in 1910 and wrote plays for local drama groups while working as a newspaper editor.

After four additional years in the Indies, Fabricius decided he would attempt to make a living as a playwright. He travelled to Paris in 1914 to observe the latest theatrical trends and then moved to the Netherlands. By 1915 his plays were being produced professionally in Amsterdam and other cities around the Netherlands and within a short time were being translated into German, French, English and other European languages. Fabricius' 1910 play *De rechte lijn*, a drama about an ambitious self-educated businessman who sacrifices marital happiness to conform to his rigid moral code, was published in an English version (as *Straight out!*) in 1915. His Indies drama *Lasmi* (1924) was translated into English and produced in 1929 by the Bandbox Repertory Theater, an innovative California company that performed in environmental settings such as drawing rooms, clubs and hotels.

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<sup>3</sup> On Fabricius' life and Indies dramas, see Van den Berg (2000).

Fabricius' 1916 play *Dolle Hans*, about a Eurasian military officer whose career and love are hampered by prejudice, was translated into English as *Insult* and produced in 1930 in London's West End and on Broadway in New York.<sup>4</sup> It is probably the most significant Indies drama to be produced in Europe, lauded by Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw and other theatre luminaries. A brief summary will provide a taste of the genre.

Major de Weert is on leave and visiting his son Does, a district controller in a remote province of the Indies. Does has recently married a strikingly beautiful and independently minded Dutch woman named Jolanthe. Jolanthe still has the glow of 'cream and roses' in her complexion, but has evidently taken a liking to the Indies. As the curtain opens, she plays *kroncong* guitar (a low-class hybrid cultural signifier), and addresses her servant in bazaar Malay. Jolanthe has asked Does to prevent the execution of a native soldier but he has not done as she requested, losing her respect. The Major flirts with Jolanthe and suggests that he would have liked to have married her if he was younger. Does' closest friend, Hans Hartman, served under Major de Weert and had an altercation with him – which resulted in the Major not getting promoted. Hans has a 'native' grandmother – and is prone to losing his temper – and the Major has a virulent dislike of 'half-castes'. 'If I had my way I'd have every Sienjo in the land with his back to the wall in front of a firing squad and I'd count it the best day's work I'd done to see that not a man of them was left!'<sup>5</sup> Hans tries to avoid meeting the Major again – as he is afraid the Major will provoke him and he'll lose his temper, and do something he might regret. But Hans has something important to discuss with Does. He meets privately with Does and advises him not to follow a central command to strip the four ruling sultans of their power. Four of the sultans are corrupt rogues, but Indra Djali, the Sultan of Poeloe Manik, is loyal to the Dutch and also well-liked by the populace and removing him would create dissent and possibly lead to insurrection. Jolanthe also advises Does to disobey orders. But Does docilely obeys his superiors, completely losing Jolanthe's respect for him as a man. She concludes that she fell in love with his uniform, not the man inside it.

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<sup>4</sup> Translators J.E. Harold Terry and Harry Tighe originally titled their translation 'Son of a—' but this suggestion of vulgarity was prevented by the Lord Chamberlain's office; each instance of 'son of a bitch' is crossed out in the script. See Fabricius (1930).

<sup>5</sup> *Sienjo*, from the Portuguese *senhor* (Lord, Sir, Mister), was a neutral term for Caucasian and Eurasian young men in bazaar Malay through the late 19th century, but is deployed here as a derogatory term for Eurasian men.



Act II begins five days later. A thunder storm rages, affecting Hans 'atavistically', raising his temper and fear. Indra Djali has thrown in his lot with the other sultans and they are raiding border villages. Does receives a telegraph from the Assistant Resident that authorizes him to retaliate. Hans reveals to Does that he has always loved Jolanthe – since he first met her in Holland. But he has never told her of his love as he is ashamed of his mixed race background. Does lets it slip to his father, the Major, that Hans loves Jolanthe and the Major forces Does to tell Jolanthe about his friend's romantic interest. An order from headquarters arrives that Hans will be transferred to Rawah – a punitive transfer instigated by the Major. The Major abuses Hans, calling him a *Sienjo* and a 'son of a bitch'. Hans tries to throttle the Major and is placed under arrest. Jolanthe goes to say goodbye to Hans – admitting her love for him. Does becomes so angry at his father for causing him to lose his wife and friend that he picks up a revolver to shoot him, but is unable to do so.

Act III is set a month later. Hans is imprisoned in the guard room of the barracks under sentence of death. A reprieve from the Governor-General is expected for him – many have petitioned. Does has died during the military expedition against the sultans. The sultans are again granted independence – though now Indra Djali is a sworn enemy of the Dutch. The Major petitions Hans not to meet the widowed Jolanthe as it will soil her reputation to go directly from her husband's funeral to her lover. A native sergeant loyal to Hans plans an escape, but Hans is a dutiful officer to the end and refuses his help. A cable arrives stating that the execution will go through as planned. Hans reconciles with the Major, who vows to mend his ways. Jolanthe arrives and Jolanthe and Hans look at each other in silence as military drums play outside the cell.

Fabricius was one of the most celebrated Dutch playwrights of the interwar years: in one year there were reportedly sixteen productions of his plays produced in Amsterdam alone. His melodramatic problem plays had an uneven reception internationally. The plays were sometimes ill-served by translators. During a thunderstorm in *Insult*, the 'half caste' officer Hans Hartman vows 'the gods are angry tonight; they demand a sacrifice. [...] My native blood is strong within me – something is threatening'. *Time* magazine quipped that with lines like these, 'from the standpoint of audience-intelligence, the play is neatly titled'.<sup>6</sup> Lee Schubert

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<sup>6</sup> 'New plays in Manhattan', *Time*, 29 September 1930, [www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,740426-2,00.html](http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,740426-2,00.html) (accessed 28 October 2008).

imported the play to New York City with a raft of other plays running in London in the hope of reviving the depressed Broadway theatre industry. The production closed after 24 performances in New York. Fabricius' plays, and many other Indies dramas, indulge in racist stereotypes. There are few indigenous or Chinese characters in his plays, and even fewer with any psychological depth. One critic has described the Indo (mixed-race) character in *Totok en Indo* as 'good at heart, ludicrous, sentimental, responsible for all the laughs on stage, especially through the mixed prattle used by him and his friend Cornelis' (February 1991: 56). When performed in Surabaya, the play was protested by Eurasians for Fabricius' demeaning stereotypes.

While Victor Ido's plays demonstrate limited appreciation of the dynamics of Javanese society, the work of Fabricius, like the bulk of Indies dramas, is testament to Dutch colonial insularity. These period dramas do not look outwards to the ethnic diversity of the Indies and the archipelago's connections to the wider world, but focus inwards on domestic concerns, psychological conflicts, personal and career angst. Though set in Java and other islands of the archipelago, the plays are not fully embedded in the cultural landscape. The Otherness of the Indies is fastidiously avoided in order to affirm the Dutchness of the Dutch Indies.

*Indies Arts Evenings: Traditional and Modern Indonesian Performance  
in Holland*

Production of Dutch-language drama in the Indies was largely limited to European and Eurasian performers and spectators, sealed off from the bulk of the population by the imposing walls of the *schouwburgen* and European clubs (*sociëteit*) where they were staged. A small number of plays, including Victor Ido's *Karina Adinda*, were adapted into Malay, and there are signs of influence of Indies drama on the development of naturalist drama in Malay, Javanese and other Indonesian languages.<sup>7</sup> However, the pluralist structure of colonial society placed Indies drama at a severe remove from the worlds of indigenous theatre, dance and music. The situation was quite different in the Netherlands, where a single programme in the 1930s might feature a one-act comical Indies drama, a Javanese or Balinese dance, *kroncong* music, a martial arts demonstration and a

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<sup>7</sup> For a recent discussion of *Karina Adinda* and its revival in postcolonial Indonesia, see Winet (2010).



Image 10.1 Group photo of participants in an *Indische Kunstavond* (Indies Art Evening) circa 1918 in the Netherlands (KITLV 34438).

silent film of the Indies accompanied by live gamelan. Such programmes, known generically as ‘Indies arts evenings’ (*Indische kunstavond*), encapsulated the cultural diversity of the Indies.

Gamelan and dance were performed by Javanese working in colonial exhibition contexts starting in the 19th century, but these performers were very temporary residents, isolated from Dutch society and made to serve strictly colonial agendas (see particularly Bloembergen 2006). There were also haphazard efforts by Dutch students and enthusiasts to stage their versions of Javanese arts – such as a parade staged by the Delft Student Union in 1857. Costumes, *topeng* masks and gamelan instruments were borrowed from the Delft Royal Academy of Linguistics, Geography and Ethnology, and the parade’s musical director reportedly based the music on gamelan melodies (Terwen 2003: 35ff). The most renowned Dutch performer of Java is certainly Mata Hari, born Margaretha Geertruida Zelle (1876–1917), who came to fame as an exotic dancer in Paris in the first decade of the 20th century. Zelle had lived in the Indies as the wife of an army officer, but had no formal background in dance. Her staged ‘temple dances’ were Orientalist, in the sense proposed by Edward Said (1979), collapsing the Dutch Indies and British India into a hypostatic and erotic

impression of the East. Her fame survives on her daring exposure of flesh on stage and her reputation as a spy during World War One (Cohen 2010: 23–35).

The emergence of an Indonesian student community in the Netherlands with the founding of the Indies Association (*Indische Vereeniging*) created new possibilities for performance. The Indies Association was established in 1908 as ‘a support group’, ‘a means to provide’ Indonesian students with ‘solidarity, mutual assistance and news from home as they eked out their existence in the cobbled, often cold, grey and bleak cities of Leiden, Amsterdam and Rotterdam’ (Elson 2008: 21). Under the leadership of the poet and law student Raden Mas Noto Soeroto (1888–1951), who promoted Rabindranath Tagore’s concept of a synthesis of East and West, the Indies Association evolved into a forum for discussion about the Dutch Indies and relations between the Indies and Europe.

In December 1913, a group of Javanese students gave a performance of gamelan to illustrate a talk given to the Indies Association by budding musicologist Raden Mas Soemitro about Javanese gamelan. The gamelan was borrowed from the private collection of banker and musicologist Daniel François Scheurleer (1855–1927) – a set now in the collection of The Hague Municipal Museum – and played by eight students under the direction of Raden Soerjowinoto, a student of hydraulic and road engineering at the technical school in Delft. Most of Soerjowinoto’s musicians were likewise Javanese men of noble descent studying law, business and engineering, not humanistic subjects. The evening was deemed a success and repeated in March 1914 in Leiden (Poeze 1986: 107, 109; Mak van Dijk 2003).

A much more public event was staged two years later. On 15 and 17 March 1916, fourteen students from the islands of Java, Sulawesi and Sumatra, joined by a few Dutch sympathizers, enacted the Netherlands’ first major ‘*Indische Kunstavond*’ or Indies Art Evening. The students from the Dutch Indies played gamelan, sung, danced, staged a tableau, recounted stories and myths and displayed traditional costumes. Their stage was the Koninklijke Schouwburg theatre in The Hague, and the student amateurs’ audience included the Queen and the Minister of the Colonies. Israeli sociologist S.N. Eisenstadt (2000: 15) has argued that the introduction of modernity in Asian societies involved the incorporation of selected aspects of ‘Western universalistic elements of modernity in the construction of [...] new collective identities, without necessarily giving up specific components of [...] traditional identities’. Being modern in Asia entailed negotiation with tradition, not abandonment of it. Modernity brought

about new modes for the social organization, invention, appreciation and representation of old performing arts. It also brought new purpose. The *raison d'être* of arts in premodern Asia was to buttress status, venerate ancestors, ward off evil, refine moral values and generate communal solidarity – as well as to entertain. The 1916 Indies Art Evening introduced a modern function for Indonesia's traditional arts. Performance became a means of sharing culture to nations of the world.

In contrast to the low-key gamelan lecture-demonstration by Soemitro and friends, which focused solely on the gamelan tradition of central Java, the gala Indies Arts Evening at the stately Koninklijke Schouwburg theatre offered an overview of the entire archipelago. It consisted of a melange of simple gamelan pieces (including *Ricik-Ricik*), sung *tembang* poetry in Javanese, Javanese dance, *kroncong* music, the recounting of a Hindu myth, so-called Eastern songs by Madame Sorga (a friend of Mata Hari), a tableau representing the cultural evolution of the Indies and presentations of the traditional costumes of the Dayak, Acehnese, Buginese and other ethnic groups. The event also featured the public debut of Raden Mas Jodjana, who was to become one of the most famous Asian dancers in Europe, in *Kelono*, a *kiprah* or solo dance that showcases a dancer's virtuosity.<sup>8</sup>

The Evening overall aimed to show the sophistication of Java's arts from an intellectual Javanese point of view. Dutch reviewers were astounded to hear Soorjo Poetro, a brother of the Paku Alam and engineering student in Delft, dressed in impeccable Yogyakarta costume, speaking in polished Dutch about rhythmic characteristics of Javanese music and dance, and the expression of spirituality through art. Technical support was received from a number of parties – including the Dutch batik artist Chris Lebeau – but in contrast to prior public displays of Javanese dance and music in Europe, the Indies Evening was essentially an autonomous initiative adhering to Javanese aesthetics rather than catering to European expectations. The musicians, for example, did not conform to European preferences for uniformity in costume: each musician wore the traditional garb of his own place of origin. The gamelan did not play a Dutch royal anthem but the ceremonial *gendhing* (musical piece) *Monggang* upon the Queen's entrance. In an article published in the aftermath of

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<sup>8</sup> 'A good rendering of *Klono* or *kiprah* is thought to be one of the highest accomplishments a dancer can achieve' (Holt 1967: 165).

the performances, *Hindia Poetra*, the organ of the Indies Association, addressed the people of Java collectively:

Take stock of your most sacred spiritual properties. Preserve the beauty and style of your *adat* (custom), the beauty of rhythm, gesture and symbols, and do not neglect your art. Do not allow it to be diminished by so-called Europeanization. Seek out more contact with the elite of Dutch artists who can appreciate spiritual beauty [...] and give performances of the best of Javanese theatre, Javanese music and Javanese dance, and teach Javanese poetry [...] with fitting pride. There will then emerge a spiritual connection between Java and Holland that is stronger than all political and economic connections (*Hindia Poetra* quoted in Borel 1916: 124–125).

*Hindia Poetra* saw the Indies Arts Evening as justification for a model of colonial relations in which, to use contemporary parlance, indigenous and Dutch cultures were *associated*, rather than unified or assimilated (Van Niel 1984: 36ff). The integrity of Javanese culture was to be esteemed for the sake of inter-racial tolerance and respect. Political advancement was conditioned upon cultural exchange on even terms.

Soorjo Poetro, in his discourse, made it clear that he and his colleagues were amateur performers, not professional artists, but also noted that the lines between professional and amateur were not the same as in Europe. The students were perhaps emboldened to appear in public by the disruption in communication and transportation caused by the war. Artists in war-torn Europe and elsewhere were thrown back on immediate resources, working in unusual constellations to create novel artistic forms. A famous example of this is the avant-garde ballet *Parade* (1917) created by Picasso, the Ballet Russes, Satie and Cocteau. A contrasting example might be the London theatre work of Hazrat Inayat Khan. Khan's world tour to promote Sufism via Indian music was halted by the war, leading to an enforced long-term residency in London, where he taught music and mysticism. Khan's corpus of plays was intended for the spiritual edification of devotees, and staged as parlour drama. In terms of quality of performance, the first Indies Art Evening was certainly closer to Khan's community theatre than *Parade*. But who else would represent the Indies if not for the student performers of the Indies Association? Regardless of aesthetic quality, this Evening was consequential politically, as well as artistically.

Events on the Indies Arts Evening model would be enacted regularly for the next quarter century in cities around the Netherlands in theatres, hotels, galleries, fairs and zoos. Boeatan, the shop and gallery in The Hague selling and displaying Indonesian arts and crafts, was a particularly



frequent sponsor. Among those who played gamelan, wrote music, recited poetry and danced were some of the most important intellectuals and political leaders of the early nationalist movement. Noto Soeroto was a particularly enthusiastic organizer, and used his journal *Oedaya* and personal connections to Mangkunegara VII to advantage. Another organizer was political exile Soewardi Soerjaningrat, who later took on the name Ki Hadjar Dewantara (1889–1959). Ki Hadjar Dewantara is best known as the founder of Taman Siswa, an educational movement influenced by Montessori and Tagore, and was the first minister of education under President Sukarno. It was likely Soewardi's experience of performing in the Netherlands, and his exposure to Tagore's ideas via Noto Soeroto, that resulted in Taman Siswa emphasizing education in traditional arts.

A number of organizations emerged in the next years to facilitate artistic activities and discussions. Mudato (an abbreviation formed from the Dutch words for music, dance and theatre) was founded in 1918 by D.F. Scheurleer, whose gamelan saw much use by Javanese students. Mudato also published a journal that focused mainly on Javanese arts.<sup>9</sup> Langen-Driyo, founded in 1919, aimed to further the 'practice and promote Indonesian music and dramatic arts'. Langen-Driyo literally translates as heartfelt entertainment, and refers to a genre of Javanese language dance drama with sung dialogue and gamelan accompaniment. It was associated with the royal courts, and considered a marker of high culture on a par with opera. The Langen-Driyo association called itself as an Indonesian art circle (*Indonesischen kunstkring*) and excluded Dutch and Eurasian members on principle, in line with the anti-association politics increasingly prevalent at the time. This principle seems to have been overlooked for performances. Langen-Driyo events commonly involved European artists like singer Madame Sorga and the pianist Jo Meyer, Noto Soeroto's wife.

Performers and organizers associated with Mudato, Langen-Driyo and other organizations that emerged in the years ahead worked to establish equivalences between the cultures of Indonesia and the Netherlands. In lectures, performances and publications, they showed that Java and other islands of Indonesia possessed distinctive artistic traditions that differed from Europe, but were as sophisticated as European high arts. This often involved acts of translation, theoretical as well as practical. Thus, Soorjo

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<sup>9</sup> *Mudato: Tijdschrift der Vereeniging tot Bestudeering van de Muziek, de Dans- en Tooneelkunst van Oost- en West-Indië* was published from 1919 to 1922. It was the first journal with an explicit remit to study Indonesian or Caribbean performing arts.

Poetro devised various systems for notating gamelan and argued for an equivalence between the *balungan* or nuclear melody of gamelan and the cantus firmus of medieval European music. He also created a new form of *rebab* with Dutch violinmaker G.J. van Leeuwen, which Ki Hadjar Dewantara called a *viol Djawa* (Javanese violin). Soorjo Poetro wrote music for a quartet of these modified *rebab* in emulation of the classical string quartet.

An exemplary work of translation is Soewardi Soerjaningrat's 'Javanese romance' *Kinanthie Sandoong*, based on the classical *gendhing* of this name (see also the contribution by Notosudirdjo in this volume). This short work for voice and piano premiered at the Colonial Education Congress held in The Hague in 1916 and was published the same year in The Hague and Semarang. The text was Noto Soeroto's free translation of three *tembang* verses from the *Serat Manuhara* by Mangkunegara IV (1809–1881). Indonesian ethnomusicologist and composer Franki Notosudirdjo (2003: 40) has emphasized the musical innovation of the piece.

First, the piece was written for soprano and piano, a musical form and instrumentation unknown to the gamelan tradition. Second, the piano transcription was based on the *gender* part, a metallaphone gamelan instrument that functions in a quasi-improvisatory way and bears a somewhat personal expression. Third, Ki Hadjar [Soewardi] employed triadic harmony and a bass line, features unknown in gamelan music, transforming *Kinanthie Sandoong* from a traditional *gendhing* into a model of Western-oriented composition.

European composers, such as Dirk Schäfer (1873–1931) in his *Rhapsodie Javanaise* (1904), had previously reworked gamelan melodies and themes into art music, but they lacked Soewardi's practical gamelan knowledge. Soewardi did not simply transcribe someone playing the *gender*, he worked out how to play the idiomatic syncopations and figurations of *gender* playing on the piano. The piece is experimental; while the piano part presents no technical difficulties, the vocal part calls on the singer to know how to embellish the melody with traditional *cengkok* (ornaments), requiring in effect 'a bi-musical singer, i.e. a singer who had mastered both Western classical and traditional Javanese music' (Notosudirdjo 2003: 40).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> It was intended that Noto Soeroto's friend, the singer, poet and painter Rient van Santen, would sing *Kinanthie Sandoong* on tour. It is not known whether van Santen actually did perform the song, though another piece with a Noto Soeroto text, Bernard van den Sigtenhorst Meyer's *Fluisteringen: Drie liederen voor zang en piano* (opus 5, 1917), was part of her repertoire.

Noto Soeroto's translation of Mangkunegara's verse also operates bi-culturally. The text, sung in the first person, tells of someone who wanders the earth and discovers that nobody can equal the beauty of his beloved. The Javanese original has spiritual connotations – the beloved is a symbol of God, and wandering (*lelana*) is the path of the mystic. This interpretation is diminished in translation as wandering (*zwervend*) in Dutch lacks clear spiritual significance. In its place, romantic nationalism emerges. In Noto Soeroto's translation, the wanderer beholds the 'riches of my land' (*rijkdom van mijn land*), transforming the text into a paean to a land of sea, mountain peaks, mighty forests and deep ravines: Java.

### *Staging Java in Germany*

The loosely-organized Javanese arts performing groups, made up largely of amateur students, began to attract attention from neighbouring European countries by the mid-1920s. In November 1925, a Javanese group from the Netherlands offered a week-long exhibition and series of lecture-demonstrations of song, dance, puppetry and gamelan music at the Künstlerhaus in central Berlin, organized by German painter-botanist Max Fleischer (1861–1930) and German publisher and Asian art connoisseur Richard Oertmann (1868–1926) under the auspices of the German-Dutch Fellowship (*Deutsch-Niederländischen Gesellschaft*). Noto Soeroto spoke in German about Javanese aesthetics and sang poetry. Javanese philologist Raden Ngabei Poerbatjaraka (1884–1964), who was a PhD student in Javanese language and literature at Leiden University between 1921 and 1926, sung Javanese poetry and performed an abbreviated *wayang kulit* play, *Arjuna Wiwaha* (Arjuna's Wedding). This canonical story-episode (also known as *Ciptoning*) of Java's shadow puppet theatre repertoire tells of the harsh devotions of the warrior Arjuna, his fight against the demon king Nirwata Kawaca in defence of the gods and Arjuna's marriage to the heavenly nymph Supraba. The play presents puppeteers with much scope for expositing Javanese ascetic practices, and there is a rich exegetical tradition attached to it. The play was linked to Poerbatjaraka's PhD research at Leiden: he published a Dutch translation of the Old Javanese *kakawin* version of the tale in 1926 (Poerbatjaraka 1926). Poerbatjaraka was unable to perform *wayang kulit* in German, so Fleischer, who had been a researcher at the botanical institute in Buitenzorg for five years and travelled widely in the archipelago, provided simultaneous interpretation

for him.<sup>11</sup> Jodjana performed solo dance – *Kelono*, *Tjantrik* (The Young Hermit) and *Wishnu*. Poerbatjaraka also performed classical dances and a woman dancing under the name of Siti Soendari performed *srimpi* and a warrior dance with a bow and arrow.

Siti Soendari was the stage name for a Dutch woman named Gieneke Weber, a eurhythmics-trained dancer who studied Javanese dance for two months before the Berlin engagement. Weber's dancing was sufficient for German audiences – one commentator said she was so Javanese that a theosophist would take her for the incarnation of a Javanese princess. She continued to perform Javanese dance over the next two years with gamelan in the Netherlands and accompanied by the music of Debussy and Ravel in France. Later, publicity said she trained at the Krido Bekso Wiromo in Yogyakarta, but this is doubtful. A series of photographs taken in 1927 show her closely approximating Javanese court dance though to the trained eye her fingers are unable to flex back fully, her toes not sufficiently lifted, her posture not fully Javanese (Aubel and Aubel 1928: 100–104).

Weber was one of a number of Dutch women performing approximations of Javanese court dance in the 1920s, compensating for the paucity of Javanese female students to partner with Javanese male dancers. A girl named Van Bemmelen, possibly the daughter of geologist Willem van Bemmelen, learned the *Kelono* dance from musicologist Raden Mas Moekiman Soerjowinoto when he was studying law in the Netherlands. Van Bemmelen gave at least one performance at a 1922 Indies evening organized by the Dansinstituut Sternfeld, a school for exhibition and ballroom dancing in The Hague. (Sternfeld's assistant, a Polish dancer named Kitty Lakatos, did a sort of Balinese dance on the same programme.) A woman named Leonie van Noorden, who studied court-style dance with the renowned Batavia dance instructor and musician Raden Kodrat, occasionally performed Javanese dance and Indische songs at Indies evenings in The Hague. A Eurasian woman named Peppink performed the dances of Java, Sumatra and Bali in the Netherlands, France and possibly elsewhere in Europe under the stage name Ghanda Soewasti. Her statuesque dances were significant enough to merit serious discussion in two major French surveys of world dance (Levinson 1929: 290–293; Divoire 1935: 305, 320–323).

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<sup>11</sup> For a brief bio of Max Fleischer, see [www.nationaalherbarium.nl/fmcollectors/F/FleischerM.htm](http://www.nationaalherbarium.nl/fmcollectors/F/FleischerM.htm) (accessed 27 April 2011).

Photographs show her in non-Javanese dance postures clothed in very fine Javanese dance costumes.<sup>12</sup>

The quality of the performances at the 1925 Berlin exhibition is dubious – Siti Soendari was a newcomer to Javanese dance and Poerbatjaraka did not have formal training in puppetry. But the event was significant in the eyes of Javanese participants, Dutch observers and German critics. German journalists heralded the Berlin exhibition as a rapprochement between Germany and the Netherlands, and interpreted it as a sign that the Weimar Republic was no longer culturally isolated from the world. German spectators and critics enthused about the rare performances and the accompanying display of *wayang* puppets, metal work, wood carving and textiles from Java, Aceh and Bali. Some journalists found the gamelan music monotonous, but Austrian-born musicologist Erich Moritz von Hornbostel (1877–1935) told Noto Soeroto he had never heard music that brought such joy (*Pertoendjoekkan tandak* 1926). The dream-like atmosphere of *wayang* evoked much commentary. The *Stuttgarter Allgemeine Zeitung* described *wayang* puppets as ‘one of the most beautiful artefacts the world of art has ever created’. The Berlin daily *Vossische Zeitung* reported how despite *wayang*’s stylization, ‘the astounding richness of movement and expression spoke to us. These grotesquely contorted figures with their elongated necks, their fantastical disfigurements, animal heads and overlong articulated arms were inspirational’.

Jodjana also came up for particular praise. The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* stated that

Prince Jodjana is a tall, beautiful man with sharp facial features. His dances breathe deep calm, with a constant flow of confident gestures. His body is festooned in colourful veils as if he was celebrating a feast, beautiful but not ostentatious. His marching is festive and calculated. The movements of his arms and legs are tightly coordinated. [...] His gestures synthesize ceremo-

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<sup>12</sup> More expert Javanese female dancers emerged in Europe in the 1930s. These included Indies-born Carolina-Jeanne de Souza (1904–88), trained in both Dalcroze-based modern dance and classical Javanese dance at the Anggana Raras studio in Batavia, who danced professionally under the names Retna Moerindia and Ratna Mohini (Kunang Helmi 1997, 2002), and Russian-born H el ene Leibmann (1912–2002), who studied at the dance school Kridho Bekso Wiromo in Yogyakarta for eight months in 1932–3 and returned to Europe to dance under the stage name Sri Woelan (Malaud 2003). De Souza was married to the photographer Henri Cartier and lived in Paris starting in the late 1930s, and while she occasionally collaborated with Javanese dancers based in the Netherlands, such as Raden Mas Waloejo, she rarely danced on Dutch stages. In contrast, Leibmann, who had lived in Belgium from childhood, frequently collaborated with Netherlands-based Javanese artists and performed often in the Netherlands.

nial calm and mimetic concision. Movements are natural, organically pure, growing like plants. [...] And those lively slim hands – how they can laugh, how they can be childishly vain, how they can close up like a flower and open up again. Even his feet are part of this nature-like articulated language of gestures.

Most of the newspapers pointedly refused to make direct comparisons between German and Javanese performance. But Dutch-born journalist Henri Blanche Koelensmid wrote in the *Berliner Tageblatt* that the exhibition proved that Javanese culture ‘does not take second place to ours. Indeed it surpasses ours in its austerity’.

Performances of Javanese music and dance, mostly by Javanese living in the Netherlands, were held with some frequency in Germany, with some in the decade thereafter, and became the norm for judging all other Asian performance. Jodjana, especially, performed frequently in Berlin and other cities in Germany and Austria, and he taught and lectured at a number of schools and museums in Germany into the 1930s. Another delegation of Javanese dancers and gamelan musicians performed under the auspices of the *Nederlandsch Indonesisch Verbond* at the *Internationalen Musikausstellung* (International Music Festival) in Frankfurt in 1927.<sup>13</sup> Featured dancers were Raden Mas Soeripto, Raden Soekamto, Raden Mas Soebanto – all of whom were students in the Netherlands – along with Siti Soendari (Gieneke Weber) and Raden Mas Jodjana. The gamelan was borrowed from Boeatan, and directed by Jodjana’s wife, the Dutch musician Elisabeth Pop (1888–1981). German audiences were becoming savvy of the diacritics of Javanese performance. Programme notes and reviews attend to the differences between the more powerful (*gagah*) performance style of Yogyakarta practiced by Soeripto and Soekamto, the more refined (*alus*) Solo style of Soebanto, and the modern Javanese-based dances of Jodjana. Photographs of the dancers were widely reproduced in German books and periodicals.

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<sup>13</sup> The *Nederlandsch Indonesisch Verbond* (also known as *Nederlandsch Indonesisch Verbond van Jongeren Organisaties* or ‘Dutch Indonesian Association of Youth Organisations’) was founded in 1926 as an umbrella organization for seven associations concerned with the Indies (including student clubs, a missionary association, Leiden’s Indology association and the arts association Boeatan) and the remit to promote better understanding between The Netherlands and Indonesia.



*Cultural Diversity in the Arts*

While the cultural events in 1920s Germany focused solely on Java, cultural events in the Netherlands became increasingly diverse with the rise of Indonesian nationalist sentiment among students from the Indies. Indies' arts evenings called upon students from different parts of Java and the islands of the Indonesian archipelago to collaborate in displaying their homeland's cultural riches in a new collective identity. That is to say, the evenings functioned to embody the ethnic diversity of Indonesian students in the Netherlands and visualise the archipelago as a whole. Presenters were challenged to encapsulate representative elements of their cultures in ways that would be comprehensible to Europeans, while maintaining the dignity and integrity of source cultures. The student performers did not offer exoticist escape, or present themselves as ethnological specimens. They spoke to the Dutch audience in Dutch, and aimed to establish what French Lithuanian philosopher Emmanuel Levinas describes as the ethical relation of the face to face.

The artistic standard of early arts evenings was surely modest as none of the student performers arrived in the Netherlands to pursue a career in the arts, but productions became more complex and sophisticated as years went by. One of the most important results of the early Indies arts evening was to encourage the career of Raden Mas Jodjana, the only truly professional Javanese dancer to reside in Europe before World War Two (Cohen 2010: 106–139). There is no strong evidence that Jodjana was active in the arts before coming to Europe: he came to the Netherlands to study business in Rotterdam and seems to have discovered his artistic talents through participation in Indonesian student performances. While Jodjana drew on traditional costumes, typical movements and characters derived from Javanese myth (such as Klana and Shiva), his dances were essentially his own personal creations rather than attempts at recreating Javanese tradition. Jodjana identified himself as a modern Javanese artist, resulting in polemics with conservative Dutch gatekeepers whether it was possible to be both 'Javanese' and 'modern'.

Jodjana's first performances as a professional solo dance artist were accompanied by Western instruments. One of his piano accompanists was Elisabeth Pop, who had studied Indian classical music with Sufi guru Hazrat Inayat Khan (1882–1927). After Jodjana married Pop in 1923, she took the name Raden Ayou Jodjana. Through their tours around Europe, the couple soon saved enough to acquire a small *gamelan pelog*, which they used in all performances.

The Jodjanas' set of instruments had formerly belonged to *Vereeniging Eurasia* (Eurasia Society; also known as Eurazia). Eurasia was founded in 1927 as an artistic wing of the Indische Club (an association composed primarily of students of mixed Javanese–Dutch descent) to perform Indies drama and music and dance from the Indies in the Netherlands and elsewhere in Europe. Eurasia's gamelan had been shipped from Yogyakarta to Holland in 1927 free of charge by the *Stoomvaart Maatschappij Nederland* (Netherlands Steamship Company). From available photographs, most of the dozen or so musicians who played gamelan in Eurasia appear to be of Dutch or mixed Javanese–Dutch descent, though they were joined occasionally at concerts by Javanese students. Eurasia's gamelan musicians typically dressed in Javanese costume for performances, an arrangement that is still characteristic of many gamelan groups outside Indonesia. A reporter for the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* pointed out, à propos a 1928 Eurasia gamelan concert, that while it was 'impossible' for Europeans to play gamelan in the Indies, the 'otherworldly' sound of Eurasia's gamelan was nonetheless a good substitute for an actual Javanese ensemble, conveying something of the meaning of gamelan as played in the context of a village celebration in Java.<sup>14</sup>

Like Eurasia, the gamelan musicians in the Jodjana troupe were mostly Europeans, including Raden Ayou Jodjana's sisters. In the 1930s, the Jodjanas' children, Raden Bagus Bhimo (1924–1944) and Raden Roro Parvati (1926–), also played in the gamelan. Jodjana's troupe developed a strong reputation in Europe and internationally. Composers including Henry Cowell (1897–1965) and Percy Grainger (1882–1961) studied gamelan and *angklung* music with Jodjana and Jodjana's disciple Romahlaiselan (1902–90), who was born in eastern Indonesia and grew up in Bali. Jodjana headed a summer school in France in the 1930s, which attracted dancers and other artists from around Europe, and featured outdoor performances, including performances of dance and gamelan as well as Western classical musical and modern dance.

The Indonesian arts scene in the Netherlands became more diverse and sophisticated in the 1930s. There were presentations of fragments of *langendriya* dance-theatre, and by the 1930s extracts of traditional dance from Bali and Sumatra as well as *pencak silat* (martial arts) were common.

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<sup>14</sup> 'De gamelan op de ITA', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, 13 July 1928 (evening edition), p. D1. Contrary to the reporter's assertion, it was possible for Europeans in the Indies to play but practical involvement was very rare by the 1930s, and after independence little gamelan was played by non-Indonesians in Indonesia until the 1970s.

**Concertbur. De Haan & Co.**  
**DILIGENTIA**  
**Zaterdag 5 Nov., 'sav. 8 uur**  
**INDISCHE AVOND**  
 door de Vereeniging „Eurasia”  
 ten bate van het Studiefonds.  
**De kostbare Sproke**  
 Boegineesch Tooneelspel in 1  
 bedr. van Mevr. van Zeggelen.  
**KRONTJONG MUZIEK**  
**EN ZANG**  
 14 personen.  
**VOORDRACHTEN**  
 door **Mr. K. VERBOEKET.**  
**LEVENS LIEDJES**  
 door **WILLEM NIESTADT.**  
**Javaansche Dansen**  
 door **Dewi Soehita Urdayana,**  
 Leerlinge van de Mangkoenan-  
 garan van Solo,  
 met begeleiding van  
**GROOTE GAMALAN.**  
 Entréeprijs *f* 2.50, *f* 2.—, *f* 1.50,  
*f* 1.— plus rechten.  
 Plaatsbespr. van af heden aan  
**Diligentia.**

Image 10.2 Advertisement in *Het Vaderland* (29 October 1927) for an Indies Evening produced by Eurasia featuring a one-act Buginesese play, kroncong, speeches, gamelan music and Javanese dance by Dewi Soehita Urdayana.



Image 10.3 Gamelan and dance performed by Vereeniging Eurasia at the Indische Tentoonstelling te Arnhem in 1928 (KITLV 1401928).

Romahlaiselan supplemented Jodjana's Javanese-based 'dance plays' with creations of his own based on Balinese and Moluccan themes. Films from the Indies were projected. The Youth Pledge (*Sumpah Pemuda*) of 1928 and its affirmation of the primacy of Indonesia over Javanese or other ethnolinguistic affiliations questioned the relevancy of Jodjana's project to develop modern Javanese dance. Modernizers in the Indies and the Netherlands alike were focused on developing Indonesian, as opposed to Javanese, art. The art worlds of Java, Sumatra, Bali and other parts of the archipelago were merging and combining in complex ways.

There were still Javanese faithfully reproducing Javanese court arts in the Netherlands through the 1930s. One of the most active was the actor and puppeteer Raden S. Hardjodirenggo, the leader of the Javanese arts group Ardjoeno. Hardjodirenggo was born in central Java and was an avid fan of *wayang kulit* from age six. Like many Javanese children, he sat next to the puppet chest during performances, carefully observing puppeteers, and reproducing the plays he observed on a set of cardboard wayang at home. By age twelve, he was performing short *wayang* plays at family gatherings (Hardjodirenggo 1922). Hardjodirenggo arrived in Amsterdam in 1920 to study economics, but soon dropped out and worked as a cleaner, waiter, writer and assistant bookkeeper. He gave private language lessons in Javanese and Malay, and performed in dance concerts, Indies dramas, revues and film (Poeze 1986: 183). Hardjodirenggo got his start as a European *dhalang* when he performed *wayang*-style narration in a play based on Eduard Douwes Dekker's love story, 'Saidjah en Adinda'. His good reviews encouraged him to pursue puppetry. As the only Javanese shadow puppeteer based permanently in Europe, Hardjodirenggo was in some demand for lecture-demonstrations and exhibitions. He typically enacted a *perang kembang* or flower battle, a set piece in central Javanese puppetry in which a refined knight such as Arjuna fights a gang of forest ogres, with comic relief from the knight's clown servants (*punakawan*). Hardjodirenggo toured with Ardjoeno to Holland, Germany and Belgium between 1928 and 1932. In 1932, he founded the more professional Javanese Artist Trio (*Javaansch Kunstenaarstrio*) with Raden Iskandar and Raden Mas Waloejo. The trio performed excerpts of *wayang wong* dance-drama, *topeng* mask-dance and *wayang kulit* around Europe.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Waloejo was the King of Surakarta's nephew who came originally in 1923 to the Netherlands to study in secondary school (HBS). When he dropped out of his law studies, funds from home were stopped. He stayed in Holland but was forced to find work. Iskandar, also known as Raden Soemardi, was the ex-chair of *Perhimpunan Indonesia*, a nationalist student society.



More noteworthy, however, are the *kroncong* ensembles that emerged in Holland starting around 1920. *Kroncong* had been gentrified in 1910s Java as a result of competitions and festivals, the recording industry and the adoption of this urban folk music by white collar societies and clubs (Keppy 2008). *Kroncong* was no longer a music of the streets, it was a sentimental music of social affiliation. The change was aesthetic as well as ideological. Ensembles were larger and harmonies tighter. Jazz elements were incorporated into *kroncong* in the 1920s, and it became common for *kroncong* ensembles to perform Hawaiian and Ambonese music from eastern Indonesia as well. In Holland during the 1920s and 30s, *kroncong* accompanied Indies dramas, played at Indies evenings and Indies-themed exhibitions, was broadcast on the radio, accompanied Indies documentary films and was performed at social gatherings, cabarets and concerts. Numerous albums of *kroncong* songs arranged for piano and guitar were published by Dutch firms. *Kroncong* artists in Java during the late colonial period were crooners. Some male and female singers were operatically inspired, and used lilting phrasing and vibrato. Accompanying ensembles were small but diverse, with piano, strings and brass, and often subtle instrumentation. In contrast, the all-male *kroncong* bands of Holland were usually made up of only string instruments. Solo and choral singing was not polished but enthusiastic in the manner of collegiate glee clubs.

The two most active Dutch *kroncong* bands of this time, Indische Club Amsterdam (established c. 1924) and Eurasia (established 1927), were both associated with the Indische Club.<sup>16</sup> The recordings that the Indische Club Amsterdam made with Columbia Records in 1928 were so popular that they were reissued on 45 EP records in the 1950s. Eurasia recorded with Edison Bell in London in 1928 and played the *Exposition Coloniale Internationale* in Paris in 1931. Eurasia also had a seven-toned *pelog* gamelan from Yogyakarta, shipped to Holland in 1927 free of charge by the *Stoomvaart Maatschappij Nederland* (Netherlands Steamship Company), which they used for concerts and to accompany dance and Indies dramas.<sup>17</sup> Though less active, there were also Javanese *kroncong* bands, including *Tjahja Timoer* (Eastern Light) and *Bintang Mas* (Golden Star). The Indonesian youth society *Slamat Hindia* fielded an arts division under the leadership

<sup>16</sup> A number of titles recorded by both Krontjongband Indische Club Amsterdam and Krontjong Orchest Eurasia have been released on CD and on the Internet over the last decade. For three tracks by Eurasia, see *Kroncong* (2006).

<sup>17</sup> Among the dancers who performed with Eurasia in its first years were Dewi Soehita Urdayana (in 1927, publicized as a 'student of the Mangkunagaran court') and Dewi Sekar Kedaton (in 1928, possibly a stage name for a Dutch woman).



of the indefatigable Hardjodirenggo that performed *kroncong*, as well as *wayang kulit*, *wayang wong* and Indies drama.

Cultural offerings from the Indies were quite diverse by the second half of the 1920s. The 1928 celebration of the 25th anniversary of Boeatan, for example, featured films of the Indies by Willy Mullens showing life in the Javanese countryside, native crafts, the palace of Yogyakarta, the Bromo volcano and Bali; gamelan, *kroncong*, *angklung* and Hawaiian music; Indies songs; Javanese and Balinese dance; and a comical Indies drama, *Tjang. Koetjita*, a cabaret association active in the 1930s under the leadership of A.E. Heynnemann, involved both Javanese as well as Europeans performing Javanese dance, *kroncong* and other Indonesian arts. When *Koetjita* played in Monte Carlo in 1936, they also performed Hawaiian music and dance. A group of thirteen student performers from Leiden University's *Studentenvereeniging ter Bevordering van Indonesische Kunst* (Student Association for the Advancement of Indonesian Art) came to London in 1939 and enacted courtly Javanese dance from Yogyakarta and Surakarta (*Hanggada-Bugis*, *Gatokaca Gandrung*, *Saksadewa-Anggada*, *Cantrik*); *randai* (a circular folk dance with chanting from West Sumatra); *pencak* (martial arts); Balinese *janger*; and *kroncong*. The group gave three public performances for charity, and appeared on television. London critics were thrilled by the dangerous energy of *randai*, *pencak* and *janger* and impressed by the skill and grace of the Javanese dances, but cringed at *kroncong*'s naïve harmonies and melodies.

Dutch reporters, in contrast, demonstrated an easy familiarity with presentations of arts of 'our' Indies. The 1916 Indies Arts Evening staged by students associated with the Indies Association might have had a radical political intention. But Dutch audiences and critics were rarely challenged by offerings of the 1920s and 30s. The music of Sumatra-born composer and orchestra director Fred Belloni, who lived in The Hague in 1933–1939 (and returned there after the war), was redolent with imagery of the *Mooi Indië* (Beautiful Indies) school of painting. A review of Belloni's gamelan-inflected orchestral composition *Langs Java's stranden* (Along Java's Shores, 1926) describes how its jaunty rhythms 'immediately call to mind the friendly tones of the *angklung* carried by the wind over laughing rice fields'.<sup>18</sup> There were real bodies performing Belloni's music in the hall of the Hague's De Twee Steden hotel, including the young dancer Fee Saueressig, but the

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<sup>18</sup> 'Indo-Europeesch Verbond: Afscheidsavond P.H. de Hoog', *Het Vaderland*, 31 December 1933 (morning edition), p. B2.

reporter could only see stereotypes of the colonies.<sup>19</sup> A charity event put on by Eurasia, one of the club's first outings, which featured *kroncong* and Hawaiian music, modern dance and an Indies drama, reportedly easily drew a large public, as one would expect in the 'Dutch-Indies city of the Hague [...] There was an affable mood, and what more could one possibly wish? To dance? Of course, to dance! There was a social dance afterwards. We would sign up for more such evenings, as much as to support a good cause as for sociability itself' (Feestavond Eurasia 1927).<sup>20</sup> The 'serious' proponents of Indonesian-based performance, the dancers who troubled colonial stereotypes of tradition, based themselves outside of colonialist Netherlands. After 1920, Jodjana lived mostly in France and Berlin, while Eurasian dancer and choreographer Fred Coolemans taught in Dresden.<sup>21</sup> Outside Holland, they were received as artists, not simply as living emblems of tradition.

### *Occupation and Decolonization*

Indonesian performance activity continued in the Netherlands under Nazi occupation. The Colonial Museum was a hive of activity, with frequent performances by a gamelan group made up mostly of sailors from East Java and Babar Lajar, directed by the teenage Bernard IJzerdraat (Kunst 1945). At the instigation of museum curator Jaap Kunst, the Colonial Museum's gamelan was put on display in the museum's Lichthal and played for the public on Sundays starting in 1940 between 2 and 4pm by a group of sailors from the Netherlands Steamship Company. The style of playing was east Javanese, reflecting the sailors' origin. IJzerdraat, a war orphan informally adopted by Kunst, joined the sailor's group in 1941 and shortly developed sufficient competence to establish and direct the youth gamelan group Babar Lajar, made up of young Europeans. This group was founded initially as a 'study group', but, as previously noted, came to occupy

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<sup>19</sup> For a portrait of Belloni, see Van Dijk (2003: 284–292). An excerpt of a recording of *Langs Java's stranden* is included in the accompanying CD. Sauersteeg was a student of Elsa Dankmeyer who specialized in exotic and interpretive dances (Arabian dance, a puppet dance, Indies dance).

<sup>20</sup> 'Feestavond Eurasia', *Het Vaderland*, 24 April 1927 (morning edition), p. A1.

<sup>21</sup> Fred Coolemans (aka Frederik Willem Cohen, c. 1903–35) was a Jewish dancer of part Dutch and part Javanese descent who gave his solo debut performing *plastische dans* at the Pulchri Studio in The Hague in 1925 and toured Europe with Else Makarof, a member of Harald Kreutzberg's dance group. For more information on Cooleman refer to Cohen (2010: 246, n27).



*Indra Kamadjojo*

Image 10.4 Indra Kamadjaja. Postcard in collection of author (photographer unknown).

a preeminent position in the Indonesian arts scene until it disbanded in 1956, following IJzerdraat's emigration to Indonesia two years earlier.

There were war-time dramatic productions as well, including a spectacular staging of the Sundanese legend of *Tangkuban Prah* (Upturned boat) at Amsterdam's Stadsschouwburg in August 1943 under the direction of Jaap Kunst and his associates at the Colonial Institute (Wormser 1943). The production had live gamelan music, a *dalang*-narrator as in *wayang wong*, meticulously authentic scenery, sumptuous costumes and a large cast of Indonesian dancers and actors. No Indonesian performance had previously been staged in the Netherlands with such elaboration. New performers came into prominence during the Nazi occupation, including the Banyumas-born dancer, actor and storyteller Indra Kamadjojo, the stage name for Jan Leonard Broekveldt (1906–92). Broekveldt, who had studied Javanese dance as a child in Jombang and modern dance and ballet in Europe, presented idiosyncratic theatricalized interpretations of

traditional dances from Java and Bali, as well as what he called ‘popular dances’ from Ambon and Sumatra, such as *pencak* and *tari piring*. He mostly used gramophone records for musical accompaniment. Kamadjojo’s wartime performances had nostalgic appeal in Holland, particularly to the large ‘colony’ of ex-colonials in The Hague.<sup>22</sup> In all this activity, there were few signs of recognition that Indonesia was under Japanese occupation, and would not return willingly to Holland’s colonial embrace after Japan’s defeat.

The forced migration of mixed race European-Indonesians after Indonesian independence brought a new group of performers to the Netherlands. Few of the migrants had experience in the traditional arts of Indonesia (though many were expert in jazz, *kroncong* and other popular forms), but in the Netherlands they took avidly to representing Indonesian (or more properly Indisch, that is to say pre-independence Indonesian) culture on stage, starting with a series of Indies cabaret evenings in 1956–8 (Cohen 2006: 358–368). Separated from Indonesia by diplomatic barriers and distance, the Indo migrants developed their own idiosyncratic style of representing tradition. A new, postcolonial era of Indonesian art in the Netherlands had begun.

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<sup>22</sup> See ‘s-Gravesande 1944; *Kunst van twee* 1961. Indra Kamadjojo had a long career after the war. He performed at the American Museum of Natural History’s Around the World with Dance and Song programme in 1952 and frequently appeared on Dutch television. His most famous television role was as the Regent of Ngadjiwa in the 1974 mini-series *De Stille Kracht*, based on the famous Indische novel. Kamadjojo also danced on *The Late, Late Lien Show*, a nostalgic Eurasian television show aired in the 1970s.

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## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### 'BARAT KETEMU TIMUR': CROSS-CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS AND THE MAKING OF EARLY KRONCONG HISTORY

Lutgard Mutsaers

#### *Introduction*

Regarding the notion of cross-cultural encounters impacting on the course of music, *kroncong* is a case in point.<sup>1</sup> It symbolizes the intimate relationship between Indonesia and the Netherlands unlike any other music. Although its roots were neither Dutch nor Indonesian, it was on Indonesian soil under the Dutch crown that *kroncong* compromised a middle ground between European and Asian aesthetics and social practices. To the present day *kroncong* holds its own cultural space in both Indonesia and the Netherlands as evergreen signature sound of East-West relations.

The unique bond was forged around the turn of the twentieth century, well before commercial electrical recording, radio and sound film would turn *kroncong* into the national popular music of Indonesia on its road to Independence, and into a special favourite and a home-grown genre in the Netherlands on its road to geographical miniaturisation. The moment *kroncong* caught the attention of the colonial press, the music was an as yet unnamed, unwritten foreign folk tradition alive in a rural niche of some notoriety in the vicinity of Batavia (Manusama 1919).

Already familiar with, in particular, lower class Indo-Europeans in the capital city, the music consisted of a handful of melodies with more or less fixed lyrics in an archaic language, accompanied by guitar-like instruments. Before long, and once labelled as *kroncong*, the budding urban

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter is an original extract of a book by the same author, *Roep der Verten. Krontjong van Roots naar Revival* 'The call from beyond'. *Kroncong from roots to revival*, 2013). *Barat ketemu Timur* ('West embraces East') was the title of a variety show staged in Jakarta in 1953 that tried to re-establish pre-war popular urban stage entertainments, more in particular *stambul* and *kroncong*. This attempt by seasoned veterans of the entertainment circuit failed due to its retro agenda within the fresh postcolonial context. It had nothing to do with the *Vereniging Oost en West* (East and West Society), a semi-idealist, semi-commercial organisation in the Netherlands promoting the native arts and crafts of the East and West Indies. Its charity events usually included *kroncong*.



Indo scene adopted and appropriated the music, enlarged its repertoire and popularised it through Indo variety performances attended by people from all walks of colonial life who could afford a ticket (Cohen 2006). When *kroncong* moved into unpreferred directions as far as the new urban Indo middle classes were concerned, its former core audience abandoned it in favour of the latest American popular musics. As an identity marker, *kroncong* was not of much use anymore. Indo's in general lost touch with the *kroncong* of old, but championed fusions of *kroncong* lyrics and melodies with foreign sounds and performance styles, in particular the commercialized genre called *Hawaiian* (the Polynesian-Portuguese signature sound of Hawaii as an annexed part of the United States of America) with its steel guitars and ukuleles (Mutsaers 1992).

Today's relevance of that long bygone era of early *kroncong*, is the actual creative aftermath of the 1970s revival of *kroncong asli* (traditional, original *kroncong*) in Indonesia. A book by the departing ambassador of Portugal in Indonesia António Pinto da França, had prompted the Suharto government to recognize old time *kroncong* as an integral part of the nation's cultural heritage (Pinto da França 1970). The revival movement in the Netherlands took action in response, unaided by the Dutch authorities, with a different outcome, and first and foremost for a different reason. The immaterial ownership of *kroncong asli* was at stake.

Within circles of the independent Indo magazine *Tong Tong* (now *Moesson*) and in close collaboration with the Indo family business that organized the annual Pasar Malam (now Tong Tong Fair & Festival) in The Hague, steps were taken to recapture *kroncong* as an 'Indo-music' (term coined by Indo-activist Tjalie Robinson in 1969; Mutsaers 2012) and secure its place as a part of the diverse grassroots of the Dutch world of music. Ideologically motivated to the point of overstressing the difference between 'Indo-music' and Indonesian music at the expense of the acknowledgement of common roots and obvious similarities – which made the movement vulnerable to hijack by sectarian interests – the strategic revival effort in the Netherlands reached an unforeseen goal: the open recognition of post revival *kroncong asli* as a classic folk genre fit and ready as a concert music for the 'world music' stage. The Netherlands embraced the world music cause and format early on. During the 1980s, popular music media and specialty promoters 'discovered' and disclosed information about world musics performed by postcolonial, so-called new-Dutch inhabitants of the nation (Mutsaers 1993).

The two successful revivals of the one music called *kroncong* reached back into a poorly documented distant past. However, as the key to success of any music revival is its method of selectively kissing a long-time

dormant style back to creative alertness within a completely different context and for a new generation of people not totally unaware of the music's history and old time meaning (Livingston 1999), the *kroncong* revivals on both sides of the world concentrated on the issue of authenticity. *Asli* was effectively translated as 'the real thing' in terms of credibility, avoiding all too obvious areas of controversy, such as stereotypical colonial issues of race, race mixing and overt discrimination. Both revivals were conducted in order to define what the real thing in *kroncong* actually meant for postcolonial Indonesia on the one hand, and post-repatriation Holland on the other hand. This was obviously not a matter of constructing a politically correct common outcome. It was a matter of creatively reinventing the past (real time old style *kroncong*) for the sake of the present (*kroncong asli* in post revival mode), both with their own dynamics regarding identities and articulations. Future generations to whom *kroncong* may concern, would be able to make choices of their own, provided they were well informed and not somehow pressed into adhering to causes beyond their grasp and interest.

Musical allegiance for old times' sake and individual taste only, is not enough to make a revival work. Apart from the business side of revivals and ad hoc commercial flare-ups, this type of cultural movement will not succeed when it is not also motivated otherwise. The sense of self as belonging to a particular self-identifying (group of) people or nation state for that matter, in creative combination with an awareness of a relevant musical heritage not yet passed into oblivion, have inspired and informed the *kroncong asli* revivals at both ends of the equation.

Especially relevant for the movement in Indonesia in relation to the Netherlands is the possibility for Indonesian *kroncong asli* bands to perform in the Netherlands and find a particularly keen and critical market for their music. Especially relevant for the movement in the Netherlands was, and thanks to oral history and cultural manifestations still is, the vivid memory of repatriation and its aftermath. Musics that embody (in its performers) and express (in its moods and contents) memories and stories of loss, alienation and reluctant diaspora, have the innate potential to universally express the power of rising above the occasion, any occasion.

In this chapter I will look more closely at the contribution of newcomers from Holland to the early history of *kroncong*, the common source of the two separately conducted postcolonial revivals. Also the common cause of pointless wanderings into the mists of time, in order to prove assumptions that no longer can be proven. Between 1880 and 1920 the term *kroncong* was fresh and exciting for more than one generation of aficionados. The label *kroncong asli* did not exist, because there was no

practical use for it. All music was acoustic and handmade. Recorded music on cylinders and disks was available to the happy few only. Early recordings of *kroncong* were specimens of studied novelty, not anthropological field recordings (Yampolsky 2010). Mass mediation was not at stake.

As it turns out, Dutch newcomers became actively involved in the formative years of *kroncong* as a popular music. Their documented personal encounters with lifelong local connoisseurs and practitioners add source-based evidence to what previously has been ignored or denied for reasons that may no longer be considered as valid. Their perhaps naive contributions also bear witness to the reality of more or less fruitful personal advances across cultural divides that, for once, do not in the first place refer to encounters of a sexual or commercial nature.

### *Prehistory*

Portugal, the top naval power in Europe during the 16th century, made its Asian capital in Goa in Southern-India and its staple of trade in Melaka on the Malay Peninsula. Goa and Melaka were the poly-cultural centres where the imported music that would develop into *kroncong* was learned by ear and memorized while plucking and strumming the guitars that came with Portuguese ships to their settlements abroad. When in the 17th century the Dutch East India Company took possession of most Portuguese strongholds in Southeast-Asia, local mestizo communities already had adopted and adapted Portuguese folk instruments, songs and tunes.

The slave trade conducted by the European powers that be, brought an element of particular intensity into the mix of musical influences and practices: the infusion of the social function of community song and dance, a universal phenomenon, with heartfelt expressions of alienation, loss and despair. People with backgrounds in faraway and different places, shared their fates and feelings at their places of transit and arrival. The Dutch East Indies were just one of the many regions where the coming to terms with forced separation and impending loneliness drew people from widely divergent backgrounds together. The unsophisticated self-made music that entered this picture had the potential to rekindle the hurting longing for home and to offer temporary consolation at the same time. From times immemorial, Portuguese folk music, both rural and urban, performed on string instruments, possessed that soothing melancholy softness and melodiousness. By historical chance this was the first European music to capture the minds and imaginations of non-Europeans on a large scale.

After the abolition of slavery in the Dutch East Indies in 1860, out of the undocumented amalgamation of musical influences, *kroncong* (as yet unnamed) covered a wide range of Portuguese-derived musical practices within mestizo communities and Christianized freedmen communities alike. Both heterogeneous cultures had their own histories and dynamics, but they were most likely to socialize because of their Christian identity within a predominantly Muslim environment and because of their social ranking in the lower regions of the colonial system. The Dutch ruling class did not interfere with native urban folk styles, nor replaced or infused existing styles with their own. They imported western musical instruments only for the purpose of their army and police force, their protestant churches and homes, often leaving the playing of instruments for recreational purposes to their servants. The Dutch did not bother to build or (co)-finance a colonial entertainment culture across the racial and cultural divides. This is why the last generation of people freed from slavery in the Dutch East Indies did not have the immediate option to seek out a popular entertainment stage. Unschooled people with ambitions of the sort had to create their own opportunities from scratch.

When modern Western entertainment hit the East Indies, it came from the United States. Blackface minstrel shows and travelling circuses passed through Java on their way from the British Straits Settlements (Malayan Peninsula) to Australia and New Zealand. The latest technological innovations such as recorded music, electric lighting and motion pictures were the magnets of American and American-style shows. These outfits offered an exciting brand of song-and-dance and sentimental 'plantation' songs accompanied by guitars, banjos, fiddles and percussion. The newly composed 'slave songs' idealised the good old times by way of parody disguised as nostalgic sentimentalism. Industrial modernity and romantic dreaming were the two sides of the nineteenth century medal of Western entertainment. Poorly documented, but immediately influential was the temporary sojourn of artists from abroad who taught and inspired local youths to try their hand at show business.

### *Tugu Strings*

In 1880, *kroncong* was first noticed in Batavia in the form of a staged parody of natives showing off their European clothes, strumming their guitars and singing *Morisco*, a beautiful (implying it was not naughty) song of Portuguese origins. The performance took place in a private home in the

European quarter Weltevreden. The parody was targeted at Tugu, a small Christian community of non-Indonesians in the vicinity of Batavia. The relatively isolated rural community over two centuries had managed to keep their musical traditions more or less intact.

Tugu's first settlers, in the mid-1600s, had a background in Portuguese Melaka as a deported group of slave labourers from the Portuguese coasts of India. Their language was an archaic mix of pidgin Portuguese and Malay, the *lingua franca* of Southeast Asia under Dutch rule. Tugunese were seen at the city markets selling their produce. The specialty for which Tugu was well-known in the city was *dengdeng*, a pork conserve. Tugunese men could drink as hard as the Dutch. Their Christian lifestyle and diet did not endear them to the Dutch however, who openly criticized their uppity behaviour when visiting their relatives in the city. Hence the farcical take on their values and customs. An attractive folk expression, such as a good song that may be learned by ear, is vulnerable to unsolicited appropriations. *Morisco* in 1880 already was or else soon became a staple of the Batavian repertoire, a few years before the word *kroncong* popped up in the press. The song is oldest one known by title of the standard repertoire called *kroncong*.

#### *A Bad Press*

After 1880 a growing number of news reports indicate that *kroncong*, under that name, had become a hobby and house party pastime of lower class Indo-Europeans in Batavia. The noise level of a *krontjong partij* (*kroncong* session), involving mostly guitars but also flutes, violins and tambourines, was one reason for sleepless neighbours to go and fetch the city police or neighbourhood watch. Another reason was alcohol induced brawling ending in serious domestic or street violence.

Legend has it that male Indo slum dwellers during that same era used to roam the city streets in moonlit nights, singing songs of unrequited love and longing. The Malay word *melajang* expressed the emotional range of what in the Portuguese language (a major feed into the Malay *lingua franca*) was covered by *saudade*. More mundanely, *kroncongistas* were after the girls for casual sex. The colonial press named, blamed and shamed these *buayas* (literally crocodiles, i.e. streetwise petty criminals basking in the 'respect' of their peers and potential victims). Truth was, girls and women seemingly unforcibly fell for *kroncong* playing *buayas* and follow the music in obvious disregard of their parents' wishes. More

often than not these girls and women ended up in prostitution or the domestic equivalent thereof: being *njais* (concubines) to men who could afford them. This supposedly unintentional career move might have been safer anyway than returning to a revengeful father's house and an unmarried future situation.

The targeting of *kroncong* was just one way of expressing fear for the emancipation of lower class urban Indo's. They greatly outnumbered the Dutch (and should, being their offspring) and had strong aspirations to improve their situation. The emergence and crossover of *kroncong* into wider society coincided with a defining time in the social history of Indo's. Having stated this on the authority of academically trained Dutch historians of late, this chapter is the place for me to notice that Dutch historians are used to leave music aside, any music, whether it is an irreplaceable motor for social change, or the affirmative embellishment of elite cultures.

### *Indo Stambul Songs*

At the centre of early *kroncong* popularisation and professionalization was the *Komedie Stamboel* (Stambul comedy) enterprise under artistic direction of August Mahieu from Surabaya, an educated self-confessed Indo and proud of it (Cohen 2006). Mahieu perhaps designed and in any case supervised the musical format of the *stambul* number: an untitled piece for the accompaniment or mood support of the scenes played out on stage. According to legend he also wrote (but never published) original songs and tunes still current within today's *kroncong* repertoire. As far as *kroncong* went at the time, Mahieu provided room and time on his *stambul* stage for *kroncongistas* to perform their songs of fate and self-pity – those were the ones early *stambul* audiences craved for – during intermissions.

Press reports from the early years of *Komedie Stamboel* identified some of the musical numbers as 'baboe songs' (nursery rhymes). The factual truth of it may be traced back to the 1865 sheet music publication of *La Berceuse Javanaise* by the Paris-based pianist Charles Wehle. He had picked up the melody the year before, when he was touring the Dutch East Indies. Batavia immediately recognized it as *Nina Bobo*, the Malay-Portuguese equivalent of *Sleep Baby Sleep* that was rocking the world in many languages.

Other Mahieu *stambul* fixtures such as *Terang Boelan* (Moonlight) and *Schoon ver van u* (Although you're far; original French title *Je pense à toi* translates as: I think of you) circulated before. *Terang Boelan* was a Malay



*pantun* type of song lyric: four lines to each verse, in a alternating rhyme scheme and inter-verse repetitions. Its melody was later identified as an original written by the French songwriter Pierre-Jean de Béranger who was old enough to have witnessed the French Revolution. The tune was a hit among sailors and inhabitants of the French colonies, from where it travelled into Dutch territory. *Schoon ver van u* is also of late eighteenth century French origins.<sup>2</sup> It came to the Netherlands during the Napoleonic wars. The song was repeatedly republished in the Netherlands until well into the twentieth century. As a typical song of sad goodbye and painful loss, it was well suited to *stambul* purposes. *Schoon ver van u* later took on new meaning for repatriates, and has since remained as a staple of the post revival repertoire.

The four main types of early *stambul* and *kroncong* songs are also the main types of the postrevival *kroncong asli* core repertoire: sweet nursery rhymes (prototype *Nina Bobo*), sour songs of satire (prototype *Terang Boelan*), bitter songs of loss and lovesickness (imported Tugunese prototype *Morisco*; translated Dutch prototype *Schoon ver van u*) and salty songs rife with sexual innuendo of a racist nature (Tugunese prototype *Cafrinjo*). *Cafrinjo* was exposed in Pinto da França's book mentioned earlier. Title and content of *Cafrinjo* were too hot to handle for the revivalist movement in the Netherlands: *cafrinjo* means 'son of a nonbeliever', as viewed from the perspective of a Muslim. Mahieu himself may have introduced the fifth type of the newly composed song with Malay and Dutch lyrics in the same song. Its prototype is *Ajoen Ajoen* a.k.a. *De klapperboom marsch* (Coconut March), one of the best known *kroncongs* of all time.

### *Taking Tugu Seriously*

The first Dutch person to take Tugu's musical culture seriously was Jan Beukhof, protestant religion teacher and preacher (*zendeling-leraar*). Newly wed in 1861, he took his wife with him to Java. The couple lived in Depok, a native Christian community in the vicinity of Batavia, with its own unique history and dynamics (Kwisthout 2007). Beukhof was to work with the Christians of Depok and Tugu. The Beukhofs grew fond of their parishioners, but to the Dutch authorities Jan could be a nuisance. He only cared for the wellbeing of his family and his flock.

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<sup>2</sup> Liederbank Meertens Instituut ([www.liederbank.nl](http://www.liederbank.nl)) shows the song's history.

In 1884 the German professor of linguistics Hugo Schuchardt wrote to the *Bataviaasch Genootschap voor Kunsten en Wetenschappen* (Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences). He was keen to know if there were remnants of the Portuguese language in the spoken language in and around Batavia. Beukhof at the time was the one who knew Tugu best, so the *Genootschap* asked him to gather information. Beukhof's informants were members of the Quiko family – to this very day a famous name in *kroncong* on both sides of the world. The cross-cultural encounter between Beukhof and the Tugunese resulted in two publications, one in German by Schuchardt and one in Dutch by Beukhof.

Schuchardt was first of all notified that in Batavia the Malay language was paramount. The same with Depok. Tugu was the community to research. Schuchardt in his armchair combined Beukhof's field findings with the literature on Tugu, one of the most studied cases of foreign Christian settlement in the Javanese countryside. A long academic article resulted and was published in Vienna (Schuchardt 1890). Unfortunately the name Beukhof appeared as Benkhoff. His international credit seemed lost for posterity. The Malay word *krontjong* (old spelling) appeared without translation. Following Beukhof's authority in this matter, Schuchardt took the *krontjong* to be a local copy of a Portuguese instrument. He determined quite a few words of Portuguese origins in the song lyrics Beukhof had sent. Some were rife with double entendre.

After his return to the Netherland, Beukhof presented a detailed history of Tugu, including its musical tradition, in a book of his own (Beukhof 1890). First of all it was meant to draw attention to the poor state of Tugu compared to its sister-community Depok. He therefore named his book *Eene verwaarloosde zuster* (A neglected sister). Beukhof identified the *krontjong* as (in Tugu) the name of the smallest of three sizes of locally handcrafted Portuguese guitars. More recent information indicates that these guitars were more like mandolins in terms of their shapes with no separate blade between body and upper blade (Manusama 1919). Tying in, as scholars do, with Schuchardt's earlier publications on the languages of the Gypsies living in the southern regions of Portugal and Spain, Beukhof wrote:

'Like the Gypsies, Tugunese Christians love their guitar, which they call Krontjong. They have three sizes of it: the big Krontjong or *guitera*; the middle type or *matjina*, and the *little* or actual *Krontjong*. Young and old play or learn to play these instruments. They manufacture them, sell them to outsiders and repair them when damaged. If one talks with them about the making of these instruments, one notices, from their words and

gestures, that they know the possibilities of the instruments inside out and are fond players. Gamelan playing, i.e. the regular indigenous variant, they do not fancy at all. At wedding parties they use the guitar or horns, and on those occasions large numbers of their kinsmen from Batavia are present in Tugu' (Beukhof 1890).<sup>3</sup>

Six years later Joh. F. Snelleman incorporated the musical information on Tugu in the fourth installment of the *Encyclopedie van Nederlandsch-Indië* (Encyclopaedia of the Dutch East Indies) (Snelleman 1896). By that time *kroncong* had gained momentum as a budding popular genre, spilling over from city streets and *stambul* stages into wider society. *Kroncong* did not get its own lemma though. It goes to show that Dutch authors were late in recognizing the difference between traditional folk music and modern entertainment music feeding on partly the same sources. Or simply that Dutch authors chose not to spend their time and money on things of little significance and no relevance to them as good Calvinists.

### *Issues of Language*

A more influential publicist to advance the general knowledge about *kroncong* among Dutch readers was F.P.H. Prick van Wely. He was a Dutch linguist and scholar of the Malay language as spoken and written (romanised and with Dutch spelling peculiarities) within the Dutch context in the East Indies. He defined '*krontjong*' within everyday speech of Indo-Europeans as 'a kind of guitar' (Prick van Wely 1906, 1910). The exotic word was incorporated into the Dutch vocabulary before the music had sounded live on stage in Holland.

Prick van Wely was a figurehead of the East Indies chapter of the *Algemeen Nederlandsch Verbond* (Transnational Dutch Language Association). The Association promoted the advancement of the Dutch in the world. The daily use of Dutch in the East Indies by all born-inhabitants who already possessed or had acquired the Dutch nationality by the 1893 Law of Dutch Citizenship, would open possibilities for singers of popular song. In due time, they might replace their Malay lyrics with Dutch words, as yet another token of modernisation. Mastery of the Dutch language became a watershed between the wannabe privileged through education

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<sup>3</sup> Translation L. Mutsaers.

and better paid jobs, and the fatefully unprivileged, uneducated majority with no apparent social ambitions.

A small number of high profile Indo-Europeans debated the issue of language at the meetings of the *Indische Bond* (Dutch East Indies Association) founded in 1898 by peers to advance their collective economic, political and social interests. They recognized the importance of lifting the largest Indo segment of the population from underclass poverty to middle class prosperity through education. The issue of *kroncong* lyrics was understood well in these circles. As had been observed several times before and after the ANV started its Dutch-language-and-culture campaign supported by the IB, Malay *pantuns* by their very nature as veiled communications of florid folk poetry were quite unfit for translation into any other language without substantial loss of rhythm, form, content and meaning. *Kroncong* performers could teach themselves to sing Dutch songs in current *kroncong* styles, but the fascination for the real thing – the Tugunese folk strand and the popular Indo *stambul* music strand – had not even begun to wane among Malay speaking, *pantun* loving punters.

#### *F. van Meurs Alerted by Kroncong*

In 1893 F. van Meurs arrived in the colony, a well educated Dutch bachelor approaching thirty. He had been eager to escape from an unglamorous life of odd office jobs, frustrated by unfulfilled ambitions and idle hopes. A quarter century later, in his autobiography *Mijn Lier Aan De Wilgen* (I Rest My Case), he mentioned his encounter with local *kroncong* at a party in the house of his boss (Van Meurs 1918). By the time he was writing, *kroncong* was way past its prime, but when he first heard the music, it was hot. It happened soon after he had started his first job as an overseer of a tobacco sweatshop in rural Java. One of his colleagues, a guy called Willems, sang local songs with Malay lyrics while accompanying himself on a guitar.

On the spot Van Meurs learned that this was known as *krontjongen*, a Dutch novelty verb derived from the word *kroncong*, covering the entire range of singing, playing and on the spot improvising. His description of the social skills and sense of humour displayed by Willems implies that this colleague was himself Indo. The guests at the party knew Willems' repertoire all too well and asked Van Meurs to tell a new joke or two. Obliging, he let the comedian in himself out. He groomed his talent at private parties, his almost sole opportunity to shine. In his next job as a

travelling salesman in cigars, liquor and life insurance policies, he infused his standard talks with a joke and a song tailored to the occasion.

In 1898 Van Meurs decided to make entertaining his livelihood. He toured the colonial men's clubs and garrison barracks, socializing with military big shots, government bosses and common people alike. Starting out by covering familiar Dutch tunes, Van Meurs soon tried his hand at singing his own lyrics to tunes familiar among his audiences. He was arguably the first Dutch entertainer in the colony to do so. A regular performer and honorary guest at the meetings of the *Indische Bond*, Van Meurs picked up on hot topics first hand. He got away with being charmingly critical in his lyrics, where others might have been cautioned or even arrested.

While Mahieu was toiling on the road doing his *Komedie Stamboel* routine, playing in tents and warehouses, Van Meurs in 1901 played the European theatre of Batavia, the city's main high-class venue. The self-made artist had 'arrived'. He had set the colonial standard for the budding stage genre called *cabaret* that was all about personality, timing and the ability to project a song. His pianist L. Simon musically took him to another level. Simon was sensitive to local sounds, possibly because he was born in the colony. While the city's youth across the ethnic board filled the streets with songs picked up at Mahieu's, Simon managed to incorporate perhaps more than a hint of the craze music into his accompaniment of Van Meurs.

A number of detailed performance descriptions indicate that Van Meurs combated his own homesickness through his songs. He sang about Dutch food, Dutch weather, Dutch women and Dutch transport, and along the way commented on '*Indische toestanden*' (colonial situations). Comparing Dutch life and lifestyles to colonial life and lifestyles in a direct and personal way would become the artistic trade of comedians and singer-songwriters who poured in from 1905 onwards. Unable to cope with the competition, Van Meurs in 1913 left the stage. The cultural space he had carved out was growing fast, as was the Dutch population in the colony. Simon continued to tour the colony but did not surface in his own right. Van Meurs turned to journalism and advertising and made his home in Malang. He died there in 1927.

#### *Willem Siep's Uit Insulinde*

Willem Siep would take *kroncong* and *stambul* songs – remaining intact as two distinguishable strands – to another level and into another realm:

publishing. Amsterdam-conservatory trained Siep arrived in Batavia in 1897. He worked as musical director in the theatre, choir conductor, tenor singer, pianist, accompanist of visiting artists, silent film, and what not. Press reviews reveal that Siep followed Mahieu's musical *stamboel* method of cutting and pasting familiar melodies and mood pieces into an often hilarious hotchpotch soundtrack to more or less coherent plotlines from Eastern and Western sources. Mahieu was often criticised by Dutch commentators for his quasi disrespectful handling of Western music. Siep became famous for it. His social intelligence had told him to meet local preferences and check out local fads and tastes.

Shortly after Mahieu died (1903), Siep capitalized on *kroncong* and *stambul* songs popularised by Mahieu. He collected twelve favourite melodies from the current repertoire and arranged them for solo piano, each one a single page long, ten items numbered only, as was *stambul* practice – hence the musical jargon *number* for single item. Two have titles, *Djohor* and *Maresco* (= *Morisco*, the Tugu traditional). *Djohor* has not made the grade of the *kroncong* classics. It may have been a Mahieu original. *Terang Boelan* is there, as is *Schoon ver van u*. Siep secured his arrangement rights under the Dutch law article of 1881 and filed this collection as his Opus 18.

For publication Siep turned to the Chinese Batavian firm Tio Tek Hong, a department store in the European heart of the city. Hong in 1902 had become involved in the founding of the local European music association Musica. Its mission was to provide tuition in Western art music theory and Western instruments such as piano, violin and cello. No guitars. Under professional Dutch supervision, Musica would be open to pupils from low income families, implying (also) the recruitment of talented Indo-European boys who might move on to classical orchestras and salon (so-called light music) ensembles. Musica did not materialize, but Siep could have met Tio while the project was still on.

Siep used his given nickname Scipio (pronounced Seep-ee-oh) on the collection of piano arrangements published by Tio in 1904. The items from *Uit Insulinde, Een twaalfstal stamboel- en krontjongmelodieën gearrangeerd voor piano* [From the Indies' islands, Twelve *stambul*- and *kroncong* melodies arranged for piano] have no melody lines or lyrics. Two years later, sound recording of local repertoire would start to add to, but not for a long time abolish, sheet music publication. Over the years, Tio reissued Scipio's arrangements and added new ones under the same title. Sheet music – *roti kismis* (raisin bread) in Indo slang – was disliked among Indo *kroncongistas*. Even when they could read music, they preferred to play





Image 11.1 Portrait of Willem Siep, 1892 (source: Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie).

their *kroncong* by ear, perceiving notation as yet another Western imposition on the Eastern soul. Underneath their interest in all things Western, Indo's cultivated their Eastern soul.

After 1904 Siep did not return to *kroncong* and *stambul* song arrangements. Although he remained in the colony and continued his varied musical activities, he worked hard at being a serious composer in his own right. In 1926 he died a member of the *Genootschap van Nederlandse Componisten* (Association of Dutch Composers) in Nice in the South of France.

#### *Ruyneman's Krontjongliedjes*

Perhaps encouraged by Siep's *Uit Insulinde* remaining in print over the years, Danny Ruyneman from Amsterdam tried his hand at arranging *kroncong* songs. He had visited Batavia as a sailor's apprentice and may have encountered *kroncong* first hand. On return, Ruyneman decided to become a professional musician and started off as a pianist/accompanist. In 1912 he had his own collection of twelve *Krontjongliedjes* (*Kroncong* Songs) published with Naessens, a Dutch firm with a colonial branch selling acoustic and mechanical musical instruments and sheet music

(Mak van Dijk 2007). The 1912 ratification of the international Copyright Law (*Auteurswet*) in the Netherlands and its colonies opened new possibilities for Dutch citizens to file existing folk melodies in the public domain as their own.

In 1913, the Naessens firm adapted Ruyneman's *kroncong* arrangements for the phonola, forerunner of the electric player piano. *Kroncong* as a repertoire now entered the homes of people who could not play the piano but were able to handle the phonola. In terms of repertoire, Ruyneman had produced *kroncong*, but it was not the real thing in terms of sound and feel. That same year Ruyneman entered Amsterdam Conservatory and went on to become an avant-garde composer and advancer of the field. His *Krontjongliedjes* were later routinely snubbed by the Dutch art music establishment.

Soon Indo-Europeans took over the field of arranging old *kroncong* tunes and composing new ones. Paul Seelig did not self-identify as Indo and adhered to the elite Dutch lifestyle in the colony. He was of German descent and had enjoyed his musical education in Europe (Mak van Dijk 2007). In Bandung he ran his father's western musical instrument retail business. Genuinely interested in all types of music in Java, he never snubbed *kroncong*. A few years later Fred Belloni came on the scene as a protégé of Willem Siep who secured his break as an arranger for orchestra. Belloni was born and bred in Bandung, moved to Batavia where he preferred a steady civil servant job over the unsteadiness of being a professional musician (Mak van Dijk 2007).

Having arranged *Schoon ver van u* in 1905 for his guitar club, Belloni moved on and arranged *kroncong* and *stambul* tunes for his own salon ensemble, while paying his dues as a dinner musician at the European restaurant Stam and Weijns in Batavia. With Belloni a new chapter of *kroncong* Indo-style began. He was a prolific arranger, songwriter and in-house composer of the *Indo-Europeesch Verbond* (Indo-European Association) founded in 1919. His commercial recordings from the late 1920s (in Asia) and 1930s (in Europe) nowadays stand as the classics of the recorded Indo-*kroncong* repertoire. The polished sound of Indo-*kroncong* Belloni style, infused with Western ballroom dance and marching rhythms was far removed from the music heard on the city streets and in the homes of Indo's around the turn of the century. When retro sounds in *kroncong* became a priority among repatriates in the Netherlands, Belloni's music was paramount. His version of *Moeritskoe* (= *Morisco*) grew into mythological proportions. Belloni did not live to see the revival movement. He died in 1969.

*Pisuisse and Blokzijl Take Kroncong Home*

Jean-Louis Pisuisse and Max Blokzijl were professional journalists with the Amsterdam-based *Algemeen Handelsblad* when they came to the colony in 1908. Only recently they had developed their alternative roles as self-made stage performers, singing topical songs with instrumental accompaniment. Their curious minds were wide open for new influences. They would tour together until the end of 1913. Their first long stay in the colony was between 1908 and 1911. With their own eyes they saw the handmade guitars used by local *kroncong* groups. Blokzijl compared the small and plump instruments cut out of whitewood to Dutch wooden shoes.<sup>4</sup>

When in 1911 they returned to the Netherlands as accomplished stage performers, their impresario Max van Gelder capitalized on the novelty by using the intriguing term *krontjong* in his promotion of the duo's Dutch tour. At a gig in The Hague, Pisuisse and Blokzijl invited a group of *kroncong* players from Semarang on stage to show their audience what the real thing sounded like. This event marked the introduction of *kroncong* on the legit stage in the Netherlands. In the years to come, live *kroncong* would be a staple of the *Indische Avond* (Indies' Night) circuit, in a staged setting with a bamboo fence, a palm tree in a pot and a bright spotlight behind a blue screen representing the full moon of the tropics.

In 1912 Blokzijl gave the readers of the *Algemeen Handelsblad* the first extensive fact finding observation of the two main strands of current *kroncong* performance in the East Indies: rural *kampong kroncong* and urban Indo *kroncong*.<sup>5</sup> His source for the *kampong* strand of the music was a young friend named Sanoesi. Sanoesi was the singer in a Priangan (Bandung region) *kampong kroncong* band. Perhaps this was the same band that in 1908 had performed in Bandung at the initiative of a gentleman called Schenck. He had formed and managed a workers' band at Pasir Malang, an agricultural business near Bandung. Schenck wanted to prove and show his fellow nationals the civilizing effect of well made music on any audience. Blokzijl may have witnessed a similar event together with Dutch friends. Describing *kroncong* as still containing Portuguese remnants, he exclaimed 'Wat schaadt het!' ('Never mind!'), as if to protect the music from being called an inauthentic hybrid. The times had changed.

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<sup>4</sup> M. Blokzijl, 'Krontjong', *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 9 November 1912.

<sup>5</sup> M. Blokzijl, 'Krontjong', *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 9 November 1912.

Blokzijl tapped into a subject of growing concern. The International Congress on Race, held in London in 1911, had discussed current views on racial mixing and cultural hybridity as the causes of dilution and therefore deterioration. This potentially poisonous analysis was put forward and supported by European and American academics, casting its shadow into the fascist future. In this shifting ideological context, the reputation of *kroncong* would soon be damaged by its very hybridity, its innate impurity, as indeed some influential Dutch critics from the 1920s onwards would insist (Brandts Buys 1921). The Indo-European middle classes united in the *Indo-Europeesch Verbond* would denounce *kroncong* for different reasons: because it had become too Indonesianized for their liking.

Blokzijl came across as a genuine admirer of *kroncong*. As a trained journalist he sticks to the facts. As an outsider he is curious to know more. He warmly described its melancholy sound, produced by male musicians only. He informed his readers about call-and-response *pantun* singing between men and women as a way to express romantic feelings. He appreciated the music itself and its community function, naively supposing a rural *kampong* was free from outside pressures. *Kroncong* meetings of Sanoesi's group were open to visitors and foreigners, provided they did not intrude, applaud or otherwise disturb the musicians' concentration.

That same respectful distance Blokzijl expected to be kept from street *kroncong*, the romantic pastime of adolescent Indo guys. Their *kroncong* rituals had caused bad press before and would off and on continue to do so. Although it was likely for outsiders to become emotionally engaged with the soft and melancholy music, Blokzijl stated, the intimate situation between serenader and serenaded should not be disturbed. City *kroncong* folklore had its own dynamics and was not to be interfered with. A couple of years later, this phenomenon would be the subject of *Totok en Indo* (Dutch newcomer and Indo) by the Dutch playwright Jan Fabricius. During the 1890s he had lived and worked in Batavia, where he had witnessed the emergence of *kroncong* as Indo-music first hand.

Taking his acquaintance with *kampong kroncong* to his song writing, Blokzijl wrote *De Zeebaboe* (The Sea Nanny), supposedly one of the 'krontjongs' (*kroncong* songs) Puisse and Blokzijl introduced to Dutch audiences upon their return in 1911. In it he described the feelings of homesickness of Adinda from Bandung, a nanny with a Dutch family. Travelling to the Netherlands by boat, a journey that took about six weeks, Adinda becomes more desperate, the Dutch family more cheerful day by day. After arrival, Adinda is harassed by strangers because of her looks and habits. In this song Blokzijl described the situation, as in his newspaper

article, by evoking a real person with a name and a face. Without moralizing he dragged his listeners into the story and left them to draw their own conclusions. In the chorus, Adinda daydreams of home, imagining the sound of 'gamelan, *pantun* and *kroncong* music'. These words were to be sung on a repetitive and punctuated three note motive, using a, d and g, meant to 'imitate gamelan', as the sheet music indicates. Blokzijl also sampled quotes from *Nina Bobo* and *Ajoen Ajoen*.

*Poëzie en proza in de thee* (Poetry and prose in tea) was the duo's signature song. Puisse and Blokzijl recorded it in Berlin in 1913 before their final East Indies tour together. The song is an example of their critical commitment regarding colonial dealings with the native workforce. As Multatuli's song they promoted *kroncong* with their audiences. Both ended up dying spectacular violent deaths, which for the wrong reasons raised their profile as a groundbreaking double act.

#### *A Folklorist's Agenda*

The serious acceptance of *kroncong* as a type of folk song had its ultimate European champion in the Flemish folklorist and singer Emiel Hullebroeck. He was conservatory trained and a well-known stage performer also in the Netherlands. In order to raise funds for the Red Cross war effort in Europe, he paid the East Indies a visit that lasted six months over 1915–1916. His sojourn would have a lasting effect on the understanding and appreciation of *kroncong* in the Netherlands. Upon return, Hullebroeck lectured extensively on the folk song traditions of the East Indies. In the lively and engaging performances for which he received much credit, he labelled *kroncong* as a slow dragging song of self-pity, a complaint about the workings of fate that was supposed to be typical for Malay culture.<sup>6</sup> In Portugal this type of song was called a *fado*. He was only interested in a *kroncong* as an authentic folk song, not made for profit but for being sung and cherished by as many people as possible.

In 1918 Hullebroeck published a selection of twelve items out of the many he had collected, in four instalments of three. Hybridity was no reason for him to pitch *kroncong* negatively against other types of songs. His enthusiasm came across as genuine, unhampered by snobbism. As such, he was an early exponent of a (semi-)academic movement in the West to try and save true folk songs from corruption by the entertainment industry

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<sup>6</sup> This is consistent with the findings of Tan (1993).

and its media. In 1928 the movement staged its first international congress on folk arts and crafts under the French title *Arts Populaires* in Prague. The conference was a sadly missed opportunity for *kroncong*. The delegation from the Netherlands consisted of a Dutch court-gamelan expert and an Indonesian expert on court dancing to gamelan music. They had not only confused folk with non-Western, but had also bypassed the one and only Batavian *kroncong* expert Alvares Theodorus Manusama, author of *Krontjong als muziekinstrument, als melodie en als gezang* (*Kroncong* as a musical instrument, as a melody and as a way of singing) (Manusama 1919).

Hullebroeck's fact finding visit marked the end of an era. The Dutch no longer called the shots as they used to. The Batavia city council in 1915 had opened the first modern amusement park: Deca Park on King's Square (now Medan Merdeka). Lunaparks popped up in all major cities, offering decent Western-style amusement such as roller skating, and entertainment such as cinema and demonstration dancing. *Kroncong* contests in particular attracted large multicultural audiences. In a stimulating competitive atmosphere, where juries awarded honorary medals and cash money, where masters of ceremony operated hand in hand with talent scouts, the *bintang krontjong* (*kroncong* star) emerged as the home-grown pop star avant-la-lettre. *Asli* became a necessary adjective to distinguish old style from new style. These contests were also the breeding ground for the female star phenomenon, catapulting *kroncong* into Indonesianisation and mass mediated eroticization (Keppy 2007).

### Conclusion

Dutch newcomers into the East Indies around the turn of the twentieth century in their own ways acted as agents of change for the world of *kroncong*. They participated not from the sidelines, giving testimony of a considerable music culture in the making via established media in elite circles. As early adopters, the likes of Van Meurs, Siep, Pisuise and Blokzijl promoted their newly acquired knowledge for the sake of the music they appreciated against the grain of their times. Beukhof in his correspondence with Schuchard even ventured into taboo territory: the informed suggestion that the *kroncong* loving Tugunese of Java had something in common with the guitar loving Gypsies of Europe. Both were ethnic minorities in a strange land and had a traumatic history to come to terms with. Present day commitments to the active preservation of *kroncong asli* have come a long way.



Early *kroncong* history provided the core repertoire for the postcolonial *kroncong asli* revivals both in Indonesia and in the Netherlands. The link between then and now is concrete. Tugunese *asli* bands living in Jakarta have *Schoon ver van u* in their repertoire, in Dutch, as do Indo *asli* bands living in the Netherlands. Remarkably, the Tugunese community in the Netherlands maintains an unbroken line of their own brand of traditional *kroncong*. The common ground called *kroncong asli* is solid. Dutch newcomers at the time have made it clear, that rural conservative Tugunese *kroncong* was diametrically opposed to urban progressive Indo *kroncong* and *stambul* songs, copied from the Tugunese and equally from Western-European repertoires that had landed in the Dutch East Indies.

In later years these distinctions remained, however hidden under the layers of legend building and controversy. The explanation of *asli* among Tugunese representing their common stance does not correspond with the explanation of *asli* among Indo's representing a common stance of their own. Both self-identifying peoples maintain a strong sense of virtual co-ownership of the music. Post revival *kroncong asli* is closely monitored by aficionados communicating across ancient divides. The bilateral restoration of cultural contacts, the Dutch tourist boom and the ever expanding Pasar Malam circuit in the Netherlands, contributed to the restoration of *kroncong* as a musical bridge between Indonesia and the Netherlands. Indonesia is the home of *kroncong*, the very music that is at home in the Netherlands unlike any other music from Indonesia.

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## CHAPTER TWELVE

### TRADITION AND CREATIVE INSPIRATION: MUSICAL ENCOUNTERS OF THE MOLUCCAN COMMUNITIES IN THE NETHERLANDS

Rein Spoorman

#### *Musical Identities*

Ethnomusicological studies have been eager to stress music's importance in maintaining the identity of minority groups living in an urban setting. In describing Chicago's ethnic musical landscape, for example, Bohlman (2004: 437) argues how music is an indispensable part of the vocabulary of cultural difference:

In a community of new immigrants, for example, ethnic music that preserved culture, language, customs, folklore, and social and family interaction from the old country would have great importance because it embodied the memory of the past. [...] Ethnic music connects a community to a selected component of its past, but it does so to give meaning to the present. Thus, ethnic music should be understood as changing, not static.

Thus, music, besides being a carrier of memories and an important medium of identification with the past, is also instrumental in displaying identity in foreign surroundings (Research Group African Music 2006). Reyes-Schramm (1975: 103–104) shows the role of conga drumming in the Latin community of New York contributing to greater group solidarity, having people gravitate towards their own kind. Moreover, the success and recognition of Ray Barretto (as a Hispanic) serves 'as adaptive function toward upward social mobility' for drummers in East Harlem (Reyes-Schramm 1975: 103–104). It is apparent that communities are internally often heterogeneous and subdivided by gender, age, or affiliation to sub-culture. But, there is also a sense of shared self-identification. Minority groups worldwide show an interest in the roots of their culture, either in the search for artistic inspiration or to show such reinvented cultural identity towards others.

This chapter discusses how, in the 1950s, people from Maluku came to the Netherlands and, ever since, have retained their cultural identity

by musically expressing themselves through different genres and modes, ranging from the very traditional to today's World Music scene. In the Netherlands you can find just about every musical tradition that also exists in the Moluccas, such as choirs, *tifa* groups, Hawaiian ensembles and, above all, pop groups. In the late fifties, young Moluccans and Indo people played a prominent role in the emergent Dutch pop music scene, excelling in sweet songs of homesickness and longing. By the 1980s, many Moluccan artists had gained mainstream fame, not only in the Netherlands but also abroad, and in Indonesia. Using examples of popular bands such as Massada, Daniel Sahuleka or my own musical encounter with the Moluccan Moods Orchestra I will show, how Moluccan people are not only proud of their musicians doing well, but how – by gaining success among a wider audience – some bands and artists are accredited for being a role model to and a symbol of the social and cultural value of the minority group as a whole.

#### *Moluccan Music at Home*

Indonesia became a Dutch colony when the Dutch East India Company was formed in 1602. The administration was based in Java, but the Moluccas – scattered like a continent of islands across the sea between Indo-China and Australia inhabited by a mixture of peoples – were the central focus of the highly lucrative trade in spices.

Despite the Moluccan archipelago being renowned for its musical richness, to date little substantial research has been carried out on its music in context (Kartomi 1994, but see the early works by Van Hoëvell 1882; Joest 1892; Kunst 1945; and Heins and Van Wengen 1979). Today, old vocal traditions and ritual music exist side by side with external, more contemporary influences. Many musical forms can be linked to religious practice, i.e. music associated with animist beliefs, but also including that of the Christian missionary and Middle East-influenced musical expressions of the Muslim population. Many songs, orally transmitted from one generation to the next, are sung in local languages and are typical of a given area. Traditionally, however, much exchange between the islands and villages occurred, resulting in a wide repertory with variations on particular texts and melodies.

Next to a shared repertory there is a common musical idiom and context of performing. The one-headed drum *tifa* (also known as *tiwa*,

*tiwal*, or *tuba*) is a common accompaniment for singing and dance. Non-melodic gongs are often played alongside such drum music. Gong ensembles with melodic gong-rows (*totobuang*) are mostly found in the central islands. Locally made flutes, multiple reed instruments, Jew's harp, and bowed and plucked string instruments such as bamboo zithers, are, generally, widely distributed, as are instruments of European and Middle Eastern origin. Alternate sung poetry, singing competitions and sung narrative, the latter often recounting historical events and claiming rights to land, forest or ocean are commonly found in the islands. Group dances in a circle, single-line, or multiple-line formations are widespread and, in some places, accompanied by singing, drums or non-melodic gongs. Such dances may be performed by men only, as in energetic war dances (sometimes referred to by the Central Moluccan *cakalele*), or they may consist of social and ritual dances performed by single or mixed sex groups. Whereas the latter dances have European roots, most Moluccan performing arts are primarily inspired by indigenous beliefs, which preceded the arrival of Islam in the 15th century or Christianity in the 16th. Many of these 'early' dances are today still performed but cast into new folkloric choreographies.

It is obvious that as a result of the Dutch colonial impact European music, dances and instruments have been instrumental in shaping what is nowadays Moluccan musical culture at large. Thus, nineteenth-century European popular dance music formed the principal repertoire of the *katreji* ensemble of Ambon and environs; its music characterised by lead violin(s) or accordion and backed by guitar or similar plucked lutes, plus *tifa*.

In the course of the twentieth century, Moluccan music, especially on the central island of Ambon, would be significantly impacted by Western influences. Moluccan ensembles now trained themselves in playing new Western styles, such as foxtrot, cha-cha but also a repertoire of local language songs (*lagu-lagu Maluku*), which were performed in new and exciting styles. Jaap Kunst – ignoring the fact that musical traditions necessarily are unstable and always subject to chance – wrote on the music of Maluku that 'nowhere else in the archipelago – unless it would be on Sangir and Talaud and the Minahassa – does one find such a collapse of cultural identity. [...] Only sporadically can we find some of the unspoiled remains of the ancient cultural heritage' (Kunst 1945). Especially popular genres, often despised by Kunst and other early musicologists, play a role in the construction of national and regional identities.



From 1925 onwards, and next to *kroncong* music,<sup>1</sup> *Hawaiian* music would become immensely popular throughout the Dutch East Indies, although it particularly struck a chord in big cities, Batavia being the main centre of the new musical craze. Many of its most prominent musicians and especially (steel) guitarists came from Ambon though.

*Hawaiian* music would also be picked up in the Netherlands, where the music and especially the prominent steel guitar is appreciated for its 'exotic sound'.<sup>2</sup> From the thirties onwards, new *Hawaiian* ensembles, both Dutch and Indonesian in origin, were established. The popularity of the genre, meanwhile, continued to grow. Because, at the start of the Second World War, the occupying forces forbade the listening to of jazz, *Hawaiian* music expanded tremendously.

### *Hawaiian Comes to the Netherlands*

On 17 August 1945, and two days after the Japanese Emperor's surrender in the Pacific, Indonesian independence was proclaimed. By May 1950, and despite Dutch efforts to re-establish authority in the archipelago, through what were euphemistically called 'police actions', all federal states were absorbed into what was now the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia, with Jakarta as its capital. However, the South Moluccas attempted to secede and on April 25 of that same year the Republik Maluku Selatan (RMS) was proclaimed at Ambon. With its large Christian population and long history of collaboration with the Dutch, the region was among the few with a substantial pro-Dutch sentiment. A relatively large number of the professional soldiers serving in the Royal Dutch East Indies Army (KNIL) were recruited among the population of Ambon and the surrounding islands. The movement was suppressed by the end of the year and, after a special agreement with the Netherlands, some 12,500 former soldiers in the KNIL were transferred, together with their families, to

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<sup>1</sup> Created prior to the Dutch arrival in the East, and influenced by Portuguese music would become one of the first popular genres to be spread through radio. Being a hybrid genre from the start, ever new instruments would be included such as saxophone, guitar, piano and trombone. There is also a strong influence of *Hawaiian* music (particularly steel guitar and ukulele) to be heard in some *kroncong* songs. For more *kroncong*, see Tangkau (1995 and 1996), Kloosterman (1996), and the contribution by Lutgard Mutsaers in this volume. Yampolsky (1991) contains some recordings.

<sup>2</sup> The history of *Hawaiian* music in the Netherlands is described in detail by Lutgard Mutsaers (1992). The documentary *Ga met me mee naar Hawaii* (Come with me to Hawaii), directed by Hans Heynen (1994), tells the story of the *Hawaiian* cult in the Netherlands.

the Netherlands. Here, they would establish a Republic of South Maluku government-in-exile (see [www.republikmalukuselatan.nl](http://www.republikmalukuselatan.nl)). The Moluccan soldiers and their families were housed in camps, mostly in rural areas and near small towns, their stay supposedly being temporary. However, they would never return home.<sup>3</sup>

After the war, and during the Dutch struggle to keep their colony, there had been a boom in so-called Lowland Hawaiian (also *Nederhawaiian*) music, its most well-known exponent being the Kilima Hawaiians, which had already been founded back in 1934 by guitarist Bill Buysman. The group was at its most popular in the period 1945–1950, but in the fifties interest in Hawaiian music was generally on the wane. The arrival of the Moluccans in the Netherlands would change its fate, contributing to what was to be a genuine revival of the genre.

Due to the exceptional housing in camps, the relatively isolated living conditions in Dutch society, and the focus on their homeland, Moluccan communities in the Netherlands long nurtured an exclusive orientation towards their own culture. Numerous church choirs and flute orchestras were established in the camps, but secular music was also popular. Several camps organized so-called ‘Ambon evenings’, probably styled after the ‘Indonesian nights’ found elsewhere in the country, and which were also attended by Moluccans. Hawaiian music was popular at such events until it was finally supplanted by Indo rock’s fame of the late fifties. Even before the arrival of the Moluccan soldiers to the Netherlands, navy man Mingus (Johnny) Pelasula and his band *Suara Timur* (Voice of the East) brought Hawaiian music. The Honimoa Singers from Camp Lunetten performed throughout the country in 1952.

George de Fretes, inspired by famous Hawaiian guitarist Sol Hoopi, was without a doubt the best known of the Moluccan Hawaiian musicians in the Netherlands. In the spring of 1938, at a competition in Surabaya, De Fretes and his band were voted ‘Champion of the Archipelago’, and now they had been renamed the Royal Hawaiian Minstrels. The Minstrels were the most popular and best paid band in the whole of the Dutch East Indies until the outbreak of World War Two. In 1958, De Fretes came to the Netherlands as a stowaway on the ship *Johan van Oldebarneveldt*. However, his fame preceded him and Phonogram producer Jan de Winter

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<sup>3</sup> For a more extended analysis of the complicated story of the disbanding of the KNIL see Manuhutu and Smeets (1991); Smeets, and Steijlen (2006); Steijlen (1996); Van Amersfoort (2004).

sent a message by telegraph to the ship hoping to contract him. On the 1st September 1958, De Fretes performed for the first time in the Netherlands, at a day for record traders in Utrecht, together with the re-formed Royal Hawaiian Minstrels. Such was their success, that a few weeks later, De Fretes had his own radio show (with the AVRO) and a special 1958 Christmas special on national Dutch television. Here, he played *Tickling the strings*, a difficult song, which he played blindfolded, especially for the occasion.

De Fretes was not the only Moluccan to gain Hawaiian fame. His former pupil Rudi Wairata – who had already arrived in the Netherlands – had successes with his band the Mena Moeria Minstrels, in which De Fretes ex-wife Joyce Aubrey featured as a singer and Lou Lima (Ming Luhulima), another well-known Moluccan artist, was head of the orchestra. When doing *kroncong* repertoire or performing Moluccan and Indonesian songs, the group played under the name the Amboina Serenaders.<sup>4</sup> The Amboina Serenaders had a bestselling song with *Ik wil klappermelk met suiker* (I want coconut milk with sugar).

Nevertheless, it was the Royal Hawaiian Minstrels (with Aubrey rejoining the group in 1958) that continued to be successful both in the Netherlands and abroad. In 1963 they and other artists grouped together and toured American military clubs in Germany under the name of the Honolulu Holiday Show. In 1966, De Fretes went on another tour of Germany, and this time also Switzerland and Scandinavia, together with Indo-rock legend the Tielman Brothers, whom he knew from Indonesia. The same year, he recorded an album with the German orchestra of Frank Valdor before leaving the Netherlands to settle permanently in America.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> In the 60s, Hawaiian bands continued to operate in the Netherlands using different names when doing *kroncong*, Moluccan or Indonesian songs. Today it is still hard to find bands that specialize in *kroncong*, and domiciled Indonesians are the biggest names in the genre. The Moluccan family group *Rayuan Samud'ra* are still requested all over the country and regularly perform at major Indonesian events, such as the *Pasar Malam* in The Hague; see, among others, Bennekom (1987); Boekholt (1980); and Buysman (1965).

<sup>5</sup> From 1969 to 1981 De Fretes lived in Los Angeles where, on 19 November of that year he died of a heart attack. He was buried next to his idol Sol Hoopi, their graves being decorated with a similar bronze plaque. George had long ago surpassed the fame of his idol (Boekholt 1981, 1982).

*Intermezzo: Rock and Roll in the Low Lands*

The Timor-born Tielman Brothers were the first and most famous exponents of a genre that rocked the Netherlands in the late 1950s. The music, performed by musicians from the former Dutch East Indies, was inspired by rock 'n roll music from the States and the instrumental music of the Shadows, the Ventures and the String-A-Longs. While, much later, the music earned the (somewhat derogatory) nickname 'Indo' rock, there has been little attention for the Moluccan input into this vibrant scene. In the Moluccan camps, countless bands were formed and although initially performing mainly in their own circles, some Moluccan groups soon made it outside the camps. Groups such as Black Magic (with Boy Tahalele, Paul Tureay, Mook and Michel and Dolf Riupassa), White Waves (the brothers Andy, Eddie and Sammy Noya), or the Black Diamonds consisted, as a rule, of boys, but were occasionally supplemented by a female lead singer, such as Lisa Sapury's role for the band The Ruby's. An exception was Martha 'Poppy' Matulesy, who was the central member of the band Poppy & her Popcats. Like the Tielman Brothers, many of these bands would perform abroad, especially in Germany (see Mutsaers 1989). With the emergence of the beat music of the Beatles, and in their wake the Stones, the Kinks and the Who, Indo-rock lost popularity and only experienced a revival in the 1980s.

In the late '60s, the psychedelic group 'Dragonfly' from the province of Zeeland won the hearts of Dutch audiences. The band usually performed with painted faces and, thus, very much suited the zeitgeist of flower power. During concerts, Dragonfly's songs are announced by Dutch writer Hans Verhagen, who adds to the band's prestige. Their guitarist Rudy de Queljoe was, in those days, referred to as the 'Dutch Jimi Hendrix'. After an extensive tour of the Low Lands, featuring as a support act for Pink Floyd, they recorded a first song for Philips. Due to extensive coverage by the Dutch youth magazine *Hitweek*, *Celestial Dreams* reached 33 in the charts. Its successor, *Prince of Amboyna*, was less popular and, in 1969, de Queljoe parted company with the group to join Brainbox and later the famous Dutch bands Cuby and the Blizzards and Vitesse. De Queljoe's success and recognition is of great importance, not only in terms of him being a good guitarist, but also as a role model for the Moluccan community.

*Mainstream Sounds*

Meanwhile, music back at home had evolved. The European harmonic and melodic idiom is still to be heard in the Christian hymns sung by choirs and congregations, or performed by flute or wind bands. The Christian faith also forms the basis of newly composed religious songs. In the 1960s and 70s more Western music would reach the Moluccas, particularly electric amplified pop music, but also (although to a lesser extent) new musical trends were styled after Middle Eastern and Indian popular music. Today's Moluccan pop and folk music is quite diverse, embracing abovementioned influences, but also being shaped by what in Indonesia is commonly referred to as *pop daerah* (regional pop), in this case pop-Ambon, pop Ternate, etc. Several of these songs have become part of the national heritage of Indonesia, and can be found in written song collections and are taught in schools.<sup>6</sup> Nowadays, local popular music uses local language and is a mix of hybrid urban popular music styles, commonly found throughout Indonesia. Similar encounters with other musical styles, genres and scenes happened among those Moluccans living in the Netherlands, a country that, by the 1970s, for better or worse, had increasingly become a home away from home.

The popularity of Indo-rock had taken Moluccans out of the camps and into contact with Dutch society. Not only the musicians themselves, but also their Moluccan fan base suddenly appeared in Dutch venues. Encounters in nightlife between Moluccan and Dutch youngsters – especially Moluccan boys and Dutch girls – would become a major source of mixed marriages. However, on other terrains participation of Moluccans in Dutch social life would remain fairly low for the time to come (Smeets and Steijlen 2006). It took until the late 1970s for Moluccans to increasingly focus on their position within Dutch society.

One of the foremost Moluccan bands of the mid-seventies was Masada, with the brothers Johnny and Eppy Manuhutu, Chris Latul, Saba Usje Sabander and Zeth Mustamu. Masada was founded in 1973 and soon had a reputation for being an excellent live act and, consequently, the

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<sup>6</sup> The total number of folk songs known as Moluccan songs is estimated at over 200. The 'official' school song collection Muchlis and Azmy (1978) contains a 164 and Simanjuntak (1984) another 17, all represented with number notation. The folk songs can be heard on audiocassettes from the 1970s–1980s, performed by groups such as Beilohy Group, orkes Rame Dendang and Masnait Group. Furthermore, there are a large number of websites complete with lyrics of what is known nowadays as Moluccan 'standard repertoire'.

band had a loyal fan base. Their Moluccan identity is especially stressed on their second album, *Pukul Tifa* (Playing the Tifa Drum, 1979). The album contains a number of long, instrumental pieces and popular songs such as *Latin Dance*, *Dansa*, *Arumbai*, clearly signaling the then popular Latin sound, as played by Carlos Santana and the likes, but theirs is a music with an 'oriental' touch.

From the Malay lyrics it can be judged that the band members sympathize with the ideal of independence for the South Moluccas, but there is also plenty of space for reference to shared traditions. On the album *Pusaka* (Heirloom), the traditional sound of the *totobuang* can be heard in the song *Toto Buang Tomah*. The *totobuang* is one of the characteristic Moluccan instruments, consisting of a row of small, horizontally-laid melodic knobbed kettle gongs.<sup>7</sup> It is considered an ancient instrumental form of music, which predates the influences of Islam, Christianity, and the West. In 1980, the band would release *Sajang é*, an old Indonesian folk song, here performed complete with a women and children's choir. The song is hardly representative of Massada's repertory, but it became an instant number one hit. A success with consequences as the band was soon to find out. During live shows, people now want to hear more songs à la *Sajang é*, while fans of the first hour quit. After this erstwhile mainstream success the group continued to tour and they made a number of studio albums, but in 1986 Massada stopped due to the lack of success.

In addition, Cheyenne, a funk group, experienced its greatest successes at the end of the seventies. In 1978, their first single, *Separated Love*, made it into the charts. When Cheyenne dissolved in 1982, front woman Julya continued as Julya Lo'ko and developed into a sought after background singer. She joined the 'super group' Suara Maluka Band, in which Ais Lawalata, Neppy Noya, Daniel Sahuleka and Chris Latul all perform.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The instrument is part of the larger gong-chime culture of Southeast Asia, such as the *kulintang* of the Southern Philippines. *Totobuang* is also used in the break-theme *Perasaan Maluku* (Moluccan Feelings) on the Moluccan Moods LP (SPN 002), composed by Zeth Mustamu and played by Rudy Tuhusula. Rudy Tuhusula is also known for his modern compositions for *totobuang*.

<sup>8</sup> From the mid-nineties she is also successful as a solo artist and widely admired in Dutch theaters. With Mathilde Santing and Astrid Seriese, Julya wins the Knokke Festival. Her career gets an additional boost after she is awarded the Silver Harp of Conamus (an institute offering support to Dutch easy-listening) and she plays an impressive role as 'leading lady' in the 'Labyrinth Project' of Jazz musician Jasper van 't Hof and Cesar Zuiderwijk, drummer of rock band Golden Earring. Today, she performs in Dutch theatres with more new programmes, along with guitarist Erwin van Ligten, percussionist Sandra Sahupala and guitarist Arnold van Dongen. Other members of Cheyenne also enjoy



Perhaps the most successful of all is Daniel Sahuleka. Sahuleka, born in 1950 in Java, was raised in the Netherlands, and initially lived in a Moluccan camp. In 1976 he was discovered as a singer/guitarist. His debut album *Sahuleka* (1977) contains funky up-tempo songs and atmospheric ballads. *Sahuleka 2* was released in 1978 and the single taken from this album, *Do not Sleep Away the Night* topped the charts in Indonesia for seven weeks. However, his third *Sunbeam* (1981) is his bestselling album and the singles taken from this recording finally managed to find their way into the Dutch charts. By that time, Sahuleka was enjoying an unprecedented popularity in Indonesia. On the album *RahASIA* (1995), Sahuleka not surprisingly goes back to his Indonesian roots. The album contains performances of well-known traditional songs, such as *Mande Mande*, *Bulan Pakai Pajung*, *Lah Ikan Gabus* and *Dibawah Bulan Purnama*.

#### *Moluccan Moods in Amsterdam*

The late 1970s quest for a new Moluccan identity surfaced most clearly in Amsterdam. Initiatives for novel cultural expressions were largely triggered by a small group of innovators, consisting mainly of intellectuals and artists or groups that lived outside the Moluccan quarters in major Dutch cities. In the late seventies, Amsterdam in particular grew into a kind of laboratory for Moluccan culture and events, where youngsters took on all sorts of art forms. The intent to reproduce 'authentic' cultural expressions from the Moluccas faded into the background and new syncretism forms were the fashion, providing traditions with new meanings and showing how Moluccan youth were willing to announce their presence in Dutch multicultural society.

From 1982 onwards, the popular music venue Paradiso in Amsterdam regularly staged concerts under the title of 'Moluccan Moods'. Each month, one or more Moluccan bands, recruited from all over the Netherlands, were presented. These series were attended by young Moluccans from all over the country and Paradiso was regarded as the main stage of the Moluccan circuit. The evenings, organized by Eddy Tutuarima, along with Zeth Mustamu of Massada and Eddy Lekranty, the guitarist of Cheyenne, were not only meant to raise awareness of Moluccan music among a wider audience, but also to encourage those same Moluccan musicians.

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individual success, such as Julya's brother Eddy Lekranty (Moluccan Moods Orchestra) and bass player Michael Peet (Jan Akkerman, TC Matic).



Image 12.1 Moluccan Moods Orchestra, with author sitting at the bottom right (photo courtesy of the author).

Within this framework, and supported by the Netherlands Foundation for Pop Music, an album was released in 1982 covering ten of the best bands that had performed at the Moluccan Moods programme so far. A year later, a second album, *Moluccan Moods Live*, followed. Both albums contain different styles, such as the experimental music of Perlawan, the new wave group Nuscera or the socially critical ska-inspired rock of H-Gang (see the contribution by Steijlen to this volume), some of which are not inherently associated with Moluccan cultural life. In later years, Paradiso continued to act as a major centre where Moluccan events were organized.<sup>9</sup>

It was the late Eddy Lekranty of Cheyenne fame who, in 1984, also started the Moluccan Moods Orchestra (MMO), a band I would join in

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<sup>9</sup> In the fall of 1983, a festival under the name of *Manggurebe* (Compromising the finish) was simultaneously organized by the Panggayo project in two Amsterdam clubs, Paradiso and the Melkweg. The shows offered a range of Moluccan arts and culture and were partly intended to encourage interaction between Amsterdam Moluccan youth and other ethnic minority groups.

1987 as a saxophonist and flute player. MMO is a music group that consists of second and third generation immigrants, whose parents came from the Central and Southeast regions of Maluku Province. They first started as a group accompanying Moluccan artists in the above described Paradiso concert series. However, in the long run, the band would develop its own new 'melting pot' style, blending musical styles from West and East, with the latter mostly referring to the Moluccas and Indonesia, but the music of Japanese composer Ryuichi Sakamoto was also influential. There proved to be a market for the band, especially in the upcoming world music circuit and their music was very well received by the music press. Festival concerts and radio and television performances soon followed and studio sessions for SFB-Radio Berlin resulted in a first album, *Wakoi* (Child). The second album *Sedjarah* (History), released on the Dutch PAN Records label provides an overview of their musical in the period 1988–1999. The group continues to develop new repertoire on the basis of traditional folk songs, but also new compositions are made mixing traditional Moluccan elements with international pop music.

From the musical practice of the Moluccan Moods Orchestra, I learned how musical traditions were taken as a source of inspiration and a starting point for new forms of music. For instance, the song *Batu badaun* (Leafy rock), tells the legend of a widow. Disappointed with her disobedient children she disappears into the leafy rock. Or the song *Lembe-Lembe*, a song that describes what happens at the beach when fishermen return home. It was during rehearsals, especially when jamming freely with fellow musicians, that I first encountered a body of folk songs that everybody seemed to know by heart. A popular music repertory that featured popular songs from the 1950s and earlier, but also harmonized folk songs (*lagu rakyat*) or so-called 'regional songs' (*lagu daerah*) from – or at least associated with – Maluku. They are still performed at 'arts nights' and cultural shows (live and televised) as tokens of the identity of Maluku.

### *A Melting Pot of Cultures*

Twentieth-century mass media facilitate the mixing of popular, folk, and classical musical elements and styles. Music now seems to travel freely from one part of the world to another. In pop music, internationally oriented by nature, this integration of musical styles – many originating outside the Northern hemisphere – has penetrated the deepest. Thus rai music, reggae, hip-hop, the many Afro-Caribbean and South American

types of music and all kinds of crossovers have become an accepted phenomenon among a broad audience. Recently, the diasporic world music of Moluccan artists such as Monica Akihary and Maurice Rugebregt has also found its way not only to a broad audience but also to its home country, with Moluccan artists now performing in Indonesian jazz clubs, at the Jakarta International Java Jazz Festival and Ambon Jazz Plus.<sup>10</sup>

After graduating from the Rotterdam Conservatory in 1996, Maurice Rugebregt travelled to the Moluccan capital Ambon in search of his roots. He bought tapes of local folk music and taped himself and other people singing traditional songs. Maurice selected several Moluccan traditionals and arranged and recorded them accompanied by some of the best Dutch jazz, Latin and Moluccan musicians. The result is *Sioh Maluku* (Nostalgia for the Moluccas), a true world music CD containing vibrant Brazilian, jazz and pop arrangements of traditional Moluccan songs.

The roots of Monica Akihary and her band *Boi Akih* lie in traditional Moluccan music (*lagu lagu*), which is known for its refined melodic twists and impressive polyphonic singing. Pop, jazz and world music elements are then added. After her 2004 album *Uwa I*, she released the CD *Princess Akih*, a duet with Dutch guitar virtuoso Niels Brouwer. On these albums, Monica develops an improvisational approach and her very own singing style. Monica sings in her father's mother tongue, the language of Haruku Island. Brouwer and Monica have integrated this language into their very own musical style, rooted in Indonesian, South Indian and European classical music along with jazz. *Yalelol* (the non-physical being), her band *Boi Akih's* fifth album, makes good use of many influences ranging from Indonesian traditional music to blues, Arabic rhythms, West African songs and more. In recent years, Monica frequently performs in other countries, including Indonesia. In 2009, she and *Boi Akih* played for the first time in Norway, Bulgaria and Tunisia, and later that year the band toured in Mexico and Indonesia. The latter was a special tour, because for the first time they performed in Ambon before a delirious audience on the

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<sup>10</sup> Recent years also saw cooperation between artists from the Moluccas and Netherlands. Moluccan Music Theatre Ensemble is a project of Anis de Jong, Nel Lekatompessy and Rence Alfons. In August 2009 the performance *Paku Coklat* (Cloves) was staged at *Taman Budaya di Karang Panjang* in Ambon. It formed a prelude to bigger scenarios in the form of an 2011 opera on Saparua (Fort Duurstede – outdoor show). The project was supported by Museum Maluku di Belanda, Culture and Tourism Office Province of Maluku, Pemerintah Daerah and the Dutch Embassy in Jakarta (Erasmus House).

*Lapangan Merdeka* (Freedom Square). *Boi Akih* received wonderful reviews in the Indonesian press.

### *Conclusion*

If one thing can be learned from the development of Moluccan music then it is that cultural identity, understood as a collective, shared history of individuals affiliated by race or ethnicity has many faces and continues to experience transformations. The musical developments, including those on the Moluccas, have not stood still and over the years the Moluccan repertoire has been adapted, modernized, westernized and again blended with other 'Eastern' traditions. Traditional music and folklore are a living tradition and the same old songs, orally transmitted from one generation to the next, are still relevant. Songs that were popular when a first generation of Moluccans came to the Netherlands in 1951 are still passed on to subsequent generations and still form the musical basis for many Moluccan music groups. This traditional music is still played – often modernized – at Moluccan weddings, parties and *kumpulans*-(village) meetings and events, but it is also performed by well-known bands and artists that play the current Dutch stage circuit, such as Ais Lawalata, Daniel Sahuleka, Moluccan Moods Orchestra (MMO), Julya Loko, Monica Akihary and many others. Most of their music is very rhythmic and many of these bands write lyrics in Ambon Malay and arrange existing new or traditional Moluccan songs. In addition, there are groups that incorporate elements of traditional music into modern pop and jazz, as Massada did back in the late 1970s. Moluccan Moods Orchestra (MMO) made the modernization of traditional music its trademark, performing well-known Moluccan evergreens from the '50s with a pop instrumentation and contemporary manner.

Listening to Moluccan music in the Netherlands, we hear various (often-times mutual) strategies to deal with musical traditions. One of them is the 'purist' approach, common for revival groups that perform what they believe are the unspoiled remains of an ancient cultural heritage. Another approach can be seen in the popular forms of folk music, which nowadays are played on modern instruments, such as synthesizers, and are still very popular at Moluccan weddings and parties. Thirdly, there is tradition as a source, inspiring the creation of contemporary music, a practice especially popular among Moluccan pop artists. And lastly, there is mainstream popular music, such as rock, funk, Latin, or hip hop to which characteristic

elements of Moluccan culture are added as if they were identity markers.<sup>11</sup> Of course, the music of Moluccan artists today is not limited to what one could typically call 'Moluccan'. But, for the good listener, there is always something Moluccan to be heard; by using tools or typical characteristics, or taking the language or traditional singing style or rhythms as a starting point for new Moluccan sounds.

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<sup>11</sup> An example is the YouTube clip of the band *Ambonwhena Aaratuaman* playing mainstream hip hop but performing in the Moluccan language, and playing together with local Maluku youth, which is intermixed with images from the islands and people of Maluku.



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## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### MULTICULTURAL ENCOUNTERS ON STAGE: THE USE OF JAVANESE CULTURAL ELEMENTS BY THE SURINAMESE DOE-THEATRE COMPANY

Annika Ockhorst

In 1974 the Surinamese journalist and writer Thea Doelwijt and actor and director Henk Tjon founded the Doe-theatre company in Suriname.<sup>1</sup> They met each other in 1970 during the production of the satirical cabaret *Frrrek* ('Shit'). In 1972 they coproduced the play *Hare Lach*,<sup>2</sup> followed in 1973 by *Land te koop* (Land for Sale). All three successful theatre productions were characterized by a socially-critical view on Surinamese society. In Surinamese theatre, the focus on Surinamese society was a relatively new phenomenon. Official theatre, as well as broader cultural life in the Dutch colony, had been founded on European standards and represented European society. From the second half of the twentieth century on, Creole cultural nationalism inspired a reorientation in theatre. Local play writers emerged and gradually their plays focused more on Surinamese society and the various cultures in it.

The Doe-theatre company was an exponent of this reorientation in Surinamese cultural life from Europe to Suriname. By founding their own theatre company, Doelwijt and Tjon hoped to establish and produce a new Surinamese form of theatre on a structural basis. They had three aims. First, by casting a socially critical view on Surinamese society and contemporary events, the Doe-theatre plays were meant to raise awareness among their audience. The plays were characterized by a sharpness

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<sup>1</sup> To a large extent, this chapter has been based on my MA thesis 'S.O.S. *We g'a fesi. Een onderzoek naar de weerspiegeling van de Surinaamse samenleving in het werk van het Doe-theater, 1970–1983*'. This thesis was written under supervision of Dr P.J.J. Meel. It has recently been transformed into the book *Lachen, huilen, bevrijden: De weerspiegeling van de Surinaamse samenleving in het werk van het Doe-theater, 1970–1983* (Laughing, crying, liberating: The reflection of Surinamese society in the work of the Doe-theatre company, 1970–1983) (Ockhorst 2012).

<sup>2</sup> *Hare Lach* is a satirical reference to both Hare Krishna and the Hindustani political leader Jagernath Lachmon.

that was uncommon in the Surinamese context. This sharp tone can be attributed to Doelwijt and her upbringing in the Netherlands. Second, the founders of the Doe-theatre company strove for professionalism. Tjon, who had received a formal theatre education in the Netherlands, was determined to elevate the practice of theatre in Suriname to a higher level, from a hobby on the side to a full-time profession. Doe-theatre members were obliged to follow the intensive theatre training created by Tjon himself. This training was based on Suriname's own cultural richness and used traditional songs, instruments, dances, rituals and oral traditions of all Surinamese population groups. Third, the Doe-theatre company was meant to have a multicultural and truly Surinamese character. Cultural nationalism had inspired Doelwijt and Tjon to explore and rediscover the various non-European cultures in Suriname, which had been marginalized by centuries of Dutch colonialism. In their plays, they emphasized Suriname's own cultural richness. In order to raise more mutual understanding among the ethnically divided Surinamese population, Doelwijt and Tjon included traditional elements of all Surinamese cultures in the Doe-theatre plays. These three aims – social criticism, professionalism and a multicultural Surinamese character – were combined in a form of total theatre, consisting of play, song, music and dance, in a way that was new to Suriname.

### *Javanese in Suriname*

Through Dutch colonialism, Suriname has acquired a greatly diverse population. Currently, the Hindustani community, brought to Suriname by contract labour, forms the largest population group (27.4%). Second place is taken by the Creole community (17.7%), who are descended from the enslaved Africans that worked the Surinamese sugar and coffee plantations. In third place we find the descendants of those slaves who had fled the plantations and formed new communities in the interior, commonly referred to as Maroons (14.7%). Then, just outside of the top three, comes the Javanese community (14.6%). Like the Hindustani people, the Javanese were brought to Suriname through contract migration. Between 1890 and 1939, a total of 32,986 contract labourers migrated from Java to Suriname. Around a quarter of them returned to Java after the end of their contracts. The majority of Javanese stayed in Suriname, forming a Javanese community that today consists of more than 70,000 people.

On a Surinamese population of only 492.829 this means that the Javanese community in Suriname is indeed large.<sup>3</sup>

The Javanese community in Suriname held on firmly to its Javanese traditions. Living and working conditions on the plantations were tough and the Javanese workers were fairly isolated from other ethnic groups. Because of this, a strong sense of community arose among the Javanese labourers, who shared a common nostalgia for Java. The Javanese culture these labourers brought with them to Suriname, was not Javanese 'high culture'. Most of the labourers were illiterate youth from a low socio-economic background, who continued daily life – and the traditions in it – as they knew it. The few people with more extensive knowledge of traditions and religion were promoted to experts. Thus, various types of traditional songs, music and dance from daily life were preserved by the Surinamese-Javanese community, although often influenced by their new environment.

The preservation of Javanese culture in Suriname was also facilitated by plantation owners who allowed the organization of traditional Javanese 'entertainment' such as *slametans* and *wayang* performances. By allowing these traditional forms of entertainment, plantation owners hoped to counter the problem of widespread opium use and gambling addiction among the Javanese workers. During the 1930s the preservation of Javanese culture was also stimulated by Governor Kielstra. As a means to counter the economic crisis, Kielstra planned to turn the Surinamese districts into 'Asian' territories, where small farming would take over from the poorly run plantation economy. To prevent the Hindustani and Javanese farmers from leaving the countryside, they were to feel at home in these new Asian districts. Kielstra's plans failed due to World War Two. From the end of the war on, slowly, Javanese started leaving the countryside in search of jobs in the bauxite industry and in the city. Interaction between the Javanese and other population groups grew and affected the way Javanese youth viewed traditional Javanese culture. 'Traditional' was deemed 'old-fashioned', as the Javanese youth wished to be (creolized) Surinamese rather than Javanese. Efforts to counter this development and preserve Javanese culture in Suriname were made by Indonesian repre-

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<sup>3</sup> Current population numbers and percentages are derived from the 2004 census. They can be found on <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surinamers>. The numbers for migrated and remigrated Javanese contract labourers were derived from Parsudi Suparlan (1995).

sentatives and, later on, by the Indonesian embassy, actively promoting traditional and more modern aspects of Javanese culture in Suriname.

Despite the efforts to preserve Javanese cultural expressions in Suriname, some of them lost their audience and are no longer performed on a regular basis. This is the case, for example, with the *wayang wong* performances. Dance styles that are still commonly practiced in Suriname are the *tayub* dance of the *lèdèk* (a professional singer/dancer) and *jaran képang*, a cultural performance with ritual characteristics in which men dance on bamboo or leather horses. Of the Javanese musical traditions, gamelan music and *terbangan* music are now most common in Suriname. Javanese gamelan music in Suriname is one of the Javanese traditions that were clearly affected by its new environment. Since gamelan instruments were not brought to Suriname by the Javanese contract labourers, they had to be made from memory with the available Surinamese materials. Not all 'traditional' gamelan instruments could be remade and the sound of the 'new' gamelan instruments differs from their sound in Java. Finally, the Javanese martial art *pentjak silat*, which was at first only practiced in secret, has become very popular in Suriname among people of all ethnicities.<sup>4</sup>

The combination of a relatively large Javanese community in Suriname that preserved (aspects of) traditional Javanese culture on the one hand, and the emergence of a theatre company that aimed to be multicultural Surinamese on the other, are the two elements that link this chapter to this book's theme of Dutch–Indonesian musical encounters. Music was not just an important element in the total theatre that the Doe-theatre company envisaged; it was also a means to including the diverse cultural traditions of different ethnicities into the company's new form of Surinamese national theatre. This chapter will explore the way in which the Doe-theatre's aim of being multicultural Surinamese was put to practice. Special focus will be on the extent to which Javanese cultural elements were embedded in the work of the Doe-theatre company. These explorations are based on what has been left of the Doe-theatre company: scripts, programmes and flyers, some audio, visual and audiovisual materials, and the recollections of former Doe-theatre members. This chapter does not offer a complete overview of Javanese elements in the work of the Doe-theatre, rather it is a first attempt at tracing these elements.

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<sup>4</sup> The short profile on Javanese in Suriname in this paragraph is based on Parsudi Suparlan (1995); Hoefte (1990); and Gooswit (2010).

*Multiculturalism and Javanese Elements in Doe Theatre's Compositions*

An obvious question that comes to mind when examining the multicultural Surinamese character of the Doe-theatre company is, who participated in it? Ideally, to give their productions a structural basis, Doelwijt and Tjon envisaged a steady core of eight to ten actors. In reality, the composition of the company would vary throughout the years due to a lack of financial means.

Doelwijt and Tjon first searched for members through a selection training. This training started on 1 October 1973. It was held three nights a week and lasted for three months. The promotional advertisement stated that Doelwijt and Tjon were looking for socially engaged and politically aware idealists.<sup>5</sup> By the end of the training, sixteen aspiring actors and actresses from various ethnic backgrounds were selected. Twelve of them would actually participate in the Doe-theatre's first play *Libi Span ini na ati foe Sranan* (Life is bubbling in the heart of Suriname). While this production was still running, the Doe-theatre was hired by the Surinamese government to promote the political goal of independence. The year of government service that followed provided the Doe-theatre company with the financial stability it needed to practice theatre as a full-time profession and with a well-rounded cast. But although no contractual restraints were put on the Doe-theatre's artistic freedom, some tension arose as a result of which the government contract was ended in August 1975. According to Doelwijt and Tjon, the government could no longer handle the company's critical point of view, which followed their own artistic conscience instead of official government views.<sup>6</sup>

After the government contract ended, the Doe-theatre company had to face a Surinamese reality: it was hard, if not impossible, to make a living out of acting. In 1976, the Doe-theatre made a new start as an independent company.<sup>7</sup> At this time, the company had only one member left. After the commercially unsuccessful play *Anansi kontra Masra Bobo, Masra Babari, Misi Fes'koki, Misi Sabiman nanga Masra Konflaw* (The Spider versus Mister Pinhead, Mister Bigmouth, Miss Slavery, Miss Know-it-all and Mr. Faint) in 1976, René Recappé, the Doe-theatre's one remaining member, quit. It was only between 1977 and 1983 that the Doe-theatre company

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<sup>5</sup> 'Thea Doelwijt en Henk Tjon beginnen theatertraining', *De Ware Tijd*, 27 September 1973.

<sup>6</sup> Doe-theatre's planning for 1980 and 1981, private archive Doelwijt.

<sup>7</sup> 'Oprichtingspamflet Doe-theater 1976', private archive Doelwijt.



was able to establish a steady core. In 1977, three (aspiring) actresses joined the company. Mariëtte Moestakim and Mildred van Eer were selected during auditions, while Rieke Eersel, who had already been involved in theatre in the Netherlands, joined spontaneously. Together with Doelwijt and Tjon they would now form the core of the Doe-theatre company, albeit a much smaller core than the founders had hoped for. The always limited number of full-time members often forced the company to work with part-time and freelance employees. The musical accompaniment of the Doe-theatre plays was always provided by freelance musicians. However, among those musicians there were two, Walter Muringen and Harto Soemodihardjo, who worked with the Doe-theatre company throughout its existence. These men can therefore be said to have been vital members of the Doe-theatre company.

Ethnically speaking, the composition of the Doe-theatre company (including part-time and freelance members) was always diverse. The company was open and receptive to people from all cultural backgrounds who, in turn, found themselves attracted to the multicultural Surinamese ideal of the theatre company. However, when looking for a steady Doe-theatre core – Doelwijt, Tjon, Moestakim, Eersel, Van Eer, Muringen and Soemodihardjo – it is clear that this core was predominantly of a Creole background. Still, two Javanese names stand out: Mariëtte Moestakim and Harto Soemodihardjo.

Mariëtte Moestakim joined the Doe-theatre company at the age of twenty. She had seen previous plays by the Doe-theatre company while still in high school. In 1977 Moestakim entered the Doe-theatre's selection training. According to the company's founders, it was immediately clear that Moestakim was a natural talent and she was hired. What attracted Moestakim most to the work of the Doe-theatre company was the socially critical tone. The multicultural aspect also appealed to her. The Doe-theatre was the only theatre company in which all Surinamese could recognize themselves. Because of this, Moestakim felt that she could fit in with the company as well. Coming from the still fairly isolated Javanese community, this was a refreshing experience, although she thinks that because of her participation in the Doe-theatre company, she was probably seen as being '*vernegerd*' (creolized) by more traditional Javanese.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Mariëtte Moestakim's experiences as described here are based on an interview with Mariëtte Moestakim, Thea Doelwijt and Marijke van Geest, 17 December 2007 in Diemen and an interview with Mariëtte Moestakim and Thea Doelwijt, 9 October 2009 in Amsterdam.

Harto Soemodihardjo first participated in a play by Doelwijt and Tjon during the aforementioned 1972 production *Hare Lach*, to which he was introduced by his friend Walter Muringen. Soemodihardjo's participation in the early plays, as well as in the Doe-theatre company, originated in his love of music. Soemodihardjo belonged to a Surinamese popular youth culture. Inspired greatly by American jazz, funk and pop music and icons like Stevie Wonder and Donnie Hathaway, Soemodihardjo played in several popular bands. He was less interested in traditional Javanese music. According to Soemodihardjo, his upbringing was not typically Javanese, but 'Surinamese'. He did participate in some Javanese events and, more or less unconsciously, was influenced by his Javanese heritage. But when speaking of traditional elements, Soemodihardjo claims to have been more interested in 'Surinamese' traditional music and, for example, drums. Yet, when composing music, to his own frustration he often found that something Javanese had 'crept in', even though he was trying so hard to be mainstream. Nowadays, Soemodihardjo embraces this influence, which he believes to be a culturally determined sense of melody and sound.<sup>9</sup> But in his Doe-theatre days, even Doelwijt remembers that Soemodihardjo had no interest in traditional Javanese music.<sup>10</sup>

In a very literal sense, both Moestakim and Soemodihardjo provided the Doe-theatre company with a Javanese face. But instead of being driven by their Javanese background, they both seem to have been more a part of a creolized Surinamese popular youth culture. The driving force behind embedding Javanese and other traditional cultural elements was founder Tjon. All interviewed Doe-theatre members confirm this.<sup>11</sup> After his return to Suriname in 1969, Tjon worked extensively with socio-cultural organizations from all backgrounds. It infuriated him that there was almost no room for 'traditional' Surinamese cultures in official cultural life.<sup>12</sup> For Tjon, traditional referred to the non-European cultures in Suriname, passed down for generations, but marginalized and considered inferior by the dominant European culture. Tjon resisted the European cultural dominance and fought to (re)instate non-European traditions as

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<sup>9</sup> Harto Soemodihardjo's experiences as described here are based on an interview with Soemodihardjo, 26 January 2009 in Rijswijk and a telephone interview with Soemodihardjo, 28 April 2010.

<sup>10</sup> Doelwijt during the interview with Doelwijt and Moestakim, 9 October 2009 in Amsterdam.

<sup>11</sup> A list of interviews with former Doe-theatre members is provided at the end of the article.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Henk Tjon, 8 April 2008 in Paramaribo.

the basis of Surinamese culture. Through the theatre training Tjon created within the Doe-theatre company, he shared his knowledge of Surinamese cultures with the Doe-theatre members and often representatives and artists from various backgrounds were invited to give lessons. A working process evolved in which all members were able to produce 'cultural input' not only from their own cultural background, but from all backgrounds. Whenever Doelwijt wrote a draft script for a new play, elements would be added or altered through improvisation, after which Doelwijt would decide on the final version of the upcoming play. This way, with the help of like-minded artists and cultural representatives, Tjon pushed the Doe-theatre as a company to embed cultural elements of all Surinamese groups into its work, even at times when the Doe-theatre core was predominantly Creole.

The importance of the Doe-theatre training in the embedding of cultural elements presses for a closer look at the nature of this training. The training Tjon developed within the Doe-theatre company was consciously based on Surinamese cultural expressions and a Surinamese aesthetic. Using traditional songs, stories, instruments, dance, rhythm and rituals of all Surinamese population groups, the Doe-theatre members received lessons on theatre techniques, movement and ballet, vocal and musical expression, improvisation, text and character analysis and renowned plays and play writers. During trainings, Tjon often used the *apinti* drum as musical accompaniment. However, he also introduced the gamelan to Doe-theatre trainings. When asked about Tjon's use of the gamelan, neither Doelwijt nor Moestakim recall Tjon having had special training in this. According to both women, the musically talented Tjon created his own sound on the gamelan. He did not play the gamelan in a typically Javanese way, but used his extensive musical knowledge and love for rhythm to teach himself how to use the Javanese instrument in a more 'Surinamese' way.<sup>13</sup> Soemodihardjo remembers that Tjon's inspiration to use the gamelan emerged when he was working with choreographer Marlène Lie A Ling, who combined classical ballet with folklore and traditional dance. Lie A Ling was also one of the experts that repeatedly participated in Doe-theatre trainings and productions. Soemodihardjo recalls that, at first, Tjon tried to play the gamelan in a traditionally Javanese way during trainings, but during plays it was always used in a non-conventional way. By using the Javanese gamelan in new ways an interesting musical

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<sup>13</sup> Interview with Moestakim and Doelwijt, 9 October 2009 in Amsterdam.

encounter occurred: a mixed Surinamese sound was created on a Javanese instrument. A similar musical encounter also happened in reverse, when Doe-theatre musicians would mimic traditional Javanese or Hindustani sounds on European instruments such as the piano.<sup>14</sup>

Besides the use of the gamelan, Moestakim also remembers other specific Javanese elements used during trainings. There was traditional Javanese dance and lessons were given by Lie A Ling as well as by two choreographers who had studied traditional dance in Indonesia on a scholarship from the Indonesian embassy. In addition, there was the well-known dancer and gamelan player Sagimin, an expert in the dances from the Ramayana epos. Other dance forms were taught by choreographers Mr. Ramdin (Hindustani), Ilse Marie Hajary (jazz) and Percy Muntslag (classical ballet). Another Javanese influence in Doe-theatre trainings, was the use of the Javanese martial arts *pentjak silat*. *Pentjak silat* was already fairly well-known in Suriname, as it is one of the Javanese cultural elements that found its way into mainstream Surinamese culture and was no longer practiced only by people of Javanese origin. Tjon believed that *pentjak silat* would help the actors and actresses achieve more balance between and control over body and spirit.<sup>15</sup>

During its almost ten year existence, the Doe-theatre produced seventeen plays. While it goes beyond the scope of this article to discuss all these plays individually, some general remarks can be made about the way in which traditional cultural elements were embedded in the Doe-theatre plays. Broadly speaking, the same kind of elements that were used in Doe-theatre company training sessions resurface in the Doe-theatre plays, ranging from language, movement, dance, music, musical instruments, customs and rituals of the different Surinamese population groups. However, two types of plays can be discerned in the work of the Doe-theatre company, in which cultural elements were used in distinctive ways.

First, in some plays the multicultural Surinamese aspect mostly functions as a part of the dominant socially critical tone. In these socially critical cabarets, ethnic division and diversity is just one of the recurring themes. Other recurring themes were politics, corruption, repression, economic development, poverty and migration. The Doe-theatre's

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<sup>14</sup> Telephone interview with Soemodihardjo, 28 April 2010.

<sup>15</sup> Moestakim in the interview with Moestakim and Doelwijt, 9 October 2009 in Amsterdam. Moestakim has only a vague recollection of the names of the choreographers that studied Javanese dance in Indonesia. According to her, one went by the name of Pak Soenardi, while the other was named Sari Sajo or Kassan.

desire to break away from the Surinamese ethnic affiliation is illustrated through explicit discussion of ethnic division, jokes and the use of common stereotypes. The message or ideal put forward by the Doe-theatre is one of nation building. In order to overcome other critical issues in Surinamese society, the divided Surinamese peoples would have to become one nation of Surinamese people, *Srananman*. Diverse cultural elements merged together in lyrics, décor, movement and music mainly serve to support this message.

In the second type of play produced by the Doe-theatre company the multicultural Surinamese character more or less functions as the central theme. These became presentations of Suriname's cultural richness. Customs and rituals of all Surinamese population groups are honoured and bound together in a storyline that leads to a similar conclusion, as was seen in the socially critical cabarets: the need for the peoples of Suriname to unite and together, as *Srananman*, build a new and prosperous Suriname. The storyline of these more dominantly cultural plays was often very similar. In general, these plays show how the different Surinamese population groups came to Suriname and what they had to suffer from Dutch colonial repression and divide-and-conquer-strategies. Due to colonialism, the Surinamese population has internalized a mentality characterized by repression and division. Now it is time to overcome these colonial remains through mutual understanding and respect and nation building. Cultural organizations of various backgrounds often participated in the production and performance of these plays. Doe-theatre members were expected to play all parts and participate in the cultural expressions of all origins, regardless of their own background. The way in which customs and rituals of all population groups were brought together on stage at the same time, representing parts of one harmonious whole, performed by peoples of all origins, was unique. In an interview with Tjon, he stressed the contrast between this way of presenting Surinamese cultures and the usual way, in which population groups were brought on stage separately in chronological order of arrival in Suriname. In Tjon's eyes, as well as in those of other Doe-theatre members, this was one of the most important accomplishments of the Doe-theatre company.<sup>16</sup>

In fact, the distinction between socially critical cabaret and cultural presentations was not as harsh as presented above. In some plays, the socially critical and the multicultural Surinamese aspect are more or less

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<sup>16</sup> Interview with Henk Tjon, 8 April 2008 in Paramaribo.

balanced. Cultural elements of the various Surinamese groups – traditional songs, music, instruments, dance, movement, stories, rituals – were used in all Doe-theatre plays. A Javanese cultural element that was often used is the gamelan, usually not played in a traditionally Javanese way, except during the cultural presentations in which gamelan orchestras of a cultural organization participated. Another frequent Javanese element in the Doe-theatre plays are movements derived from Javanese dance, which were visible, for example, in dramatic movements with a *slendang* (a sort of scarf), and from *pentjak silat*. Although Dutch and the Surinamese language Sranantongo were the dominant language in Doe-theatre plays, sometimes in the portrayal of rituals Sarnami Hindustani, Surinamese Javanese and even the indigenous Arowak and Caraib were used. The mention of Islam in the more dominantly cultural Doe-theatre plays can be seen as a shared Hindustani and Javanese influence, as some Hindustani and almost all Javanese in Suriname are Muslims. To add to this general image of the Javanese cultural and musical elements used in Doe-theatre plays, in the following some more specific examples will be explored.

*Libi span ini na ati foe Sranan (1974)*

*Libi span ini na ati foe Sranan* (Life is bubbling in the heart of Suriname) was the first play produced by Doelwijt and Tjon after founding the Doe-theatre company in 1974. This play is a typical example of the second category of plays mentioned above. *Libi span* paid homage to Suriname's cultural diversity. It was performed by a multi-ethnic cast of twelve people selected during the 1974 selection training. To portray elements of the various Surinamese population groups, the Doe-theatre not only used its own texts and compositions but, with the help of representatives from various cultural organizations, also adapted traditional songs, texts and dance for use on stage. On stage, the various cultural elements were presented as parts of one Surinamese identity.<sup>17</sup> The dominant language in *Libi span* was Sranantongo. Unlike in their previous plays, Dutch was not used at all. However, other non-European languages were used, namely Sarnami Hindustani, Surinamese Javanese and indigenous languages (Arowak and

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<sup>17</sup> 'Libi Span ini na ati foe Sranan. Totaal-theater van Thea en Henk', *De Ware Tijd*, 26 June 1974.



Caraib).<sup>18</sup> Although the use of traditional cultural elements and rituals on stage hardly ever led to feelings of indignation among the audience, in the case of *Libi span* the portrayal of Mama Sranan as a pregnant woman carrying the future Suriname, was considered inappropriate by Creole members of the audience.<sup>19</sup>

From the scripts retrieved of *Libi span* one learns that the play starts with the Creole story of Creation, which is accompanied by the sounds of the *apinti* drum. The story of how Anana created the world is followed by the appearance of Mama Sranan, the sacred mother of Suriname from Creole oral tradition. She recalls how the indigenous peoples used to live a happy life in a paradise-like Suriname. This story is illustrated with Javanese dance and gamelan music. When the Europeans arrived in Suriname, the carefree life of the indigenous peoples came to an abrupt ending. As new peoples were brought to Suriname from Africa and Asia, a repressed and divided society emerged. An indigenous requiem, sung in Arowak and Caraib and accompanied by indigenous instruments and dance, expresses the pain colonization has brought upon the indigenous as well as on the new 'Surinamese' peoples. During the second half of the play, all efforts go into overcoming the division in society and bridging the cultural gap between population groups. In this, gods of different Surinamese peoples are called upon for help. Together, God, Krishna, Tamoesi, Allah, Gado and Anana form the universal power of love that is needed to build a new and prosperous Suriname.<sup>20</sup>

In the actual performance of *Libi span* in all probability many more cultural elements of various groups were present. One can think of costumes, décor, music and movement. Unfortunately, the scripts that were found do not elaborate on this. However, it is clear that the Javanese population was represented in *Libi span* through the use of the gamelan, Javanese dance, the use of the Surinamese Javanese language in certain rituals and the call upon Allah for help.

#### Anansi kontra . . . (1976)

In the 1976 play *Anansi kontra Masra Bobo, Masra Babari, Misi Fes'koki, Misi Sabiman nanga Masra Konflaw* the socially critical and multicultural

<sup>18</sup> Various scripts of *Libi span ini na ati foe Sranan*, private archive Doelwijt.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Henk Tjon, 8 April 2008 in Paramaribo.

<sup>20</sup> Various scripts of *Libi span ini na ati foe Sranan*, private archive Doelwijt.

Surinamese character of the Doe-theatre were more or less balanced. Manboi Anansi, son of the cunning spider Masra Anansi, is fed up with the destroying influence of the colonial past on Surinamese society. These remains are symbolized by the characters mentioned in the play's title: Masra Bobo (a foolish labourer), Masra Babari (a bawling overseer), Misi Fes'koki (a woman stuck in a slave mentality), Misi Sabiman (an arrogant and well-educated woman, who looks down on the mass) and Masra Kon-flaw (a drunken weakling). Lacking in all these characters is faith in the abilities of the Surinamese people. Manboi Anansi decides to put an end to this and, one by one, tricks all characters into his spider web. But as he is doing so, another enemy surfaces within himself: that of the power-hungry leader. Now the other characters, symbolizing the people of Suriname, have to find their common strength in order to beat the tyrant.<sup>21</sup>

The concept of *Anansi kontra* is based on the Creole oral tradition of the *Anansitori*, the stories about the cunning spider Anansi. Traditionally, in the telling of *Anansitori* there is a lot of interaction between the storyteller and his audience. To involve the audience more in the Doe-theatre's play about Manboi Anansi seats were created on stage, so that the audience could sit in a circle around the actors.<sup>22</sup> The cast of *Anansi kontra* consisted of only two actors, Henk Tjon and René Recappé. Together, they played all six characters. The characters had distinctive masks, so that it was clear at all times which character was at play. These masks were made by visual artists Ron Flu and Paul Woei and were inspired by the masks used in Javanese theatre.<sup>23</sup> The actors' costumes were inspired by indigenous clothing, while songs and music from all Surinamese cultures were used. This combination of an *Anansitori*, played by actors dressed in indigenous looking clothing, wearing Javanese-inspired masks and singing perhaps a Hindustani song, illustrates just how the Doe-theatre mixed separate Surinamese cultures into a new unified whole.

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<sup>21</sup> Script found in private archive Doelwijt.

<sup>22</sup> Hadil, 'Anansi Contra: slaand applaus voor Henk Tjon c.s.', *De Ware Tijd*, 25 August 1976.

<sup>23</sup> 'Oprichtingspamflet Doe-theater 1976', private archive Doelwijt; interview with René Recappé, 25 May 2008 in Paramaribo; interview with Ron Flu, 1 May 2008 in Paramaribo.

## Prisiri Stari (1977)

The same kind of cultural mix can also be found in the 1977 children's play *Prisiri Stari* (The Fun Star). This fairytale-like play was based on an indigenous legend in which, every once in a while, the moon descends down to the earth as a bird. While on earth, he plays with the children and looks for new stars to join him in his kingdom. During one of these nights the moon meets the indigenous girl Toewe. Toewe and her family live a traditional life in the Surinamese interior. When the moon tells her about his kingdom and all the stars in it, Toewe decides that she wants to become a star too. The moon agrees and takes the little girl back with him into the sky. There, Toewe becomes the Star of Suriname. Her task is to look out for the young new republic. Soon, Toewe finds that things are not going so well in Suriname. Her parents, Mese and Adoewe, have received a reward, because their daughter has become the star of Suriname. To collect their golden coconut, they leave the interior and travel to the city of Paramaribo. In Paramaribo, Mese and Adoewa are blinded by all the apparent wealth of the city. They do not want to go back to their traditional life and throw all their belongings into the river. Toewe does not understand how her parents could be so foolish as to believe that they could build a new, prosperous life without their own cultural heritage. Herein lies the message of *Prisiri Stari*: in order to build up Suriname, all Surinamese population groups and their heritage are needed (Doelwijt 1980).

In *Prisiri Stari* Javanese actress Mariëtte Moestakim played the leading character Toewe. The setting of this indigenous based play did not resemble an indigenous context at all. During the production of *Prisiri Stari* a Javanese visual artist by the name of Waïdi was in town. He was inspired by the play and offered to create its décor. Thus, *Prisiri Stari's* décor had a Javanese touch. Moestakim recalls how Waïdi made a *gapura*, a triumphal arch, from wood carvings and young palm leaves to represent the gate of heaven. The *Prisiri Stari* costumes were Javanese-inspired as well. For example, Moestakim and Doelwijt recall the head piece of King Moon in which the Indonesian garuda can be discerned as well as little wings attached to bracelets that the actors wore on the upper arm.<sup>24</sup> The entire script of *Prisiri Stari* was written in Sranantongo, which makes for an interesting combination of indigenous, Javanese and Creole elements in the Doe-theatre company's first children's play.

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<sup>24</sup> Interview with Moestakim and Doelwijt, 9 October 2009 in Amsterdam.

## Na krakti foe Mama Sranan (1978)

After the Doe-theatre's year of government service in 1974–1975, the company only received incidental financial support from the government. This official support for the Doe-theatre's activities can mostly be attributed to the nationalist poet Robin Raveles, a government official and in the early 1980's even vice-minister of Culture. Raveles strove for a cultural policy that would contribute to turning his countrymen into confident, versatile Surinamese, who were strongly aware of the cultural richness of their people (Abrahams 2008: 143). His ambition was a good fit with the ambitions of the Doe-theatre company and its cultural performances, in which they included cultural elements of all population groups.

In this light, the Doe-theatre company was hired by the Surinamese government to produce a cultural manifestation in line with *Libi span ini na ati foe Sranan* on the occasion of the visit of the Dutch Queen Juliana to Suriname in February 1978. The result was the play *Na krakti foe Mama Sranan* (The power of Mother Suriname), which again celebrated Suriname's cultural richness and called for nation building. While the Doe-theatre produced and coordinated *Na krakti foe Mama Sranan*, several cultural organizations participated in it. These groups were *Anna Nijaware Maro* (indigenous), *Tonelly* (Creole), *Sanskritiek Karkarini Samaadj* (Hindustani) and *Federatie Kebudajan Indonesia Suriname* (Javanese). Although I was unable to retrieve a script of *Na krakti foe Mama Sranan*, the play's programme is all that is needed to conclude that this play too vividly incorporated the Doe-theatre's aim of a multicultural Surinamese identity. The programme notes the use of percussion instruments, song and dance from the various Surinamese ethnicities. It explicitly mentions the presence of religious figures such as a *piaiman* (indigenous), an *obiaman* (Creole/Maroon) and a Hindustani priest. The Hindustani priest calls upon Hanuman, the brave monkey god from the Ramayana epos, to fight a character called Kartasini. The presence of Hanuman raises the interesting question whether this mythical figure was at the time used as a Javanese, Hindustani or common cultural element, since the Ramayana epos is a part of both Hindustani and Javanese culture. Other specifically Javanese elements that can be deduced from the play's programme are the presence of a gamelan orchestra, Javanese clowns as they were known from the *dagelan* plays, Javanese dance movements and *jaran képang*.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Programme of *Na krakti foe Mama Sranan*, private archive Doelwijt.

*Rebirth (1981)*

In 1981, the Doe-theatre company was hired by the Surinamese government again. This time, Doelwijt and Tjon were asked to lead the Surinamese delegation to the Caribbean arts festival Carifesta on Barbados. The Surinamese delegation to Carifesta consisted of experts in the field of theatre, traditional and contemporary music, dance and visual arts. The delegation shared the common theme 'rebirth', a referral to the 'rebirth' Suriname supposedly experienced through the 1980 military coup. The Doe-theatre company translated this theme into a theatrical manifestation of Surinamese cultural richness, called *Rebirth*. For this occasion, the Doe-theatre company consisted of Thea Doelwijt, Henk Tjon, Rieke Eersel, Mariëtte Moestakim, Walter Muringen, Harto Soemodihardjo, Wilgo Baarn, Chandra van Binnendijk, Marlène Lie A Ling, Otto Manichand and Alida Neslo. They were, however, not the only participants in *Rebirth*. Like in *Na krakti foe Mama Sranan* various cultural organizations took part. These were *Anne Nija Mare Waro* (indigenous), *Vanda Libi* (Maroon), *Naks* (Creole), *Pemuda-Timbol* (Javanese) and *Kalamitri* (Hindustani). In addition, members of the Surinamese National Ballet, the Surinamese Dance Theatre and Harto [Soemodihardjo]'s Band participated in *Rebirth*.

As no script of *Rebirth* was found, the use of cultural elements has to be deduced from other sources. From the members recollections, it seems that *Rebirth* had its own distinctive storyline. Within this storyline, very similar cultural elements were used, as had been the case in *Libi span ini na ati foe Sranan* and *Na krakti foe Mama Sranan*. However, in *Rebirth* the use of Hindustani elements seems to have been more prominent than it was before. At the beginning of the play, a couple gets married in a Hindustani wedding ceremony. After the ceremony, the newlyweds are confronted with a great many obstacles. Traditions and rituals from the various Surinamese cultures turn out to be of crucial importance in overcoming these obstacles.<sup>26</sup> Where the programme of *Na krakti foe Mama Sranan* showed the kind of elements used, photographs of *Rebirth* were printed in the book *De grote Caraïbische familie* (The big Caribbean family) (Doelwijt, Beeker and San-A-Jong 1981), in which the Surinamese Carifesta participants described their experience. These pictures show the return of the mythical character Hanuman, the use of movements from

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<sup>26</sup> This very restricted description of *Rebirth* was deduced from various interviews with former Doe-theatre participants.

the Javanese martial art *pentjak silat*, and a character whose costume and position somewhat resemble the exterior of a Javanese *wayang* puppet.

The extensive use of Hindustani elements in *Rebirth*, which can also be seen in the printed pictures, surprised contemporary critics. In *De Ware Tijd* Benjamin Mitrasingh wrote that it required real guts to include religious aspects of all groups in one play, considering that this was a sensitive subject in Suriname. In particular, the extensive use of Hindustani culture was extraordinary, since the Hindustani community was thought fairly isolated and kept to itself.<sup>27</sup> In *Rebirth* it was presented on stage as a part of daily life. According to another critic, H.R.A. Malmberg, *Rebirth* expressed the Surinamese integration process of the various population groups into national unity as a step in the gradual cultural decolonization of Suriname.<sup>28</sup>

#### *The Reception and Audience of the Doe-theatre*

To understand how successful the Doe-theatre company was in accomplishing a multicultural Surinamese character, we must look beyond the Doe-theatre's composition, training, plays and performances. It is also interesting to see to what extent the Doe-theatre company was able to reach a multicultural Surinamese audience. While Doelwijt and Tjon had at one point intended to reach a broad national audience, this was generally not achieved. Instead, the Doe-theatre's regular performances in Paramaribo attracted the usual middle and higher class audience from a Creole and mixed background. According to Moestakim, one of the biggest difficulties in reaching a Hindustani and Javanese audience was that many of them still lived outside of central Paramaribo.<sup>29</sup> In general, the city audience was enthusiastic about the Doe-theatre plays, which were sold out most of the time.

There are exceptions to the limited reach of the Doe-theatre company. On several occasions, especially while in government service, the Doe-theatre was able to go on a tour through the districts and the Surinamese interior. Such tours were rare in Suriname, as these areas were

<sup>27</sup> Benjamin Mitrasingh, 'Inbreng Carifesta op niveau', *De Ware Tijd*, 8 July 1981.

<sup>28</sup> H.R.A. Malmberg, 'Rebirth in perspectief van de cultuurpolitiek in Suriname', *De Ware Tijd*, 22 July 1981.

<sup>29</sup> Moestakim in interview with Moestakim and Doelwijt, 9 October 2009 in Amsterdam.



hard to reach and the people who lived there could not afford to pay for theatre visits. With its performances in the districts and the interior, as well as through special performances for schools within Paramaribo, the Doe-theatre company reached an audience of a broader ethnic and socio-economic scope. Through the Doe-theatre's performances outside of Paramaribo, especially in a district like Commewijne, the theatre company was also able to reach a Javanese audience. While the audience in Paramaribo was enthusiastic about the Doe-theatre plays, the audience outside of the city was even more thrilled. On the one hand, this excitement probably had to do with the fact that there was little entertainment in these areas. On the other hand, the fact that the people outside of Paramaribo recognized elements from their own culture and religion in the plays of this city theatre company was a pleasant surprise. Furthermore, the presence of unfamiliar cultural elements was intriguing to the people in these isolated areas. According to Tjon, the Doe-theatre's performances outside of the city were a great encounter, especially in the interior where Javanese and Hindustani cultural elements were new to the indigenous and Maroon population.<sup>30</sup> The company's message of nation building seems to have been understood outside of the city as well. Daily newspaper *De Ware Tijd* recorded the words tribal chief Forster in the Maroon village Langetabetje spoke after a Doe-theatre performance: '*Wi alamala na Srananman. Wi moes libi boen nanga makandra. We moeten samen leven, samen werken voor Suriname*'.<sup>31</sup>

The Doe-theatre's audience was also broadened by the company's performances in the Caribbean region (Barbados, St. Lucia, Curacao) and in Europe (the Netherlands, France, Germany, Belgium). Opinions on the Doe-theatre plays were more differentiated in the Netherlands than they were in Suriname. The general response was positive, although plays did not always live up to the expectations or standards of the Dutch critics. While the socially critical tone of Doe-theatre plays was very sharp and eventually even dangerous in the Surinamese context, in the Netherlands it was considered relatively meek. The multicultural aspect of Doe-theatre's plays left critics with a sense of incomprehension. Although all phrases were repeated in Dutch, the use of Sranantongo made them uneasy, as they felt they were missing something. In a way, the incomprehension

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<sup>30</sup> Interview with Henk Tjon, 8 April 2008 in Paramaribo.

<sup>31</sup> 'Libi Span in districten en binnenland', *De Ware Tijd*, 17 August 1975. 'We are all Srananman. We have to live well together. We have to live together, work together for Suriname.'

Dutch critics expressed about a play like *Libi span* indicates that the Doe-theatre company had created its own Surinamese theatre form. On the one hand, some Dutch critics thought that this was no more than a manifestation of folklore, unsuited to an audience outside of its own region. In the Amsterdam-based newspaper *Het Parool*, H. van den Berg expressed the opinion that *Libi span* was no more than a series of extremely primitive scenes with very basic use of expression, music, song and dance.<sup>32</sup> Other critics were more receptive toward this new form of Surinamese theatre and emphasized that it could not be judged by Western standards. In *NRC Handelsblad*, Hanny Alkema wrote that the Dutch audience, from its own 'civilized' arrogance, expected Surinamese theatre to be an exciting package of primitive elements ('rolling drums, jungle sounds, wild dances and many nude brown breasts').<sup>33</sup> Instead, this theatre company had started a slow but intensive search for a distinctive Surinamese character and a sophisticated national theatre form.<sup>34</sup>

The Doe-theatre company enjoyed much popularity in Suriname and there is no doubt that its work and mentality influenced and inspired people. However, an interesting question for future research would be to which extent it has had a lasting influence on Surinamese theatre as a whole. The Doe-theatre company, as a socially critical, multicultural and professional steady theatre company, seems to have been a unique phenomenon in Surinamese cultural history that has had no clear successor. Regarding any lasting influence of the Doe-theatre's social criticism, the statement of actrice Rieke Eersel about the satirical portrayal of Surinamese parliament as monkeys in 1977 seems to be characteristic: it was a hilarious thing to do and watch, but to this day nothing has changed.<sup>35</sup>

### Conclusion

This chapter has explored the way in which the Doe-theatre's aim of being multicultural Surinamese was put to practice and, specifically, the extent to which Javanese cultural elements were embedded in the work

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<sup>32</sup> H. van den Berg, 'Surinaamse Doe Groep in Amsterdams Mickery theater. Bont gewoel in show', *Het Parool*, 16 April 1975.

<sup>33</sup> Hanny Alkema, 'Surinaams theater gaat zijn eigen gang', *NRC Handelsblad*, 16 April 1975.

<sup>34</sup> Jan Paul Bresser, 'Surinaamse Doe-Groep in Mickery. Theater op zoek naar eigen verstaanbaarheid', *De Volkskrant*, 17 April 1975.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Rieke Eersel, 15 April 2008 in Paramaribo.

of the Doe-theatre company. It has shown how, through a group process and often on the basis of opportunity, the Doe-theatre company made structural use of diverse cultural elements to raise awareness and mutual understanding and to promote an ideal of nation building. Structurally recurring Javanese elements that were used in both the theatre training and the Doe-theatre plays are the use of the gamelan, movements from Javanese dance and martial arts, the mythological character Hanuman, Islam and the Surinamese Javanese language. The various cultural elements were used in an interchangeable way in the sense that where Javanese elements were used, similar indigenous or Hindustani elements could have been used with the same effect. They were not meant to accurately depict Surinamese cultures in all their traditional aspects, but used in a stylized way as a sign of inclusion. In line with this, for example, the gamelan was frequently used not to make Javanese music, but rather to create new Surinamese sounds with a Javanese touch. Although the Doe-theatre company remained predominantly Creole in its core, inspired most by Tjon's passion for cultural diversity, it went to great lengths to incorporate other Surinamese cultures into its work. The Doe-theatre's use of cultural elements from different Surinamese backgrounds created an extraordinary encounter of cultures on stage. In this, the Doe-theatre company was unprecedented in Suriname.

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*De Volkskrant*  
*De Ware Tijd*  
*Het Parool*  
*NRC Handelsblad*

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<sup>36</sup> Most of these interviews were conducted during the research for my MA thesis. General statements about the Doe-theatre company made in this article are often deduced from common statements by former Doe-theatre company members in these interviews.



## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### KOLLEKTIEF MUZIEK THEATER'S REPOSITIONING OF MOLUCCAN ISSUES

Fridus Steijlen

#### *Introduction*<sup>1</sup>

In this contribution I focus on the *Kollektief Muziek Theater* (KMT), a Moluccan collective that emerged at the beginning of the 1980s. The KMT was a politically active, left-wing collective, which consisted of a theatre group named *Dengan harapan* (With hope), a choir *Merantau* ('Abroad' or 'in exile'), and a popular music band called *H-Gang* (named after the playground of its members). H-Gang was the best known and the band performed most regularly out of all three. The repertoire of KMT reflects both the fundamental political changes taking place among Moluccans in the Netherlands and the turbulent 1980s in which many social movements manifested in the Netherlands. In more than one respect the repertoire of KMT can be seen as an encounter between Indonesia and the Netherlands (or more generally, the West). Such an encounter is reflected in the use of language – mixing Indonesian, Dutch and English – but it can also be recognized in the themes taken up in the songs and the critical stance towards both Indonesian and Dutch society. The repertoire reflects the audience KMT imagined itself, the issues they were willing to address, the call for self-reflection among their Moluccan peers, but also signs of solidarity with other more external cases elsewhere in the world. KMT fitted into a wider tradition of awareness theatre that was popular in the 1970s. KMT was a child of its time. Today, listening to its performances one cannot help but feeling it is outdated. However, its sounds echo the often radical changes within the Moluccan community throughout the 1980s.

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<sup>1</sup> This contribution is based on earlier 1980s research (see references), observations and a recent interview with Roy Wannee (Oost-Souburg; 30 March 2010). All quotes are from this interview. On several later occasions I verified statements by Roy with others involved in MTK and Pemuda 20 Mai. These members were Njonkie Pattinama, Anis de Jong, Joop Sahetapy, Jan Malawauw and Nico Lopulissa.



*Echoes*

Browsing the internet I found a YouTube clip of H-Gang that was uploaded in 2006. The group played a song called *Ibu Tien* (the nickname of the wife of former Indonesian President Suharto) in the headquarters of the Moluccan Evangelical Church in Houten (province of Utrecht).<sup>2</sup> The clip showed a bunch of Moluccans in their fifties, singing about the need for revolution in Indonesia in the month of May. The song dated from 1982, when it was written just before the May general elections in Indonesia. It was performed at different gigs by the band, especially at meetings of left-wing Moluccan youth organizations that opposed the military regime of Suharto. I had quite often heard them play this song back in 1982 when I was involved in some of these meetings. For example, together with *Merantau*, the Moluccan choir, H-Gang played at a conference of the Moluccan Schooling Kollektif in Assen (April 1982), which focussed on the upcoming Indonesian elections, but also at a conference of the *Komitee Indonesia* in which the arms trade with Indonesia was fiercely discussed (June 1982). Later on, H-Gang was to perform at the Melkweg Venue (one of Amsterdam's better known pop-stages). Listening to and watching H-Gang on YouTube was like hearing an echo from a distant past. Indonesia had been transforming over the last decades; Suharto had stepped down in 1998, but also the Moluccan community had thoroughly changed. Meanwhile, at the end of the 1970s and at the beginning of the 1980s, the Moluccan community in the Netherlands had changed from exiles into migrants. To understand the implication of these changes we need to know more about the political background of the Moluccan community.

*Political Background Moluccan Community*

In 1951, upon arrival to the Netherlands, the vast majority of Moluccans considered themselves nationals of the *Republik Maluku Selatan* (RMS); the South Moluccan Republic that was proclaimed on 25 April 1950 in Ambon. The proclamation of the RMS was a response to the dismantling of the Federal Structure of Indonesia in 1950. The federal structure was the result of the colonial war and negotiations between the Netherlands and Indonesia after the latter's proclamation of a free Republic in 1945. During

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<sup>2</sup> [www.youtube.com/watch?v=hprwHoyUPro](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hprwHoyUPro) (last accessed, May 2011).

the colonial era and the subsequent colonial war, the Moluccans, especially the Christians among them, had partly sided with the Dutch colonial power. Within the framework of a federal state, with the South Moluccas as a province of the state of East Indonesia (*Negara Indonesia Timur*; NIT), they felt safe because of a reasonable measure of self-governance. However, with the collapse of the federal structure they were afraid of losing this self-governance, as they feared that old scores would be settled and they would be dominated by their old enemy, the Indonesian republicans. In order to escape all of this, they proclaimed the independent RMS. When in September 1950 the Indonesian army attacked the RMS movement, forcing it into the hinterlands of the island of Seram, it sparked a guerrilla conflict that would last until 1963. Moluccans still serving in the Dutch army outside the Moluccan Islands and awaiting their demobilization supported this new Moluccan republic. The developments in the Moluccas made their return almost impossible, because they were seen as potential RMS guerrilla and the Indonesian and Dutch governments did not want them to go to the Moluccas. As the Dutch government was still responsible for the 12,500 Moluccans (3,500 soldiers and their family) they were eventually transported to the Netherlands (Steijlen 2010).

After their arrival in 1951, the Moluccans were housed in special camps. Because most of these camps were not really fit for long-term residence in the 1960s the government built special wards to house Moluccans. Inside the wards, the community was organized along the lines of the previous camps, with a Moluccan council, social welfare, a Moluccan church, etc.

As the Moluccans had come as supporters of the RMS, they – like the Dutch government – were convinced their stay would be a temporary one. They would go home as soon as the RMS was re-established. This expectation continued until the end of the 1970s and into the 1980s. During this time, Moluccans were perceived as exiles. The second generation of Moluccans became active in the politics of the RMS and they started to radicalize. This led to an outburst of violence into the 1970s with six hostage-taking actions, the consequences of which were thirteen casualties, including six Moluccan hijackers. The very same networks of second-generation Moluccans, which had given birth to more radical and violent groups, would also give rise to a new perspective. In the mid-1970s, young Moluccans started to discuss the rigidity of the RMS ideas and its proclamation was largely perceived to be as a result of decolonization. It was a reaction to the dismantling of the federation, which itself was a construction forced upon by the Dutch. In their opinion, it was better to

fight for the remaining Moluccans at home and their right to self determination, enabling them to opt for a self chosen future.

In the course of the 1980s, this redefinition of RMS ideals became more generally accepted among Dutch Moluccans. This significant change in the course of the RMS, from ex-patria nationalism (independence for the homeland) to vicarious nationalism (advocating right for relatives in the Moluccas), changed Dutch Moluccans from exiles into migrants. Their future no longer depended on the realization of a RMS, but was now in the Netherlands (Steijlen 1996: 223–247; Smeets and Steijlen 2006: 360–376).

It is important to notice that one of the factors that contributed to the change of political orientation was the social problems the Moluccan community faced during the mid-1970s. Two of the major problems were unemployment and drug abuse. In 1981 it was estimated that drug abuse among Moluccan youngsters was almost twenty times as much as among their Dutch peers (Steijlen 1984: 42). Unemployment among Moluccans in the same period was 2.5 times higher (Smeets and Steijlen 2006: 299). The shift in political orientation coincided with a shift from political activism to social work advocated by a second generation of Dutch Moluccans. It was also an era in which the Moluccan community started to liberate itself from the social control exhorted by RMS and the first generation that had arrived in the Netherlands. It was an era for Western-inspired women's rights organizations to come to the fore, with new and independent Moluccan media mushrooming and fierce debates on topics hitherto taboo among the Moluccan community (Steijlen 2008).

#### Pemuda 20 Mai

The core of people who had started questioning the RMS ideals was organized around two left-wing Moluccan youth organizations: *Gerakan Pattimura* and *Pemuda 20 Mai*. *Gerakan Pattimura*, the Pattimura Movement, was named after a Moluccan freedom fighter in 1817, and had its origins in circles of Moluccan students in 1973/1974, many of them living outside the Moluccan wards. *Pemuda 20 Mai*, in turn, had its base inside the wards and was founded in 1978. In referring to the 20th of May (*20 Mai*) the initiators hinted at the proclamation of East Timorese independence, which had been declared in 1975 by Fretilin, but also at the founding of *Budi Utomo* in 1908, the first Indonesian political party that stood at the cradle of Indonesian nationalism. In the 1980s yet another organization, the Moluccan Schooling Kollektif (MSK) from the town of Assen could

be added to the Pattimura and May 20 movements. MSK was a regionally based youth organization, organizing discussions on all sort of political issues and it was very critical of the RMS, in spite of its roots in traditionally pro-RMS wards. The hijackers of the mid-1970s had come from the very same wards; some of them were even brothers or friends of the MSK members.

Of the three left-wing organizations, *Pemuda 20 Mai* was to be most involved in various international networks. Members of *Pemuda 20 Mai* joined trips to Cuba with organizations such as *Venceremos*, a pro-Cuba organization. Another international link was with the Indonesian communist party, the PKI. Two *Pemuda* members even visited the official delegation of the PKI in China. This PKI delegation was stuck in China when visiting that country in 1965 at the moment of the putsch in Indonesia. With the PKI now banned in Indonesia, its China delegation was forced into exile. It was this China delegation that was to head a network of PKI members throughout Eastern and Western Europe, and *Pemuda 20 Mai* members, but also other left-wing Moluccan youth organizations, had regular contacts with these PKI exiles. In the 1970s some *Pemuda 20 Mai* members were even politically trained by the exiles. This relationship was extraordinary because the RMS was generally considered to be right-wing and ideologically anti-communist in stance. Until the 1970s, social control within the Moluccan community had also effectively discouraged contacts with Indonesians.

The Moluccan initiators of *Kollektief Muziek Theater (KMT)* were all part of *Pemuda 20 Mai*. They were critically minded and politically active on a local level, in the wards of Zeeland Province. Here, they opposed established social welfare organizations dominated by the national – RMS oriented – Moluccan organization, instead organizing their own venues to meet and a documentation centre in a Dutch community house called *Het Zwaantje* (The Swan). They were deeply involved in reformulating the RMS ideology, organizing discussions on Indonesia related issues, the communist party and East Timor, a former Portuguese colony now violently occupied by Indonesian forces in December 1975. In reference to Indonesia, they positioned themselves as resolutely anti-Suharto.

Whilst being unemployed, they also looked for alternative ways to serve their community, as one of the founders of KMT and a good friend since the 1980s, Roy Wannee, told me:

We wanted to help, so we bought a second hand van and went around in the ward saying: *Tante* [a way to address older women, FS], the houses are badly

maintained, let us help to repair its shortcomings; in that way we gained sympathy. We were unemployed; a lot of Moluccans were unemployed then in Zeeland, as elsewhere in the Netherlands, and wanted to help the people. Our slogan was: to serve the people.

### Kollektief Muziek Theater

As said, the band H-Gang I happened to watch on YouTube was part of a larger collective, the *Kollektief Muziek Theater* (KMT). KMT was based in two of the Moluccan wards in the province of Zeeland (Smeets and Nanuruw 2009). When KMT was launched, towards the end of the 1970s, it began with the band:

We started in '*het Zwaantje*', under the auspices of social cultural work. Every Wednesday we had a music workshop. We gathered there with our guitars and amplifiers. We already could make music, but were discussing how to perform differently than others who used to sing in Dutch or the Malay language. The music had to be about us. Later on people would say, your songs are critical, but we were just singing about ourselves, about our live and what we thought about it. That's how it all started, with a song about unemployment. Nan (one of the members) had written the song, and we said, you have to add this and that. Being unemployed also included a glimpse of discrimination at least that is how we experienced it (Interview Roy).

More or less at the same time, the choir and a theatre group were launched, partly by the same people. It was not a professional or commercial endeavour but very much framed by their political activism:

All three started in the same period; indeed, shortly after each other, and starting from the same place. The idea was to have a broad approach and to present the three as one deal. If somebody wanted to book H-Gang, then we said we also have a choir and a theatre group, together for a nice price. We used the money to buy equipment and for travel expenses. H-Gang did not bring us a penny, but we had something to eat however. If we played in Den Helder, for example, the deal was that we wanted to have food at least (Interview Roy).

KMT was referred to as a collective so as to avoid any sense of hierarchy. Nevertheless, within the collective one could distinguish a core group of people who were involved in all three of the units. They were the foremen or leaders of the collective. The choir, and to a lesser extent the theatre, consisted of more people than the band. Most others were recruited from family and friends of the core group who also happened to live in the wards. Two member of the band (two brothers), for example, no longer

lived in Zeeland, but now lived close to Amsterdam. The sound system was organized by their brother-in-law. And Roy played in H-Gang, sang in the choir (together with his wife) and also participated in the theatre.

KMT may have been unique to the Moluccan community, but outside similar things happened. The 1970s saw a movement of socially engaged awareness theatre (Van Noort 1988; Van Kerkhoven 2004). Music and musical theatre were used as a means to communicate political messages and to promote the struggle of liberation movements. A well-known example was the African National Congress' music theatre, which toured the world to promote the ANC's struggle (Gilbert 2007). KMT's choir, *Merantau*, could be linked to a wider tradition in the Moluccan community of church choirs, but singing liberation songs was a new thing to do. Another such a choir had previously been organized by other *Pemuda 20 Mai* members, living in the eastern part of the Netherlands. In the north of the Netherlands, a group of Moluccans copied *Merantau* by setting up the choir *Bintang Merah* (Red Star). They sang a repertoire that was similar to Merantau's.

### *The Repertoire*

Of the three KMT units, the band and the choir were the most active, each having a broad repertoire. *Dengan Harapan*, the theatre group, had only one play. The band H-Gang picked up on various music styles such as ska and reggae. Latin-funk, which was popular with so many Moluccan bands at that moment, was left aside, although the members of H-Gang often played this kind of music in other bands:

At the beginning of the 1980s, there were influences from ska and punk, bands such as Doe Maar and UB40. The music and lyrics came right from our heart. Members of H-Gang also played Latin-funk and rock and ska to keep up with the times. We wanted an identity of our own (Interview Roy).

The repertoire of the three units all reflected political engagement. The theatre group *Dengan Harapan* only played one piece: *Batu Badaun*. This play was inspired by the Moluccan folk tale *Batu Badaun* (see also the contribution by Rein Spoorman in this volume): a stone in the form of a leaf. The original story tells of a mother with two children who would not listen or obey her. Finally, the mother is so sad and disappointed that she goes off to the *Batu Badaun* and asks to be swallowed by it. *Dengan Harapan* used this folk tale, but imbued it with a new meaning, which





Image 14.1 Members of H-Gang and the Bintang Merah Choir at a private party, 1984 (Private collection author).

referred to their own recent past: that of their fathers being mobilized into the colonial army, transferred to the Netherlands and the problems they faced while surviving there:

*Batu Badaun* is a folk tale that can be interpreted in various ways. We wanted to do so from a political perspective. Due to colonialism, the father was taken from his home to serve in the colonial army. The family was torn apart and then, at some stage, the mother had nothing to live for any longer, her only option left was to go to the *Batu Badaun* asking to be swallowed (Interview Roy).

During the preparations for the play, the actors of *Dengan Harapan* were coached by two members who had professional careers as actors. They tried emphasizing the theatrical aspects of performance, whereas other members were more interested in sending a political message to the audience:

The others just wanted to play. Me, I wanted the message to get across. Such as the message about the colonial era, with families being torn apart and the forced migration of our parents to the Netherlands. We started with a piece of history and then added social problems. In my monologue, as a first-generation father and former soldier of the colonial army, I was talking about how beautiful the city of Amsterdam was, and that I noticed that there were many girls. I played it as if I did not notice I was in the Red Light district, that's the way I had to play it, and that I saw so many of our own people, Moluccans, especially in casinos. People laughed when I had my monologue because they recognized this situation; like, 'yes, you are right, most of them are in the casinos'. And when I started to talk about the Red Light district they would feel ashamed. We wrote the play together (Interview Roy).

The audience felt uneasy with the father-figure starting to talk about the Red Light district because the scene showed its hypocrisy: going there to gamble and look at the prostitutes while there were also Moluccan girls selling themselves there. This was felt to be unacceptable, as it was considered a slur on the reputation of Moluccans.

The language used in the play was mixed Dutch with Melaju Sini, referring to a form of Indonesian spoken by Moluccans in the Netherlands (Tahitu 1989). Thus, it was close to the way Moluccans would communicate with each other, but in such a way that the Dutch audience could follow the story.

The repertoire of H-Gang consisted of songs in Dutch, English and Melaju Sini. As mentioned, it all started with a song about unemployment. The lyrics of one of the first songs dealt with the issue of discrimination when looking for a job:

Later, lyrics referred to when you were a child you were a 'curly wurly', and when you grow older you became a knife fighter. That's how we experienced it in Zeeland. If you are grown up you don't get a job, then you are discriminated against (Interview Roy).

H-Gang's first song reflected on serious social problems within the Moluccan community of that time. Their songs also criticized the police and intelligence services. This was partly based on their own experiences with the police, but also on information that circulated within the Dutch social movement. In a song about the anti-riot squad (*ME*, short for '*Mobiele Eenheid*') H-Gang refers to rumours of the police watching porn movies before getting into action. Whether this was true or not, the social movement was convinced such things occurred in order to make the police more aggressive. H-Gang was certain about the unjust police behaviour towards demonstrators. The violent reaction to a demonstration by women in The Hague or the use of tear gas to suppress demonstrations at the nuclear plant in Dodewaard in 1980 and 1981 were seen as evidence of this. Another song dealt with the *Nederlandse Volks-Unie* (NVU), a 1980s right-wing nationalist party. In the 1980s, the upcoming right was one of the main drives for the social movement in the Netherlands to organize further. However, it was not merely politics, but also human behaviour they criticized. The lyrics of the song *Disco* dealt with the presumed emptiness of visitors of clubs and discos.<sup>3</sup>

If we look at the language H-Gang used in its lyrics, one can distinguish only two songs sung in Melayu Sini: *Buka mata sama sama* and *Realiteit*. Both of these songs contain messages addressing the Moluccan community. In *Buka mata sama sama* (Let's open our eyes together) H-Gang calls upon Moluccans in wealthy and prosperous Europe (*tanah senang Europa*) to choose sides with those oppressed under the regime of Suharto. This was the only one of H-Gang's songs to be officially released and it was included on the *Moluccan Moods* album of 1980. The song *Realiteit* (Reality), sung in Melayu Sini in spite of its Dutch title, deals with the dark side of Moluccan life in the Netherlands, with members of the community working in prostitution and the rampant use of hard drugs (heroin). Most other topics dealt with were aimed at a broader public. The unemployment of Moluccans, for example, could not be seen separately

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<sup>3</sup> In the 1970s and 1980s in most towns there was a strict separation between youngsters visiting discothèques and those visiting so-called 'brown café's' and youth centres. The latter were more into politics, the first were supposed to be just partying. H-Gang sung about what they deemed a necessity to get involved in politics.

from Dutch society; discrimination on the labour market was an inherent component of this. The attitude of the police to citizens was something that other Dutch people were also confronted with.

*Realiteit*, a song about heroin use, bemoaned the ostrich attitude of the Moluccan community. Its first section reads as follows:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <i>Aku djalan djalan di kota amsterdam<br/>deng kawan kawan</i>             | I was walking in Amsterdam<br>with friends               |
| <i>Ketorang minum makan ketawa banjak<br/>omong katjo katjo</i>             | We were drinking, eating<br>and talking tough            |
| <i>Satu bilang mari pi di jelanan lampu<br/>merah</i>                       | One said: let's go to the red light<br>district          |
| <i>Lihat lihat bikin lutju lutju<br/>kawan kawan bilang sebarang sadjah</i> | Just looking for fun<br>the friends were just saying     |
| <i>Djalan djalan di jelanan lanu lampu<br/>merah ketorang semua kagit</i>   | Walking in the red light district<br>we all were shocked |
| <i>Lihat perempuan Maluku berdiri<br/>djual badan</i>                       | Watching Moluccan girls standing<br>selling themselves   |
| <i>Lihat anak Maluku banjak datang<br/>di situ</i>                          | Watching so much Moluccans<br>coming there               |
| <i>Buat bli tjandu obat putih</i>   | To buy drugs, heroin                                     |
| <i>Bli tjandu obat putih</i>  | Buy drugs, heroin  |
| <i>Bli tjandu obat putih</i>  | Buy drugs, heroin  |

Reflecting on this particular song, Roy again refers to the topic of illusion and shame in relation to the Red Light district:

Moluccans should have no illusions; we live in a hard world in which Moluccan girls even prostitute themselves. That was the song with *aku djalan djalan di Amsterdam*; it's also about heroin. The song has to do with the idea that we should not hide (from) ourselves. We should not have the illusion that Moluccan girls do not prostitute themselves. We had heard about that before and Njonkie (writer of the song; FS) saw it himself. So I said: we have to denounce that (Interview Roy).

With this song, H-Gang linked up with a broader initiative within the Moluccan community to fight the use of hard drugs in its circles. The reference to Moluccan girls working in the Red Light district, was just one of the stories with which to justify their work: it connected moral and social issues, such as drug abuse, and was a strong call for preserving a sense of community, by protecting what was considered most valuable,

its women (Steijlen 1984). At the beginning of the 1980s, several new Moluccan women's rights groups emerged. Contrary to already existing organizations, these new women's rights groups were oriented towards women's emancipation, with some of the initiators having had experience in Dutch women's rights organizations (Smeets and Steijlen 2006). H-Gang supported such developments by performing a song entitled *Toekomstig Molukse vrouw* (Prospective Moluccan woman). Whereas its title may suggest some form of paternalism, the song was meant as a tribute to politically active women. Roy mentioned it to be one of H-Gang's most important songs.

To conclude this brief analysis of the band's repertoire I will refer to two other songs dealing with politics on yet another level: *Toekomstdroom* (Dream for the future) and *Ibu Tien* (the nickname of the wife of former Indonesian President Suharto).<sup>4</sup>

*Toekomstdroom* addressed the big political issues of the 1980s: the threat posed by the nuclear bomb, the problem of nuclear waste, and Reaganism as representative of the on-going cold war politics. The song showed H-Gang's involvement in larger issues, beyond the scope of Moluccan society. *Toekomstdroom* was written especially for one of the many demonstrations against cruise missiles that took place in the Netherlands during the 1980s. The song *Ibu Tien* was written anticipating the 1982 Indonesian general elections. It tells of the corrupt wife of Suharto who was said to claim ten percent (*Tien*) of all the state's earnings. The lyrics wonder why she continues to steal and oppress, and they call for a revolution in the month of May, *Bulan Mai musti revolusi é*. *Ibu Tien* was part of the campaign of left-wing Moluccan organizations cooperating with Indonesian exiles as well as the solidarity movement with Indonesia in the Netherlands. The latter was lobbying against development aid and arms trade between the two countries.

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<sup>4</sup> A reviewer noted that in the 1970s the Indonesian band Bimbo released songs on comparable topics: *Tante Sun* and *Surat untuk Reagan dan Brezhnev*. There is no connection between the H-gang's repertory and the mentioned Bimbo songs though. Bimbo was not known in Moluccan left wing circles in the Netherlands. Thematically songs may show similarities but in practice they dealt with different issues. *Ibu Tien* is about revolution and president Sujarto's wife personified oppression; *Tante Sun* is a critic of the Indonesian elites. *Toekomstdroom* fits in the struggle against nuclear weapons being installed in Europe and is far removed from the call to presidents Reagan and Brezhnev of Surat, a song that overall shows more resemblance with Frankie goes to Hollywood's hit single *Two Tribes*.

The repertoire of the *Merantau* choir did not include many self-written songs, one exception being the Dutch language song *Politiseer Organiseer* (Politicize, Organize). This call to mobilize, and the use of words such as 'the people', 'organize' and 'mobilize', resonates with the prevailing left-wing jargon of that era. The song very much represented what the KMT stood for, as did another song written by one of its members in Indonesia, *Panggilan Rakyat* (Call the People). Most *Merantau* songs were Indonesian, but they also came from East Timor or from South Africa and were sung in those local languages. *Merantau* obtained many of these Indonesian and East Timorese songs from *Kollektif 20 Mai*, the other prominent choir of the *Pemuda 20 Mai* movement.

Yet another remarkable song bears the title *Sumpah Pemuda* (The Youth Pledge). It appears to be an overt reference to the *Sumpah Pemuda* of October 1928, when Indonesian youth declared to believe and fight for one (Indonesian) nation, one country and one language, Bahasa Indonesia. The *Sumpah Pemuda* is an important moment in the rise of Indonesian nationalism as it clearly signals the promise of a united state of Indonesia. That same unitary ideal is quite contrary to the separatist ideal of an independent South Moluccan Republic, which the RMS was fighting for. Roy of H-Gang and *Merantau*, thinks *Kollektif 20 Mai* obtained the song through their PKI contacts: 'I think it was sung by the PKI, or maybe a student organization'.

*Merantau* participated in a wider network of choirs. One of them was the Amsterdam ANC choir. Through these contacts, they also came into contact with James Madhlope Phillips (1919–1987). Phillips was an African activist who, in 1950, had taken refuge in England. In 1980, he started to train choirs in, among others, Germany, Belgium, Sweden, and the Netherlands, performing South African liberation songs.<sup>5</sup>

### *Performing*

H-Gang performed at important Dutch pop venues including Doornroosje, O'42 and the Vereeniging in the University City of Nijmegen, but also at the famous Melkweg Venue in Amsterdam. In the Melkweg, H-Gang won a 'battle of bands', each representing one of the provinces of the Netherlands. Roy recollects with some pride how they had won that contest,

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<sup>5</sup> [www.anc.org.za/people/jmphillips\(anc\).html](http://www.anc.org.za/people/jmphillips(anc).html) (checked June 2010).





Image 14.2 The Merantau Choir at the Conference Handel in Onderdrukking ('Trade in Oppression'), 1982 (Private collection author).

even while competing with far more professional bands: 'we participated in *Pop from the Province*. We were the only non-commercial band and still won the contest'.

H-Gang and *Merantau* also performed at political rallies, such as May Day (the International Workers' Day of the 1st of May), a day of action by trade unions. The song *Toekomstdroom*, which protests against the Neutron bomb, was even performed at the Amsterdam's central Dam Square stage during a large anti-cruise missile demonstration on the 21st of November 1981 (with some 400,000 people attending this demonstration). Preceding this huge national demonstration, smaller manifestations were organized at a more local level all over the country. H-Gang played at some of these in Zeeland. Due to their contacts with the local Communist party, the band was also invited to perform in Amsterdam. This was novel for two reasons: In those days, there were not yet many members of ethnic minorities participating in this kind of political action. It was a particularly new thing for Moluccans to do, as it showed concern for interests beyond the RMS. Roy: 'H-Gang said: the Bomb does not choose colours, if it drops it falls for everybody and in *everybody's* backyard'. Also with *Merantau*, KMT reached a more general Dutch audience when performing on Dutch national television with James Phillips. 'We always explained what we were singing about. For the Television performance James said: we just sing "Africa"'.

Best-known is their performance at the *Moluccan Moods* program in the famous Amsterdam Paradiso concert hall. In 1982, a programme began (see Spoorman's contribution to this volume), with Moluccan bands from all over the country performing at the Paradiso every month. It was a huge success, and *Moluccan Moods* continued over several years (other ethnic programming in Paradiso lasted for a maximum of one year). In 1984, *Moluccan Moods* was halted for a year and then re-launched to include talk shows and other cultural expressions. An album was also released, comprising the ten most popular bands and their songs, including H-Gang's *Buka mata sama sama*.<sup>6</sup>

Although performances for a Dutch audience were becoming important, solidarity with their kin in Indonesia (as an alternative to the RMS ideal) continued to be expressed towards their own people. The band and

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<sup>6</sup> The *Moluccan Moods* album was pirated in Indonesia and released on cassette. Two songs from the original album were not included. One sung in Dutch by Perlawanan and the political motivated song *Buka mata sama sama* by H-Gang.

choir also performed at different Moluccan occasions. Gigs in Moluccan wards were important as not all Moluccan wards were equally enthusiastic about the RMS ideal. Obviously, pro-RMS wards were most difficult to play. 'The message was important and that's what we could do in Bemmell, being a pro-RMS ward'.

Asked to name the most memorable performance Roy does not mention a gig in a Moluccan ward, but rather a performance at the Groningen Grand Theatre in April 1982. It was during a symposium on the upcoming elections in Indonesia. It was for this occasion that the song *Ibu Tien* was written. 'It was the most important performance, because it included all; it was about politics and even Basuki Resobowo (an Indonesian painter living in exile) was dancing to our music'.

Two months later, H-Gang and *Merantau* performed at a conference against the arms trade between the Netherlands and Indonesia, an event organized by the Solidarity Movement with Indonesia. H-Gang's respect for political exile Resobowo turned out to be mutual here, as is described by I. Jungsleger in the Dutch national daily *De Volkskrant* in 1982:

I asked an old man if he happened to be the father of one of the members of the Zeeland collective. No, he is the painter Basuki Resobowo, who lives in the Netherlands as a political exile. The band is proud that Basuki Resobowo appears at the same event as they do. Resobowo about them: I love what these boys do, because it comes from a new spirit. They are the children of the RMS, but they bring a new ideal.<sup>7</sup>

It was not only the Indonesian exile who praised H-Gang and KMT for their new approach. Sam Pormes of the Moluccan Schooling Kollektif in Assen, and responsible for the April meeting in Groningen, voiced a similar enthusiasm:

What this band brings is a culture of struggle. At last there is a Moluccan band with success but without being tardy. *Massada* (a well-known Moluccan band) and other Moluccan musicians, they don't really deal with their own culture. This group from Zeeland does. It is not for nothing that we invited them to our own meeting last April, anticipating the elections in Indonesia. By inviting H-Gang, one shows how to abandon traditional positions.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> I. Jungsleger, 'Een Molukse popgroep die succes heeft zonder hoerig te zijn', *de Volkskrant*, 11 June 1982.

<sup>8</sup> In: Jungsleger, 'Een Molukse popgroep die succes heeft zonder hoerig te zijn', *de Volkskrant*, 11 June 1982.



Image 14.3 Singing the socialist 'Internationale' anthem at the Free University, Amsterdam 1980 (Private collection author).

*Looking Back*

In more than one respect, the *Kollektief Muziek Theater* – consisting of H-Gang, *Merantau* and *Dengan Harapan* – was a child of its time. Political theatre and using a choir to sing explicit political messages was the way to do it in the 1970s and 1980s. Asked for what inspired them, Roy cannot think of something specific. ‘We did our thing and other people liked it, that’s enough of an inspiration’. Undoubtedly, the members of the KMT were influenced by the movements of their time, such as *Amandla*, which toured the world with theatre and songs in their struggle against apartheid. But there were many choirs singing such songs of freedom and it was an important means for social movements to reach a broader audience.

The mere fact that KMT did what it did at the beginning of the 1980s signifies that they were ahead of the majority within the Moluccan community. This period proved to be transitional, with Moluccans restyling themselves from exiles into migrants. With socially inspired songs about problems and politics in the Netherlands, H-Gang showed that they were already focussing on their new motherland. Expressing concerns about the N-bomb also demonstrated a wider orientation and that they were part of a broader global movement. Their concern with the Indonesian situation, expressed in songs such as *Ibu Tien*, but also songs referring to Indonesian history such as *Sumpah Pemuda*, emphasizes their non-RMS and liberal interpretation of history. It made them part of another Indonesian tradition, not always shared by fellow Moluccans; a tradition of leftism and Indonesian nationalism.

Their support for the anti-apartheid struggle is also significant. It manifested itself in the performing of South African liberation songs and, specifically, their participation in the choir project of James Phillips. Allying with others, rather than putting their own struggle in first place, reflected their political journey. Thus, they joined *Venceremos* and supported the East Timorese Fretilin. Members of KMT were part of the vivid solidarity movement of that era. This was unique, as most of these movements were rarely multiethnic in character. Ultimately, the meaning of H-Gang’s songs has to be interpreted in the context of particular historical circumstances.

Today, listening to some of H-Gang’s songs on YouTube, one becomes nostalgic for the 1980s. It reminds the listener of those exciting years and the big changes within the Moluccan community, but also of the engagement and political activism of movements that fought discrimination,

police violence or the threat posed by the N-bomb. Songs and lyrics may help us understand what happened in those years. Roy had a special experience recalling the East Timorese songs he sang with the *Merantau* choir. Former members of the *Pemuda 20 Mai* (the organization has been dismantled since 1987) are still involved with the East Timorese cause. Some of them, involved in development aid, even visit East Timor regularly since it gained its independence from Indonesia in 2001; something made possible by Suharto's resignation. Roy joined one of these trips and when they sat down with some East Timorese youngsters they started to talk about the meaning of the song *Ina ne Ama ne*.

*Ina ne Ama ne* means something like: father and mother, wake up! The chickens are busy again pecking everything. The chickens of course were the Indonesians taking all. We were on our way to Pasabe and stopped and talked about the song. Then they explained to us the contents of the song. And we talked about the other songs as they asked: how do you come to know these songs? So we said, in the early days we used to sing these because we stood up for East Timor. Then somebody said, they are comrades from the Netherlands, they helped radio Maubere. They are Fretilin from the Netherlands (Interview Roy).

Thus, recollecting musical memories not only framed a common history but also forged a connection between the Moluccan KMT and the East Timorese.

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Brinkgreve, in this volume is the result of her interest in the extensive correspondence between the Javanese prince, Mangkunegoro VII, and the Dutch ethnomusicologist, Jaap Kunst. Madelon Djajadiningrat-Nieuwenhuis is the granddaughter-in-law of Mangkunegoro VII.

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