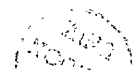


**No tree is untouched by the wind: aspects of  
composition and improvisation in Balinese  
*gendér wayang***

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2006

Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) at the School of  
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## Abstract

This thesis is an examination of the music of the Balinese *gendér wayang*, the quartet of metallophones (*gendér*) that accompanies the Balinese shadow puppet play (*wayang kulit*). The research focuses on processes of musical variation, the main means of creating new music in this genre, and the implications of these processes for the social and historical study of Balinese music, musical aesthetics, concepts of creativity and compositional methods.

Firstly, it studies the processes of composition and variation-making in this unnotated tradition. Secondly, it examines the relationship between pre-composition and spontaneous variation-making. Thirdly, it explores concepts of musical composition, variation, improvisation and creativity in *gendér wayang*, which shed light on attitudes to these processes in Bali in general. These processes are examined in two main geographical areas: Sukawati in South Bali and, secondly, the contrasting area of East Bali, particularly the villages of Budakeling and Tenganan.

Part 1 (chapters 1 to 3) describes the context of *gendér wayang* within Balinese musical and ritual life and gives an overview of improvisation and composition in Balinese music. It also contains a review of existing literature on *gendér wayang* (chapter 2) and an overview of relevant ethnomusicological theories of improvisation and composition (chapter 3). In part 2 (chapters 4 to 6), I examine compositional techniques in *gendér wayang* in more depth, as well as aspects of regional variation, before analysing the processes at work in a spectrum from the more improvised to the more pre-composed, illuminated by players' comments (chapter 6). Finally, in part 3 (chapters 7 and 8), I draw out and bring into focus certain themes raised by the processes described in the previous chapters, particularly those that relate to changing social contexts for the music.

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## Preface

### Acknowledgements

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I would like to thank the late Dr Laurence Picken of Cambridge University for his inspiring suggestion, nearly two decades ago, that I should look into the nature of composition in Bali. I would like to thank my supervisor at the School of Oriental and African studies, Dr David Hughes, for guiding this study, Professor Richard Widdess and Dr Mark Hobart for many useful insights and comments and Ni Madé Pujawati for teaching me Balinese. Thanks also to Lisa Gold and Henrice Vonck for their supportive comments via e-mail. Thanks to Margaret Birley at the Horniman Museum in London for the use of a TLA Tuning Set to measure the tuning of my instruments in cents. Thanks to Chris Comber for drawing the map.

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## A note on spelling, transcriptions and tuning

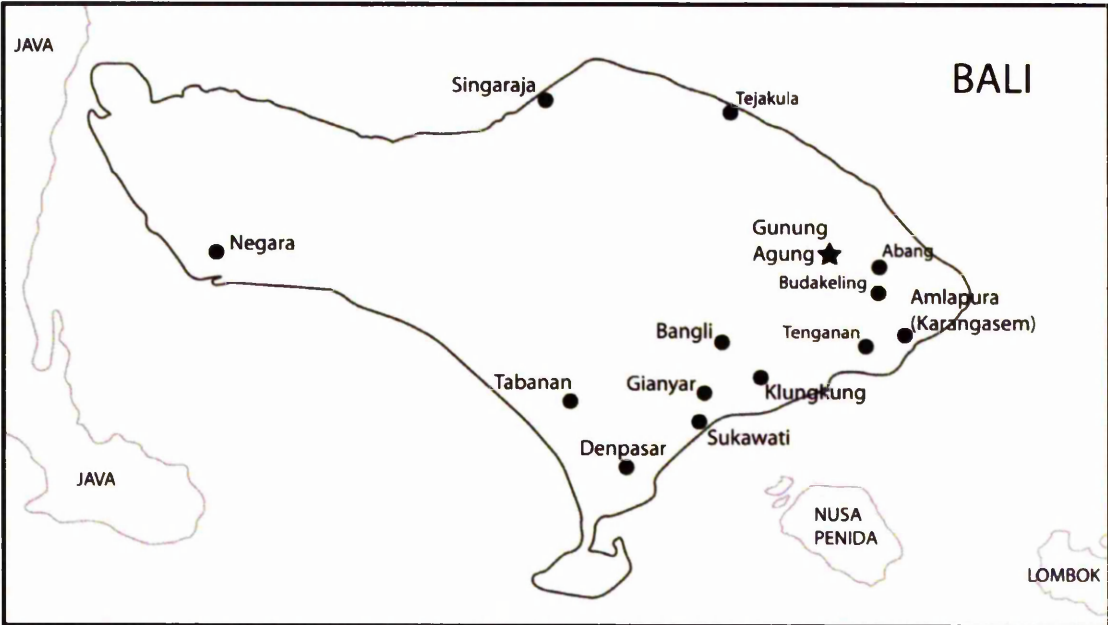
Where appropriate, I indicate Indonesian words by “I” and Balinese words by “B”. I follow the most commonly used romanisation of Balinese, which distinguishes between e and é, while Indonesian simply uses e for both sounds. I retain this distinction for personal names but not place names, where Indonesian forms are better known from maps (such as Denpasar and Tejakula). In Balinese, but not Indonesian, final a is pronounced as the a in the English “China”. In both Balinese and Indonesian, c is pronounced “ch”. Where I quote an author, I use the spelling and format used in the original text, thus: *gendér* sometimes appears as *gender* or *gendèr* or *gèndèr*, and *wayang kulit* as *wajang koelit*. Where Javanese forms are referred to, I use the Javanese versions: *gendhing* for *gending* and *dhalang* for *dalang*.

There is some variation in the tuning of different *gendér wayang* ensembles (see chapter 1, below). McPhee (1936 and 1966) expresses *gendér wayang* tuning by the following Western notes: F#, G#, B, C#, and E. Gold (1992 and 1998) and Heimarck (1999 and 2003) prefer: F, Ab, Bb, C and Eb. I have opted for the form F, G, Bb, C and Eb, approximating the pitch of the lowest of my own instruments (the tunings of these are presented in cents in appendix 3). In the transcriptions, I have used bar lines more as a guide to the reader’s eye than to mark significant metric stresses. Where notating all the rests would confuse a transcription, I follow Tenzer (2000) in omitting them. Depending on clarity, most musical examples are notated with right and left hands on separate staves (marked R.H. and L.H.) with the stems of *polos* player’s notes downwards and the *sangsih* stems up. In other examples, again to clarify the point being made, the *polos* and *sangsih* parts are written on separate staves, with right hands stems up and left hands stems down. This is indicated in these examples. Click-stops are indicated by + signs and the commonly occurring *accelerando* on repeated notes is indicated by sloping note beams, as in the following example.





**Map of Bali showing some of the places mentioned in the text**



# Part 1: Concepts

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Scope of the study

This thesis is an examination of the music of the Balinese *gendér wayang*, the quartet of metallophones (*gendér*) that accompanies the Balinese shadow puppet play (*wayang kulit*, or simply *wayang*). It is about composition in the broadest sense, from small changes made in the course of performance to larger scale creation and re-creation of pieces. I hope that it may contribute in a small way to the cross-cultural study of composition and improvisation.

*Gendér wayang* is perhaps unique in Bali in that, though it has ancient origins, it has remained popular because of its association with the shadow play. It thus represents a link with some of Bali's oldest musical forms and is able at the same time to adapt to changing musical tastes and styles. In this, it contrasts with some of Bali's other "ancient" gamelan types such as *gambuh* or *selonding*, which (despite recent revivals) are mostly preserved through their use in ritual and have a more limited popularity.

Unlike the modern Balinese *gong kebyar* ensemble, complete new pieces are rarely composed for *gendér wayang*. However, there is an almost continuous process of reworking old pieces into new versions. Many of the pieces are, themselves, structured as variation forms: the concept of variation seems to be fundamental to the compositional technique. This study examines the scope and limits of such variation through discussions with player-composers, the musical analysis of old and new versions of pieces and of variation as a method of composition within the pieces themselves.

Compositional technique in *gendér wayang* is also of particular interest because of its remarkably varied principles of musical organisation: it is not just built around the regular even note "nuclear" melody of other gamelan types. It also has an unusually close relationship with vocal music as an accompaniment to the puppeteer's songs.

This study concentrates, first and foremost, on processes of composition and musical change. However, it also necessarily addresses forces in modern Bali that affect these processes and give them shape and direction. Such forces include tourism, urbanisation, political change, TV, radio, cassette culture and the local recording industry, government academies and religious reform. I can only, however, touch on these matters, which have been examined at length by Vickers (1989, 1996), Picard (1996), Bakker (1993) Heimarck (1999, 2002, 2003) and others.

It may seem paradoxical to examine composition in a genre in which there is supposed not to be any. I began to look at composition and variation-making in Balinese *gendér wayang* for three main reasons. Firstly, I became interested in the processes by which the same pieces seemed to change through time, but apparently new ones were rarely written, unlike the modern gamelan *gong kebyar*. Secondly, although there was supposed to be little or no improvisation in Balinese gamelan, I found that *gendér* players adopted a very flexible approach to their music and that this spontaneous variation-making seemed to be linked to players' more "worked-out" versions. Thirdly, there was the shock I experienced when, after several years' learning, I was finally allowed to take part in a *wayang* performance and found that completely different versions seemed to come into play in performance. This prompted me to take on a study of the relationship between the conscious composition of pieces and parts of pieces with more spontaneous variation-making in this ensemble.

Though this study is limited to *gendér wayang*, it has repercussions for examining composition in other Balinese genres. The processes involved in creating new versions of *gendér wayang* pieces seem to feed into compositional methods for creating completely new pieces in other ensembles and may be reflected in other art forms.

These processes will be examined in two main geographical areas: Sukawati in South Bali, and secondly the contrasting area of East Bali, particularly the villages of Budakeling and Tenganan. Although Gold (1998) and Heimarck (1999) discuss Sukawati *gendér* style, my own familiarity with it provides a useful starting point from which to make comparisons with East Bali, an area more remote from current centres of power and modernisation. Vonck

(1997) covers aspects of *gendér* in North Bali but, to date, nothing has appeared on East Balinese *gendér* traditions. None of these theses focus primarily on composition, variation and improvisation.

David Harnish states: "Composition in world musics is a subject sometimes overlooked by ethnomusicologists, who more usually explore musical tradition, performance practices and theories, issues of statehood and identity, or gender and cultural studies. However, a study of composition can unveil rich and profound values within a music culture" (Harnish 2000:1). Sloboda, however, warns that "composition is the least studied and least well understood of all musical processes" (Sloboda 1985:103).

To attempt a complete analysis of the "poietics" of Balinese *gendér wayang*, following Nattiez (1990) would be an almost impossible task. However, Nattiez's description of the scope of such a study depicts the potential conceptual space to be explored:

the *link* among the composer's intentions, his creative procedures, his mental schemas, and the *result* of this collection of strategies; that is the components that go into the work's material embodiment. (Nattiez 1990:92)

An analysis of this grouping should also include an awareness of the importance of Nattiez's other element, the "esthetic process" involving the listener or receiver (ibid.:17). This is the space that I hope to explore, in a limited way, in this study.

## 1.2 Performance contexts: *wayang* and ritual

*Gendér wayang* is just one of the diverse range of Balinese musical ensembles sometimes referred to as *gamelan* (a Javanese term) or its Balinese equivalent, *gambelan*.<sup>1</sup> Each of these types of ensemble may play on a number of different ritual or social occasions, some becoming associated with a particular ritual event, such as *gamelan angklung* with cremation ceremonies. As its name implies, the main role of *gendér wayang* is to accompany Balinese shadow puppet plays.

Such shadow plays are found in many countries, including China, Cambodia, Thailand, Indonesia (mainly in Java and Bali but also Lombok and

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<sup>1</sup> From this point on, *gamelan* as a general term will be written in roman type, as it has become a part of the English language.

parts of Kalimantan and Sumatra), Malaysia, India, Turkey and Greece. They also featured in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain and France, where they were known as *ombres chinoises*. However, nowhere do the plays such a significant social and religious role as in Bali and Java. In these two islands it has fed into many other forms of dance and drama. Images from the shadow plays are central to how people describe everyday life and current events, and the form itself has a powerful magical and religious value, particularly in Bali where performances are held as part of, or to coincide with, religious rituals.

Balinese *wayang kulit* is a night-time drama in which a single puppeteer, *dalang*, recites and enacts stories from the ancient Indian epics, *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, moving flat leather puppets against a screen. The puppets are lit from behind by a hanging oil-lamp, which makes their shadows visible through the screen. The *dalang* alone, with two assistants to hand the puppets and accompanying instrumentalists, enacts the whole play and speaks and sings all the characters' voices.<sup>2</sup>

Contexts for the performance of the night-time *wayang* include temple festivals (*odalan*), which often take place every 210 days (depending on the calendrical system followed for that temple) and last up to a week.<sup>3</sup> A booth for *wayang* is set up, either in the outer court of the temple or nearby. Performances also commonly take place for cremations and post-cremation rituals as well as major life-cycle rituals and secular holidays, such as Indonesian Independence Day. These night-time performances, although magically and spiritually charged and linked with ritual, are also entertainment and generate large audiences (depending on the reputation of the *dalang*). However, there are also two important forms of *wayang*, one of which is itself a ritual, while the other ends with a special ritual that gives the performance an added power.

The first is *wayang lemah*, which takes place during the day (often the afternoon). This can only be performed by a *dalang* who has also been initiated

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<sup>2</sup> For detailed information about Balinese *wayang kulit*, see McPhee (1936), Hobart (1987), Hinzler (1975 and 1981), Sedana (1993), Zurbuchen (1981 and 1987) and Hooykaas (1973a).

<sup>3</sup> Space does not permit a full description here of the elaborate ritual landscape of Balinese Hinduism, for which see Covarrubias (1986), Swellengrabel (1984) and Lansing (1983) among others. Belo (1953) describes the course a temple festival, and Gray (1984) describes some of the ways in which music can be used in this context. See Picard (1996) for a discussion of recent compartmentalisation of arts into *sakral* and *sékulér* categories and Bakker (1993) for modern developments in Balinese religious thinking.

as a priest (*mangku dalang*). It is performed without a booth or a screen, but in its place a thread is stretched between two branches of the sacred *dapdap* tree (*erithrina lithosperma*, Hobart 1987:130). This performance is ritual rather than spectacle. Often half-lost in the surrounding ceremonial complexity, it is ignored by the humans present.

The second type of ritual *wayang* is *wayang sudamala* ("freed from evil") or *sapulégér*, which is usually performed to free from a curse a child born during the week of the Balinese calendar called *wayang*, who is at danger from the demon Kala. It may also be performed for "people who are in some way out of place either through death, illness or danger" (Hobart 1987:135). The *dalang* conducts this *sudamala* ritual after a night-time performance using the most sacred puppets and special mantra to make a purificatory holy water for the person in need of the ritual.

The *gendér wayang* ensemble on its own, without *dalang* (puppeteer), often performs during tooth-filing ceremonies (*masangih*, *matatah*, *mapandes*), a life-cycle ritual usually carried out in early adulthood. Occasionally, two *gendér* players play on top of a cremation tower on its way towards the cremation ground.<sup>4</sup> New contexts for performance include *wayang* on television or radio, cassette and CD recordings, tourist performances,<sup>5</sup> the annual Bali Arts Festival, *wayang* festivals, official events, and student exams at the Indonesian Arts Institute, Institut Seni Indonesia (ISI), formerly called Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia (STSI), in the provincial capital, Denpasar.

*Wayang* puppets are made of buffalo hide, which is treated, carved and painted. Each puppet has a central wooden rod, sharpened at the bottom in order to stick into the banana trunk at the base of the screen, in front of the *dalang*. A complete set may consist of some 80 and 130 puppets (Hobart 1987:68). The arms of most characters are moveable, manipulated by supplementary rods. The jaws of some comic characters, such as Tualén, can be opened and closed by pulling a string. The stage consists of a raised booth (*panggung*), a white cloth screen (*kelir*), a coconut-oil lamp behind this (*damar*), a banana trunk at the base (*gedebong*), and a puppet box (*kropak*) with a

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<sup>4</sup> See Eiseman (1989:108–26) for a description of tooth filing and cremation; see Gold (1992:266–70) for the use of *gendér wayang* in these contexts.

<sup>5</sup> The language component of *wayang* makes such tourist performances rare. Some *dalang* perform shortened *wayang* partly in English.

swinging side, against which the *dalang* strikes a cone-shaped wooden hammer (*cepala*) held between the toes. The group consists of one puppeteer (*dalang*), two assistants, one on each side to sort out, hand over and sometimes repair puppets and to refill the lamp, and four musicians (*juru gendér*). The *dalang* sits cross-legged, in front of the lamp and moves the puppets between this and the screen. The right leg rests on the left thigh in order to tap the *cepala* against the *kropak*. Behind the *dalang* is the special, small type of gamelan that accompanies the *wayang*: four (or in North Bali, two) *gendér wayang*.

Performances usually take about three hours from around 9 or 10pm, and so are shorter than the all-night Javanese performances, though in the past it seems they were longer. Given the fast pace of action and intensity of some of the plays it is doubtful whether the puppeteer would be able to carry on much longer. Stories are usually excerpts from the *Mahabharata* (also known as *Parwa*: the name of the eighteen sections of this epic) or from the *Ramayana*, or are so-called “branch” stories, more loosely based on these. Often, the basic story is freely elaborated and it is always interspersed with comic scenes featuring the important clown characters, often with references to everyday, modern life. More rarely, other types of story are performed, for instance the witchcraft-based *Calonarang*, which can only be performed by a *dalang* who has been initiated as a priest (see McPhee 1936).

Characters are divided into *keras* (coarse) characters such as the evil Korawa in the *Mahabharata* and demons and *manis* (sweet) or *alus* (refined) gods and benevolent characters such as the five good Pandawa brothers from the *Mahabharata*. *Keras* characters are often also called *mata belog* (with round, bulging eyes), and *manis* characters, *mata supit* (with small, almond-shaped eyes). However, much smaller gradations of character are also expressed through eye-shape, costume and hand gesture (see Hobart 1987:67–124).<sup>6</sup>

The *parekan*, *punakawan*, or *penasar* (sometimes, *pendasar*) are servants and clowns. They are particularly important characters, as they translate the medieval Javanese spoken by the main characters into everyday Balinese and are also the main source of entertainment, elaboration and

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<sup>6</sup> For the musical expression of the gradation from *manis* to *keras*, see Vonck (1997).

humour. There are four clowns, servants to the main noble characters: two for the right and two for the left. They are Tualén, Merdah, Délem and Sangut.

The *kayon* or *kayonan* puppet is in the form of a stylised tree, and carries many overlapping layers of symbolic meaning: a higher unity between the forces of *manis* and *keras*, right and left, and a signifier of action or thought among others. It is danced at the beginning and end of the “Pemungkah” (or “Pamungkah”, instrumental overture to each play) and is placed in the centre of the screen during the “Pemungkah” and to mark the end of the entire performance. It sometimes emerges during the play, too, to symbolise magical transformations, natural forces, or the voice of the *dalang* as narrator (for more on the *kayon*, see McPhee 1936:6 and Gold 1998:225–6).

The main language of the play is Old Javanese, known as *Kawi*, which, nevertheless, cannot be described as a “dead” literary language because the *dalang* improvises conversations in it. The clowns speak in Balinese, sometimes translating the language of their lords and ladies, sometimes subtly subverting it and sometimes going off on a tangent of their own. The *dalang* uses the *cepala* to punctuate speech, to highlight action and to cue the musicians. Besides the stylised speech styles used for the different characters, the *dalang* also sings at points, often using quotations from Old Javanese literature, sometimes accompanied and sometimes unaccompanied by the *gendér*.

The list of subjects puppeteers need to master is, therefore, quite awe-inspiring. *Dalang* must know the magical and religious text known as *Dharma Pewayangan*, the epics *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, the levels of the various languages, music, puppet movement, the characters' voices, and how to bring the characters and story to life. They must have a strong voice, know classical poetry, know how to enliven the play with the *cepala*, and know how to embellish the story and be funny. They must also understand supernatural power. The word often used to express the *dalang*'s (and other artists') quality of power is *taksu*, a word with multiple, overlapping meanings. *Taksu* is an interpreter or messenger deity whose shrine is found in many temples and in a *dalang*'s household temple; the verbal form, *mataksu*, can mean “inspired” or “possessed”. It is often said that, without *taksu*, a *dalang* cannot perform (Hobart 1987:34–5).



Both puppetry and playing *gendér wayang* tend to be handed down as traditions within a family. For instance, my first teacher, Wayan Locéng's family is known as "the family of Sukawati puppeteers" (B: *soroh dalang* Sukawati; I: *keluarga dalang* Sukawati), because members of this extended clan have acted as puppeteers and *gendér* musicians to the royal court of Sukawati in South Bali for generations. There are still around 18 practising *dalang* within this one family. One of these is the woman *dalang* Wayan Nondri, who is the only woman *dalang* I know of, although there may be others elsewhere in the island. *Gendér* players too, tend to be men, but there are some exceptions to this, particularly in Budakeling (see chapter 5).

Colin McPhee (1936) finds that, despite the lack of caste restriction on who may become a *dalang*, "the amangkoe dalang seems naturally to come from the highest caste, the brahmana caste" (ibid.:5). However, this statement is not borne out by my own observations. My research has been carried out with a Sudra family in Sukawati, a musician from the "casteless" Bali Aga village of Tenganan, and a *brahmana* family in Budakeling. In the latter, one of the *dalang* recently had to retire on becoming a *pedanda* (high priest). McPhee is correct though, to state that "the position of the *dalang* is a high one in the social structure" (ibid.:6): *dalang* are revered for their skill as artists and for their possession of magical knowledge and power, regardless of their place in the caste hierarchy.

Before describing the instruments and music of *gendér wayang* in more detail, I will first list some of the other gamelan forms mentioned in this thesis and consider some parallel aspects of composition and improvisation in some of these other Balinese ensembles.

### **1.3 Bali soundscape**

A survey of all the different forms of Balinese gamelan is outside the scope of this study (for this, see McPhee 1966 and Tenzer 1991). The most commonly heard ensemble is gamelan *gong kebyar*, described in detail by Tenzer (2000). Among the Balinese gamelan forms mentioned in this thesis are *gong kebyar*, *semar pegulingan*, *pelégongan*, *angklung*, *gambang* and *selonding*. Many old

genres, such as *gendér wayang* have influenced and, in turn, been influenced by younger ones such as *kebyar*.

The flashy and dynamic *gong kebyar* ensemble developed in the early twentieth century in North Bali and quickly spread throughout the island, replacing older ensembles, such as the ritual gamelan *gong gedé*. Tuned to a gapped pentatonic scale, sometimes known as *pélog* (see below), the ensemble is made up of a range of metallophones, gongs, gong-chimes and drums. Its music features contrasting orchestral textures, speeds and dynamics ranging from dramatic unison passages and strings of short *ostinati* to longer, more lyrical passages. *Kebyar* composers frequently borrow material and stylistic features from other ensembles. Pieces are used to accompany dances, some of which, like "Taruna Jaya", have become modern classics, or the ensemble may play on its own. Such pieces may be called *tabuh kréasi*, *kréasi baru* (new creation) or *tabuh lepas* (free piece: in other words, free from dramatic or dance setting). Arrangements of the old ritual pieces for the temple, which used to be played on gamelan *gong gedé*, are now also usually played by *gong kebyar*, in which case they are known as *gending lelambatan*.

The gamelan *semar pegulingan* was formerly associated with the Balinese courts and has a sweeter, lighter tone than *gong kebyar* or *gong gedé*. The term is sometimes used not only for the seven-note *pélog* version playing pieces derived from the *gambuh* theatre but often also for its five-note *pélog* derivatives, gamelan *pelégongan* and *bebarongan*. Pieces in the seven-note repertory are led melodically by a *trompong*, a gong chime played by a single player, and, in the five-note repertory, by a pair of *gendér* (tuned to *pélog* unlike *gendér wayang*). Although McPhee describes the seven-note ensemble in the 1930s as on the verge of extinction, it has recently undergone a revival. The five-note gamelan *pelégongan* and *bebarongan* repertoires, which accompany the *légong* dance and *Calonarang* drama, however, are nowadays usually played on *gong kebyar*.

*Gendér wayang* is sometimes grouped as an "old" ensemble together with gamelan *angklung*, *gambang* and *selonding* (Tenzer 2000:149, citing Rembang 1973). These are contrasted with the supposedly later, Majapahit-influenced ensembles derived from the *gambuh* theatre, such as *semar pegulingan* and more recent forms. The small gamelan *angklung* is nearly as

common as *kebyar* and features prominently in cremation ceremonies. Its metallophones and gong chimes are tuned to a four-note *sléndro* scale (see below). *Gambang* and *selonding* are widely regarded by scholars both inside and outside Bali as ancient forms. The former is still played for cremation ceremonies in several villages throughout Bali, and is particularly common in Karangasem district, East Bali, where it may also be played for other ceremonies. A single player plays the long melodies on two *saron* metallophones. Four *gambang*, bamboo xylophones whose keys are arranged to be played in octaves by forked beaters held in each hand, play interlocking figuration around this (see Schaareman 1980). The rare gamelan *selonding* are sacred iron gamelan, played for rituals for the gods and to accompany sacred dances (see Ramseyer 1992). The instruments have large iron keys, tuned to seven-note *pélog*, suspended above boxes and played with a mallet-shaped beater in each hand. They are mostly found in East Bali, where they are associated with so-called Bali Aga cultural forms, which differ in significant ways from the Central Balinese heartland and are supposed to preserve elements of Balinese tradition pre-dating Majapahit Javanese influence (see Covarrubias 1986 [1937]). Usually, touching or recording such gamelan is forbidden to outsiders but, in Tenganan, while such taboos are maintained for the three sacred ensembles of that village, replica *selonding* are played and have been exported outside the village to other parts of Bali and throughout the world.

I also refer to the vocal genres *kekawin* and *kidung*, both of which may be sung at temple festivals and other ritual events. The former is Old Javanese (*Kawi*) narrative poetry in Indian-derived metres built from long and short syllables; the latter is middle Javanese poetry in verse forms structured by the number of syllables and the final vowel (see Zoetmulder 1974 and Wallis 1980).

## 1.4 Composition in Bali

A detailed exploration of composition in Bali is outside the scope of this study, but some discussion of the main form of composition, which is composition for the modern gamelan *gong kebyar*, is essential to put the kinds of compositional processes seen in *gendér wayang* in context.

Michael Tenzer finds that contemporary Balinese composers are searching for new orchestral combinations and colours, but that too great a disruption of the normal instrumental roles is held to lead to unsuccessful results (2000:60). Tenzer notes the adoption of English, Dutch and Indonesian terminology for musical processes both inside and, increasingly, outside the academies (see chapter 5). These terms include: *komposer*, or *komponis* (composer), *pencipta* (creator), *penyusun* or *penata* (arranger), *karya* (a work by): “these words are more often heard than the Balinese *karang*, *acep*, or *ngae* (arrange, create, make), partly because select Indonesian vocabulary is increasingly standard for spoken communication in the cities, and also because concepts of what composers do are undergoing change” (ibid.:120, note 7). However, he stresses that the use of certain Western terms about composition does not indicate a wholesale adoption of musical ideas (ibid.:137–8).

Tenzer describes how composers commonly adapt material from other gamelan genres to create new *kebyar* pieces. The *gendér wayang* piece “Sekar Gendot” (also known as “Sekar Ginotan”) was adapted initially by Colin McPhee’s friend, the composer Lotring, for both *pelégongan* and *gong kebyar*, and subsequently by his student Gusti Madé Putu Griya in 1969 and then others (ibid.:168). As we shall see in later chapters, this kind of cross-fertilisation from other ensembles occurs in *gendér* too. Tenzer also discusses the relationship between composition, melodic identity and regional variation in *kebyar*, finding that such variation takes many forms. Sometimes, different groups may know the same piece by a different name or different pieces may share the same name. There is much borrowing and sharing of material between pieces (a feature, too, of *gendér wayang*) (ibid.:175). Most small scale *kebyar* pieces are the work of one person but, sometimes, up to four composers from the STSI (ISI) faculty are involved in the composition of large-scale *Sendratari* dance-dramas for the annual Bali Arts Festival (ibid.:306). Tenzer found that composers tended to stress “conformity and practical skills” rather than “the kind of shoptalk about design and process” he was looking for (ibid.:309).

David Harnish (2000) explores the composition of new music in Bali in the two contrasting genres of *kréasi baru* (new pieces in traditional style) and *musik kontémporér* (new pieces in a more experimental, avant-garde style). He

finds that although, throughout the twentieth century, composers moved from modelling new works on existing ones to creating completely new ones, “concepts of composing have not changed markedly; Balinese composers continue to conceptualize their activity in relation to ideas of spiritual power” (ibid.:1).

With the rise of the government-run academies from the 1960s, new composers arose, as did new pressures on the forms that creativity could take: “Creativity within the academies is thus often meant to further government aims, and it is this style of creativity which has normally been rewarded at competitions” (ibid.:9). Despite this, “Composers today are far more individualistic than their earlier counterparts; they craft more personal works, and many have personal agendas ... Several ... state that American or Western ideas of individual creativity greatly influenced and stimulated their ideas for composition” (ibid.:11).

*Musik kontémporér* tries consciously to avoid traditional approaches, even when using gamelan instruments (ibid.:19). Such pieces include experimental approaches such as throwing pebbles at instruments, playing them in unusual combinations or ways, or using unconventional materials. There is a feeling though that the pieces still reflect a Balinese perspective and are an opportunity for composers to express views on issues such as religion or politics. This became increasingly frequent just before the collapse of Suharto’s New Order regime.

Harnish sums up the new Balinese soundscape, noting that “Bali, perhaps more than the national capital Jakarta, has become the most modern area of Indonesia; ideas are rushing in and out of the country at a rapid rate” (ibid.:30). Some village gamelan groups avoid playing pieces produced in the academies, “refusing, in a way, to acknowledge recent socio-political changes in Bali” (ibid.:30–1), underlining the fact that “life in the cities has never been more distinct from that in the rural areas, particularly those that are not tourist centres” (ibid.:31).

This short sketch of the basic parameters of today’s composition in Bali already raises issues as diverse as the hegemony of government ideology, globalisation, change and the psychology of creativity. These will be discussed further in later chapters.

## 1.5 Improvisation in Balinese music

The significance of improvisation in Balinese music has often been neglected. Statements such as the following have led to an underestimation of the flexibility in performance of some (particularly smaller) Balinese ensembles:

Other than in solo parts there can be no place for spontaneous improvisation where all component parts are doubled by two, four, six or more instruments. Unison in the different parts must prevail or utter confusion results. (McPhee 1966:xvii)

So, for McPhee, there is a clear distinction between flexible solo parts in the gamelan and fixed interlocking or doubled parts: the solo “is never the final melodic version”, while the unison passage “exists in the minds of the musicians as clearly as though it were read from a printed page” (ibid.:xvii).

McPhee discusses the art of improvising on the solo *trompong* gong chime of the gamelan *gong gedé* (ibid.:66–8). In this old court and temple gamelan, now rare, the *trompong* introduces each piece with a long half-improvised solo (ibid.:67) and, throughout the main body of the piece, embellishes the *pokok* (“trunk”, nuclear melody) notes more or less elaborately depending, as with *gendér wayang*, on the regional style and individual taste. McPhee describes how the hill villages’ style was much simpler than that of the lowlands and the “extravagantly baroque” North Balinese style. Where no second *trompong* was present, doubling an octave higher, the soloist was even more at liberty to perform a “floridly ornamental melody” (ibid.:67). Some ornaments are similar to those used in *gendér wayang* as is the rhythmic fluidity of the realisation, seemingly based on additive patterns, although, unlike *gendér*, the rest of the gamelan maintains a rigid four-square metric structure (ibid.:73). This type of syncopation also forms the basis for many new Balinese compositions.

McPhee also describes how the *réong*<sup>7</sup> parts in the same *gamelan gong gedé* tradition may be partially improvised despite being interlocking (ibid.:75–9). This can happen because there are only two players who aim to coincide either upper or lower note with the main *pokok* notes, making a substitution for the note missing from their four-note instrument (ibid.:76). They also try to move

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<sup>7</sup> In the old *gong gedé*, *réong* usually consist of four gong kettles played by two players whereas, in modern *kebyar*, four players play 12 gong kettles.

“not only in opposing rhythms but in essentially contrary motion” (ibid:76). As with flexibility in *gendér*, this requires experience in playing together, but the limited number of notes at their disposal makes this form of *réong* playing easier than the complex interlocking improvisation I describe in chapter 6: “more essential than the actual sequence of tones is an unbroken rhythmic continuity” (ibid.:79).

Tenzer, too, distinguishes between the flexibility of some solo parts and the more usual fixed interlocking in *kebyar* (2000:6). The unfixed elaboration of the *pokok* melody on instruments such as *trompong*, *ugal* (lead metallophone in *kebyar*), *suling* (bamboo flute) or *rebab* (spike fiddle) is called *payasan* (B: ornaments, adornments). These *payasan* “allow for a limited kind of improvisation” (ibid.:206). The two *gendér* which elaborate the *pokok* in gamelan *pelégongan* are, likewise, able to improvise; these play in a much simpler style than *gendér wayang*, mostly in parallel octaves. Tenzer is cautious, however, about the use of the word improvisation to describe *payasan*, as the changes are “constrained by instrumental idiom and motives accepted as standard in specific cases” (ibid.:206). The *payasan* don’t add anything structural to the music, but are highly prized and add beauty.

Tenzer notes that improvisation can be part of the process whereby a composer creates a new *kebyar* piece when alone (ibid.:310). He also describes how in some dances, the dancer’s improvisation can affect musical form: “In the simplest free-standing types of *gending*, such as the 16-beat dance melody *Topeng Keras* ... form is wholly determined in this way, reflecting the dancer’s spontaneous interpretation of a basic choreography” (ibid.:341).

Herbst’s (1997) discussion of vocal performance in Bali also highlights many instances of improvisation in *arja* singing, and it may be that vocal music is generally more open to improvisation than Balinese instrumental music. In conclusion, improvisation is significant in Balinese music in certain contexts: solo instrumental lines within larger gamelan ensembles, vocal music and, as we shall see, *gendér wayang*, where it can even take place while players are playing interlocking parts.

## 1.6 The instruments and tuning



Two *gendér wayang*

The *gendér wayang* ensemble consists of four ten-barred tube-resonated metallophones called *gendér*.<sup>8</sup> They are sometimes termed *gendér dasa* (ten-note *gendér*) to distinguish them from the thirteen-barred, *pélog*-tuned *gendér* used in gamelan *pelégongan*. Two of the quartet are tuned an octave higher than the others and double the music played on the larger instruments. One *gendér* of each size is tuned slightly higher in pitch than its partner so that acoustic “beats” occur when the instruments are played together. The lower of each of these pairs is called *pengumbang* (buzzer) and the higher, *pengisep* (sucker). This paired tuning system is also found in metallophones of other Balinese ensembles. As mentioned previously, for the rarer *Ramayana* performances, gongs, drums and cymbals are added. This study concentrates on the quartet alone, which is the sole accompaniment of the commoner form of *wayang*: that for *Mahabharata* stories (*Parwa*).

Each bronze bar (*don*, “leaf”) is suspended above a bamboo tube, which is tuned to resonate at the appropriate pitch, prolonging the sound. These

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<sup>8</sup> Although the term “bars” is probably preferable, writers commonly use “keys” when referring to xylophones and metallophones. I use both terms interchangeably in this study. Sachs (1968:239) uses “slabs”.



bamboo resonating tubes (*bumbung*) are held in place within a carved frame (*plawah*). The bronze bars are struck with disk-headed beaters (*panggul*) held in each hand and are then damped with the heel of the hand to prevent the sound ringing on while the next notes are being played – a very difficult technique, given the speed and virtuosity of some of the pieces.

The instruments are tuned to the anhemitonic pentatonic scale-type called *saih gendér wayang* (*gendér wayang* scale), which is similar to the *sléndro* tuning of the Javanese gamelan. Nowadays, Balinese musicians use the Javanese terms *sléndro* and *pélog*, to refer to their anhemitonic and gapped pentatonic scale-forms respectively. Gamelan *angklung* is tuned to four- or five-note *sléndro*, but the quintessential *sléndro* ensemble is *gendér wayang*. The tuning seems to be historically linked with *wayang*: in Java, *wayang* for *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* performances are primarily in *sléndro* (see Kunst 1949:255, Lindsay 1979:24, Sorrell 1990:23).

There is some variation in the tuning of different *gendér wayang* ensembles (see McPhee 1966:50–2 for examples). The Balinese note names for the scale are, from the bottom note of the *gendér* upwards: *dong*, *déng*, *dung*, *dang* and *ding*, this being repeated for the upper octave. Sometimes, these are nazalised, as *ndong*, *ndéng*, and so on (see Bandem 1986) and, sometimes, they are expressed by their vowel sound alone: o, é, and so forth.<sup>9</sup> In the rarely used Balinese music notation, the symbols for each note are those of, or similar to, the relevant vowel symbol. McPhee expresses *gendér wayang* tuning by the following Western notes: F#, G#, B, C#, and E. Gold (1992 and 1998) and Heimarck (1999 and 2003) prefer: F, Ab, Bb, C and Eb. I have opted for the form F, G, Bb, C and Eb, approximating the pitch of the lowest of my own instruments (see appendix 3). McPhee's finding that "the intervals tend to be greater between deng and doeng, and dang and higher ding" (McPhee 1936:10) does not always correlate, therefore, with those of other observers (Gold 1992 and 1998, Heimarck 1999). In particular, the interval from *dong* to *déng* is quite often larger than *déng* to *dung*. It would perhaps be more correct

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<sup>9</sup> Gold (1998:168) notes that the solfège systems for the notes of the *gendér* are not entirely standardised, although many players choose the lowest note as *dong* (thus O E U A I).

to say that two intervals tend to be larger than others: usually *dang* to *ding* and either *dong* to *déng* or *déng* to *dung*.<sup>10</sup>

In discussing the *gendér wayang* tuning system, McPhee dismisses the view of *sléndro* as a conceptually equidistant scale: "Were such the case, it would be as colourless and ambiguous as the whole-tone scale" (McPhee 1936:11). To back this up, he quotes a passage transposed from *sléndro* to the gapped *pélog* of gamelan *gong*. From the evidence of such passages, however, I would rather put it that both *pélog* and *sléndro* are often treated as functionally equidistant, but are, in effect, acoustically gapped. Sometimes their gapped structure is used as a compositional device, as when a passage in *gendér wayang* is repeated, transposed to a higher or lower pitch level, making it sound familiar, but different.

## 1.7 Techniques and textures

Despite its limited orchestral resources compared with *kebyar*, *gendér wayang* (arguably) employs a more imaginative range of different polyphonic textures. In some pieces, a melody or ostinato is played by the players' left hands while their right hands interlock in complex figuration. In others, the left hands play an interlocking melody, or an interweaving melody and counter-melody, while the right hands perform a simpler, repeated interlocking pattern. In still others, the texture becomes completely contrapuntal, with both hands interlocking. These different textures may occur within the same piece.

The interlocking of two parts, *polos* (basic) and *sangsih* (differing) is fundamental to *gendér wayang*, as to much Balinese music. This technique, in *gendér*, may occur between the players' right hands, left hands or both. It enables highly complex melodies and figurations to be played at high speed and also allows for the creation of counter-melodies based on complementary notes. The right-hand figuration, in particular, derives its complexity from a

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<sup>10</sup> Schneider and Beurman (1993) point out the difficulty of perceiving a "fundamental" pitch in gamelan tuning. Gomperts notes that stretched octaves do not feature as prominently in *gendér wayang* as in larger Balinese and Javanese gamelan and finds that its intervals "deviate more from the equipentatonic one-step interval (240 cents) than do Sundanese *kacapi* and Central Javanese court gamelan tunings, because an auditory compromise is made by the Balinese tuner between beat frequency, octave stretching and suboctave interval stretching" (Gomperts 1995:199).

range of interlocking styles, known collectively as *kotékan* or *ubit-ubitan*.<sup>11</sup> The two small *gendér*, tuned an octave higher than the large ones, usually play the same music as the two large ones.

The following examples illustrate just some of the range of interlocking textures found in *gendér wayang*. The first shows interlocking patterns, which together create a pattern of three notes; this is called *kotékan telu* (three-note *kotékan*, sometimes called I: *pukulan tiga*). This is followed by a version of the same pattern changed to include the complementary note four keys above the base note of the pattern; this is called *kotékan pat* (four-note *kotékan*, I: *pukulan empat*) (see musical example 1).<sup>12</sup>

**Musical example 1: *kotékan telu* and *kotékan pat***

The image shows two musical staves. The top staff is labeled 'kotékan telu' and the bottom staff is labeled 'kotékan pat'. The top staff has two parts: 'sangsih' (upper voice) and 'polos' (lower voice). The 'sangsih' part consists of a sequence of eighth notes, and the 'polos' part consists of a sequence of eighth notes, creating an interlocking texture. The 'kotékan pat' part is similar but includes a fourth note in the sequence.

Often, in this four-note interlocking style, the “gaps” are filled by each part sharing some or all of the middle notes. Gunawan in Tenganan calls this *ngucék* and says it is characteristic both of gamelan *selonding* and of *gendér wayang* (tape 2001:1a).

The following example shows an interlocking melody between the left hands (see musical example 2).

**Musical example 2: excerpt from “Tulang Lindung”**

The image shows two musical staves. The top staff is labeled 'R.H.' (Right Hand) and the bottom staff is labeled 'L.H.' (Left Hand). The top staff has a sequence of eighth notes, and the bottom staff has a sequence of eighth notes, creating an interlocking texture. A bracket above the top staff indicates that the right hands continue this oscillation throughout.

<sup>11</sup> See Tenzer (2000:61–70) for a discussion of different types of interlocking texture in *kebyar*.  
<sup>12</sup> In this and subsequent examples, *polos* is notated with stems down and *sangsih* stems up, unless otherwise stated.

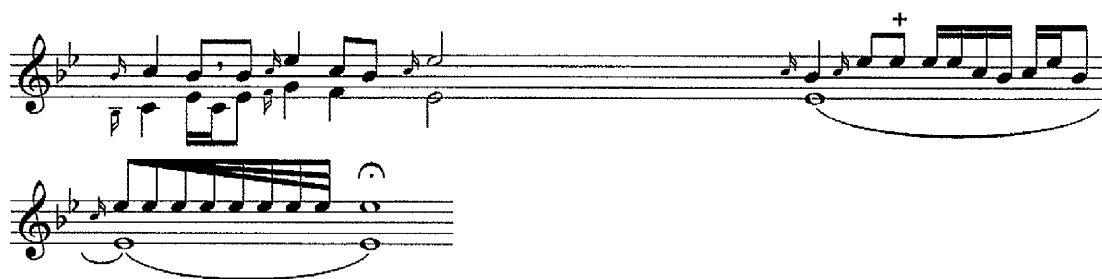
Finally, here is an example of interlocking between the two right hands and between the two left hands (see musical example 3).<sup>13</sup>

**Musical example 3: excerpt from “Suléndra”**



Besides these types of texture, some of which are similar to those of other forms of Balinese gamelan, there are a number of slow pieces (see musical example 4) which feature a more heterophonic, less metrically fixed style using ornaments. In this style, the *sangsih* part plays a version of the piece that may emphasise complementary notes, often four keys above. This texture is characterised by ornaments called *ngorét*, grace notes, and subtle click-stops created by playing while damping a note.<sup>14</sup>

**Musical example 4: *ngorét* in excerpt from “Mésem”**



In this slow style, left and right hands often move against each other in true polyphony. As in Java, the octave (six keys apart with four in between) is the primary consonance. The next most important consonance is an interval four keys apart with two in between, which McPhee (1936) (perhaps

<sup>13</sup> See Gold (1998:177–9) for further discussion of various types of *kotékan* in *gendér*.

<sup>14</sup> Gunawan in Tenganan told me that a click-stop on one note is known there as *ngetek* (personal communication, 2002). Gold (1998:171) finds that the terminology of such playing techniques in *gendér wayang* is not as codified as in Java, although she cites the following terms: *pipilan* (single melody played by both hands alternately); *ngorét* (grace notes); *notol* (staccato striking of damped keys, accelerating); *kotékan* (interlocking parts); and *selah* (alternating hands delaying an octave or *empat*).

confusingly) refers to as a “*sléndro* fifth”, possibly because of its function as a secondary consonance to the octave and which Gold (1998) calls *empat*. In this study I make use of both these terms. A piled up chord of two such “*sléndro* fifths” is also regarded as consonant and often occurs as a result of the building up of the *sangsih* part on the *polos* (see musical example 5). Many other interval combinations are also used, not just in passing.<sup>15</sup>

**Musical example 5: piled up *empat* and final chord of “Grebeg”**



**1.8 Types of piece**

Colin McPhee (1936) divides *gendér wayang* pieces into two types. The first, “andante, two-voiced, and irregular in phrase structure, is non-rhythmic, archaic, static” (1936: 11). This is used to accompany the *dalang*’s songs. The second, is “animated and dynamic” and accompanies dramatic action (ibid.:11). However, I tend to think of three main types of piece in *gendér wayang*, based on differences of musical texture. This tripartite division is etic – based on my perception of stylistic contrasts – and over-simplified, but I attempt to match it with Balinese categorisations.<sup>16</sup>

The first type is the slow style, as described by McPhee above. It is used for pieces such as “Méseme”, “Rundah” and “Alas Harum”, pieces known as *tetandakan* (or *tandak*) that are designed to accompany the *dalang*’s vocal melodies (*seséndon*). They feature long, winding ornamental lines, using many *ngorét*, and the *sangsih* is a heterophonic elaboration of the *polos*, rather than

<sup>15</sup> Manuscripts such as *Prakempa* refer to the way of playing (*gagebug*) of *gendér wayang* with the descriptive Kawi (old Javanese) phrase, *kumbang atarung* (bees fighting or colliding). This image is elaborated with names for the possible intervals expanding out from unison, but which are not used in everyday playing contexts (see Bandem 1986:68–9). I Nyoman Sedana gave me a longer list with slightly different names (personal communication, 1988).

<sup>16</sup> Gold (1998:172–4) breaks down the repertory into slightly more refined stylistic categories than my three categories. Both Sumandi (1984/5:32–5) and Gold (1992:252) cite a Balinese classification of the repertoire according to ten categories of piece: *petegak* (“sitting down”), *pamungkah* (“opening”), *patangkilan* (“meeting”), *pangkat* or *angkat-angkatan* (“moving”),

an interlocking part (see musical example 6). These *tandak* are used to set the mood in the *wayang*: “Mésem” for good characters such as the Pandawa brothers crying, “Bendu Semara” for characters such as the evil Korawa crying, “Rébong” for love scenes or the appearance of a princess, and so forth.

**Musical example 6: cadential phrase from “Mésem” with *sangsih***



The second style is fast and occurs in pieces used for action scenes in *wayang*. Around ten pieces, collectively called *pangkat*, or *angkat-angkatan*, are based on different left-hand ostinato patterns. These patterns are repeated with elaborate right-hand *kotékan*, after which a short bridge passage leads to a repetition of this same ostinato with *kotékan* one note higher (or lower, if the piece starts at the higher of the two pitch levels). The high and low sections then alternate, linked by bridge passages up and down.

Despite the similarities between the various *pangkat*, there are distinctive *pangkat* for different characters or situations: “Bima Kroda” (angry Bima) is lower in register, more violent and less refined than “Partha Wijaya” (victorious Arjuna). These *pangkat* were formerly used extensively in *wayang* but have been increasingly dropped in favour of the even faster, more violent music for action and fighting, *batél*, which McPhee compares with the Western term “agitato” (1936:24, note 2). In between fights or for general scenes of movement, a (relatively) slow form of *batél* is used, known as “Batél Moyo”, “Batél Majalan” or “Peselah Batél”, based on an oscillating pattern in the right

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*tetangisan* (“weeping”), *aras-arasan* (“kissing”), *papeson* (“coming out”), *pasiat* or *batél* (“fighting”), *panyuwud* (“ending”), and *ngastawa* (“worshipping”).

hands and simple ostinato in the left. These patterns are quite flexible and may be adapted to different pitch levels and numbers of repetitions according to the scenario (see chapter 6). The fastest level of action music, “Batél” proper, which accompanies fighting scenes, features a range of faster, more violent ostinato patterns. Again, it is very flexible, to fit with the action (see musical example 7).

**Musical example 7: excerpts from (1) “Pangkat Grebeg”, (2) “Peselah Batél” and (3) “Batél”**

(1)

Musical notation for excerpt (1) "Pangkat Grebeg". It consists of two systems of staves. The first system has a Right Hand (R.H.) staff and a Left Hand (L.H.) staff. The R.H. staff contains a complex, fast-moving melodic line with many sixteenth notes and slurs. The L.H. staff contains a simpler, more rhythmic accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a fermata. The second system continues the R.H. melodic line and the L.H. accompaniment, ending with a fermata.

(2)

Musical notation for excerpt (2) "Peselah Batél". It consists of two staves: R.H. and L.H. The R.H. staff features a steady, rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The L.H. staff features a similar rhythmic pattern with some rests and a fermata at the end.

(3)

Musical notation for excerpt (3) "Batél". It consists of two staves: R.H. and L.H. The R.H. staff features a very fast, rhythmic pattern of sixteenth notes with many slurs. The L.H. staff features a similar fast, rhythmic pattern with some rests and a fermata at the end.

The third style is more complex and features contrapuntal interlocking between both left and right hands of the two parts (see musical example 8). This often (but not exclusively) occurs in pieces known as *petegak*, which means “sitting down”, in other words pieces played before the shadow play when the *dalang* and audience start to sit down. Such pieces are sometimes known as *tabuh lepas* – “free pieces” – in other words, free from the contextual associations of the *wayang*, as they are not associated with a particular character or mood. In Sukawati, the term *pangguran* (from B: *nganggur*, be at leisure) is also used, again implying the idea of freedom (Locéng, tape 2000:10a). In Sukawati, there are around ten of these pieces, any of which could start a performance or be used in the context of a ritual such as a tooth filling. However, in practice, groups tend to choose one or two almost exclusively: in Sukawati, the commonest is “Sekar Sungsang” and, occasionally, “Suléndra” is played.

**Musical example 8: theme of “Sekar Sungsang”**

The musical score for 'Sekar Sungsang' is presented in two systems. The first system consists of two staves: the upper staff is labeled 'R.H.' (Right Hand) and the lower staff is labeled 'L.H.' (Left Hand). Both staves are in a key signature of one flat (B-flat major or D minor) and a 4/4 time signature. The R.H. part features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and some ties. The L.H. part provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth-note patterns and rests. The second system continues the piece, showing further contrapuntal interlocking between the two hands. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

These *petegak* often begin with a rhapsodical introduction (*gineman*), with many unmetred or only partially-metred passages. The main body of the piece (*pengawak*) is sometimes, but by no means always, structured in a similar way to a *pangkat*, the theme being repeated at another pitch level, usually a



note higher or lower. The two pitch levels are connected by short bridge passages. Often, this *pengawak* section is followed by one or more variation sections based on it. These variation sections are called *peniba* in Karangasem and *runtutan* in Sukawati.

There is much overlap between the three styles outlined above. For instance, the Sukawati *petegak* pieces “Cerucuk Punyah” and “Engkuk-engkuk” are in the style of *pangkat*, while the *tandak* “Rébong” starts in the slow style for its first section (*pengawak*) before moving on to more animated sections.

## 1.9 The course of a performance

The use of music is integral to the structure of a *wayang* performance, providing “a structural framework around which the *wayang* is built” (Gold 1998:204). The initial *petegak* piece, which, in Sukawati, is often “Sekar Sungsang”, helps draw the audience to the performance while the *dalang* prepares the stage and offerings. Then follows the “Pemungkah”, the lengthy overture containing many sections. It begins with an elaborate *gineman*: an introduction in a relatively unmetered, virtuosic style. This is followed by the “Kayonan”, an ostinato for the dance of the *kayon* puppet, shaped like a tree and symbolically representing, among other things, the mediation and higher unity between the two sides represented as left and right in the *wayang*. During subsequent sections of the “Pemungkah”, the *dalang* brings out all the puppets and arranges them on the appropriate side: gods and *alus* (refined) characters to the *dalang*’s right and *keras* (coarse) characters to the left. These are then taken off the screen again and handed to the assistants on either side, leaving just the *kayon* puppet in the middle of the screen. The Sukawati “Pemungkah” is longer and more elaborate than those of other areas, having been substantially reworked by Locéng’s group over the years. There, and sometimes elsewhere, the different sections are named as separate pieces: “Kayonan”; “Katak Ngongkék” (croaking frogs), “Tulang Lindung” (eel bone), “Sesapi Ngindang” (flying kite/bird of prey), “Bebrayut anggít-anggitan” (referring to the folk legend of Brayut, who had many children, Gold 1998:277), and, finally “Angkat Kayon” (taking up the *kayon*). In many other parts of Bali, the “Pemungkah” is shorter. In most, the final section before the second *kayonan* dance is “Tulang Lindung”

while, in Sukawati, this is shifted to second place and the very similar-sounding "Bebrayut" takes its place at the end.

The first song in a *Mahabharata* performance is, nowadays, almost invariably "Alas Harum" (scented forest), during which the puppets for the first scene are taken out. This song is appropriate for performances in which the first scene features *alus* (refined) puppets, such as the Pandawa brothers.<sup>17</sup> The piece flows directly from the end of the "Pemungkah" as the *kayonan* dances for a second time, then leaves the screen. The text for the song is taken from the medieval Javanese *kekawin* poem *Bharatayuddha* (for a complete description of "Alas Harum", see Gold 1998:286–401). The slow-style texture of "Alas Harum" continues in the next piece, "Penyacah Parwa", during which the *dalang* switches from song to a special stylised shouting or declamation. This section includes the *dalang's* apology for the performance, a short reference to the background to the eighteen books of the *Mahabharata* and, finally, an introductory explanation of the scene to follow. One or both of the following short songs may follow to introduce the opening scene: "Pengalang Ratu" (which Gold translates as "king's border", *ibid.*:392) and "Pengalang Malén" or "Pengalang Penasar" ("Tualén 's border" or "servant's border"; Tualén is the principal clown of the right side) (*ibid.*:382–401). These *pengalang* are frequently omitted nowadays.

The *gendér* are silent during the subsequent meeting scene but start playing again as the characters move to depart, with the piece "Pangkat Pekesehan" or "Pangkat Pengesehan". While this is playing, the *dalang* sings a *bebaturation*, an excerpt of *kekawin* poetry set to a characteristic melodic shape, which, however, is not intended to fit precisely with the instrumental piece. During the course of the play, any of the following *tetandakan* pieces (mood-setting or character pieces) may be performed: "Rébong" for romantic scenes or the appearance of a beautiful woman, "Mesém" for refined characters crying, "Bendu Semara" for coarse characters crying, "Lagu Délem" for the appearance of the clown Délem, or "Tunjang" for witches and the goddess Durga. Nowadays, *pangkat* pieces which used to signal action scenes are rarely used within the *wayang*. Locéng's group still uses "Pangkat Krépétan" though, for

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<sup>17</sup> For initial scenes with the coarse Korawa or demons, "Bopong" may be used in some areas, while "Candi Rebah" is often used to start *Ramayana* performances and "Rundah" takes this place for ritual *wayang lemah* (Gold 1998:405–10).

refined characters facing the enemy (Gold 1998:591). However, the commonest instrumental pieces are semi-improvised “Batél” and “Peselah Batél”, which pervade the whole *wayang* and increase in strength and intensity towards the end. Finally, the piece “Tabuh Gari” is used to signal the end of the performance, when the *dalang* places the *kayon* in the middle of the screen. If the *sudamala* ritual is to be performed, the slow, archaic-sounding piece “Sudamala” or “Cupu Kembang” is played after the performance.

The course of a *wayang lemah* performance is similar to the above, although shorter, and “Rundah” usually replaces “Alas Harum”. For tooth filings, a selection of *petegak*, *pangkat* and *tetandakan* pieces, usually those expressing sweetness or sorrow (“Rébong” and “Mesém”) are used, while a singer performs the “Kidung Malat”.<sup>18</sup> For cremations, a selection of *pangkat*, *tetandakan* expressing sorrow (“Mesém” and “Rundah”) are played by the two players on top of the tower on its way to the cremation ground (see Gold 1998:628–74).

## 1.10 Learning

I became involved with *gendér wayang* in 1987, when I studied in Bali for two years on a Dharmasiswa scholarship from the Indonesian Department of Education and Culture. I had previously studied some Javanese gamelan, including some Javanese *gendér*, at Cambridge and Oxford, and a very little Balinese *gong kebyar* through visits to Dartington.<sup>19</sup> I had become fascinated by the sound of *gendér wayang* and, although my original plan had been to study both this and *gong kebyar* while in Bali, my *gendér* teacher I Wayan Locéng rightly persuaded me that to study *gendér* seriously, I would have to concentrate on this alone. I thus spent the two years studying with Locéng in his village, Sukawati. During that time, I was also able to study some of the techniques of the *dalang* – songs and puppet movements – from Kaca Winaya (then studying at STSI) and I Wayan Nartha in Sukawati. This was essential to understand how *gendér* actually worked in performance. Subsequent trips to

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<sup>18</sup> See Vickers (2005).

<sup>19</sup> At that time, Balinese gamelan was relatively undeveloped in the UK, with the exception of *kebyar* ensembles in Dartington and Belfast. Javanese gamelan groups, however, were beginning to flourish.

Bali in 1992 and 1993 involved me in performance with Locéng's group and further study with Locéng, who was also able to teach me about the philosophical and narrative background to *wayang*. These earlier trips formed the basis for this study, but I carried out the specific research for this study in 2000, 2001 and 2002, extending the geographical search of my enquiry into East Bali. There, besides conducting research, I also studied with I Nyoman Gunawan and I Wayan Mudita in Tenganan and Ida Wayan Ngurah and I Nyoman Sutawa in Budakeling.

Mantle Hood uses *gendér wayang* as an example of the practical importance of bi-musicality, noting that its homogeneity of sound makes it hard to notate for someone who does not play (Hood 1971:234–5). I found its very complexity a spur to learning. At first, I could not understand how the music was structured – it seemed so idiosyncratic with its varied textures, uneven phrase lengths and lack of clear structural gong markers. This made me even more determined to try and understand it.

Colin McPhee describes the teaching of a children's *angklung* group (McPhee 1938:310–20): the teacher, is “merely the transmitter”, who repeats sections of the melody until the students pick it up as best they can. This is paralleled to some extent in the approach of teachers of *gendér wayang* today, with the important difference that the latter give the student more opportunity for one-to-one lessons, which enable concentrated repetition of shorter segments. This is even more so among teachers who are used to teaching non-Balinese students, who tend to pick things up more slowly.<sup>20</sup>

Sitting opposite my teachers following their hand movements in mirror image as their instrument faced mine, I found that I was learning through a combination of sight, sound and touch memory.<sup>21</sup> I would visualise patterns in terms of where the notes lay, separated in pairs by the supports bearing the cords that suspend the keys. I would also, simultaneously, be memorising the sound – not just the melody and rhythm of the piece but also dynamics and small stylistic features such as click-stops. Most importantly, my hands were memorising the pieces too, while gradually becoming more supple and flexible

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<sup>20</sup> See also Heimarck's description of learning with Locéng (1999:134–6).

<sup>21</sup> This is why my use of terms such as “oral/aural” tradition, and even the more neutral “unnotated” in this study is tentative. Various means of transmission or a combination of them may occur: aural, visual, tactile/kinaesthetic as well as oral (singing or talking about music).

through practice. When recreating the piece in later practice, I realised that I had learnt not just notes but the teacher's whole manner while playing: some of his feeling towards the piece had been transmitted too. In particularly intensive sessions with Locéng, I sometimes felt as though he was physically forcing the piece into me.

Like other non-Balinese *gendér* students, I found my own recordings of the individual *polos* and *sangsih* parts essential to following up the lessons, particularly on my return to the UK. I also became able to learn new pieces just from such recordings. While learning a new piece, it is necessary to think of it quite consciously in very small segments which one then builds up into sections. As one absorbs it, the piece seems to pass from the short-term into the long-term memory and one can only recall it in larger sections – it seems to come out in full, like a computer print-out. Locéng said on numerous occasions that when one has fully absorbed a piece one can play it asleep. However, I found that when I later became uncertain about a passage, particularly if I had to teach a piece, I would have to go back to thinking of it in small segments again, bringing it back into my short-term, conscious memory. In this way, I have found teaching several *gendér* groups in the UK useful in fixing pieces more firmly in my memory.

I have already mentioned the next stage of learning, which I encountered when Locéng first invited me to play in a *wayang* with his group on New Year's Day 1993. This was one of the most nerve-racking musical experiences I can remember. Although for ceremonies, such as tooth filings, the pace of *gendér* pieces is fairly relaxed, *wayang* music is at top speed. Sarga, Locéng's partner on the large *gendér*, had decided he did not approve of Locéng's pupils taking part in the group's performances and deliberately began to push the pace. The music became a battleground between Sarga pushing and Locéng pulling it back, with me in the middle.

Besides this, in several sections of the "Pemungkah" the *angsél* (rhythmic accents) seemed to be different from what Locéng had taught me. When we reached the first song, "Alas Harum" and the following "Penyacah Parwa" the group's version again seemed different from the one I had learnt in the lesson. As for the *batél* sections later in the *wayang*, which closely follow the action on screen, I couldn't understand how the players knew when and where

to start and stop at all. The whole experience was similar to that of David Sudnow, who, as a novice jazz improviser, suddenly found himself at sea in a real performance context: “The music was literally out of hand” (Sudnow 2001:35). I realised that, despite several years of lessons, a key part of the learning process – learning in performance – had only just begun.

## 1.11 Fieldwork

Gold describes how her teachers would often use *wayang* stories as allegories for situations or to explain their ideas (Gold 1998:3 and 15–18). I, too, have noticed the pleasure of my teachers in not just playing but also in storytelling and talking about music – one of the many enjoyable things about fieldwork in Bali. Although the specific fieldwork for this study took place in stages over the years of 2000, 2001 and 2002, there is no clear dividing line between my “learning” of *gendér wayang* and my “fieldwork” about it. Throughout my practical lessons in the 1980s and 1990s I was also learning about the theories behind the music and how players felt about it, collecting material which forms the background to this study. In the 1980s, already fairly fluent in Indonesian, I started to learn the much harder Balinese language. Later, from 1999, I continued my study of Balinese with Ni Madé Pujawati at SOAS.

The fieldwork from 2000 to 2002 covered three geographical areas: Sukawati in South-Central Bali and Tenganan and Budakeling, both in East Bali. Some of the musicians I interviewed, such as Wayan Locéng, I had known for years, while others in Budakeling were new acquaintances, sought out with introductions from other musicians. I carried out numerous interviews and recording sessions with the following musicians: in Sukawati, I Wayan Locéng, I Ketut Sukayana, I Ketut Buda Astra, I Wayan Sarga, *dalang* I Wayan Nartha; in Tenganan, I Nyoman Gunawan, I Wayan Mudita, I Wayan Dasta; and in Budakeling and nearby Abang, Ida Wayan Ngurah, Ida Wayang Oka Granoka, I Nyoman Sutawa, *dalang* Ida Nyoman Sugata, and I Madé Kondra and his group. The interviews (sometimes in Balinese, sometimes in Indonesian) covered many aspects of composition, improvisation and variation-making and were illustrated with practical examples of both solo and group playing.

Interviews and performances were recorded on audio tape and in some cases on digital video. These included 26 audio tapes of interviews, with examples of solo and group playing, and 8 DVD tapes of performances and demonstrations of particular techniques, such as improvisation. This is in addition to the dozens of tapes accumulated during my learning experiences in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>22</sup>

As I had previously studied for over two years in the village of Sukawati, which is noted for its elaborate, complex and virtuosic versions of pieces, I spent more time in contrastingly isolated areas of East Bali, in the district of Karangasem, with players from Tenganan, Budakeling and Abang. Among the most fruitful sessions were those involving several people in group discussions, an approach following Hobart 2000b.

I focused the interviews and selection of musical examples on the range of types of composition and variation-making, from the more spontaneous or improvised through to the more pre-planned. This follows the approach I adopt in chapter 6. During the interviews musicians discussed their views on each of these types of composition and the relationship between them. I asked for musical examples to illustrate specific points raised. Through the fieldwork, it became clear that, in each district studied and among different players, the “weight” of creative activity fell at a slightly different point along this spectrum from improvised to composed, from small changes around the “edges” of pieces to major acts of re-composition.

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<sup>22</sup> I refer to fieldwork tapes by the interviewee, the year, tape and side-number (a and b), for instance: Locéng, tape 2002:1a.

## 1.12 My teachers and where they live

### Sukawati



I Wayan Locéng

My first teacher, I Wayan Locéng, lives in Sukawati, a large village in Gianyar district, about halfway between the capital, Denpasar, and Ubud or the town of Gianyar. Sukawati is rapidly becoming part of the suburban sprawl that surrounds Denpasar. It has many *banjar*, village districts or hamlets that organise ritual and social events (see Covarrubias 1986) of which one, Babakan, has become a renowned centre for *wayang* and its music. This is due to the formerly important court of Sukawati, which was founded in the early eighteenth century after breaking away from the island's main court of Klungkung (Wiener 1995:217–18) and became a major patron of the arts. The family of shadow puppeteers who served this court are today known as *soroh dalang* Sukawati (or *keluarga dalang* Sukawati), the family of Sukawati *dalang*. Most live along a road at the back of the palace and Locéng told me (in 1989) that there were at least 18 practising *dalang*. This concentration of specialists in the shadow play and its music is very rare in Bali and has contributed to the



development of a characteristic way of playing *gendér*: “flashy, highly virtuosic, using rapid tempi and complex damping techniques and interlocking, with a high level of rhythmic and melodic complexity” (Gold 1998:57). Among the most influential figures to influence the style of Sukawati *wayang* are the *gendér* player I Wayan Locéng (born around 1930), and two *dalang*: I Nyoman Granyam (c.1900–c.1975) and I Ketut Madra (1949–1979).

The following summary is based on Gold (1998:63–71); further information about the Sukawati *dalang* family, including family trees, can be found in Heimarck (1999 and 2003). I Wayan Locéng was first taught by I Madé Cetug and his father and grandfather were both *dalang*. He was influenced by Colin McPhee’s friend, the composer Lotring, who taught and studied in Sukawati, and he played in Lotring’s gamelan *pelégongan*. Locéng’s *gendér wayang* group, which became famous for its qualities of *sip* or *kompak* (tight, compact) playing consisted of Locéng, his brothers I Ketut Balik and I Nyoman Jaya and Balik’s son I Wayan Sarga. This group accompanied the famous *dalang* Granyam and Madra. Locéng also played *réong* in the Sukawati gamelan *gong* (gamelan in Bali are often referred to simply as *gong*) and was influenced by the outstanding *gong kebyar* style from Gladag in Denpasar that was famous at that time. Locéng later formed the group of another famous and influential *dalang*, his nephew I Ketut Madra.

Gold describes how Locéng likes to teach complex versions of pieces: “Each time I mastered a difficult piece, at my next lesson he would change the previous version he gave me to one more abstract or technically challenging, or merely different, for the sake of *variasi* (variation)” (ibid.:66). Locéng also worries about people stealing his versions, so he “hides” them by making them very complicated. Among his favourite techniques are *ngorét* (ornamentation) and *cecandatan/tetekanan* (double damping/simultaneous damping of the struck key), techniques emphasised by his current slowing down of tempi.

Other prominent Sukawati figures are I Wayan Wija, described by Gold as “perhaps the most popular, innovative, and famous *dalang* today in Bali” (ibid.:70), the ISI (STSI) teacher I Wayan Nartha, and I Madé Juwanda. Wija’s innovative approach to puppet making and popular style of performing has won him awards and a large following. He created a new form *wayang tantri*, based on animal tales and accompanied by *pélog*-tuned *gendér pelégongan* and other

instruments. Locéng played an important role in developing the music for this (ibid.:71).



**I Ketut Buda Astra**

Most of my early information about *gendér* and *wayang* was also obtained from Locéng, who had been my teacher since 1987. However, when I returned to Sukawati in 2000 to 2002, I was able to interview and record many other musicians. One young musician in particular, I Ketut Buda Astra, was able to explain much about improvisation in the genre and relate it to compositional technique. Buda was born in 1969 and so was 33 at the time of the main interviews in 2002. He is a graduate of ISI and a composer of contemporary Balinese music, who has made a name for himself as a *gendér* player capable, despite his youth, of creating his own versions of pieces. Other players who gave me important information include I Wayan Sarga, the other main player in Locéng's group, and his brother I Wayan Warga, Locéng's son I Ketut Sukayana, who plays with dalang Ganjréng's group, the *dalang* I Wayan Nartha and, during my study in the 1980s, Locéng's brothers, I Nyoman Jaya and I Ketut Balik.

## Tenganan



I Wayan Mudita

In Tenganan, a so-called Bali Aga (“original Balinese”) village with self-consciously different customs from much of the rest of the island, music is set against the background of old ritual ensembles such as *selonding* and *gambang*.<sup>23</sup> *Gendér wayang* is a relative newcomer to the village, having been adopted in the 1950s from neighbouring villages, such as Pesedahan. It is not used to accompany the characteristically Bali Aga rituals of the village, for which *gambang* or *selonding* ensembles are used. Although, as in the rest of East Bali, playing old, supposedly unchanged versions of *gendér* pieces is valued in Tenganan, many sections of pieces have been added in recent memory and the younger generation of players is actively creating new pieces by drawing from other gamelan traditions such as *angklung*.

The foremost *gendér* player in Tenganan today is I Wayan Mudita. Mudita says he started studying the art of puppetry in 1964 in Klungkung. He says that, by that time, he already knew how to play *gendér*, having learnt from Ketut Serurut, a local teacher who had studied both in Karangasem and Denpasar and who taught as far away as Lombok. Ketut Serurut taught in

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<sup>23</sup> For more about Tenganan, see Korn 1984 and for *selonding*, see Ramseyer 1992.

Tenganan around 1950. There were no puppets, so Mudita made some out of cardboard. At that time, the *gendér* in the village were made of iron (Mudita, tape 2002:1a). One figure often mentioned in Tenganan is the late Ranu, who was widely held to be the best *gendér* player in that area and who created many current versions of pieces and composed several variation sections (*peniba*).



I Nyoman Partha Gunawan (left) and I Wayan Dasta (right)

Other Tenganan *gendér* players who helped me in this study are I Nyoman Partha Gunawan, I Wayan Dasta and I Wayan Jiwa. These players are, primarily, players of other ensembles. Gunawan was responsible for creating the first replica *selonding* instruments, which have enabled young Tenganan musicians to learn more easily and which, through commercial recordings and performances around the island, have triggered a revival of interest in this type of gamelan.

### **Budakeling and Abang**

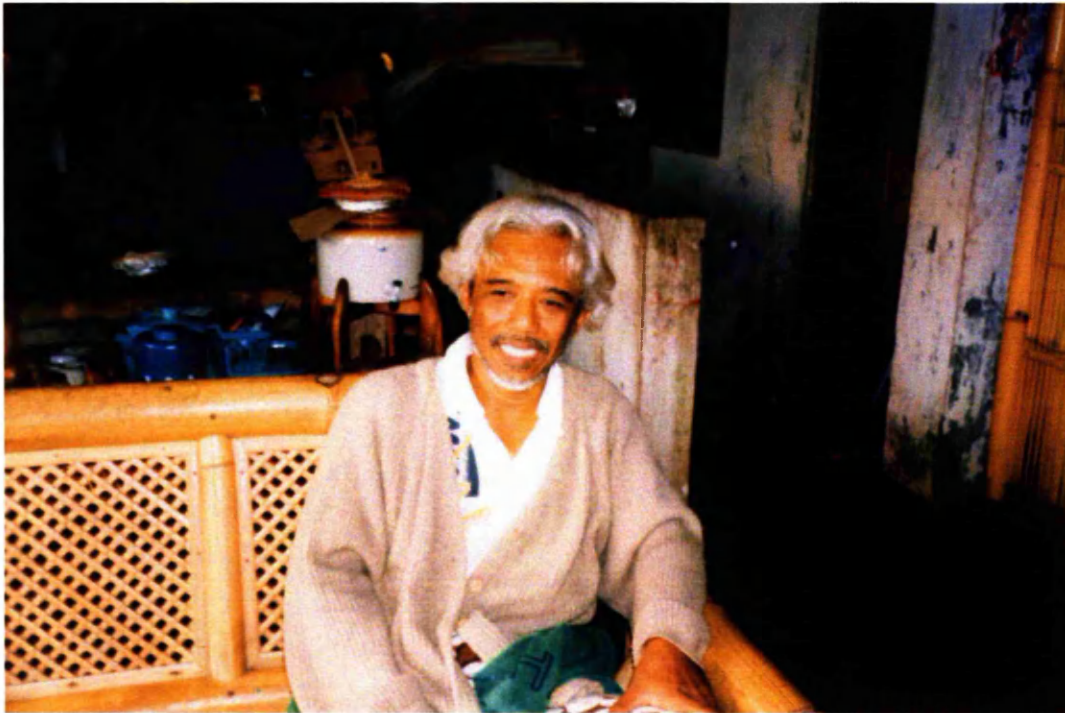
Budakeling, still in Karangasem district, but further inland than Tenganan, is a centre for the *brahmana budha* (*brahmana* high priests with elements of Mahayana Buddhism in their ritual), and the principal family of

*dalang* and *gendér* musicians is also the main priestly family here. Although the majority of Balinese *brahmana* high priests, *pedanda*, are *brahmana siwa*, an important minority are *brahmana budha* and some ceremonies call for both types of priest to be present (see Covarrubias 1986:292–307). Hooykaas (1975b:250–1) lists the active *brahmana budha* households with their priests in Bali at the time: the first 14 out of a total of 40 households listed are from Budakeling village. This gives some idea of the centrality of this one village to the *brahmana budha* tradition within Balinese Hinduism.



**Abang group: I Wayan Jira (front left), I Madé Kondra (back left), I Madé Widastra (back left), I Madé Putu (front right)**

In the Budakeling area, *gendér wayang* seems more “sacralised” than in Sukawati, in the sense that its ritual context and religious connotations are emphasised more than in South Bali. My informants here were slightly more guarded about the tradition and anxious to stress the unchanging nature of many pieces. I was encouraged to meet groups, such as one in the nearby village of Abang, that still remembered old pieces and the current trend of adopting pieces from Denpasar was decried. The musicians I met in Abang were I Madé Kondra, I Nyoman Kota, I Madé Putu, I Madé Widastra and I Wayan Jira.



**Ida Wayan Oka Granoka**



**Ida Wayan Ngurah**

Ida Wayan Oka Granoka, who has moved to Denpasar, and who is regarded by many in East Bali as a particularly talented musician and upholder of tradition, expressed a particularly Tantric view of the roles *gendér wayang*

and other gamelan forms (see chapters 6 and 7). Granoka is a lecturer in linguistics in the Faculty of Literature, Udayana University, Denpasar. He was born in 1949 and was 53 at the time of the interviews in 2002. His brother, Ida Wayan Ngurah is slightly older than Granoka and started playing *gendér wayang* in 1967 when he was 22. Another member of this *brahmana* family who helped me was the *dalang* Ida Nyoman Sugata, who lives in Abang and introduced me to the group there. Another musician who taught and helped me in Budakeling was I Nyoman Sutawa. His wife, Ni Ketut Sasih also plays *gendér*, as does his daughter, Ni Wayan Apriani, who was 14 in 2002 and his even younger son, I Kadek Adriana.



I Nyoman Sutawa (right) and Ni Wayan Apriani (left)

### 1.13 Conclusion

In chapter 5, I describe some of the stylistic contrasts between Sukawati and Karangasem. Regional styles in *gendér* are linked with broader perceived regional styles in the arts: Gianyar district, which includes Sukawati, is famed as a centre where the performing arts are particularly nourished and developed, while Karangasem is generally felt to be archaic (*kuno*) and traditional.

But regional variation is only part of the story: each *gendér* group and individual players within that group may have their own version of pieces.

Sometimes there is a standard group version, which the players all agree on, while individual players may have their own favourite version. As we shall see, *gendér wayang* is one of the most individualistic of Balinese music genres. Among *gendér wayang* players, musical knowledge is commonly seen as “owned” by individual players who are sometimes afraid that it will be “stolen”, in the context of a compositional system that, nevertheless, relies heavily on borrowing (Gold 1992:16–17). The importance of diverse individual opinions in Bali has been underplayed in much ethnographic writing and is only now being redressed in works such as Hobart (2000b). It is particularly important here, in a system of musical variation and composition which is related not just to regional but also to group and personal styles of playing.

This chapter has given an overview of *gendér wayang* and its context in the performance of *wayang* and in ritual as well as some background to general concepts of composition and improvisation in other Balinese ensembles. The following chapter reviews the major literature on *gendér wayang*.



## Chapter 2: A survey of existing literature on *gendér wayang*

### 2.1 Some early sources

Jaap Kunst (1968:75–8) discusses the possible relationship between Javanese and Balinese *gendér* and instruments referred to as *selondèng* or *salunding* in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Javanese texts and thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Balinese charters (ibid.:75). He points out that the ritual orchestras known as *selonding* in Bali, found in certain so-called Bali Aga villages, are also metallophones with suspended bars, but of iron not bronze and without the *gendér*'s separate bamboo resonators.



*Selonding* instruments at I Nyoman Gunawan's house in Tenganan

In the texts Kunst quotes (*Wrtta-sancaya* and *Bharatayuddha*), the sound of the *salunding* is compared with the sounds of quails and frogs. In both they are described together with *wayang*, and in one (*Bharatayuddha*) the instrument is explicitly referred to as "*salunding wayang*" (ibid.:76–7). The relationship between the various Balinese *selonding* ensembles and *gendér wayang* has yet to be explored fully and is beyond the scope of this study. The former, however,

are sacred, ritual ensembles, sometimes used to accompany dance (for instance *réjang* in Tenganan) and never used for *wayang*. Access to the instruments of the *selonding* is often limited by ritual taboo. It is invariably tuned to a seven-note *pélog* system from which pentatonic modes are chosen, rather than *sléndro*. Most *selonding* ensembles that have been described are larger ensembles than the *gendér wayang*. However, Danker Schaareman states that some *selonding* ensembles in the Kintamani area “consist of two instruments only with eight keys each, whereas in Karangasem the number of instruments varies from four to ten” (Schaareman 1992:178). Kunst concludes that “*salunding wayang* must have been synonymous with *gendèr wayang* and makes it probable that the *gendèr* was well known as early as 1157” (1968:77–8).

Robson’s (1971) translation of the *Kawi* text *Wangbang Wideya* mentions *gendér* and several descriptions of *wayang* performances. Although the text is in middle Javanese and the action is set in medieval East Java, it was probably written in Bali in the second half of the sixteenth century (ibid.:9).<sup>24</sup> Despite Robson’s assertion that “it is safe to assume that the cultural background to what we call the Middle Javanese literature, that is, works written in the Javanese school in Bali, for the most part reflects the situation in fourteenth-century East Java, in particular the court of Majapahit” (ibid.:9), it is impossible to know whether the performance described is modelled on Majapahit Javanese *wayang*, or *wayang* contemporary to the author at the court of Gelgel in Bali. One of the descriptions mentions *gendér*, in ensemble with *redep* and *gong* (canto 3:69b). Kunst thinks *redep* is a name for a frame-drum (1968:39).<sup>25</sup>

Kunst and Kunst van Wely (1925: 110–12) briefly describe the *gendér wayang* ensemble, although they mistakenly assert the instruments have 13 rather than 10 keys each.<sup>26</sup> Interestingly, they cite a theory by the *controleur* Heyting that the *gendér* might have once been a women’s instrument (ibid.110). Heyting reached this hypothesis from his observation that while players of other instruments carried their own instruments, *gendér* were usually carried by

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<sup>24</sup> Although Kunst (1968:117) dates it to the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries.

<sup>25</sup> Interestingly, terracotta figurines excavated at the Majapahit *kraton* site include *gendèrs* and frame drums (Kunst 1968: figures 65a, 65b).

<sup>26</sup> It is the *pélog*-tuned *gendér* for the *gamelan peléngan* that has thirteen keys.

someone else. I have to say that I have never noticed this distinction, nor have I read of it elsewhere, and the Kunsts do not offer any supporting evidence. Kunst states that in Java the *gendér* is commonly played by women, and that in Nias an instrument he describes as a wooden-keyed ancestor of the *gendér*, called *doli-doli*, is also a women's instrument (ibid.:111)<sup>27</sup>. I discuss women *gendér* players later in this study.

## 2.2 Colin McPhee

The first in-depth account of *gendér wayang* is Colin McPhee's article "The Balinese wajang koelit and its music", in which he describes it as: "Perhaps the highest, and certainly the most sensitive form of musical expression existing in Bali" (1936:2). McPhee mentions that *wayang* performances lasted from around 11pm till dawn. Nowadays, performances have generally been shortened to around three or four hours at most, which Brita Heimark connects with a shift to a more modern lifestyle and the need to get up early for office-based jobs (Heimark 1999:8).

McPhee describes the performance itself with an eye for descriptive detail: "The brightly painted puppets ... are capable of great expression, punctuating the speeches with tense nervous gestures" (1936:2). He briefly compares aspects of Balinese and Javanese *wayang*, drawing attention to the form of the Balinese puppets, which resemble the style of late medieval Javanese stone reliefs (ibid.:2). Holt (1967:82) and others have also drawn attention to this resemblance, but as Arps (1990:62) points out, it would be unwise to conclude from this alone that other aspects of the Balinese shadow play necessarily preserve such ancient characteristics.

McPhee's study is remarkable for its attention to ethnographic detail in its description of the background to the shadow play, and the performance contexts of both daytime (ritual *wayang lemah*) and night-time *wayang*. He also mentions rarer, less well-known forms of *wayang*, such as *wayang panji*, *cupak* and *calonarang*. He describes the *dalang's* training, both as a performer and as a ritual specialist, the philosophical/magical book *Dharma Pewayangan*, and the distinction between the initiated priestly *dalang*, who may perform ritual *wayang*,

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<sup>27</sup> On women *gendér* players in Java, see Weiss (1993) and Byard-Jones (1997).

such as *wayang lemah*, and the uninitiated *dalang*, who is restricted to night-time performances.

Along with McPhee, I feel that it may not be too far-fetched to draw a parallel between the effect of the flickering oil lamp, so different in quality from the icy calm of the electric light used in Java today, and the slightly tremulous quality of the *ombak*-tuned *gendér* quartet:

Sweet, yet acid, soft, yet metallic, the four instruments are in perfect accord with the nature of the performance. The clear-cut design of the music and the delicate arabesques are reflected in the transparent lacework of the puppets, whose gestures, miniature and heroic, nervous and menacing, are in turn retranslated into sound by the sensitive and vaguely sinister nature of the music. (McPhee 1936:8)

After discussing tuning and the slow and fast composition types and frequently used techniques (see chapter 1 above), McPhee addresses questions of variation. Although he gives no details of witnessing actual compositional processes, he recognises the presence of continuous variation: “The general construction of this latter type of music, its figuration and style of execution, bear evidence of considerable development during the course of time” (ibid:11).

He presents a transcription of two different versions of “Alas Harum”, from Bongkasa and Kuta, the latter probably from his composer friend Lotring. He finds that, despite the many differences between the versions, only to be expected in such a tradition, many of the phrases and patterns nevertheless correspond (ibid.:13).<sup>28</sup> I would dispute his claim that in all the pieces in this slow style, “the mood remains the same, in spite of the difference in texts, and only the voice of the *dalang* changes, varying in pitch and voice quality” (ibid.:15).<sup>29</sup> He sums up the slow style as “freed of any emotion” and “almost completely static, where all sense of time is lost” (ibid.:15–16), an orientalist view of much gamelan music, which I would also dispute. McPhee also states that this slow style is two-voiced (ibid.:11), in other words all four instruments play in unison with each other, rather than dividing parts into interlocking *polos* and *sangsih*. Nowadays, even relatively simple styles of *gendér wayang* have at least a little *sangsih* counter melody added in slow styles too. Either this was not generally the case when he was writing or he did not notice it.

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<sup>28</sup> Lisa Gold’s analysis of several versions of “Alas Harum” (Gold 1998:319–81) found many similar correspondences.

<sup>29</sup> Many of these *tandak* are expressive of quite different emotions, like “Rébong” or “Rundah”.

McPhee describes the complexity of the interlocking fast style, in which “a great diversity of sound and colour prevails” (ibid.:16). He describes a style of *ostinato plus kotékan*, and also circumstances in which the melodic line is split between *polos* and *sangsih*: “Through this ingenious dovetailing of the two parts complicated polyrhythmic passages are executed with incredible speed and smoothness, giving the impression of a single instrument” (ibid.:17). This is perhaps more the case in *gendér wayang* than other forms of Balinese gamelan, with their more diverse range of instrument types, and perhaps represents a Balinese sound ideal.<sup>30</sup>

McPhee notices that each of the *polos* and *sangsih* parts are not only meant to interlock but also to contain their own rhythmic vitality, “*felt rather than deliberately worked out*” (ibid.:19, my italics). I will describe later how, particularly in Sukawati style, by emphasising the complexity of each individual part, players are less prone to follow the “rules” of *kotékan* interlocking. As McPhee states: “Sometimes the two instruments become independent and travel in opposite directions” (ibid.:20). He gives an example of “curious seconds”, of which many similar cases could be cited from Sukawati and elsewhere.

McPhee also touches on aspects of group composition, in a comment that implies a strong improvisatory tendency:

The polyphony has an easy grace and richness of texture which is all the more surprising when we stop to realize that such passages are not the result of some mind trained in the art of counterpoint, but are spontaneously conceived during some rehearsal, when some slight deviation or fresh version is sought. (McPhee 1936:20)

Although group versions certainly exist, most of the players I talked to spoke of actually creating the new versions alone before taking it to the rest of the group.

McPhee’s etic analysis of tonality in *gendér wayang* takes each note from the bottom up as the starting point of five modes of four notes each. He comments: “Needless to say, the Balinese do not consciously consider their scale in this way. I have dissected it thus for the sake of analysis” (ibid.:21, note

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<sup>30</sup> Silkstone (1993:21) compares the sound ideal of the Thai *piphat* ensemble, in which each instrument is clearly delineated in timbre, with Javanese gamelan, which seems to aspire to a merging of related timbres and textures. The Balinese ideal seems to be several instruments completely blended to sound like one, though playing with a complexity and speed that would be impossible on one instrument.

1).<sup>31</sup> Many *gendér* melodies do keep within a basic four-note structure, rather like those of the four-note *gamelan angklung*, and may be influenced by the latter. McPhee goes on to describe the third note above each of these “tonics” as a “secondary point of gravity”, although I have not particularly noticed this.

McPhee emphasises the importance of transposition to the structure, giving examples in both the *pangkat* ostinato style and more extended *petegak* pieces. McPhee describes how this transposition sounds like a further variation, due to the change in pitch and interval relation (ibid.:23).<sup>32</sup> He describes “Merak Ngilo” (sometimes called “Merak Ngelo”) as an example of such a composition, but the versions of this piece I have come across do not reflect this transpositional structure.

McPhee makes plain his high admiration for *gendér wayang*, citing “evidence of the high sophistication of workmanship” (ibid.:24). What seems to attract him most is its abstract quality, which I feel he overemphasises, ignoring the role of *gendér* in expressing mood and emotion in the *wayang*: “It is non-lyrical, non-expressive, a complicated antithesis to the simplicity and directness usually associated with folk-music. And it is precisely in this abstract formalism that so much of its beauty lies” (ibid.:24). His appendices include material on *wayang* stories, on the treatise *Dharma Pewayangan*, ritual *wayang sudamala*, the use of *gendér* in cremation, and the texts of several *tandak* songs: “Mésem”, “Tunjang” and “Alas Harum”.

McPhee’s *A house in Bali* (1979 [1944]) describes his life on the island in the 1930s. Nowadays, personal narrative having been reincorporated into ethnomusicological description, a modern author might have merged *A house in Bali* and *Music in Bali* into one.

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<sup>31</sup> However I have heard (the then) STSI student *dalang* I Nyoman Sedana describe the “*patutan*” of *gendér wayang* in a similar way but with five notes each (personal communication, 1988).

<sup>32</sup> See Nettl (1958) for a discussion of transposition as a compositional device. It could be argued, and in fact McPhee implies, that this is really a form of modulation rather than just transposition, as the intervallic relation between the notes alters. Conversely the whole process could be seen as an extended pivoting between two notes, of which one is the “tonic”. Oscillation between two adjacent notes is a common melodic shape in many types of gamelan, such as the Javanese *srepegan* and *sampak* (see Becker 1979). Gold (1998:566–8) notes the link between *pangkat* and processional *beleganjur* motifs. I tentatively suggest that the transposition upwards could even reflect the perceived Doppler effect of a *beleganjur* marching to and fro. It certainly adds psychologically to the strong sense of motion in *pangkat*-style pieces.

McPhee describes a shadow play in Kuta, accompanied by musicians trained by I Wayan Lotring, drawing a parallel between the intricate detail of temple reliefs, *wayang* puppets and the sound of *gendér wayang*: “a laciness that seemed to translate magically into sound the movements of the mysterious little shadows” (ibid.:34–7). *A house in Bali* is also notable for the description of the composer I Wayan Lotring, still revered today for his *légong* compositions and *gendér wayang* playing.

McPhee devotes chapter 14 of his later book, *Music in Bali*, to *gendér wayang* (1966:201–33). In it, he again demonstrates his particular love for the genre as Balinese music’s “most perfect form of expression” (ibid.:201). McPhee admits his preference for the basic *gendér wayang* ensemble used for *Parwa* (*Mahabharata*) performances against the *gendér wayang batél*, which accompanies *Ramayana* performances. However, I would dispute his statement that in the latter ensemble, the additional instruments “merely supply a rhythmic background to certain compositions that are musically complete without them” (ibid.:202). In fact, the *Ramayana* repertory also contains a number of compositions different from those of the *Parwa*, and which are designed around the capabilities of the enlarged ensemble.

McPhee analyses the “Pemungkah”, the overture to the shadow play, which he describes as “a long chain of melodically related episodes which can be extended or shortened as required” (ibid.:202). Nowadays, the “Pemungkah” is both conceived as a single unit, as McPhee’s statement would suggest, but sometimes also as a series of discrete, named pieces. McPhee’s version is from Kuta, from the ensemble of the composer Lotring. He transcribed it through musical dictation: “Lotring and a second *gendèr* player remained for two weeks at my house in Sayan while the music was transcribed” (ibid.:204). How much easier and more rewarding to have learned to play a little, as Mantle Hood (1971:234–5) suggests!

McPhee mentions one important divergence from contemporary practice, at least in Sukawati. He states that the *kayon* is removed and the leading characters are introduced after “Alas Harum” and the “Penyarita”, introducing the story (1966:202), whereas nowadays, the *kayon* is removed at the final swirl of its second dance before “Alas Harum”, and the characters are introduced during this song. This means that, nowadays, the “Penyacah Parwa” and

“Penyarita” are declaimed while the characters face each other, motionless on the screen.

McPhee reduces the rhythmically free *gineman* (introduction) section to its essential structural notes, describing it as an “embryonic polyphony”, with delayed octaves, canonic imitation and fifths resolving to octaves (ibid.:205). A *batél*-like section follows this, which is simpler than that currently performed in Sukawati, although McPhee’s “Kayonan” is similar (ibid.:207–10). He shows how the passages after the “Kayonan” grow out of its motif, which is an ostinato based on the lowest note of the *gendér, dong* (F# in McPhee’s transcription). He sees all these first passages as a complete “movement”, ending with a “codetta” ending on note *dang* (his C#).

This is followed by a transposed (but varied) restatement of the previous material up two keys to the note *dung* (B), starting with the *kayon* motif, so that “both melody and figuration take on a new and contrasting color through the change in pitch and subtle alteration in interval relation” (ibid.:210). In the present-day Sukawati version of this section, the identity of this transposed theme is masked by the complexity of the variations. The second main section of the “Pemungkah” shifts the tonal emphasis up a note to *dang*, again using a process of transposition, this time just of the introductory phrase. The subsequent ostinato passage is based on a variant of the motif of the first section of the piece (ibid.:215–16). It is first heard based on *dong*, then moves to *dang, ding* (E) and finally reappears on note *dang*. The final section of the “Pemungkah” is based on note *dang*, on which the overture ends. Thus, the overall tonal movement is *dung* (B), *dong* (F#), *dung* (B), *dang* (C#).<sup>33</sup> The very last part of the “Pemungkah”, which nowadays goes by the name of “Tulang Lindung”, features a long, winding melody, in which the left hands may interlock in different ways in different villages (ibid.: 220–1). McPhee comments on the balanced form of the “Pemungkah”, composed as it is of contrasting episodes and transpositions, and says that its form remains the same in different regions, despite the alteration of episodes to suit personal and regional tastes (ibid.:222–3).

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<sup>33</sup> This tonal shift could perhaps reflect a transition from one state to another (see Gold 1998 on symbolic aspects of the “Pemungkah”, below). Incidentally, it mirrors the tonal progression during a Javanese *wayang* through tonal centres based on *sléndro* notes 2, 5 and 6 in the Javanese *pathet* system.



After a transcription and description of part of the *dalang*'s first song, "Alas Harum" (ibid.:223–4, Ex.213), which runs on straight from the "Pemungkah", McPhee describes the use of music in the course of the *wayang* performance. McPhee gives examples of the left-hand ostinato motifs of "Batél" and "Angkatan" (ibid.:225, Ex.214). The former is similar to the *Ramayana* "Batél" ostinato in Sukawati today, but not the standard "Batél" now used for *Parwa* performances. McPhee distinguishes his examples by the fact that the "Batél" is a two-beat ostinato, and the "Angkatan" a four-beat one (ibid.:225).

McPhee then discusses the three-part composition used for love-scenes, "Rébong". In this, the "long, supple phrases" of the vocal line, "embellished from time to time with ornamental passing-tones" adds a third voice to the *gendér*, joining them in unison at phrase endings (ibid.:229). His description of how "Rébong" is enacted as a whole scene is close to how it is still performed today: the slow, gentle first section accompanies the puppets' dance, while the optional second section accompanies the servants' parody of the previous love scene (ibid.:230–1).

McPhee concludes the chapter with a description of the use of *gendér wayang* outside the shadow play context, when it accompanies life-cycle rituals, such as weddings, children's birthdays and cremations.

## 2.3 Other short studies

### Peterman, "Regional variations in Balinese *gender wayang* music"

Lewis E. Peterman's (1989) paper on regional variation in *gendér wayang* analyses regional versions of the piece "Rébong". He refers to an ASTI (Akademi Seni Tari Indonesia, now ISI) survey of 1985, which counted 687 sets of *gendér wayang* in Bali as well as an unknown number exported to other parts of Indonesia and abroad (1989:1). He notes that the concept of *desa, kala, patra*<sup>34</sup> seems to be reflected in musical practice: "Depending upon the local customs of each village, the time of the year, and the proper socio-cultural context, each composition, or *gendhing*, in the repertoire may be presented

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<sup>34</sup> An often-repeated phrase meaning every thing can vary according to "place, time and situation".

differently, that is, with a different interpretation" (ibid.:2). After describing the various musical textures, Peterman estimates that most players know around twenty pieces (ibid.:4). Like McPhee, he mentions two affective types, *keras* (strong) and *manis* (sweet), and a variety of textures and forms.

Peterman presents a transcription of the two main parts of "Rébong" as played by a group in Sukawati and eight other versions of parts of the same piece, notated in cipher notation.<sup>35</sup> He gives the names of the locations (Denpasar, Ubud, Blakuih, two villages in Bangli, Tampaksiring, Saba and Sukawati) but, strangely, does not name the players (ibid.:5–6).

He finds that each version of the *pengawak* is closely related, although five of the eight versions include phrases lengthened with infixes (ibid.:6–7).<sup>36</sup> He then eliminates the melodic decoration to reveal "the underlying basic progression of diads" common to all versions (ibid.:8–9), concluding that the basic melodic gestures of this section of the piece are the four-note sequences: 3 2 1 6 and 2 3 5 6 (ibid.:10–11). In the *pengecét* (second part) of "Rébong" (ibid.: 11–13), he concentrates on the left-hand melody, which is more prominent in this section. He finds a similar basic set of melodic gestures: 3 2 1 6, 6 5 3 2 and 2 3 5 6 (ibid.:12). He can "scarcely resist the temptation to compare" these cells with Javanese *pathet manyura* and wonders whether elements of *pathet nem* and *sanga* might be found in other pieces (ibid.:14). Perhaps he should resist this temptation though. Gold (1998), Vonck (1997) and my own enquires suggest that modal practice in *gendér wayang* has its own distinctive characteristics. One could argue, conversely, that the *pathet* systems of East and Central Java (which also differ from one another) may be developments from a kind of proto-*pathet* modal system such as that found in *gendér wayang*.

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<sup>35</sup> The notes of *gendér wayang* expressed in Javanese cypher notation are, from bottom to top: 2 3 5 6 1 2 3 5 6 1.

<sup>36</sup> One could argue that the others might have been shortened, though I tend to agree that these are infixes. See Gray (1990) for examples of infixes in "Suléndra".

## Michael Tenzer, *Balinese Music and Gamelan Gong Kebyar*

Tenzer (1991:75) observes that *gendér wayang* is a flourishing tradition and he describes a new role for it as restaurant background music (ibid.:84)<sup>37</sup> Like drummers, *gendér* players form a particular clique of musicians who enjoy meeting each other to compare versions and styles, and other musicians who do not play *gendér* are often in awe of those who do (ibid.:85).

Tenzer's later book *Gamelan Gong Kebyar* (Tenzer 2000) refers to *gendér wayang* to illustrate aspects of modern Balinese music. He compares *gendér wayang* with other genres classified by Balinese as "*tua*" (old), including *gambang* and *selonding*, and contrasts it with court music ensembles derived from *gambuh*. *Tua* music tends to have just two strata, *pokok* and *kotékan*, and the former is not abstracted hierarchically like court music. This leads to the enrichment of the music's horizontal flow, often resulting in internal rhythmic elaboration, and surface rhythmic details and contrasts (ibid.:232–3). Tenzer gives the first theme of "Sekar Sungsang" as an example, commenting: "It lies, by Balinese standards, in sharp syntactic opposition to court music" with its assymetric figuration (ibid.:241). The left-hand melody features periods of melodic motion (*majalan*) and stasis (*ngubeng*). At some points it seems to derive from the right hand figuration, while at others the parts seem almost independent (ibid.:241).

## Nick Gray, "An introduction to the Sukawati style of Balinese *gendér wayang*" and "'Suléndra': an example of *petegak* in the Balinese *gendér wayang* repertory"

I describe features of the Sukawati style of *gendér wayang* in two articles (Gray 1990 and 1992). In the first, I note that less frequently played *petegak* seem to have been changed less than virtuosic show pieces such "Sekar Sungsang" and "Sekar Ginotan". I also describe the illustrative use of figuration in "Sekar Sungsang". *Sungsang* means "upside down" or "topsy-turvy" and the music reflects the upside-down look of the *sungsang* flower (a type of climbing lily,

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<sup>37</sup> I Nyoman Gunawan and I Wayan Dasta of Tenganan play regularly at hotels in the nearby resort of Candi Dasa.

*gloriosa superba*). Another example is the winding melody of “Tulang Lindung” (“eel-bone”) (ibid.:46–7). I also describe the use of high and low registers to denote the aesthetic quality of pieces from *manis* to *keras* respectively (ibid.:48).

In the second article, which examines the *petegak* piece “Suléndra”, I stress that the transcription presented represents a “snapshot” of one version of the piece as it develops through time, being changed by different players (ibid.:4). I describe how the *gineman* introduction establishes a tonal centre (*ndang*) with a middle section that emphasises another pitch (*ndéng*). I then divide the *pengawak* (first main section) into its constituent melodic cells, and note that “the *pengiwan* [second main section] extends the material from the *pengawak* by inserting short passages of new material and varying some of the existing sections” (ibid.:7). The coda-like ending (which appears, varied, in other pieces) seems to interrupt the flow of the piece in order to provide closure (ibid.:7).

I describe two basic types of melodic phrase in the main body of the piece: interlocking in both right and left hands to sustain a static pitch level and, secondly, snatches of freer left-hand melody emerging from the interlocking, especially towards cadences. However, even the latter are cell-like and somewhat repetitive (ibid.:7). I distinguish three such functional cell-types: initial, cadential (moving towards a cadence note) and final (static after a cadence note) (ibid.:8). I note that similar melodic shapes are common in ritual music for the *gamelan gong gedé*, and that the technique of building with functional cells seems close to the Central Javanese use of *céngkok*. However, the cells of “Suléndra” are largely unique to it, although the sharing of similar patterns does occur between several *gendér* *wayang* pieces (ibid.:9). I suggest that one reason for the occasional irregularities of phrase length in *gendér* *wayang* pieces such as “Suléndra” (so different from the four-square structures of most other gamelan types) stems from the use of inserted cells to extend melodic material (ibid.:10).

## **Mashino, “A study of changes in the style of *gender wayang* music of Sukawati village in Bali”**

Ako Mashino’s (1999) article complements the work of Heimarck (1999, see below) on the impact of modernisation in the same village. Mashino is interested in the motivation behind the stylistic changes that took place there during the 1950s and 1960s, which transformed Sukawati style to become distinct from other villages (Mashino 1999:3).

Mashino notes the influence of *gong kebyar* on the new Sukawati style in sharpness of sound, fast tempo, dramatic expression and virtuoso techniques (ibid.:3). The new style led to Sukawati musicians to embark on a quest for ever more complex versions, too difficult to imitate (ibid.:3). Mashino concludes that the Sukawati style continues to change “not only through the motivation to create better, more modern musical expression, but also through their strategies with which they maintain their high position as the top performers of *gender wayang*” (ibid.:3).

Although this competitive spirit is certainly present, I find also that Sukawati musicians often stress the importance of other motivating factors, such as a quest for artistic fulfilment or boredom with commonly used versions, in creating new music.

## **2.4 Lisa Gold**

### **“Musical expression in the wayang repertoire: a bridge between narrative and ritual”**

Lisa Gold’s (1992) article shows the parallels between *gendér wayang* in shadow plays and its use in rituals such as cremations and tooth filings. Her study focuses on players from Sukawati, Tunjuk (Tabanan), Kayu Mas (Denpasar) and Teges (Gianyar).

Gold stresses the centrality of *wayang* to Balinese concepts of ritual and everyday life and the importance of the *gendér* music that accompanies it in “shaping this narrative style by creating and reinforcing dramatic moods and characterizations” (ibid.:245). Gold describes how, when *gendér wayang* is played in rituals outside the context of *wayang*, “a complex theatricality is

implicit in these rituals because the strong associations established between these pieces and their dramatic function within the *wayang* are carried over” (ibid.:246). Conversely, “the sacred qualities transmitted by *gëndér wayang* music within a ritual situation are carried into the *wayang* context by association” (ibid.:246).

She finds that *gëndér* in ritual “continues to function in the same way that it does within the *wayang* context although on a more abstract level” (ibid.:266). During cremation ceremonies, in which two *gëndér* are sometimes played on top of the cremation tower, and at tooth-filing ceremonies, the pieces chosen mirror the quasi-dramatic shape of the ritual (ibid.:266–7). The pieces chosen “convey certain moods and provide control over emotional and temporal aspects of a dramatic build-up in a generalized way without referring to specific characters” (ibid.:268). During tooth-filing ceremonies, *gëndér* are played while singers chant the “Kidung Malat” (ibid.:269). Through this loosely co-ordinated vocal and instrumental music: “The participants are ‘treated’ musically like *wayang* characters, but in an oblique way” (ibid.:269).

### **“The *gender wayang* repertoire in theater and ritual: a study of Balinese musical meaning”**

Gold’s extensive 1998 thesis explores these themes in greater depth, concentrating again on South Bali, especially the villages of Sukawati in Gianyar, Tunjuk in Tabanan, and Kayu Mas in Denpasar. Gold reinforces the theme that: “Music expresses time and mood in similar ways in *wayang* and in ceremonies” (ibid.:20). Theatre flows into ritual and vice versa: the accompaniment of both follows similar principles and uses similar musical materials (ibid.:21).

Gold states that *wayang* is “an integral part of Balinese worldview, existing in another place (a parallel world of myth) not another time”, and that the performance links these two worlds (ibid.:22). To explain this, she introduces some key Balinese cosmological concepts of relevance to performance, music and shadow puppetry. She describes how the *dalang* is able to internalise the forces of the macrocosm (*buana agung*) into the microcosm (*buana alit*) of his body, and how this is portrayed in the concept of

*panca maha buta* (five great elements/demons) and the symbolism of the *bantén daksina* offerings (ibid.:28–9). This is mirrored in the “inter-referencing process throughout Balinese artistic and religious traditions, with the *wayang* at the core of everything else, and with everything else at the core of *wayang*” (ibid.:30). Likewise, “*gender* music carries with it the *wayang* associations when played outside of *wayang*” (ibid.:31).

Gold also highlights the Balinese concepts of *trikaya parisuda* (three good acts) or *tri pramana* (three powers): *bayu* (energy, physical action), *sabda* (speech, voice), and *idep* (thought, mind) (ibid.:31). These form aesthetic focal points in performance, with the *dalang* shifting from one to another (ibid.:31). She also describes *taksu*, the “divine inspiration” of the *dalang* (ibid.:33), and the symbolism of the *pangawak dalang pat*, four spirit *dalang* called by the *dalang* to help in the performance (ibid.:33–7).

Gold describes how musicians and *dalang* look back on former musical practice in the idealized past of *zaman dulu* (“the good old days”) and maintain pieces that may no longer be in use: “many musical events seem fragmented and their purpose in *wayang* inexplicable, until they are filled in and completed in light of former practice” (ibid.:39). Anecdotal memories of this *zaman dulu* include how *Kawi* would be used more and audiences would appreciate a wider variety and more complete versions of mood, character songs, dances and entire scenes (ibid.:40). Gambling in the *wayang* area used to encourage longer performances with more *petegak* pieces (ibid.: 41).

Gold traces some central lines of transmission among *dalang* and *gendér* players between the villages of Tunjuk, Kuta, Teges, Sukawati, Buduk and Kayumas (ibid.:53, chart 2-A). She notes differences in players’ attitudes to regional and personal variation, some being happy to trade pieces and others fiercely possessive. New ways of exchanging pieces include contact with other musicians at the government arts academies, TV and radio stations and through sharing foreign students (ibid.:55–6).

Gold describes the musical and historical background of Banjar Babakan in Sukawati, as well as the contrastingly quiet village of Tunjuk in Tabanan, where Gold’s main teacher was I Nyoman Sumandhi, director of SMKI (high-school level performing arts academy), and Kayu Mas, Denpasar, where the main performers are I Wayan Konolan and his children, I Wayan Suwéca, I

Nyoman Sudarna, I Wayan Sujana and Ni Ketut Suryatini (ibid.:57–84). Among Gold's secondary research areas is the isolated village of Sumita, in Gianyar, whose players claim their repertoire is "old and unbroken by outside influences" (ibid.:84).

Gold describes how the concept of *ramé* (busy, crowded with noise) is given a positive value in ritual contexts, contrasting with the negative concept of *sepi* (empty) which implies vulnerability (ibid.:92). Gold explores how music is used to shape ritual, noting that music is frequently used in Bali to mark a person moving from one state to another, as in tooth filing and cremation (ibid.:102).

Gold notes many changes in concepts as well as performance contexts, for instance modern distinctions between *adat* (custom) and *agama* (religion), and recent attempts to distinguish sacred and secular (ibid.:103–5). Like myself, she finds Banded and DeBoer's (1995) categorisation oversimplified: this groups performing arts into *wali*, *bebali* and *balih-balihan* in a continuum from most to least sacred. *Gendér* cuts across these three categories and is played in each (1998:131), although it is associated with the "old" group of ensembles, which include *gambang* and *selonding*, and with the *Kawi* language and *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* (ibid.:114–129). The ensemble can thus stand in as a symbol of the mythological period, for instance the *gendér* may represent a *wayang* when the host cannot afford a complete performance, as is often the case in the three-month *oton* (Balinese birthday ceremony) (ibid.:135).

Gold describes how the repertoire is used to give shape to both theatrical and ritual contexts and outlines the shifting focus between *dalang* and musicians (ibid.:146). She examines how concepts of binary opposition and of levels of ceremony types affect musical forms and aspects such as pitch, tempo, texture, dynamics and timbre (ibid.:154). Pieces may be divided into *manis* (sweet) and *keras* (strong) types, but players often distinguish a third, intermediate level of *menengah* (medium) (ibid.:155). Gold proposes a modification of McPhee's "soft" versus "strong" classification (derived from *manis* and *keras*) to one of "motion" and "emotion" (ibid.:155–6). By emotion, she means: "the idea of the 'essence of being', the mood evoked during contemplative moments such as opening invocations to the wayang and moments of prayer" (ibid.:155). This static, quiet (*sepi*) music is contrasted with



the music for action, which is busy and *ramé* (crowded). Besides *ramé* and *sepi*, a state of *kosong* (emptiness) characterises certain pieces, such as the ritual (*ngastawa*) piece “Sudamala” (ibid.:156–7).

Gold shows that the three main character types in *wayang* are associated with pitch level, more refined characters being associated with higher pitches both in song and accompaniment (ibid.:183). Texture also plays a part in such characterisation, with more delicate *kotékan* required for *manis* characters, simpler *kotékan* for *keras* types, and no *kotékan* for demons, but “rather a pivoting between two keys” (ibid.:183).

The “filler” type of *batél*, “Penyelah”, “Peselah” or “Batél Maya”, which often accompanies *bebaturan* songs in Sukawati is also applied on different pitch levels according to character: the lowest note for *keras* characters such as Bima or a *raksasa* (demon, ogre), the next note up for refined characters and the third note up for female characters, children and gods, but Gold notes that this is not always followed in practice (ibid.:192). Gold shows how easy it is to shift between levels of intensity in this type of *batél*, due to its modular use of short ostinati (ibid.:193).

Gold next explores the symbolic levels operating in the “Pemungkah” suite, as a cycle of life and death and as “a doorway into the *wayang* world” (ibid.:212): “Loceng sees the Pamungkah as outlining a development from birth through life, night (frogs), day (sky), water (eels) ‘all sorts of disturbances in life’ ... many offspring, and finally to destruction and nothingness” (ibid.:278). Gold draws parallels with similar symbolism in the “Talu” overture to Javanese *wayang* and with Thai overtures. She speculates that the *gambangan* passage in the “Pemungkah” may refer to death (*gambang* is commonly associated with cremation ceremonies) (ibid.:276–7, note 84). Gold outlines the choreography of the *kayon* dance and how this has been influenced by Balinese dance styles, including the “floor pattern” of *arja* and the *légong* dance, which is said to have developed at the court of Sukawati (ibid.:247–52).

Gold then analyses the initial songs for the first, meeting scenes, showing how “a transferral of vocal personae from dalang to puppet is occurring” (ibid.:287–8), mirrored in the musical texture which moves from the complexity of “Alas Harum” to the (near) monophony of the two *pangalang*

songs. She discusses “Alas Harum” from the point of view of text, vocal style, melodic contour and the relationship of *gendér* and vocal parts (293–319). She analyses this piece (and the subsequent meeting music, “Panyacah Parwa”) in versions from Tunjuk, Sukawati, and Kayu Mas (ibid.:319–82), highlighting its “modular variation”, in which phrases are repeated or reworked, sometimes becoming asymmetrical, and often reappearing, exact or altered in different pieces (ibid.:343). Some *tandak* pieces may replace the opening song “Alas Harum”: “Candi Rebah”, “Rundah”, and “Bopong” may be used in specific dramatic contexts. This may happen if the opening scene is in the court of the Korawa or the demons, if it demands an opening weeping scene, or if the performance is another type of *wayang* such as *Ramayana* (ibid.:405–6).

Gold next discusses the two *tangisan* pieces (weeping music), “Bendu Semara” (also known as “Tangis Gedé”, for coarse characters weeping) and “Mésem” (for refined characters weeping). She finds that the three regional versions of “Mésem” are similar to each other, while those of “Bendu Semara” are more varied (ibid.:447–8). These pieces share many motivic fragments, a common feature in *gendér wayang* in which pieces seem to cross-reference each other motivically (ibid.:448–9). In performance, these pieces move between background and foreground as the puppeteer alternates between speech and song, reflecting a shift in focus between the external situation and the inner mood of the character (ibid.:449–53). Gold discusses the vocal contour and performance possibilities of these songs, noting that the vocal line for “Mésem” descends in contrast to the ascending melody of the otherwise similar “Rébong” which is happier in mood (ibid.:453).

Gold describes how Locéng developed the Sukawati “Bendu Semara” “immensely, reworking pre-existing motives with elements of other pieces”. However, she adds: “I don’t know to what extent Pak Loceng made the changes himself, and to what extent it was a matter of ‘communal composition’ through the ages” (ibid.:463, note 9).<sup>38</sup> The final two sections of the Sukawati version of the piece share more similarities with the Kayu Mas version. Gold notes that “a note-for-note comparison would render them quite different”, and yet they are

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<sup>38</sup> I have also noted that many players make contradictory statements on which pieces or sections they themselves have actually composed, although on other occasions instances of personal composition may be clearer (see chapter 6). This seems to reflect the ambiguity of the line dividing the creation of totally new material and the reworking of old.

identified by Balinese as “the same piece”, because of some constant identifying features (ibid.:488).

Gold analyses different versions of the other main *tetandakan* (ibid.:491–535) and considers the sacred piece used for the Sudamala ritual, “Cupukembang”, which is often also called “Aji Kembang” or “Sudamala” (ibid.:535–9). This conveys an “otherworldly” mood, and a “lack of emotion, that state one achieves when one has transcended emotion” (ibid.:536). Although different pieces are used for this category in different regions, they share a similar austere texture (ibid.:537). In conclusion, the *tetandakan* pieces are categorised along a continuum from refinement to coarseness and, although pieces are associated with certain emotions, categories such as feeling sad, alone, quiet or in love seem to overlap (ibid.:538).

Next, Gold examines the music for scenes of travelling and fighting, *angkat-angkatan* or *pangkat* (ibid.:544–626). Although now only a handful of these pieces are used in South Bali, Gold states (and Vonck 1997 confirms) that they are still much used in North Bali (1998:545). Gold’s teachers divided these pieces into three different levels of intensity, depending on the dramatic situation, from calm, through medium to violent (ibid.:554). Gold describes their form and structure, including the conceptual “gong” tone at the start (or end) of the left hand ostinati, the interdependence of right hand *kotékan* and left hand ostinati (ibid.:561–6). She also notes the way these pieces seem to refer to *gamelan beleganjur* in the *ponggang*-like pattern of the ostinati, while *angkatan* themselves are often briefly quoted in *petegak* (sitting pieces) (ibid.:568).

Formerly, *angkatan* made up piece-clusters for whole scenes in the *wayang* (ibid.:568–74) and specific *angkatan* were linked with specific characters (ibid.:574–8). Nowadays, although pieces may be named after a character, they are more associated with character type (refined or coarse), and all but a few have been dropped from actual *wayang* performance, being preserved simply as instrumental compositions (ibid.:576). Gold compares “Partha Wijaya” (“Victorious Arjuna”) from Sukawati, “Patra Wijaya” from Pengosékan, “Arjuna Kapili” from Tunjuk and a piece for Arjuna from Kayu Mas (ibid.:576–85). For more violent scenes, the ostinato materials of “Batél” and, for the sections before fighting, “Batél Maya” and “Panyelah” (or “Peselah”) can be manipulated flexibly according to different situations (ibid.:616–26). These “filler”

materials can occur at three levels of intensity and at different pitch levels (ibid.:617–18).

Finally, Gold explores the use of *gendér* in tooth-filing ceremonies and in cremations. Although it is possible that once full *wayang* performances were incorporated in these ceremonies, now pieces are used in a more general, less specific way in ritual than in *wayang* (ibid.:628–31). Gold describes the tooth-filing ceremony as a transformative act for the participants, in which the *gendér* functions both to calm their otherwise frightening sensations and to accompany the singing of “Kidung Malat” (ibid.:638–46). She notes a certain detachment between the musicians, who play the pieces slowly and casually, and the course of the ceremony. However, musicians seem to follow a fairly predictable order of pieces, which seems to be based on the guidelines followed in *wayang* performance (ibid.:647). She cites Locéng, who describes how *petegak* are played as an introduction, then *angkat-angkatan* to accompany the participants’ approach to the ceremonial platform, “Cupukembang” or “Sudamala” during the prayer, slow *tetandakan* such as “Mésem” or “Rundah” during the filing, “Rébong” after the filing and “Tabuh Gari” to close (ibid.:650, Chart 10-1). Other villages follow a similar but not identical order (ibid.:652–4).

Gold shows how playing *gendér* in the context of cremation ceremonies also represents an entire *wayang* performance (ibid.:663). The *gendér* on the cremation tower are almost inaudible in contrast to the loud, processional *gamelan beleganjur* on the ground (ibid.:665). Players give different lists of pieces for use on the tower, which agree on essentials: *angkat-angkatan* while the tower is raised, “Rundah” as it is carried to the intersection of the village, “Mésem” till the road to the graveyard, “Sangsangan” or “Batél” from there to the graveyard and “Tabuh Gari” as the corpse is lowered from the tower (ibid.:666). As with tooth filing, *gendér* music is used to accompany a transformation from one state or status to another, as “the physical path of the tower always outlines the journey of the soul” (ibid.:674). Often, the story of *Bima Swarga*, which relates Bima’s transformative journey to the underworld is chosen for a night time *wayang* performance after the cremation as well (ibid.:675). Gold summarises the links between *wayang* and ritual, reinforcing her view that “you can take the *gendér* out of *wayang*, but you can not take the *wayang* out of *gendér*” (ibid.:677).

## 2.5 Brita Heimarck

### **“Balinese discourses on music: musical modernization in the ideas and practices of shadow play performers from Sukawati and the Indonesian college of the arts”**

As its title implies, Brita Heimarck's 1999 thesis focuses on Sukawati and STSI (now, ISI) and covers ground relevant to my research on variation. However, Heimarck focuses more on the broader social aspects of change and the reasons different generations of players give for such change than on the musical effects of this, or on the purely musical reasons for change. Her primary source is I Wayan Locéng of Sukawati, who is also one of the main teachers of Lisa Gold and myself. This dissertation has since been published, slightly modified, as a book with the title: *Balinese discourses on music and modernisation: village voices and urban views* (Heimarck 2003). However, as the sections on *gendér wayang* are largely the same, I have continued here to refer to the earlier thesis. Heimarck's (2002) article, "Waves of emphasis and the effects of modernization in the Balinese shadow theater" likewise reiterates these same themes, while postulating a theory of "waves" as a background aesthetic in the performance of *gendér wayang*.

Heimarck sums up recent observable changes as, "the use of faster tempi, shorter performances, reductions in the use of the literary language, *Kawi*, and increases in colloquial Balinese, and preferences for humor over philosophical teachings" (1999:8). She notes the tendency for shorter performances and for dropping certain pieces from the active performance repertory. She suggests that modern working hours are the main reason for this change, as well as the faster pace of modern life and familiarity with short television programmes (ibid.:8–9). The increasing use of Balinese rather than *Kawi* reflects a growing trend towards the vernacular in Bali and the increase in humour helps to relieve some of the stresses of modern life (ibid.:9). Other factors include new forms of training at academies such as STSI (ISI) and SMKI and new performance contexts, often untied to religious ceremonies: musical demonstrations, concerts, music festivals, competitions and tourist

performances (ibid.:11). Modern methods of transport also make it easier to play in different districts (ibid.:12).

Heimarck describes aspects of institutional teaching in STSI, including the teaching of non-Balinese musics, research and the opening up of new career opportunities. She also discusses the new political roles for the performing arts that have emerged since independence, in which artistic tours abroad become a form of diplomatic mission, and the effects of Indonesian self-identity within globalisation (ibid.:15). She contrasts a *guru alam* (traditionally-taught) artist like Locéng with the younger generation in Sukawati, whose experience combines traditional and modern methods of instruction (ibid.:17).

Heimarck rightly stresses that by concentrating on the voices of individuals from different generations, she can move beyond monolithic concepts such as “traditional” or “modern” (ibid.:19). However, I disagree with her reasons for conducting interviews only in Indonesian or English rather than the harder Balinese language. Heimarck justifies it as making comparison with modern written materials on music in Indonesian more consistent (ibid.:36) but using Indonesian alone, in my view, places an artificially formal, over-modernised context around the content of her interviews and conversations.

Heimarck translates Locéng’s narration of the myth of the origin of the shadow puppet play (ibid.:579) of which I have another, similar version that he wrote down. Then, she traces the family history of the Sukawati dalang family in Banjar Babakan, noting its special relationship with the court of Sukawati (ibid.:62–7). She provides family trees showing the main lines of teaching, transmission and influence within this family from the late nineteenth century to the present (ibid.:64–6, table 1.3). She also cites a recent text tracing the history of the court of Sukawati, the *Babad Timbul Sukawati* (ibid.:67–71) and highlights the changing role of the court during post-colonial times.

Heimarck next explores teaching and learning methods through her lessons with Locéng. Locéng teaches both Balinese and foreign students privately at his house in Sukawati, as well as in classes at STSI (though he has since retired from this), and the influence of his musical style is further spread through the commercial cassettes of his group (ibid.:111–12). Heimarck notes, as I and many of his other pupils have found, that Locéng’s teaching method makes great use of proverbs, metaphors and stories as well as purely musical

instruction (ibid.:112). Heimarck describes some particular musical techniques used by Locéng, including *selah* (broken octaves which delay the beat) and *ngorét* to create a quality of refinement (ibid.:136–8). The *selah* technique is most commonly used in the *pangkat* type of piece, while *ngorét* is more characteristic of the slow *tetandakan* pieces (ibid.:138).

Heimarck then focuses on the younger generation of *gendér* players and *dalang* in Sukawati through summaries of interviews. These include *gendér* player and *dalang* I Wayan Mardika Bhuana, the son of one of the most famous Sukawati *dalang*, the late I Ketut Madra (ibid.:150–63).

Heimarck describes the musical training of Locéng's son, I Ketut Sukayana, who studied *gendér* with his father before studying other types of gamelan at STSI and playing in the *seka gong* of the *banjar* (ibid.:158–60). Heimarck also interviews *gendér* player I Gde Wawan Oktaviyana, who taught himself electric organ to play in a Western-style rock band (ibid.:162–7). She discusses the influence of Western pop music on youth culture in Sukawati and talks about Ketut Sukayana's interest in Western classical music, unusual in Bali even for a musician (ibid.:166). Heimarck asks if he has seen his father compose a piece (*menciptakan lagu*) or add to one, to which Ketut replies no, but he has seen him add to, correct or improve something (ibid.:177). Heimarck notes the ambiguity of this answer, a characteristic I have also noted when asking whether someone has composed or made a piece.

Whether a player considers him or herself to have “composed”, “changed” or “reworked” a piece seems to shift, perhaps according to their expectations of the questioner's intentions. Thus, it is interesting to quote in full the list of pieces Locéng mentioned to Heimarck as having substantially altered: “Krépétan”, “Abimanyu”, “Banaspati”, “Sekar Sungsang”, “Grebeg”, most of the “Pemungkah”, “Sekar Ginotan”, “Seketi”, “Peselah” or “Penyelah”, the *pengécét* section of “Rébong”, “Grudo” and music to accompany the clowns Tualén, Délem and Sangut, and possibly “Segara Madu” (ibid.:181–2). I suspect that Locéng is only referring to the final, partly improvised section of “Peselah” as one of his creations, as his was the first group to add this section. Locéng also told me that the piece “Segara Madu” was brought from Klungkung.

Two other aspects of the music were embellished by Locéng: firstly the introductions (*gineman*) to many pieces were made more elaborate and *kebyar-*

like, and, secondly, *sangsih* parts in the form of counter-melodies were added to some slow sections that had previously been unison, for instance the first section of “Rébong”. Locéng tells Heimarck that, in this, he was influenced by Western-style singing in harmony that he heard during the Dutch colonial period (ibid.:183). I raised this point with Locéng and received both confirmation and some further revelations about his source material, which I discuss below in chapter 6 of this study. Locéng sums up his style as a mixture of old and new, since “the old music is still evident in his pieces, but at the same time, people can feel that his music is also current” (ibid.:183).

Ketut Sukayana, describes to Heimarck how he had to learn slightly different versions of pieces from those his father had taught him when he started to play with another Sukawati group to accompany the *dalang* Ganjeréng (ibid.:184). He describes how the differences lay in the “system of counterpoint”, especially in slow pieces that show off the melody, (ibid.:184). Later, when he came to lead this group, Ketut introduced his father’s versions of pieces as he found the other versions old fashioned and not sweet enough (ibid.:184–5). The newer style has been adopted by other groups as “more appropriate for their times” (ibid.:188): “To play in a *kuno* [ancient, old] fashion would seem old-fashioned, simplistic, or even boring to them” (ibid.:189).

The younger generation of Sukawati *gendér* players now plays at an even faster tempo than Locéng’s generation, following the lead of I Kadek Budi Setiawan, who plays for the *dalang* Wawan Oktaviyana (ibid.:192). Locéng’s younger son, I Wayan Suprpta, says such tempi are impressive and fit with the faster pace of modern life (ibid.:192–3). Locéng criticises them for playing everything loud and fast, without contrastingly sweet music. His own style was previously fast but he slowed it down to give space to the complex, embellished versions he has created (ibid.:193–4).

Heimarck discusses the goals and motivations of the younger generation of Sukawati *dalang* and musicians (ibid.:213–26). She finds a sense of pride in the family tradition and that all mention a desire to preserve and maintain the legacy of *wayang*. Some highlighted a mastery of the technical, especially rhythmic, aspects of the music, as well as a strong desire to study. Older musicians, though, tended to stress the importance of the ritual use of music. Heimarck concludes that “the Balinese are still negotiating the boundaries



between sacred and secular, but there is a basic understanding that both aspects are essential to life and will continue to exist" (ibid.:226).

The second part of Heimarck's dissertation is less concerned specifically with *gendér wayang* than with STSI's place in the picture of musical modernisation in Bali. She interviews students and teachers at the college, looking at STSI's twin roles of preservation and development of Balinese arts. She mentions Ketut Sudiana's thesis (Sudiana 1995) about the creation of "a new shadow play that combined enlarged *wayang golek* three-dimensional puppets made out of styrofoam (hence the original title, "Wayang Sterefom"), dancers performing an episode from Balinese history, and projected images on a screen" (Heimarck 1999:326).

## 2.6 Henrice Vonck

### **"The music of the North Balinese shadow play; the dramatic function of *gendèr wayang* in Tejakula"**

The Dutch scholar Henrice Vonck has concentrated on the very different *gendèr wayang* tradition of North Bali, in the village of Tejakula (Vonck 1995 and 1997). Vonck notes that "names, melodies and the playing style of the compositions were different" from in the south (1995:146).

Vonck's 1995 article shows how *wayang* stories are expressed as a "living text" through repeated performances, made up of the three threads of words, sung and spoken, puppet movements, and the accompanying *gendèr* music (ibid.:145). She describes two categories of *gendèr* composition: the first illustrates the main action of the standard scenes, which vary in mood from coarse (*keras*) to neutral (*sedeng*) and refined (*halus*) or sweet (*manis*), while the second musically illustrates the characters of the particular puppets in the scenes, again ranging from coarse, through neutral to refined (ibid.:145).<sup>39</sup>

Vonck's description of the three interactive "threads" of the performance (words, images and music), of the relationship between pitch level, aesthetic

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<sup>39</sup> I feel Vonck is right to stress this tripartite aesthetic division as the binary quality of Balinese categorisation has generally been over-stressed.

character (from *manis* to *keras*) and the developed use of character pieces will be omitted here as I describe them below in relation to her thesis.

**“*Manis* and *keras* in image, word and music of *wayang kulit* in Tejakula, North Bali”**

Vonck’s 1997 thesis puts forward two contradictory theories surrounding the historical basis for the stylistic differences between North and South Bali (ibid.:29). In the first, North Bali is regarded as having more direct and closer contact with Java and thus more similarities with Javanese *wayang*. The second theory states that *wayang* was brought to North Bali from the south. The latter reflects the view that northern style is a “defective” version of southern, echoed by McPhee (1936:32). Vonck’s Tejakula informants agree that their style is unique, though not “defective” (1997:29). North Balinese *wayang* is not appreciated in the south: it is seldom performed there so audiences are not acquainted with the *dalangs*’ style or music and it fails to communicate meaning (ibid.:29). Vonck describes how her teacher, Madé Sujana has forbidden the modernisation of *gendér wayang* pieces in Tejakula, to preserve the unique repertoire, and other informants describe the Tejakala *gendér* tradition as a very conservative one (ibid.:33).

The following are the main northern characteristics not found in the south: only two instruments are used, there is only one *dalang*’s assistant and the mallets are shorter and lighter, leading to a playing technique closer to Javanese *gendér* style. The right mallet is harder than the left, giving it prominence and a strong attack, while the left-hand melody hums more softly. A dish is used for a lamp instead of the southern bowl, while the way the lamp is hung, the attachment of the banana trunk and the open staging are similar to Java. The manipulation of the *kayon* puppet at the beginning of the play is closer to Java than to South Bali, being less elaborate and “more authentic” according to Vonck’s informants (ibid.:29–30).

Vonck discusses *wayang kulit* as a “living text” and, after describing the literary sources of the shadow play, explains what she calls the “three threads” of word, image and music, which go to make up a complete performance. Vonck expresses diagrammatically the relationship between senders (those

performing the threads of image, word and music), the synthesis of these threads, and the receivers (the audience) (ibid.:40). I feel however, that this model does not sufficiently express the multivalent relationships of dialogue between *dalang* and musicians, between the musicians themselves, or the feedback from the audience to the performers.

Vonck describes how cosmological concepts such as *buana agung/buana alit* (macrocosm and microcosm), *rwa bhineda* (bipartition) and *tri murti* (an example of tripartition) are reflected in the staging of *wayang kulit* (ibid.:44–7): “the whole cosmos is projected on the microcosmic screen, so that people can watch and learn from it” (ibid.:46–7). Like Gold (1998), she links the opening “Pemungkah” with the creation of the “*wayang* world” (1997:49). Vonck stresses that the duality inherent in *wayang* symbolism should be understood as relative and no hierarchy is intended (ibid.:62).

Vonck examines how key cosmological concepts are reflected in the shape, colouring and character of the various puppets (ibid.:67–80). Tripartition is reflected in the assortment of characters according to upper, middle and lower worlds, while concepts of duality are reflected in the division of character-types into *manis* and *keras*, with the connecting classification of *sedeng*. Vonck shows how the subtler combinations of these three basic character types are reflected in the shape, eye-type and colour of each puppet. Such combinations include: *manis* outside with *manis*, *keras* or *sedeng* inside, *sedeng* outside with *sedeng*, *keras* or *manis* inside, *keras* outside with *keras*, *sedeng* or *manis* inside.

Vonck then looks at the subtext of word, both spoken and sung (ibid.:81–104). She examines the hierarchy inherent in the use of Old Javanese and Balinese, and the contrasting *keras* and *manis* styles of speech as well as the voices of the clowns. She examines the use of sung extracts of *kekawin* (Old Javanese epic poetry) in the *wayang*, which seem to be used more frequently than in the south. In the south, such extracts are frequently termed *bebaturation*, and are given a different melodic contour to the one they usually have when sung as literature outside *wayang*, whereas in Tejakula it seems that the *reng* (melodic contour) of the *kekawin* is maintained.

Vonck then studies how the melodic contours and pitch emphases of various *reng* used for different *wirama* (different poetic metres of *kekawin*)

correlate with different *wayang* characters. She finds a clear linkage between the distinctive musical qualities of ambitus, melodic contour, dominant pitches and voice quality and subtle gradations along the line from the most *manis* (for instance “Wirat”) through *sedeng* to *keras* (for instance “Sragdhara”). Thus, the use of pitch to highlight subtle gradations of character is similar to the use of visual cues she describes in the previous chapter (ibid.:104).

Vonck then applies this analysis to the content of the “subtext music” (ibid.:105–60). She studies the relationship between music, *wayang* puppets and their actions, classifying the pieces according to their use at points of entry, meeting, departure, and for scenes of sadness, love or war (ibid.:108–11). She then analyses this relationship in categories of pieces from *manis* to *keras*. She starts with the most *manis* in style, such as “Lor-loran” for “female heavenly beings and refined female Pandawas”, the equivalent of the southern “Rébong” (ibid.:119).

The piece “Sronca” is *manis*, but also sums up the characteristic of sadness, like the South Balinese “Mésem”. Like “Lor-loran”, it contains both a *cenik* (high register) section and a lower register one (*gedé*). The piece “Sikandi”, used for the entry of Kresna, also exhibits very *halus* features (ibid.:120–7). Vonck highlights the use of *gebugan wayah* (“old strokes”) in the playing of this and other *halus* pieces, as opposed to the simpler and easier *gebugan nguda* (“young strokes”). The former feature intricate embellishments and “the coordination between the two parts and the resulting chords is no longer synchronic, but syncopated” (ibid.:125).<sup>40</sup> Vonck points out subtle expressive differences within these *halus*-style pieces: in “Sikandi”, the music is less focused and songlike than in “Lor-loran” and there are no descending fifths, “so no-one is moved to tears” (ibid.:127).

Vonck then looks at pieces that can be placed “from *halus* to *sedeng* in music and *wayang* type” (ibid.:128–32). These pieces often emphasise the middle range of the register, which is neither *halus* nor *keras*, or alternate between high and low. A description then follows of the characteristic *galak-manis* (strong outer appearance with a refined inner nature) (ibid.:132–8), which

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<sup>40</sup> Interestingly, when I once played a cassette of *gendér wayang* from Tejakula to Locéng, who was not familiar with north Balinese *gendér* style, he interpreted the disjunction of the parts between the *gendér* in such pieces as poor ensemble playing (Locéng, personal communication, 1988).

likewise combines *halus* and *keras* musical features, for instance “Glagah Tunon”. After this, Vonck explores compositions in which the *keras* elements take over, starting with pieces that can be classified as *keras-manis*, for instance “Caak Mréngang” and “Rundah Mrawa”(ibid.:138–48). Then she describes pieces which can be categorised as *keras*, for the evil Korawa characters, such as “Sekar Sungsang Korawa”, “Angkatan Burisrawa” and “Batél” (ibid.:148–52), and finally *kasar* (even more coarse than *keras*) for instance “Bapang” (ibid.:152–5).

*Batél* *ostinati* based on the two lowest notes of the *gendér* are used “to accompany fights of the *keras* type wayang puppets” (ibid.:150). The lowest to fourth pitch levels upon which *batél* can be based are classed as *keras*, *keras/sedeng*, *sedeng/manis* and *manis* and accompany such character types respectively (ibid.:150). Tejakula has its own special type of piece, called *batél kekawin*, for accompanying sung *kekawin* quotations (ibid.:152).

Vonck concludes that the instrumental ambitus is divided into two opposing parts of which the top octave, called *cenik*, is regarded as *manis* and the low octave, called *gedé*, is *keras* (ibid.:156). Each octave too is divided into two opposing parts: “The upper two pitches constitute the *manis* part, the lower two pitches the *keras* part, while the one in between is the neutral pitch” (ibid.:156). Furthermore, many compositions are centred on two pitch levels, often one note apart. The higher-pitched of these alternating tonal centres is known as *cenik* (small) and the lower, *gedé* (large). *Manis* pieces start and end on the *cenik* episode and *keras* ones on the *gedé* episode (ibid.: 156). Similar subtleties are expressed by way of chords, which can be more or less consonant and can also express *manis* and *keras* through their appearance in the different registers. *Sléndro* fifths and octaves are most consonant and classed as refined when they appear in the upper octave but *keras* in the lower. More complex chords are *ramé* (crowded) and thus less refined (ibid.:156).

The *manis/keras* distinction is found in melodic type too: “The long, winding melodic phrases with sparse motifs are the most refined. In contrast, music based on an *ostinato* in the left-hand part and interlocking in the right-hand part is once again perceived as *ramé* and *keras* (ibid.:156). Perhaps strangely, the *gebungan wayah* is regarded as making the music sound *keras*, because it makes it more busy, *ramé*, but it is an indispensable feature even of

refined pieces as it is such an important playing technique (ibid.:156). Tempo, dynamics and song style are all also important aesthetic indicators in determining the degree to which a piece is *manis* or *keras* (ibid.:157).

Vonck shows how the three subtexts are woven together to create a whole in a performance of the *lelampahan* (play) *Pati Jayadrata* as performed by Jro Dalang Madé. She shows the tight co-ordination of pieces, puppet types and actions and the way that pieces flow from one to the next (ibid.:164–87). This seems familiar from South Balinese practice, for instance in the way *batél* pieces can be brought in suddenly, but it is clear that the music is more continuous in Tejakula than in the south. Vonck describes how pieces switch between *manis*, *keras* and gradations in between to reflect action and character, and shift between background and foreground (ibid.:190–1).

Vonck concludes that the North Balinese style of *gendér wayang* represents a tradition distinct from the south in several ways. In Tejakula, *gendér* music is played almost continuously. As a result, the repertoire is larger than in the south. Distinct from the southern tradition, too, is the very thorough and consistent application of the aesthetic continuum between *manis* and *keras*: outlines of this scheme are also present in the south but not so systematically applied.

## 2.7 Literature printed in Bali

Most Indonesian-language writing about *gendér wayang* is set in the wider context of *wayang*. The papers generally consist of a summary of the ensembles used for different types of *wayang*, followed by a list of pieces and piece types used for different purposes in the performance. As the bulk of these papers deal with the practice of *wayang* as a whole rather than going into detail about the musical accompaniment, I will only summarise some representative examples.<sup>41</sup>

An example is Sumandi 1984/85, which contains a chapter on *wayang* accompaniment (ibid.:29–39). Sumandi sets out the types of ensemble used for the various forms of *wayang*, such as *wayang parwa*, *wayang ramayana*, *wayang calonarang*, *wayang gambuh*, *wayang arja*, *wayang sasak* and *wayang*

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<sup>41</sup> See Heimarck (1999:325, note 79) for some of these publications on *wayang*.

*tantri* (ibid.:29–31). He notes, though, that the make up of these ensembles may vary, or that some ensembles may be used for several different types of *wayang*.

Sumandi then sets out the following categories of *gendér* piece (for a discussion of various categorisations presented by musicians see Gold 1998:144–60): *petegak* (sitting pieces), *pamungkah* (overture), *patangkalan* (meeting), *pangkat* (departure, movement), *tetangisan* (weeping), *pasiat* (warfare), *aras-arasan* (romantic), *papeson* (entry, emerging), *panyuud* (finishing) and *ngastawa* (worship) (Sumandi 1984/85:33–5). He then concludes with a list of actual pieces within these categories in various forms of *wayang*, though he does not say whether he has compiled this list from various sources or whether it represents the tradition of his own village, Tunjuk (ibid.:35–9).

Ketut Roda's work on Balinese *wayang* also contains a short chapter on *gendér* (Roda 1977/78:40–53), which again lists a number of commonly used piece names and piece types before setting out transcriptions of the following pieces in Balinese notation: "Glagah Katutunan", "Batél Wanara", "Bapang Délem", "Alas Harum" and "Rundah". All are versions from Tunjuk except for "Alas Harum", which is from Grenceng in Badung (Denpasar). The Balinese-language work on *wayang* by the renowned Sukawati dalang I Ketut Madra (1982/83) only mentions the *gendér* accompaniment in passing, in the context of action and song within the play (Madra 1982/83:2–8).

## 2.8 Conclusion

Despite Lisa Gold's wide-ranging thesis and Brita Heimarrck's examination of some of the forces of modernisation that have an impact on contemporary *gendér wayang* playing, there has been little detailed study of actual changes in the repertory and the processes of composition. This study aims to examine these phenomena and explore wider issues of composition, creativity and flexibility in performance deriving from them.

## **Chapter 3: Some key literature on composition, variation-making and improvisation**

Some of the first questions I began to ask myself about *gendér wayang*, once the unfamiliarity of the genre, the learning process, the musical textures and structures of the pieces had worn off, were about composition. Firstly, how did these pieces work, without a clear gong- and core-melody structure to guide them? Why such a variety of musical textures? I wondered how these pieces had come into being. Did known composers create them, like some *kebyar* pieces, or were they all “old” pieces, handed down from generation to generation? One answer to the last question seemed to be that *gendér wayang* was regarded as a very ancient genre, and yet at the same time remained popular and so had obviously kept up with the times. Known player-composers had contributed to the development of the different *gendér wayang* styles, which were, none the less, passed on as traditional. In this chapter, I examine some of the models that ethnomusicologists have used to discuss composition, variation-making and improvisation and consider the application of such theories to *gendér wayang*.

### **3.1 Continuity, variation, selection**

Cecil Sharp (1907) identifies three principles or forces at work in the shaping of English folk song. These are: continuity (based on memorisation and exact repetition), variation (the way a song may change each time it's sung) and selection (the community's acceptance or rejection of the variations so that some continue while others are dropped).<sup>42</sup>

These terms, of course, are similar to Darwin's principles of evolution, “variation, selection and preservation of traits” (Darwin 1859). More recent studies suggest that such an evolutionary model of creativity may be misleading (see, for instance, Perkins 1994). According to the model, a folk song acquires its qualities through the achievements of many generations of singers:

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<sup>42</sup> They form the core of the International Folk Music Council's definition of 1954: “Folk music is music that has been submitted to the process of oral transmission. It is the product of evolution and is dependent on the circumstances of continuity, variation and selection” (Karpeles 1955:6).



Individual angles and irregularities have been gradually rubbed off and smoothed away by communal effort, just as the pebble on the sea shore is rounded and polished by the action of the waves. (Sharp 1907:16)<sup>43</sup>

Bertrand Bronson's "Morphology of the ballad tunes" (1954) reassesses Sharp's model and suggested that self-selection by singer may be more significant: continuity of a tradition is so ingrained that it acts as an inner check, preventing the "unacceptable" coming into being (ibid.:13). However Bronson does not fully explore whether what is regarded as unacceptable by a society may also be subject to change, nor does he examine the complexity of the relationship between performer and the surrounding community of which he or she is a member.

In Bali, *gendér* players are acutely conscious of the approval or disapproval of the community. Locéng told me he was going to try out the piece "Segara Madu", which he had recently adopted from another area, as a *petegak*, or sitting piece before a *wayang*, to see whether it met with the approval of the discerning Sukawati audience (personal communication, 1992). Audience approval and disapproval play a large role in Balinese gamelan competitions (Bakan 1999:112–13). Bakan's examples (as with Western pop charts) tend to involve submitting whole pieces to be approved, in which small variants might slip by unnoticed, but in Sukawati it is the complexity of the variations themselves for which the area is famous and which are appreciated by aficionados. *Gendér* players perform for a number of different audiences simultaneously: discerning musicians and puppeteers, casual spectators, and, at temple festivals and other rituals, the gods. Players aim their complex variations and versions mainly at the most knowledgeable audience members. Locéng's frequent statements that he makes pieces more complex so they cannot be stolen imply a very active listening, which in reality is only adopted by some fellow musicians.

Even in a village tradition such as Sukawati, where pieces have been greatly changed within living memory and continue to change, it is interesting to re-apply Sharp's concept of continuity. What is noticeable is that all the changes to the pieces seem to make the style "more ours" to those who own them. It is

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<sup>43</sup> Note the similarity with Lévi-Strauss's imagery: "during the process of oral transmission, these probabilist levels [of myths] will rub against each other and wear each other down, thus gradually separating off from the bulk of the text what might be called its crystalline parts" (Lévi-Strauss 1981:626–7).

as if Sukawati's reputation and self-identity are spurring on the very changes that elsewhere might be seen to be an unacceptable modernisation of local identity and tradition. This perhaps reflects Hood's (1959) notion of "offensive" versus "defensive" traditions. Sukawati style threatens to replace older styles in some other areas, while in Sukawati itself changes are made that make pieces more characteristically "Sukawati". In some other areas, preservation rather than change ensures continuity, as with Vonck's (1997) description of Madé Sujana's edict forbidding change in the Tejakula *gendér* tradition (see chapter 2 of this study).

Which elements can vary in *gendér*? Musicians state that whatever changes can be made one should never lose the sense of the piece's *pokok* ("trunk"). I explore the rather subtle notion of *pokok* in *gendér wayang* later in this study, but one could sum it up as "simple underlying form of the piece, which contains the piece's identity". Some special restraints are placed on improvised variations, in that they must fit into the overall structure of the piece as performed by the other players.

Sharp portrays variation as an almost unconscious, blind force, with the implication, perhaps, that it is a succession of mistakes, equivalent to scribal errors in written traditions. What, then, are we to make of a statement by Locéng in chapter 6 that his changes made on the spur of the moment while playing are never done "without thought" (I: *tanpa pikir*)? I think what he means is that, despite some changes appearing to "slip out" as if unconsciously, he is always on top of them, always in control.

This highlights one problem with applying the concepts of "continuity, variation and selection": it implies that these are outside, abstract forces at work on individuals, ignoring their choices. More recent studies treat musicians and their surrounding music cultures more responsively. Lortat-Jacob's depiction of Sardinian player-composers, for instance, foregrounds individual choice: he describes how Pichiaddas worked hard to ensure his music's individuality, "alone, at night, in his kitchen", going over his repertoire "the way a stamp collector reviews his entire collection to savor its richness" (Lortat-Jacob 1995:14).

### 3.2 Tunes and transformation

The focus of this study is primarily on processes of composition rather than regional variation, though the two are clearly related. Differences and similarities between village repertoires provide a network of musical transformations that seem to echo those described by Lévi-Strauss (1966, 1969 and 1981) for orally transmitted myth. Ethnomusicologists have studied such networks in orally transmitted music and introduced the concept of tune families to describe groups of related melodic material.<sup>44</sup>

Nettl (1983:195) proposes a model of four types of musical transmission. In the first, the piece is carried on intact, in the second it changes in a single direction, in the third it changes to produce numerous variants, while the fourth develops like the third but borrows from other pieces. He says that these categories overlap, and I think it is debatable whether the first really exists, even where pieces are fixed through ritual use, notation or are regarded as “received” rather than “composed”.<sup>45</sup> In Nettl’s model, which can be applied to a whole repertoire or just a group of pieces, the “density” of a repertoire is the degree to which units of a repertoire are similar – how close or far apart they are, while the speed at which they change he calls “dynamics”. Nettl (1982) notes that little work has been done on the processes of such transformations:

we have not given much practical attention to the way in which they [processes] may lead to 'a piece,' or away from it to another piece, or perhaps to another version of the same piece. (Nettl 1982:7)

It is very much these “lines” leading to, from and between pieces that I wish to focus on in this dissertation.

I would select two of Lévi-Strauss’s concepts as being of particular relevance to these processes of variation in *gendér wayang*, namely, *bricolage* and transformation. Lévi-Strauss describes the process of making and remaking myths as “*bricolage*” and the myth-maker as a “*bricoleur*”, using whatever materials are to hand, renewing and enriching the stock of previous

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<sup>44</sup> See, for instance, Charles Seeger's (1966) study of versions of the ballad “Barbara Allen” and Helen Robert's (1925) survey of Jamaican folk music.

<sup>45</sup> Even where conscious composition is denied, as in the Flathead vision quest, the process may be represented in symbolic form, for instance as a song being sung by a being that approaches closer and closer (Merriam 1964:168). This may be relevant to some Balinese traditions, such as pieces in some gamelan *selonding* repertoires, which were received from the deity (Ramseyer 1992:126).

“constructions or destructions” (1966:17). The creations of mythic thought always really consist of a new arrangement of materials. When, in *The raw and the cooked*, Lévi-Strauss analyses the effects across time and space of this way of working – transformation – the parallels with *gendér wayang* composition and regional variation are even more striking. He attempts to show how one Bororo “key myth”, is “simply a transformation ... of other myths originating either in the same society or in neighbouring or remote societies (Lévi-Strauss 1969:2). This leads to a system of comparative analysis to apply to regional variations of myths, drawing an axis between myths “that present certain analogies with the first, although they derive from neighbouring communities” (ibid.:2). A parallel may be observed here with the way transformation (variation) operates in aurally transmitted musical traditions such as *gendér wayang*.<sup>46</sup>

Variations of the “same” *gendér wayang* piece in different districts can likewise be seen as transformations of each other (see Peterman’s 1989 study of regional versions of “Rébong” described above in chapter 2). Thus it is possible to trace pieces from region to region, although piece-names and pieces do not always coincide with each other. For instance, the pieces “Sekar Genot” in Tejakula and some versions of “Sekar Ginotan” in Karangasem are melodically related to the Sukawati piece “Sekar Jepun” but not to the group of pieces called variously “Sekar Ginotan” and “Sekar Genot” in Sukawati, Kayu Mas and Tunjuk, which are all themselves interrelated. The latter, together with versions of “Pangkat Pekesehan”, form a family of melodically related pieces, which also share some material with “Merak Ngelo”. It is noticeable that segments of one piece turn up in another or several others to form related groups of pieces within one district and, likewise, such segments of pieces turn up in different pieces in different areas. Pieces have become quite fixed in most areas (as often do myths). Although few are newly composed, they are malleable within limits, using acceptable variations, including chunks of material similar to or the same as those in other pieces.

One could also regard types of pieces as transformations of each other, for instance pieces in one mode or style (refined pieces such as “Rébong” and

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<sup>46</sup> Lévi-Strauss himself acknowledged the similarities (and differences) between myth and music at several different levels, although, perhaps strangely, he tends to limit his comments to Western classical music (Lévi-Strauss 1969, 1981). Some ethnomusicologists have started to

“Mésem”, which share melodic material), or in one mood (“Mésem”, “Bendu Semara” and “Rundah”, which again share material), or for action (different *pangkat* pieces), or linked in style (all *pangkat*), or related groups of piece-types (*batél*, *peselah* and *pangkat*). One could continue to trace such transformations as pieces are adopted from *gendér* to other genres (such as *kebyar* or *angklung*) and vice versa.<sup>47</sup> Musicians’ statements about how they compose reinforce this picture of re-composition in *gendér wayang*, as they describe building up new structures from the leftovers of old ones (see chapter 6).

### 3.3 Oral-formulaic theory

Albert Lord and Milman Parry’s oral-formulaic theory (Lord 1960) proposes that, through the process of learning a set of formulas and the rules to combine them, a performer is able to recreate oral poetry in a flexible way. Crucially, Lord recognises that formulas, though used like building blocks, enable rather than limit creativity. He stresses the individuality of the oral poet as “a traditional creative artist” (ibid.:4).

When Lord’s theory is transferred to an unnotated music tradition, the parallel is clear: performers continually manipulate the building blocks of the pieces, meaning that there is no clear line separating performer and composer: “Such artists are not just carriers but also creators of the tradition” (ibid.:13). As we will see in chapter 6, improvisation does occur in *gendér* but it less frequent than continuous reworking of a composition, perhaps weakening Lord’s argument that the reason for formulaic structure is “composition in performance”.

Lord also rightly questioned our understanding of “memorisation” in such traditions, stressing that “we are dealing with a particular and distinctive process

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explore some of these close links between processes in oral literature and aural/oral traditions of music, for instance Pandora Hopkins (1977).

<sup>47</sup> One might even extend the comparison to pieces or styles elsewhere in Indonesia. There are, for instance, melodic similarities between the group of piece-types for action (*pangkat*, *peselah* and *batél*) and the analogous Central Javanese forms (*ayak-ayakan*, *srepegan* and *sampak*). These show a similar proportional diminution to express higher levels of dramatic intensity culminating in fighting. The Balinese pieces feature an oscillation between two pitch levels, at both surface and structural levels, while the significance of a similar contour in the Javanese forms has been highlighted by Becker (1981). A recorded *ayak-ayakan* from a *wayang banjar* in South Kalimantan also features a repeated two-note oscillation (Music of Indonesia 14, 1997, Smithsonian Folkways CD 40441).

in which oral learning, oral composition, and oral transmission almost merge” (ibid.:5). The way Lord’s singers memorise the material gradually, by absorption, enables them eventually to recreate it in their own words (ibid.:26). This seems to be mirrored in Balinese *gendér* players who learn tunes from other areas to rework them in their own way later. Likewise, I have heard *gendér* players claim to have repeated something exactly, whereas in fact they have made changes.

Lord’s theory has been critically examined by Ruth Finegan, who feels Lord underestimates the complexity of the interplay between prior memorisation and creativity (1977:78). One problem lies in knowing what exactly a formula is. Is it just a segment of a certain size? Does it have to be repeated or varied to count? Is it a repetition of metrical, syntactic or semantic elements? This is also a difficulty in defining meaningful segments of musical material.<sup>48</sup> Finegan also notes that much written poetry is quite formulaic too and thus cannot be used as a way of proving the orality of a poem (ibid.:71). Likewise, as formulaic analysis of Western classical music by analysts such as Réti and Keller have shown, formulas are by no means a sure indicator of aural composition in music either.

Treitler points out in his discussion of the transmission of plainchant that memorisation and subsequent performance (also the basis for *gendér wayang* performance) involves a process of reconstruction, re-creation and active organising (Treitler 1974:345). He also finds a blurring between notated and unnotated music in medieval Europe as composers used the same generative systems for both (Treitler 1991:68). Little comparative work has been done on processes of composition in different periods of Western notated music, with which processes of unnotated composition might be compared.<sup>49</sup>

Bruno Nettl notes that pieces are not necessarily the principal units of transmission; these could just as easily be smaller units such as “melodic or rhythmic motifs, lines of music accompanying lines of poetry, cadential formulas, chords or chord sequences” (Nettl 1983:190). In the *gendér wayang* tradition, absorbing the pieces leads to the player also absorbing their

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<sup>48</sup> Besides short word formulas, Lord identifies groups of recurring ideas in oral poetry, which he calls themes (ibid.:68–9).

<sup>49</sup> One exception is Jessie Ann Owens’s study of how composers worked in Europe between 1450 and 1600, which stresses the importance of “composing without writing” (1997:64–73) and the writing of polyphonic music in separate parts rather than in a score (ibid.:313). She also finds evidence of a generally additive process of composition (ibid.:313–14).

constituent elements, which can then be recombined by an accomplished and creative player to create new material. Even if a culture recreates continually, “it also transmits to itself (and perhaps very slowly changes) the stylistic superstructure” (ibid.:190).

The piece “Suléndra” (described in Gray 1992) indeed seems to be constructed from quite tightly knit and economically used formulas. However, it is difficult to know whether these formulas are a result of how the piece was composed, how it is learned (formulas help one grasp the piece bit by bit) or whether the way one learns affects the way one composes. Perhaps we should recognise that “formulas” do occur in *gendér wayang*, and that they can aid memorisation, they can be a way of pre-composing and, occasionally, they may facilitate “composition in performance”.

### **3.4 The improvisation to composition continuum**

Bruno Nettl's writings on the subject of composition and improvisation span several decades (see particularly Nettl 1974, 1982 and Nettl and Russell 1998).

Nettl finds a huge range of compositional processes worldwide, from improvisatory to more pre-planned methods. He also finds improvisation in performance much less frequent than solitary improvisation while pre-composing (1954:82). Nettl takes as his extremes Africa, where improvisation is encouraged, and certain North American Indian tribes, where it is actively discouraged. He also contrasts the “unconscious composition” of the dream quest of the Indians of the Great Plains of Montana, Colorado and Wyoming, with the elaborately pre-planned composition and choreography of Chopi xylophone ensembles in Portuguese East Africa (now Mozambique) (ibid.:83).

Nettl sees re-composition of pre-existing pieces (which frequently occurs in *gendér wayang*) as a defining characteristic of oral traditions (1964:230–1). He also sees some constraints on compositional practice as characteristic of oral traditions. In order to memorise material, he feels, “the music must be simple, and there must be unifying devices such as repetition, a drone or parallelism in polyphony, isorhythmic structure, repetition of a metric unit, a definitely established tonality, melodic sequence, the predominance of a single tone, etc.” (ibid.:236).

In later writings, Nettl proposes a continuum from pre-planned composition to improvisation (1974, 1982 and 1983). He notes that some Western art composers, like Schubert, composed so rapidly it might almost count as improvisation:

Should we not then speak perhaps of rapid and slow composition, rather than of composition juxtaposed to improvisation? And would we not do well to think of composition and improvisation as opposite ends of a continuum, with a Schubert and a Beethoven at the extremes, likewise with the improvising Eskimo at one extreme, the Pima at the other, and the Plains Indians somewhere in the middle? (Nettl 1974: 6)

Clearly though, Western musicologists have viewed pre-composition and improvisation as somehow different in kind. Nettl notes that in the West until recently it has been given a low social value by art musicians and academic musicologists, being associated with minority groups such as black jazz musicians or with cultural outsiders (Nettl and Russell 1998:7). In an Indonesian parallel, Sarah Weiss (1993) found in Java that women *gendér* players were felt to be better than men at improvising the continuous musical accompaniment to the *dhalang*'s speech during *wayang*, because they approached the material more freely. However, this was also felt to reflect the allegedly uncontrolled nature of women and thus was interpreted partly negatively.<sup>50</sup>

In the Middle East, improvisation has yet another social meaning. There, Nettl describes two opposing groups of ideas: predictability, professionalism (playing on demand) and low status on the one hand, set against improvisation, amateurism and high status (1998:7–8). Thus, different points of emphasis along the improvisation to composition continuum may be prioritised or weighted with different values from culture to culture.

Hood (1975) compares group improvisation in the “stratified ensembles” of Java, Thailand and Bali, noting that Western terms such as composition or improvisation may not adequately describe what is going on: “the fine line between improvisation and composition may be difficult to establish and ... possibly, in some instances, such a line may not even exist” (1975:26). With reference to Balinese *gong kebyar* (one of the “most composed” or “least improvisatory” forms) he says: “at any given performance the filling in is fixed because of the requirements of interlocking parts. But over a span of time these parts are likely to change. Do they, therefore, fit the prescription for composition

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<sup>50</sup> In the West, improvisation has often been perceived as a symbol of femininity, and as free rather than controlled despite the strict rules that often actually operate within it (1998:9).



or improvisation? Or is our frame of reference still too narrow or too European – or too *recently* European?” (1975:30). Hood’s examination of group improvisation thus leads him to similar conclusions to those of Nettl.

Chapter 6 of this study shows one interpretation of how Nettl’s model of the continuum from improvisation to composition might be applied to *gendér wayang*. I found this a practical and useful way to classify types of composition, variation and improvisation in *gendér*, and it was one that seemed to make sense also to my informants and teachers as I asked questions about processes at different points along the scale.

### **3.5 Interactive approaches**

Other writers have focused on interaction in performance, particularly Gourlay (1993) and Brinner (1995). Gourlay’s approach is to analyse all the unpredictable aspects of a performance (in this case a Karimojong beer party) at both a macro- and micro-level. This includes unpredictability at the level of whether or not and when the performance takes place at all, who gives it, which songs will be sung and when – the whole order and sequence of events, down to the level of choices between notes. Gourlay’s approach and findings seem to coincide with my instinctive feeling that in *gendér wayang* pre-composition, pre-planned variation and improvisation can be seen as interrelated phenomena, or even different ways of looking at the same thing.

Benjamin Brinner’s (1995) book examines interaction in Javanese gamelan and how it affects group improvisation. He relates musical competence and interaction in Central Javanese gamelan music to the realisation of varied or improvised parts played on soft instruments in the ensemble, such as *rebab* (spike fiddle), *gendér*, and *gambang* (xylophone). He explores how such improvisatory skills are acquired and realised and analyses the impact of external forces, particularly interpersonal conduct, on the choices made in producing the eventual sound: “the sound product is a ‘trace’ of that give and take” (ibid.:4). His study is particularly important to this discussion in that it relates how knowledge is acquired (competence) and how music is produced (interaction) to the act of creating sound itself (composition, variation and improvisation).

Brinner takes a wide view of such interaction, which includes those who might not be physically present, such as great performers or teachers who have influenced the musicians and audience (ibid.:4). He also includes extra-musical knowledge in this interaction and acquiring of competence, such as mystical or ritual knowledge, gauging listeners' tastes and negotiating with patrons. He highlights issues such as keys to learning: items which are regarded as prototypes to the acquisition of other items (ibid.:156).

Brinner puts forward four overlapping concepts for the analysis of interaction: interactive network (the roles assumed by performers and links or relationships); interactive system (the means and meanings of communication); interactive sound structure (constraints and possibilities inherent in the ways sounds are put together); and interactive motivation ("goals, rewards, pitfalls, and sanctions") (ibid.:169).

Within an interactive network, questions of leadership come to the fore: whether such responsibilities are constant or shifting, assigned or attained, the explicitness and recognition of leadership, the status of leaders, the relative spontaneity or rehearsed nature of leadership, the timeframe involved, the domains controlled and the degree of control or influence over blend, balance, rhythmic co-ordination or tempo change (ibid.:172). Personality plays an important role: some are leaders who inspire, others may have roles as followers or accompanists (ibid.:174). Linked relationships are often built into the music, as with Balinese interlocking figuration (ibid.:177–8). Relationships may be more complex than they seem in an interactive network: even leaders, such as soloists, may depend on the followers' driving role. Some musicians even talk of a kind of telepathy at work (ibid.:179). Besides leaders, other instruments may act as mediators, actualising cues, or reinforcers (ibid.:188). Brinner further distinguishes prompts, that correct mistakes, signals, which show a path and prevent mistakes, and markers, that orient players (ibid.:190).

Competitive interaction is common in a number of traditions: Brinner cites interaction between North Indian musicians. In *gendér wayang* too, group dynamics often lead to an audible effect: I noticed that the tensions between Locéng and Sarga often seemed to make them play faster, louder and more aggressively. Among the flash points of interaction are mistakes, how to cope with them or cover them up, uncertainty, support, breakdowns, challenges to

authority in or outside the ensemble, and clashes between individual and group goals (ibid.:205).

Brinner discusses interaction in *pathetan*, used after many *gendhing*, before songs or as a mood-enhancer and structural marker in Javanese *wayang* and dance (ibid.:245). Although there is no Balinese equivalent, the style of *gendér* playing in *pathetan* seems similar in its relative metric freedom to the slow style of *gendér wayang* in pieces that accompany the *dalang*'s songs. Brinner's interest in *pathetan* focused on the role of interaction between players in how this rather loosely constructed, metrically free style was conceived and co-ordinated (ibid.:167). A similarly mystifying process of interaction seems to hold together performances of some slow-style Balinese *gendér wayang* pieces that accompany a *dalang*.

In Javanese *wayang* performance, the interactive network is centred on the *dhalang*, who has a special relationship with certain members of the gamelan. He chooses pieces and controls the performance, but through leading musicians (ibid.:269). The *gendér* is the key instrument in Javanese *wayang*, accompanying the *dhalang*'s *sulukan* (similar to Balinese *seséndon*), playing the introductions to pieces and providing a nearly continuous improvisation (*grimmingan*). The player usually sits near the puppeteer and is often a female relative (ibid.:269). The drummer transmits the *dhalang*'s cues to the *gamelan* through drum strokes (ibid.:270). Brinner also discusses the occasional leading or prominent roles of *rebab*, *gong* and *demung* (large metallophone), as well as the singers. Thus, the leading instruments mediate between the *dhalang* and the rest of the gamelan.

Such interactive analysis of group musicianship is an approach that might usefully be applied to *gendér wayang*. Following Slobin (1993) one can see how Balinese *gendér* groups engage in "banding and bonding" (1993:98–108) the former stressing the everyday aspects of performance and the latter the aesthetic, transcendent aspects of playing together. Thus an ensemble such as *gendér wayang* can be seen as "a microcosm of expressive culture", though Slobin warns us that expressive forms may run contrary to as well as be a mirror of the society at large (ibid.:106–7). Brinner, too, warns against a simplistic interpretation of correlations between musical and social structures: "That both Balinese and Javanese musicians can invoke the concept of

communal cooperation and harmony (*rukun, gotong royong*) as an interactive model for music shows how careful one must be in connecting musical ideals with social ones" (1995:202). We need a fine-grained description to understand how these concepts may be applied to music in both Java and Bali despite the differences in the actual interaction (ibid.:202–3).

### 3.6 Inner melodies and steady states

Three interrelated concepts have been put forward to describe the relationship between fixed and improvised material in a range of South East Asian ensembles, particularly Central Javanese gamelan and Thai *piphat*: group improvisation, the idea of an "inner melody" and the concept of a "steady state". The first of these has been touched on above in relation to the interaction between players, while the other two describe a perceived structural function: how the music is put together.

Sumarsam (1984 and 1992) on Javanese gamelan and Francis Silkstone (1993) on Thai music, both examine the concept of "inner melody" as a guiding force behind the freer parts.<sup>51</sup> In both styles, it seems to be a concept that can only be grasped by a musician who has first mastered the basic melodic part. They then acquire a sense of the real "inner melody" through learning other, flexible parts and relating them to this basic, core melody. In Java, "the musician has to work, to fashion, or to model the melody of his part by coordinating his inner melody with the characteristics of his instrument" (Sumarsam 1984:303). Silkstone perceives the "basic melody" in Thai music to be a shifting conception. This melody may be conceptualised in three ways: abstraction, idiomatic simplification and formulaic assimilation. To realise an instrumental part from this perceived "basic melody", the reverse process takes place: filling in, idiomatic elaboration and formulaic manipulation (Silkstone 1993:246).

In chapter 4, I describe how the term *pokok* is applied to *gendér wayang* in a manner reminiscent of Silkstone's description of a basic melody. This raises the question of whether McPhee's description of *pokok* in *gong gedé* and other Balinese gamelan forms oversimplifies the concept to that of a "nuclear

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<sup>51</sup> See also Perlman 2004.

melody". I feel *pokok* may prove to be a much subtler musical concept that guides Balinese musicians in these ensembles as well. Sumarsam describes how a misunderstanding by Western scholars of the role of *balungan* in Central Javanese gamelan has also led to an over-simplified conception of its musical organisation: "There are indications that musicians have an intuitive understanding of the *gendhing* melody deeper than the *balungan*" (Sumarsam 1984:256).

R. Anderson Sutton (1993 and 1998) has questioned whether Javanese gamelan players, playing the freer soft instrument parts, are really improvising: "while very little is entirely fixed beforehand in a Javanese performance, a great deal is almost fixed (or is expected to be)" (Sutton 1998:87). He concludes that "Javanese musicians improvise, but that Javanese music is not improvisatory (ibid.:87). He describes how *gendér*, *gambang*, *rebab* players in Java select *céngkok* (melodic formulas) and sometimes interpret them in personal versions (*wiletan*), in an almost unconscious process. Hardly ever does it involve creating patterns that are out of the ordinary, being a kind of search for existing variants: "The idea of searching is rather different from that of innovative creation, for it assumes the prior existence of the object sought" (Sutton 1993:199). Sutton claims that this flexibility actually helps maintain the conservative musical system in a kind of "steady state", in which "the system itself can be seen to contribute to its own perseverance" (ibid.:200). Thus, Sutton contrasts this "steady state" of micro-variability, with actual composition. Conversely, Brinner argues (1995:55) that the formulaic quality of Javanese melodic realisations has been overemphasised.

Although Sutton is dealing with Java, the term "steady state" in this context seems to derive from Bateson's (1949) exploration of Balinese character traits. In this, he elaborated Bateson and Mead's (1942) "no climax" view of Balinese character and culture, which claims that, from childhood, Balinese are trained to avoid climax. This theory has been firmly rebutted by Jensen and Suryani, who found no evidence to support such views: "it is incorrect to state, and misleading to accept Bateson and Mead's view that Balinese life or culture lacks climax" (Jensen and Suryani 1992:103–4). Other writers, particularly Geertz (1966) have repeated this "lack of climax" view of Balinese culture, but Jensen and Suryani present convincing evidence of climax

in many Balinese cultural forms including music (1992:98). I, too, have presented evidence that refutes the view that Balinese music lacks climax (Gray 1983 and 1984) and feel that an orientalist view of Javanese or Balinese music as essentially steady and unchanging should not go unquestioned. Tenzer points out that “writers on jazz never refer to it as static” despite the fact that “musics of Africa and the African diaspora are all far more rigidly periodic than gamelan” (Tenzer 2000:423, note 18). Exploring the particular ways Javanese and Balinese expressive forms handle climax seems much more interesting than denying its existence, although such a study is outside the scope of this thesis.<sup>52</sup>

I suggest that, in contrast with this picture of Central Java, “micro-variations” in Balinese *gendér wayang* are a genuine form of creativity directly related to the kinds of changes involved in making a completely new piece. The material I examine in this study suggests that pre-composition and improvisation are indeed linked and are different only in degree, not in kind. I suggest that they are both ways in which Balinese player-composers explore the ensemble’s conceptual space. It might be argued that the material I present demonstrates only a small amount of flexibility in the performance of *gendér wayang*, but I would argue that even a small amount of variability may have significant consequences for the style and feeling of the music. Bailey quotes flamenco guitarist Paco Peña as saying that a tiny amount of flexibility can change the entire character of the piece:

I don’t consider improvisation only to play different notes within a piece. I also consider improvisation to actually change the weight of a piece from one place to another. Change the direction. I mean you might play roughly the same piece and yet because you are feeling quite different, you are producing a completely different piece of music – really and truly. (Bailey 1992:16)

Bailey finds this view echoed in comments by comedian Lenny Bruce: “If I do an hour show, if I’m extremely fertile, there will be about fifteen minutes of pure ad-lib. But on average it’s about four or five minutes. But the fact that I’ve created it ad-lib seems to give it a complete feeling of free form” (ibid.:49). Sloboda, too, finds that “commentators on jazz have emphasized that there is often less

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<sup>52</sup> Jensen and Suryani suggest two types of characteristic climax in Bali: “one is the building up to a major turning-point in the action, and the height of dramatic tension ... The other is a major turning-point, culminating in feelings of inner peace and well-being” (1992:98).

improvisation on the concert platform than one might imagine" (Sloboda 1985:149).<sup>53</sup>

This is echoed in Jeff Pressing's (1988 and 1998) attempt to describe a cognitive model for improvisation, using concepts such as "event clusters", feedback and feed-forward. He finds that a number of cognitive and motor impulses are involved in improvisation and that the most effective strategy is to shift from one cognitive control area to another (1998:161). Moreover, the human performance system is non-linear and, therefore, "novel, strikingly different behaviour may follow when controlling system parameters assume certain novel combinations of ranges. It can further be shown mathematically that behaviour described as 'chaotic' may occur under such conditions ... even for simple systems" (ibid.:161).

### 3.7 Cognitive approaches

Other writers have also approached composition and improvisation from a cognitive viewpoint. This has added another dimension to the approach taken in this study, one that allows me to move beyond Nettl's continuum and touch on issues relating to theories of creativity. An example is Laudan Nooshin's 1999 examination of the improvisatory tradition in Iran, in which she explores the "broader implications of possible parallels between creative processes in music and those found in other areas of human creativity" (1999:69). She writes: "Ultimately, the processes of creation are also those of re-creation as each musician shapes the music of the past to give it new meaning in terms of the present" (ibid.:113).

Paul Berliner's *Thinking in Jazz* (1994) explores improvisation and creativity from many angles, but with interaction between musicians as a recurring theme. His conclusions are always rooted in the words of the musicians he has interviewed and there are some parallels with comments I have heard from *gendér* players, such as Locéng (see chapter 6), for instance:

Ironically, artistic creativity sometimes seeds new inventions as a result of the monotony of repeated performance routines. "After you have sung a song one hundred and fifty times," Carmen Lundy observes wryly, "the chances are that you are going to begin doing little, different things with it." (Berliner 1994:66)

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<sup>53</sup> Compare these statements with Lévi-Strauss: "when the pattern [of myth] undergoes some kind of transformation, all its aspects are affected at once" (Lévi-Strauss 1969:13).

Berliner describes the use of “crips”, stock filler phrases, that can be fitted to many different jazz tunes, somewhat like Javanese *céngkok*, or formulas in *gendér wayang* (ibid.:184). The term “ideas”, however, has more creative application. It refers to short musical formulas in jazz that can be united, for instance through fusion with others (ibid.:184). Players strive for balance between repetition and variation when using “ideas” (ibid.:196). Berliner compares the creative use of “ideas” with ideas in thinking: by “going over old ground in search of new”, they are able to delve “more deeply into the possibilities of their ideas” (ibid.:216).

Berliner also notes the interrelationship between pre-composition and improvisation: “There is a perpetual cycle between improvised and precomposed components of the artists’ knowledge as it pertains to the entire body of construction materials” (ibid.:222). As with *gendér wayang*, it is sometimes hard to interpret whether something has been pre-composed or improvised (ibid.:237). Berliner describes how these activities merge into a single ongoing process; musicians “are perpetually engaged in creative processes of generation, application, and renewal” (ibid.:242). As with Locéng in Bali, “jazz improvisers fundamentally devote their lives to music composition” (ibid.:492). Berliner finds that this holds true over the whole gamut of activity we might regard as improvisation, arrangement or composition: “each situation simply imposes different kinds of compositional conditions on musical invention” (ibid.:492).

As so often in *gendér wayang*, compositional changes in jazz may take place rather slowly (ibid.:493). Berliner keeps emphasising, as I do in this study, the similarity between these various types of compositional process: “The cyclical process of generation, application, and renewal occurs at every level of music making from fashioning subtle details to executing radical changes” (ibid.:495). These concepts of “fusion and transformation” emerge as important issues for my discussion of *gendér wayang*, and form a link with more cognitive approaches to composition taken by Hall (1992), Pressing (1988, 1998) and Sloboda (1985) as well as Sudnow’s (2001 [1978]) kinaesthetic self-analysis of learning to improvise jazz piano.

Sloboda (1985) attempts to find a cognitive basis for describing composition by examining Western composers’ notes and sketchbooks,



analysing what composers say and observing the act of composition. He also explores the cognitive elements of improvisation. He notes that most existing literature on music “deals with the product of composition not the process” (Sloboda 1985:102), and that the relationship between this finished product and the composer’s intention remains largely unexplored (ibid.:102). Hence, his interest (and mine) in composition, “the least studied and least well understood of all musical processes (ibid.:103). Overall, Sloboda finds, firstly, “the persistent occurrence of superordinate structures or plans which seem to guide and determine the detailed note-by-note working out”, and secondly, “the degree to which these plans can, particularly in composition, be rather provisional. They can, for instance, be changed in the light of the way a particular passage ‘turns out’” (ibid.:103). Of course, in an unnotated tradition, such as *gendér wayang*, such a structure must be maintained in the player-composer’s head. Perhaps this helps explain why new material is so often constrained by becoming a variation section of an existing piece, whose pre-existing section becomes the structural model for further development (see chapter 6 of this study).

E. T. Hall connects musical improvisation with the instinct to play, “a highly creative, adaptive process in human evolution” (Hall 1992:224). He describes three interrelated sets of relationships: the ways in which culture is transmitted (inherited, acquired or learned), three levels of learning culture (formal, informal, technical) and the high and low context spectrum (ibid.:225).

High context (HC) situations are those in which much of the background information is already known, and thus does not need to be overtly expressed, as in baroque figured bass. In low context (LC) situations, like later Western classical music, more information needs to be supplied. Open score, high context music like jazz is much more adaptable to improvisation than closed score, low context music (ibid.:230). Thus, learning and the acquisition of experience (“contexting”) are frequently strongly emphasised in improvising traditions. Thus, Hall questions whether composition is truly “slow” and improvisation “fast” because in HC communication, while the communication is fast, “one needs to take into account the months and years involved in the programming, the ‘contexting’, that produces this fast response” (Hall 1992:230).

Hall's emphasis on experience in HC musics is also found in *gendér wayang*, perhaps adding to its tendency to include flexibility in contrast with the more LC *gong kebyar*. It could be argued that the instrument's difficulty has led to the appearance of experts who have, simply by acquiring such expertise, opened the genre up to improvisation. As Hall puts it, in a phrase with great resonance for *gendér wayang*: "I hold that improvising is the domain of the expert, rooted as it is in knowledge and experience" (ibid.:233).

Margaret Boden (1990 and 1994) explores the cognitive dimensions of creativity. She feels it is important to distinguish between what did not occur before, which is merely novelty, and what could not occur before. She also distinguishes P-creativity (that which is new to the individual) and H-creativity (what is historically new). The latter depends on the former, but also depends greatly on what is preserved or valued by a particular society, and so, for the psychologist, P-creativity is the main concern (1990:34–5).

One much-used heuristic with P-creative effects is to negate a constraint, and another is to drop a constraint altogether, for instance dropping the constraint of tonality in twentieth-century music. Such creative ideas must be recognised – to understand the structural novelty one needs to understand the structure. In this way, exploring conceptual space changes the contours of the mind (ibid.:59–61). Boden compares such explorations with changing a room, which can be done in some ways more radically than others (ibid.:100). She notes: "To be creative is to escape from the trap laid by certain mental processes currently in use" (ibid.:103). Heuristics for changing heuristics can lead to deep-level changes in conceptual space: "The deeper the change in the generative system, the more different – and less immediately intelligible – is the corresponding conceptual space" (ibid.:81). However, even small explorations of a conceptual space may herald profound changes: chaos theory posits that even a small event may have larger consequences, a pattern emerging only at a higher level (ibid.:235). I have found Boden's model of the exploration of conceptual space crucial to understanding how Balinese *gendér* players' reworking of existing material (both in and outside performance) is indeed profoundly creative and is inextricably linked with the creation of new pieces.

Boden (1994:4) and Schaffer (1994:16) also point out that many supposedly spontaneous, creative breakthroughs in science and the arts turn

out to have been mythologised to such an extent after the event that the actual process involved in the discovery is obscured. Boden notes that: "The compression of decades of episodic work into a single inspirational moment is utterly characteristic of these parables" (ibid.:16). Such hindsight may help to explain why it is hard to pin down exactly who had made changes to particular pieces in the Sukawati *gendér* tradition. Granoka's description of how he came to found his group after receiving an inspirational and magical piece (described in chapter 6 of this study) could also be an example. Schaffer (1994) finds that "discovery starts to look less individual and specific, and more like a lengthy process of hard work and negotiation within a set of complex social networks" (ibid.:16). This view puts more emphasis on arts communities rather than simply on individual breakthroughs, and brings us back towards Sharp's selection by the community, although in a subtler, less deterministic way.

### **3.8 Creativity: unconscious, conscious or self-conscious?**

I am keenly aware that there are dangers in venturing into a discussion of creativity in Bali. From the early twentieth century on, the descriptions by Western aficionados of Bali as the island where everyone is an artist but where there is no word for "art" has become a cliché: "Everybody in Bali seems to be an artist. Coolies and princes, priests and peasants, men and women alike, can dance, play musical instruments, paint, or carve in wood and stone" (Covarrubias1986:160). By Covarrubias's time this idea seems to have become commonplace: "It has often been stated that there are no words in the Balinese language for 'art' and 'artist'" (ibid.:162). Nowadays the Indonesian word *seni* is used to mean "art" in the general sense in which Westerners use it, as in the name Institut Seni Indonesia (Institute of Indonesian Arts).

Picard (1996) and Vickers (1989) have described how, as the idea of Bali as a kind of tourist "paradise" island was constructed during the twentieth century, the preservation of its culture became an obsession with Westerners and successive Indonesian governments, leading to the concept of "cultural tourism". Picard stresses that, contrary to the image of Balinese as passive recipients being "impacted" by tourism, Balinese have interacted with these ideas about Bali to produce new concepts of culture and creativity. In this

context, words such as “culture” and “creativity” become politically loaded terms (see also Hobart 2000b for this problematisation of the word “culture”). The impact of cultural tourism has led to a particular self-consciousness:

Tourism encourages Balinese to reflect on their own culture. Members of a culture usually learn and express their culture unconsciously – it is something they have grown up with, a matter of habit. Balinese culture has long been an object of study. For over a century various Balinese have had to make statements to outsiders, first Dutch scholars and civil servants, then tourists, describing their culture and the elements of their religion. (Vickers 1989:198)

Thus, Balinese have had to be conscious about their culture and able to express it “in a way that can be conveniently understood by others” (ibid.:198).

In this atmosphere, talking about creativity in Bali or about Balinese concepts of creativity becomes complex. Firstly because we are in constant danger of reinforcing our own stereotypes of Bali: “For what the Orientalist does is to confirm the Orient in his readers’ eyes; he neither tries nor wants to unsettle already firm convictions” (Said 1995:65). Secondly, as Picard and Vickers describe above, Balinese people have been told so often how creative they are and in what ways, that many have come to believe it and will tend express such ideas as their own opinions. However, in this hall of mirrors, the question remains, does this make these expressed opinions somehow “unreal”? I can only leave this question open during the discussions that follow.

I believe, however, it is still possible to discuss creativity meaningfully in Bali, notwithstanding the problems I have just raised.<sup>54</sup> The cognitive studies discussed above would suggest all societies may be equally “creative” in the sense that individuals all have the capacity for P-creativity. H-creativity may vary according to time and place as it depends on the values a particular group places upon particular activities.

Many of the writers cited in this chapter have attempted find a correlation between an individual’s creative act and the surrounding society. Sometimes, creativity is seen as a manifestation of deep structures within both individual and society (Blacking 1973). At other times, individual cognition or the interaction between individuals is foregrounded. Many aspects of creativity in composition and improvisation I describe in this study may have resonance in

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<sup>54</sup> Pirkko Moisala (1991) explores the difficulties in adopting a cognitive approach within ethnomusicology to examine the musics of other cultures, coining the term “cultural cognition in music” as a basis for understanding music from the viewpoints both of the cognitive sciences and within a specific culture.

other cultures, including our own. In other ways, though, they are more localised, perhaps to Bali, perhaps to a region, a family or an individual.

In their critical re-examination of Bateson and Mead's analysis of Balinese character, psychiatrists Jensen and Suryani (1992) acknowledge certain traits as characteristically Balinese, although pointing out the hazards and pitfalls of trying to define character traits in a particular culture (1992:117–56). Among these traits is one they describe as “industrious creativity”: “Industrious creativity (B: *glitik* and *prataktik*; I: *rajin* and *kreatif*) refers to the self-initiated industrious trait of the Balinese personality and character” (ibid.:133). It is worth quoting their findings at length:

According to Djelantik ... the painter (artist) seeks security in the regular traditional forms or copies of model works, “but there is a fire that burns that seeks expression”. Although a painting may appear to be an imitation of another, originality is expressed in it in relatively obscure small changes. An example from the field of *gamelan* music is when a flute player, following a regular melody, suddenly changes the melody and perceives the change as a surprise, more lively and vibrant. Such a relatively small change in musical expression is analogous to the small change executed by the painter. Similarly, family ceremonies show variation and creativity. (Jensen and Suryani 1992:134)

I attempt to describe this exploration of conceptual space in *gendér wayang* in the chapters that follow.

## Part 2: Explorations

### Chapter 4: Compositional structures and techniques

In this chapter, I attempt to add more detail to the background to *gendér wayang* I sketched in chapter 1. This, in turn, will form the basis for the explorations in subsequent chapters of how the musical structures are manipulated and transformed. Here, I outline some of the most characteristic compositional features found in *gendér*, some of which distinguish it in some way from other gamelan forms and even those that do not are particular in their application to *gendér*. These include: *pokok*, transposition, variation form, textural contrast, modality, the melodic and rhythmic system of *kotékan*, rhythmic flexibility, relationship with vocal music, dramatic representation and referencing of other genres.

#### 4.1 A unique ensemble?

Although *gendér wayang* shares certain characteristics with other Balinese gamelan forms, in many ways it stands apart. Influences from other ensembles are perceptible but the basic structures of pieces are, in many ways, unlike those of other types of Balinese gamelan.

It is regarded as the quintessential *sléndro*-tuned ensemble, although it shares this tuning with four- and five-note *angklung* ensembles and bamboo *jogéd* instruments. Although commonly linked with other “ancient” Balinese ensembles, such as *selonding*, *gambang* and *luang*, it is not obviously related to this group in tuning, as these three share seven-note *pélog* modal systems (see Tenzer 2000:147–53). The repertoire is also not obviously linked: many *selonding* and *luang* pieces seem to be derived from *gambang* and, ultimately from *kidung* songs. The formal structure of pieces, too, is different: these three linked *pélog* ensembles, like many other gamelan forms, are based on a clearly differentiated, extended nuclear melody with interlocking elaboration, whereas, in *gendér*, the relationship between melody and elaboration is often ambiguous.

The possible historical connection with *selonding* was also raised in chapter 2.<sup>55</sup> The ensembles share the fact that their keys are suspended over rather than resting on resonators. *Selonding*, too, are played with a mallet in each hand, although these are much larger and squarer than *gendér* mallets. Gunawan says that *selonding* pieces, too, sometimes feature an irregular metric structure (tape 2000:6b).

Gunawan compares a type of three-note interlocking pattern, *gucek*, in *selonding* with similar patterns in *gendér wayang*. He says that in the 1960s, *selonding* pieces were very *klasik*, with no *réong*-style interlocking (i.e. *kotékan*). Instead, they used *gucek*, which involves interweaving *polos* and *sangsih* parts as in the *gendér* piece, “Sekar Sungsang”. Gunawan also explains that, due to the intricate layout of the instruments of the archaic *gambang* ensemble, it is almost impossible to add *réong*-style interlocking; it must remain within its classical style, “but gong and *gendér* are different – they can be created” (tape 2001:1a).

*Gendér wayang* also stands apart from the other clear grouping of related ensembles derived from the courtly *gambuh*, which includes *semar pegulingan* and *pelégongan* (see Tenzer 2000:147–53). These, along with *gong gedé* and *kebyar*, feature regular, four-square nuclear melodies with gong punctuation, whereas *gendér* pieces are quite often more metrically free. However, the Sukawati version of “Tabuh Gari”, seems to be related in its melodic contour to *semar pegulingan* versions of the same piece. The *pélog*-tuned pair of *gendér* that play in gamelan *pelégongan* simply elaborate the *pokok* melody, mainly in octaves.

Links with the repertory of the gamelan *angklung* are also limited: the main similarities are in the use of *sléndro* tuning and in the irregular structure of some melodies (see McPhee 1966:240). McPhee suggests that many *angklung* pieces are, in fact, drawn from the *gendér wayang* repertory (ibid.:246, note 6). Some left-hand melodic passages in *gendér* are also similar to *angklung* in their exploitation of the possibilities of limited melodic range: partly for physical reasons, these left-hand melodies often involve permutations of three or four notes. Despite the fact that *gendér wayang* technique is similar in some ways

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<sup>55</sup> The link with *selonding* is strengthened by Gold's observation that “when *gendér* are played on the cremation tower, the act of playing is referred to as *maselonding* ... and in some Bali Aga (pre-Hindu Balinese) villages today *gendér* is referred to as *selonding*” (1992:246).

with that of certain xylophones, there do not seem to be direct connections with the *tingklik* (bamboo xylophone) and *jogéd* repertory (xylophone ensemble, see Tenzer 1991:89–91). *Gendér wayang* textures are far more varied than their uniform pattern of left-hand melody with right-hand accompaniment.

We have seen that some of the ostinato-based *pangkat* pieces show strong similarities with the processional gamelan *beleganjur*. Links with gamelan *gong gedé* are mainly found in terminology, such as the term *pengawak* for a piece's main section and *peniba* for a variation section. *Kebyar* has influenced *gendér wayang*, particularly in Sukawati and Denpasar, especially in the introductory *gineman* sections. However, even this is not clear-cut: one of the major influences on *kebyar*'s fluidity, right from the early years, has itself been *gendér wayang*. Influences have travelled back and forth between the genres. Gold describes how pieces are transferred to other gamelan types from *gendér wayang*, and the reverse process, in which stylistic elements (but rarely whole pieces) are introduced into *gendér* from ensembles such as *gong kebyar*, *gambang* and *angklung*. She notes that "In the western part of North Bali a composition called 'Angklung', evoking sadness in imitation of the *angklung* orchestra, is played on the *géndèr* during *wayang* instead of travelling music" and how Locéng has brought *kebyar* elements into many of the introductions (*gineman*) to pieces (ibid.:249). Gunawan also adapted several *angklung* pieces for *gendér*.

Another related tradition is Javanese *gendér*, which, like *gendér wayang*, is essential in accompanying *wayang*, though as part of a larger gamelan. Javanese *gendér* formerly had ten keys like the Balinese (Lentz 1965:37, Kunst 1968:77). One similarity is the two-handed technique, although, in Java, the player's right-hand mallet is held differently to allow the thumb to help with damping. Unlike the Javanese *gambang*, which plays almost entirely in octaves, Javanese *gendér barung*, like *gendér wayang*, features many different intervals: the two hands move contrapuntally. Important goal notes, *seleh*, are marked by octaves or "sléndro fifths" but, in between these, many passing intervals are allowed. In Java, only one *gendér barung* is used in an ensemble, and sometimes one *gendér panerus*, an octave higher, which plays less contrapuntally complex patterns twice as fast as the *barung*. Hence, Javanese music does not feature interlocking parts between *gendér*, although interlocking



may occur between other instruments, such as *saron* or *bonang*. Javanese *gendér* patterns have evolved in a more stylised fashion than *gendér wayang*: various set melodic patterns, *céngkok*, which may be varied in performance, fit with the nuclear melodies, *balungan*, of pieces, which contribute to pieces' individuality. The *céngkok* patterns are partly determined by the mode (*pathet*) of the piece. Although, Balinese *gendér* pieces are also constructed in a modular way (see Gray 1991), the pieces have more individual characteristics. Another similarity with Javanese *gendér* is in song accompaniment: in Java, the *dalang's* songs, *sulukan*, are accompanied by *gendér* in a metrically free style, similar to the slow style of Balinese *tetandakan*, such as "Mésém", which also follow the *dalang's* vocal melody.

## 4.2 Pokok

In other types of gamelan, in particular *gong gedé*, *pokok* ("trunk") refers to the core melody played slowly on *saron* metallophones, which is elaborated by other instruments, rather like the *balungan* of Central Javanese gamelan. In *kebyar*, it is usually played by the one-octave *calung* metallophones, while other metallophones may play an elaboration at twice the speed, called *neliti* (Tenzer 2000:452–3). Although *gendér* left-hand melodies (when these can be clearly distinguished from figuration) are occasionally referred to as, or compared with, *jégogan* (the largest metallophone in *kebyar*), I have only rarely heard the word *pokok* used for them. Instead, in *gendér wayang*, *pokok* is most often used to refer to a basic, unadorned version of the whole piece, including all melody and elaborating strata. This version is sometimes taught first but, in many cases, it is more of an implicit concept lying behind the more usually played version of the piece. I questioned several players about how one could know the *pokok* without being taught it directly; their comments about *pokok* can also be found throughout chapter 6, as it is a concept that underlies many of the variation categories discussed there.

Buda, here, tries to explain left-hand melody parts in terms of *pokok*, comparing them with other gamelan but, straight away, points out that the issue is more complex and also refers to a *pokok* of the *kotékan*. He also describes how, in slow-style pieces, the *pokok* is formed of both left- and right-hand parts:

B: Like in *gong kebyar*, the left hand [in *gendér wayang*] is the *ugal*, like the *jublaga* .... This holds the melody – you can't depart from this .... Me: But in pieces like "Mésem" or "Rundah" the *pokok* is in both hands? B: Yes, the *pokok* in "Mésem" and "Rundah" is a rather complicated *pokok lagu* (basis of the melody), because there's no *jajar pageh* (firm row). There's no certain melody to follow ... the left-hand melody and right-hand melody become one. They directly become the *pokok lagu*. (Buda, tape 2002:17b)

Locéng, who says he was taught the *pokok* of pieces before gradually elaborating them, compares it to a road or route (B and I: *jalan*):

L: That is the road (*jalan*) called the *pokok*. We look for the road first; which way does the road go? To Denpasar, which way should we go? If you already know the road [you think] where can we visit on it? For instance, visiting a certain *banjar* on the road to Denpasar, here's a village and another village, so we start here, we meet here and, later, arriving home, we try to be listened to. If it's good, use it. If not, don't. (Locéng, tape 2002:17b)

Here, he seems to be saying that one can take slightly different routes through the *pokok* and, if they work, these can be re-used. Besides *pokok* and *jalan*, another commonly used word for "basic shape", both in music and storytelling, is *patokan* (I: rule, form). Musical example 9 shows the first phrase of what Locéng played after I asked whether he remembered what he was taught as the *pokok* of "Mésem". After playing this he played a more elaborate (usual) version, shown on the stave below (tape 2000:4).

**Musical example 9: *pokok* of "Mésem" (above) and usual version (below), *polos* only**

Buda demonstrates how a piece's *pokok* forms the basis for variation, using a piece from the "Pemungkah", "Katak Ngongkék":

B: [plays part of "Katak Ngongkék"] That's the *pokok*. Now if we play what's developed, perhaps what I play and what is played by, for instance, Pak Locéng is not the same. Usually I play ... like this [as before] if the situation is not good. If the mood is good, perhaps [I go] to the east, a new improvisation [plays the same passage in a more elaborate way] like that. Its *pokok* is [plays short passage] but you can look up here [plays higher note]. If that's the *polos*, then the *sangsih* arrives here [plays lower note]. (Buda, tape 2002:22a)

This leads towards the subject of improvisation, which will be explored in depth in chapter 6. Note that Buda says it depends on a favourable situation or mood.

Locéng explains how the *pokok* remains throughout the kinds of compositional changes he and Ketut Balik made around the 1950s:

L: Every decade there's a change ... not a change, an addition. The *pokok* is still there – it's not changed, it's added to. Addition means someone who's a child in ten years becomes an adult, in another ten years becomes a grandparent. (Locéng, tape 2000:2b)

Mudita in Tenganan says he was not taught the *pokok* of pieces first but learnt a more elaborate version directly (tape 2002:1a). This mirrors my own experience. Mudita explained that decorating the *pokok* is similar to decoration in painting and in vocal music:

M: For instance, *mayasin gending* (decorating the piece) – its purpose is, with *pukulan tiga* (three-note interlocking pattern), *lanang* and *wadon* [*sangsih* and *polos*], to be given decorations so that it sounds good, to be given [*pukulan*] *empat* (four-note pattern). That's decoration. If you're making a picture, that's allowed. For instance, if [a puppet] is small we keep the decorations small, if we're making decorations on *wayang* puppets. If we're making bigger puppets, then we can put decorations in a bit ... I think Balinese culture is like the melody of a *tembang* (song). There are those who add artistry, there are those who add decoration. Me: So, it's continuously decorated but not lost? M: Its shape is not lost. (Mudita, tape 2002:3a)

Gunawan remembers that pieces were simpler earlier and remembers Ranu, for instance, adding to the *pukulan* of “Sekar Sungsang”. Like other players, he insists that the *pokok* of the piece must not be lost:

G: The *kotékan* can be added to or taken away from. People have their own way of creating – however it is usually. Or it can be made slow or fast like a *pangkat*. We choose which one we like. We can choose, like a dancer. What do young people like? Humour. What do old people like? Philosophy. It's the same with creating *garapan* (“workings”, versions of a piece). We can analyse what the people listening will like. (Gunawan, tape 2001:1a)

Players' comments show that the concept of *pokok* in *gendér wayang* is much subtler than a simple nuclear melody. They seem to be looking at it from several different angles and describing a kind of motivating or generating force behind the piece and, at the same time a kind of route-map of the piece, which can be used to create variations. To me, what they are describing is strongly reminiscent of the inner melody in Thai and Javanese music discussed in the previous chapter.

### 4.3 Transposition

We have seen how *pangkat* pieces are usually based on a left-hand ostinato figure with right-hand *kotékan*. After a few repetitions, a bridge passage or transition leads to the same material played one note higher or lower. Another

bridge passage returns to the beginning or to a variation. Several *petegak* pieces, including the popular “Sekar Sungsang”, are also based on this form, while in the freer *batél* pieces, the transposition may take place to several different pitch levels. Transposition of large sections occurs even in some slow-style pieces, such as the Sukawati “Candi Rebah”, whose entire theme is transposed up two pitches.

Although a certain amount of melodic transposition does occur in other gamelan melodies, nowhere is it used as frequently and systematically as this.<sup>56</sup> I suggested to Buda that this common *gendér wayang* form of transposing whole sections of a piece up and down a tone was perhaps different from other gamelan. He drew my attention, though, to the fact that these also have bridge passages (*penyalit*, *pengalihan*, *penyaitan*):

B: *Gong kebyar* also has *penyalit* from one composition to another composition. What connects it is called *penyalit*. In *gendér wayang*, this is called *pengalihan*, from the word *alih*. Me: In Karangasem, they call this *penyaitan*. B: The context is the same. *Penyaitan* means it is sewn up to the first [part] like using a thread. Here, *pengalihan*, from *ngalih*, means to look for. From one note, looking for another note. *Pengalihan* in *gong kebyar* and in *gendér wayang* have a different form. In *gong kebyar*, the *pengalihan* can stand alone to connect one tune to another. In *gendér wayang*, *pengalihan* one and *pengalihan* two become one [perhaps, connect repetitions at different note levels?]. But they are small because, in a *gendér wayang* piece, a long *pengalihan* would give it another character. So, the *gendér wayang pengalihan* are very small, to join one tune to the following one. (Buda, tape 2002:19a)

Here, Buda is describing how the bridge passages linking transposed sections in *gendér wayang* are kept short, in contrast to *kebyar* compositions, in which links between sections may be longer.

Nettl notes that transposition is a common compositional device cross-culturally, but claims that it is less common in polyphonic and instrumental music (1958:61). He states that, in “folk and primitive” music, there is no sense of hierarchy in this transition as there would be in Western music (ibid.:56–7). However, Vonck sees primary and secondary pitch levels operating in these *pangkat* pieces (see chapter 2 of this study). She describes how, in North Bali, the higher level is called *cenik* (small) and the lower, *gedé* (large): *manis* (sweet) pieces start with the higher level and *keras* (coarse) pieces with the lower (Vonck 1997:156). McPhee points out that, because the intervals of the *gendér* scale are not, in fact, equal, a new tonal character as well as a change

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<sup>56</sup> It is interesting, though, that the various five-note *pélog* modes in seven-note Balinese ensembles are derived by transposition, for instance using the keys: 1 2 3 5 6, then 2 3 4 6 7 and so on (see McPhee 1966:283).

in pitch level is effected by such transposition: "Such a treatment has the result of giving (to us) a very satisfactory form, in which the pattern repeats, but by the nature of the change in pitch and interval relation, becomes a further variation" (McPhee 1936:23).

Occasionally, the right-hand parts may need to be altered when transposing up to the new pitch level, due to the instrument's limited range. In such cases, the part will adapt by seeking equivalent or complementary notes that fit with the other part. Occasionally, to make the right-hand parts flow satisfyingly, the transposition may be inexact. For instance, in the second part of "Pangkat Grebeg", the left-hand ostinato is transposed up one note, while the right-hand *kotékan* shifts up two notes, as this works more naturally from the transition (see musical example 10).

**Musical example 10: from part 2 of "Grebeg"**

The musical notation for Musical example 10 consists of two staves. The top staff is labeled 'R.H.' and the bottom staff is labeled 'L.H.'. Both staves are in a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature. The R.H. part features a complex, rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some notes beamed together. The L.H. part features a simpler, more rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some notes beamed together. The two parts are transposed relative to each other, with the R.H. part being higher in pitch than the L.H. part.

Smaller-scale melodic transposition also occurs, for instance a right-hand *kotékan* pattern may transpose within a section based on a single left-hand pitch level. Musical example 11 shows two phrases from "Partha Wijaya", *polos* only. In the second phrase, the right hand has moved up a note, while the left hand remains on the same pitch level.

**Musical example 11: two phrases from "Partha Wijaya"**

The musical notation for Musical example 11 consists of two staves. Both staves are in a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature. The top staff is the first phrase, and the bottom staff is the second phrase. Both phrases feature a complex, rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some notes beamed together. The two phrases are transposed relative to each other, with the second phrase being higher in pitch than the first phrase.

#### 4.4 Variation form

What in Western musical terminology would be termed “variation form” provides the fundamental structure of much of the *gendér* repertory. Almost all *pangkat* and *petegak* pieces are based on a thematic section followed by one or more variations, which in Karangasem are often called *peniba* and, in Sukawati, *runtutan* (see chapter 6). The first, thematic section is usually called *pengawak*, as in gamelan *gong gedé*.

A simple example is “Pangkat Grebeg”, in which the first section consists of a left-hand ostinato figure with a right-hand *kotékan* that is repeated several times before a bridge passage leads to the same passage being repeated one note higher and then another transition leads down to the original level. The one variation section features the same left-hand ostinato but with different, more complex *kotékan*.

In the *petegak* piece “Suléndra”, there are two main sections, besides a contrasting introduction and a coda. The second section starts the same as the first, but later adds to and transforms its material (see Gray 1991 for a full transcription and analysis of this piece). Another *petegak* piece, “Sekar Sungsang”, which I describe in more detail in chapter 6, extends the transpositional structure of *pangkat*. Its theme consists of a melody played twice. This is then played a note lower before being played again at the original pitch level. Three subsequent variations modify and transform this original theme in increasingly intricate ways. The first variation is closely related to the theme, the second transforms it further, while the final variation is, itself, a transformation of the previous one.

Such variation sections also occur in other Balinese gamelan forms. McPhee describes the *pengiwa*, *pengiwan*, *peniba* or *peniban* section of pieces for gamelan *gong gedé* as “the final repetition of the *pengawak* in the *gending ageng*, now melodically altered, and with different drum patterns; thus a transformation or variation of the main melody” (McPhee 1966:374). This structure, however, usually consists of the main theme being repeated several times and the single variation only once, whereas, in *gendér*, theme and sometimes several variants are often repeated the same number of times. I heard of pieces in Karangasem that had up to thirteen *peniba* sections

(Granoka, personal communication, 2002). However, McPhee also mentions that, in *gong gedé*, the more melodically free *tabuh pisan* form may include more *peniba* variations as part of a central section.

Nicholas Cook (1990:64) states that, in Western classical music, variation form is one musical form that is likely to be perceived by the listener, in contrast with other forms that demand more knowledge of convention, such as sonata form. Listeners can tell when the music has moved into each different section (Cook calls this “edge-related”). Cook’s observations in connection with Brahms’ “Handel” Variations are particularly relevant to the variation structure of *gendér wayang* pieces. He points out that some variations relate not so much to the theme but to other, neighbouring variations, as we have seen with “Sekar Sungsang”:

the organisation of the variation set is not so much concentric – with each variation deriving coherence from its relationship to the theme – as edge-related, with each variation being lent significance by its relationship to what comes before and after it, or by the group of variations within which it is located. (Cook 1990:64)

Thus, the theme itself may be “simply the variation that comes before Variation 1” (ibid.:64). The Sukawati “Sekar Sungsang”, which will be discussed further in chapter 6, is a case in point: the old version of the theme, from which the modern one is derived, has itself been modified and a new set of variations added. These edge-related variations generally become increasingly complex, adding a sense of movement and climax (so much for “steady states”!).

#### **4.5 Textural contrast**

*Gendér wayang* is perhaps unique among pre-*kebyar* ensembles in its varied textures. As McPhee puts it: “Within five notes a tonal world is created, a small world perhaps, but rich in possibilities which we see everywhere fulfilled” (McPhee 1936:24). Such varied textures may have stimulated the growth of *kebyar* orchestration; we know that *kebyar* has borrowed heavily from *gendér wayang*. The slow style of *gendér wayang* in pieces like “Mésem” or “Rundah” seems to me unique among Balinese musical forms in terms of texture, though at times reminiscent of Javanese *gendér* styles.

Besides the great stylistic differences between slow- and fast-style pieces, described in chapter 1, each piece or section of a piece may feature

textural contrast. For instance, in the piece “Merak Ngelo”, even the first part of the main theme features a range of textures: unison passages, hands in parallel motion, melody and *kotékan* and then ostinato and *kotékan*.

Musical example 12 shows several such textures from three phrases of this piece: (1) top staff *sangsih*, bottom staff *polos* to show unison and contrary motion; (2) top staff right hands, bottom staff left hands to show melody plus interlocking; (3) top staff right hands, bottom staff left hands; (4) same phrase as (3) but top staff *sangsih*, bottom staff *polos* to show movement of parts.

### Musical example 12: phrases from “Merak Ngelo”

The musical score for "Merak Ngelo" is presented in four numbered phrases, each with two staves. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The time signature is 2/4.

- Phrase 1:** Labeled "1)". The top staff is labeled "sangsih" and contains two staves (R.H. and L.H.) with a complex, rhythmic melody. The bottom staff is labeled "polos" and contains two staves (R.H. and L.H.) with a simpler, accompanimental melody.
- Phrase 2:** Labeled "2)". The top staff is labeled "R.H." and contains a single staff with a melody. The bottom staff is labeled "L.H." and contains a single staff with a melody.
- Phrase 3:** Labeled "3)". The top staff is labeled "R.H." and contains a single staff with a melody. The bottom staff is labeled "L.H." and contains a single staff with a melody.
- Phrase 4:** Labeled "4)". The top staff is labeled "sangsih" and contains two staves (R.H. and L.H.) with a complex, rhythmic melody. The bottom staff is labeled "polos" and contains two staves (R.H. and L.H.) with a simpler, accompanimental melody.

## 4.6 Modality

Harold Powers (1980:437) points out difficulties in defining the musicological concept of mode and notes the important differences between phenomena that



have been grouped under this heading, such as Indian *raga* and Javanese *pathet*. Particularly relevant to *gendér* is his discussion of whether the concept of mode can be appropriately applied to those traditions where no emic concept that might be related to the word “mode” exists, such as Anglo-American folksong. He notes that: “Scholars have usually failed to make a clear distinction between mode in connection with melodic type and mode as a classifying rubric” (ibid.:420). Importantly, he stresses that: “So far the modes of Anglo-American folksong, whatever they may be, have been treated by most of those who know the repertory best more as properties of individual items than as universal categories” (ibid.:422).

Mantle Hood notes that, in contrast with *gong kebyar*, in which only “residual modal features” can be found, the *gendér wayang* tradition “provides quite clear evidence of a firm modal practice notwithstanding the lack of conscious knowledge on the part of the performers” (Hood 1975:27). Unlike Javanese *pathet*, players do not use an emic concept of mode to describe and classify the *sléndro gendér wayang* repertoire.<sup>57</sup> This is despite the existence of the term *patutan*, which can classify Balinese seven-note *pélog* modes and which is sometimes applied in theoretical writings such as *Prakempa to sléndro* (see Bandem 1986). Most players who refer to *patutan* in *gendér wayang*, though, describe it as a system of relatively high, middle and low tunings for the instruments (for instance, Locéng cited by Gold 1992:247). Michael Tenzer says these rarely known terms are “obscure and abstract” and that he has “never heard the terms mentioned in relation to actual music” (Tenzer 2000:129) and this mirrors my experience. Ida Wayan Ngurah says the three terms refer to different possible *gendér* tunings and sang me an example of *patutan pudak setegal* (tape 2001:2a).

One prominent modal feature in *gendér wayang*, and one which mixes musical features with extra-musical associations, is the association of low notes (in Balinese, *gedé* – “big”) with large, coarse (*keras*) *wayang* characters and high notes (*cenik* – “small” notes) with small, refined (*manis*) characters. Henrice Vonck (1997) has described a thorough and strictly applied correlation between pitch levels, characters and dramatic action in North Balinese *gendér*,

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<sup>57</sup> *Sléndro*, though, is perceived to have its own extra-musical characteristics, being “an aural means of communication with the spirit world, the world of the ancestors, and the world of the past”, and is “also said to connote sadness” (Gold 1992:248).

which I have summarised in chapter 2. Both Locéng in Sukawati (personal communication, September 1993) and Gunawan in Tenganan (tape 2000:6b) also said that refined puppets with small eyes were represented by high (in Balinese: *cenik*, small) notes and coarse puppets with large eyes with low (*gedé*, large) notes. However, Locéng said that this was a general principle and not applied in every instance.

In traditions with no emic concept of mode, such as *gendér wayang*, perhaps the best way to assess “modality” and its aesthetic impact is to explore each piece’s melodic system within the context of other musical parameters and within its dramatic or social context. More systematic analysis of individual pieces and groups of pieces is clearly called for, in conjunction with explorations with Balinese player-composers about the aesthetic choices they make.

#### **4.7 The melodic and rhythmic system of *kotékan***

The system of interlocking *kotékan*, despite its apparent rigidity, which would appear to exclude improvisation, can be flexible in practice. However, this flexibility is mostly limited to smaller ensembles, such as *gendér*; in *kebyar*, too many players are playing the same part to allow for this. In Tenzer’s book on *kebyar*, he demonstrates the various standard forms of *kotékan* in *kebyar*, including directional patterns such as *norot* and *nyog cag* and the more static *ubit-ubitan* (2000:212–31), which are also commonly used in *gendér wayang*. The fact that many such patterns are standard helps *gendér* players work out what a *sangsih* part should be to a given *polos* at certain points. This is also helped by the fact that, in *gendér*, different *sangsih* parts can be applied to fit the same *polos*, as in musical example 13 from the piece “Krépétan”. Here, the *polos* can either stay the same as in the simple version (R.H. 1) or it can become more elaborate too (as shown in R.H. 2).

**Musical example 13: two possible *sangsih* parts to a passage from “Krépétan”**

Later, in chapter 6, we shall see some examples in which one part (either *polos* or *sangsih*) remains static, while the other makes improvised changes. In other examples, both parts improvise while attempting to fit together.

#### **4.8 Rhythmic flexibility**

One important difference between *gendér wayang* and most other forms of gamelan is the lack of a rigid, four-square or binary melodic and metric structure. Two-, four- and eight-beat phrases do occur, and are probably the most commonly heard, but other groupings are also frequent. Sometimes a phrase-structure with an odd number of beats is cycled, as in the “Katak Ngongkék” excerpt transcribed in chapter 6. Elsewhere, odd groups of notes are inserted, giving an irregular feel to the piece, as in the following examples. In the first (musical example 14), extra beats seem “shoved in” (at the bracket).

**Musical example 14: cadential phrase from “Merak Ngelo”**

The second example further reveals the cellular melodic structure (see musical example 15). The cells here work in a basic two-beat measure but not in the four-beat measure usual in gamelan.

**Musical example 15: irregular phrasing from “Suléndra”**

Other parts of this piece seem based on four-beat and still other measures (see musical example 16 and Gray 1992).

**Musical example 16: more cells from “Suléndra”**

Buda uses the term *jajar pageh* (B. *jajar*: row, *pageh*: firm, strong) to describe the regular four-beat structure of other forms of gamelan, which is outlined by *jégog* metallophones and gongs. This, he says, differentiates such ensembles from *gendér wayang*, where these instruments are absent:

B: The difference between *gendér wayang* and *gong gedé*, *semar pegulingan* – all of them – is this: they are measured by *jajah pageh*, the rule of composing tunes. In the

*gong kebyar* tradition, there's the rule: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 – *jegogan*, *kempur*, *gong*. So, it's tied down. In *gendér wayang*, it's not like that. It doesn't have *gong* or *kempul*, it doesn't have a rule. So, in creation, it can be taken to wherever it wants – it's only tied by the notes in the left hand. So its structure can be various ... *gendér wayang* isn't tied by the rhythmic rules. The tune's structure is of another type (*wangsa*). *Gong kebyar* has a certain form while, in *gendér wayang*, one tune has a count of seven, another can be nine ... the transition doesn't have a [fixed] count either. In *gong kebyar*, it always has a [fixed] count. (Buda, tape 2002: 19a)

Buda further explains, how this makes the perceived structure of a *gendér* piece more ambiguous than *gong*:

B: *Gong kebyar* has *kempur*, *kempli* and *gong*. After the *gong*, only then does it move to the first tune, one, two, three, *gong*, return to the first. So it hangs on repetition. In *gendér wayang*, it changes. [When the tune returns] we don't realise that it is already repeating again. (Buda, tape 2002:19a)

Buda sees this rhythmic flexibility and freedom as one cause of the variety of texture found in *gendér*, as this allows for melodic passages to flow into passages of interlocking patterning and vice versa:

Me: Sometimes there's a bit of melody in the left-hand part but then it's lost in something else ... I rarely hear that kind of variety in other types of gamelan. B: *Gendér wayang* ... can play melody, then it flows into the *kotékan* and goes the same as the right hand. That means that *gendér wayang* isn't tied down: it can move as it likes. When it plays the *komposisi lagu* [main structure of the tune], although it's one piece with the original melody, like the left-hand melody, after that, it can enter into the *kotékan* because it doesn't disturb others, as it would if there were a *kajar*, *kempur*, *kempli* and *gong*. There's nothing that disturbs. In *gong kebyar*, the possibility of that happening is very little because, if the melody flowed into the *kotékan* all together, it wouldn't have a *pokok*, a trunk (*batang*): it would be lost. If there is no trunk, how could there be *jajah pageh*? But the *gendér wayang* doesn't have *jajah pageh*, so the melody can sometimes be lost: it flows into the *kotékan*. (Buda, tape 2002:19a)

It is this flexibility of tempo and texture that has caused *gendér wayang* to be an inspiration to *kebyar* composers seeking to find ways to vary the metric structures of gamelan music.

## 4.9 Relationship with vocal music

*Gendér* is also unusual in that it provides an accompaniment to the *dalang's* vocal melody. Often in Bali, vocal music is heard simultaneously with instrumental music rather than fitting with it melodically and metrically. For instance, when *kidung* singing is "accompanied by" a gamelan in a ceremony or recording, the two are simply heard simultaneously without being tied by tuning or the beginning and ending of a piece.<sup>58</sup> Some dramatic music, for *arja* and

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<sup>58</sup> Certain villages maintain an old tradition, now rare, in which *kidung* and *gambang* follow the same melodic path (see Scharman 1980).

*gambuh* theatre, however, does include songs whose melodies are followed by the instrumental lines (small flutes for *arja*, large flutes and *rebab* for *gambuh*).

The different types of vocal music used by the *dalang*, known as *bebaturan* and *tetandakan* (or *tandak*) mostly consist of quotations from Old Javanese literature.<sup>59</sup> *Bebaturan* fit the pattern described above of being sung simultaneously, rather than fitting melodically, with the instrumental part. In contrast, in the *tetandakan*, such as “Alas Harum” or “Mésem”, the vocal and instrumental parts genuinely dovetail. The vocal and instrumental lines coincide with consonances (the same note, octave or “*sléndro* fifth” apart) at cadence points. *Dalang* and instrumentalists thus aim to reach these cadence points simultaneously. Gold cites Locéng as describing the relationship between the *gendér* and the vocal melody in “Alas Harum” as like the *buku* (joints) of bamboo, as the parts converge at points of stress and phrase endings (Gold 1998:310).

Locéng described to me how the *gendér* players must follow the length of the *dalang*’s phrases in order to coincide at cadence points in “Alas Harum”, while a certain looseness is idiomatic:

Me: With “Alas Harum”, who drives that? L: All together, they all know [it]. Me: You need to wait for the *dalang*’s voice. L: There are borders [sings and plays] ... now the *dalang* starts. There are signs there. Me: If the *dalang* wants to extend his voice ... L: You must follow! Me: When singing, the *dalang* can lengthen the voice [melody] or ... L: That’s up to the *dalang* – his ability [sings]. Just a little, whichever one is earlier it’s allowed – you don’t need to be very exact. If it’s too exact it’s *kaku* [awkward]. (Locéng, tape 2000:4b)

Accompanying and imitating the lines of vocal music in such songs differentiates *gendér wayang* from other Balinese struck-percussion gamelan ensembles. It is this function that has given rise to all the slow-style *gendér* pieces (“Mesém”, “Bendu Semara”, “Rundah” and many others) which seem, in some ways, closer to Javanese *gendér* technique than to the *kotékan*-based fast Balinese *gendér* style. Imitating vocal music is not, perhaps, something that seems to come naturally to struck idiophones. However, the long resonance of *gendér* notes that are left ringing does provide a stable support to the *dalang*’s voice. The *gendér* can also imitate the fluidity of the vocal line with the lace-like

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<sup>59</sup> Many lines of text are shared among *tandak* songs, both in the versions of a single *dalang* and between versions. Zurbuchen shows that many may be based on (possibly lost) *lelungid* poems, a type of *kidung* featuring allusive, mystical and erotic imagery, composed at the Gelgel courts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (1981:250–1). *Bebaturan* tend to be excerpts of *kekawin* poetry.

ornamentation called *ngorét*.<sup>60</sup> Musical example 17 shows the flexible relationship between vocal line and *gendér* phrases from “Mésem”, sung by Locéng while I play the *polos* part (lesson tape 1993).

**Musical example 17: “Mésem”, vocal part and *gendér***

The image displays two systems of musical notation. The top system features a vocal line on a treble clef staff with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The lyrics 'gan-da ka-sih a-----sih' are written below the notes. The bottom system shows the *gendér* accompaniment on a treble clef staff with the same key signature. The lyrics 'su-mi-----rit' are written below the notes. Both systems include rhythmic markings such as '+' and 'rit' (ritardando) to indicate specific performance techniques.

**4.10 Dramatic representation**

McPhee stresses the abstract quality of Balinese gamelan: “Nor was it personal and romantic, in the manner of our own effusive music, but rather, sound broken up into beautiful patterns” (1979:40). However, *gendér wayang*, along with certain theatrical forms such as *arja* and *gambuh*, is used quite explicitly to portray and evoke dramatic mood and situation, which may be carried over when passages or textures of these ensembles are quoted by modern *gong kebyar*.

Gold proposes the distinction between “emotion” and “motion” pieces in *gendér wayang* (1998:155). The former are the mostly slow *tetandakan* pieces, which characterise a situation or figure for instance, “Mésem” for refined characters crying, “Bendu Semara” for coarse characters crying, “Rébong” for love scenes, and so on. This rather stereotypical evocation of emotion and

<sup>60</sup> Using a fixed-note instrument to imitate a more flexibly pitched vocal line while accompanying it in this way produces similar strategies in North Indian harmonium music. *Mind* and other vocal ornaments involving glides, which would be impossible to reproduce on the harmonium are “faked” by various methods of ornamentation involving overlaps between keys or rolling the hand (Breslin 2004). See Gold (1998: 203) for a description of the *dalang*’s various vocal ornaments.

character-type (which, as we have seen above, is related to the use of pitch levels) may be related to ancient Indian *rasa* theory. "Motion" pieces are the mostly fast *pangkat*, *batél* and *peselah* ostinato, which are, again, linked to character-type and situation.

The focus shifts during a performance between the various strands of instrumental and vocal music, dialogue and action; sometimes one will be in the foreground of the audience's attention, sometimes another. Attention to character, mood and action thus plays an important part in the choices involved in performance. Later, in chapter 6, we shall see how the improvisations are strongly influenced by the dramatic situation, following the cues of the *dalang* and lead *gendér* player.

Titles of pieces also form part of this web of interaction. They may evoke the beauty of flowers, as in the *petegak* pieces "Sekar Ginotan", "Sekar Jepun" and even, in the case of the Sukawati "Sekar Sungsang" evoke the winding shape of the vine (see chapter 6). Other pieces evoke specific characters from the *wayang*, such as "Partha Wijaya" (victorious Arjuna) or "Bima Kroda" (angry Bima), animals such as "Lutung Manyunan" (swinging monkeys), states or sounds such as "Krépétan" (crackling). As far as I know, however, titles are not specifically alluded to by the *dalang* in order to cue pieces, as occurs in Javanese *wayang*. In Balinese *wayang* performance, some pieces may be cued by the *dalang's cepala* or through a short vocal introduction: a short melodic phrase for "Rébong" and the word "*menangis*", "cry" for "Mésem". Players are often unaware which *petegak* piece will start a performance until the lead player has placed his mallets over the starting notes. One could argue that such introductions act as "titles" and vice versa, as in McPhee's description of an *angklung* group whose players relied entirely on the lead metallophone introduction rather than the title to distinguish pieces (McPhee 1966:239)<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>For an exploration of song titles as a kind of meta-language, see Lewis Carroll's *Through the looking-glass*, in which the White Knight distinguishes between what "the name of the song is called", "the name of the song", "what the song is called" and "what the song really is" (Carroll 1986 [1897]:218).



## 4.11 Referentiality

Besides the evocation of mood and character, *gendér* music can refer outside itself in other ways. Tenzer uses the term “topic” to describe the power of such rhetorical referencing in *kebyar*: “Some *kebyar* topics are defined by attributes such as colotomic meter, drum pattern, or elaboration style; others suggest connections to theater or dance. A given musical situation can contain many such kernels, prompting the listener to reference several related genres, affects, or analogous musical moments all at once” (ibid.:163).

Examples of references to other gamelan genres in *gendér* include the use in the Sukawati “Pemungkah” of a melody moving in the *gambang* rhythm of 5 plus 3 beats, textures similar to *angklung* in pieces such as “Segara Madu”, and quotations from gamelan *selonding* in the Tenganan “Pemungkah”. Players sometimes describe a conceptual “gong” tone at the start or end of *angkatan* ostinati, which reference the *ponggang* (two small hand-held gongs) of the processional gamelan *beleganjur* (see Gold 1998:566). Musical example 18 shows a typical *ponggang* pattern from gamelan *beleganjur* followed by three left-hand ostinati from *gendér wayang* pieces.

### Musical example 18: *ponggang* and left-hand ostinati

The image displays four staves of musical notation in treble clef. The first staff shows a single melodic line with a gong-like tone at the beginning and end. The second, third, and fourth staves show rhythmic patterns with eighth and sixteenth notes, characteristic of left-hand ostinati.

Referentiality means that different gamelan ensembles form a mutually influencing web of styles and textures. It is sometimes unclear whether a

particular *gendér wayang* passage has *kebyar* influence or not, as many *kebyar* characteristics were themselves taken from *gendér* style (Buda, personal communication, 2002). In *kebyar*, *gendér* is commonly evoked as a topic through the type of *kotékan* or use of irregular phrases. However, to view the essential “meaning” of *gendér* (or any music) as simply a matter of references outside itself would be to ignore the vast bulk of the sounds it contains and pieces’ inner musical logic. Besides the extra-musical associations and references to other genres in *gendér*, there is an inner pull towards non-referentiality and abstraction.<sup>62</sup>

In this chapter, I have attempted to show some of the unique features of *gendér wayang* and how they relate to other Balinese gamelan forms. These features strongly influence the compositional and improvisational choices made by player-composers, which I explore in the following chapters.

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<sup>62</sup> Granoka makes many positive references to the *gendér* repertoire's “*abstrak*” (abstract) qualities (see chapter 6).

## Chapter 5: What players say

This chapter introduces the players' descriptions of how and why they make variations to existing pieces and compose new pieces. It forms a preface to the more searching descriptions in chapter 6 and, as an overview, is slightly impressionistic: I leave my teachers' comments "hanging in the air". This chapter tackles terminology and regional identity as a background against which the creative changes described in chapter 6 take place.

### 5.1 Terminology

Hobart (2000b) emphasises the importance of trying to understand and apply Balinese terms to understand Balinese concepts. Sometimes it is the very lack of Balinese language terms that is revealing. Words for key theoretical concepts to describe some of the distinctive musical acts that I am describing, namely improvisation, composition and variation, are simply not used. Instead, words such as *improvisasi*, *komposisi* and *variasi* have been adopted from Indonesian and, with them, their modern, Western-derived distinctions between these phenomena.<sup>63</sup> Equivalent Balinese words tend to be either very specific, like *ngorét* (a type of ornament) or very general, like *maganti* (to change). The following are some of the terms that my teachers used to describe related processes of playing, composing, improvising and changing.

#### ***Improvisasi and mayasin gending***

The word most commonly used to express improvisation is the Indonesian *improvisasi* (from Dutch *improvisatie*). This term is used even by players with no connection with the music academies, such as I Nyoman Sutawa. Another term is *mayasin gending*, to decorate the piece, from the root-word *hiyas* (also: *hyas*, *ias*) which means ornament, decorate, beautify. "In Balinese, *improvisasi* is *mayasin*. Even though that's not exact, it's the nearest", says Ida Wayan Ngurah (tape 2002:7a).

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<sup>63</sup> Schaareman (1986:76) describes a similar situation for Balinese words meaning "ritual".

*Mayasin* was a term used frequently by all my teachers to cover both spontaneous changes in performance and more worked-out small changes. The term gives a sense of the purpose of such changes: to decorate the piece so it is more beautiful and intricate and, thus, more attractive to the listener. Ida Wayan Ngurah also used the term *nyekarin gending*, from the refined Balinese word *sekar* (flower); thus, to decorate the piece like a flower.

Other phrases used to mean improvisation include the following, mentioned by Sarga and Warga:

Me: In Balinese, is there a term for *improvisasi*? W: *mayasin gending*. S: *Tekep mawayah, gebug wayah, pukulan tua*. (Sarga and Warga, tape 2002:25b)

*Tekep mawayah, gebug wayah* (Balinese) and *pukulan tua* (Indonesian) all mean “old playing”. This term *wayah* (old, mature) implies that the performer’s playing style is mature enough to allow him to make subtle changes to the music.

Buda mentioned another term used in Sukawati for improvisation – *ngecékang*:

B: There’s a term, perhaps not very well known among most people but, especially here, we use the term *ngecékang*. That’s if the shape of the tune is: 2, 3, 4. Later, if I play 1, 2, 3, 4 then 2 then 3 – this we call *pengecékang*. I say, to improvise is *ngecékang*. Because, here, it is often said: *cékcékang*. *Cékcékang* means *kocékkocékang*, which means with variation. Without this, here, it’s not very good. So, I conclude that, here, *ngecékang* means improvised. (Buda, tape 2002:18b)

On other occasions, players used the Indonesian *permainan pukulan*, which could be translated as “the play of hitting”, to describe improvisation.

Locéng often uses the word *maganti* (B: to change) and *pagantian* (B: changes), to describe all the changes he makes, giving the example: “*suba masa patut maganti*” (“it’s already the time to change”). He gives the Indonesian phrase *secara mendadak* (all at once) as equivalent to *improvisasi* and says that in Balinese this is: *jeg mekeneh* (suddenly thinking or suddenly intending), *jeg nambahin* (suddenly adding) or *nglénang* (making different).

Locéng often dismisses old playing styles and pieces from other areas as *pojol* or *pocol* (B: too short, not enough) by which he means they are over-simple. The opposite of this is his own style, which is *rumit* (I, complicated) or *kéweh alih* (B, hard to get) (tape 2000:10a). Gunawan uses the Indonesian terms *ganti pukulan* (change the playing) and *berubah* (alter, change) to mean improvisational or semi-improvisational changes.

## ***Komposisi and kréasi***

At the other end of the composition to improvisation spectrum are *komposisi* (Dutch: *compositie*) and *kréasi* (Dutch: *creatie*), which are used for avant-garde and modern-traditional *kebyar* compositions respectively. *Komposisi* can also mean the structure of a piece. Ida Wayan Ngurah states that, in this case, it is equivalent to the Balinese term *tata titi* (organisation) of the *tetabuhan* (piece).

Me: Are there Balinese words for *komposisi* or *kréasi*? IWNg: In Bali, *komposisi* is *tata titi tetabuhan*. The structure, for instance in "Sekar Ginotan", *gineman*, *pengawak*, *peniba*. That's *tata titi*. But the Balinese term is more complete. *Komposisi* is just the structure but *tata titi* includes the inner structure. (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 7a)

Perhaps, we could interpret *komposisi* as surface structure and *tata titi* as inner structure.

## **5.2 Regional identity**

Several of my initial discussions with players revolved around regional styles. This issue is made more complex by government-encouraged constructions of "regional identities" and by frequent all-Bali competitions in music as diverse as *kebyar* and *lagu pop Bali* (Balinese pop music). In these contests, each representative district (*kabupaten*) is given equal weight and yet there is no consideration of finer gradations of regional style, or reflection on whether these political boundaries reflect meaningful cultural ones – groups compete like sports teams, artificially differentiated from one another.

In *gendér*, real stylistic differences encompass both broad regional variation (Central Bali, East Bali and so forth) and smaller differences between villages. In the following sections, I describe how my teachers gave an impression of their particular style in comparison with others, including both musical features, such as types of ornament, and extra-musical elements, such as general aesthetic preferences in that region. Through my research, I began to notice, too, that regional styles and different players within it seemed to fall at different places along the improvisation to composition continuum. Some villages, like Sukawati, and some players within it, like Locéng and Buda, stressed improvisation and complexity. Gunawan in Tenganan preferred to create his own compositions by adapting other gamelan forms. Musicians

around Budakeling and Abang were anxious to preserve their old pieces, while that region's principal musical exponent, Granoka, had created a unique performing group based on mystical theories.

### 5.3 Discussions with musicians in Sukawati



I Ketut Sukayana (left) and I Wayan Locéng (right)

This section is based on interviews and conversations on the subject of variation-making, composition and creativity with musicians and puppeteers from the puppeteer family of Sukawati. As further background on both the history and music of this family is contained in Heimarck (1999 and 2003) and Gold (1992 and 1998), I will concentrate on additional information presented by my teachers that is particularly relevant to this study.

In chapter 1, I have already described the Sukawati family of puppeteers and its relationship with the old palace of Sukawati. This palace had close historical links with the main Balinese court at Klungkung and the family still has connections there (Locéng, personal communication, 2000). Nowadays, Sukawati's proximity to Denpasar and to the government academies SMKI and ISI has created a zone of mutual influence. Locéng and the *dalang* Nartha taught at ISI, leaving a legacy of Sukawati style there. The many young Sukawati puppeteers and musicians who have graduated from ISI, like Buda

and Ketut Sukayana, bring back a new attitude to composition. As we have seen, Sukawati has perhaps more *dalang* and *gendér* players than anywhere else in Bali. However, Ketut Sukayana says there are four main *gendér wayang* groups in Sukawati. Three of these four groups are lacking members, hence, members are shared between the groups for *wayang* performances (Ketut Sukayana, tape 2002:25a).

Locéng painted a picture of the musical scene in Sukawati when he was young. He described how *gong kebyar* groups gradually spread throughout South Bali in the mid twentieth century, from Bona, Belaluan, Pindha and other villages before finally reaching Sukawati in the 1950s. Before this, the village only had *gendér wayang* ensembles (including the *batél* ensemble with drums and gongs for *Ramayana* performances and for danced *Mahabharata*, *parwa tari*) and a tradition of *sanghyang* singing for trance dance (see De Zoete and Spies 1973). Locéng's late wife was a *sanghyang* singer and Locéng himself knows many of the songs. When the people of Banjar Babakan wanted to buy a *gong kebyar*, they had to borrow money from all 12 *banjar* in Sukawati and repaid it by playing at temple festivals. They were taught first by the famous Gedé Manik from Jagaraga in North Bali and later by the noted composer Lotring (tape 2002:23b).

Sukawati, too, is said to be the original home of the *légong* dance, which was developed in the *puri* Sukawati (royal palace). Later, it was neglected there but flourished elsewhere, for instance in Peliatan and Saba (Locéng, tape 2002:23b). *Angsél* patterns from *légong* have influenced the development of the *kayonan* dance in *wayang* (Gold 1998). Locéng says there is a link between *sanghyang* songs and *légong* (tape 2002:23b). The *pengecét* of *légong kraton* is based on the melody of a *sanghyang* song and, in nearby Ketéwél, there is a *légong*-related mask dance tradition incorporating *sanghyang*-like trance and accompanied by a sacred *semar pegulingan* (see Tenzer 1991:83–4). McPhee talks of a predecessor of *légong* called *nandir*, which he says the composer Lotring told him was accompanied by *gendér wayang* together with *sléndro*-tuned *jégog* metallophones (1966: 356). However, Locéng says that he remembers that *nandir* did not include *gendér wayang*, only the *jégog* and *gong* “in a container”, which probably means a gong-substitute like the Javanese

*gong kemodong* with two metal plates suspended over a resonator (tape 2002:23b).

Players tend to define their own regional style by contrasting it with those of other villages. In Sukawati, the contrast is most often made with the styles of Kayu Mas in Denpasar and Teges, near Ubud in Gianyar, both of which are characterised by Sukawati players as simple. In contrast, Wayan Konolan of Kayu Mas told me he preferred his own simpler, older style (personal communication, 1989). As we will see later, Karangasem players contrasted their own “eastern” style with that of “the west”, referring to Sukawati and Badung (Denpasar), feeling more affinity with the second of these rival centres.

Locéng, like many Balinese musicians, has a competitive outlook and, having won so many competitions with his refashioning of the already formidable Sukawati style, has a certain suspicion of other regional styles. He found the Budakeling pieces I played to him “chopped up” and slightly unclear (personal communication, 2002). I once told Locéng that players in Denpasar said they preferred a simpler style. “Nonsense! Denpasar pieces are too easy,” he replied (tape 2000:2b). Several times, I suggested to Locéng that players in other areas might actually prefer simple versions for aesthetic reasons but he always ended up insisting that they were not capable of tackling complexity.

Buda, however, has a more charitable attitude:

B: In Denpasar ... don't say they're not capable – they are capable. But their hearts aren't struck by complexity, because they have their own character. In the Gianyar district, the character is really rather complex – all the pieces are like that, *gong kebyar*, *gendér*. In Denpasar, there are a lot of melodic pieces; the *gendér* is very refined. That is besides ability. What is most dominant is the regional character of our humanity. (Buda, tape 2002:17a)

Locéng does acknowledge that the differences between different villages' styles are good and that no one style can be said to be perfect:

L: What's the best thing in art? Me: I don't know. L: What's best is what's fitting (*pantas*). The situation is all-important. Which beater is best? [holds up two *gendér* beaters] This one ... because I like it! [laughs]. (Locéng, tape 2000:2b)

Likewise, Locéng feels that each group within Sukawati has its own preference and that one should not be too judgmental, even if one prefers one's own version (tape 2000:2b).



## 5.4 Discussions with musicians in Tenganan



Tenganan

Compared with Sukawati, *gendér wayang* is new to Tenganan, a village with its own long-established musical traditions in *selonding* and *gambang*. Gunawan says that *gendér* is not used for Tenganan ceremonies: “For the Indra sect, only *selonding* and *gambang*. *Gendér* is only for the more usual Hindu ceremonies” (tape 2000:6b).<sup>64</sup> He says that, in the 1940s, there were some iron *gendér* in the village, which were played by Ranu and Mudita, together with Jiwa, Sugita and Mamuk. Later, around 1970, he says Mudita bought some antique bronze *gendér* from Sibetan and Ranu also bought a set. Mudita became the *dalang*, while the group consisted of Ranu, Jiwa, Sugita and Mamuk. Mudita stopped performing in 1990 for health reasons but is still a teacher of *gendér* and *kekawin*. Gunawan made a set of *gendér* himself too. Much of the repertoire was obtained from Ketut Serurut, who was famous throughout Karangasem and had studied at the Puri Karangasem (royal palace) where, as a favoured royal servant, he was invited to play *gendér*, *semar pegulingan*, *rebab* and so forth. Gunawan says that the basis of most tunes came from the Puri Karangasem

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<sup>64</sup> People from Tenganan and other Bali Aga villages sometimes identify themselves as followers of the Indra sect of Hinduism.

and from there the pieces were disseminated to nearby villages such as Pesedahan (tape 2001:1a).



I Wayan Dasta playing *selonding*

Gunawan first started making replica *selonding* instruments at the request of a Japanese visitor in 1980. The order was never fulfilled even though he built the instruments, with the result that there was a set for local people to play on. Since then, he has made and sold several sets, many of which are now abroad. Previously, the *selonding* repertoire was learnt on wooden instruments called *selonding uyung*, as the real, sacred *selonding* ensembles may only be played at ceremonies (Gunawan, tape 2001:1a, see also Ramseyer 1992). Gunawan's group has made several commercial recordings with the non-sacred *selonding*, which have influenced musicians across Bali (notably, the audio cassettes: *The best of gamelan selonding 1 and 2*, 1985). There are *selonding* sets at ISI and elsewhere – it seems to be fashionable for modern composers to experiment with this genre, at least in the version taught by Gunawan (other villages' *selonding* traditions remain hidden).

I asked Mudita to compare the surrounding influences in Tenganan and Sukawati. He agreed that Sukawati's closeness to ISI in Denpasar made a difference but stressed the factor of choice in being influenced:

M: My teacher, Ranu, didn't want to be approached by it [ISI influence]. Sometimes, there's an influence from *gong* going into *gendér*. He was angry: "this isn't *gendér* playing!" So that people knew the difference between the *gendér* way of playing and the *gong* way of playing. (Mudita, tape 2002:1a)

I asked whether, in Tenganan, there was an influence, instead, from the *gambang* and *selonding* traditions, which are so strong in this village:

M: There is. For instance, in the "Pemungkah", the *gambang* enters. There's also "Sekar Jepun" that comes in [plays] – that's "Sekar Jepun" from *selonding*. Me: So, it was taken from *selonding* and put into the "Pemungkah"? M: Yes. My teacher's purpose was to lengthen it because it was short. (Mudita, tape 2002:1a)

I also discussed regional differences in style with Gunawan, who contrasts Gianyar (in other words, Sukawati) with Karangasem:

G: In Gianyar, it's changed a lot. They look for playing techniques from *gong kebyar*. In Karangasem, one village might be different [from another]. For instance, in Pesedahan, they have the same piece but the way of playing is sometimes lessened or added to – here as well. But, after practising together once or twice we can play: "Oh! It's the same tune, just a different way of playing." If I hear Karangasem pieces, they are very classical. We're happy to hear classic pieces, brought from 1950 without any changes. In Gianyar, Locéng and Sarga's *petegak* pieces are very quick. *Petegak* should inspire (I: *menjiwai*) the listener. People should be as if meditating listening to gamelan. (Gunawan, tape 2002:2a)

Gunawan explains how he sees the relationship between the old and new in Tenganan music:

Me: Tenganan is regarded as a very traditional village in Bali, with the most traditional music: *gambang*, *selonding*, *kidung*. But musicians here such as you and Pak Dasta are very creative, always making new things and different instruments like the *penting* (plucked zither). G: I like to combine. For instance, I take *gong* pieces to *selonding*. But what is traditional is the music for ceremonies. Later, the extra: I look for pieces to take to *selonding*, to *gendér* and so on. Me: Has there been an influence from composers in Denpasar at STSI [ISI]? G: The development of music, especially for *déwa yadnya* [ceremonies for the gods], is like before – there's been no change. So, in *selonding*, there's a piece, "Geguron", for opening. That's never been changed: never reduced and never added to. Now, for the extras, I make pieces so people won't be bored; I make *kréasi* like *gong*. (Gunawan, tape 2002:5a)

Balinese often link different approaches to various art forms when distinguishing one regional style from another. People in Karangasem tend to stress the antiquity of their traditions, their reluctance to change things and their preference for strength and simplicity in artistic styles:

Dasta: It's older here. They don't like new pieces. If *gendér* pieces are brought here, people don't like them. Here, it must be slow. People don't like painted things, for instance temples should be just carved not painted. (Dasta, tape 2002:4b)

However, Dasta also emphasises that he enjoys making new pieces by arranging pieces he hears on cassette for different ensembles.

## 5.5 Discussions with musicians in Budakeling



Ida Wayan Ngurah performs *wayang lemah*

The main family of puppeteers in Budakeling is known as the Gria Jelantik and is one of the several *brahmana budha* families in the village. Ida Wayan Ngurah says there are around eight practising *dalang* in Budakeling, all from the Gria Jelantik, and about ten *gendér* groups. I asked him whether the fact that the main *dalang* family in Budakeling is *brahmana budha* had any influence on the regional character of *gendér* or *wayang*:

IWNg: There's no special education but there is a tradition. Like me, in Budakeling there's an obligation: after someone has risen in age to adulthood (*grhasta*), they are obliged to carry out puppetry. (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2002:5b)

If, however, this family member goes on to become a fully-fledged high priest (*pedanda*), he or she is obliged to give up puppetry. Ida Wayan Ngurah feels that this gives a particular concentrated spirituality to the arts there:

IWNg: Budakeling is the centre for [*Brahmana*] *Buda* in Bali and Lombok. [There are] *Siwa* [and] *Sogata*.<sup>65</sup> The *Siwa*, their spiritual value is in religious ceremonies. The *Buda* are more towards *budi*, *budaya* (culture). The movements of yoga went to the arts. The movements of the *mudra* developed into dance; the *windu swara* ("empty sound"; a jewel, Barber 1979) into the sounds of *selonding*, *gambang*, *gong*, *gendér* and so forth; the *sloka* into the shapes of the literary arts ... Gamelan and *gendér* all are tools of concentration [meditation]. On the other hand, the *Siwa* do it through ceremonies. Art

<sup>65</sup> *Brahmana siwa* and *brahmana budha*.

and religion become one: people's concentration through art becomes a spiritual value.<sup>66</sup> (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2001:2a)

Ida Wayan Ngurah describes the sacred quality of Karangasem *gendér* style:

IWNg: The way the *gendér* are used here in the east [East Bali], I say *gendér* in Karangasem feels *tenget* (B: spiritually charged), *sakral* (I: sacred). (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2002:5b)

Both Ida Wayan Ngurah and his brother, Granoka, only half-jokingly use the word *fanatik* to describe Karangasem attitudes to their *gendér* tradition. Initially, I found musicians there harder to approach than I was used to in Gianyar. Sometimes, during the early stages of my research there, I felt as if I was being kept at some distance on purpose. It was only later on, once players realised I was serious in my quest that they began to open up.<sup>67</sup> Granoka says I was not imagining this:

Me: I felt that it was harder for me to look for Karangasem pieces than in Sukawati. G: Yes! Me: In Sukawati, you are given pieces: "please come and study!" But, in Budakeling, it felt as though I had to go there several times before I was received. [G laughs] I was almost tested to know if I was serious. G: Yes, yes! For matters like that – when can it be received? I'm regarded as *brahmana* there and respected but I don't dare ... It's not because they're mean. Don't think it's because you're a foreigner, Nick. I myself experienced that. This is not just by chance. (Granoka, tape 2002:21a)

Sutawa agrees and describes older Karangasem players:

S: Before, if they had a piece, it was as if they had a powerful weapon. Those are the fanatics of Karangasem. (Sutawa, tape 2002:14a)

Many Karangasem players chose, in their conversations, to contrast their style with Sukawati. This may be because they knew I had studied there but also because it represents a contrast with their conservative self-image. Ida Wayan Ngurah, for instance, says:

IWNg: *Dalang* here use old melodic shapes (*rəng*). That's why the styles of *dalang* in Karangasem are all ancient. To the west, in Sukawati, they look for increasing sweetness. Here, it's not like that; it's the same as before. In *petegak* pieces, there aren't any new influences. [They are] very pure. For instance, pieces which use a *tatorékan* or *cecandétan* way of playing [types of interlocking] are still very firm. There's no influence allowed from modernisation. Pieces like "Selasah", "Glagah Puun", "Sekar Ginotan", are firmly Karangasem with no [outside] influences at all. (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2002:5b)

Players in Budakeling and Abang would often refer to the Gianyar region and Sukawati as *kauh* (the west) in contrast with themselves as *kangin* (the east), a distinction which may refer back to the splitting off of the Sukawati palace from

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<sup>66</sup> This description is reminiscent of those cited in Becker's (1993) study of Tantric influences in Javanese gamelan.

<sup>67</sup> Richard Widdess described a similar musical secrecy among some Newar musicians in the valley of Kathmandu, where Tantric influences prevail (personal communication, 2002).

Klungkung in the seventeenth century (see Wiener 1995). Ida Wayan Ngurah describes the link with the original kingdoms:

IWNg: In Bali, *pedalangan* (the art of puppetry) came from certain areas, first of all from the kingdoms, for instance the kingdom of Waturenggong.<sup>68</sup> The basis of *pedalangan* was brought from Java by my ancestors. They were at Gianyar – the other brother was here at Budakeling. (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2002: 6a)

Ida Wayan Ngurah says that the basis of the tradition is from the central court at Klungkung (and, formerly, nearby Gelgel) but, following its destruction by the invading Dutch in the early twentieth century, performing arts traditions passed especially to Gianyar and the literary arts east to Karangasem. Thus, the Gianyar region became famous for its performing arts, while Karangasem became better known for literary skills (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2001:1b). There is also a strong link with the neighbouring island of Lombok but, apparently, there is now just one Balinese-style *dalang* performing there. Formerly, there was a *dalang* in Karangasem who performed *wayang sasak* (Sasak-style *wayang* from Lombok) (Ida Nyoman Sugata, personal communication, 2002).

Ida Wayan Ngurah says that the development of *gendér* in Sukawati is good and much-liked by audiences but that Karangasem style is strong in feeling and in spiritual values, supported by ritual (*yadnya*):

IWNg: While in the west [Sukawati] it has developed from the pattern of puppetry that has a ritual character – it is entertainment. Here, even as entertainment, it is strongly ritual in character. (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2002:6a)

Sutawa says that Gianyar players are better at decorating a piece creatively, but that only a few Karangasem players are able to do so. He describes Karangasem style as “old” and “stiff” (*kaku*) and says that formerly players’ elbows were held much higher but that Granoka influenced people to adopt the more usual Gianyar way of holding their arms (tape 2002:8a).

Sutawa and the *dalang* Ida Nyoman Sugata both say that some pieces have been adopted from Buduk in Denpasar, in particular “Alas Harum” and “Lagu Délem”. “Alas Harum” was taken because the large vocal range of the original Karangasem song made it hard to sing. Sutawa also says that the fact that the original Karangasem “Alas Harum” goes straight into fast “Batél” afterwards makes it tiring for the musicians. Both feel that Denpasar style fitted

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<sup>68</sup> An ancestral king of Gelgel, from where Bali was ruled before the palace shifted to nearby Klungkung.

better with the hard but simple Karangasem style than that of Sukawati, which they describe as “sweet” (*manis*). The pieces were learnt from cassettes of the famous *dalang* Ida Bagus Buduk (Sugata, personal communication, and Sutawa, tape 2002:14a).

Although there is certainly some resistance to change in Karangasem, many of Ida Wayan Ngurah’s descriptions describe a situation that is disappearing. For instance, he says that not many *dalang* and players actually use the different versions of the “Pemungkah” appropriate for different characters and situations any more. He singles out the Abang group, described below, as one that kept up the old ways of playing.

Karangasem style has been partly reconstructed after a period of decline following the 1963 eruption of nearby Gunung Agung, in which the area was devastated. Many people referred to Ida Wayan Oka Granoka as the figure that had done most to revitalise local *gendér* traditions. Despite moving to Denpasar, Granoka is constantly referred to locally as the foremost Karangasem musician and composer, hence his nickname: “Granoka Gong”. Sutawa says it was Granoka who taught him the genuine Karangasem “Pemungkah”.

When Gunung Agung erupted, the village *gendér* were moved to Granoka’s house (Sutawa, personal communication, September 2002). Granoka says that when Karangasem *gendér* players fled to Budakeling during the eruption, this opened up an opportunity for him to study. However, many of the old people from Budakeling itself who knew the pieces had died and the tradition was being lost. So, Granoka looked all over Karangasem and other parts of Bali for tunes. He got many pieces from the group in Abang led by Madé Kondra and also learnt from Pak Ranu in Tenganan. In this way, although the thread of the actual Budakeling style was partially broken, it was restored from other parts of Karangasem and Granoka ended up knowing many versions of pieces (tape 2002:20a).

## 5.6 Discussions with musicians in Abang



Ida Nyoman Sugata

*Gendér* groups exist in many other East Balinese villages, including Abang, Padang Kertha, Selat and Sengkidu as well as in the neighbouring island of Lombok, which has strong connections with Karangasem.

In the village of Abang, near Budakeling, I spent two afternoons discussing aspects of *gendér wayang* with a group of musicians consisting of I Madé Kondra, Nyoman Kota, I Madé Putu, I Madé Widastra and I Wayan Jira together with *dalang* Ida Nyoman Sugata. Ida Wayan Ngurah mentioned this group several times as one that preserved old ways of playing. He put me in touch with his relative, the *dalang* Ida Nyoman Sugata from Abang who introduced me to the group. Granoka also later described learning from Kondra.

The Abang group was presented both by others and by themselves as an example of “old” Karangasem styles and practices. They were anxious to point out the contrasts between themselves and Sukawati, where many changes have taken place. Kondra says that, unlike in Sukawati where *pangkat*



pieces have been dropped from *wayang* performance, groups such as those in Abang and Manggis still use them (Kondra, tape 2002:12a).<sup>69</sup>

Old pieces were sometimes presented as possessing a sacred character, and this was given as a reason for not changing them. At times, the musicians were self-deprecating about their ability to change pieces and, at others, critical of the fast Sukawati style:

Me: I asked Pak Locéng why [he made changes] and he said that playing *wayang* all the time he got bored. Sugata: Yes, bored [others agree]. Kondra: Besides that, that area [Sukawati] is an area of artistry. They can quickly make pieces. S: As well as that, there's a lot of competition, many crews [they use the English word, crew], so each crew tries to increase their *kréasi*. In Karangasem it's not [like this], there's no competition. P: There, *wayang* is very different. K: So that the *gendér* is *emosi* [agitated by strong emotion]. S: The feeling doesn't enter. K: Yes. S: The spirit doesn't enter the playing. K: It's remembered – *ngot!* S: This is why the playing is bad, the feeling doesn't follow the playing, hitting continuously like this. (Sugata, Kondra, Putu, tape 2002:12b)

The Abang musicians felt it was important that the old pieces should not be changed. Often the Indonesian term *sakral* was used to explain their inner quality, for a discussion of which see Picard (1996):

Me: While I was in Sukawati, I asked why they always made changes. Perhaps, here, I should ask why don't you want to change? [they laugh] K: Yes, good! S [to the group] Why don't you want to change? MP: Ability ... K: Because they are *sakral*, like *gending gambang*. Truly, these are our inheritance (I: *warisan*) [plays]. S: So, the crews here still remember to preserve the creations of previous creators [they agree]. They pass down the previous pieces because those who created the pieces before were charismatic (I: *berkarisma*). They had the weight (*bobot*, cleverness) of their own playing. New players won't dare to change and create, except for creating new pieces. Besides this, there's the ability to express. What's clear is the essence of why Karangasem doesn't want to change and decorate pieces: one, they want to preserve the creations of before, secondly, besides that, they don't want the character of that piece to get changed. It's not certain that if a piece that has charisma is decorated whether its charisma is lost. K: Its antiquity is lost. S: It's as if that piece doesn't have a soul later. Besides which, the ability to express their playing is less because they are "natural artists" (I: *seniman alam*). In Sukawati, the majority are academic artists. K: Yes, the creators of *kréasi*. (Sugata and Kondra, tape 2002:12b)

Here, the Abang musicians discuss Karangasem characteristics with the *dalang* Ida Nyoman Sugata:

Sugata: Karangasem pieces have the spirit, the character of Karangasem people. Me: And what is the character of Karangasem people? S: They want to show their strength. Kondra: Yes, that's right. S: So, all the pieces are powerful – high in character throughout. In Sukawati, they like it sweet: the performance is romantic. (Sugata and Kondra, tape 2002:12b)

Besides *gendér*, Kondra and the others also played *gambang*, which is prominent in Abang, as in some other parts of Karangasem, where it plays for temple rituals (see Schaareman 1986). In other parts of Bali, *gambang* is rarer

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<sup>69</sup> However, the players were unfamiliar with the longer forms of character piece described by Vonck (1997) in Tejakula with a slower *pengawak* and faster *angkatan* section.

and is mainly associated with cremation rituals. Kondra felt that *gambang* and *selonding* repertoires were linked but that *gendér* was separate from this (tape 2002:12b).

Karangasem *gendér* style, unlike that of Sukawati, is certainly not widely known outside the area. Sutawa was surprised that I had even managed to find one commercial cassette of a Karangasem *gendér* group (from Selat) in a shop in the regional capital Amlapura. Locéng, although polite about me studying in Karangasem did pointedly state that Karangasem had never been known to win a *wayang* competition. But maybe old-style Karangasem players are not interested in winning competitions and making their pieces known on cassettes, as Sutawa states:

S: In Karangasem – the very old players – the pieces on purpose are not given to other people. If we go to Abang and ask for a piece, if we don't have a relationship [with them], they won't give it. (Sutawa, tape 2002:14a)

### ***Gending* “Tunjang”**

The piece “Tunjang” is used to accompany the entrance of the goddess Durga in *wayang* and for terrifying, supernatural scenes such as the dancing of witches in the graveyard both in *wayang parwa* and, especially, in the magically charged *wayang calonarang* (see McPhee 1936). The Abang musicians would not play it outside the context of a performance, despite being urged by the (only slightly) more sceptical *dalang* Ida Nyoman Sugata:

Me: What about *gending* “Tunjang”? Kondra: “Tunjang”? [all talk at once] Madé Putu: We don't dare to use it in practice ... Sugata: Wah! Kondra: Yes. I don't dare. (Abang musicians, tape 2002:12a)

Later, the piece again came up in conversation:

Me: It seems that perhaps here the link [between *gendér* and ritual] is tighter. Perhaps the pieces are regarded more sacred here than in Sukawati? Sugata: Yes. Like before, the example of the piece “Tunjang”. The *gendér* players here regard this piece as sacred. It cannot be played unless the puppet of Durga is taken out [they nod in agreement]. To use it in practice is not allowed – it has been made sacred (I: *disakralkan*). Kondra: Sorry. For instance, when it's *kajeng–kliwon* ... S: Because “Tunjang” is special for Durga, it is very sacred. They don't dare use it for a practice [players murmur agreement]. Hidden creatures would emerge after the practice. K: That's it. S: Hidden spirits would emerge [all talk at once]. (Abang musicians, tape 2002: 12b)

In chapter 6, below, Granoka also describes this piece as sacred and dangerous. In that chapter, he describes how he feels that this piece was bestowed upon him by the goddess Durga as the basis for his own gamelan. In

Sukawati, this piece is not surrounded by such a taboo. However, one anecdote may hint that here, too, it has certain powers. Once, I was in Locéng's house practising the piece, "Tunjang", which Locéng had recently taught me. The day in question was *kajeng–kliwon* in the Balinese calendar, which is generally more supernaturally charged than other days. Locéng sharply told me to stop playing it, without explanation.

### Women players in Karangasem



I Nyoman Sutawa, Ni Wayan Apriani, Ni Wayan Naning and Ni Komang Edo

In such a culturally conservative area, I was surprised to find how many women *gendér* players there were in Budakeling. In Sukawati and, to my knowledge, elsewhere in South and Central Bali, *gendér*, like all gamelan, is very much a male preserve, although there is no actual prohibition against women playing the instruments. All-women *kebyar* groups have now, however, become common in urban areas and women's *beleganjur* has been described by Bakan (1998 and 1999), again, mainly in a modern urban environment. I had, however, only come across one or two women who played *gendér* in the south, for instance Surayatini, Konolan's daughter, and Purnawati, the granddaughter of the gamelan maker Gableran, who learnt from Locéng. There is, however a woman *dalang* in Sukawati: Ni Wayan Nondri.

In Budakeling, however, it is not unusual for players' wives and daughters to learn *gendér*. Granoka's daughters all play *gendér* and form part of his performing group, *Bajra Sandhi*. Sutawa's wife, Ni Ketut Sasih, and his (in 2002) 14-year-old daughter, Ni Wayan Apriani, also play. Granoka and Sutawa both stated that this was not a new phenomenon and not in any way linked with modernisation or with the women's gamelan groups mentioned above:

Sutawa: Here, truly, they [women players] existed from before. Not in our *banjar* but in Jung Sri. Then, Granoka's daughters all can play. Then, by chance, there's me – my daughter. Me: It seems this has been already for a long time in Karangasem? There are also women *gendér* players in Central Java ... S: Only in Karangasem, truly have there been [women players] for a long time. (Sutawa, tape 2002:14b)

Sutawa described how Granoka had advised him on the best way of teaching his children and that once his daughter had learnt enough to perform, other children were very impressed, saying: "Teach us! Teach us!" Now, Sutawa often performs with his daughter and two, even younger friends, Wayan Naning and Komang Edo. "We're really proud that we have a group of young girls who can play *gendér*," says Sutawa (tape 2002:14b). Granoka links the women players in Budakeling with the idea of learning within a family, mentioning the Jung Sri group and Sutawa's family as examples (tape 2002:20b).

This Karangasem tradition of women *gendér* players deserves further study in its own right but is beyond the scope of the present thesis. A comparison with Central Javanese traditions of women *gendér* players (as described by Weiss 1993) would be particularly interesting.

These, then, are the broad outlines of the regional styles, as perceived by my teachers, which form a background to the next chapter's exploration of how players improvise and compose. Some themes have already emerged, which will be made more explicit in later chapters: in particular, the sense of a strong, hegemonic, modernising centre based around ISI and, through proximity, Sukawati. This is balanced by Karangasem's use of its sacred traditions as a kind of defence against such influences, paralleling the cultural conservatism cited by Vonck (1997) as characteristic of the *gendér* tradition in Tejakula in North Bali. Further research in other "peripheral" areas, such as Bangli and Klungkung, might shed further light on such strategies of resistance.

Table 1: the improvisation to composition continuum in *gendér wayang*

Improvisation ...		... variation ...			... composition		
Spontaneous variations (6.1)	Malleable units (6.2)	Pre-planned variations within a piece (6.3)	Re-composition of short episodes, shared segments (6.4)	Making new variation sections (6.5)	Making new <i>gineman</i> introductions (6.6)	New versions of old pieces (6.7)	New pieces (6.8)
<p>Varied melodies, counter-melodies, added ornaments, varying <i>kotékan</i></p> <p>Examples: "Rébong", "Alas Harum", "Katak Ngongké", <i>sangsih</i> of some Budakeling and Tenganan <i>pefegak</i></p>	<p>Used in action scenes featuring interaction between <i>dalang</i> and musicians</p> <p>Examples: "Batél", "Peselah batél", "Lagu Délem", <i>parngkat</i> used flexibly in performance like "Krépétan"</p>	<p>Similar to the spontaneous variations and maybe arose from these, but now a relatively fixed variety of ways of doing things</p> <p>Examples: <i>halus</i> versions of pieces such as "Partha Wijaya", "Krépétan", "Mésem", "Cangak Merengang"</p>	<p>Sometimes just adding, taking out or changing small segments</p> <p>Examples: "Sekar Jepun", "Mérak Ngelo"</p> <p>An additive process of transformation that leads to tune-families</p>	<p>Process evident from the variation form of pieces, where variations get progressively more complex</p> <p>Examples: "Sekar Sungsang", "Sudamala"</p>	<p>Several introductions have been developed. These do not need to relate melodically to the main body of the piece.</p> <p>Examples: Sukawati "Sekar Ginotan", Locéng's new <i>gineman</i> to "Sekar Gadung"</p>	<p>Examples of reworking: the Sukawati show pieces, "Sekar Sungsang", "Sekar Ginotan" and "Pemungkah"</p>	<p>Example in traditional style: Locéng's "Buristrawa"</p> <p>Example of an adaptation or arrangement for <i>gendér</i>: Gunawan's "Tabuh Suling"</p> <p>Example of <i>gendér</i> in <i>kontemporér</i> style: Buda's "Gonggang"</p>

## Chapter 6: What players play

I thought it's as if you're given 10 coins; if, later, you still only have 10, it means it's not useful – it's very bad. So, I was given 10 *pokok*. It's like capital. It's right that eventually it should give interest. So, if I don't add to that, it's called *nista* (low, base). Stupid, that's called ... Why make the changes? It's the times: *sing ada kayu luput tekén angin* (no tree is untouched by the wind). (Locéng, tape 2000:5a)

Bruno Nettl's model of a continuum from composition to improvisation (see chapter 3) serves as a useful starting point for categorising the variety of compositional processes in *gendér wayang*. This chapter sets out eight distinct, though related, types of composition in *gendér wayang*, moving from the improvised to the pre-composed end of the continuum. These are set out in table 1. Within each category, I present musical examples illuminated by comments from my teachers. Thus, this chapter examines material along a line from the most to the least improvisatory, taking in the following headings: spontaneous variations; malleable units; pre-planned variations within a set piece; re-composition of short episodes; new variation sections; new *gineman* introductions; new versions of complete pieces; and, finally, new pieces.

I feel, however, that this model needs to be applied with care. Although the lines between composition, variation and improvisation may be blurred, it may not be possible to remove them entirely. Conversely, in other cultures, other distinctions may demarcate meaningful categories. Hobart (2000b) describes the distortions caused by imposing our unchallenged presumptions and categories on Bali. It is therefore essential that when etic categories are used they are clearly presented as such. One way of reducing such problems is to involve the players in the analysis, as Richard Widdess has done in his article "Involving the performer in transcription and analysis: a collaborative approach to *dhrupad*" (Widdess 1994).

Although I have not been able to submit all my conclusions to the scrutiny of Balinese musicians, I was careful to explain the reasons behind my questions and to get a sense of whether or not my categorisations, theories and assumptions made sense to my teachers. Nettl's model proved a practical and fruitful way of approaching different types of composition, variation and improvisation during my fieldwork. It was also one that seemed to make sense to my teachers as we discussed the processes involved at different points along the scale. Applying this etic concept also drew to my attention the fact that

different regional styles and different players could be placed at different points along this continuum – or, rather, that they seemed to place more weight or emphasis on different points. It also became clear that players regarded these different manifestations of creativity as linked. Once, after a wide-ranging discussion, while I was leafing through my notes of questions, thinking what to ask next, Locéng commented: “Those questions are truly linked – truly of one family” (tape 2000:4b).

However, it was clear that, although convenient as a way of setting out types of changes, this model should not be regarded as a classification system, either emic or etic. Discussions of the types of improvisatory changes, set out in 6.1, merged seamlessly into talk of pre-composed small changes, described in 6.3. There is no clear-cut conceptual boundary between these types of change. In fact, rather than a neat “continuum” between small improvised changes and large-scale composition, as suggested by Nettl’s model, it seems more like an inter-related web of connected actions and concepts. Events at one end of Nettl’s spectrum may suddenly be seen to be related to events at the other.

## 6.1 Improvisation 1: spontaneous variations

In *gendér*, my spirit is free. (Granoka, tape 2002:20a)

Spontaneous variations in *gendér wayang* are those made at the improvisatory end of the continuum. These small variations are not always easy to distinguish from the pre-planned variations described below in 6.3, and players often have a collection of small variations to phrases which may be used in alternation. However some new phrases do seem to be generated in performance. These involve the spontaneous creation of slight differences, usually fitting within the established structure, in other words the group version of a piece. These changes could occur when playing *polos* or *sangsih* alone or together with other players in performance. Examples include: slight differences in left-hand melodies, in particular adding or varying a left-hand *sangsih* counter-melody (an example is the *pengecét* of “Rébong”), adding *ngorét* (grace notes) and other ornamentation to slow pieces, and making *kotékan* figuration more complex (in which case it must still fit in with what other players are doing).

Variations of this kind sometimes recur but, equally, the player may go back to the “original” model, or create something new. Thus, there may be a group of possible variants to parts of each piece, some of which are selected on one occasion, while allowing for new ones to appear. This improvisatory practice is close to the variations of *céngkok* in Javanese *gendér* playing. I will discuss these “crystallised” variants below in section 6.3 and concentrate here on what appears to be genuinely new material.

Not all the spontaneous changes in performance involve pitch change. Dynamics, for instance, play an important role in bringing a piece to life in performance. Especially in fast style, players will create frequent dynamic changes within phrases (I: *ombak*, waves) to emphasise structural points. The placement of these dynamic rises and falls is not set – it seems to be something that is left to a player’s individual feeling, though a group will follow the lead set by the leading *polos* player. As with other types of improvisation, sometimes these crystallise into an “own favourite version” of a group or individual, and which may mutate with time.

Some pieces seem to have more room for improvisation than others, but what determines this? I Ketut Buda Astra emphasises that the complexity of improvisation should be determined by the character of the piece (tape 2002:17a). In Sukawati, favourite *pangkat* pieces, like “Krépétan” and “Partha Wijaya”, with already showy and complex *kotékan* are often further elaborated with spontaneous changes, making them even more breathtaking in their complexity.

Also in Sukawati, pieces with enough “space” to permit variation may also invite the player to make changes. A performance of the first section of “Rébong” by Buda and Komang Wrespatika, described below, shows just how flexible this piece can be. Other slow-style pieces, such as “Mésem” and “Alas Harum” have scope for improvisation, though Buda emphasises that this should remain simple, in character with the seriousness of the piece (tape 2002:17a). *Petegak* pieces, which often have complex four-part textures and elaborate variation structures, seem to be least suited to improvisatory treatment and yet, even here, improvisation takes place, for instance in the commonly heard Sukawati piece “Sekar Sungsang” as described here by Buda:

B: In other pieces, like “Sekar Sungsang”, its notes are like this [plays] – its *pokok*. Later it can be developed [plays a more elaborate version of the phrase] like that, giving it



breath [to play]. That's already giving it colour, the *polos* [plays a simple phrase followed by a complex version]. That's a small development. Me: Is that your usual version of "Sekar Sungsang"? B: Sometimes I can [play it like this], sometimes not. Me: And the *sangsih* will know beforehand, or not necessarily? B: Not necessarily. Me: It must just follow? B: It must follow. [If] he improvises, we too can follow after. It's not certain what we'll play. (Buda, tape 2002:22a)

Later, when he performed "Sekar Sungsang" with I Komang Wrespatika, I commented that there was *kréasi* in it, "taking it from here to there." Buda replied:

B: That's us playing without realising it, playing using just feeling, because the format of the piece has already been mastered by us. (Buda tape 2002:22b)

In the following conversation, Locéng describes how the "way" (*jalan*) or structure of the piece must be preserved and how he uses certain techniques such as *selah* (broken octaves) to embellish the melody, before raising the difficulty of two players improvising together:

Me: In *gendér*, you can go here and there a bit? L: You can. Me: As long as it fits? L: Fits the melody, still, the melody of the way (*jalan*) of the piece isn't reduced [plays left-hand phrase from "Sekar Sungsang"]. This is already sufficient – it's not wrong. Don't look for this, look for more than here [plays more complex example]. This is firmer still [*mantap*], that is *selah* [plays complex extract from "Partha Wijaya"] like that. Do you want that? Me: Yes! If [you play] this, surely the *sangsih* must also follow? L: Yes! It must follow. Where there's a space, the *sangsih* follows. Me: That's harder for the *sangsih*. L: There are those who can [follow]. (Locéng, tape 2000:1a)

### Examples from Sukawati

Musical example 19 shows the *polos* part of *pangkat* "Partha Wijaya" in the version Locéng first taught me (lowest stave) plus some more *halus* (refined) phrases I later learnt above these, in bars 3, 4, 7 and 8 (I discuss pre-planned *halus* versions of pieces in section 6.3 below). The top stave shows a rendition by Locéng incorporating some improvisation (tape 2000:1a, **track 1 on the accompanying CD**). Note, particularly, the *ngorét* grace notes and syncopation in bars 5 and 11 of the improvised version. The left-hand part, which is the same in all versions, is shown as the bottom part in the bottom stave. The left-hand ostinato starting in bar 2 continues throughout until the transition in bar 12.

Musical example 19: right-hand improvisation in "Partha Wijaya"

The musical score is written for a right-hand improvisation in the key of B-flat major (two flats) and 4/4 time. It consists of 16 measures, with some measures containing multiple staves. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, such as eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above notes. Dynamic markings like accents (>) and breath marks (gamma) are used. The score concludes with the word "etc." in measure 16.

2 3

etc.

4 5 6

7 8 9

10 11 12

13 14 15 16

etc.

“Rébong” seems to be a piece with plenty of space in it for improvisation. The first section is in the slow style, allowing the players to aim for the cadence points, without worrying about intricate interlocking parts. The faster sections of “Rébong” have simple interlocking in the right hands giving scope for elaborating the left-hand melody, and for adding counter-melodies in the *sangsih* part.

Musical example 20 (see separate fold-out sheet) shows the first section (*pengawak*) of “Rébong” as played by Sukawati musicians Ketut Buda Astra and his younger brother Komang Wrespatika during a session in which they agreed to demonstrate both regular and improvised versions of pieces. First they played a simple version of the *pengawak*, similar to the one taught to me by Pak Locéng, and followed this with an improvised version, in which they play the *pengawak* twice through.

The transcription shows a simple version of the piece taught to me by Locéng and, below this, the two repetitions of the improvised performance by Buda and Wrespatika. These are laid out phrase by phrase in a comparative score so that the different versions of each of the four phrases of the piece appear together. This improvised version, shown as the bottom four staves in the transcription can be found on **track 3 of the accompanying CD**. The bars of each phrase are numbered so that I refer to bar 8 Locéng’s version, bar 8 Buda and Wrespatika first time, second time and so on. Both Locéng’s and their simple versions are themselves ornamented, so it would be misleading to present them as a “model” upon which the improvised version is built. These, themselves, seem to be an elaboration of an unrealised underlying pattern.<sup>70</sup> Although most of Buda’s and Wrespatika’s separate parts are clearly audible (tape 2002:22b), there are some moments where my transcription is hesitant as the *polos/sangsih* separation is unclear, even from scrutinising the video recording of this session.

The improvised version contrasts with Locéng’s and their own simple version in its overall feeling of freedom within the basic structure. There are sections of varying dynamic intensity, speeding up and slowing down. The central part of the performance introduces *kotékan* into the texture, not found in

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<sup>70</sup> See Peterman (1989) on shared patterns in regional variations of “Rébong”.

**Musical example 20: "Rèbong", main section (pergawak).** The top staff shows the *polos* as taught to me by Locéng. Staves 2 and 3 show Buda (*polos*, staff 3) and Wrespatika (*sangsih*, staff 2) improvising. Their version continues on staves 4 and 5, showing the second time through the *pergawak*.

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system consists of three staves: Staff 1 (Single version, polos), Staff 2 (Improvised version, sangsih), and Staff 3 (Improvised version, polos). The second system consists of two staves: Staff 4 (Second time, polos) and Staff 5 (Second time, sangsih). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'p' and 'f'. The piece is in 4/4 time and features a complex rhythmic structure with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The improvisations in staves 2 and 3 show significant variation from the single version in staff 1. The second time through the piece in staves 4 and 5 repeats the structure of the first system.

the basic version, after which the music returns to the previous, simpler style to end. One constraint on change is clear from the transcription: the metric framework of the piece is immutable. There is no insertion or subtraction of note-values or phrases, as to do so would confuse the other player – they stay firmly within the structure. Such insertion or subtraction is a feature of more worked-out variations of pieces, discussed below in section 6.4, but not of improvised variation. Once two or four players have adopted a particular structure, they tend to stick to that version in performance. Having said that, when playing with another group, players must be ready to adapt in performance to that group's version, which may contain a different phrase structure.

The first time round the cycle, Buda and Wrespatika's variations are emphasised by tempo and dynamic changes. For instance, from bar 9, they get louder, softer then loud again before slowing down with a diminuendo in bar 11. Bar 9 first time shows that varying a phrase may involve making it simpler rather than more complex: here, the flowery phrase shown in Locéng's basic version is replaced by emphatic even note-values. In bar 17 first time, they speed up and get louder, emphasising the melodic descent to the first note of bar 18, then slow down and get softer in bar 19.

Around bar 29 first time, their playing starts to become more animated, moving towards a texture of left-hand melody and right-hand figuration. This is firmly established by the beginning of the second time. It involves a somewhat simpler outlining of the melodic structure in the left hands while melodic interest is focused on the right-hand figuration. From around bar 23 of the second time, the texture returns to the calmer, slow-style texture of the opening.

It is in this passage (bar 29 first time to bar 23 second time) that Buda and Wrespatika seem to "get into" their improvisation, only "coming out" of it as the piece approaches the end. Their variations are held together by the melodic line of the left hands, which remains close to the previous time through and to Locéng's basic version. This left-hand melody of the first line of the second time can be compared with the same passage in Locéng's version. It is clear that the general melodic shape and important structural notes are the same. However, in the same passage, Buda's right-hand part is quite different. It only coincides at certain points with the first time and with Locéng's version.

Improvised interlocking figuration will be discussed in more detail below with reference to the piece “Katak Ngongkék”. Here, it is notable how accurately Wrespatika reacts to Buda’s *polos* to add a *sangsih* that mostly fits within the general rules of *kotékan*. Most dyads produced are at a space of four notes (*ngempat*) or three notes apart, while clashes of smaller intervals tend to be in passing. For instance, at second time, bar 7, fourth crotchet beat, there is a momentary clash between *polos dung* (Bb) and *sangsih dang* (C) which is immediately resolved.

Besides definite pitch and rhythm changes, the overall “feeling” of the improvised version is one of letting go and allowing the music to flow. It seems to echo Buda’s comment, above, about “playing using just feeling”. However, as with much improvisation, it is hard to ascertain how much, if any, material is genuinely “new” in the sense of never having been played before. Buda may not always move to the *kotékan* texture at the same point or in exactly the same way, but Wrespatika’s ease in following with the *sangsih* part implies that they had at least tried to play in that way before.

Another consideration in pieces in this slow style is how the players follow the *dalang*’s vocal melody. The version described above is purely instrumental, so the *sangsih* player (Wrespatika) simply needs to follow Buda. In a *wayang* performance, the lead *gendér* player will be acutely sensitive to the phrasing of the *dalang*’s vocal melody and other cues, guiding the group through dynamic and tempo changes. Typically, the *dalang* will sing a few phrases before the characters speak, at which point the musicians play more quietly so the words can be heard. When the *dalang* sings another snatch of song, the dynamics rise again. This kind of interaction between musicians, puppeteer and audience is discussed further in 6.2 below. Both McPhee and Gold describe how “Rébong” is as much a dramatic scene as a “piece” (McPhee 1966:229 and Gold 1998:530–5).

I asked Buda whether, in slow-style pieces like “Rundah” or “Mesem”, this vocal line determined the main shape of the piece:

B: The format or shape of the tune, I think, first was the *gendér wayang* [part]. After that, the *dalang* can follow the notes of the *gendér* melody. But in its movement, later in performance, the *gendér wayang* follows the *dalang*. The *dalang* will control the *gendér* – where to stop, where it’s long – the *gendér* will follow. [But] in the shape of the tune, the *dalang* is tied to the *gendér*. (Buda, tape 2002:19a)

So, in Buda's view, the *gendér* part determines the tune's structure but, in performance, the *gendér* must follow the *dalang*. Musical example 21 shows the cadential phrases from the opening song, "Alas Harum", sung by Wayan Nartha in a *wayang* performance in 1987. The musicians, realising that Nartha is drawing out his notes, repeat the final chord of each phrase (the notes in squares) to continue to support his voice (tape October 1987: *Kresna Sorga* 1a). This excerpt starts at 45 seconds into **track 4 of the accompanying CD**.

### Musical example 21: cadential phrases from "Alas Harum"

The musical score consists of four systems, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a *gendér* accompaniment line (treble clef). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The lyrics are: "ta- tas", "ka- man- tyan", "ne- mu- ning".

- System 1:** The vocal line has a long note for "ta- tas". The *gendér* line features a series of chords. A square highlights the final chord of the first phrase.
- System 2:** The vocal line has notes for "ka- man- tyan". The *gendér* line continues with chords. A square highlights the final chord of the second phrase.
- System 3:** The vocal line has notes for "ne- mu-". The *gendér* line continues with chords. A square highlights the final chord of the third phrase.
- System 4:** The vocal line has a long note for "ning". The *gendér* line continues with chords.

### Examples from Tenganan

Mudita states that although changes are usually rehearsed by players first, small spontaneous changes are possible in one or all parts, taking care, however, not to break the piece (tape 2002:1a). One expression I first came

across in Karangasem, which is also used in other parts of Bali, was *mayasin gending* (to decorate the piece). Mudita played “Merak Ngelo” as an example: the opening phrase is quoted in musical example 22 to show small differences in three successive repetitions (tape 2002:1a). The changes are small and mostly in the right hand, where different notes are syncopated in each version.

**Musical example 22: Mudita, three versions of phrase from “Merak Ngelo”**

The image shows three staves of musical notation, labeled 1), 2), and 3). Each staff contains a sequence of notes and rests, representing different versions of a phrase. The notation includes treble clefs, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 7/8 time signature. The first staff (1) shows a phrase with specific syncopation. The second staff (2) shows a variation with different note placements. The third staff (3) shows another variation, also with different syncopation. The notes are primarily eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests.

Mudita also demonstrated different ways of approaching the piece “Serempak”. Musical example 23 shows the first phrase (1) as taught to me by Gunawan, then (2) as played by Mudita at fast tempo (tape 2002:4a) and (3) as a slower version (tape 2002:3a). In the last of these, he actually alters the phrase structure at three points: at (a) and (b) three beats are condensed to two, and at (c), three beats are condensed to one.

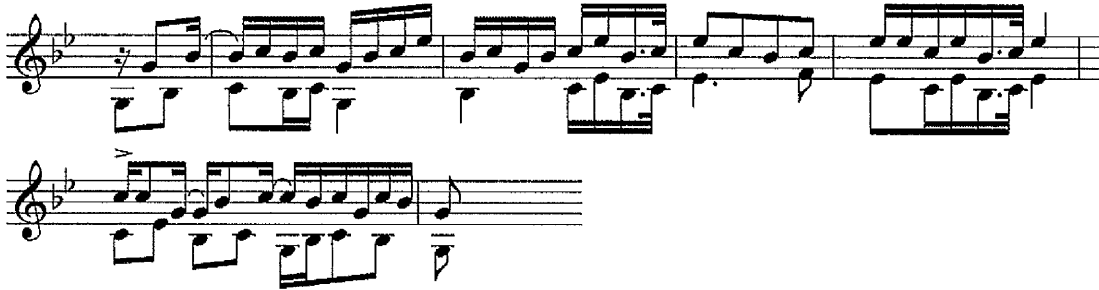
**Musical example 23: Mudita, three versions of phrase from “Serempak”**

The image shows three staves of musical notation, labeled 1), 2), and 3). Each staff contains a sequence of notes and rests, representing different versions of a phrase. The notation includes treble clefs, a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and a 4/4 time signature. The first staff (1) shows a phrase with specific syncopation. The second staff (2) shows a variation with different note placements. The third staff (3) shows a slower version of the phrase, with brackets labeled 'a', 'b', and 'c' indicating where three beats are condensed to two or one. The notes are primarily eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests. There are also some '+' signs above the notes in the first staff.

Mudita also demonstrated a type of playing in another phrase of the same piece, which he called *crukuk nglanting* (B: swinging thrush) to illustrate the alternating of right and left hands (musical example 24, track 5 of the accompanying CD) (tape 2002:4a).



**Musical example 24: Mudita, *crukcutuk nglanting* in “Serempak”**



Gunawan describes how players react to each other’s changes. Like many Karangasem players, he uses the term *wadon* (female, often used of largest of a pair of drums) and *lanang* (male, smallest of a pair of drums) to mean *polos* and *sangsih* respectively:

Me: What happens if the *lanang* doesn’t know that the *wadon* is going to change? G: The *lanang* can be quick. Once you know the *wadon*, the *lanang* is automatic. But if the *wadon* changes without consultation, suddenly, an expert spectator would see the mistake. Me: Can a clever *lanang* player follow? G: Yes, he can quickly try to play. After a couple of times the *lanang* would get it; the first time maybe not! (Gunawan, tape 2002:2a)

Later, he demonstrates, using me as a guinea pig:

Me: If the *lanang* player doesn’t know this, how can he follow? G: If he’s clever, he’ll get it quickly. If he’s just learning he’ll be confused [plays]. Now, try like yesterday [we play simpler pattern]. Now, for instance like just now [we play]. If you want to keep creating like this you can, as long as your colleagues follow. (Gunawan, tape 2002:2b)

Changing the *sangsih* to make *pukulan empat* instead of *pukulan tiga* (see chapter 1) is a simple change that can be made spontaneously without disrupting the *polos* player. But Mudita also describes, in connection with musical example 25 (phrase from “Banapati”, *polos*), how sudden changes may occur, “so there’s no compromise with your friends” (fellow players). Such changes are “*otomatis*” (automatic): “it’s not thought about but it’s already happening” (tape 2002:3a).

### Musical example 25: Mudita, phrase from “Banaspati”



Gunawan and Dasta played together to demonstrate how players cope with sudden changes in the other part:

G: That's sudden or spontaneous. Me: But usually the *lanang* knows [what's going to happen]? G: No, it can be suddenly from the *wadon*, but once he hears it he can follow quickly. When you've played it a couple of times. (Gunawan, tape 2002:3b)

However, in Tenganan, it is more often the *lanang* (*sangsih*) player who makes changes against a relatively fixed *wadon* (*polos*) part. During a recording session in which Mudita was playing *wadon/polos* and Dasta *lanang/sangsih*, they swapped round to demonstrate, allowing the more experienced Mudita to play an elaborate *sangsih* part of “Sekar Sungsang” (Mudita and Dasta, tape 2002:5a).

### Examples from Budakeling and Abang

In the Budakeling area, many players feel that only certain pieces should be accorded improvisatory treatment. This is partly to do with the amount of musical “space” for improvisation within the piece, as described above for other areas. However, it is also to do with the seriousness or “*klasik*” character of certain pieces, which may be regarded as “*sakral*”.

Ida Wayan Ngurah regards some pieces, which he describes as *gending klasik* or *gending ageng*, as untouchable. He lists “Sekar Sungsang” and “Garjita” (both *petegak*) among the pieces where improvisation is, however, appropriate (tape 2002:7b). He comments:

In Karangasem, the same [piece] changes, depending on the artist, sometimes without him realising it. One piece, eventually, can develop, change from the basic way of playing, which in fact still has a classic character. But ... little by little there's an

alteration, according to the artist. But it's restricted to the type of piece that's basic, whose pattern of striking [allows it]. But if it's a *gending ageng* (great piece) like "Sekar Ginotan" or "Abimanyu" that's just *tekeh* [stored, preserved]. Its *gegedig* [way of playing] can't be developed, let alone changed. (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2002:6a)

However, even in the pieces he describes as *klasik* (classic, classical) or *gending ageng* (great pieces), a certain amount of ornamentation is appropriate:

Me: Nevertheless, it can be ornamented a little? IWNg: Yes it can. Here, you can [do it], but only by decorating it according to the feeling [*wirasa*]. In the *gegedig*, perhaps the *polos* changes to *tatorékan* [a type of interlocking]. It's allowed. (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2002:6a)

Ida Wayan Ngurah told me that, in Budakeling, these spontaneous changes often involved changes to the right-hand *kotékan*, while the left-hand melody remained the same (tape 2001:2a). He also explained the technical reasons why some pieces change more than others, for instance the complexity of the relationship between right and left hands in some *klasik* pieces makes it hard to develop them further:

IWNg: It's hard if the *gegedig* is already fixed as mature *gegedig*. In *gending ageng* like "Sekar Ginotan", "Gringsing Kuning", which are *lawas* (enduring, lasting, ancient) then they are fixed. You must not [decorate them] a lot. They must be left alone. I think in the basic pieces [*gending dasar*] alone there's an opportunity to decorate. Certainly it would be difficult in a piece like "Sekar Ginotan". Me: So, decorating pieces is usually regarded as something good but there are pieces in which it's not allowed? IWNg: [Pieces] which are difficult to be developed, because the *gegedig* of the classic pieces, like "Sekar Ginotan", the shape is difficult. As one example, "Sekar Sungsang" is still easy [to develop] but in "Sekar Ginotan" the patterns between left and right hands go against each other [plays]. That's old "Sekar Ginotan". It's hard to develop it further. If it were developed the *ngisep/ngumbang* [the two instruments' parts] wouldn't meet. It's been arranged from before. Me: It's already so complex? IWNg: Yes, there are no gaps. It's already fixed: *cecandétan*, *tatorékan*. If that changes, the meeting of the *sangsih* and *polos* can't take place. (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2002:7a)

Slow-style *tandak* like "Mésém" are also relatively fixed, although, as in Sukawati, *ngerék* (*ngorét*) ornaments may be added.

In Abang, during a discussion with the group consisting of I Madé Kondra, Nyoman Kota, I Madé Putu, I Madé Widastra and I Wayan Jira together with *dalang* Ida Nyoman Sugata, I raised the topic of improvisation. Kondra said that some pieces were decorated and some not, while Sugata suggested that the pieces they decorated were mostly those adopted from "the west, from Badung", while they left the local pieces untouched (Kondra and Sugata, tape 2002:12a). The other musicians later confirmed that this was the case (Abang group, tape 2002:13a).

Sugata, in particular, was keen to present the group to me as an example of "old, genuine" Karangasem style, tallying with the local image of

Karangasem as a place where ancient, original versions are preserved, in contrast with the dynamic and ever-changing Gianyar. However, when pressed, they did say that in fact changes were made in local pieces. Sugata related this to playing the piece with proper feeling:

Me: But [with] *gendér* players, if they are good players, aren't there small changes? Often I see players make smaller changes to make it more refined. All: Oh yes! S: Here as well, because when playing *gendér* it is fitted to the *wayang*, so the energy of the piece is hooked to the gamelan. For instance, if a female puppet comes out, the lady-in-waiting, it's "Rébong", sweet. The player makes it inspired (*taksu*) so that the mood enters. Then sad [pieces], the player will inspire (*taksu*) the feeling so that it's also sad, so there's a link between the piece and the mood (*manas*, Sanskrit: mind) of the *wayang*. (Ida Nyoman Sugata, tape 2002:12a)

The Abang players, just like Buda in Sukawati, chose "Rébong" as an appropriate piece to demonstrate unadorned and adorned versions, playing a simple version of the first section and then decorating the *pengecét* (Abang group, tape 2002:12a).

In Tenganan and among most Budakeling players I talked to, the terms *wadon* (female) and *lanang* (male) are used for *polos* and *sangsih* respectively. However, Ida Wayan Ngurah insists that this should be the other way round, with the *lanang* corresponding to the *polos* part (tape 2002:7a). Although the *polos* can make decorations, he says that, in Budakeling, it is more usual in the *sangsih*, comparing the *wadon* and *lanang* to a couple: "the one who decorates must be a woman":

IWNg: It's easier to follow the *polos*. The *sangsih* player can often develop the melody.  
Me: So the *sangsih*'s freer? IWNg: Yes, it's freer. There are gaps in which you can decorate the melody, but the right hand is stable. (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2002:7a)

In musical example 26, Ida Wayan Ngurah gives an example of an alternative *sangsih* part to an excerpt of the piece "Garjita", which moves lower in the left hand to create *kotékan empat* (tape 2002:7a).

### Musical example 26: Ida Wayan Ngurah, "Garjita" excerpt

The musical score consists of five staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The staves are labeled as follows:

- sangsih 1:** Features a complex, rhythmic melody with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, including slurs and ties.
- sangsih 2:** Is mostly empty, with a few notes appearing in the second measure.
- polos:** Features a steady, rhythmic accompaniment with many sixteenth notes.
- both 1:** Features a steady, rhythmic accompaniment with many sixteenth notes.
- both 2:** Features a steady, rhythmic accompaniment with many sixteenth notes.

#### He comments:

IWNg: This [change] is carried by the *wadon* [here he means *sangsih*]. In Karangasem, the *wadon* is a woman. The *lanang* [here he means *polos*] *gegedig* stays the same, while the *wadon* decorates. The *wadon* can decorate, but not in the right hand. Many Karangasem pieces are like that: they decorate the *wadon* – the *lanang* can't change at all. (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2002:7a)

In the above passage, he is talking particularly of flexibility in the left-hand counter-melody of the *sangsih*, while the right hands of both parts must remain stable to keep the *kotékan* going.

Here, Granoka demonstrates the elaboration of the *sangsih* part for me in a short extract from an unnamed piece (musical example 27). Each time round, the *sangsih* was slightly different (tape 2002:21b). This is **track 6 on the accompanying CD**.

### Musical example 27: Granoka improvisation

The musical score for Granoka improvisation consists of seven staves. The top staff is labeled 'polos' and contains a melodic line in a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a common time signature. The following six staves are labeled 'sangsih line 1' through 'sangsih line 6'. Each 'sangsih' line shows a rhythmic accompaniment with various note values and rests. The 'sangsih line 2' includes a note with a fermata and the annotation '(pauses for a while)'. The notation uses a treble clef and a key signature of two flats.

In the following example from Tenganan (musical example 28), Mudita and Dasta (tape 2002:5a) also show how a *sangsih* player can interpret more freely than the *polos*. Mudita, as the more experienced player, takes the *sangsih* part, varying the left hand at various points. Mudita's variants thicken the texture of the pattern created by the two left hands, making the passage sound richer and more complex than the basic version. (1) is the basic version as taught, (2) shows the varied left-hand *sangsih*.

### Musical example 28: Mudita and Dasta, “Sekar Sungsang”

The musical score consists of five staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The first staff is labeled '1) sangsih' and shows a melodic line with eighth notes. The second staff is labeled '2) l.h. sangsih' and shows a bass line with eighth notes and some rests. The third staff is labeled 'polos' and shows a melodic line with eighth notes and some rests. The fourth staff is labeled '1) both together' and shows a combined melodic and bass line. The fifth staff is labeled '2) both together l.h.' and shows a combined melodic and bass line. The score is divided into two measures by a double bar line.

I asked Ida Wayan Ngurah about how players achieve this spontaneity:

Me: Pak Mudita said that when decorating a piece it was *otomatis*, without thinking.  
IWNg: That is strength (*kawibuhan*). If [one is] strong it is spontaneous. It's from inside and comes out. The left hand follows your own taste. In Tenganan, Pak Ranu was very strong. I was often invited to play *gendér* with him, and the *pokok* sometimes got lost because there were so many decorations! (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2002:7b)

Hall (1992) states that improvisation is the domain of the expert. Among *gendér* players, the ability to improvise is often seen as a sign of personal strength:

Me: *Mayasin gending*, improvisation – what's the reason? IWNg: Well, it's like this: it's according to the feeling, the improvisation in the *wadon* [here, *sangsih*]. Especially in *gendér* you see the strength (*kawibuhan*) of the person playing the *gendér*. If you're not strong you can't do it. Ordinary people use the basic version. If they are strong (*wibuh*), like Pak Ranu in Tenganan, they can decorate. If you can *mayasin gending* it means you are strong. It's very difficult. It's not fixed in the *gegedig*. Like “Sekar Sungsang” earlier, in the *lanang*, the *pokok* stays the same. The decoration won't change it. If the *wadon* plays decorations this is a sign of strength. Me: Only someone who really knows the piece can do this? IWNg: Yes, [you need] a strong artistic feeling, bringing a sense of pride. (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2002:7a)

Ida Wayan Ngurah uses the term *wibuh* for this, which means strong or powerful. It is this personal sense of pride that often lies behind these subtle changes rather than a desire to impress the audience with virtuosity:

Me: What's the purpose of decorating the pieces? Will the audience understand? IWNg: This is spontaneity, which is characteristic of *gendér* alone. It's for one's own personal pride, one's skill and strength. Me: Perhaps other *gendér* players would notice? IWNg: Ah yes! That's strength. It's not for the audience. (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2002:7a)

All my teachers emphasise that improvisation is something that only experienced players are able to do. After adding a particularly elaborate *sangsih* while we were playing “Sekar Sungsang”, Locéng commented:

The *pokok* isn't left behind but, if you're not able to, you can't [do it]. It must be “outside the head”, [it must have] been mastered. For others, if it just goes [i.e. doesn't break down], it's enough – thank goodness! Let alone look for something else [an alternative version]. Many roads so that they're exact – that's the hard thing. We take many but not lessening the *irama* (rhythmic structure). In fact, if most people looked for lots [of versions], they would certainly be late, left behind. (Locéng, tape 2000:1a)

In Sukawati, Sarga describes how this knowledge is acquired:

S: I studied, in an indirect way, the process of arrangement at the time of performance. [Later, it was] automatic direct practice: “Oh, this is how the old people play, this is the way of the piece, by changing the right hand.” That's because of experience and because of already playing for a long time. Me: Can everybody in Sukawati improvise like that or just those with experience? Can the young generation? S: If not first of all, later they can because of their descent. If they want to study, they'll certainly be able to. Me: So, when you began to study you couldn't yet improvise? S: Not yet! Me: But eventually? S: Yes, as it developed. Warga: That improvisation is ... used directly in *wayang* performance. S: It is felt. (Sarga and Warga, tape 2002:25b)

Ida Wayan Ngurah says knowing the other player musically is a great help:

Me: Perhaps people who play together a lot are best at decorating pieces? IWNg: Yes, because they share feeling, they're both strong. Someone who's learning the piece will get confused and the piece's *pokok* can be lost in the decorations. (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2002:7b)

Players will estimate each other's musical strength to raise or lower the level of variation, as Sutawa points out:

S: I estimate the crew we'll be playing with – their abilities. If they are not able, automatically the piece will be changed to find a simpler version. If they're able, we add to it so it is better. (I Nyoman Sutawa, tape 2002:8a)

Sutawa, playing with his daughter Ni Wayan Apriani, gave some examples of *mayasin gending* in the piece “Sekar Ginotan Cenic” (“small Sekar Ginotan”), explaining how once one had grasped the *pokok* one could add variations such as different *angsél*: “*Angsél kado* is like riding a motorbike. You come across something and suddenly brake” (tape 2002:8a). He also gave examples of sudden changes in the *kotékan* of “Bima Kroda”, saying:

S: If you're just learning you'll certainly lose the path. [It only works] if you've played a long time. It goes by itself if you're used to it. Here, it's only Ida Wayan Granoka who can play around with it as I've described. The others can't do it. They stay the same. (I Nyoman Sutawa, tape 2002:8a)



## How are players able to improvise together?



I Ketut Buda Astra (left) and I Komang Wrespatika (right)

As we have seen in “Rébong”, sometimes both *polos* and *sangsih* players improvise together. This is made easier by the lack of interlocking figuration in the slow first section of this piece, and by the simplicity of the right-hand interlocking in the faster sections. In other words, there is space for variation to take place in one or both parts. But players also describe, and one frequently hears, improvisation in much faster pieces with complex interlocking in the right hands, such as the various *pangkat*. In Sukawati this seems to happen most with favourite, “show” *pangkat*, which have already been turned into complex versions, for instance “Krépétan” and “Partha Wijaya”.

But how can two, let alone four, *gendér* players improvise the two interlocking parts of *polos* and *sangsih* together? Buda explains,

B: If we are improvising in *gendér wayang*, what becomes the teacher, the handle, the key, is the *jublag* [like the metallophone in *gong kebyar*] in the left hand. The *kotékan* in the right hand is tied by the left hand's striking. The right hand can improvise, the *polos* too can improvise but ... in the middle of the improvisation it must meet with the *jublag*. For instance, if the *jublag*'s final note is *dong*, the *kotékan* can improvise to *dang*, to *ding*, but eventually it must fall to *dong*. Here we are tied to the left hand. The *sangsih* is also like that. It can improvise following the *polos*. Sometimes it can cross over, but it must think “where is the *polos* improvising to?” If it goes to the west in its improvisation we can go to the north and turn back to the west. For instance, improvising for five beats, they can separate but then the last two must interlock. Three separate and two

interlocking – that's good in *gendér wayang*. According to other people perhaps it's different, but that's how I see it.

Me: Does it depend on experience? B: Yes, on experience and ability, intellect. Improvisation comes spontaneously. So, as well as experience, it's the sharpness of thought for improvisation. Sometimes people who are good at this don't know how to play *polos*, but they can play *sangsih* because they're just improvising. I think the point of improvisation, what's most dominant, is the matter of tempo. If the tempo has been mastered truly, then you can improvise in various ways. If this isn't strong, the piece's shape (*patokan*) can be lost. The tempo in the heart – if this isn't strong, the improvisation can go too far and go past, and the piece can be broken. (Buda, tape 2002:17a)

Buda's description here relates specifically to improvising right-hand parts in pieces where the left hands play stable, repeated ostinatos such as in the *pangkat* forms. These points are illustrated by his performance of an excerpt of the "Pemungkah" together with his younger brother, Komang Wrespatika, playing *sangsih*.

Musical example 29 (see separate fold-out sheet) shows different versions of a repeated phrase from the piece "Katak Ngongkék", part of the "Pemungkah", notated to show each equivalent bar of the cycle, one above the other. First is a simple (1) and then a more elaborate (2) version taught to me by Pak Locéng. Then (3), a very basic *polos* part played by Buda alone, which he immediately followed with an elaborate *sangsih* (notated above this), saying that no matter how elaborate it would still be "*harmonis*". Next (4), is a transcription of Buda and Wrespatika playing what they describe as a basic (*polos*<sup>71</sup>) version. Finally (5), a version in which they improvise together for five and a half repetitions of the cycle. In the first four of these examples, the line is repeated over and over again, while the last one is written out in full. The left-hand parts, which are the same for each version (although Locéng's and Buda's versions differ by a few notes), are written out only for the first example. This improvised version (right-hands: the bottom six lines of the transcription, left-hands: second line of transcription) is on **track 7 of the accompanying CD**.

After Buda and Wrespatika play their basic version, Buda comments:

That's the *pukulan* that is *pokok*, *pukulan* that is *polos*. Now for the *pukulan* that's developed. I'll play [a part that's] not adjusted (*disetél*) to him. He will play how he likes. (Buda, tape 2002:22b)


Then, after the performance of the elaborate version, Buda describes how he cues the finish by getting louder:


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<sup>71</sup> Confusingly, the word *polos* can either mean one player's part, as opposed to *sangsih*, or as here, mean "basic, unadorned", the *pokok*.

**Musical example 29: "Katak Ngongkék", simple and improvised versions**  
 In items 2, 3, and 4, each line is repeated indefinitely, while the six lines of the final example are notated one after another, as they sound. All bars are shown as 4 + 5 crotchets long. Example 5 is around crotchet = 120, but it is usually even faster in a wayang, around crotchet = 160.

1) Isong's basic version

R.H. 

L.H. 

Buda's version  
L.H.




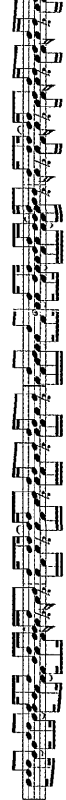
2) Isong's more elaborate version

 as above

 as above

3) Buda's basic version







4) Buda and Wispaika basic version








5) Buda and Wispaika improvised version

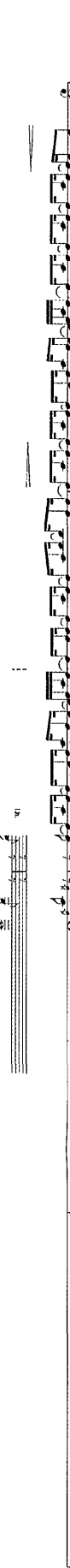
line 1 

line 2 

line 3 

line 4 

line 5 

line 6 

beat missed 9, 10, 16, 17, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36

sounds rushed

B: That's called *muncab* (B. *uncab*: hop, skip) If we *muncab* leading up to the *gong*, that means it's already over. Because we don't have a rule of this many times, that many times – there's not that. We can directly make contact with our partner with that *uncab*. (Buda, tape 2002:22b)

The cycle is based on four repetitions of a nine-beat ostinato played by the left hands, shown in the transcription as a bar of four beats and a bar of five beats. This left-hand part remains the same, based on note *dong* (F). The right-hand interlocking parts play a two-bar phrase based on note *dong* (F), which is repeated with its ending altered to rise to note *dung* (Bb). This two-bar phrase is then played twice at this higher pitch level, with the ending changed the second time to return to the original pitch level. Thus, each alternate bar consists of equivalent figuration, the first static and the second more animated, corresponding to the common phrase-types of stasis (*ngubeng*) and melodic motion (*majalan*) described by Tenzer (2000:241).

Right hand: A    B    A    B rising    A<sup>1</sup>    B<sup>1</sup>    A<sup>1</sup>    B falling

Left hand:    A            A                    A                    A

In the improvised version of “Katak Ngongkék”, I have written each repetition of the ostinato cycle on a separate staff and four-note cells have been numbered 1–36. This shows that some four-note cells are more likely to change than others, as set out in table 2. Figures in brackets refer to changes in Buda’s (B) or Wrespatika’s (W) part alone.

**Table 2: differences in four-note cells between repetitions, improvised version of “Katak Ngongkék”**

<b>1</b> 3 same 3 diff (B: 4s 2d) (W: 6s)	<b>2</b> 4 same 2 diff (B: 4s 2d) (W: 5s 1d)	<b>3</b> 3 same 3 diff (B: 3s 3d) (W: 4s 2d)	<b>4</b> 2 same 2 same 2 diff (B: 2s 3s 1d) (W: 2s 3s 1d)	<b>5</b> 4 same 2 diff (B: 5s 1d) (W: 5s 1d)	<b>6</b> 5 same 1 diff (B: 6s) (W: 5s 1d)	<b>7</b> 4 same 2 diff (B: 5s 1d) (W: 5s 1d)	<b>8</b> 5 same 1 diff (B: 6s) (W: 5s 1d)	<b>9</b> 4 same 2 diff (B: 4s 2d) (W: 5s 1d)
<b>10</b> 0 same 6 diff (B: 2s 4d) (W: 5s 1d)	<b>*11</b> 3 same 3 diff or 4 same 2 diff (B: 4s 2d) (W: 4s 2d)	<b>12</b> 4 same 2 diff (B: 5s 1d) (W: 4s 2d)	<b>13</b> 2 same 4 diff (B: 3s 2s 1d) (W: 3s 2s 1d)	<b>14</b> 2 same 4 diff (B: 3s 2s 1d) (W: 4s 2d)	<b>15</b> 4 same 2 diff (B: 5s 1d) (W: 4s 2d)	<b>16</b> 3 same 3 diff (B: 3s 2s 1d) (W: 4s 2d)	<b>17</b> 5 same 1 diff (B: 5s 1d) (W: 6s)	<b>18</b> 0 same 5 diff (B: 2s 3d) (W: 3s 2d)
<b>19</b> 2 same 2 same 1 diff (B: 2s 2s 1d) (W: 3s 2d)	<b>20</b> 2 same 3 diff (B: 2s 2s 1d) (W: 2s 3d)	<b>21</b> 0 same 5 diff (B: 2s 3d) (W: 3s 2d)	<b>*22</b> 2 same 3 diff or 2 same 2 same 1 diff (B: 2s 3d) (W: 5s)	<b>*23</b> 2 same 3 diff or 3 same 2 diff (B: 3s 2d) (W: 5s)	<b>24</b> 3 same 2 diff (B: 3s 2d) (W: 5s)	<b>25</b> 0 same 5 diff (B: 2s 2s 1d) (W: 2s 2s 1d)	<b>26</b> 0 same 5 diff (B: 2s 2s 1d) (W: 2s 2s 1d)	<b>*27</b> 0 same 5 diff or 1 same 4 diff (B: 2s 2s 1d) (W: 5d)
<b>28</b> 1 same 4 diff (B: 4s 1d) (W: 2s 3d)	<b>29</b> 3 same 2 diff (B: 5s) (W: 3s 2d)	<b>30</b> 2 same 3 diff (B: 3s 2d) (W: 4s 1d)	<b>31</b> 2 same 3 diff (B: 4s 1d) (W: 3s 2d)	<b>*32</b> 2 same 3 diff or 2 same 2 same 1 diff (B: 2s 2s 1d) (W: 3s 2d)	<b>33</b> 2 same 2 same 1 diff (B: 3s 2d) (W: 4s 1d)	<b>34</b> 0 same 5 diff (B: 3s 2d) (W: 2s 3d)	<b>*35</b> 0 same 5 diff or 2 same 3 diff (B: 3s 2d) (W: 2s 3d)	<b>*36</b> 0 same 5 diff or 2 same 2 same 1 diff (B: 3s 2d) (W: 3s 2d)

Cells marked with an asterisk can be interpreted as the same or different, depending on whether the different note tied over from the previous phrase is counted as making it “different”. From cell 18 onwards there are only five repetitions of the cycle, as it stops part of the way through the sixth repetition.

Selecting four-note cells is a device to get a measure of the amount of change. It would have been possible to select longer phrase-units. Also, it should be noted that, at a larger phrase-unit level, as set out previously, bars 1 and 3 are the same and that bars 5 and 7 are transpositions of these. A similar relationship exists between bars 2 and 4 and 6 and 8.

The table only gives a general impression of the overall amount of change between repetitions, bearing in mind that only one player needs to play something different for the cell to be marked “different”. This is why I have included, for each cell in brackets, a summary of the changes Buda and Wrepatika make separately. For instance, in cell one, “3 same 3 diff” means that overall, including both players’ parts, three of the note-cells are the same each time and three different. Below this, “(B:4s 2d) (W: 6s)” means that Buda plays the cell four times the same and twice differently, while Wrepatika plays it the same all six times. “2 same 2 same 2 diff” means that two versions of the cell are each played twice, while the two further versions are totally different.

It is clear that both players are involved in making changes. Furthermore, the cells that are the same from repetition to repetition are not necessarily taken from Buda and Wrepatika’s “basic” version. However, the impression is of a stable framework with micro-changes.

### **Are there more changes at certain parts of each repetition of the cycle?**

Cells 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 15, 17, 24 and 29 are relatively stable and hardly change from repetition to repetition, whereas cells 10, 18, 21, 25, 26, 27, 34, 35 and 36 are frequently varied. So, the cycle opens with relative stability and changes tend to increase throughout. This mirrors Tenzer’s statement that, “In *gamelan*, accumulating tension precedes the cadence, but stasis comes after it” (2000:180). This pattern of *ngubeng* (points of melodic stasis) and *majalan* (directional melodic movement) is characteristic of *kebyar* and other Balinese melodies.

## Buda's part

It is Buda who is taking the lead, so it pays to look at his part alone more closely. His main "tool" for improvising his part appears to be syncopation.

Rhythms such as:



from bar 1 of the basic version, become:



from the third and fourth repetitions of that bar in the improvised version. These syncopated phrases become more and more predominant and Buda gives special emphasis to them at points such as bar 5 where the right-hand starts the pattern at the higher pitch level. It is as if by this mid-point in the cycle he is truly "in the flow", continuing to play freely till he reaches the last three beats of the final bar (cells 34, 35 and 36), which form a concluding phrase linking back to the beginning.

## Wrespatika's part

Wrespatika's *sangsih* part is generally simpler and less variable than Buda's *polos*. For instance, he tends to use standard patterns for each *ngubeng* (static) A phrase (bars 1, 3, 5 and 7). However, in bars such as 6 and 7, rather than attempting to interlock throughout, he seems to join in with Buda's syncopations at a higher pitch level.

## Does Wrespatika react to Buda's changes?

This raises the question of the nature and level of interaction between the two musicians. One might expect that players would watch one another closely when reacting to each others' changes, but visual cues, while important, are not the only way they interact. Despite the fact that my video shows the two players seemingly gazing into the distance (in a manner typical of *gendér*

players!), and Buda's assertion that, for instance, an elaborate *sangsih* can be "harmonis" with a simple *polos*, there is evidence of a complex process of interaction between the players.

Buda starts playing and Wrespatika follows from the second beat of the first bar with off-beat repeated notes rather than the fuller *sangsih* pattern he uses in subsequent repetitions. A clear example of adjustment follows when, in bars 2 and 4, they accidentally drop a beat. Although it is not entirely clear whose fault it is, the problem seems to lie in a disjunction of the left-hand melody. Buda's right hand *kotékan* in these bars seems to flow logically (although "wrong"), while Wrespatika seems to mark time with repeated notes till he can fit back in. This leads me to suspect that it is Buda, leading, who drops the beat and Wrespatika who follows. It must be remembered that Buda is consciously improvising for the recording, having played a simple version before, so he is probably making efforts to get into a spontaneous flow.

In some bars, such as the first bar of each repeated cycle, even where Buda changes the *polos*, Wrespatika's *sangsih* remains simple and more or less the same each time. But in other places, such as the different repetitions of bar 6 and the first statement of bar 7, Wrespatika mirrors the syncopation of the *polos* part. The relative stability of Wrespatika's *sangsih* part makes it easier for the whole to sound "harmonis", even in places such as the fifth repetition of bar 3 where the parts move in contrary motion, coinciding at one point on an interval a note apart.

### **Is there evidence of "scrambling" to return to a pattern?**

There are several points at which a player seems to rush to return to a pattern. The first three have already been mentioned: the first bar of *sangsih*, where Wrespatika joins in for the first time, and the two dropped beats in bars 2 and 4.

In bar 8, it is Buda this time who seems to rush from the end of the second beat into the third, at a point marked in the transcription by a square bracket. This occurs towards the end of the whole cycle just before a seven-note phrase that leads back to the starting note. This is significant because it implies that this closing phrase is a kind of "safety net" through which he can return to the opening pattern following the freer syncopated passage that



precedes it. This use of set phrases as points of safety plays an important part in many traditions of improvisation such as North Indian classical music and jazz (Widdess 2001). Although the last two cells, 35 and 36 are very variable overall, in terms of both players' patterns together, in fact Buda only uses one pattern for three of the repetitions, and Wrespatika's phrases are quite similar to each other.

The sensation of improvising can be very subjective for listeners and players alike. The points where Buda seems most "in the flow" in the recording, through special melodic emphasis and fluidity, are not necessarily the points where actual change is most evident. Sometimes this is where a recurring pattern, albeit complex, starts, for instance at the beginning of bar five. Actual changes seem to occur later in the phrase. But it is the nuance, the emphasis given to the opening phrases, partly through dynamics, that gives the impression of improvisatory flow. One gets the impression that he is letting go of the music and letting it travel where it will. However, it may be that it is the security of returning to a familiar phrase that produces more confident playing.

In conclusion, it seems that the *kotékan* in a passage such as the one quoted from "Katak Ngongkék" is flexible enough to allow for either one or both of the players some freedom, depending on their ability and how familiar they are with each others' playing. Locéng describes the process:

Me: If the *polos* player changes suddenly, what happens to the *sangsih*? Can he follow?  
L: He can. Because we measure – we've already measured that. Clearly, he can't change from the *pokok*. It depends on the ability of the person you're playing with. Unless he's genuinely wrong he can change. If it's not wrong, definitely the *pokok*, we can measure it. My friends won't be different in the road [they take]. If the *polos* goes outside [what is usually played] even though I turn and turn, I will arrive there. I won't be left behind. (Locéng, tape 2002:18a)

In such circumstances, players must remain alert, watching as well as listening:

Me: If each time it's different, you must keep looking. L: Yes, I must look over there. If I'm playing *sangsih*, I must measure first. If it remains the same, we can ourselves exceed [make changes]. Pak Sarga, like me, will be continuously making [changes], so we are careful, prepared and alert, guarding for it. As long as his hands are like this we can ward it off like that. Me: That's hard if it's fast. L: Even though it's fast, we know everything [that might happen]. There's already an impression (*bayangan*). It's different for you, 'Yan [Wayan – my Balinese birth-order name], or for other people who aren't used to it. (Locéng 2000:2b)

If the *polos* improvises, in some cases the *sangsih* just keeps to its set part or sometimes it may improvise too:

Buda: In Sukawati, according to me, what's most important we don't [stay] too much [to the] *patokan* (fixed pattern), to the harmony (*harmonis*) of the notes like in *gong kebyar* [plays notes at the interval of *empat*]. We can part [from it] but it can be *harmonis*. Our

aim in improvising like that [is so] the piece has *pukulan* whose technique is harder. If the *polos* also plays like that, the *sangsih* doesn't have a set *pukulan*. For instance, now it plays like this, perhaps tomorrow it will be different. But he [the player] will feel ... when he plays together with the *polos*, there we in direct way get chinks [*celah-celah*], we get opportunities: "Oh, here it can be brought to here, it can be brought to here, it can be brought to here – it can be like that". (Buda, tape 2002:22a)

Buda points out that exact interlocking, according to the "rules" of *kotékan* may become secondary to the flow of the improvised parts. This seems to be particularly the case in Sukawati, where I have noticed from transcriptions that more attention is sometimes given to the melodic flow of *polos* and *sangsih* parts than to strict correspondence in vertical intervals. Buda agrees:

B: It [the *sangsih*] doesn't need to fit exactly (*pas*) with the *polos* improvisation. It can be free but it can still be *harmonis* like this [plays elaborate *sangsih* part of "Katak Ngongkék"]. The playing isn't the same. Me: So, even though it's ... B: Different ... Me: Yes, although sometimes it doesn't fit ... in the way theory says it should. B: Yes. Sometimes, the *sangsih* is *harmonis* like this [plays *empat –sléndro* "fifth" – four keys apart] but sometimes it can be like this [plays octave] or like this [plays other intervals]. (Buda, tape 2002:22a)

There is a flexibility of possible harmonic relations between *polos* and *sangsih*:

B: The *sangsih* of *gendér wayang* can be a distance of five notes, or it can be six notes or three notes [away]. In *gong kebyar*, the distance is perhaps just four notes. That's called *ngempat* ... four interlocking notes. In *gendér wayang* we can go anywhere. It depends on our wish, the amount of improvisation. (Buda, tape 2002:17a)

Mudita in Tenganan agrees:

M: In *gong* [gamelan] pieces, the *lanang* and *wadon* fit like this [plays *empat*] but the *gendér* doesn't work like that. Many people try to give it a playing style like *gong* but it then loses its authenticity. (Mudita, tape 2002:1a)

Related to the ability to improvise is the ability to make your own *sangsih* part. In fact, this ability may be a prerequisite, as it involves conceiving the piece as a whole. Making a *sangsih* part in a pre-planned way will be discussed further in 6.3, but players may also attempt to spontaneously develop a *sangsih* to another player's *polos* without prior knowledge of the piece. Buda speaks of players who can only play this type of *sangsih*. They are happier fitting in to the other player's part rather than completely memorising a whole piece (Buda, personal communication, 2002). I suggested to Locéng that creating a *sangsih* like this involved thinking of *polos* and *sangsih* parts as one but he corrected my use of the word "thinking" (I: *pikir*):

L: No, while you're thinking like that the piece won't be clear. Its meaning, its melody, its rhythm, isn't [accessible] while thinking. It means: outside the head. As long as you're thinking it isn't yet outside the head. Me: These sudden changes, are they usually by people with a lot of experience? L: Yes, otherwise how could they change it? (Locéng, tape 2002:18a)

The late Pak Ranu of Tenganan is remembered throughout Karangasem both for his ability to compose new variations and to improvise. Granoka remembers him as a “truly creative individual”. He states that Mudita misses being able to play with someone of that ability and enjoys it when Granoka visits so they can improvise together. Granoka stresses the importance of “*saling intip*” (I: glancing at one another) while playing: “this [ability to improvise] was what was extraordinary, not [the fact] that he made pieces” (tape 2002:20b).

The ability to improvise makes it easier to follow somebody else’s version of a piece. Locéng describes how his and Sarga’s versions of pieces have drifted apart, but that he can follow the latter:

L: If he changes, I can [follow]. So whoever wants [to play] – someone new for instance, whoever – if the guest plays *polos* I can follow from behind. It’s not certain that you could follow me! Because he [Sarga] has *stok* [a set way of playing something], what stays the same ... he has *stok*, I have sudden changes. I know [how to do] that. Whatever piece, I already know that. The model he owns, I know. (Locéng tape 2002:22b)

There seems to be a special pleasure in the empathy produced between two players improvising together, as Sarga and Warga describe here:

Me: If, for instance, the *polos* player improvises, the *sangsih* player also has to follow.  
S: Yes, that comes from here! If already we are as [one]. Generally, if someone [else] it’s not certain the two can use those decorations. Me: It’s exciting when I see it – how can the *sangsih* follow without an accident? That doesn’t happen in *gong kebyar*. S: No, in *gong kebyar* you can’t do it. Why? Why is *gong kebyar* not able? For me, I feel, already I look for its *anu* [whatever, something] ... W and S: Our feeling. W: Our feeling must be united. (Sarga and Warga, tape 2002:25b)

#### Four players playing together

The description above is of just two players improvising together. But what happens when all four players are playing? It was generally stated that the two smaller *gendér* may stick to a simpler version of the *kotékan*, which will nevertheless still fit. However, this obviously puts further limits on how freely the larger *gendér* can improvise. “The small ones don’t follow [while the big *gendér* are improvising],” says Locéng. “They are just as usual” (tape 2000:2b). Mudita explains that awareness within the group helps unite it:

Me: If there are four of you playing and the two big instruments start changing things a little, what do the small ones do? M: If they’re really one group, they can understand quickly. Me: If they’ve played together for a long time? M: Yes. (Mudita, tape 2002:1a)

This is where the flexibility of the system shows a marked contrast with *gong kebyar*, where such improvisation by so many instruments would result in

chaos. However, it may also be that in the *sléndro* scale of the *gendér wayang*, clashes between neighbouring notes are less jarring than they would be in the *pélog* of *gong kebyar*, which produces some smaller intervals.

Ida Wayan Ngurah describes how this problem of the small *gendér* is solved in Budakeling:

Me: If you're decorating a piece, what about the small *gendér*, if the *sangsih* is decorated? IWNg: The small one doesn't join in the decoration. The person doesn't *penyorog* [B: *sorog*, slide open, push along], the *sangsih* stays the same as before. Only the big ones develop it. Me: Even though it's different, it doesn't matter? IWNg: No, it will [work] [plays]. That's the development but the small one doesn't do this, it's just usual. Me: If there are four players, only one player develops the *sangsih*? IWNg: The variations are not so far from the basic melody. (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2002:7a)

He says that beginners usually play the small *gendér* with a relatively set part, allowing more experienced players to decorate on the larger instruments (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2002:7b).

## Learning in performance

One word is often used to describe the playing of players who can vary or improvise pieces: *wayah*. This means "old", "mature", "ripe". Of musical performance, it is used to mean that the player has so thoroughly absorbed the style and tradition that he is able to play complex versions. To say that a piece or section of a piece is *wayah* implies that it has been reworked by a player or successive players to achieve a complexity and maturity it previously lacked. When playing is truly *wayah*, it is characterised by subtle nuances of phrasing, an individual approach to ornamentation, and appropriate feeling, all of which are only acquired through long playing experience. It cannot be learnt in lessons but only through performance.

I described my experience playing for the first time in *wayang* to Sarga and Warga. Sarga had himself been playing in that performance:

Me: "Alas Harum" – when performing, is there also improvisation in that? Because I remember, when I took part in a *wayang* for the first time, I wasn't very experienced and when we reached that piece, it was very different, the *pukulan wayah* from Pak Locéng and Pak Sarga. S: That's it! But the piece isn't wrong. From that we see the character of [different] people. Me: Also, what's interesting is that when I asked Pak Locéng "how do you do *pukulan wayah* like that?" he found it hard to explain outside the performance. S: Yes! Me: It's as if, to teach it in everyday lessons, he could only give a version that's ... W: *Patokan*? [basic framework] Me: Yes, a *patokan*. To learn what's more *wayah*, more *halus*, one must learn directly in performance – that's my feeling. Is that true? S: If me previously [How I was before], the more I was [involved] in the field, the more I knew of everything. I truly learnt just the *pokok*. After we've grown up, automatically it comes out of this ... Whatever feels good, we feel that. W: It's really hard to explain that. That's

what's called *taksu*. Perhaps he's improvising in a performance, later he forgets what it was. S: That's *taksu*. W: Later he forgets what he made at the time of performance when improvising. (Sarga and Warga, tape 2002:26a)

Sarga describes how various *sangsih* realisations of “Lagu Délem”, for the dance of the clown puppet Délem, are possible in performance, but stresses: “But the *tempo* and *pokok gending* must not be lost ... there are those who make decorations that don't work” (tape 2002:26a). However, when I suggested that one might need to make mistakes to find what was good, Sarga emphasised that one should always be aiming for what sounded right – mistakes are not acceptable:

S: You look for what's right! If we listen, try, practice, it means [you know] what fits and what doesn't. After we've practised, we can hear what's matching (*serasī*) and not matching together. [We] try again to look for something else, something even better. (Sarga, tape 2002:26a)

The situation is critical in determining how one plays. It depends, for instance, on whether the performance is part of ritual or for a shadow play, and on the nature of the audience, as Sarga explains:

S: If we play in Badung, in Kayumas, we must be satisfied we've put out whatever we possess. But on condition that we've mastered it, mastered the tempo, mastered the *gending pokok*, mastered everything. And we are also like that if we play in Sukawati ... truly art must be like that, artists must be like that. The more people are paying attention and giving a response, the stronger [*mantap*] they are. Me: Will the audience notice the changes, the improvisation and *pukulan halus* like that? Or only if they're good at playing *gendér* or know a bit about other gamelan? If it's a spectator who's ... S: Critical? W: Critical like you Nick? S: According to me, even if they don't play, certainly many people know the theory. Like a *dalang*, for instance, whichever one I don't like, “this isn't good!” but I don't practise it, it's from the point of view of theory ... people who play *gong* are happy to hear *gendér* although they don't play it. But they know what's good and what's not. (Sarga and Warga, tape 2002:26a)

### **Interaction in performance in Budakeling: *mileng* and character pieces**

Part of learning in performance, and hence improvisation, involves negotiating the *wayang* repertoire along with all its formal expectations and the demands of the *dalang*. I will digress briefly to consider the situation in Budakeling, where a larger repertoire means more choices must be made.

Ida Wayan Ngurah highlights a local Budakeling technique known as *mileng*, which involves the insertion of sections of character-pieces or *batél*-like fragments into the initial pieces, “Alas Harum” and “Penyacah Parwa” (tape 2002:6a). For instance, if Tualén enters during this initial section, the *dalang*

may announce his arrival by suddenly cueing his song, which is played for a while before the music returns to “Alas Harum” or “Penyacah Parwa”:

IWNg: [With the words] *Tualén umatur* ... the *gendérs* already takes up *mileng* (sings), *Tualén*'s song. Then ... it continues with “Alas Harum” ... the *dalang* is singing “Alas Harum”, then “plak!”, the *dalang* [uses] *Kawi*, this is where the *gendér* takes it up (*nérek*: aligns) ... but it's still linked to “Alas Harum”. This is called *mileng* ... then *Darmawangsa* continues – it returns again to “Alas Harum”. (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2002:6a)

Reacting quickly like this to the *dalang*'s interpretation of the story is an essential skill for the leader of the *gendér* group and will be discussed further below in 6.2 with reference to action music. Ida Wayan Ngurah gave a further example, “Mileng Pawistri”, used if a female character emerges within “Alas Harum”:

IWNg: In “Alas Harum”, [there is a *mileng*] for a woman [*Kawi: pawistri*]. It's still “Alas Harum” but, if a woman comes out, it's not “Rebong” – usually for a beautiful woman it's “Rebong” – but here, it's still inside “Alas Harum”. Here, it's called “Mileng Pawistri”. (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2002:6a)

Like many of the subtle techniques he describes as being characteristic of this part of Karangasem, Ida Wayan Ngurah admits that these types of *mileng* are becoming rare. Nowadays the structure usually followed is “Alas Harum”, *mileng*, “Pangelangkara” and “Batél” (Ida Wayan Ngurah tape 2002:6a).

IWNg: The purpose of the *mileng* is so the *dalang* can bring in his *dalang*'s voice [own narrator's voice] in *Kawi*. For instance, Dewi Kunti is in the “Pangelangkara” [opening scene] with *Darmawangsa*. If, for instance, *Begawan Narada* comes in there is *mileng*. But “Alas Harum” is still going – after that, “Alas Harum” continues. That's called *mileng*. That's difficult for the *gendér* [players]. Me: If they don't know who will come out ... IWNg: Beforehand, the *dalang* always says: “later *Begawan Narada* will *mileng*, or *Batara Siwa*” so the *gendér* already have an idea. If *Tualén*, it's already usual. If it's been *mileng* for a long time, the *gendér* must remember that this previous scene is still within the framework of “Alas Harum”. (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2002:6a)

Ida Wayan Ngurah was able to demonstrate several types of *mileng*, including “Mileng Narada”, for the sage *Narada* (see musical example 30, tape 2002:6b) and “Mileng Kunti”, for the mother of the *Pandawa* brothers in the *Mahabharata*.

### Musical example 30: "Mileng Narada"



Sutawa also knew of the term *mileng*, but associated it with the dividing moment after "Alas Harum" when the *kayon* emerged again and the *gendér* played "Batél" before moving on to the "Penyacah Parwa". He said that this was a characteristic of Karangasem "Alas Harum" but, now that most groups use the Badung (Denpasar) version of this song, it is not heard any more (tape 2002:8b). The group from Abang still remembers and performs this local version (Abang group, tape 2002:12a).

Unlike Sukawati, where "Batél" has replaced many *pangkat* pieces that were formerly used for specific characters during action scenes, Budakeling still uses many character-specific and scene-specific pieces, mirroring Vonck's findings in Tejakula (Vonck 1995, 1997). For instance, the piece "Glagah Puun" (burning grass) is used for the story from the *Mahabharata* of Duryodana's attempt to burn the Pandawa brothers. Ida Wayan Ngurah describes some of these:

IWNg: If it's for a *raksasa* [demon], use "Grebeg Agung" ... female demons have a different [piece]. If it's the Pandawa, they must have medium *pengalang*, not below or above. For instance, if Arjuna or Dharmawangsa comes out, one uses "Partha Wijaya". For Kresna, there is the piece "Kresna Wiagra". *Wiagra* is the one standing upright above everything, the highest, that's *wiagra*. The *gendér* players must be ready beforehand to go back and forth. (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2002:5b)

Ida Wayan Ngurah explained how, formerly, in Budakeling, there were different introductions (*gineman*) to the "Pemungkah", depending on whether the *mata belog* ("stupid-eyed", *keras*) characters predominated in the story or the *mata supit* ("thin-eyed", *manis*), so the character of the performance is clear from the outset:

IWNg: Its character is different, its *karisma*. The coming out of feeling; the *gendér* has the feeling; the *dalang* brings down the feeling that will be expressed in the puppetry. (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2002:5b)

He went on to explain that, besides these two versions of the “Pemungkah” for night-time performances, there were three others used for ceremonial *wayang*, making five in all. He also mentioned a special version used for the story where Bima meets Hidimbi (or Adimbi). He can remember these (and I was able to record them) but, nowadays, most groups only use the version for *mata supit* (Ida Wayan Ngurah, personal communication, 2002:7b). After the *gineman*, the different versions converge with the start of the *kayonan*. In musical example 31, Ida Wayan Ngurah gives four examples of the *gineman* to the “Pemungkah”: for (1) *mata supit*, (2) *mata belog*, (3) *istri* (women), and (4) “Adimbi Prehati” (tape 2002:7b).

**Musical example 31: four versions of the start of the *gineman* to the “Pemungkah”**

The image displays four musical staves, numbered 1 through 4, each representing a different version of the start of the *gineman* to the “Pemungkah”. Each staff is written in a single system with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat).  
 Staff 1: Features a melodic line with quarter and eighth notes, and a bass line with chords. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with three plus signs (+ + +) above it.  
 Staff 2: Shows a melodic line with quarter notes and eighth notes, and a bass line with chords. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a plus sign (+) above it.  
 Staff 3: Displays a melodic line with quarter notes and eighth notes, and a bass line with chords. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a plus sign (+) above it.  
 Staff 4: Shows a melodic line with quarter notes and eighth notes, and a bass line with chords. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a plus sign (+) above it.

The *dalang*’s first song, “Alas Harum”, also exists in two versions:

IWNg: The “Alas Harum” which is medium has the character of *dharma* – the five Pandawa. The harder [*keras*] one is “Alas Harum Ageng” [great “Alas Harum”. For



instance, for the meeting of the Korawa ... its *karisma* is different; its soul [*jiwa*] is different. (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2002:5b)

He continues:

IWNg: If the [version of "Alas Harum" for] *mata supit*, there is a lot of *ngerek*, *ngorét*. If *mata belog*, it is mostly *mileng*. But sometimes it is mixed. *Mileng* is also used for *mata supit*. So, it depends on the choice of the *dalang* which of the "Alas Harum" will be used. If *mata belog* [he sings] low, if *mata supit* [he sings] in the middle. This depends on the *dalang* and the *gendér* players will ascertain beforehand what the *dalang* wants.<sup>72</sup> (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2002:6a)

The character of the performance that is to follow affects how and what players play in more subtle ways, right from the very start:

IWNg: The *gending petegak* first, whatever you are going to use – "Sekar Sungsang", "Sekar Pucuk", "Sekar Ginotan" – these will be made harder [or louder] first [if the characters that predominate are *keras*]. From there it's already used. (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2002:5b)

As in Tejakula, this means that the repertoire is broader and more character-specific than in Sukawati, which has implications for improvisation as more choices can be made in performance:

In Badung and Sukawati ... the dancing [of the puppets] is put first. Here, it's not like that – the *gendér* is more prominent. Only then does the *dalang* fit with it. The *gendér* is dominant. For instance, when Abimanyu dies in the war, it's sad ... there's a piece that is still used here [for the death of Abimanyu]. In the west [Sukawati], for sad scenes it is just "Méssem". For whoever is sad, it's "Méssem". Here, whoever is sad has their own [piece], so there are a lot. Now, though, quite a lot of them have been lost. (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2002:5b)

The effect of this greater variety in the Budakeling repertoire increases the need for the *gendér* players to react quickly to the *dalang's* prompting. This increases the number of interactive choices made in performance, an issue I will discuss further in the next section (6.2) on action music.

### **Pokok and the limits to improvisation**

In chapter 4, I discussed the concept of *pokok* as a basis for variation. In *gendér wayang* the term is used to mean a basic, unadorned version of a piece, not "nuclear melody" as in other types of gamelan. The idea of a basic underlying piece, in itself, contains the implication that variation will take place. During the conversations about improvisation, the following points emerged about *pokok*.

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<sup>72</sup> Local terminology, as used by Ida Wayan Ngurah, is slightly different from Sukawati. He says that *nerék*, or *ngerék* are repeated notes in slow style that underly and are determined by the *dalang's* song, *ngorék* seems to be the same as Sukawati's *ngorét* (ornaments).

Although Pak Locéng said he was taught the *pokok* of pieces, then elaborated them, he does not usually teach this basic version himself. He teaches pieces in various degrees of complexity depending on how he judges a pupil's ability. However, Ida Nyoman Sugata and I Madé Kondra from Abang agree that Balinese learners would usually learn the *pokok* first before going on to a decorated version of the piece (Sugata and Kondra, tape 2002:12a). I asked Buda whether the *pokok* is ever really taught:

Me: I often hear the term *pokok gending* in *gendér wayang*, but I've never been given the *pokok gending*, so I'd like to know if usually the *pokok* is taught first and after that it is decorated. Or, if it's not taught, how do people know the *pokok*? B: In "Partha Wijaya" its simple *kotékan* [sings] is the *pokok*. So, after that it's decorated [sings]. Perhaps it depends on the character of the teacher, who might want to teach a lot of [complex] playing directly. All pieces have a *pokok gending*, but it's almost hardly visible because it's filled with all kinds of variation. (Buda 2002:17b)

Buda stated that he was indeed taught the *pokok* first:

B: Certainly [I learnt] the *pokok* first. After the *pokok*, sometimes our playing – me, Pak Locéng, Pak Sarga and so on – isn't the same but the *pokok* is the same. Perhaps the *pokok* isn't visible anymore. It's already filled with decorations. These decorations are different: Pak Locéng's are rather sweet but I prefer what's rather short and simple. It depends on the character of us making the decorations. (Buda, tape 2002:17b)

Over and over again, I heard the statement that the *pokok* must not be lost:

Me: Does the *pokok lagu* get lost sometimes, for instance if it is continuously decorated? B: I think not. For instance, Bapak Locéng plays with a lot of decoration but, if we ask for the *pokok*, it's certain he hasn't lost it. It can't be lost, the *pokok*. (Buda, tape 2002:17b)

Locéng explains:

L: It's not changed. It's changed but the melody is the same. So we flow to the big or the small [low or high pitches] like that. It depends if we hear it with changes so it's like adding to it. Truly, we made it ourselves although its *pokok* stays the same; we just add to it. (Locéng, tape 2002:17b)

Sarga's comments that follow apply equally to newly improvised material and to "own favourite versions" worked out in advance. This again suggests that these two categories (sections 6.1 and 6.3 in this chapter) merge into each other conceptually:

Me: I'd like to ask about the way that you make your own versions. They are different from Pak Locéng's ... S: The pieces which already exist are decorated, *mayasin gending*. [Mine are] different from Pak Locéng's. Ketut Buda is different again. It's according to me, from me, from our own pleasure. But taking note of the tempo and the *pokok* of the piece. That mustn't be lost. The tempo must remain. It can't advance and can't retreat. So if the tempo is matching (I:*serasi*) ... I feel happy with my variations. (Sarga, tape 2002:25b)

In the following conversation, Sarga, Warga and I discuss how players give pieces their individual stamp:

S: Those pieces each have a character. Me: What's the character you give them? W: You mean, how does it differ from Pak Locéng? S: For me [I think] it can't be studied. It comes from here! You can't ... it's reflex [*réflék*], it comes. W: For me, if I hear a piece by Pak Locéng or Buda, it's like this, Sarga like this ... it's too sweet, I prefer it dynamic. S: I see that from the *gending pokok* that was first of all, each creator [*pembina*] has a character and there are teachers who change it a bit but the *pokok* isn't lost. The *pokok* we use as the basis, like "Sekar Sungsang", "Suléndra", remain ... that which is our tradition. But owning decorations to the pieces, we bring those ourselves. If studying that, it can be said that you can [do it], if you say it can't be studied, it can't be. It's automatic, it's like a person coming we don't see.<sup>73</sup> (Sarga and Warga, tape 2002:25b)

I was interested to know where players felt the limits of this system lay and I asked Buda:

Me: In these spontaneous changes and improvisation, are there limits? I mean, if you really like improvising, just how complicated can it get? Perhaps ... it's sometimes limited by the piece itself ... B: Yes, I think that's it. You've just answered it, Nick! Me: But I'd like to ask because in other areas they look for simpler versions and don't always like the very complex versions like here in Sukawati. Pak Locéng says that it's because they are not capable, so I asked him "where are the limits to complexity?" B: The limits of complexity [are:] ... we shouldn't be free from the character of the piece, for instance in *gong kebyar* pieces from Gianyar, the complexity is in the introduction and *pengawak*. In the *pengecét*, usually the composer of the piece will make it as melodic as possible so that it is easily digested by the listeners because in that *pengecét* will be seen the title of the piece. (Buda, tape 2002:14b)

### Spontaneous variations: conclusion

Buda's answer again highlights the links between improvised and non-improvised development: small, improvised changes seem to be related in kind to more worked-out and larger compositional changes.

This is supported by the following conversation with Locéng. First, he corrects me for suggesting that small changes are made without thinking:

Me: About the changes that are made by you without thinking, while playing, as well as what you make on purpose ... L: It is on purpose truly, not while playing. After we've played, we think. If someone has taken [this version of the music], we become bored. We will change it a bit, make it harder so it's not fully been taken by somebody. For instance, like the former "Sekar Ginotan". Me: Sometimes, when repeated, each time it's a bit different. L: Different, yes! So it's not fully taken by people – it could be taken because it's [repeated] many times. Me: Is it really thought of first, or while playing? L: You can, while playing you can think of that, you can do that if you already know the *pokok*. That's also from our pride. If we know that those watching want to hear that – there are many musicians who we know will be critical of us – even more again to show them! You have to add ... outdoing it, so they are even more amazed. (Locéng, tape 2000:2b)

<sup>73</sup> Hobart discusses this use of deliberate contradiction to indicate uncertainty. It is an acknowledgement of the complexity of a situation. He gives the example: "If [one says] one is tired, one is tired; if [one says] one is not tired, one is not tired" (Hobart 2000b:120).

Here, Locéng explicitly compares the way he reworked the piece “Sekar Ginotan” in the ‘50s with the way he makes spontaneous changes in performance. In both, he emphasises conscious change and choices made.

### Why improvise?

When I asked Locéng why he liked to make changes, both improvised and thought out, his answer surprised me. I had expected to hear more about Sukawati’s reputation and the need to outdo rival “schools” of *gendér*. Locéng, however, said that he makes the changes for his own pleasure so as not to get bored with the pieces. He never stops changing things and never stops learning (tape 2000:2a). He says that Sukawati groups change things a lot because they play frequently and that groups who do not play so often do not feel such a need to change: “It’s for ourselves, primarily” (tape 2000:2b).

Me: It’s well-known that Sukawati *gendér* is more exciting than other areas. Why do you think that is? Why is there a wish to make ... L: New creations? Me: Yes, more complex than, for instance, in Denpasar. L: It’s like this. Because the important figures are here, the *dalang* from before who were truly famous. Because of that, of being used [to performing]. If we weren’t well known, perhaps there wouldn’t be ideas at all. So, if people are used to it, they are well known, meaning that [they play] every day. In one week, [they perform] at least four or five times. So, if there are no changes, then we will be bored. There must be made changes, little by little, changes, a renewal, so as not to be bored. It’s different for other people who don’t play often. [If] once a month it’s not certain that they will play, where’s the boredom there? (Locéng, tape 2000:2b)

With other groups, who play rarely, the urge to change is not so strong: “It’s called in Balinese *langkah-langkah* (widely spaced), playing *wayang* far apart (*wayang joh-joh*)” (Locéng, tape 2000:2b). Locéng says that if his own group, however, played the same way more than three times in the same place, they would get bored:

Me: So, the more popular [you are], the more complex the pieces? L: Yes, we truly made them complex on purpose because of the frequency of playing.<sup>74</sup> (Locéng, tape 2000:3b)

Notice again in these descriptions that pre-composed changes, for instance changes to make the next performance more interesting for the players, are not separated out from improvisation changes. I also asked Buda about the creative impulse behind improvisation:

Me: Why do people want to improvise? B: It depends on the person playing. It’s usually if the person playing has a high degree of creativity. For instance, if we play in the usual way, it’s as if we’re not satisfied. We can’t bring out our creativity that’s still here. It must

<sup>74</sup> Compare Berliner (1994:66) quoted in chapter 3 of this study.

come out. It flows down to the hands. Because the basis is satisfaction. If we play music, gamelan, number one is satisfaction. For instance, if we play with friends and the piece is broken we can't sleep at night. But if it's good and we can improvise a lot and if the *sangsih* player can follow the improvisation well, we'll feel satisfied. (Buda, tape 2002:17a)

Satisfaction and relief from boredom emerge as key “creativity drivers”, besides regional and personal rivalry.

Even in more conservative Budakeling, improvisation is regarded as a particular characteristic of *gendér*. Granoka explicitly linked this with the notion of personal, or even political, freedom, an idea I will explore in more detail later in chapter 7:

Me: In *gendér* it's more flexible, it seems [than *gong kebyar*]. G: Free! Liberated! A free spirit, liberated! (I: *Bebas! Mahardhika! Jiwa bebas, mahardhika!*) That's one reason I continued to play *gendér* ... there is that freedom. It's not nailed to pieces that are – “it must be like this, the playing” – no! There's freedom within the tradition. (Granoka, tape 2002:20a)

Locéng agrees: “It can't be governed. It stands alone and can't be controlled. It is strong” (tape 2002:24b). This notion of freedom from control seems to depend, in part, on the music's inaccessibility, due to the technical difficulty of the instrument (again, this reinforces Hall's description of improvisation as the domain of the expert):

G: There is a dynamic of life, playing this. And creativity keeps growing. There's change – that's what I feel. But it's very rare ... because it requires an ability that is high. There are many players. But those who have that ability – perhaps one or two people [in each generation]. (Granoka, tape 2002:20a)

## 6.2 Improvisation 2: malleable units

I use the term malleable units to refer to the small chunks of ostinato figuration that make up “Batél” and “Peselah Batél”, and also occur in *pepeson* (pieces to introduce specific characters) such as “Lagu Délem”. “Batél” is used to accompany fighting scenes, while “Peselah Batél” is played in the lead up to fighting, or battle scenes of lesser intensity. “Batél”, “Peselah” and *pangkat*-style pieces can be seen as expansions and contractions of each other, rather like the Central Javanese genres *sampak*, *srepegan* and *ayak-ayakan*, although one would not wish to push that analogy too far. In these Javanese action pieces, too, “musicians need not think about the next note – they need only be alert and ready to respond with split-second reflexes to cues to stop or alter the piece” (Brinner 1995:69). In *gendér*, these ostinatos form a class of their own,

demanding of the performers a special flexibility and responsiveness to the *dalang* and to the course of the action:

Buda: If we make spontaneous changes, that's usually in "Batél", "Batél Pajalan" (walking *batél*). There's a lot of spontaneity in that. In pieces which already have a *pakem* [fixed form], like "Partha Wijaya", "Krépétan", "Sekar Sungsang", or "Sekar Ginotan" – in those we improvise just a little". (Buda, tape 2002:17a)

## Leadership and learning in performance

The "implementation" of "Batél" is a prime example of learning in performance. Many players explained how it had to be picked up through experience and I had myself found my first experiences playing with Locéng in a *wayang* baffling. I asked Buda to explain more about this:

Me: Is there a type of learning that only happens within a *wayang* performance? After I'd studied with Pak Locéng ... the first time I took part in a *wayang* performance, it was as if a new type of learning was just beginning, which couldn't be taught in a lesson. B: This is precisely my experience. Before, when I first performed in a *wayang*, I could only play one piece and the "Pemungkah". The rest I didn't know. When I played, you could say I was terrified! I certainly wasn't brave. In the end, as you say ... you can't join in the performance with what you've learnt in a normal lesson. Usually, it's caught in performance. (Buda, tape 2002:17a)

To someone inexperienced like me, many aspects of this skill seemed mysterious. Who leads? What determines the starting pitch level? Which of the several possible "chunks" is chosen and when?

Me: In *wayang*, there's "Batél" and "Peselah Batél". There, I'm amazed because ...  
Mudita: Of the changes? Me: Yes, of the changes, because, when the puppet comes out – boom! Where do I start, here or there? M: [laughs] According to my experience, it's like this. Now, [plays "Batél"] now, how is the puppet? We need to look over there, [plays again] now it walks [plays more slowly], the puppet is talking here. If it's going to run, it suddenly changes. Me: But it's hard, because you can go here or there ... M: [plays] Your friends [i.e. fellow players], if you always play together, must know. Me: Is there a leader? M: Yes, the big *wadon* [polos player on one of the large pair of instruments]. Me: So the leader, the big *wadon*, must always be watching the puppets? M: Yes. Later, if there's a little bit of a change here, your friends will understand. For instance, if the puppet is going to let off an arrow, you must be ready. Me: Are there sometimes accidents? M: Yes. Sometimes people go too soon! Really, it's the hardest in *gendér*, to accompany *wayang kulit*. (Mudita, tape 2002:1a)

Other groups agree that accidents are possible as in this conversation with players from Abang:

Me: I find it ["Batél"] hardest to play because you have to follow the action. Kondra: Yes, jumping around. Putu: When the puppet comes out, you have to react quickly. Me: And because it can start on this note or that note [they mutter agreement, K plays an example]. K: It's quick to change. P: Or to go back. Me: Who is the driver? The big *polos* player? All: Yes. Me: And the others must follow? All: Yes, that's it. Me: Does it ever go wrong? Is there ever a collision? All: Oh yes, that can happen! P: If the players aren't watching the puppets, they come out with the wrong piece. (Abang musicians, tape 2002:13a)

The question of leadership is important here, both from the *dalang* and from the lead *gendér* player, though this is contested territory. Gold cites Suwéca as saying that *gendér* players in Sukawati are given more power than those in Badung in terms of cueing and creative responses to the action (Gold 1998:81). Gold describes the *dalang's* signals to the musicians using the *cepala*, the wooden beater between his or her toes (there is another *cepala* used occasionally, held in the *dalang's* hand). Besides punctuating speech and action, "The single 'tak' cues the musicians to stop whereas 'teblak' cues them to begin or continue" (ibid.:167). Both *cepala* and musicians are closely coordinated with puppet movements, and feature a variety of *angsél* (rhythmic breaks).

The accepted pattern in all areas is that the main *polos* player, who will be playing one of the larger pair of instruments will follow the *dalang's* actions closely and be followed in turn by the rest of the group:

G: [In "Batél"] it's the combination between the *dalang* and the players. The *wadon* [*polos*] carries it – the key. He's the leader, so the *lanang* [*sangsih*] must quickly follow him and watch the puppets [plays]. (Gunawan, tape 2002:2b)

However, issues of leadership can be blurred, especially when the group contains several experienced players, as Locéng describes here, during a discussion and demonstration of "Batél":

Me: Who is the driver? The *dalang*? L: Together [they do] that. All of them together have the right. I don't want to be ordered like that. Why? Because in one group, they are all powerful. Why is that? If the *dalang* continuously exercises power, that is not possible. If the *dalang* doesn't have musicians, he can't perform. Do you understand? So, don't always be ordered. Sometimes, we too want to be visible [plays loud "Batél"]. We start– only then does the *dalang* go *tok, tok, tok*, like that. You can do that. But, apart from myself, most people follow the *dalang*. They follow – me, I don't want to! I have a right too. Me: And, between the *gendér* players, who becomes the driver? Pak Sarga or you? L: Ah, in fact, the *polos* player has the right, yes, and the *sangsih* is behind. The *sangsih* can be one [beat] less...so it's behind. When I play with Sarga, in fact he's the *polos*. But because I know he's *lengah* (weak, dizzy), he's often like this [pretends to sleep]. If that's the driver, later, we'll fall into the ravine if we follow! It's better if we take the steer so that we don't! [We laugh] What else [could we do], if he's not watching the *dalang*? If he is watching, let him [lead]. (Locéng, tape 2000:4a)

Locéng continues:

L: The driver must watch the *dalang* ... Me: And you must stop if the *dalang* starts to speak? L: That's it, and start again. Me: Sometimes it [the puppet] comes out – boom! L: As long as this [he plays], the puppet comes out [plays loudly] there's a loud impact: *dlang, dlang, dlang*. As long as it comes, you must stop or play softly. Those are the rules. That's experience. If in a *stok* (automatic, pre-determined) way, the friends [other players] can follow in a normal *wayang*. It's experience – often seeing it. (Locéng, tape 2000:4b)

Buda describes how “Batél” is picked up in performance and also describes “rescuing” inexperienced players in a similar way to Locéng:

Me: In “Batél” in *pewayangan*, that’s also a type of improvisation because you have to follow the puppet movement. B: Yes, I feel, usually, if we play here we don’t come out [make a sound], to make what feels good. But after the puppet comes out, suddenly it happens spontaneously. I’ve often experienced that. After the first time, [which] is spontaneous, then the next day, or two days later the players will know: “Oh, that’s it now!” Certainly, they will follow. The first time perhaps they will be confused. Because our ability, the thought of the four people, is different. I have this instinct; perhaps he doesn’t have it, perhaps he has another. So, if I’m playing the large *gendér*, the *ugal* [large metallophone, here: large *gendér*] even though I’m playing *sangsih*, because my friend who’s playing *polos* his ability is not very high, I often play *sangsih* taking the improvisation of the *ugal*. Me: So, you become the leader? B: Yes, because we must help, serve. If we don’t follow the puppets, it’s a shame for the *wayang*. (Buda, tape 2002:17a)

The fragments, “chunks” or motifs are learnt previously but it is their effective and appropriate combination in performance that is so hard:

B: There really are motifs in Sukawati style *gendér wayang*. We can learn their format, their shape, outside *wayang* but as I’ve said previously, we have to ... follow in the *wayang*. Sometimes, we study the tempo: 1, 2, 3, 4. Then, when we follow the *wayang*, we can’t do it; it doesn’t fit with the *wayang* scene. There, we are pushed to have a good feeling – the *wayang* is like this, how does the gamelan fit? [In “Batél”] if the situation of the puppets is calm, the tempo is slow. There are tempos of slow, medium and fast. We have to be brave enough to become a victim in one performance [otherwise] we cannot know anything about “Batél”. Later, we must look at the player of the large [*gendér*]: the puppet is like this – how is the “Batél”? The puppet is like this – what is its piece? The situation is like this – how is the “Batél”? In fact, we don’t need to study “Batél” very seriously.

Sometimes, when the *gendér* is playing, the *dalang* isn’t satisfied because the “Batél” doesn’t fit. My *dalang*, my older brother Juwanda, often has a problem with “Batél”. If “Batél” doesn’t fit with the gamelan, it’s hard for him to perform. He feels it’s not exact, not fresh. If you want to study “Batél” which is very spontaneous, you can’t study it in a lesson. You must have feeling in the left hand – how is the “format” (*format*) of the left hand? [sings] Here, we can improvise the *kotékan*. This is sufficient as a handle [sings]; you can improvise the *kotékan*. There are various types of *kotékan* that fit with the scene in the *wayang*. If the situation is rather “broken”, we can make various *kotékan* patterns. If, the situation is calm, we make the simplest possible *kotékan*. If the situation increases, becomes rather tense, warlike, we make “Batél” in a fast tempo. (Buda, tape 2002:17a)

As in the examples in section 6.1 above, “Batél” itself can be modified improvisationally with different *kotékan* when it is played slowly to accompany puppets walking. Buda demonstrated this, saying that the left-hand *pokok* remains the same and that the *sangsih* would be able to follow the right-hand changes (tape 2002:22a).

Musical example 32 shows fragments of “Batél” played by Locéng (*polos* only, lesson tape January 1989) in a possible combination. This is **track 9 on the accompanying CD**. Bars between repeat marks are repeated several times.





**Musical example 33: typical “Batél” segments, *polos* and *sangsih***

1) or

2)

3) 4) 5)

6) 7)

I asked Locéng to explain how he put a section of “Batél” together from this raw material. He explained by singing an imaginary *kempur* (small punctuating gong in gamelan) part to match the left-hand ostinato:

L: It's like this. If you want to study “Batél” ... remember the *kempur* first. [sings] This is the way [plays “Batél” slowly, singing “pur, pur”] so that it is closely fitting. Only then do you do this [plays “Batél” slowly]. Then, you can look for changes according to the arrival of the puppet, whether it is big or small [descends to a lower pitch]. The *kempur* still stays the same [plays]. This is called *tugak* (cut short) [plays, moving to different pitch levels]. If the fighting is over and they are already walking, it's not still like this [plays]. It stays still [plays], the puppet comes [plays], it moves [plays faster with *kotékan*]. Only now is it the end. (Locéng, tape 2000:4a)

Experience teaches the lead player where and when to begin: some “Batél” segments are preceded by a short introduction, which leads in, but otherwise it is a question of following the lead player: “Wherever it is taken to, we will just follow. But we already know that, wherever it goes, we’re prepared” (Locéng, tape 2000:4a).

Gunawan in Tenganan stated that:

G: For puppets with small eyes, *manis* like Arjuna, we look to here [plays high notes]. For big-eyed puppets, to here [plays low notes]. (Gunawan, tape 2000:6b)

I have already described this association of small, *manis* puppets with small (high) notes and large, *keras* puppets with large (low) notes in chapter 2. However, players tend to acknowledge that it does not always happen in practice and knowing about it does not necessarily help one follow “Batél” in performance. Kondra describes how in Abang, the group uses different “Batél” for different characters, for instance “Batél Arjuna”, “Batél Bima” or “Batél Raksasa”. Each of these is at a respectively lower pitch level, reflecting different degrees of *manis* and *keras*. The group also played me a version for Hanuman in *Ramayana* performances, followed by the usual “Batél” for *Parwa* (tape 2002:13a and b). This wider range of pieces for different occasions and types seems characteristic of this area, as shown in Ida Wayan Ngurah’s discussion of *mileng* and the different introductions to the “Pemungkah” above.

Musical example 34 (**track 10 of the accompanying CD**) shows a schematic representation of the use of “Batél” and the slower “Peselah Batél” in a Sukawati performance with Locéng’s group and the *dalang* Nartha (tape October 1987 *Kresna Sorga 2a*, group: Locéng, Sarga, Balik and Jaya). Musical example 35 (**track 11 of the accompanying CD**) sketches a similar performance from Karangasem with Sutawa’s group plus the *dalang* Ida Nyoman Sugata (story: *Kunti Yadhya*, tape 2002:16a, group: Sutawa, Apriani, Naning and Edo). The examples show the *polos* part only. *Cepala* cues are indicated by “x” and are approximate only.

**Musical example 34: "Batél" in performance from Sukawati**

*dalang* speaks with *cepala* , then cues with the word: "enak!"

medium speed

*dalang* speaks with *cepala* (xxxxxxx)

*dalang* speaks with *cepala* (xxxxxxx)

slow then accel. *cepala* cues end (xxxxxxx x x)

*dalang* speaks with *cepala* (xxxxxxx)

*dalang* : "aduh!" (x)

*dalang* : "he!" (cepala: x) (xxxxxxx) (x x) (xxxxxxx) (x)

etc. (xxxx) (xxxxxxx)

**Musical example 35: “Batél” in performance from Karangasem**

*dalang*  
speaks  
with  
*cepala*  
(xxxxxxxxx)

( *cepala* continuous throughout: xxxxxxxxxxxx)

*dalang*  
speaks  
with  
*cepala*  
(xxxxxxxxx)

etc.

( *cepala* : xxxxxxxxxxxx) (x x to end)

“Peselah Batél” (sometimes: “Penyelah Batél”) is the term used for a slower form of *batél* used in between fighting and in medium rather than fast action scenes. Musical example 36 shows fragments of this piece played by Locéng (*polos* only, lesson tape January 1989), as a demonstration of how the segments might flow together in performance.

**Musical example 36: Locéng, “Peselah” segments**

The musical score consists of seven staves of music in a single system. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and a common time signature. The melody is written on the upper staff, and the accompaniment is on the lower staff. The second staff includes an annotation 'accel. (♩ = ♩)' below it. The third staff has several accents (>) and plus signs (+) above the notes. The fourth staff continues the melody and accompaniment. The fifth staff has a plus sign (+) above a note. The sixth staff has a plus sign (+) above a note. The seventh staff ends with the word 'etc.' to the right of the notes.

Musical example 37 shows a special section that particularly allows for improvisation, in which the *sangsih* is fairly fixed while the *polos* changes. Locéng mentioned that this improvised section of *peselah* was something invented by his group, although other Sukawati groups now also use it. I show two versions of the *polos* Locéng taught me, which could be used interchangeably for each bar. The combination of *polos* and *sangsih* is also shown but here only goes to show just how independent the horizontal *polos* and *sangsih* lines are – one does not perceive the music as it appears in actual combination but as simultaneous lines, held together by the repeating left-hand ostinato. Musical example 38 (track 12 of the accompanying CD, starting 18 seconds into the track) shows a few bars of *polos* and then of *sangsih* played by

Locéng separately, which again emphasises the parts' linearity (*polos*, lesson tape January 1989, *sangsih*, lesson tape 1992).

**Musical example 37: improvised "Peselah" section, basic patterns**

The musical notation for the "Peselah" section is presented in four staves, each with a label on the left:

- sangsih**: The top staff shows a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, and a rhythmic accompaniment below it consisting of eighth notes and rests.
- polos**: The second staff shows a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, and a rhythmic accompaniment below it consisting of eighth notes and rests.
- both above combined**: The third staff shows the two melodic lines from the previous staves combined into a single melodic line, with the rhythmic accompaniment below it.
- polos alternative cells**: The bottom staff shows an alternative rhythmic accompaniment for the "polos" part, consisting of eighth notes and rests.

This section continues the musical notation for the "Peselah" section, showing the same four staves as above but with different rhythmic accompaniment patterns. The labels on the left are not explicitly repeated but correspond to the same parts as in the first section.

**Musical example 38: improvised “Peselah”, Locéng solo, *polos* then *sangsih***

1) *polos*

2) *sangsih*

left-hand pattern repeats throughout (note in bracket sometimes excluded)

Locéng explains that the secure basis for this improvised section is the left-hand of the relatively stable *sangsih* part, which provides an imaginary *kajar* (small punctuating gong) or *kempur* (medium-sized gong) part:

L: The *polos* is hung on the *kempur* [while] the *sangsih* remains fixed. The *sangsih* carries the fixed part so the *polos* becomes free. (Locéng, tape 2000:10a)



Locéng emphasises that it is the left hand of the *sangsih* that is crucial; the right hand is allowed to join the *polos* in improvising:

Me: But if both of them are free, how can they fit together? L: They both understand each other. If they didn't, perhaps they wouldn't be able to remember where the *kempur* is. The two of them have *kempur* [sings] – that's called *ngecékang* (improvisation). (Locéng, tape 2000:10a)

Besides *kempur*, Locéng sometimes compared this left-hand *sangsih* part to another punctuating instrument, *kajar*, which he emphasised as being crucial in holding a gamelan together:

L: Do you know the meaning of *kajar*? In the field of *gong* [gamelan], what is thought to be the hardest, most important? *Réong*, *ugal*. The *kajar* is felt to be the easiest, most behind. But, in fact, it's the *kajar* that is number one ... if it stops, the others can't move! So *kajar* is *pengajar* [teacher] ... the *kajar* is the *guru*. (Locéng, tape 2000:5b)

Locéng stated that the use of the *sangsih* part as a point of orientation in this piece is the secret that confuses other local groups, some of whom use a simpler version from Denpasar, which Locéng regards as too easy (tape 2000:5b).

Buda and Wrespatika demonstrated both a basic and an improvised version of "Peselah Batél":

[They play] B: That's what's *polos* [basic], the *pokok*. Now, what's developed according to each of our feelings: *ngecékang* [they play] That's with each of us improvising. The movement isn't controlled, the move isn't fixed that it has to go here. The key, the handle of the *polos* is that he holds the steerer: wherever he wants to go, the *sangsih* must follow him. (Buda and Wrespatika, tape 2002:22b)

Mudita explains that the sudden appearance of characters, such as Délem is not really that unexpected:

Me: In *wayang*, does anything really unexpected happen – not expected by the *gendér* players? For instance, if the *dalang* brings out a figure but the players aren't ready? M: The *dalang* must say first what he's going to bring out, for instance Délem. After the "Penyelah", when Délem is about to come out, he sings [plays "Lagu Délem"] like this. (Mudita, tape 2002:1b)

In the past, when more *pangkat* pieces were used, it was harder for the players to predict which piece would come next. Ida Wayan Ngurah says pieces in Budakeling *wayang* are also becoming more limited:

IWNg: When the *dalang* comes out ... the *gendér* players will know what story it is going to be. From this, the pieces are certain. Me: Despite this, perhaps there are more possibilities in the structure here, compared with Sukawati. IWNg: This, here, is the long version. Nowadays, *dalangs* can't still use this. The *gendér* players have been influenced by the taste of the *dalang*. Beforehand, it was very hard for the *gendér* players. (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2002:6b)

However, the use of such pieces gave an opportunity to the *gendér* players and the *dalang* could make use of the pause in the action, as Locéng describes:

L: The *dalang* also makes cuts. He doesn't give an opportunity to the players. If he gives an opportunity, he looks for a reason – to repair the lamp or repair a puppet or to chew betel ... so he has an activity, to build up the music. Nowadays, it keeps on running like that – there isn't an opportunity. But clearly this will add to people's stupidity: the pieces which exist will be lost. (Locéng, tape 2000:2a)

Locéng acknowledges that changes like these (cutting most of the *pangkat* pieces from *wayang* performance) are inevitable: "It's not wrong – it doesn't fit with the times now. In these times, everyone is in a hurry" (tape 2000:8a). He regrets the current overemphasis on humour and action as opposed to philosophy and literary merit in *wayang* but remains confident in the future:

L: The time won't remain; it will change. Later it can return again to the origin, to tradition [! *tradisi*]. Tradition doesn't change – only the government changes!. (Locéng, tape 2000:8a)

### **Malleable units: conclusion**

The improvised manipulation of these "malleable units" in action music for *wayang* illustrates the importance of interaction in *gendér* improvisation generally. This interaction is crucial not only in *wayang* but also in the improvised versions described above in 6.1 and in the application of personal favourite versions described in the next section, 6.3. This interaction takes place on different and shifting levels between *dalang*, players and audience. Audience attention, interest and participation is underlined by this charming story told by Gunawan:

G: There's a story about a *dalang* who didn't have *taksu*. No one watched. He kept on with the story, the humour, the philosophy, but no one was interested. The audience left. That's called not having *taksu*. Then, when Délem came out, the *dalang* tore the screen and he came out speaking. Only then did the audience take notice [laughs]. Because no one was watching, he himself tore the screen – his head came out and spoke! *Taksuning ringgit* it's called. [That's why] now ... the screen is torn; it's sewn – there's no perfect screen. (Gunawan 2002:4b)

The relationship, linked yet differentiated, between these forms of interactive improvisation and other compositional situations is highlighted in Buda's description of his early compositional career. Buda described how he learnt to improvise accompanying Wija's *wayang* group and, later, began to make formal compositions, *kréasi*, at STSI:

Me: And were these *kréasi* small changes or large parts? B: The small changes we make spontaneously in *wayang*. The big changes, of an *utuh* (complete) kind, those I tried to make at STSI. We were encouraged to make new things at STSI, so we made big changes. (Buda, tape 2002:17a)

### 6.3 Pre-planned small variations within a piece

It is often difficult, if not impossible, to tell whether apparent changes to a piece are truly spontaneous. Often, through improvisation, a version of the piece seems to crystallise out and become a player's own favourite way, before gradually transforming again. This phenomenon is common in many improvised and semi-improvised traditions and helps explain why boredom is often cited as a reason for changing pieces. Even one's own favourite version may become tired after months of repetition.

In this section, I will consider refined (*halus*) versions of pieces, players' personal styles and how they relate to perceived regional styles. In terms of the continuum from more to less improvised, these changes could be defined as the conscious or pre-planned composition of new versions of pieces, incorporating similar types of changes to 6.1 above, in that they do not involve new sections or deviate markedly from the rhythmic structure. Creating *halus* versions of pieces may involve making the *kotékan* more intricate and technically difficult, or adding a left-hand *sangsih* counter-melody or additional *ngorét* ornamentation. Typical examples of *halus* versions are certain Sukawati *pangkat* that have become "show pieces": "Grebeg", "Krépétan" and "Partha Wijaya". Such worked-out variations are probably the commonest type of composition in *gendér*, as nearly every competent player attempts to find a favourite version. One reason for creating these refined versions, particularly in Locéng's case, seems to be to impress and mystify players and listeners from other areas, making it hard for them to "catch" the music, or steal the pieces from listening to recordings.

It is worth questioning whether these versions always derive from spontaneous variation-making that becomes relatively fixed. This sometimes seems to be the case, but changes are often also worked out beforehand and become, in turn, a basis for improvisation. In this way, spontaneous and worked-out compositional methods feed into each other: the ability to choose between variants may be a prerequisite for the ability to improvise. It forms the background to those more spontaneous types of change, as does the ability to make one's own *sangsih* part.

## Halus versions

In Sukawati especially, but also elsewhere, players delight in creating versions which they describe as *halus* (refined) or *wayah* (old, mature), featuring intricate syncopations and tricky, unusual *kotékan*. An example is this phrase from the *pangkat* piece, “Krépétan”, showing how Locéng has created a more complex right-hand *sangsih*; the *polos* can change too to a more complex version (see musical example 39).

### Musical example 39: simple (above) and complex (below) versions of phrase from “Krépétan”



These versions may be crystallisations of previous improvisations and lead to players creating their own distinctive styles with their own favourite versions of pieces, as Buda explains:

B: In *gendér wayang* pieces, we can't say Sukawati style is always the same. It depends on who is playing. If it's Pak Locéng playing, if it's me playing, or me with him, it's the breath of the tune. Its breath gives its own character to the piece. For instance, Pak Locéng likes it sweet, likes it melodic. I prefer it with sudden *entak-entakan* (pushing, forceful). So we give it our own character. (Buda, tape 2002:17a)

I asked Buda whether players can easily distinguish different versions of a piece they already know from genuinely new, improvised material. He replied:

B: There are many pieces like that, that are changed gradually, on purpose. They are thought about first to make different motifs of playing. “Partha Wijaya” – what's its *kotékan*? [I sing] That's already been changed. Its *pokok* isn't like that [he sings]. There are many pieces whose *kotékan* have been changed, outside the spontaneous [changes]. (Buda, tape 2002:17a)

Buda describes playing with a Japanese pupil of Locéng:

B: She said, “how can I play?” I said, “just try it. Later we will meet there in that playing and can connect. We will be able to follow because in *gendér wayang* it doesn't have to be like this or like that, we can improvise.” (Buda, tape 2002:17a)

Changes to pieces in slow style, both “crystallised” and improvised, usually involve variations in the ornamentation such as *ngorét*. Buda regards

such changes as relatively simple, but “connecting to the heart” (tape 2002:17a). Mudita in Tenganan agrees, saying he only changes the *pukulan* (striking) a little in pieces like “Mésem” and “Alas Harum” (tape 2002:1b).

Locéng has reworked “Mésem” by increasing the subtlety and intricacy of the ornaments. He feels there are limits to how much a piece like this can be changed:

L: Why is it there are pieces here I’m never bored with? I like them. Perhaps these are popular; they don’t need to be changed any more. For instance, “Tangis” [“Mésem”] – how could you change that? It’s not possible that I could. If I changed it, it would have to be better. Only the *pukulan* alone could improve. (Locéng, tape 2000:3b)

Locéng demonstrated the simple, *pokok* version he first learnt of “Mésem”:

Me: Do you still remember the *pokok* you first studied, for instance “Mésem”, before it was made *halus*? L: It was still *pojol* (simple). Me: Did it already have *ngorét*? L: Yes, it had *ngorét* [plays] It was us who made it more refined – if it’s given *ngorét*, it’s more whatever ... compared with now. I don’t say that’s bad; I’m grateful to be given the *pokok* [plays]. Only, we made it so it’s good to be heard – for me! Whether other people like it, I don’t know [plays]. (Locéng, tape 2000:4a)

Musical example 40 shows a refined cadence from “Mésem” played by Locéng (tape 2000:4a), above the simpler version he had first taught (see also example 9 in chapter 4 for another *halus* phrase from this piece compared with a *pokok* version). Locéng commented about the *halus* version of “Mésem”: “the feeling is truly different” (2002:23b), although the difference is, on the surface, simply adding some subtle ornamentation. A slightly different version is on track 14 of the accompanying CD, starting at 2 minutes 12 seconds in.

#### Musical example 40: Locéng “Mésem” cadence

Locéng gave a short example from “Sekar Sungsang” to further demonstrate the difference between *halus* and *pokok* versions (see musical example 41). “Sekar Sungsang” (1) basic version of theme (*polos*) (2) Loceng's *halus* version (tape 2002:22b) (3) Buda's *halus* version (tape 2002:22a).

**Musical example 41: “Sekar Sungsang” phrases**

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system contains two staves: staff 1 (labeled '1)') shows a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes, and staff 2 (labeled '2)') shows a more complex melodic line with sixteenth notes and a grace note. The second system contains three staves: staff 1 (labeled '2)') is a continuation of the previous version, staff 2 (labeled '3)') shows a simpler melodic line, and staff 3 (labeled 'as basic version 1)') shows a rhythmic accompaniment. The third system contains three staves: staff 1 (labeled '3)') shows a melodic line with eighth notes, staff 2 (labeled 'as basic version 1)') shows a rhythmic accompaniment, and staff 3 (labeled 'as basic version 1)') shows another rhythmic accompaniment. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 4/4 time signature.

Locéng says that bringing a piece to life like this (I: *menjiwai*) is the good thing about *gendér* and rare in other gamelan apart from *trompong* which may also improvise. He agreed with my suggestion that *mayasin gending* was like ornamentation in painting and drawing:

L: Yes, it's the same. So that it is good to be seen, so that the piece is good to listen to, *halus* to listen to. If it's just usual, people ... truly, it's not wrong, but it's lacking, lacking in interest. (Locéng, tape 2002:22b)

Locéng often makes it clear that one reason he makes complex, *halus* versions is so that pieces cannot be taken by other players:

Me: Perhaps you can't return to the style before Granyam's time, because it's already lost? L: The style? No, it won't return again because the melody is truly the same, this style has been chosen. The style here before was *pojol* [*pocol*, too simple]. It was easy for people to take [sings] – like that, very sparse [*langan*] I feel it's too easy for people to take: it's already general. As long as it's already general, it's boring. So, I have the principle of making it difficult, making complicated *pukulan* so that people can't take it easily, without learning. (Locéng, tape 2002:24b)

This applies as much to “insider” family members as to people from other villages:

L: The families here, the way (*jalan*) [of the piece], they can take it ... [but] what's a little bit hidden they can't fully [take]. They ... half know it but what's a little bit complex, they don't know because I don't give it. Like “Burisrawa”, if it's not given, of course you can't do it: it's hard. In “Partha Wijaya” with refined playing (*gebug halus*), nothing hits the beat, it's continuously to here and there. That's its difficulty: if you could hit the beat, it would be easy to take [sings]. (Locéng, tape 2000:4b)

I had heard an apocryphal story that Locéng's group deliberately played “wrong” versions on his commercial cassettes so that the correct versions would remain secret. This struck me as far-fetched and Locéng agreed:

L: No, we would fall if that were the case! That's not true. But, in the complex playing [in the recordings] I did exceed the original *pokok*. (Locéng, tape 2000:4b)

I mentioned Locéng's comments to Buda. Locéng had said that people could not grasp the version from a recording, so they would have to come to study with him:

B: Many are like that. If we perform and someone is recording, that is greatly to our loss because we've been continuously making until we're tired, being creative, while he just records it easily. The next day, I'll hear, “oh, he can play what I own!” Perhaps that's Pak Locéng's reason. So, he has a scheme so that they make recordings with difficult [playing]. But, nowadays, people have increased [in cleverness]. If they hear a cassette, 90 per cent they can [get] and 10 per cent they can't. Because, if the *polos* is standard [*stok*], they can catch it but, with the *sangsih*, perhaps it's [harder]. Me: Especially if the *pukulan* is *halus*, a bit improvised. How could you memorise it? It's changing each time. B: But ... if truly there was a desire that other people couldn't follow our *pukulan*, why are so many of his cassettes in the shops now? [laughs]. (Buda, tape 2002:22a)

In the following example (musical example 42, tape 2000:7b), Locéng demonstrates a *halus* version (*polos*) of the opening of “Sekar Ginotan”, on the borderline between being improvised (there were minor changes with each repetition) and a crystallisation of an “own favourite version”. The simple version is shown on the staff below.

**Musical example 42: Locéng, *halus* version of opening of “Sekar Ginotan”**

The image displays a musical score for the opening of "Sekar Ginotan" in a *halus* style. It consists of two systems of two staves each. The first system shows the initial melodic and harmonic lines, with the right hand playing a series of eighth-note patterns and the left hand providing a steady accompaniment. The second system continues the piece, featuring more complex rhythmic patterns and melodic developments. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings such as accents and slurs.

Commenting on the *halus* playing of “Partha Wijaya” (see musical example 19 earlier), Locéng stated that the *sangsih* player could stick to a simple version in these instances, “but that’s lacking” (tape 2002:22b).

Even players who play together in the same group may have their own “favourite versions” of pieces. Musical example 43 shows an extract from “Krépétan” played by Sarga in his own version (tape 2002:26a) with the version Locéng taught me below. The left hand is the same in both versions and only notated on the lower staff.



**Musical example 43: Sarga's "Krépétan" above a version taught by Locéng**

The image displays a musical score for 'Krépétan' by Sarga, comparing it to a version taught by Locéng. The score is written in two systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The first system shows the beginning of the piece, with the Locéng version (bottom staff) featuring a more complex, rhythmic accompaniment than the Sarga version (top staff). The second system continues the piece, with the Locéng version showing a more intricate melodic line in the right hand and a more complex bass line. The third system shows the Locéng version with a more complex melodic line in the right hand and a more complex bass line. The fourth system shows the Locéng version with a more complex melodic line in the right hand and a more complex bass line. The fifth system shows the Locéng version with a more complex melodic line in the right hand and a more complex bass line, ending with 'etc.'.

Musical example 44 shows more simple and *halus* versions, this time from "Grebeg" (tape 2002:22b): (1) *halus* version right hands, (2) basic version right hands, (3) left hand to both. Locéng says that one should present the simpler version first to highlight the complexity of the subsequent version. Drawing attention to complexity like this, by starting with a simpler version and making the music more and more difficult as the piece progresses, will be further discussed below (in 6.5) with reference to making variation sections.

#### Musical example 44: "Grebeg" pokok and halus phrases

Mudita, in Tenganan, explains how some of these small, worked-out changes can be used improvisationally: "We practice the addition together first. Later, if we want to put it in, it's good" (tape 2002:1a). However, he notes one difference with spontaneous changes in performance:

Me: I know there are many individual versions but if you play with a group, it needs to fit together. How do they decide? M: In fact, if you have pieces, you need to find your own group so you all know them. Me: So, if someone makes something new, he takes it to the group and, if they want to, they learn it? Are they ever made during rehearsals? Is it always alone? M: It's done alone first. We can learn together. If he's made it himself, then it can be given to his friend. If it's still being corrected, it's not [given]. When it's already good, then [it is given]. (Mudita, tape 2002:1b)

One of the simplest changes simply involves changing *pukulan tiga* into *pukulan empat* (see chapter 1). This was demonstrated by both Mudita and Gunawan (tapes 2002: 2 and 3). Mudita demonstrated a more subtle form of *pukulan halus*, involving syncopation, octave displacement (*selah*) and ornamentation, set out in musical example 23 above in the discussion on improvised change.

He commented:

Me: You said if you played with Pak Gunawan, it wouldn't fit. M: It wouldn't fit. Me: Even though he learned from you? Who has changed? M: I'm still original; perhaps he's the one that's changed. Like "Serempak" earlier, it's very sweet *pukulan* [plays]. This type of playing is called *crucuk nglanting*. *Crucuk* is a bird [plays]. (Mudita, tape 2002:4a)

Tenganan's style is much simpler than Sukawati's but, nevertheless, a similar process of reworking into personal versions goes on. These types of worked-out changes are not unique to *gendér* but occur in most other Balinese gamelan traditions. Gunawan's main compositional focus is the *gamelan selonding*, for which Tenganan is famous, and he has reworked numerous *selonding* pieces. He compares this reworking with the late Ranu's remodelling of *gendér* pieces,

emphasising additions to the *pukulan* (way of playing) and the *réongan* (interlocking figuration):

G: Before, truly, *gendér* was very *klasik*, just like *selonding*. These *réongan* were made by people who were clever at composing ... like the late Pak Ranu. He added to the *pukulan*, I know. Now, the key is this: one *patokan* [here, probably: section of a piece] is one *guru* [teacher]. "Sekar Sungsang" before, for instance, was like this, so the *pokok lagu* must not be lost. The *kotékan* can be added to or reduced and people have their own way of creating. Whatever fits. (Gunawan, tape 2001:1a)

### Personal, group and young people's versions

We have seen how personal, favourite versions of pieces fall into this category of pre-planned, or half-set variations. I mentioned to Nyoman Sutawa that his version of "Sekar Sungsang" was slightly different from that of Ida Wayan Ngurah and he commented, "*Mayasin gending* is according to the player, his taste" (tape 2002:14a). When giving examples of *tatorékan*, or *norék*, a term which seems to mean the same as the term *ngorét* in Sukawati, Sutawa commented: "Each player brings his own version of the interplay of the hands" (tape 2002:14a).

Gunawan explains how pieces that are changed are still regarded as "*klasik*":

G: So, these pieces are still authentically classical (!: *utuhnya klasik*) but there are several players who want to change them, for instance the *réongan* [*kotékan*] in "Seketi". In fact, each person has his own art (!: *seni tersendiri*) so as to change a piece or change a *réongan*. There's a lot of that. Like me: I change the *réongan* and the ones I like, I continue to use. But the *pokok* of the piece should not be lost. (Gunawan, tape 2002:2a)

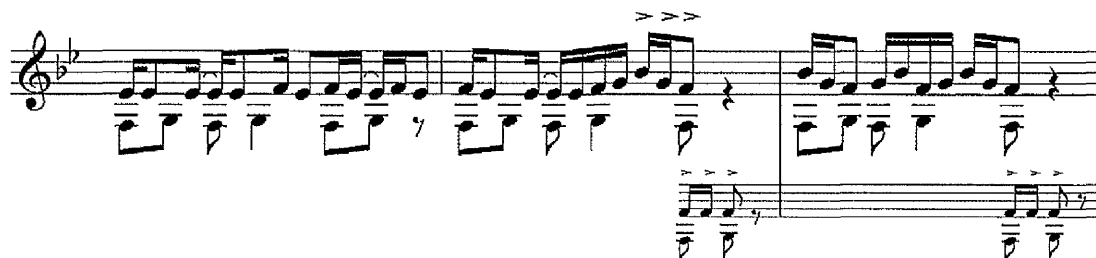
Ida Wayan Ngurah links these personal versions with players' spontaneity and strength:

Me: Often in Bali, *jurugendér* have their own versions. Even though they are from the same village and the same group, nevertheless they have their own version. IWNg: Ah, yes. That often happens. Me: After playing with Pak Locéng, I sometimes have problems playing with someone else in the same group. IWNg: This is based on strength (*kawibuhan*) and spontaneity (*spontanitas*). Me: Is there usually just one version that is always played by the group? IWNg: Yes, in Abang, the group has [a version] from before. (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2002:7b)

Sometimes, differences of opinion are quite small, the realisation of a particular *angsél* (accent), for instance. Buda and Locéng play a short section of *kotékan* in "Kejojo" differently and Buda says he prefers a harder, faster *angsél* than Locéng in the piece "Bima Kroda" because it fits more with the character of

the piece, “angry Bima” (Buda, tape 2002:22a) (see musical example 45, Buda above, Locéng below).

**Musical example 45: *angsél* of “Bima Kroda”**



There are numerous different versions of *angsél* and players do not always stick to their first preference: they may influence each other's choices or create new versions. This process is examined later with reference to the piece “Merak Ngelo”. The possibilities of both old and new pieces are continually explored in this way. After playing a new variation section he had composed to “Kejojo”, Buda said:

This isn't perfect yet. Perhaps, later ... because [for] the essence of the completeness of a piece, the process is rather long. After we play, the next day we play it: “oh, here it's lacking this!” Perhaps we must try several times and again several times so that we get to find that perfection. This isn't yet perfect for me. Perhaps tomorrow I'll play it again and there will be changes. (Buda, tape 2002:22a)

In a single group, each player may have their own, preferred way of playing pieces, with different *angsél* or slightly different *kotékan* but they will stick to the agreed group version for performances. During the *dalang* Granyam's time, when Locéng made many of the changes to the pieces, the group would rehearse regularly but not any more: “Before, I, even if I wasn't performing, I was rehearsing ... with the group and with the *dalang* as well” (Locéng, tape 2000:2a). Locéng goes on to describe the group rehearsals in the old days, when they would try out their new versions of pieces:

L: If we were making a piece, we'd [say], “try this”, putting it together first, with my brother Balik. [We'd] look for the *polos* first. If he, for instance, had made a *polos*, I'd look for the *polos* to see whether all of it can be used to make a *sangsih*. If it can have a *sangsih*, then [we'd] try so that they [the parts] want to go against each other. That's the way: measuring first, so that it was making a piece, not just one half. The way [*jalan*] is made first. After the way is made, that is divided in two: *polos* and *sangsih*. If you make one [part], it's not certain that it will all be able to be given a *sangsih* later, so that the melody's way is divided. Me: You have to think of both? L: Yes, both: the “body” I think of first, if making a piece. Make the body first, not the *polos*: the body that is divided in two. (Locéng, tape 2000:2a)

In Locéng's group there has always been a tension between Locéng's and Sarga's versions, with the latter usually dominating as Locéng is better able to follow Sarga than vice versa. Even where players deviate from the agreed version, the ability to improvise helps the others follow. Locéng gives a picture of the situation in his group:

Me: If, for instance, you like an *angsél* here, but Pak Sarga wants an *angsél* in another place, how does the group choose? Who wins? L: It's like this. He, if giving *angsél*, clearly he follows. I know more about that. It must follow the current: here it must be slow, here it must be fast. He only follows. Me: To make a group, the *polos* and *sangsih* must be the same, so you have to choose a way that's the same ... L: If everyone gave out like that, their own opinion, it's not certain that it could be used, so it's broken. Me: Is it chosen in rehearsal, among the four? L: Well, before, it was while it was still my older brother, Balik. Even though he had an idea, he would ask me: how are the *angsél*? Perhaps, if the position of the *sangsih* was bad, I'd say "try this, changing the *sangsih*", or "don't use it: look for what's united". He'd say: "that's *tugak*". It's called *tugak* (cut short, perhaps: "to the point"): what's good. Sarga is more behind in knowing about *angsél* and the way of the melody. Me: So, he follows? L: But, on the other hand, if he makes a tune, I don't forbid him. Where he wants to, he makes himself [and] doesn't ask. He makes *angsél* – I don't forbid him, I follow him. That's how it is: I submit ... I measure his ability: I'm 90 per cent certain we'll arrive, even though he's not the same. It doesn't make it broken. (Locéng, tape 2000:2a)

A group can drift apart both musically and socially: Locéng now prefers to teach his own versions, particularly to non-Balinese students who do not have to fit in with a group (tape 2002:18a).

So, group and individual versions are continually evolving: Buda says that, for his generation, the received version of pieces is the one developed by Locéng and Balik – what was before is lost. Now, he is developing the tunes according to his character and feeling: "If Pak Locéng plays with his group and I play with my group, perhaps the breath is not the same" (Buda, tape 2002:18b).

Players who respect each other, such as Locéng and Buda, agree to differ on their preferred versions. Locéng says Buda's versions are not wrong but that he finds them loud and not supple enough, while recognising Buda as a rising talent (tape 2000:2a). Locéng goes on to explain why he prefers his own versions:

Me: When I listen to the cassette of your group with Pak Sarga, the *angsél* are a bit different [from what I was taught]. L: Buda is even more different. So, it's the pleasure of each different one. We don't say: "that's bad". For me [sings *angsél*], this is what I like. That's *selah* [alternating hands]. For old people who are experienced, that's what they enjoy. Sarga's father was like that. (Locéng, tape 2000:2a)

Locéng often states that people's playing styles changed with age. Generally, he says, young players like to play quickly so as to show off, while older players learn a more balanced and subtle approach. Locéng compares this with growing up to more responsibilities and life experiences.

L: Later, when they are a little older, they will prefer to hear what is rather slow and not so loud. *Ngirit* (B: cautious, economical), it's called – a sound that isn't loud. (Locéng, tape 2002:24a)

He, therefore, does not criticise young players too much for this, as it is appropriate for their age:

L: So that you understand: making refined versions depends on age too. Because, what is an old person like? Certainly he won't like running, won't like it loud. He'll like it gentle and will be more careful (I: *waspada*), slower when walking ... Young people don't! Ketut [Locéng's son], for instance, never plays slowly. As far as he's concerned it's sufficient, for his age. So we're wrong to judge. Me: Were you like that too? L: Yes – before, I was fast too. But when I was more than 50, I was already getting bored to hear that. How can people say it's good? They don't have the opportunity to hear; it's too loud and fast. For me to enjoy it, it must be a little slow and *irit* (B: cautious, economical). So, there was a change from the '60s. My Maharani cassette is still very fast. (Locéng, tape 2000:4a)

Locéng says he now prefers to take a medium tempo:

L: My older brother, Ketut Balik, liked it fast too and playing loud. So, I often said: "Try and think, how can people say it's good? They can't hear because of the speed. It's already gone past: *wwwwang* – like a car". If it's slow, you can pay attention. He said it was *sip* [tight]. Truly, it was *sip*, but too fast: it can't be paid attention to, so its sweetness is lost. (Locéng, tape 2002:24b)

Locéng explains that a middle way, playing loud and fast or soft and slow as appropriate to the *wayang* context is a more mature option:

L: Twenty years ago or more ... that [fast style] was emerging. As long as you could play loud and fast – "Oh, that's it! Who can play the fastest?" That's what made people amazed. Now, it's not like that: the middle way is taken. There are fast times, there are slow times. No, if it's with the *dalang's* voice, called *seséndon* or *bebaturan*, it must be slow so that it's fitting. The middle is the most powerful: don't go too high or you'll fly away and crash, don't go too low or you'll fall. The middle, *sedeng*, is good: there's sweetness, there's slowness, there's speed. I guarantee it will satisfy and remain. (Locéng, tape 2002:24b)

Locéng also applies this principle to programming, so that loud, fast pieces alternate with soft pieces:

L: You must go *keras, manis, keras, manis*. If *keras, keras, manis, manis* ... people would go to sleep. (Locéng, tape 2000:10a)

In Karangasem too, due to technical difficulty, the most complex, subtle versions are often beyond the reach of the young:

IWN: In "Sekar Ginotan", there are three types [of playing] in its structure. This piece has *matatorékan*, there's *cecandétan*, there's playing which is simple. This is what gives a feeling of change, like *kréasi*. The young ones are not able to look for *gegedig cecandétan* which is old. They can't do that, so they play simple *gegedig*, faster and faster. So, there's a change and the original structure of the piece is influenced. There are many pieces whose *gegedig* is lost. (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2001:1b)

However, young players in Sukawati rapidly catch up with their elders in such a competitive musical atmosphere. Buda, as we have seen, is able to improvise with ease and Locéng's son Ketut Sukayana (28 in 2002) also says he likes to

improvise (tape 2002:25a). Buda explains how the innovations of individuals catch on in other groups:

Me: There are many *gendér* players in Sukawati but not everyone makes changes. Usually, who is it who becomes a composer here? In each generation are there many people or just a few? Or do nearly all players make small changes? B: Here in Sukawati, I think the creativity in making changes, me, Pak Sarga, those who have potential to make changes. Now, after we've made them, others will follow. Automatically, the changes depend on each group ... they hear the changes and can follow. (Buda, tape 2002:18b)

### **Making your own *sangsih***

Related to these kinds of worked-out variations within pieces is the common practice of making one's own *sangsih* part. This involves conceiving the piece as a whole entity, neither *polos* nor *sangsih* but a combination of both.

Paradoxically, pre-planned composition of *sangsih* is also regarded in some ways as a variation built upon the *polos*:

M: For the *lanang*, we see how the playing of the *wadon* is and follow [plays]. If we're part of the same group, we can do this. Learning the *lanang* in my day, [we learnt] the *wadon* first. We thought: "how is the *wadon*?" and made the *lanang* ourselves. For instance, like this "Sekar Ginotan" [plays]. (Mudita, tape 2002:1b)

Mudita then plays part of the *polos* of "Sekar Ginotan" followed by a *sangsih* part he worked out himself (tape 2002:1b, see musical example 46 where I artificially merge the two parts in notation). This is really a variation of the *polos* part, making more use of the top two notes of the instrument in the right-hand part. The *sangsih* has its own melodic direction which, at times, seems to take precedence over "graceful" interlocking harmonic coincidence. This happens a lot in the Sukawati style but also, as here, in Karangasem.

### Musical example 46: Mudita: “Sekar Ginotan”

The image shows two systems of musical notation for 'Sekar Ginotan'. Each system consists of a Right Hand (R.H.) staff and a Left Hand (L.H.) staff. The R.H. parts feature complex, fast-moving patterns with many beamed notes and some grace notes (marked with '+'). The L.H. parts consist of a steady, rhythmic accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

One of the keys to this is the ability to think of the piece as a whole. Locéng described earlier how he and his brother, Balik, worked out *polos* and *sangsih* together: “Make the ‘body’ first, not the *polos*: the body that is divided in two” (tape 2000:2a). Locéng here uses the English word “body”. So, sometimes the *polos* is foregrounded in the compositional process and sometimes the “body”. One common technique, much liked by Locéng, which builds upon the *polos*, is to create a left-hand counter-melody in the *sangsih* part as, for instance, in this excerpt from the *pengecét* (fast section) of “Rébong” (see musical example 47).

### Musical example 47: “Rébong” *pengecét*, left-hand counter-melodies

The image shows musical notation for 'Rébong' pengecét. It features a Right Hand (R.H.) staff and a Left Hand (L.H.) staff. The R.H. part is a simple, rhythmic melody with a few notes and a fermata, followed by the text 'etc.'. The L.H. part is a counter-melody with a long, low note at the beginning, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

I mentioned to Locéng that Brita Heimarck’s thesis describes him being influenced by hearing Western harmony when making *sangsih* counter-melodies (Heimarck 1999). Locéng emphasised, though, that this was still based on traditional concepts, such as the use of complementary notes at the intervals four keys apart (*kempyung*, a “*sléndro* fifth”) or three keys apart:



L: That's *sangsih-menyangsih* (playing against each other) so that the piece seems lively and, besides that, it brings sweetness. It's better to be seen, to be heard. Its difficulty is that the *jublaga* [left-hand melody] also plays *sangsih* [as well as the right-hand interlocking]. In Denpasar this doesn't happen. (Locéng, tape 2002:23a)

### Is what is complicated always good?

In view of his penchant for making increasingly intricate versions of pieces, I asked Locéng the following question:

Me: According to Bapak, is what's complicated always good? L: [laughs] It's good for me! It's like that. As well as that, what's complicated is not good for everybody. It's good for those who have excelled, who have long experience. (Locéng, tape 2000:2b)

I asked the same question of Buda, who was more cautious:

B: That's a very good question. I think that something that's complicated is not necessarily good, because, if we make it complex, it must be in the *patokan* [pattern] of the composition of the piece. If the tempo is rather fast, like "Krépétan" or "Partha Wijaya", then it's better if we do something rather complicated, because later we'll interlock here, *polos* and *sangsih*. If we do interlocking which is just obvious, just usual, that takes away from the character of the piece. Now, we flow with the character of the piece, [deciding] which piece has a character that's suitable for complexity and which is not. I think that in a piece in slow tempo we can't make it complex. We need to find the simplest way that's melodic, like "Rébong", "Mésem", or "Rundah" – there's no complexity, the playing is sparse but the character of the piece is like that, slow. In the Balinese term: *wayah* (old, mature). *Wayah* means that the intellect of that piece is high. The piece is sparse, like the playing of *selonding* or *gambang* but it connects to the heart, like "Mésem", "Rundah". So, in conclusion, to make complex, it has to fit the character of the piece we are playing. (Buda, tape 2002:17a)

Sarga and Locéng agree that what is important is appropriateness: "For me, if it's already matching, it's good – it's better than good!" (Sarga, tape 2002:26a).

One example of changes made to reinforce the character of the piece is *gending* "Tunjang", used in *wayang* for black magic scenes, set in the graveyard, featuring the goddess Durga or witches (*léyak*). Locéng first taught me a basic, *pokok* version in three parts, each repeated, which he then elaborated into a more *halus* style. This featured sudden stops and starts and abrupt ornaments to bring to life the peculiar movements of the witches' dancing on screen:

L: That's the tune for the movement of the puppets. The *polos* way is this [plays]. This is just the way (*jalan*). So, now, it is created with the dance [plays] so that it's frightening [plays, imitating the dance by swaying to and fro]. (Locéng, lesson tape January 1989b)

I mentioned to Sarga and Warga that Locéng said that he made changes primarily for his own enjoyment, partly from a creative impulse but also so as not to get bored and they agreed: "It's for ourselves inside, not to be shown off to the outside" (Warga, tape 2002:26a). Mudita notes that audiences are

unlikely to notice the changes that make a piece more complicated, “unless they are researchers of *gending*” (tape 2002:1a). However, Buda thinks they will be aware, even if they don’t understand:

Me: I’d like to know, if you’re making changes like this, whether the audience really knows that, except for *gendér* experts. Whether normal spectators who can’t play *gendér* would know much about music. Would those spectators pay attention to the changes? Who are those changes made for? For other players? B: That depends on our influence, who we are performing to. If we are performing one rhythm and tune that will not make the audience open their eyes or ears. Now, if we are clever at performing, for instance the rhythm is like A, then we make changes so it’s not A anymore, we make C and D, it will seem like this. Even if people don’t know *gendér wayang*, they will know that’s an operation; that’s a change. (Buda, tape 2002:19b)

Again, I touched on Locéng’s reasons for composing. He responded by emphasising a feeling of moral obligation to develop what he had been given:

L: Before, I was given an investment (*modal*) by my parents who knew *pedalangan* and *gendér*. I was given the *pokok* of 25 pieces, for instance. If from when I was young until now I still had 25, there would not be *kertayasa* (service). Moreover, I would be worse. If given 25 *pokok*, at the very least we must make it double. It’s as if we’re given money one million [*rupiah*] to trade with. Don’t use that up; there must be interest. So, I also want to develop, to make. (Locéng, tape 2000:3b)

### Pre-planned changes: conclusion

The effect of these small changes, which in turn shade into the following sections on more extensive compositional change, is to create a constantly evolving and transforming tradition:

Me: In Sukawati, the pieces have changed a lot from generation to generation. Perhaps here [in Karangasem] they are older? M: Yes. Me: Although I see they do change ... M: For instance, in this way, future generations will ask: “what was this piece originally like?” and we won’t know. (Mudita, tape 2002:1b)

However, players kept saying that the *pokok* must not be lost, so I tried to get to the root of how the *pokok* is conceptualised. Mudita says he tries to remember the original as well as subsequent changes. But, I asked him, what happens if the *pokok* is not taught?

M: The person learning, of course, will not know the *pokok* unless it is given by the teacher first. He must give the *pokok* first [and say], “this is the *pokok*, later the additions are like this”. Me: Not all teachers give the *pokok* ... [I describe how Locéng teaches according to the abilities of his pupils]. M: I’m like that too. We ask, “do you want the *pokok* or the version that is already decorated?” Some say they’d like the *pokok* first, then ask how the decorations go. But, rarely do teachers give the *pokok*, unless the pupil isn’t up to it. Me: But, in that case, the *pokok* could be lost. M: Yes, the *pokok* could be lost unless the teacher still remembers. Later, unless the pupil asks, “was it really like this, the piece, before?” The teacher answers, “no, this is the *pokok*”. (Mudita, tape 2002:3a)

Sarga explains that the complexity of the version of a piece one is taught depends on how the teacher estimates one's ability (tape 2002:25b). Locéng's son, Ketut Sukayana, took a pragmatic view of the *pokok* as any version of a piece one first learns:

Me: It's hard to imagine changes like those in your father's time – that was like a revolution! Now it's rather fixed, preserved. KS: I change [things] and Buda, but we have the same concepts, the traditional pieces. We still own them and he does too. It's just the *pukulan* that changes according to our wishes. I want to make it go to here, him to here. What's important is that we know the *pokok*. Me: But sometimes it's hard to know the *pokok*. Were you taught the *pokok* by your father? KS: Yes, all the *pokok* are the same. Me: But they are hardly ever taught as *pokok*, you're usually just given the piece ... KS: The *pokok* ... just means: whatever he uses first, what he practices for the first time. The first time he studies, he is given the *pokok*. Sometimes he hears the piece, for instance, Pak Sarga: "oh, very good to listen to: he brings it to here." He can follow because he knows one [version]. Perhaps there are 10 *pukulan*, ideas, but he follows one. If we want this one [version], belonging to whoever, we can quickly get it. (Ketut Sukayana, tape 2002:25a)

So, from the first version learnt, one can learn others by listening to other players.

I mentioned Locéng's phrase "*sing ada kayu luputing angin*" ("no tree is untouched by the wind") to Sutawa:

S: You mean changing the *wayang* pieces? That's in fact the creativity of the player. I've changed the "Pemungkah" three times ... when the players were my elder brothers, this is what I used [plays]. I can't play it myself, never mind these children! How could it be? I was forced to change it. The reason for the change is the ability of the person you are playing with. (Sutawa, tape 2002:14a)

Sutawa here gives an example first of the hard version of a short passage from the "Pemungkah" (above), followed by the version he usually plays with his children (below) (see musical example 48, tape 2002:14a). The latter not only has a simpler *kotékan* but a different left-hand part as well.

#### Musical example 48: Sutawa, passage from the "Pemungkah"

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp). The top staff represents the 'hard version' of the passage, featuring a complex melodic line with many sixteenth notes and a left-hand accompaniment consisting of chords and single notes. The bottom staff represents the 'simpler version' usually played with children, featuring a more straightforward melodic line and a different left-hand accompaniment. Both staves end with a double bar line and repeat dots.

As when discussing the more spontaneous improvisations, set out in 6.1 above, players stress the individuality of *gendér*. Locéng says that the two handed technique lends itself to working out versions:

L: You can build it yourself, to make it interesting. If you play *gong*, it can't be interesting, if you play *gendér* you can. If you play "Alas Harum", even if you play it alone, it sounds good. "Mésem" is very nice, even alone, "Rébong" too. Try doing that with *gong*! *Gupek* (drumming) or *gangsá* – you can't find what's interesting. In *jogéd bumbung* you can because there's a connection: there's two hands. So, it [*gendér*] can't be ordered, can't be forced. This is classic. You must be calm to face this. If you don't have a talent for it, you can't do it either. Only this can't be lost, as long as my religion exists. Its strength is from religion – it will be continuously used. (Locéng, tape 2002:24b)

I think it is important to note the associations Locéng brings to the individuality of *gendér*: personal creativity, calm, inner strength and religion. These qualities are manifested in the compositional creativity of players in continuously reworking pieces as described above.

#### **6.4 Adding, taking away, sharing and transforming short segments**

One step further towards the pre-composition end of our continuum is a compositional practice that involves inserting or subtracting short melodic segments. This contrasts with the changes described above in 6.3, which normally remain within the pre-existing rhythmic structure of the piece.

In a previous article (Gray 1992), I have shown how the *petegak* piece, "Suléndra", is characterised by melodic cells, which are repeated, varied or used as infixes within the structure. I conclude that this helps to explain the metric flexibility of the form and suggest that these cells may arise from the technique of interlocking *kotékan* itself. Two points arise from this method of composition. Firstly, adding or subtracting "chunks" in this way obviously makes it harder for a player unused to that version to join in: such variations are usually worked out then taught to the group. Secondly, the practice highlights *gendér wayang's* tendency to ignore the rather four-square rhythmic structures of much other gamelan music. I give examples below of segments that seem to be "shoved in" and which alter the rhythmic balance of the phrase.

Two examples of pieces I have witnessed being altered like this are "Merak Ngelo" and "Sekar Jepun", though the melodic structure of many other

pieces hints that they too have been treated in this way. This “modular variation” may be effected by voicing, rhythmic augmentation, diminution or syncopation, extension by adding material to a motive, or oblique reference by partial iteration of a characteristic part of a motive (Gold 1998:343–4). These motives may lead to linked groups of pieces that could be described as “tune-families” (Seeger 1966, Nettl 1982, 1983).

Sometimes names and pieces are interchangeable, for instance the piece known in Sukawati as “Sekar Jepun” is known in Tejakula (North Bali) and Sidang (South Bali) as “Sekar Ginotan” (or “Sekar Genot”), which in Sukawati, Denpasar and elsewhere is, at first hearing, a completely different piece. In Karangasem, it forms one of the several different versions of “Sekar Ginotan”. I mentioned the idea of a family of pieces to Mudita in Tenganan:

M: Yes, it's as if those pieces are one family. Like “Sekar Sungsang”, many are related [plays a version of “Sekar Sungsang”]. Me: Perhaps these parts were taken from other pieces? M: Yes, it's as if. For, instance, although the “Sekar Sungsang” that's here has never been heard by players in Tabanan, if they have a “Sekar Sungsang”, it's similar. Why's that? That's my question too to my friends: why's that? Perhaps, previously the creator was one person, they said. One creation which has been embellished, Tabanan taking a half, Karangasem taking a half of it ... I forgot: there's also a “Sekar Sungsang” from Lombok [plays Lombok “Sekar Sungsang”]. Ketut Serurut [his teacher] was teaching in Lombok, heard this piece and took it and four “Seketi” from Lombok. (Mudita, tape 2002:1a)

The final comments illustrate the fact that in Karangasem, many different versions of favourite pieces are maintained in the repertoire: several versions of “Sekar Ginotan”, “Sekar Sungsang” and so forth. Ida Wayan Ngurah says that there are five types of “Sekar Ginotan” in Budakeling. The musicians I talked to in Abang knew three different versions of “Sekar Sungsang”. Locéng and others in Sukawati found this notion strange as, generally, there, only one functioning version of a particular piece is kept current. Nevertheless, Locéng still plays the old version of the Sukawati “Sekar Sungsang”, slightly modified with added variation sections, and recently a new *gineman*. He now calls this piece “Sekar Gadung”.

Mudita explained that there are three versions of “Sekar Ginotan” in Tenganan as well as one used for *wayang* (in Sukawati, this “Sekar Ginotan”-like piece is called “Pangkat Pekesehan”). Mudita says that his teacher, Ketut Serurut, learnt one of these versions from Nengah Latri in Klungkung (tape 2002:3a). Mudita also told me that there are three versions of “Sekar Sungsang” in Tenganan as well as the Lombok one mentioned earlier (tape 2002:3b).

Granoka says of his time learning with Ranu in Tenangan and elsewhere in Karangasem:

G: I got to know so many various pieces, "Sekar Ginot" too – many versions that are different but that have the pattern (l: *pola*), the structure the same. So, we can identify that [they are] "Sekar Ginot" but I've never formulated what its characteristics are. Perhaps it's just a feeling, not a science. (Granoka, tape 2002:20a)

An example of such a tune family is the group of variants around the piece "Sekar Ginotan", which in Sukawati and elsewhere shares material with "Pangkat Pekesehan" and "Merak Ngelo". Musical example 49 shows shared material: (1) "Merak Ngelo" with (2) "Sekar Ginotan", and (3) "Sekar Ginotan" with (4) "Pekesehan".

#### Musical example 49: shared material

1)

2)

3)

4)

Locéng acknowledges the connection between "Sekar Ginotan" and "Pangkat Pekesehan":

L: The last interlocking pattern [sings], the way is the same as "Sekar Ginotan" [plays second part of "Pekesehan"]. The opening is the same. Who made it, I don't know. Truly, it already existed. Me: Like "Sekar Ginotan". L: Maybe it was imitating, had an idea from "Sekar Ginotan", an impression (l: *bayangan*). Me: Or, perhaps the old "Sekar Ginotan" was taken from this? L: After that, it goes straight into "Batél". There aren't any *ubitan*. Those *ubit* we made, then straight into "Batél". In order that there is a purpose. That tune is called "Pekesehan" because it's the end of the meeting scene (*sidang*), already dispersing, towards the principle of whatever has been planned, so *pengesehan* means already clear, already valid. (Locéng, tape 2002:23b)

In Karangasem, parts of Badung and Tejakula in North Bali, there is a version of "Sekar Ginotan", which at first sounds different from the common versions and is related to the piece known as "Sekar Jepun" in Sukawati. However, examined

more closely, these versions feature a similar structure with two parts of the theme: one at a higher pitch level and the other at a lower one.

### **Adding and subtracting segments: “Sekar Jepun”**

Locéng made one small change to the piece “Sekar Jepun” during my first period of intensive study (1987–9). He added a small chunk to one of the transition passages in the second part of the piece, thus altering the phrase structure and adding an emphatic accent (see musical example 50; Locéng’s infix is in square brackets).

#### **Musical example 50: transition passage from “Sekar Jepun”**



Similar small differences occur between Locéng’s and his group’s versions of many pieces, for instance in the number of repetitions of short segments in pieces such as “Sekar Sungsang”. The flexibility of *gendér wayang*, with no *gong* and *kempli* (small punctuating gong) structure to force the music into the rigid, four-beat framework of much other gamelan, means that players are freer to add and take away such chunks as long as the group agrees to the version. Locéng has also recently reworked part of the piece “Cangak Merenggang” in a similar way.

Chunks can be taken away as well as added: the “Pemungkah” is particularly flexible in this regard as whole sections can be omitted if the *dalang* has finished arranging the puppets early in the overture. There has been a trend towards making the “Pemungkah” shorter to suit the attention span of contemporary audiences. Locéng played me an extended version of the slow piece “Rundah”, which is used to accompany the *dalang*’s initial song in *wayang lemah* and sometimes in *Ramayana* performances. He says that a chunk was

cut in the present form of the piece because it delayed the entry of the first puppet (tape 2000:7b).

### **Transforming segments: “Merak Ngelo”**

Another piece I witnessed Locéng changing over the years is “Merak Ngelo”. Gold (1998:46–7) charts the extraordinary transmission history of this piece from its origin in Tunjuk via American pupils of I Nyoman Sumandhi<sup>75</sup> back to Kayu Mas where it came to be used by Pak Konolan for a religious TV broadcast. From there it has been disseminated to other parts of Bali. This story acknowledges the role of foreign pupils in the transmission process. “Merak Ngelo” itself is clearly related through much shared style and material with the “Sekar Ginotan” complex of pieces described earlier.

“Merak Ngelo” seems relatively simple compared with much of Locéng’s repertoire but, when I first learnt it in 1987, he had already created a new opening to the third section. When I returned in 1992, I found that he had reverted to the earlier version of this section, as he was not entirely satisfied with his creation. Another pupil returning a few years later found it has started to change very slightly again in a new way and now Locéng has elaborated this still further. Musical example 51 shows: (1) the version Locéng first taught me, (2) the simple version he reverted to, (3) the later slight modification (right hands only), and (4) the complex version he was playing in 2000. It may well have changed again since.

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<sup>75</sup> His own book spells his name differently (Sumandi 1984/5).



### Musical example 51: “Merak Ngelo”, opening of third section

The musical score consists of eight systems of staves, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is marked with '1)' and '2)' at the beginning of the first and second systems, respectively. The piano accompaniment features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The vocal line is a simple melody with some grace notes. The score is written in a standard musical notation style with a treble clef for the vocal line and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) for the piano accompaniment.

## 6.5 Making new variation sections

That the principle of variation is deeply embedded in *gendér wayang* is evident from the form of the pieces themselves. Nearly all *petegak* and *pangkat* pieces, which, together, comprise the bulk of the repertoire, have at least one and often more variation sections. These sections, usually called *runtutan* in Sukawati and *peniba* in Karangasem, are linked with the original “theme”, sometimes closely,

as in Sukawati's "Sekar Sungsang", and sometimes less so, as in "Sekar Jepun". Many of these variation sections are stated to have been composed by known individuals, for instance Locéng in Sukawati and Ranu in Tenganan.

The word *peniba* or *pengiwan* is used in other gamelan genres such as *gong gedé*, where it means a varied final version of the main section (*pengawak*) (see McPhee 1966:374). The word *runtutan*, used in Sukawati, means, "what goes with something; partner, companion", from *runtut*, "agree with, harmonize with, be unanimous" according to Barber (1979). Buda says it means "tail" and that, in Sukawati, people also refer to the final *pengecét* section of *gong* pieces as *runtutan* (personal communication, 2002). Buda says:

B: I think the context is perhaps the same as someone making a statue as composing a piece. Like a carving, the *polos* goes to here but perhaps he prefers it rather like this. The context is the same: satisfaction. I often compare it to a statue. If making a piece, this is the *gineman*, the *pengawak*, this is the tail: *runtutan*. The *gineman* is the head, the *pengawak* is the body, the *runtutan* is the feet. (Buda, tape 2002:17b)

Locéng says that *runtutan* means "follower" or "what follows" (I: *pengikut*) and that in the old days this section was referred to as *pengiwan*. I mentioned that, in Karangasem, people called it *peniba* and he said this meant "what will come" (personal communication, September 2002).

Several *pangkat* pieces keep the same left-hand ostinato in each section while the right-hand interlocking part changes, for instance "Grebeg". In other *pangkat*, such as "Krépétan" and "Partha Wijaya", the left-hand ostinato pattern, too, changes in the *runtutan*. The basic *pangkat* structure (statement, transition up or down a note, statement at the new pitch level, transition to previous pitch level) is maintained in several *petegak* pieces, such as "Sekar Sungsang". Again, this basic structure is maintained in each variation, often with the same or similar transition passages. The links or transition passages are known as *penyaitan* in Balinese, or *pengalihan* in Indonesian.

## Sukawati

The compositional technique in making *runtutan* is sometimes evident from the way variations get progressively more complex. This is illustrated by the order in which Locéng plays variations in *pangkat* "Grebeg", in example 44 above.

“Sekar Gadung”, as the old Sukawati version of “Sekar Sungsang” is now called, is already a set of variations that get progressively more complex. The new “Sekar Sungsang” starts off complex and gets even more convoluted through its variations: what is sought is not just complexity but audibly increasing complexity. I suggested this principle to Locéng and he agreed: “Like ‘Sekar Sungsang’, when the third section starts, it’s very exciting” (Locéng, tape 2002:22b).

In the Sukawati “Sekar Sungsang”, not only is each of the three variations based on the initial theme, there is a progression so that the first variation (part 2) is closer to the theme than the second (part 3) and the third variation (part 4) is based on the previous one. I wanted to know whether composers based their *runtutan* on the theme of the piece and how they went about it:

Me: I’d like to ask about how you go about making new *runtutan*. Because there are many *runtutan* that weren’t there [previously] but that you made. L: How did we make? We looked for a little bit from the opening. That’s *runtutan*. From our experience of liveliness, going from here to there to wherever, looking for comparisons too. Apart from looking here and there, we found images/ideas (*bayangan*) from other people, for instance from *angklung*, from *gong*, from wherever, as long as it’s some kind of music. You can [do this]. As long as there’s a *pokok*, why can’t you? So that the way is close to the *pokok*. Me: To the *pengawak* (theme, first section)? L: Yes, to the opening. But [you make it] so that the way later is made different. For instance, in “Grebeg”, the *pokok* is still the same as its *runtutan*. In “Partha Wijaya”, “Krépétan”, it can be continued with different ones. (Locéng, tape 2002:23a)

Locéng says you must have an idea or impression (*bayangan*) from the *pokok*, for instance in the development of the variations of “Sekar Sungsang”:

Me: In “Sekar Sungsang”, was it just the *pengawak* that was there first? Or were there *runtutan* already? Because there are four types [sections]. L: Yes truly it was just the *pokok* first. Then, we looked for *ubitan* (interlocking patterns), the second part. As long as you’ve got the *pokok*, although it’s a bit different, as long as later it fits with the ending you can keep trying it. (Locéng, tape 2002:23a)

So, the “theme” or *pengawak* section is used as the basis of further variations, as an idea, image or impression (I: *bayangan*). Its form is also used as a kind of “frame” for the variation: Locéng says, “as long as it fits with the ending”, in other words as long as the section can link to the next in the same way or similar way to the theme. For example, the transition sections to the high and low pitch levels in “Sekar Sungsang” are similar in each variation. Locéng makes it clear that within these boundaries, there can be a free play of imagination, looking for “liveliness”, sometimes getting ideas from the theme and sometimes from other sources, such as other gamelan types.

Perhaps because players are constantly altering the pieces and parts of pieces slightly, the issue of who composed what and when becomes blurred. I often heard Locéng say that he'd created a certain section only later to hear him say that it had already existed. This makes perfect sense in such a scenario, as illustrated by the continuation of the previous conversation:

Me: The third part [of "Sekar Sungsang"] is most complicated. L: The third part is complicated but the fourth is easy again. We found the impression/idea (*bayangan*) from there, turning it a little. Me: Was the third part made by you? L: The third? [sings to himself]. Me: Or did it already exist? Perhaps it's hard to remember ... L: It is hard to remember ... The way is still the same, even in the third section, the way is still the same. Only, we added *ubitan* (interlocking patterns). It was made more complicated now, so that it has numbers, one, two, three. So, its difficulty: number two is a little bit hard, number three is the hardest and number four for the *ubitan* is easy, because it's the same as number three. That's what we tried to do.

Me: Is there a connection with the title, "Sekar Sungsang" because I know the Sungsang flower is upside down (*sungsang*)? L: Yes, *sungsang* is upside down, to and fro. The way fits with the title: we found an idea from the first [section] alone, so that it fits with the first: the ways are all the same. Remember, the continuations are all the same, the bridges. We just made the *ubitan* (interlocking patterns). (Locéng, tape 2002:23a)

In some other pieces, such as "Sekar Ginotan", the second or third sections are less clearly related to the *pengawak* and Locéng says he found making this piece harder.

### "Sekar Sungsang"

In Sukawati, "Sekar Sungsang" is the most commonly performed *petegak* piece before a *wayang* performance. It is an elaborately developed but sweetly melodic piece that the area is proud of. The third section is particularly intricate, with interlocking patterns that seem to weave in and out, turning in on themselves like the shape of the *sungsang* (upside down/inside out) vine, *gloriosa superba*. The structure of the piece is as follows (see separate fold-out sheet for musical example 52, which presents part of each section as they appear at the upper pitch level, aligned to show the relationship between sections 1 and 2 and between 3 and 4, particularly). Section 1 (top line) can be found in **track 15 of the accompanying CD**, 9 seconds into the track and section 3 (third line) can be found in **track 16**, 6 seconds into the track.

Musical example 52: Sukawati "Sekar Sungsang", theme and variations

Musical example 54: Sukawati "Sudamala" theme plus Locéng's two variations

Short *gineman*

(1) Theme on pitch level *déng* (second note from bottom) X2

Transition down 1

Theme on pitch level *dong* (bottom note) X2

Transition up

Theme on *déng* X2

Transition down 2

(2) Variation 1 on *dong* X2

Transition up

Variation 1 on *déng* X2

Transition down 3

(3) Variation 2 on *dong* X2

Transition up

Variation 2 on *déng* X2

Transition down 3

(4) Variation 3 on *dong* X2

Transition up

Variation 3 on *déng* X2

Transition down 3

Short coda

Locéng says that the first three sections already existed but that he just added the last one. These changes were made after the group had worked out the modern version of the “Pemungkah”, “at least 60 years ago” (Locéng, tape 2002:18a). Sarga feels that “Sekar Sungsang” has reached its ideal form: *runtutan* cannot be added or taken away (tape 2002:25b).

### “Sekar Gadung”

Locéng sometimes refers to “Sekar Gadung” as the old “Sekar Sungsang” but, when I asked him about this, he distinguished it slightly saying “It’s like the old



Locéng says of the two variation sections of the Sukawati “Sudamala”: “the road is the same” (tape 2002:18a). The “theme” features quite simple but hypnotic interlocking in the right hands over a simple, *jégog*-like left-hand melody of 18 notes. In performance, it is this theme which is repeated as many times as necessary while the *dalang* carries out the *sudamala* ritual. Locéng says it could be played a hundred times and still no one would be bored (personal communication, 1989). Certainly, it has a compelling quality.

Locéng created the two variations himself. The first retains the interlocking parts of the theme in the right hands, while the left hands now join in the interlocking texture. This change obscures the simple underlying melody and illustrates how complex four-part interlocking textures found in other pieces, such as “Sekar Sungsang” and “Suléndra” may have evolved from a more simple left-hand melody with right-hand interlocking. The relative simplicity of the variation technique in this piece provided me with a clue as to how some of the more bafflingly complex textures in *gendér wayang* may have evolved.

The second variation departs more radically from the theme with its gently oscillating left-hand melody. Although this preserves the descending structure of the end of the theme, the opening is based on *dang* (C) rather than the bottom note, *dong* (F). This, however, is its complimentary note at the interval of *empat* (four keys apart; a “*sléndro* fifth”), which helps explain why this section is indeed perceived by the listener as a variation of the theme.

Although the Budakeling “Sudamala” uses a different melody, its mood and circular structure are similar. Transcribed below Locéng’s version is “Sudamala” played by the group from Abang led by Madé Kondra (tape 2002:12a). Interestingly, its oscillating descending structure is similar to Locéng’s final variation. Musical example 55 shows: (1) Loceng theme, (2) Loceng second variation, (3) Abang.



### Musical example 55: "Sudamala" left-hand melodies

1) 

2) 

3) 

The *dalang* Sugata, who was present at this recording session, said: "When I perform "Sudamala", I feel *mandeg* (still), to which the Abang musicians nodded their heads in agreement (tape 2002:12a). Ida Wayan Ngurah says he's "a bit fanatic" about the piece "Sudamala":

IWN: I don't think it's allowed for a *dalang* to make *tirtha* (holy water) without using *gending* "Sudamala". I don't know how the ancestors made it – it's *buntar* (circular); you can't find where the end or beginning of the piece is. It's really *sakral*. (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2001:2a)

I suggested to Ida Wayan Ngurah that it was a bit like *gong luang* and he agreed, saying, "yes, it's *taksu*" (tape 2001:2a).

### "Kejojo"

I asked Buda whether he had made any new *runtutan* or heard of others doing so:

B: I think I've never made one, because ... I'm afraid – honestly – to make an addition to a piece, because *gendér wayang* pieces I've already received like that. According to me, if you make a tune, it's better to make a completely new tune. Me: New from the beginning? B: Yes, because we're perhaps afraid, if we give a *runtutan* to a piece that exists already, we're afraid it won't fit. That's what I'm afraid of, because I know the

pieces which have those [*runtutan*], their quality is extremely high. But, nevertheless, we try. I've already tried, often I've tried. But, if we use them in *wayang* accompaniment, we need to practise them with the group. That's the difficulty of making something all new. If we make something new for our pupils, maybe that's more possible. If for *wayang* accompaniment, that's hard for us as a group with friends. We need lots of rehearsal. So, I've tried to make new pieces, but they can't be used because my friends can't yet play them. We need to rehearse first. (Buda, tape 2002:17a)

Buda went on to describe the difficulties in making a new *runtutan*:

B: Here, if we make a *runtutan* for the second [part], we are restricted by the shape of the first tune, we must follow the character of the first. This is rather hard. If we're making a tune on its own, perhaps this isn't a problem. But to make a *runtutan*, we're bound by what's already there, as much as possible to follow the character of the first tune. (Buda, tape 2002:17a)

He has mixed feelings about adding to existing pieces in this way:

B: If I make a *gendér* piece to fill a lack that exists, I feel afraid, in fact, because I received this piece from whoever made it ... I'm afraid to destroy the identity (*utuh*) of that piece. That's first of all ... [but] I hear several pieces that Pak Locéng [has changed]. There are pieces like "Rébong", where it's from I don't know, that has been united with "Rébong" here – mixed. Why can it be mixed? It means that I, too, can make pieces that are different ... we must be daring. Before, I was afraid of the ancestors. In Bali, it's like that, we guard the preservation of the work of people before. We don't want to destroy it. But I see its development, about pieces that have been improved by others. I can do this, I can also try to make different pieces, to make *runtutan*, to be daring. (Buda, tape 2002:22a)

Buda has indeed created a new *runtutan* for the *pangkat* piece, "Kejozor", which previously had only one section. This new variation retains the left-hand ostinato of the original piece, which helps to retain its identity as "Kejozor", but the right-hand patterning contains emphatic *angsél*. Musical example 56 shows the *polos* of "Kejozor" followed by Buda's new *runtutan* section (tape 2002:22a). Section 1 is from bars 1 to 12, section 2 at higher pitch level is from bars 13 to 24, Buda's *runtutan* starts bar 25, and is at a higher pitch level from bar 38. The left-hand ostinato is only notated for the first bar of each pitch level (for instance, bar 3). After this, it repeats until a change is indicated. This musical example is recorded as **track 19 on the accompanying CD** (note that in this recording Buda pauses momentarily after the first note of bar 25 before going back to the previous bar to continue).

Musical example 56: "Kejojo" and Buda's new *runtutan*

The musical score is written in a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a common time signature. It consists of several systems of staves. The first system includes measures 2 and 3. The second system includes measures 4, 5, and 6, with the text "left-hand ostinato continues" below it. The third system includes measures 7 and 8. The fourth system includes measures 10, 11, and 12, with the text "Loceng prefers:" above measure 9. The fifth system includes measures 13, 14, and 15, with "left-hand ostinato continues" below it. The sixth system includes measures 16, 17, and 18. The seventh system includes measures 19, 20, and 21. The eighth system includes measures 22, 23, and 24. The ninth system includes measures 25, 26, and 27, with "left-hand ostinato continues" below it. The tenth system includes measures 28, 29, and 30.

(Musical example 56, continued)

31 32 33 34

35 36 37

38 39 40 left-hand ostinato continues

41 42 43

44 45 46

47 48 49 50

51 52 53 54

55 56 57 58

59 60 61 62

63 64 65

66 67 68 69

Buda was still working on this section and making changes to it, saying: "This isn't yet perfect for me: perhaps tomorrow if I play it again, there will be changes."

Me: How is the *sangsih* for this? B: The *sangsih* is not too hard. But, frankly, in a piece like this, if I play *sangsih*, perhaps I won't find it. According to me, if a *sangsih* like this, I

must be able to respond directly to the *polos*. Me: I understand. B: If there's someone playing *polos* like that, I respond directly. Sorry. Me: Never mind, I understand. Perhaps because it's new? B: New. It hasn't completely entered my feeling how the *sangsih* should be. (Buda, tape 2002:22a)

Buda selected "Kejojo" because, unlike most *pangkat*, it only had one section:

B: I saw that "Kejojo" was still very simple: just one part. It didn't have [a *runtutan*]. "Partha Wijaya" has already got one, "Krépétan" has already got one, "Bima Kroda" has already got one: almost all of them already have. Later, if I added to those pieces, perhaps it would not be good because of its length. Because the concept of us making a piece, according to me, if its length is such that the listener is involved, already for a long time within the piece, we need to stop so that it finishes. When it's finished, they will wonder: "how was that piece again?" If we make it too long so that they're bored listening, the quality of the piece would be lost. (Buda, tape 2002:22a)

I suggested to Buda that the *pangkat* "Abimanyu" only has one section and could be added to. However, he feels that the style of this piece is more like "Batél Majalan" than a true *pangkat* like "Kejojo" and that it stands by itself (tape 2002:22a).

## Tenganan

I suggested to Mudita that the *pengawak* plus variations form perhaps encouraged composers to add new *peniba*:

M: I think that's true. For instance, if there's a model of one *peniba*, now, to lengthen it, a *peniba* is added. It means that if it's only twice up and down and then over, so they add to it. Pieces here, for instance, "Banaspati" has six *peniba*, "Abimanyu" has ten. Me: Are they all used? M: Yes! Me: Even in performance? M: Yes! For instance, if there are ten *peniba*, you only repeat each one twice. (Mudita, tape 2002:1a)

Mudita has written a list to keep track of all these *peniba*. This list contains four pieces with just one *peniba*, eight pieces with two *peniba*, seven pieces with three *peniba*, seven pieces with four *peniba*, one with five, one with six and one with ten. Thus, more than one *peniba* seems to be the norm. His three different versions of "Sekar Ginotan" each had four *peniba*, besides their themes, making fifteen variations of one basic melodic concept in all! Most of the pieces Mudita lists are either *petegak* or *pangkat*, with the exception of "Alas Harum". Mudita remembers how the late Ranu used to compose *peniba*:

Me: Have you ever made a new *peniba*? M: No. Me: But Pak Ranu did? M: Pak Ranu made many *peniba*. He made a whole new piece. He made them at home – he had *gendér*. Later, when they [the pieces] were already good, he brought them here. He was angry if the children didn't want to learn them. "Later, when I'm dead, you'll want to learn them!" That's what he said. (Mudita, tape 2002:1a)

Mudita says that Ranu added to "Glagah Puun", "Burisrawa" and "Merak Ngelo" as well as several others.

Mudita's half-brother Gunawan likes to combine parts of pieces in new arrangements. He says: "As long as the target is correct, you can keep adding and adding. For instance, "Sekar Sungsang" followed by "Lelasan Megat Yéh". The first is called the *gending*. The second, even if it's another piece, is called *peniba*" (Gunawan, tape 2002:2b). Gunwan says the *pengawak* of his new piece, "Tabuh Suling" is an arrangement of an *angklung* piece but that he likes to follow it with a *gendér* piece, such as "Sekar Sungsang" or "Sekar Ginotan" as a *peniba*. This kind of arrangement of pieces into suites was also described by Sutawa from Budakeling:

Me: Sometimes people make new *peniba*, like Pak Ranu in Tenganan. Is there anyone here like that? S: Here, there isn't anyone now like that. I can't. Except to blend, which means this: there's a tune like this, we add this tune to that tune just like that. To make myself – I can't yet. Me: How are they joined? S: This is called "Gegineman" [plays]. After that, is joined "Sekar Sandat", after that, the opening of "Tabuh Petegak". This *gineman* was taught by Granoka but can be joined to any piece. But to make a *peniba*, I can't yet. Me: And Granoka? S: If him, maybe – he's in another class. (Sutawa, tape 2002:8b)

Musical example 57 shows (1) the main theme (*polos* and *sangsih* combined) and (2) part of the *peniba* (*polos* only) of a Tenganan version of "Sekar Sungsang". The *peniba* starts the same as the *pengawak* but is longer, adding much new material. The main theme is featured in **track 20 of the accompanying CD**.

**Musical example 57: Tenganan “Sekar Sungsang” theme and segments added in *peniba***

1)

2)

**Budakeling**

Granoka explains that to play pieces with many *peniba* is seen as a challenge for Karangasem musicians:

Me: I hear that Pak Ranu in Tenganan did make new *peniba*, adding until there's one piece with nine *peniba*. G: Up to thirteen! Me: But perhaps rarely all used? G: No! [they were used] Perhaps we can't witness people playing *gendér* like there before. People would play *gendér* for three days. I was often invited to play for three days, using these pieces and they never ever repeated a piece for a day, two days, three days. Moreover, the *gendér* were in rows, here one group, there another group. That often occurred: a competition! Playing *gendér* for days. Me: Where, in Abang? G: Abang, Budakeling or wherever, if there was a ceremony. If I'm at home and there's a ceremony, a cremation or whatever at home in the *gria* [*brahmana's* house], there are many groups. Three, four perhaps come, *gendér* are brought. There, they demonstrate and they often overhear other pieces. However many pieces are used earlier, if they bring them out again, that's called *numpal gending* (bringing attention to the piece). They're ashamed [to do it]! Here are the very long pieces. I got a piece from Madatelu, *gending* “Cangak Merenggang” with thirteen *peniba*. There's truly a tradition there: very long ... while playing in the middle, I forget it. It's like entering a forest. Who knows the way out?

Me: That's the richness of the form of *gendér* pieces that have a lot of *peniba*. Perhaps that's why there are rarely new pieces for *gendér*, because the creativity is in the *peniba*? G: This is more of a commitment to the inner, than to the outside. I see that people here in the east [in Karangasem] have an essence to preserve what they have – maybe it's their custom. (Granoka, tape 2002:20a)

As Granoka puts it, he could make many new pieces: “If making pieces, mankind alone can make many. But how are these pieces called? These [established pieces], used like this, are regarded as committed towards values that are great” (tape 2002:20b). Of the version of “Cagak Merenggang” with 13 *peniba*, he says: “By the fifth or sixth [*peniba*], already we are transported to that world. Perhaps this is the world of the piece, the world of its creator. As if I am taken to be introduced to him” (tape 2002:20b).

**Musical example 58: Budakeling “Sekar Sungsang” theme plus segment added in the *peniba*, based on separately learnt parts combined**

1)

2)

Musical example 58 shows (1) the theme (*polos* and *sangsih* combined) and (2) part of the *peniba* (*polos* only) of a version of “Sekar Sungsang” from Budakeling. **Accompanying CD track 21**, with me playing *polos* and Ida Wayan Ngurah playing *sangsih*, includes the *gineman* and is different in some



details from the notated musical example, which starts 20 seconds into the track. Ida Wayan Ngurah taught me the *polos* and *sangsih* separately and combining them in this transcription highlights the horizontal rather than vertical thinking behind each part, resulting in some unusual note combinations when the parts are combined. The *peniba* material is not obviously related to the initial theme as is the case in the Sukawati or Tenganan versions. Ida Wayan Ngurah states that “Sekar Sungsang” should be the main *petegak* that is performed before the “Pemungkah” because the title means “upturned/turned around” (*sungsang*) flower, which corresponds with the concept of turning away impurities at the beginning of a ceremony (tape 2002:5b). This may be one underlying reason why it is so popular as an opening piece not just in Budakeling but elsewhere. It is almost invariably performed before a *wayang* in Sukawati even though many *petegak* are available. However, Sutawa says that any *petegak* piece may be chosen before a *wayang* in Karangasem, as elsewhere in Bali.

### **Variation sections: conclusion**

I discussed with Buda what he felt the relationship between variation sections was and how variations were felt to be appropriate or not. He suggests that there are two stages to this process: firstly, creating the piece or section for oneself (“for our creativity”) and secondly, teaching it to the group, though he stresses that this is a matter of negotiation rather than instance:

Me: In *gendér*, who chooses what fits? For instance, in the second part of “Kejojo”, if you later teach it to your group. According to whose feeling will it fit? Is it sufficient for other groups? I mean, whose opinions are important for a piece to continue to be used?  
B: Now, it depends on who is judging. We make the form of the piece first. First and foremost it is for ourselves, for our creativity – we have a duty. We can’t force them on other friends: “use this, use this”. We try them out, try to play as a group. With our group, I have an idea like this, then we try to have a performance, to play. If it feels fitting, “please join and use this”. Whether they are interested or not, what’s important is that we make it for ourselves first. (Buda, tape 2002:18b)

Locéng and many other players’ comments in this chapter also attest this two-stage process: the act of creation appears generally individual, but then acceptance has to be sought in the presentation of the new material. At the more improvisatory end of the continuum, of course, this negotiation has to be more simultaneous.

## 6.6 Making new *gineman*

Making new introductory sections, *gineman*, involves using material less related to the theme of the piece than new variation sections. *Gineman* have their own stylistic features, which appear in different combinations: unmetred passages, metrical changes, *kebyar*-like flourishes, sudden accents and repeated notes.

Many *gineman* seem to be recent additions to pieces: now, most Sukawati *petegak* have *gineman* but Locéng recalls that, formerly, there was a single *gineman* which could be used to introduce any piece. Sutawa of Budakeling also mentions this (tape 2002:8b). Many Budakeling *petegak* do not have *gineman*, for instance “Sekar Ginotan Ageng”.

Gold notes that Ida Bagus Deksa of Blakiyu was the known composer, in the 1970s, of a *gineman* used by Konolan in Denpasar for “Merak Ngelo” and other pieces (Gold 1998:46, note 2). Locéng composed many of the *gineman* currently used in Sukawati. The flashy *kebyar* style has greatly influenced many *gineman*, for instance the Sukawati “Sekar Ginotan”, which will be described in the next section of this chapter. However, *kebyar* itself was greatly influenced by *gendér wayang* style, so the influences flow both ways.

### Old *gineman*

Locéng still remembers an old Sukawati *gineman* that could be used to introduce any piece:

L: But, if there's the *sakral*, the tradition from before, which is called ancient, don't lose it. I still have that. If I change or add, I still remember the *pokok*. Like the old *gineman* – I still remember it even though it's not used any more because many people are using it. In Denpasar, Pak Konolan already uses it so it's better if I make [something different]. (Locéng, tape 2002:17b)

Locéng played this old *gineman* to lead into the beginning of the old version of “Sekar Sungsang”, saying: “That's how it was before: too simple, too simple” (tape 2000:1b). He demonstrated how it could be joined to “Suléndro”, “Sekar Ginotan” and “Sekar Jepun” as well. From the following opening phrases, just using the right hand, the *gineman* becomes more complex, with the left hand joining in (see musical example 59, tape 2000:1b).

### Musical example 59: opening of old Sukawati *gineman*



In Budakeling, Sutawa also described a *gineman* taught to him by Granoka, which he said could be used to introduce any piece (tape 2002:8b). As mentioned above, Ida Wayan Ngurah described how there were formerly several different *gineman* to the “Pemungkah” depending on whether the first scene was set in the camp of the Pandawa or the Korawa. However, nowadays, only the usual one for the Pandawa is used.

### “Sekar Gadung”

Locéng describes making the *gineman* to “Sekar Gadung”, a piece which has evolved from being the old version of “Sekar Sungsang” to a piece in its own right with two variation sections:

L: When I started, there was no *gineman* to “Sekar Gadung”. Me: When was that? L: About six months ago. We tried to look for the *jégog* here, a bit different from “Bima Kroda”, “Batél”, “Grebeg” – they’re all different – the “Pemungkah”. It didn’t exist. Me: How long did it take you to make this [*gineman*]? A long time? A week? L: It could be three days, until that, three days so that it sounds good. But the beginning, previously, wasn’t there, only this [plays opening melody of “Sekar Gadung”]. I chopped it up so that it’s satisfying, this *pukulan* I know. Like the movement of a chicken picking food, *kék, kék*. (Locéng, tape 2002:18a)

The composition of this *gineman* was followed by a period of reflection:

L: For a month, I was thinking about it [the new *gineman*], whether it worked or not, this continuation. After I’d thought for a long time, only then did I give it to my pupils. This can be used as *stok* (standard) – I believe in this. Before that, I tried a lot but it didn’t work yet. I didn’t dare be certain of whether it was good or not. Me: So, there’s always a process of trying out before it’s certain? L: [sings] Not one, certainly more than one [version] will be made [sings] – like that. I put that one off – it didn’t work. Better is what did work [plays]. I made this one: the two patterns are close but a little different. So this was clearer.

Me: And, now the *gineman* of “Sekar Gadung” is finished, does it feel that way or perhaps later it might change again? L: For the moment, I’ll get familiar with this first – I’ll leave it alone to begin with, because the friends can still accept it. They like it. Later – and this is not certain – if I’m bored or I find something that’s even better, I may change it. So, what I gave you before can be different from now: a little bit different. Truly, it’s not wrong, what was before ... it represents the first beginning. (Locéng, tape 2002:23a)

Interestingly, during a lesson several years previously in 1988, when Locéng had finished playing “Sekar Gadung”, he started demonstrating some segments of a *gineman* that was on his mind, saying:

L: [plays] This is clearly like *réong*. Whatever it will become later, I will try this. This is not yet [developed]. I don't yet use this and, moreover, it's not finished yet. I will make this, so that it's not the same. I don't like to be the same as my colleagues. I want to make things continuously, because many tunes don't yet have a *gineman*. (Locéng, lesson tape February 1988a)

So, although the final composition of the *gineman* for “Sekar Gadung” may have taken place quickly, the ideas had clearly been in his mind for at least fourteen years! Comparison of the *gineman* he was working on in 1988 and the one first presented in complete form in 2002 shows that the opening phrases are nearly identical (see musical example 60). Then, the versions diverge. As *gineman* tend to be less strictly metered than the main sections of pieces, note durations are approximations only. Musical example 60 shows: (1) above, the opening of the new *gineman* of “Sekar Gadung” (Loceng, tape 2002:18a), at the start of **track 23 on the accompanying CD**, and (2) below, slight differences in Loceng's earlier new *gineman* (lesson tape February 1988a), at the start of **track 22 on the accompanying CD** – the rest is the same as the first staff.

#### Musical example 60: new *gineman*

The musical notation consists of three systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system shows the opening of the new *gineman* (2002), featuring a treble staff with triplets and accents, and a bass staff with notes and rests. The second system shows the earlier *gineman* (1988), with similar melodic lines but different rhythmic patterns and accents. The third system continues the comparison, showing further differences in the two versions. Labels like "as above" are used to indicate where the notation is identical to the previous system.

## 6.7 New versions of old pieces

Some composers have reworked whole pieces in more fundamental ways, recreating them to such an extent that they could be said to be new pieces. Starting in the late 1940s and through the 1950s, Locéng, together with his brother, Ketut Balik, made radical changes to much of the repertoire, mirroring the performance innovations of their renowned *dalang*, Granyam. The latter included new, *légong*-influenced choreography for the *kayon* and puppets' dances and detaching the side of the puppet box so that it swings when hit by the *cepala*, making a more pronounced clattering noise (see Gold 1998:247–56). In this section, I will focus on Locéng's reworking of the "Pemungkah" and of "Sekar Ginotan".

These new versions of pieces are the ones that have now been handed down to the younger generation of Sukawati players, as Buda explains:

B: Granyam was also a *gendér* player, also my father and Pak Locéng. But what I know of *gendér wayang* is like that. Perhaps I'm too late to know how it really was – I only know it with the changes. (Buda, tape 2002:17b)

Keeping up Sukawati's good name and being able to show off the skill of the group was a strong motivating factor in creating these elaborate versions, as the following reminiscence by Locéng reveals:

L: My *dalang* was very clever in weighing up his gamelan players. For instance, if there was a *wayang* in the region of Denpasar, in the part that likes *gendér*, I wasn't allowed to stay silent: we played there. The *dalang* would be asked by the person who'd invited him, "*jero mangku dalang*, please sleep, rest for a while. Ask your *gendér* players to entertain the guests first". If we didn't have a large stock of capital [many pieces] how would it be? Those people were naughty but it was good for us. (Locéng, tape 2000:2b)

Locéng says that the difference between people who make changes and those who do not depends on whether or not their group plays primarily for spectacle or for ritual *wayang*:

L: Large changes – these are used for spectacle. Those that don't change are not used for spectacle, only for ceremonies. No one pays attention to them and also they play rarely. Here, as well as playing each day, often it is used a spectacle. In order that it is not the same, it is better if we make [the pieces] again, so that it's different. I change [a piece] but, truly, it's not lost. (Locéng, tape 2000:3b)

Locéng compares this desire to make changes for spectacle to the way *kebyar* composers create new works for competitions:

L At the Arts Festival, players get dizzy thinking about next year – it has to be different! That's it, because it takes place each year. It's like that here too [with *wayang* performances] but even closer together – it can be one month. (Locéng, tape 2002:3b)

## “Sekar Ginotan”

The *petegak* piece “Sekar Ginotan” occurs in numerous versions throughout Bali. In Budakeling there are three versions alone, while in Sukawati it is closely related melodically to another piece, “Pangkat Pengesehan”, which is used to mark the puppets’ departure at the end of the first, meeting scene in a *wayang* performance. Around 1950, Locéng and Ketut Balik reworked the old Sukawati “Sekar Ginotan”, adding a virtuosic opening *gineman* and intricate variations. This new version, which Locéng says took a long time to create, later won a competition, although Locéng says such competitions for *wayang* only started in 1973, much later than *kebyar* ones (tape 2000:1b and 3a). Locéng’s group won first place in this competition, in 1973, playing “Sekar Sungsang”, “Sekar Ginotan” and “Suléndra” (tape 2000:3a).

This new version illustrates the complex cross-fertilisation between *gendér wayang* and *gong kebyar*, as highlighted by the following conversation with Buda:

B: In “Sekar Ginotan”, there is a lot of influence from *gong kebyar* ... but the “Sekar Ginotan” that was before was [itself] taken to *gong kebyar*. Me: Because there’s a lot of *gendér* style that was taken into *gong kebyar* before? B: I think that’s a possibility. Taking *kebyar* motifs, we put them into *gendér wayang* but the scope in that form, I think, is smaller than taking from *gendér wayang*. The more *gendér wayang* we take to *gong kebyar* the better – it makes it more *wayah* (old, mature, venerable). In contrast, if *gendér wayang* takes the form of *gong kebyar*, the possibility is very little. Because of the motifs of *gendér wayang*, its character, if we take from *gong kebyar*, it won’t be good. (Buda, tape 2002:19a)

However, the *kebyar* influences on the new “Sekar Ginotan” seem to have worked well, guaranteeing its popularity as a Sukawati “show piece”. Locéng says that the reason they reworked it was that the old version had been arranged for *gong kebyar* and therefore was too well known:

L: The piece, “Sekar Ginotan” already existed, its *pokok*. Many people had already taken it to *gong* [made a *gong* piece], so we looked for what was new again. Me: What was the process of making the new one? L: The road is the same [sings]. It has turned a little bit [sings], now, like this [sings]. So it’s turned a little but the road is still the same. That’s because it has interlocking patterns from *gong*. I looked for *kotékan* that was fitting, whatever we like ... why can’t you? Of course you can. You need a lot of capital – you need to know a lot about *angklung* patterns, about *gong* patterns. If you just know about *gendér* patterns, you can’t make anything [new]. (Locéng, tape 2002:23a)

Locéng played me the old version of “Sekar Ginotan” (tape 2000:7b), which has only one section, unlike the modern version, which has three. The old piece features many phrases which appear in the new one (and also appear in the

piece “Merak Ngelo”) including a passage with right-hand *kotékan* over a left-hand ostinato phrase.

Locéng went on to describe how his varied experience playing *tingklik* (bamboo xylophone), *gong kebyar*, *tantri tari* (dance based on *Tantri* stories, with *pelégongan* accompaniment), *jangér* and *sanghyang dedari* trance-dance music, all fed into his *gendér* creations:

L: Pieces were taken from *jangér*, arranging so that note six becomes note one ... It's hard to explain the way, ‘Yan, because before, while I was still young, I liked this. You have to work a lot, listening constantly. You must know, not just listen but also experience and study it. After that, only then did I look for an opinion from people who were knowledgeable, like Pak Granyam: he was clever at judging this. Although he didn't make [pieces], it was him who judged it: whether it was good or bad. If he agreed, we could use it. If not, we didn't, because he was the cleverest. (Locéng, tape 2002:23a)

Locéng went on to describe the “life stories” of various segments of the new “Sekar Ginotan”. Sometimes he could not remember how a particular passage came about, as with an unusual *angsél* in the third section of the piece (see musical example 61).

**Musical example 61: *angsél* from part 3 of “Sekar Ginotan”, *polos***



Another segment in “Sekar Ginotan” also appears in a similar form in “Merak Ngelo” (see musical example 49 above). The recycling of chunks of melodic material has already been discussed above in section 6.4. Here, we see how these can be included in a completely reworked piece. Both new and older material may be recycled in this way. Locéng calls this particular segment a *bayangan* (shadow or image) from the old version of “Sekar Ginotan”, which has made its way into both “Merak Ngelo” and the new “Sekar Ginotan” (tape 2002:23b).

Another fragment is used in varied form in the new “Sekar Ginotan”, towards the end of “Suléndra” and “Sekar Gadung” and at the beginning of “Sesapi Ngindang” in the “Pemungkah” (see musical example 62). In all but the latter, it is less integrated into the surrounding texture and provides a structural

contrast. This is newer material. Locéng says it was taken from the *calung* part of the *pengecét* of “Légong Kraton”, “but turned around a bit” (tape 2002:23b).

**Musical example 62: from (1) “Sekar Gadung”, (2) “Sesapi Ngindang”, (3) “Suléndra”, (4) “Sekar Ginotan”**

The image displays four staves of musical notation, numbered 1 through 4. Each staff is written in a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The music consists of a complex, rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. The pattern is repeated across the staves, with some variations in phrasing and dynamics (indicated by accents and slurs). The notation is dense and intricate, typical of traditional Indonesian gamelan music transcribed for a Western instrument.

I also asked about the tune that appears half way through the *gineman* and received an unexpected answer:

L: There were tunes that were made in Java – tunes for school [sings]. At the time of the parties there were many tunes like these. The PKI (Indonesian Communist Party) were clever at making tunes. The melodies were better but they were banned because the PKI was banned ... This tune was included just for its sound. Those tunes quickly influenced [us] like the Japanese tunes that were earlier. If you don't know a lot of tunes, you can't make anything. I knew a lot of Japanese tunes before [sings]. They fell into *gendér*. (Locéng, tape 2002:23b)

I discuss Locéng's use of a Japanese tune in the “Pemungkah” below. By “the time of the [political] parties”, Locéng means the period in the 1950s and early 1960s during which the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) became prominent, rivalling Sukarno's Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI). The supporters of various parties wrote popular songs, which were disseminated throughout Indonesia and I think Locéng may here be hinting at a PKI origin of this tune in “Sekar Ginotan”. The inclusion of such tunes shows a startling eclecticism: it seems that almost any musical material that caught Locéng's ear could be worked into the new versions of the pieces (see musical example 63, 1 minute 26 seconds into **track 24 of the accompanying CD**).



### Musical example 63: tune from the *gineman* of “Sekar Ginotan”

The image shows a musical score for two staves, labeled R.H. (Right Hand) and L.H. (Left Hand). The R.H. staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, ending with 'etc.'. The L.H. staff is in bass clef and contains a more complex accompaniment with many beamed notes and rests. Below the L.H. staff is a separate line of music, likely a continuation or a related piece, also in bass clef, featuring a similar melodic and rhythmic style.

This “archaeological” dig into “Sekar Ginotan” reveals a patchwork of variously sourced material, from *légong* and *kebyar* tunes to political songs. It seems every melodic segment has its own hidden history. Over and over again, Locéng would stress the creative ferment of these times, when the *dalang* Granyam was in charge of the group, prompting and testing changes to the practice of both puppetry and music:

L: Granyam was very diligent. Every time there was no *wayang*, I was called there to practice. So I had the most tunes, because I was considered [supervised] by him. I was ordered to make [them]. It wasn't that he made them; he told me to make and then he examined them. Trying to make the *gineman* as an opening ... it was us who made it. He was the one who examined it – [the *gineman*] for “Sekar Ginotan”. He said: “This is good; this can be used.” If he said, “use it”, I believed him because he was the cleverest. Every time there wasn't a *wayang*, he was just there at the stage (*panggung*), practising *wayang*, sweetening the [performance of] *wayang*, using *légong* [sings] like that. I made that [music] ... the dance he made, so that it fitted together: “Where's the *angsél*?” Now, there aren't any *dalang* like that. (Locéng, tape 2000:4a)

### “Pemungkah”

The opening sections of the “Pemungkah” (“Kayonan” and “Katak Ngongkék”) are based on the expansion, contraction and variation of a left-hand melodic motif. McPhee (1966) notes that this motif is also used, transposed, later in the overture. In Sukawati and elsewhere, the different sections of the “Pemungkah” are given names as separate pieces (not always the same ones), whereas McPhee analyses it as a single composition in several related sections. This raises the question of whether it is conceived as a single piece, in which case it

would be the longest and most complex in the repertoire, or as a suite of separate pieces.

“Pemungkah” from other areas seem closer in general structure to McPhee’s than the two Sukawati “Pemungkah” (one for *Mahabharata* and one for *Ramayana* performances, the latter with drums and gongs). This is due to Locéng’s extensive reworking and restructuring of the “Pemungkah” in Granyam’s time, which he says took place before he made the changes in other pieces (tape 2002:18a). The most notable difference is that, in most other areas, the “Pemungkah” ends with a section, often called “Tulang Lindung” in which the left hands carry a lyrical melody and the right hands play a simple interlocking oscillation between the two highest notes of the instrument. In Sukawati, “Tulang Lindung” has been moved to form the second section of the “Pemungkah” and a similar section, called “Bebrayut angit-angitan”, or just “Brayut”, has replaced it at the end. Many sub-sections of the “Pemungkah” may be left out if the musicians are in a hurry to get home, or if the *dalang* has prepared the puppets more quickly than usual.

I asked Locéng if he still remembered the old “Pemungkah”:

L: It was short, it was simple, it didn’t have [complex] interlocking patterns like now. Me: Do you still remember it? L: It’s already been 60 years! [sings to himself] Certainly, the *pokok* of the “Pemungkah” is still there, very slow [sings]. The *Ramayana* [version] – that was the *pokok*. There were two openings: for *wayang* and for *parwa tari* [*Mahabharata* dance-drama]. My father and grandfather also made the tune so it would be easily remembered. Me: But the *gambang* section was not in there yet? L: No, the *gambang* was not there. (Locéng, tape 2000:2a)

Locéng described the way he had adapted the *gambang* section from *gong kebyar*:

L: When I was in the *seka gong* (gamelan group), I brought it here. Before, among the old people, it didn’t exist. It was the new era. Me: When was that? L: About 1950, from 1945 on. Me: was it at that time that the new “Pemungkah” was made? L: Yes, all the new “Pemungkah”. The old “Pemungkah” was forgotten. There are still little bits of its *pokok*: still from before are “Tulang Lindung”, “Katak Ngongkék”. We added to it – before, it was very short. Me: In Karangasem, the “Pemungkah” is still very short. L: Yes, if it’s old, it’s still short: they haven’t changed it or added to it, there is no advance. (Locéng, tape 2002:17b)

I asked Locéng about the reworking of the original “Pemungkah”:

L: The road was already more or less there, from the “Kayonan”, “Katak Ngonkék” – there was already that. So, number three we took from *gong*, the *gambang* from *gong*, the *gegilakan* from *gong*. “Brayut” was already there from before but its road was different, just simple, with no *kotékan* in the *batél* [section]. (Locéng, tape 2002:17b)

Locéng says that although he made the changes himself, he worked on them with other people (usually his brother, Ketut Balik) and the *dalang* Granyam.

This was so they could choose the best versions, check whether a *sangsih* would fit and so on:

L: Granyam was good at *gendér* too. I let him hear it and examine it ... if he said it was good, I'd carry on using it. Me: So, it was Pak Granyam who ... L: Judged – yes. He was the most famous *dalang*, number one in Bali. (Locéng, tape 2002:17b)

Locéng then began to describe how he'd gradually put together the new "Pemungkah":

L: We also liked to play various *gong* tunes – I really looked for them in *gong*. Me: This became part of the "Pemungkah"? L: Yes, "Pemungkah" number three [plays part of "Sesapi Ngindang" the third part of the "Pemungkah"]. We made the various *angsél*. Before, it was closed [plays without *angsél* and then sings it in *pélog* tuning]. Me: So, when you made the new "Pemungkah", it was you who brought most of the new parts? L: The way from *gong*, yes. Me: Just you? L: Yes ... but they were played together. There were other friends who used the same. (Locéng, tape 2002:17b)

I wondered how other groups reacted to the new material:

Me: Was it quick? Or, did your group play the new "Pemungkah" for a few years, while the others didn't know it? L: They didn't make a different one – they just followed. There were three groups here previously. They just followed because they liked to learn it. They were all family. But they weren't serious like me. The only one who was strong was my older brother [Ketut Balik]. When the older people weren't there any more, we were the oldest. (Locéng, tape 2002:17b)

The new "Pemungkah" was much harder to play than the old one, less simple and more fluid "like 'Krépétan' or 'Partha Wijaya'" (Locéng, tape 2002:18a):

L: Before, it was just the *pokok*...we had the way but later created something better so that people would find it hard to imitate. Me: So, at that time, the other groups came to you to study? L: It wasn't like that. Although they weren't united on purpose, they were already used to coming here. Hearing it just once, they could do it all. People often exchanged – I, too, got information from them. We often joined each other to play gamelan. But, for my group specially, the secret was slightly different. (Locéng, tape 2002:18a)

Locéng says that to play like his group, pupils would have to study with him on purpose, while the other groups " could only just follow the *wayang*" (tape 2002:18a).

Buda says that his generation just received the pieces with the changes made by Locéng and his contemporaries and that they have no idea of what went before. I asked him if, in the case of the "Pemungkah", which was greatly altered, that meant that the *pokok* had, in fact, been lost:

Me: The Sukawati "Pemungkah" has already been changed a lot, so ... if no one remembers the "Pemungkah" before those changes, is the *pokok* lost or not? Has it become another *pokok*, or how is it? B: I think the tune has not been lost. I know, like "Brayut", "Tulang Lindung" [two melodically related parts of the "Pemungkah"], there is one *pokok lagu*, which was later cut but the *pokok lagu* is still there. I know a little of the *pokok lagu*. Perhaps, the other pieces [of the "Pemungkah"] I don't know because I received it like that. (Buda, tape 2002:18b)

Locéng stated that the *pokok* of the original “Pemungkah” has not, in fact, been lost, despite the added sections, though the original linking passages have been altered to connect this newly added material:

L: The links mean that, if it's broken off here [plays two notes an *empat* apart] and it continues here [plays another *empat* one pitch level higher], we made a link. If not, the piece can't continue. This way, it can be brought together so it's not strange. It must have a link. (Locéng, tape 2002:23a)

Sarga and Warga both agree that, in the new “Pemungkah”, the *pokok* had not been lost but has been added to (tape 2002:25b). Buda points out that the arrangement of the “Pemungkah” must follow both the needs of the audience and of the *dalang*, who puts out the puppets while it is playing, which may take more or less time than usual: “if the puppets are finished, automatically the ‘Pemungkah’ is cut. If we were just playing without *dalang*, *gendér wayang* alone, we could play it in full” (tape 2002:18b).

Just as *gong kebyar* segments need to be “processed” (I: *diolah*) to become appropriate for *gendér wayang*, so too do fragments from other ensembles. There is a section in the “Pemungkah” in the 5 + 3 rhythm of the *gambang* ensemble, which seems to have been added during Granyam’s time (see musical example 64, 21 seconds into **track 25 of the accompanying CD**).

Buda comments:

B: If we take a little from *gambang*, for instance ... it is processed. Eventually, it is as if it isn't from *gambang*. (Buda, tape 2002:19a)

**Musical example 64: *gambang* tune from the “Pemungkah”, *polos***

I suggested that this segment may have been taken from early-twentieth century adaptations of the *gambang* rhythm to *gong kebyar* and *pelégongan*, by the composer Lotring among others (see McPhee 1966:309–15). However,

Buda said this segment could have come directly from *gambang*, as there were old gamelan like this locally:

B: I hear it as almost precisely like genuine *gambang* – they're the same. I hear it from genuine *gambang*, not *gong kebyar*. (Buda, tape 2002:19a)

However, Locéng had previously said that this *gambang* segment had indeed been taken from a *gong* version (see above). Perhaps the truth is that it was an influence both from the original ensemble and from the fact that *gambang* segments were finding their way into *kebyar* pieces at that time.

Gold finds this *gambang* section appropriate to the journey through stages of life portayed in the "Pemungkah" (1998:281–2). Although it does not appear in most areas that preserve older versions of the overture, a section in *gambang* rhythm is present in the Budakeling "Pemungkah" and may have been adopted from Sukawati. As McPhee (1966:309) had described how the composer Lotring had adapted the *gambang* rhythm for a *pelégongan* piece, and Locéng had already told me of Lotring's visits to Sukawati both to teach and learn, I asked whether this section had been taken from the Lotring piece:

L: No, the *gambang* [section] was not taken from Lotring. Here there was a special *gambang* [sings]. Like *gambang*, [there was] *gending luang*. For instance, it was usually used if Chinese people died ... I brought it to *gong*. From Lotring, it was different: *tabuh telu, légong kraton, semarandana* [all *gong* and *semar pegulingan* pieces] – that was what was learnt from Lotring. Me: In Karangasem I heard a *gambang* section in the "Pemungkah", even though they say their version is ancient. Perhaps it was taken from Sukawati? L: Clearly it was. At the time of the festival in 1963, I already used this and it was already circulating. (Locéng, tape 2002:23a)

Locéng sees the *gambang* section as just one of the additions made during this period, which they added because of a feeling that the times were changing:

L: However the time is, we must follow a little bit: there's *gambang*, there's *gegilakan* [from *gong*] – it's added there. During the Japanese time [Japanese occupation, 1942–5], there were also Japanese tunes included in the "Pemungkah", in the '40s. (Locéng, tape 2002:23a)

This comment interested me, as it was the first I had heard of this. I asked Locéng to tell me more:

M: Really? What Japanese tunes? Do you still remember? L: Before the *gambang* section in the "Pemungkah" [plays section from "Sesapi Ngindang" from the "Pemungkah"]. This is a Japanese tune from the Japanese time in the '40s. Me: Where did you hear that Japanese tune? On the radio? L: Oh, we got to study Japanese tunes at that time at school [sings song]. That's the type of thing. A little bit can be brought to here. (Locéng, tape 2002:23a)

**Musical example 65: “Japanese tune” from the “Pemungkah”**

**Musical example 66: Locéng singing Japanese tune**

u le li lo lu le lo li lo le lo      dung ding\_dang u li la\_no la

ni nu ni ko ko ro a cu ni      i wa i sa ni      na ne no ne de no de du

noninano      ni\_nu ni no      nononane no

Locéng spontaneously sang this Japanese song using apparently meaningless syllables (*lo li*) and Balinese note names (*dong dang*) but also with what seem to be one or two actual Japanese words (see musical example 65, 5 seconds into **track 25 on the accompanying CD**, and musical example 66, **track 26 on the accompanying CD**; the latter is transcribed pitched as a pentatonic scale starting on C). He did not say that this was the actual source of the “Sesapi Ngindang” extract but that these songs were “like that”. Although the two tunes have stylistic similarities (as does the extract from “Sekar Ginotan” highlighted earlier), I would hesitate to say that they are “the same tune”. This extract, along with the “Sekar Ginotan” example cited earlier, highlights just how eclectic Balinese composers can be, even within a relatively traditional genre such as *gendér wayang*. I often found that discussing the making of specific pieces would jog Locéng’s memory like this about similar parts of other pieces. The

following day he told me about incorporating other types of song into pieces (see above with reference to “Sekar Ginotan”).

The younger generation of Sukawati players continues to alter the “Pemungkah”, though not as radically as Locéng and his peers. Various sections are frequently omitted to shorten the time the audience has to wait for the play to begin. This is often cited by players as an example of modern tastes and lifestyles altering the way *wayang* is presented (see Heimarck 1999 and 2003).

In Tenganan, too, the “Pemungkah” was added to, although not nearly to such a degree as in Sukawati:

Me: Here, in Tenganan, because this is a centre for *selonding* and *gambang*, is there an influence from these two traditions? M: There is. For instance, in the “Pemungkah”, the *gambang* enters. There’s also “Sekar Jepun” that comes in [plays]. That is “Sekar Jepun” from *selonding*. My teacher’s [Ranu’s] purpose then was to lengthen it because it was short: “what would be fitting to put into it?” From before, there was a *gambang* section in it [the “Pemungkah”]. (Mudita, tape 2002:2a)

In Budakeling, changes have taken place too. Nowadays, Budakeling groups use the Buduk, Denpasar version of the opening song, “Alas Harum” because the original Karangasem version was very hard on the *dalang*’s voice, going high and low (Sugata, tape 2002:12b). Other Denpasar versions of pieces adopted in Budakeling include the accompaniment for the dance of the clown Délem (“Lagu Délem”) (Sutawa, personal communication, 2002).

## 6.8 New pieces

Players commonly assert that completely new pieces are hardly ever composed for *gendér wayang*. It is true that *kréasi baru* (new creations) are rarer than in *gong kebyar*. However, I found several newly composed pieces, which I will discuss in this final section as examples of the “composition” end of Nettl’s improvisation to composition continuum. As with composing *runtutan* sections and *gineman* introductions, it seems that only certain players feel themselves capable of creating completely new pieces. Having said that, of the players I interviewed, most had created a new piece, even if it was a matter of arranging a piece from another gamelan repertoire. The list includes Locéng, Sukayana, Buda, Gunawan, Dasta, Sutawa and Granoka.

Gold notes that, in some areas, performers play several sitting pieces rather than just one: "In certain areas in *zaman dulu* the *gendér* players would even play a full fledged little concert before the *wayang* and many sitting pieces were composed during the 1940s and 1950s for this purpose" (Gold 1998:218). She cites Locéng as stating that the Sukawati piece "Burisrawa" is an old piece, "never used anymore" (ibid.:589), whereas Locéng told me he composed it himself after consulting with older players who remembered that the old piece used to sound like "Krépétan" (personal communication 2000, see below). Again, as with Locéng's discussion of *runtutan*, there is some confusion between "old", "old-but-changed" and "genuinely new". This is not surprising in a tradition in which material is constantly being reworked.

In contrast with *kréasi baru* for *gendér*, some energy has been spent in the related field of creating new forms of *wayang*, which often make their appearance at festivals and include *wayang tantri*, *wayang arja*, *wayang babad* and the revived *wayang gambuh*. These often use ensembles other than *gendér wayang*, such as the flute-dominated gamelan *arja* for *wayang arja*. Buda described the popular *dalang* Céngblong from Tabanan who has created a new form of *wayang* accompanied by *gong kebyar*. Buda noted:

B: He's creative and, besides being creative, he's covering up his deficiencies because there are no good *gendér* players [in his village], so he uses *gong kebyar*!. (Buda, tape 2002:18b)

I asked Locéng for his opinion of these new *wayang* experiments and, also, whether he felt there were any limits to this experimentation:

L: [The competitions are] once a year, so that it's different, to astonish people. It means *wayang* can be taken to wherever. *Bayangan* means explanation. It takes good stories to explain good and evil. It can't not [do that], so that's good. But it [the experiments] won't last; they can't be played. When Ketut Suidiana finished school, he did a *wayang kréasi golék* [Javanese-style rod-puppets]. Its gamelan was *gong* ... its story was Babad [history]: Ken Arok, Gajah Mada, in *wayang golék*. It was really good at first glance but, to continue, people couldn't use it. It needed at least ten *dalang*. It needed at least one month of rehearsal. How much would this cost? At least 10 million *rupiah*. Who could afford that? It was only performed three times: once at school [STSI] and in the *pura désa* (village temple). The spectators were truly amazed; it was really good. Other than the government – the *pura désa* – it is too expensive. In Guwang, once, the *désa* asked for it for the *pura dalem* (death temple). Ordinary individuals can't afford it. Ordinary *wayang parwa* here costs 500,000 rupiah – if 1 million, it's already expensive – that cost 10 million. (Locéng, tape 2000:3b)

I mentioned my own attempts to compose for *gendér wayang*, to gauge further Locéng's opinion about experimentation:

Me: Are there limits to creating tunes too? I've tried to make *kréasi baru* for *gendér wayang* – like *gendér* pieces but also with influence from Western music. Is that allowed? L: Why can't it be allowed? If you can, you can do it. Later, don't say it's good



or bad at first – feel it first for a year, whether it is beneficial or not. That’s the way. If we make [something], it’s not certain it will be good. Use it first. Later, if it’s not good, we will be bored ourselves. These tunes, I’m never bored with. (Locéng, tape 2000:3b)

I have followed Locéng’s advice in testing my own compositions and have found it a useful way to ensure creative self-criticism.

## Sukawati

It is worth examining the reasons why there is less emphasis on creating new pieces than on reworking old ones and why, despite the existence of new pieces, players assert so strongly that they are almost never made. Buda points out one reason why making a completely new *gendér wayang* piece is difficult:

B: To make a *lagu utuh* (genuine piece, i.e. a completely new piece), to give it the character of *gendér wayang* is hard. Like the motifs of *gendér wayang*, of the pieces or of the melody, the motifs of playing (*pukulan*), and the *kotékan* motifs – that becomes the aim of the composer to make a *gendér wayang* piece. In my opinion, making small changes is easier than making a new piece in *gendér wayang*. In *gong kebyar*, I think it’s easier to make a new piece rather than changing a piece that already exists. (Buda, tape 2002:18b)

Buda says it is ten times as hard to make a *gendér wayang* piece than a *gong kebyar* piece (tape 2002:17b). He says that *kebyar* composers tend to make the first section of a piece melodic, so that the audience can grasp it, and the last section will often reflect the title of the piece. However, he says that this does not hold for *gendér wayang*, in which, “we rarely know there’s a *pengawak* or a *pengecét* – the tunes are all one” (tape 2002:17a). Buda points out another problem: working up new pieces with a group involves a lot of extra rehearsal. It often only happens in the context of an exam at STSI/ISI:

B: Formerly, I made a *gendér wayang* piece mixed with *gendér rambat* [from the *gamelan peléngongan*]. That’s new. All those pieces I made new but now, perhaps, I don’t remember it. It was just for the exam – now it’s lost! Where has it gone? Me: Because you didn’t like it? B: Not because I didn’t like it but because it’s usually like this for STSI people. After the exam, if there isn’t another performance, it is never developed. Because the group is too big, it’s hard to develop it in the villages. (Buda, tape 2002:17b)

Locéng, interestingly, also gave a figure of ten to one when describing how much harder it is to compose a *gendér* piece than a *kebyar* piece, although he noted that certain tunes have entered *gendér* from other repertoires, such as “Segara Madu” from *angklung* (tape 2002:23b). He stressed that most recent *kebyar kréasi baru* quickly fade from memory and from the repertoire, in contrast with some of the earlier *kebyar* classics such as “Oleg Tamulilingan”:

L: *Kréasi baru* has limits ... after "Tamulilingan". "Tamulilingan" was the final one of that tradition – the least boring. Apart from that, one is quickly bored. "Manuk Rawa", "Manuci" [more recent *kebyar* pieces], whatever is new like this disappears and is quickly lost. What existed previously, like "Légong Kraton", cannot be lost. People cannot be bored [with it]. (Locéng, tape 2002:23b)

I came across this idea – that older pieces have a more lasting quality – expressed even more vehemently in traditionalistic Karangasem. Perhaps, like old buildings which survive earthquakes while more modern structures fall down around them, this is a self-fulfilling argument: the fact that they are old and still played shows that they have a lasting quality.

Buda feels that new pieces should fit with the special character of *gendér wayang*, making the process harder:

B: If you are making a *gendér wayang* piece, it has to be one with the right hand: look for unity between right and left hands to make the interlocking. The process of making a *gendér wayang* piece is very long. Often, we make a *gendér wayang* piece whose tune is like *gong kebyar* – then I don't want to use it, I won't use it. To be honest, making a piece that fits with the character of *gendér wayang* is really rather hard. As recordings now are mostly of *gong kebyar*, we can be influenced. If a composer is not involved in *gendér wayang*, he can't make a piece for *gendér wayang*. He can make a composition, a piece, but the character of the piece would be *gong kebyar*. If we make a complicated *kotékan* [we ask ourselves], "does it work or not in *gendér wayang*?" Later, it is seen in the melody that comes out. I try it [thinking], "does it work or not?" If not, then I don't use it. We need to enter into it to make it. (Buda, tape 2002:18b)

I asked whether, when he made new material, Buda looked for the *polos* and *sangsih* parts together:

B: The *sangsih* is not thought about first. We make the *polos* first. Once you've made the *polos*, however difficult it is, there surely will be a *sangsih*. It's not a problem to make the *sangsih*. We make the *polos* first to make the shape of that piece. The shape of the piece has to be cut, using this, using that. After the *polos* has taken shape, the *sangsih* can just follow. Then, we can just look for the correct *sangsih*. After we can do ... the *sangsih* of the *pokok*, we can add all kinds of decorations. (Buda, tape 2002:18a)

Locéng, however, stressed that one should look for the general shape of the whole first, before separating it into *polos* and *sangsih* (see above, section 6.3). He says he would work out such versions with his brother, Ketut Balik, making the melody first (*melodiné gaé malu*), then working out the *sangsih* (tape 2000:5a).

One common way of creating a new piece is simply to arrange a piece from one gamelan repertoire for another. In general, this seems to happen more often from *gendér wayang* to other ensembles rather than the other way round and from *sléndro* tuning to *pélog* ensembles. However, there are exceptions (see the comments about Tenganan below). Locéng describes creating the accompaniment for *wayang tantri*, later popularised by *dalang* I Wayan Wija,

based on animal stories from the *Tantri* cycle. The accompaniment includes four *pélog*-tuned *gendér* from the *légong* ensemble and the music combines elements from both *gendér wayang* and *légong* styles.

### Locéng's "Burisrawa"

Locéng recently created "Burisrawa", a *pangkat* piece with two sections. The first section of this piece is based on the same left-hand ostinato as "Krépétan" and the second on a new ostinato (see musical examples 67 and 68). This may be followed by the second section and concluding *batél* of "Krépétan". Locéng says he used "Krépétan" as a model or image (*bayangan*) (tape 2002:23b). He describes how the piece "Burisrawa" used to exist in Sukawati, as it does in other areas like Denpasar, but was forgotten. To make the new piece, he asked older people what "Burisrawa" used to be like and was told it was similar to "Krépétan", so he used the ostinato of this piece as his model:

L: [In *gendér*] people are not even capable of learning what already exists let alone making a *kréasi baru*, because it's too difficult. Try asking one hundred people in the market: "Can you play *gendér*?" Clearly not! Try asking about *gong* – certainly half will know! Me: Despite that, you've made a piece from the beginning, "Burisrawa". But the model already existed. L: It already existed – that's "Krépétan". We used it as a *bayangan*, we only added to it. (Locéng, tape 2002:23b)

I asked him how he went about making it:

L: I looked for the *pokok*, because it hadn't been played for a long time. I asked the old people ... [They said] it was almost the same as the *pokok* of "Krépétan". The piece had already been lost for a long time ... Why make the changes? It's the times: *sing ada kayu luput tekén angin*. (Locéng, tape 2000:5a)

It was in this context that Locéng introduced the phrase *sing ada kayu luputing angin* (or, *luput tekén angin*), "there is no tree unaffected by the wind".

I asked Locéng whether, when making this new piece, he was influenced by the versions of "Burisrawa" that existed in other places, for instance the Denpasar version:

L: Even though it exists, I don't know it; I've never studied it and never heard it. Only before, when I was small, when I studied before, it resembled this. We never studied it before. The old people described its character. They didn't know it; they hadn't studied it. They just said it resembled "Krépétan". (Locéng, tape 2000:1b)

Locéng said that he made the second part of "Burisrawa" in 1999:

Me: You made this piece last year? L: One year ago. The front bit truly existed before a little bit. Me: And how did you make it? The *polos* first and then the *sangsih*? Or both of them? L: The *polos* first. It has to be the *polos* first. Make the *body* first so that ... if you make the *body* first, after there's a *body*, it is divided like that. Which one is *polos*, which

is *sangsih*. You must divide it. If you don't look for the *body*, if you specially look for the *polos*, it can be later that it cannot be given a *sangsih*. (Locéng, tape 2000:9b)

Musical example 67, track 27 on the accompanying CD, shows Locéng's "Burisrawa", *polos* and *sangsih* combined. The left-hand ostinati are repeated until a change is indicated. Musical example 68 shows the first few bars of "Krépétan" and "Burisrawa" together, *polos*.

### Musical example 67: Burisrawa

or 



The musical score consists of eight staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 7/8 time signature. It features a melodic line and a bass line with a repeating eighth-note pattern. The second staff has a measure marked with a '5' above it. The third staff has a measure marked with a '7' below it. The fourth staff has a measure marked with a '10' above it. The fifth staff has a measure marked with a '5' above it. The sixth staff has a measure marked with a '20' above it. The seventh staff has a measure marked with a '25' above it. The eighth staff continues the melodic and bass lines. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and repeat signs. The word "etc." appears at the end of several staves. A small instruction "to go to part 2" is located on the left side of the sixth staff.

(Musical example 67, continued)

etc.

30

35 into part 2 of "Krepetan"

Musical exmple 68: first bars of (1) "Krépétan" and (2) "Burisrawa"

together

1) etc.

2) etc.

Locéng had, before, stressed that the first thing to look for in creating a piece was not the *polos* part on its own but a kind of outline of the piece as the whole, which form the basis for the *polos*. He used the English word *body* to describe this (in Balinese, it would be *awak*). With this in mind, one can create a strong, basic *polos* part (hence, his seemingly contradictory statement above: "the *polos* first"). Clashes in bars 10 and 29 of musical example 67 seem to result from the parts being horizontally rather than vertically conceived.

Locéng says that much of the impetus to keep adding to the repertoire like this comes from his status as a teacher and being constantly pushed by his pupils. He says, if a teacher is asked something they don't know, they will quickly go and find the answer. In a similar way, his pupils' questions and desire for knowledge push him to extend the repertoire (tape 2002:23b).

I asked Locéng how he went about composing, putting it into the context of my interest in creativity. His answer reflects a pattern of creativity which has been described worldwide, in which the creative "solution" appears during moments of near-sleep or inactivity after a period of conscious searching:

Me: Even in the West, very rarely is there research about composition. Rarely does someone ask a composer: "How do you begin? How do you go about this?" Often, it's hard for people to answer. L: Answering it is really very hard. An artist, the art of making ... if someone who plans to, composes ... he's looking for it when he's just about to sleep, he'll think of that. An artist, when there's an opportunity, while he's asleep, musing by himself, at that time, sometimes he gets such and such [a feeling]: "Oh, this is very good!" Forgetting [sings], that's the way: he remembers. Just now, he takes it – it fits. That's the way: not in public. When it's empty with not many people. Me: I understand. It's as if, during the day, you're constantly playing, constantly looking for the answer and that answer doesn't yet come but, when it's a bit empty ... L: Yes! Only then you can, that's it! For instance, if 'Yan wants to ask about this and sometimes I can't answer ... the answer later suddenly occurs at the time it's a bit empty – then you can get it. (Locéng, tape 2002:23b)

## Tenganan

It is common for "new" pieces to be created by transferring them from one gamelan genre to another. Although many *gendér wayang* pieces have been taken into *gamelan angklung*, *pelégongan* and *kebyar*, it rarely happens the other way around. However, parts of *gendér* pieces have been influenced by other gamelan styles: *kebyar*, *gambang* and *pelégongan*. Adapting pieces from other repertoires is Gunawan's main compositional method:

G: Now, why have there been these changes? For instance, playing *rindik* or *gendér* at the hotel, [I think] "don't be just the same", so people will think, "here's a new piece". That's for music people. If I played "Sekar Sungsang" and nothing else, the audience would be bored. So, music people like you in England, can make new pieces: buy a *gong* cassette and take it to *gendér* and so on: [you can say] "this is Nick's composition". (Gunawan, tape 2002:4b)

Gunawan describes how he started composing in *selonding* by trying out different *saih* (modes) to make the pieces sound different and changing the interlocking patterns to be more like *réong*. But, then, he started transferring pieces between ensembles, for instance from the Karangasem vocal genre *génjék* to *rindik* (xylophone):

G: My first [*selonding*] cassette with *kidung* is very classic. Then, on the CD, there's *saih sondong* with one more *gangs*, there's one with added *suling* and *rindik*. You follow your own desire. We mustn't forget to please the audience (*menjwai penonton*). For instance, [there was] a Swiss man who combined *rindik* with Western music: *jembe*, violin and *suling* – he sent a tape. I also like that. Make your own group with *gendér* and other instruments. There's a group from Sibatana with two *suling* and *gendér*. Me: I'd like to combine *gendér* with *tabla*. G: That's a good idea. (tape 2002:4b)

Dasta also creates new pieces by adapting them from other repertoires:

D: *Tingklik* (xylophone) pieces, *gendér* ... a *selonding* melody – take it to *penting* (zither) ... other people are surprised to hear it: "what's this? It's new". One's own creation. (Dasta, tape 2002:4b)

However, in Dasta's opinion, not all repertoires can be treated in this way:

D: [We made "Tabuh Suling"] together from *angklung* to *gendér*. You can't take *gong* to *gendér* because of the tuning but *angklung*, yes. It doesn't sound good if *gong* pieces are taken to *gendér*. Me: Why's that? Because of the scale? D: Yes its scale is different. *Angklung* can be taken to *gendér* because it has the *angklung* scale [*sléndro*]. Me: So, what is appropriate to be used for *gendér* is ... D: *Angklung*, *semar pegulingan* ... *grantang* (xylophone) would not be good. *Selonding* using *angklung* – people wouldn't like. The sacred dances are really special to *selonding* and can't be mixed. Me: Can you bring from *selonding* to *gendér*? Has this ever been done? D: It has already been done: "Sekar Gadung" can be used. Me: What does it sound like on *gendér*? D: Good. Find those pieces that are very gentle. Don't use the *gucék*. So it's clear. *Angklung* pieces can be taken to *gendér*; *selonding* pieces can be taken to *gendér* but only those which are very gentle. (Dasta, tape 2002:5a)

## "Tabuh Suling"

I asked Gunawan how he composed new pieces:

Me: You've said you've tried to make new pieces for *gendér* and I'd like to know how you go about that. G: Like this piece, "Tabuh Suling". I heard it on a CD. This is from an *angklung* piece – I took it to be a *gendér* piece [plays] ... Me: Are there other pieces you've made? G: "Kelompok Guna" Me: Is that from *angklung* too? G: The scale is like *angklung* but it was created with my friends [plays]. There's a bit from *angklung*. (Gunawan, tape 2002:2b)

Gunawan also demonstrated a few phrases of the *selonding* piece, "Sekar Gadung" on *gendér* as an example of a possible arrangement. "Later, you can make your own," he said (Gunawan, tape 2000:6a). He was working on this arrangement at the time.

He says that *gendér wayang* is more adaptable to new music than other old ensembles such as *gambang*:

G: *Gambang* follows the melody. *Gambang* is still classic. How could you create *réongan* for *gambang*? But it's different for *gong* or *gendér* that can be created. You can [do it]. For instance, I brought to here an *angklung* piece, "Tabuh Suling" [plays *gineman*]. That's *kebyar* "Tabuh Suling" – *angklung* [plays]. Nah! This is *réong* [plays], it's simple [plays]. The notes of *gendér* are the same as *angklung*. This is the same as *grantang* or *rindik* [xylophones]. "Tabuh Suling" is from *angklung*. There's a group that plays it in Seraya – I brought it to *gendér* and *selonding*. (Gunawan, tape 2000:1a)

### Musical example 69: from “Tabuh Suling”

The musical notation consists of three staves. The first staff shows a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and a bass line with quarter notes. The second staff shows a left-hand melody with quarter notes and a fermata. The third staff shows two notes with a fermata.

Musical example 69 shows two short excerpts (a *kotékan* passage and a left-hand melody) from Gunawan’s “Tabuh Suling” (Gunawan and Dasta, tape 2002:3b). The first excerpt appears in **track 28 on the accompany CD** from 1 minute 19 seconds into the track. The piece shows its *angklung* origins by staying almost entirely within the bounds of four notes (see musical example 69). However, towards the end, the melodic range is extended downwards to touch on the bottom note (*dong*), so the four-note range has been extended to five. The mood of the piece reflects Gunawan’s statement about a calm, meditative style being appropriate for *gendér*. Dasta states that, nowadays, it is Gunawan and himself who like to make new versions, while Mudita keeps to an older style (tape 2002:4b).

### Budakeling and Abang

Players from Abang were clear that there were no new pieces in their repertoire. However, they noted that some pieces had been imported from other areas, including Denpasar, which were thus “new” to them.



## “Lagu Pejogédan”



Ida Nyoman Sugata brings out a puppet of a *jogéd* dancer

In Budakeling, Sutawa has created a version of a *jogéd bumbung* (flirtatious social dance) piece, adapted for *gendér* (see musical example 70, *polos* only, **track 29 of the accompanying CD**). He uses this as a special ending for the romantic piece, “Rébong”. In *dalang* Ida Nyoman Sugata’s performances, this signals the arrival of a puppet dressed as a *jogéd* dancer, who does a short turn. Sutawa says that Sugata made the puppet first and then asked him to make the turn (tape 2002:14a). This simple adaptation shows the flexibility of the *wayang*, even in culturally conservative areas, like Budakeling. Sugata often uses the scene to remind youngsters of the seriousness of ritual situations, in contrast with the flirtatiousness of the *jogéd* dance. Both in its mood and pitch level (based on *dang*, C), the piece flows on naturally from “Rébong”, heightening the flirtatious mood and adding a comic touch, much appreciated by young men in the audience.

### Musical example 70: “Lagu Pejogédan”

The image shows a musical score for 'Lagu Pejogédan' in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of four staves. The first staff is a treble clef with a melody of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff is a bass clef with a bass line of eighth and sixteenth notes. The third staff is a treble clef with a melody that includes a long note with 'etc.' written above it, followed by more eighth and sixteenth notes. The fourth staff is a bass clef with a bass line of eighth and sixteenth notes. The score ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

From *kréasi* to *kontéporér*: as far as you can go?

### Ketut Sukayana's “Kertha Gita”

Locéng's son, Ketut Sukayana, 28 at the time of the interview in 2002, describes how he created a new piece for *gendér wayang* as part of his final exams at STSI (now ISI) in 1997:

KS: The piece is called “Kerta Gita”. It's a piece for peace – that's the purpose, used as a concept for the exam. I did a dissertation too. My idea was that *gendér* is usually used to accompany *wayang* but I created it to make it a performing art. Me: A dance? KS: Not a dance – a concert (*konsér*). Not for *wayang*, not for a ceremony – a concert. That was my idea first. Usually, in *gendér wayang*, there are four players. I made it eight players in order to demonstrate the playing patterns (*pukulan*) – four large instruments and four small ones. Me: So, the *polos* and *sangsih* remains? KS: Made bigger. The idea was from *gong kebyar*. Me: What did it sound like? KS: Loud! Joyous (*girang*). Me: Didn't you use any other instruments? KS: Only three kinds of instrument: *gendér wayang*, *suling* and *rebab*. There's a vocal part, which comes in with poems of peace. In the playing, there are a few additions but it's not different from the usual [way of playing]. But I made a different piece – the piece is new. (Ketut Sukayana, tape 2002:25a)

Ketut describes the piece, which is in three parts – *kawitan* (introduction), *pengawak* (body) and *pengecét* (end section):

Me: It wasn't taken from another piece? That's hard because it's hard to create a new piece for *gendér*. KS: There was an inspiration (*inspirasi*) truly, at that time, because there was an idea of three instrumentations that would be linked ... an inspiration from a Western tune – orchestral music. I thought, if there is a way of playing where the *suling* would come in, then the *rebab*. The character is together but they show themselves first: the *gendér* alone, then *suling*, then *rebab*. Me: Is it a long piece? KS: Only seven minutes, up to ten minutes. (Ketut Sukayana, tape 2002:25a)

Ketut says there were various influences on the piece including Western classical music, such as Vivaldi. I asked him whether it took a long time to compose:

KS: The reason I made it has a relationship with my dissertation: the two had to be balanced. So, I had to do it slowly and it had to be written down in notation. There is *pélog* that enters. The problem was how can *gendér wayang*, whose scale is *sléndro* be entered into by *pélog*? The *pélog* scale I made with *suling* – there are various notes that can be the same as the *suling*. But [I made] the music so that it's smooth because the theme was together: three instruments so that they're together. How can one make an atmosphere of peace? That's the theme. (Ketut Sukayana, tape 2002:25a)

Although Ketut had written the piece down, he taught it to the group directly, who practised it three or four times over the period of a month. Nevertheless, it was only performed once, for the exam itself, although there is a recording of it at ISI. I said it was a pity only to play it once:

KS: There are friends who tell me to [do it again] but there's no time. The friend who supported this is from a long way away. He can't practice directly. The other *gendér* players come from here. We must find a place, a special time to perform this, I think, and the time is only seven minutes. (Ketut Sukayana, tape 2002:25a)

Ketut mentioned other new pieces for *gendér wayang* created by ISI lecturer Bu Suryatini, the younger sister of Pak Suwéca, and by Suwéca's younger brother, Sudarno. However, Ketut said, these used the *batél* ensemble (with added drums and gongs, used for *Ramayana*).

Ketut is a composer but says time difficulties get in the way of his composing. He plays *rebab* and a little violin (when he can borrow one from a friend) and is very interested in Western classical music, which is unusual in Bali, where, usually, only Western pop is appreciated. Besides playing *gendér*, Ketut is a member of the new music group Arti Foundation, which uses a variety of instruments, including *selonding*, *suling*, *rindik*, *gendér wayang*, *gendér rambat* (*pélog*, for *pelégongan*) and *beleganjur*. He also played *gendér* in performances of Buda's "Gonggang" (see below). He regards his own composition as more traditional than Buda's:

KS: I don't use *kontéporér*. That's [going] outside. [Mine is] truly *kréasi*: it still uses the guides of tradition. There's a *pengawak* and an introduction, there's *kotékan*. It's not *kontéporér*. For me, *kontéporér* is going outside tradition. (Ketut Sukayana, tape 2002:25a)

Ketut Sukayana says that creativity in *gendér* is usually in the form of changing the way of playing: "spontaneous forms, suddenly" (tape 2002:25a). I asked him if, besides the difficulty, there was a feeling that *kréasi* for *gendér wayang* did not fit:

KS: That *kréasi gendér* piece took long and was a bit hard. There were problems. Here and there, it must be ripe (*matang*). And the place for *pentas* – for what? Usually, there's a purpose. Spontaneity and belief are needed: belief from people. Who wants to support the making [of new pieces]? Asking people to rehearse is hard ... if there's an exam, perhaps they'll really help. (Ketut Sukayana, tape 2002:25a)

This problem of there being no real context for the performance of new *gendér* pieces was also raised by Buda (see below).

### Granoka's dance-dramas



Ida Wayan Oka Granoka's gamelan in Denpasar

Ida Wayan Ngurah described how his brother, Granoka, created his own gamelan, combining *gendér* with other instruments. He corrected my misunderstanding of Granoka's approach as something "new" or a "new creation":

Me: So, here, even though there are artists such as yourself or Ida Granoka, there's no one who makes new pieces for *gendér*? Because I know that in Granoka's studio, there's a new gamelan, many creations ... but, in *gendér*, there aren't any? IWN: No. In *gending gendér* there are not. There is the basis of *pakempan jagat*, the purity of *tabuh* in Bali. For instance, there are those based on seven *reng*, seven notes such as *selonding*, *gambang*, *gendér*. This has a philosophical value that is one form. Thus, there is duality (*rwa bhineda*). This is why he tried, from the teachings of literature, to give form to the sounds, from the *Aji Gurnita* [a philosophical treatise on music]. That's what he used. He tried to make the form of all the types of gamelan. Complete with *selonding*, *gambang*, *gong gedé*, *semar pegulingan*, *gendér* – all together in one. The sound is *selonding* but his pieces are very strong – fanatic. He doesn't want to give [outside] influence to *gendér*, influence from *gong*, no. He's very strong because he shows literature – *Wéda* – in the form of gamelan. Now, in *gendér*, it's really special. He

doesn't want to make *kréasi* – it's authentic (*asli*). Even the *selonding*. He called people from Tenganan [and said]: "what's authentic?" (Ida Wayan Ngurah, tape 2002: 6a)

Granoka's whole approach to gamelan is based on his favourite form, *gendér wayang*: "it has a unique beauty, which is extraordinary. The most simple but abstract – *gendér*" (tape 2002:20a). Like Buda, he contrasts genuine *gendér* style from that of other gamelan:

G: If you can use *mat* (regular rhythm) that means it isn't a *gendér* piece, it's a *pejogédan* piece, or *kekebyaran*, if it has *mat*. If it's truly a piece for *gendér dasa* (ten-note *gendér*, i.e. *gendér wayang*), then it must not. "Sekar Ginotan", for example [sings] – it's abstract ... it's united ... this is the form of father and mother, created, married, positive and negative like this, made one – it is born. This is the gold of *gendér*. (Granoka, tape 2002:20a)

Granoka explained that Karangasem musicians' proud maintenance of their old versions of pieces led to a spiritual strength within the tradition, whereby creativity arose from within rather than superficially:

G: This is more of a commitment to the inside than to the outside. I see that people here in the east [of Bali, in Karangasem] have an essence to preserve what they have – maybe it's their custom. But no, [making new pieces] is not important there ... I alone can make many pieces but, where are the pieces whose spirit [is like the old ones]? ... The thing we must preserve is to return to basic concepts, which are great principles. That's hard for us: we must open skins, until we reach the essence, that principle. The essence – how can we open it? By opening a new space. Creation is to bring to life that spirit ... in the Balinese concept of yoga, this is the yoga of music – this inside me. (Granoka, tape 2002:20a)

So, what is important is that art should be clear in its target:

G: They [artists] don't need to understand, realising it or not, [if they are] truly artists, if *taksu* [inspired], they still arrive ... It's the same as you studying a book. There are two forms of realisation, *warna* and *dwani*. *Warna* is with letters, *dwani* is without letters. These are the concepts – have you heard of them? *Aksara-dwani* or *warna-dwani*?  
Me: Not yet. G: These are higher concepts: *segara tanpa tepi* (an ocean without sides), *lontar tanpa tulis* (a book without writing) – but it has a meaning. The performer doesn't need to know by reading books, there's skill which is already there – that's a deeper form of understanding. Its name is *dwani*.<sup>76</sup> (Granoka, tape 2002:20a)

Here, Granoka seems to be saying that an artist's knowledge is not dependent on books or theories. This true creativity, based on *taksu* (inspiration) is linked with spirituality:

G: If we as humans realise what it genuine (*utuh*) ... here, an artist achieves *yogiswara*. As an artist, he knows his actions in valuing old creations, in creating pieces, building worlds, building new pieces. *Satwam, siwam, sundaram* – truth, holiness, beauty. These three are the energy that builds realisation. (Granoka, tape 2002:20a)

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<sup>76</sup> *Warna* – (B) face shape appearance, (Kawi) speech, *varna* (Sanskrit) colour, appearance, social class. *Dwani* – (Kawi) to hold, *dhvani* (Sanskrit) sound, suggestion. *Aksara* – (B) letter, alphabet.

Granoka describes how he created the unique gamelan for his music, dance and drama group *Bajra Sandhi* in Denpasar. This involved waiting for the right moment for inspiration:

G: I looked everywhere ... for a piece that would fit to be used as a platform for creativity. I long for something new but I don't like people to keep on making [pieces] like that [i.e. just for the sake of it.]. (Granoka, tape 2002:20a)

Late one night, he suddenly decided to return home to his village. He went all the way to Abang, where he woke up Madé Kondra, who in turn woke up his father. Normally, in this region, the piece "Tunjang", used in *wayang* for scenes of black magic or the appearance of the goddess Durga, is kept secret: players believe that it is extremely dangerous to play it out of context. However, later the next day, the father sat down and simply taught Granoka "Tunjang":

G: That time was 12 o'clock – the sun was passing over. Do you know the value of the time of noon? It's not just an ordinary time as according to Western thought. According to us, when it passes over, the deity passes over: Durga, *taksu*, that which gives spirit to the performer. So, at that spiritual time, I got that piece ... this was the piece that I'd sought for a long time, a piece that was abstract, mystic – a *gendér* piece that I could use as a basis: its notes, its scale, its character, its creativity. I felt blessed. (Granoka, tape 2002:20a)

Granoka used the melodic material of this piece as the basis for the tuning of his new gamelan, expanding it into a seven-note scale, and then began to make pieces for the ensemble. This reflects Granoka's view that *sléndro* is the starting point and, from this, should move to *pélog*. His gamelan has a number of unusual features besides its tuning, for instance its inclusion of three large gongs is based on symbolism within the musical and cosmological treatises *Prakempa* and *Aji Gurnita* (see Bandem 1986).

A full description of Granoka's gamelan and his music is outside the scope of this study – its significance here is its basis on *gendér* and Granoka's use of *gendér* in experimental forms. The trough-resonated *saron* metallophones in the ensemble are reminiscent of Javanese gamelan or Balinese *gong gedé*, while symbolic statues of animal figures are placed among the instruments.<sup>77</sup> Granoka then began to create a dance-theatre composition, "Rudra Murti", again influenced by *gendér*, "because my creativity starts from *gendér*". (tape 2002:20b):

G: It must begin with *gendér* – not because of my children's ability [they play *gendér* and perform in his group] – but because it is *mula prekerti* (the origin), in concepts of

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<sup>77</sup> Granoka explained that the tiger, two *naga* (snake) and other figures represented *buta* (elemental beings) and that they were *pelinggih* (mounts) for *taksu* (creative energy).

yoga: *déwi, sakti*. In *sléndro*, the goddess moves. The goddess teacher starts from *sléndro* and moves to *pélog*.<sup>78</sup> (Granoka, tape 2002:20b)

Granoka links this with the reason there are so many women *gendér* players in the Budakeling area. I asked him if this was a modern trend, like the women's *kebyar* groups elsewhere in the island:

G: *Emansipasi?* No ... before, there was a group in Jungsri. That's one family: usually with *gendér*, the essence is the family. In Sarén Kangin too. In that family in Jungsri, I knew that the women played *gendér*. That's more beautiful because that's the concept of *sakti*, the goddess. So, I taught my daughters. (Granoka, tape 2002:20b)

As well as *gendér*, Granoka taught his daughters the music for *Calonarang* from the gamelan *semar pegulingan* and now they perform in his group *Bajra Sandhi*. This group is thus based around his family, although there are also members from outside. Granoka stresses that creating the composition "Rudra Murti" was thus based on "basic concepts" from religion and ancient musical elements, such as *gambang* and the *gendér* piece, "Tunjang" already mentioned:

G: Then, with that creativity based on basic things, I arrived at the process of creating new worlds ... because it was made possible by religion, so that new rites grow. This is in the *Wéda*, the world's oldest literature. This gave me the opportunity and the certainty that this should be done and is needed by our time. But creating for the sake of creating is wrong – when we create in a place like this all together, there arises a new world, a new rite, a new understanding grows. Then, it had already happened – I'd made a new composition! (Granoka, tape 2002:20b)

Basing this dance and music composition on the cosmological treatises *Aji Gurnita* and *Prakempa*, which trace links between musical notes, syllables and deities, Granoka feels he was returning to the basic essence of music and creativity. He contrasts this metaphysical philosophy with an attitude based solely on a mechanistic or materialistic approach to composition, and sees such syllables as a "vibration of nature" (tape 2002:20b). Granoka encourages the members of his group, *Bajra Sandhi*, to be both dancers and gamelan players: "there are no barriers any more between dancers and musicians ... it's a mystical marriage, a synthesis" (tape 2002:21a).

Just as Granoka did not hurry the creation of the gamelan and the group, waiting instead for the right moment, so too, compositions such as "Rudra Murti" remain in the group's repertoire for a long time. The pieces mature and change

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<sup>78</sup> Compare: "the goddesses of the notes of the *sléndro* scale are: Mahadéwi, Saraswati, Gayatri, Sri and Uma. These in turn change into their male forms: Mahasora, Rudra, Sangkara, Sambu, Buda" (*Aji Gurnita*, cited in Becker 1993:104). *Prakempa* also refers to *sléndro* as female and *pélog* as male (Bandem 1986:73).

over years, in contrast with the “flash-in-the-pan” approach of many *kebyar* groups to new compositions. Likewise, the group rarely appears publicly and Granoka prefers to be approached for special events:

G: I restrict myself. This must not join in competitions, because these performances I consider to be new rites. (Granoka, tape 2002:21a)

*Bajra Sandhi* has performed frequently around Bali as well as in Jakarta and as part of Indonesia’s presence at the 2004 Olympics in Athens. Granoka, through an approach based on an ideology of returning to roots has, in my opinion, created something far more original and innovative than most of the creations coming out of ISI.

### Buda’s “Gonggang”

If Locéng’s “Burisrawa” can be said to be a *kréasi baru*, albeit based firmly on an old model, Buda’s “Gonggang” would be firmly classed as a *komposisi* or, more specifically, as *musik kontéporér*, which is much less traditional and more avant-garde in its ethos.<sup>79</sup> Buda first mentioned this piece when I asked him whether he thought one could compare making a new piece with other arts, like painting, puppetry or carving:

B: In the context of *gendér wayang* and painting, in my experience, I’ve collaborated with a painter, who I think is known abroad, Erawan.<sup>80</sup> In his contemporary painting, he made a creation, which he joined with me to make a composition. The painting became one with the colours: he made a creation, painting in front [of the musicians] ... I tried to make a composition using *gendér wayang*, *selonding*, Balinese and Javanese *kendang* (drums), *dijeridu*, *jembe* drums. I used a co-operation between all those instruments. First, I made the *gendér wayang* [part], then the *selonding*, then the [electronic] composition, then, in the last part, they start to play. Later, I made them stand on their own; the *selonding* stands on its own, it has its own responsibility. I put all this together because I wanted to follow the character of of his painting. The colour was red – plak – the colour blue as well, perhaps [done] automatically. So, I thought, I could make a composition like a painting. Then we performed it in Jakarta and Bandung.

Me: And the use of *gendér wayang* in that composition, was it traditional or contemporary? B: First, I made a very traditional composition: the motifs were like “Rundah”. Then we made forms of playing that were rather modern: playing and *kotékan* that were not traditional. They were developed: we tried to match the painting and the *gendér*. If we made what was traditional, I think it would have been difficult to collaborate with the painting, so I made playing that was free of tradition. (Buda, tape 2002:18b)

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<sup>79</sup> Although the distinction between these is becoming increasingly blurred as more experimental effects creep into *kréasi baru* (see Harnish 2000).

<sup>80</sup> Nyoman Erawan is a well-known Indonesian avant-garde performance artist, who was born in Sukawati.



This piece, "Gonggang" was staged in Jakarta and in Negara in West Bali in 2001; the name only emerged after it was composed. I asked whether Buda had conceived it all first or tried it out with the group:

B: About the composition process, we think first: first comes the trunk (*batang*), the leaves, the fruit – after that, we can wait. (Buda, tape 2002:18b)

I was curious to know how audiences reacted to such radically non-traditional music:

Me: What do most people here think about *musik kontemporer*? Only a few people like it in England. Here, how is it? B: Now, in Bali, if we make a *kontemporer* piece, as long as the instruments are traditional, even though the work is contemporary, then that can be received. It is acceptable [plays me a taped excerpt from "Gonggang"]. What dominates is traditional instruments, so it can be received. (Buda, tape 2002:18b)

Buda says he is now trying to make a new piece for *wayang*, using a *selonding* accompaniment. He says, "We've already played it: it's closer and simpler – perhaps *selonding* is nearly the same as *gendér wayang*" (tape 2002:17a). I expressed my excitement on listening to Buda's tape of "Gonggang":

Me: It's great that *gendér* can be taken to wherever, like this ... in *gendér*, it seems, there are still rarely *kréasi baru* but you can take it directly to *kontemporer* music. B: It seems like that. If you're making a *kréasi* for *gendér wayang*, it always follows the scope of the performance. Its context is tightly bound up with ritual. Then, if we make a *kréasi* for *gendér*, we must have an opportunity to perform it, *gendér wayang* on its own: we'd have to make a special performance for *gendér wayang*. But, in Bali, *gendér wayang* performance is to accompany ... we are restricted to *wayang* accompaniment or ritual accompaniment. If we're playing in a ritual, it's not possible to perform something new... Perhaps if we made something special for *gendér wayang* – a special performance – then there would arise *kréasi* like in *gong kebyar*. Each year, there is a festival of *gong kebyar*, but *gendér wayang* doesn't have this. (Buda, tape 2002:18b)

I find it interesting that, despite so few new pieces for *gendér* in the *kréasi baru* mould, *gendér* should be both acceptable and appropriate to use in the more modernist, *kontemporer* style. As some composers of *kontemporer*, like Buda or Granoka, are top *gendér* players, it seems natural to them to use *gendér wayang*. They are creating their own performance circumstances in a way that would not be possible for a *kréasi baru* piece: for how would a *kréasi baru* for *gendér wayang* fit in either with its traditional performance role or in a festival dominated by *gong kebyar*? Whereas, nowadays, *kontemporer* is a recognised genre with some performance opportunities of its own at festivals, such as the Bali Arts Festival or outside Bali, for instance in Jakarta. It can also incorporate both new and old gamelan instruments, including *gendér wayang*.

Here, in discussing *gendér* within *musik kontemporer*, we have come farthest, it would seem, to the composition end of Nettl's improvisation to

composition spectrum and yet improvisation is still central, as demonstrated by the following conversation with Buda:

Me: In your composition, "Gonggang", is each time it's performed nearly the same, or can it be different? B: Each of the three times it changed. The first time we performed, there was no *gendér*, only *selonding*. After that, for the second performance, I added *gendér wayang*, as in the recording and, after that, the third time, I added a *kantil* (metallophone) from *gong kebyar*. Me: And, does the form of the composition remain the same each time? B: The format must be like that always but in the gaps there are improvisations for the *gendér*. I gave the *gendér* players freedom: "the duration is like this, the distance is like this – please could you fill with *gendér* whatever tune you like as long as it fits with the composition of the piece." Often, they're not the same – sometimes they play like this [plays tremolo]; sometimes they play various kinds of *gineman*. [I tell them:] "please, you be free; this is your own creativity." But I give them boundaries: "don't use playing like this which has a lot of complicated *kotékan* – just [keep it] very simple". (Buda, tape 2002:21b)

Here, we have travelled in a full circle back to improvisation.

## 6.9 Summary

### A test of Nettl's model

As I stated at the start of this chapter, setting out different types of composition in this way, from the more to the less improvised, is both a presentation and a test of Nettl's etic model. A more emic approach, which could be tested through further research, might be to set out and examine these processes in the way in which a player learns them. For instance, a player generally learns one version of a piece before feeling confident enough to vary certain phrases.

Improvisation and re-composition of sections are usually only the result of a long process of acquiring individual pieces, enlarging one's repertoire and absorbing the prevailing style.

### The relationship between improvisation and composition

Racy (1998) contrasts Arab musicians' spontaneous, audience-involving improvisatory composition with statements from Western composers who tend to stress solitary, private composition. Much Western writing implicitly or explicitly contrasts improvisation with pre-composition in this way (see chapter 2 of this study). In contrast with *kebyar* composers, who create new, pre-composed pieces frequently, *gendér wayang* composers seem to inhabit both

these compositional worlds, sometimes making improvisational changes in performance, sometimes reworking pieces and making new ones.

I was keen to explore with my teachers the relationship between all these types of composition. I asked Buda whether he saw a connection between the process of making small, improvised changes and making a complete piece in advance:

B: The process of making small changes, I think, is not too difficult because we are already constrained by the true piece. We are only giving small decorations. But [one could] call it hard, too, because it depends on one's own ability.<sup>81</sup> If the player is quite good, making those changes isn't so difficult. Besides, we are following the flow of the piece that exists already. We can develop the tune according to our ability but we mustn't go outside the track (*jalan*) of that piece. That's what's hard ... if we make a new piece that is *utuh* (genuine, i.e. completely new), there isn't anything restraining us. We can be creative, but here we are pushed by our potential to compose. I think to make those [kinds of] pieces is harder than making small changes. (Buda, tape 2002:18b)

We have seen how both small improvisatory and small worked-out changes are linked conceptually through the term *mayasin gending*. These changes are not always easy to distinguish by outsiders or even by players themselves. In common with many improvisatory traditions, players may have an "own favourite" way that changes over time. These "own favourite" versions may themselves be crystallisations of previous improvisations.

One of the themes that has emerged from comparing these types of change is that improvisatory changes seem to be related in kind to more worked-out and larger compositional changes. In *gendér wayang*, we have seen how pieces may be rearranged to a greater or lesser degree. The limits to such rearrangement are the players' conception of what constitutes the *pokok*. But this latter concept is so hard to define that one might better translate it as the piece's "identity" rather than "underlying structure". Thus, changes in performance and more worked-out versions take place within a broader conceptual space and seem more closely interrelated than the Central Javanese model as described by Sutton (1993 and 1998).

### **Character of pieces**

Some pieces lend themselves to different treatments through reasons of relative sparseness or density of texture or their character: a slow, serious *tandak* such

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<sup>81</sup> Another example of a phrase emphasising a situation's ambiguity.

as “Rundah”, a fast, intricate *pangkat*, such as “Partha Wijaya”, or a complex *petegak*, such as “Sekar Sungsang”. The appropriateness of changes to different pieces is linked with characterisation in *wayang*, as shown by *mileng* in Budakeling, in which sudden changes are made to pieces to indicate the entrance of certain characters.

### **Simultaneous improvisation**

I have discussed the phenomenon of simultaneous improvisation, albeit within boundaries, in which players react with each other in performance, feeling the flow of the piece. The ability to make spontaneous changes to interlocking *kotékan* patterns, which might seem a near impossibility, turns out to be a skill acquired by many players and shows a flexibility within the “system” of *kotékan* which is perhaps unique in Bali.

As in many traditions, players feel most confident in improvising when they know each other’s playing well. Locéng’s group at the height of its effectiveness showcased the intense (and sometimes tense) musical relationship between Locéng and Sarga, whose improvisations seemed to fly off them like sparks.

I have also examined the potential problems involved when the two lead players are confident enough to improvise but the players on the smaller instruments are not. This, obviously, places limits on the extent of the improvisation but, at the same time, demonstrates the system’s flexibility. Usually, the two least experienced or youngest players will be playing the smaller instruments, putting them in a position to learn the more advanced techniques of the lead players and the subtleties of interaction in the action scenes. Learning in performance within this interactive network is the key to improvisation. In these action scenes, in particular, the players learn to manipulate the chunks of melodic material that make up “Batél” and “Peselah Batél”. As we have seen, this manipulation raises issues of blurred and contested leadership, cueing and interaction.

To learn in performance in this way, one must first have sufficient technique and knowledge of pieces to play in a *wayang*. Thus, despite a certain flexibility in the versions of pieces learnt in lessons (Locéng would vary some

phrases slightly as he repeated them to teach me) improvisation is one of the later skills acquired. Only experienced players have the confidence to tackle complex improvisation, reinforcing Hall's (1992) observation that improvisation is the domain of the expert.

This raises the issue of different stages of learning to improvise and compose. One skill possessed by many players of different abilities is the ability to make up a *sangsih* to a given *polos* part. This forms a useful basis for conceiving the piece as a whole and to the process of making changes. The ability to make one's own *sangsih* feeds into the conception of pieces and is a skill linked to all these types of change.

### ***Pokok***

I have explored the idea of *pokok* as a kind of model or underlying pattern – although “identity” might be nearer the mark. The idea of *pokok* is linked with the conception of refined (*halus*) or mature (*wayah*) ways of realising the model. *Pokok* and its elaboration forms the basis for the development of personal and group styles as well as young people's styles and, no doubt, the emergence of regional styles. In Sukawati, the seeming veneration of complexity for its own sake made me ask players whether what is complex is always good. But, here as elsewhere, players stress that appropriateness is the determining factor in making changes. They must fit with the character of the piece and to the situation of the performance (ritual or *wayang* performance).

### **Melodic cells**

I have suggested that the cellular construction of many pieces enables players to change pieces by adding, subtracting and transforming small melodic cells or segments. This construction seems to be related to the relative metric flexibility of *gendér wayang* compared with other genres and is perhaps encouraged by the lack of *gong* punctuation. Such a modular approach to changing and creating pieces may be related to the pervasiveness of *kotékan* or *réongan* interlocking figuration, which is based on such small units. The process also plays a part in developing tune families: segments are added, subtracted or

transformed either when moved to another piece or, through time, within the same piece.

### **Simple to complex**

Throughout many pieces, there is a sense of moving from the relatively simple towards the relatively complex. This is shown in the order of variation sections in a piece like “Sekar Sungsang”, which draws the listener’s attention to the introduction of progressive complexity. Likewise, Locéng’s addition of two variation sections to the ritual piece “Sudamala” almost seems like a lesson in how to make variations. The first is relatively simple and closely related to the theme, while the second has a more abstract relation with it.

We have seen how known composers, including Locéng, Ranu and Buda, have created many variation sections (*runtutan* or *peniba*), at least as long as the original theme. Smaller kinds of change usually have no name attached and players who made them may not remember doing so. These longer variation sections must, again, be appropriate to the style and feeling of the rest of the piece. The fact that so many Karangasem pieces have extended strings of such variation sections (up to thirteen in one instance!) implies great compositional efforts in the past, despite the region’s present ideology of preservation.

### **New *gineman***

I have also looked at the composing of new *gineman*: introductory sections in a contrastingly free style. I found that Locéng had been working out a new *gineman* for the piece “Sekar Gadung” over a period of fourteen years. If it is true that, in living memory in both Sukawati and Budakeling, there was only one *gineman* for all pieces, all the other *gineman* must have been added since.<sup>82</sup> Almost all *petegak* pieces feature some kind of introductory *gineman*. Creating a new *gineman* poses fewer constraints on the composer: it does not have to

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<sup>82</sup> This must be exaggerated, though there was certainly one *gineman* that could be adapted to most pieces.

conform to the structure of the piece to follow and often borrows or imitates phrases from *kebyar* style.

### **Reworking pieces**

I described how whole pieces may be recreated as new versions. Locéng and Balik reworked all the main Sukawati pieces during the 1940s and 1950s rather in the manner of jazz arrangers. They created the complex versions that would make Sukawati famous in a stylistic revolution, whose eclecticism is shown by the incorporation of such material as wartime Japanese songs and tunes from the politically charged 1950s.

### **New pieces**

Finally, I looked at completely new pieces for *gendér*, exploring some reasons why such *kréasi baru* are said to be rare (although I did find some examples). The main reason was the lack of a performance context (and, hence, an audience) for such new material. Ketut Sukayana's piece for STSI is typical of institutional *kréasi* in that it only seems to have been performed once: for his exam.

However, other reasons were cited for this rarity: in particular, the sacred nature of the ensemble. Nevertheless, in conservative Budakeling, new pieces have been introduced for instance, Sutawa's piece adapted from *gamelan pejogédan*. In Tenganan too, Gunawan and Dasta create new *gendér* pieces by arranging material from other ensembles. Meanwhile, Granoka's emphasis on the traditional and the sacred in Karangasem traditions has, perhaps paradoxically, led to the creation of a truly original form of gamelan.

*Gendér* has been incorporated into the more modern form of *kontémporér*, which is, perhaps, better adapted to the new performance contexts created by ISI, the Arts Festival or inter-island and inter-provincial festivals than is *kréasi baru*. Hence, composers like Buda who have mastered *gendér* (rare amongst graduates and lecturers of ISI) feel confident to include *gendér* in modernistic compositions, in combination with other instruments.

## **Why change?**

I have begun to explore some of the reasons players give for improvising or making changes. These range through boredom, frequent playing, inner artistic need and regional desire to impress. Several felt that making such changes was a natural development, an expression of their artistry and skill. Locéng feels a moral obligation to develop the music from the basic versions he was given. He also sees it as a way of safeguarding his versions against those who would try to steal them – a concern that seems to have increased with the emergence of a cassette (and now CD) culture in Bali. Often, small changes are said to be primarily for the player's own enjoyment, although some in the audience may notice, if not the changes themselves, the overall effect wrought by the playing.

## **Unconscious, conscious and self-conscious change**

Locéng was at pains to point out that even improvised changes are made consciously, although other players talked of following the flow (Buda, above) or changing automatically (Mudita, above). Other, less spontaneous, types of change are certainly purposeful. The motivation for making them, as we have seen, may be various. However, I found little evidence of what, in chapter 3, I described as “self-conscious” change – that is, change motivated by reflection on and construction of a Balinese “identity” in response to central government ideologies or in response to tourism. Instead, we find a reassertion of the individual: even Ketut Sukayana's STSI exam piece is very personal in expressing a theme of peace.

## **Re-sacralisation**

There are different ideologies and narratives of change and preservation in different parts of Bali: Karangasem people portray the region as highly traditional, while Sukawati acknowledges both its pioneering role in *wayang* and the influence of nearby ISI. However, these regional narratives over-simplify musical reality: Karangasem does change; Sukawati does preserve.



Granoka's work shows a striking originality despite his strongly argued case for Karangasem regional traditionalism. In this, he is strikingly similar to oppositional artist-composers described by Sutton in South Sulawesi, who spearhead a movement away from the secularisation, commodification and government control and towards a reaffirmation of ritual (Sutton 2002). Here, there is a similar paradox in artists looking back to traditional, sacred material but presenting in ways that, to outsiders, appears modernistic.

### ***Gendér* and freedom**

Another related theme that emerges is the link between *gendér* and personal, even political, freedom. Several reasons are given for the feeling that the *gendér* repertoire and its players cannot be controlled in the same way as *gong kebyar* and dance forms. One reason is the genre's technical difficulty, hence inaccessibility. Another is its perceived spiritual strength through links with ritual and *wayang* (though ritual links have not prevented the adaption of *selonding*). There is a sense, here, of resistance to a cluster of hegemonic forces: government cultural policy, ISI, the Bali Arts Festival and forms of art such as *sendratari* dance-drama. This, along with the other themes that have emerged in this chapter, will be explored further in chapter 7.

### **Future changes**

I suggested to Buda that the changes made by Locéng and Balik in Granyam's time were a kind of revolution, perhaps connected with the new political environment after independence and the arrival of *kebyar*. I asked whether he could imagine anything similar happening in the future:

B: Perhaps in the future, I think if we follow, we must develop society. [There is] the possibility that *gendér* Sukawati will experience a lot of changes, shake-ups. I already try to change the style of the pieces but it's limited to pieces that have *kréasi*. The traditional ones, which are authentically Sukawati style, I think, will remain. They won't be lost but later we'll be driven by the development of society. Perhaps we'll make some truly different compositions but the style that's already here, we don't dare to change it or to lose it. (Buda, tape 2002:24a)

Locéng, however, emphasises continuity and experience in describing his creativity:

L: Truly, what was before was not wrong. I don't condemn it: it represents the beginning. Now, we have long experience, we are already adult, we can hear, think and look for comparisons with other things. And we have already often used it, so we long to add to our knowledge: to make the playing richer – that's the purpose. We never stop thinking about that. So, if people ask: "How do you make whatever?" [I say:] "We're still alive, we have a brain! And, moreover, it's our pleasure to live like that. If someone only lives for a moment ... they can't do it. We have long experience – 60 years. How many types, how many models, do we already know? (Locéng, tape 2002:23a)

However, he does say that the reason there were more changes in the time of the *dalang* Granyam was because they felt compelled to follow the changing times:

L: The time had turned. We had to follow the time, changing and changing. Later, if it returns again, it can return to that [form]. That's spontaneity. Because the time caused it, we had to. Don't ever go against the current. However the time is, we must follow. (Locéng, tape 2002:23a)

Now, Locéng creates his new versions for his private students (mostly foreign) rather than for group use in Sukawati, although these groups may well adopt them in time. As he put it on several occasions: *sing ada kayu luput tekén angin*, there's no tree untouched by the wind. What is certain is that these different, though related, kinds of change will continue to be made in Karangasem, Sukawati and elsewhere. The nature of these changes will be influenced not only by social forces but also by the particular genius of individual player-composers.

## **Part 3: Shifting boundaries**

### **Chapter 7: *Sing ada kayu luput tekén angin* (no tree is untouched by the wind)**

This chapter explores some of the themes raised in the previous one and the external and internal forces at work on the form and nature of composition and variation-making. The issues raised by the forms of improvisation and composition just described are so various, touching on areas of politics, religion and personal creativity, that I can only briefly outline them in this thesis. For instance, a full study of the impact of modernisation is outside the scope of this study: Brita Heimarck (1999 and 2003) has tackled aspects of this in relation to Sukawati *gendér* and STSI. In some ways, I might have aired some of the themes of this chapter much earlier in this study, providing as they do a context within which musicians operate. However, I have preferred to discuss them here as arising naturally from within the earlier discussions with musicians.

#### **7.1 teaching, learning, experience**

One theme to emerge is the role of experience in relation to the ability to improvise and compose. Locéng often said “you must have many experiences”. Some parallels with the acquisition of musical knowledge in Central Java, as described by Brinner are also evident. These include the care taken over how knowledge is transmitted (“you can only understand what you are capable of understanding”, Locéng once told me). Also significant are passive knowledge (for instance Locéng’s mastery of all the elements of the shadow play without actually being a puppeteer) and intuitive knowledge (for instance, the choice of pieces during a toothfilling ceremony) (see Brinner 1995:35–6). These create the kind of “High Context” situation (Hall 1992) in which improvisation is likely to flourish. Brinner also describes his learning experience of Javanese *gendér*, when he was, at first, able to learn note-for-note but without developing the ability to combine patterns flexibly during a performance (ibid.:68). The latter makes it easier to personalise the music (see Campbell 1991:107). Locéng

describes how he gradually absorbed his first pieces, after being attracted first to watching the puppets as a child (tape 2000:4a). He remembers lying awake at night trying to remember these first pieces. It was only much later, once he had absorbed all the basic versions (*pokok*) that he felt able to start making alterations (tape 2000:4a).

I asked Locéng if he found it different teaching foreign and Balinese pupils. He replied that Balinese tend to pick it up more quickly because they hear the pieces more often (tape 2002:3b). He said that some Balinese quickly learnt to play in a group just by following, without fully absorbing the pieces. He called this: *maguru panggul* (being taught by the mallets) implying a strong kinaesthetic feeling of being led by one's hands. Bakan (1999:353) defines *maguru panggul* as: "the conventional method of Balinese gamelan music pedagogy; literally, 'teaching with the mallet'". However, Locéng interprets the phrase less favourably, as these players cannot play on their own (tape 2000:3b).

Locéng also explains how the teaching and learning process feeds into creativity and stresses that both teacher and pupil are essential for this:

L: It's not that the pupils ask the teacher to give knowledge to the pupil; the pupil also gives knowledge to the teacher. Because of this, the clever pupil likes to ask: "what is a good way of playing?" So, the teacher tries to find what's even better. If he didn't have a pupil, certainly he'd just be an ordinary teacher. The pupils make the teacher cleverer so that he's not outdone by them. (Locéng, tape 2002:18a)

Locéng likens this to the way parents, after death, are helped by their children who carry out *pitra yadnya* (ceremonies for ancestors) (tape 2000:3b).

Finally, there arises the issue of natural ability or talent. Certain players past and present and in various parts of Bali are singled out for their particular ability, such as Locéng, Buda, Granoka or the late Ranu. Locéng says this talent does not necessarily pass from father to son but can appear elsewhere in the extended family, in a process reminiscent of Balinese views of reincarnation:

L: Usually, there will be one. That's called *taksu*. If not my children, then one of the other family branches because it's still within the family. (Locéng, tape 2000:4b)

## 7.2 Kinaesthetic and symbolic content

Blacking (1973:12) notes how the layout or other physical properties of instruments affect the pieces played on them, giving as an example the *kalimba mbira* of the Nsenga in Zambia. Pressing, too, recognises that “the design of some instruments allows more precise visual feedback and more categorical kinaesthetic feedback than others” (Pressing 1998:135).

*Gendér* players’ decisions in performance and when working out new material on an instrument are governed by a combination of sensory perceptions. The visual layout, the “feel” of the layout beneath one’s hands, interaction with other players and the ability to “follow one’s feeling” in the piece all play a part in guiding improvisation. It could be summed up as the player’s experience of engagement with the physical structure of the instrument. This may manifest itself in numerous subtleties of playing, with click-stops, *ngorét*, changes in dynamics and other approaches to notes too transient to be given names. David Sudnow’s (2001) introspective account of how he learnt to improvise jazz piano particularly highlights the kinaesthetic aspects, whereby understanding is felt to be in the hands themselves. I have also experienced this, as my hands can sometimes “remember” a *gendér* piece that my conscious mind has forgotten.

The structure of the instruments themselves may influence the music played on them in other ways. The *gendér*’s ten-keyed structure, which seems to go back to medieval times (see chapter 2), may have been preserved due to the instrument’s ritual importance. Locéng equates the ten keys of the *gendér* with ten fingers and says players are clever enough to work within these limitations (tape 2002:24b). Locéng says that the shape of the *gendér* is related to Balinese architecture, which is governed by rules called *asta kosala kosali*. He pointed out various features which occur on buildings such as temples, such as the Bhoma faces at each side, the backwards-facing beak shapes, called *garuda mungkur*, on the supports below the keys and the *kuping* (ears) which hold the supporting cords, which he says are like supports in the main house building, *balé gedé* (tape 2002:24b; see also DeVale and Dibia 1991 for the symbolism of *gong kebyar* instruments).

The legend explaining the *sudamala* ritual (see chapter 1) also hints at a special power in the *gendér* instruments themselves. The demonic deity Batara Kala is allowed by his father, the god Siwa, to eat all those moving about at noon or dusk. Wanting to eat his younger brother, Panca Kumara or Raré Kumara, he pursues him. Panca Kumara hides in various places, such as a bundle of *lalang* grass, then a bundle of firewood under a granary, then an oven but, each time, he is discovered by Kala. Finally, he takes refuge in the bamboo resonator of a *gendér* during a *wayang* performance. Panca Kumara receives the protection of the *dalang* and from this point on, the curse on those born in the week *tumpek wayang* may be lifted by a *wayang* performance (Hooykaas 1973a:170–87). The story illustrates both the purificatory power of the *dalang* and the perception of *gendér* as sacred instruments. That this perception of sacredness has a real effect on players is demonstrated by Suryani and Jensen's (1993) description of altered states of consciousness among *gendér* players quoted later in this chapter.

### 7.3 Performance contexts

Another theme to emerge from the discussions in chapter 6 is the importance of performance contexts. As we have seen in chapter 4, McPhee (1979:40) describes much Balinese music as abstract. However, in theatrical contexts, it can convey strong emotion: Locéng describes how *dalang* Ketut Madra would bring listeners to tears with his rendition of the crying song, "Mésem" (tape 2000:4a). Gold notes that two concepts, *taksu* ("divine inspiration while performing") and *kalangen* ("emotionally moved ... while watching the performance") are important in shadow play performance (1998:33).

These concepts imply something more emotionally involving than the rather stock emotions tied to character-type, described by Vonck (1997), or even Gold's "motion and emotion" (1998). Buda, Ida Wayan Ngurah and Ida Wayan Sugata had all talked about the importance of feeling, *rasa*, in playing and, especially, when improvising. It seems that improvisation is one way for the players to immerse themselves in the *rasa* of the piece and bring its emotional content to the fore, transcending the otherwise rather standardised emotional content of the repertoire.

This is also a matter of interaction: the flexibility of *gendér* playing in performance is mirrored in the *dalang*'s flexible vocal line and flexible retelling of the story. Gold notes that *dalang* have their own versions of the melodic contour for each *tandakan* and that, although some texts are fixed, in some other *tandakan*, different *dalang* may have their own favourite text or version of a text (1998:254). *Gendér* and voice (sung and spoken) realise the piece in their own characteristic ways, while being mutually interdependent (such simultaneous idiomatic realisations are fundamental to much South East Asian music). In a piece like "Rébong", which forms a mini-scene in itself, they interact with puppet movements and laughter to form interpenetrating threads of the story. Buda explicitly compares creativity in *gendér* pieces with creative retelling of the stories in *wayang*, balancing the ingredients of sadness, humour or anger:

B: Later, the *dalang*, after he's finished [will think]: "Where was it lacking? Where was it too much?" The next day ... he can make it again, make variations to here and to there. (Buda, tape 2002:17b)

Turning now to ritual contexts, players agree that the context of a performance affects the way the music is played. The style is fast for *wayang* performances, festivals and competitions where the group wants to show off its talent. The pieces are played much more slowly in ritual, for instance at tooth fillings or cremations.<sup>83</sup> There is less flashy showing off than in *wayang*, making the impetus to improvise less strong. The fact that certain pieces are used in ritual also makes players reluctant to make changes to them.

In Tenganan in particular, the way the sacred *selonding* repertoire is maintained may have influenced a "protective" view of *gendér* pieces too. There, Gunawan says it would be unthinkable to make changes to the way the most sacred *selonding* pieces, such as "Geguron" are played, although changes are made to less sacred items in the repertoire (tape 2001:1a; see also Ramseyer 1992). In Karangasem, old *gendér* pieces, too, tend to be maintained out of deference for their sacred (*sakral*) quality, and players would not dare rework certain pieces (such as "Tunjang" and "Sudamala"). In Budakeling, as we have seen, players were anxious to emphasise the antiquity and sacred (*sakral*) quality of their *gendér* tradition. It would also be wrong to exaggerate

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<sup>83</sup> The exception to this is certain slow style pieces, such as "Mésem", which may actually be slower in *wayang* to allow time for the *dalang*'s vocal part. "Rebong" can be played in full as a kind of "concert version" outside the *wayang*, whereas it would be broken into sections in *wayang* performance.

Sukawati's modernisation. There, too, players regard *gendér* as a sacred ensemble and this puts constraints on change. Sarga describes *gendér* pieces as *tenget* (magically charged) and gives this as a reason why people are reluctant to create new pieces in the manner of *gong kebyar* (tape 2002:25b).

Picard (1996) points out that the very use of the Western-derived Indonesian word, *sakral* (sacred), much in evidence in the discussions above, shows how the distinction between sacred and secular arose as a response to the non-traditional uses of Balinese arts, for instance for tourist performances. Formerly, there was no need to make a distinction between *sakral* and *sékulér* (sacred and secular) as "the sacred" permeated every aspect of life. This raises the question of whether players' protestations of the old, unchanged and sacred nature of certain traditions is like closing the barn door after the horse has left: modernisation has caused a subtle shift in meaning throughout the repertoire, leaving nothing, not even the most sacred traditions, untouched. Again, we are reminded of Locéng's phrase: "no tree is untouched by the wind".

It is in this context that we can begin to understand Granoka's "*ritus baru*" (I: new rites). I found it revealing that Granoka's brother, Ida Wayan Ngurah, corrected my statement that Granoka had created a new gamelan and new compositions (see chapter 6). They both stressed that these seemingly "new" forms were created by exploring the music's roots in ritual and spirituality. Further, Granoka and Ida Wayan Ngurah explicitly set up this way of working as the opposite of the "new" ways of composing in ISI, which they reject as superficial: "This is more of a commitment to the inner, than to the outside" (Granoka, tape 2002:20a).

It seems clear that many such Karangasem musicians stress the integrity, antiquity and spirituality of their musical styles and their way of maintaining them (creating from the "inner" rather the "outer") in order to defend themselves against the relentless assault of Denpasar- and Gianyar- based cultural forms. Denpasar and Gianyar groups are nearer the sources of contemporary political power, radio and television providers, and all major sources of modernism and urbanisation. The new urban élite of Denpasar and its surroundings (including those who migrate there from other parts of Bali) control such events as the annual Bali Arts Festival and productions by ISI. This context strengthens the Sukawati *gendér* tradition. Other areas sometimes feel



threatened by this hegemony and may respond with varying degrees of subtle resistance.

In this context, Granoka's "new rites", or "new worlds", as he describes his dance and music productions, may be rooted in tradition but to outsiders they seem new and innovative. This is strikingly similar to the attitude of some artists in Java and South Sulawesi as described by Sutton (2002:78) and seems to be part of an Indonesia-wide phenomenon of re-sacralisation or re-ritualisation, which challenged the New Order status quo.<sup>84</sup>

## 7.4 Some shifting boundaries

The activities I describe in this thesis all take place against a rapidly shifting backdrop of political, economic and technological change and new performance contexts. I can only offer here a brief sketch of these.

Heimarck (1999 and 2003) describes how, in Sukawati, speeding up the performance style, cutting pieces and shortening *wayang* performances are felt to be the result both of a modern lifestyle and indicative of the faster modern pace of life. Buda feels that although Locéng has lately slowed down his style to bring out the complexity of his versions, the general direction of Sukawati style remains unchanged, favouring the fast and dynamic (tape 2002:24a). However, as Gold points out, one generation's innovators can become the exemplars of tradition for the next (Gold 1998:548). Locéng, although he has his own preferences, stresses: "[How they play] now, it's not wrong. That [old style] doesn't fit with the times now" (tape 2000:8a).

The availability of cassette recordings has greatly increased players' access to different regional styles of *gendér*. The availability of recordings from Sukawati and Denpasar, in particular, has helped to spread their style and reinforce South-Central Balinese hegemony. I found it hard to trace commercial recordings of *gendér* or *wayang* groups from Karangasem; generally, only groups that do well in festivals or are in other ways prominent are chosen to make recordings. Institutions such as recording companies, state and private radio and television as well as the government academies necessarily create

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<sup>84</sup> It remains to be seen how performing arts will re-position themselves in the post-New Order evolution of Indonesia.

“in” groups and “out” groups among musicians, some of whom claim this selection is not necessarily made on musical grounds at all.

Another effect of recording technology is the use of recordings at ritual events and the use of microphones, for instance while singing *kekawin* on ritual occasions, which likewise alters the sonic balance. *Dalang*, too, now almost invariably attach a microphone to the back of the oil lamp, allowing them to concentrate on vocal effects rather than voice projection (Zurbuchen 1987:257). A large auditorium, such as that used to stage dance the annual Bali Arts Festival, alters the visual, spatial and acoustic relationship between the audience and performer. Traditional *wayang* is too intimate for such overblown staging, hence the creation of new forms incorporating larger gamelan as described in chapter 6.

But what happens when there is no live audience at all? Some TV *wayang* performances are, in fact, recorded in front of an audience, but others are not, having a radical impact on the traditional give-and-take between the audience and the *dalang*. Felicia Hughes-Freeland (1996 and 1997) describes different people’s reactions to “cultural” presentations on the state channel TVRI, which show that, although the dialogic aspects between audience and performer are necessarily absent in such presentations, nevertheless, different viewers may interpret them differently.

Tenzer describes how, until around 1979 when the first women *dalang* performed and some women musicians enrolled in STSI, men monopolised gamelan playing (1991:109). The 1980s saw the emergence of women’s *kebyar* groups throughout the various regions of Bali but both mixed-gender groups and women’s groups playing sacred music have yet to become established (ibid.:110). I have already described the existence of women *gendér* players in the Budakeling area in chapter 5. This seems to be connected with the idea of learning within a family, rather than an aspect of modernisation. It could also imply that rather than women players being a new phenomenon, it is actually the domination of male players that is more recent. This is hinted at by Kunst and Kunst van Wely’s enigmatic comments about *gendér* formerly being a women’s instrument (1925: 110–12; see chapter 2 of this study) as well as Central Javanese traditions of female *gendér* players (see Weiss 1993). Male monopolies of certain traditions can be more recent than they appear, as

attested by Wong's analysis of the Thai *wai khruu* ritual (Wong 2001:239–42). A full exploration of gender relations in Balinese music is outside the scope of this study. However, it would not be surprising if gender restrictions came to be applied more rigidly under colonialism than they had been before, in a manner similar to the rigidification of caste at that time (see Vickers 1989:146).

I have already mentioned the impact of the government academies, SMKI (formerly KOKAR) and ISI (formerly STSI and ASTI), on the way pieces are composed and learnt. Tenzer observes that “because of the way in which they dominate the scene more than any individual village or court ever did, [they] remain controversial” (1991:25). Part of the same cultural constellation is the annual Bali Arts Festival, which takes place in late June or early July. This is held next door to ISI in the Denpasar Arts Centre and ISI performances feature prominently as do the winners of the various regional *kebyar* competitions (ibid.:110).

Heimarck (1999 and 2003), whose study describes both Sukawati *gendér* musicians and STSI faculty staff, notes the changes wrought but is generally uncritical. Bakan, however, explores the tensions between musicians who become part of the STSI élite and those, whose musical but not academic credentials might be higher, who remain outside, for instance the *beleganjur* composer, Sukarata (Bakan 1999:191). Likewise, Granoka feels that musicians at ISI are not free to explore their creativity (tape 2002:20b).<sup>85</sup>

Granoka says he often argues with ISI people about the way (he feels) they debase the creative arts. Nevertheless, he is often invited to attend conferences and his group has performed in Bali, Java and abroad. He does not promote his group, preferring that people come to him to ask them to play. Granoka is likewise adamant that Budakeling should not become a “touristic village” and has made representations to local government to ensure that the region is seen as a cultural area instead (tape 2002:21a). His group has performed in Budakeling for ceremonies and the philosophical background to these performances is described in some of his own publications (Granoka 2001a and 2001b).

At ISI, *gendér wayang* is not taught as part of *jurusan karawitan* (music studies) but *jurusan pedalangan* (puppetry studies), so that most pupils in the

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<sup>85</sup> However, a less rigid system is emerging at STSI following Suharto's fall (Harnish 2000:32).

class are studying how to be *dalang*, rather than learning other gamelan types. This is perhaps indicative of *gender wayang*'s special relationship with *wayang*, and how it is kept conceptually separate from other musical genres. ISI is thus reinforcing the exclusive nature of the instrument, which is usually only studied as a family tradition, tied to the shadow play, in contrast with *gong kebyar*'s focus in the neighbourhood *banjar*. Perhaps this also shields the *gendér wayang* genre somewhat from the "STSI-isation" (or now, "ISI-isation") that occurs in other genres that are repackaged with new compositions in the academy style. Locéng often says that he did not like teaching at STSI because he felt he could not do justice to the intricacies of *gendér* playing when teaching a class.

The new kinds of performance situations created by staging at ISI, the Denpasar arts centre and elsewhere have encouraged new forms of *wayang*, such as the *golék* with multicoloured light effects created by Nartha's son, Ketut Sudiana (mentioned in chapter 2), or large-scale shadowplays such as those produced by the *dalang* Céngblong (see chapter 6). Such productions, however, tend to bypass *gendér wayang* in favour of larger, flashier ensembles such as *kebyar* or *gong gedé*. More experimental *wayang* forms have also been created by the *dalang* I Madé Sidia from Bona, who has tackled subjects such as post-traumatic stress disorder in connection with the Bali bomb attack of October 2002. Another of Sidia's experimental *wayang* creations, "The Theft of Sita", a co-production with Australian puppeteers and the composers I Wayan Gedé Yudiane and Paul Grabowski, toured Britain in 2001. It tackled issues such as environmental destruction, problems caused by tourism and the downfall of the dictator Suharto, mixing Balinese and Western instruments (but not *gendér wayang*). Thus, although numerous new forms of *wayang* are being created, they tend to experiment with different instrumental groups rather than *gendér wayang*, which is, strangely, somewhat overlooked in this modernising drive.

Most players are philosophical about these modern changes. Locéng kept referring to the Balinese proverb in the title of this thesis: *sing ada kayu luput tekén angin*:

L: These are crazy times. But I don't blame them – it's truly the times. Don't go against the current ... Things quickly change but, later, they can return to tradition. That's the strongest thing. (Locéng, tape 2000:8a)

Under the New Order, different provinces and, within them, different districts, were encouraged to forge new “regional” identities; competitions for *kebyar* and other performing arts are sure to represent each district (Badung, Gianyar, Karangasem etc) equally. However, a more “genuine” map of the island’s diversity does not necessarily coincide neatly with such boundaries. The cultural diversity is such that a book by Frederik Barth is aptly named *Balinese worlds* (Barth 1993). Budakeling and Tenganan *gendér* players identify themselves as playing in “Karangasem” style and yet we have seen the very specific influences that affect them in each village. Both feel they need to guard their regional identity against the encroaching academy style and yet have modernised in their own ways, too. The ways in which changes are made (or not made) to their *gendér* pieces are strongly affected by these regional ideologies.

We have seen, too, the strong inner drive in players such as Locéng and Buda that leads them to make compositional changes: “it’s for ourselves, primarily” (Locéng, tape 2000:2b). Locéng cites performing frequently, the drive of reputation and being pushed by his pupils as key spurs to creativity. He directly links this with other difficulties in life, which he says actually help us move forward rather than backwards:

L: Don’t say the Korawa were bad; in fact they were good. If there weren’t people like the Korawa, there would be no progress because the good side wouldn’t have to think. (Locéng, tape 2000:2b)

How pieces and styles are changed can be seen as part of a negotiation between forces at national, regional and personal levels. These affect how player compose new pieces and even how they approach improvisation.

## **7.5 *Gendér*, improvisation and freedom**

As we have seen in chapter 6, some *gendér* players explicitly make a connection between having an individually improvised *gendér* style with personal or political freedom. Similar associations between improvisation and freedom are made in other cultures, as Rice describes for Bulgaria (Rice 1996:208) and Monson for modal jazz (Monson 1998).

Besides the aspect of improvisation, *gendér* musicians also point out the way the *gendér wayang* has, to some extent, preserved itself against the

hegemonic, modernising forces represented by ISI and the Arts Festival, although *wayang* itself has, arguably, not (see above). The reasons for this are various. Its technical difficulty means it is held in a certain amount of (perhaps unnecessary) awe. It is associated in people's minds with the religious and philosophical weight of the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* and the respected, quasi-priestly status of the *dalang*. The sound has often been described to me by non-players as "*suci*" (holy) and it was often emphasised that I couldn't just learn *gendér wayang* on its own but that I must combine it with a study of religious concepts, stories and texts.

This raises the question of the negative side to this exclusivity: to what extent could *gendér wayang* be considered an "elitist" musical pursuit? It is usually only played by people who have a *dalang* in the family, and access to the instruments is much more limited than with *kebyar*. There is a set of *kebyar* instruments in most *banjar* buildings and children can often be seen playing on the *gangsa* but *gendér wayang* sets are usually found within the family compound either of a *dalang* or even just people who have bought a set for themselves. Women *gendér* players are few and far between (notwithstanding the situation in Budakeling), compared with *kebyar* players and even *beleganjur* players (see Bakan 1998).

Granoka describes the relationship between preserving the Karangasem tradition and the freedom of the *gendér wayang* genre and contrasts this with the standardisation brought about by ISI and modernisation:

G: What I see in Karangasem, is that the business of the past is something that must be looked after. Those values must be bequeathed, preserved. This is [the attitude] towards the ancient pieces ... as if their souls are sacred. But people remain creative. In *gendér*, the difference with the rest is ... its independence (I: *merdekanya*), its freedom (I: *bebasnya*). No one presses. There are no kinds of rules ... like now, people at the [arts] festival. Why did I run to *gendér*? Because, at that time, *gong* was like this: already coloured by the efforts of standardisation, because the values of the festival are like that. I saw people in the villages already beginning not to believe in themselves. Then [there are] those pieces that are as if violated by changes ... so, I'm not free, I can't freely enjoy this because I must join one big current: festivals, standardisation like this, STSI like this. So, I left this behind [and went] to *gendér*, because, in *gendér*, my spirit is free. (Granoka, tape 2002:20a)

At first sight, this link between Karangasem players' preservation of old pieces and playing styles and their creativity appears paradoxical, but both are linked through the concept of inner, spiritual strength:

G: But what is still pure is *gendér*, which lasts continually. There's a promise that as long as I live [I'll play] *gendér*, because there is my freedom. Nothing can touch my freedom, because *gendér* is very individualistic; it can't be collectively determined (I:

*ditentukan bersamaan*). Me: It can't be organised by the government? G: Can't be ordered by anybody! (Granoka, tape 2002:20a)

Buda says that the small number of people involved in *gendér wayang* compared with *gong kebyar* might be a factor in the immunity of *gendér wayang* from government and ISI interference. The players have developed a special skill that is out of the reach of ordinary gamelan players:

B: Balinese composers who make *gong kebyar* pieces are not brave enough to try composing for *gendér wayang*, because *gendér wayang* has a different character and technique: it's special. So, people who already have a name in composition, I think they've never dared to make a genuine composition in *gendér wayang*. So, institutions or governments have never looked at *gendér wayang*. (Buda, tape 2002:24a)

Moreover, perhaps the instrument attracts a certain type of person:

B: Besides that, in Balinese society, the people who are immersed in *gendér wayang* – like me, for instance – are not easily ordered about. They have a higher self-worth. For instance, if we're asked to play in a hotel to accompany a dinner, I think I couldn't accept that. Because *gendér wayang* is highly valued. So, perhaps that's one factor in why *gendér wayang* doesn't follow the programme of *gong kebyar*. (Buda, tape 2002:24a)

I asked Buda whether improvisation was a factor and he said that was just one of the special skills that put it out of the reach of ISI lecturers and players of other types of gamelan (tape 2002:24a). Sarga and Warga also feel that *gendér* has an individual character: "There's a lot we can't explain in *gendér*," says Warga (tape 2002:25b). Locéng emphasised the spiritual strength of the art of *wayang* as a factor: "its strength is from religion" (tape 2002:24b).

Musicians from several cultures often cite a related kind of freedom when they describe the experience of "letting go", "finding a flow" or "getting into a groove" in performance. This occurs in predetermined and notated as well as improvised musics, although improvising musicians may particularly associate it with spontaneous creativity. Berliner cites jazz musicians who compare subjective experiences of being "in the groove" with other strong emotions such as sex or religious experiences. They often experience difficulty in "coming down" from this experience (Berliner 1994:389–94).<sup>86</sup>

In Bali, Suryani and Jensen (1993) found that gamelan musicians tended to report altered states of consciousness with playing many different genres but particularly with older types of ensemble, regarded as ceremonial, and they

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<sup>86</sup> Pressing suggests such a feeling of automaticity is the result of practice, till the performer reaches "a stage at which it has become possible to completely dispense with conscious monitoring of motor programmes, so that the hands appear to have a life of their own" (1988:139).

found this was particularly the case with *gendér wayang* players. Players reported feeling “that their body is ‘not here’; they feel as if they are floating above the ground, ‘nearer to the gods’ and ‘in another world’” (Suryani and Jensen 1993:123). It may well be that it is the improvisatory element, along with the ensemble’s ritual status that makes *gendér* musicians particularly susceptible to such feelings. Buda often talked of the players following a feeling (I: *perasaan*) or flow (I: *aliran*) while playing, which enabled them to improvise successfully together.

Several players used the word *taksu* to explain this kind of playing. We have seen above how the word *taksu* can have several different shades of meaning, which might be translated in English as: inspiration, possession, genius, a talent passed on through generations, a shrine, and also a mediating or messenger deity. Amin Sweeney describes a similar state of mind among Kelantan *dalang* in Malaysia, where the term *angin* (wind) is used to portray a *dalang*’s urge and motivation to perform but also carries the secondary meaning of a susceptibility to be moved by the performance, bordering trance (Sweeney 1972:24).

This “flow” of feeling in the music is intimately connected with the character of pieces, characters on screen, the instrument’s ritual status, but also, within this an individuality of expression. Players use improvisation as a means of coming closer to this feeling and, conversely, improvisatory ideas may actually arise from it.

## 7.6 Where do new ideas come from?

At this personal level, it becomes harder for players to answer questions about how and what they do to create new material. Locéng said: “answering it is really very hard” (tape 2002:23b). Western composers and improvisers, too, tend to find it hard to describe what exactly is happening.

Locéng says that, commonly, a musical idea will come at these quiet moments after some time trying to work it out. As we saw in earlier chapters, although Locéng denies making “unconscious” changes, the fact that he is constantly working on new versions inevitably means that the process continues sub-consciously. As is so common in creativity (see chapter 3), the best solution



to a problem often appears “spontaneously” from the subconscious at such quiet moments but this follows days, weeks or months of conscious work on the subject.

Despite known composers such as Locéng and Buda in Sukawati or Ranu in Tenganan making changes to pieces, we have seen some limits on how far the repertoire can be changed. There is a sense in which the standard pieces have been handed down from the ancestors, which in Bali carries connotations of divine origin. However, despite my comments about *taksu* in performance above, there does not generally seem to be a tradition directly attributing divine or supernatural origins to particular *gendér wayang* pieces as described, for instance, by Merriam (1964:167) of the vision quest among the Plains Indians. Such pieces do, however, exist in the repertory of sacred *selonding* ensembles. Ramseyer mentions three pieces in Tenganan, “which the god himself composed and gave to the people” (1992:126). Music, generally, does have a divine origin, as attested in manuscripts such as *Prakempa* and *Aji Gurnita*.

We have seen Granoka’s inner, spiritual quest to create “new worlds” and “new rites” and how he felt “blessed” by receiving a secret version from the goddess Durga of the piece “Tunjang”. However, he was at pains to point out the separation between the actual performance of yoga and music. He described how he had read about a group of American musicians playing music while meditating and said that this was missing the point, as “how could one possibly meditate properly while playing?” (tape 2002:21a). The spiritual quest through yoga rather forms the basis for creative exploration, which, in turn, produces new spiritual experience.

Richard Widdess once asked me whether, in Balinese Hindu concepts, there could actually be anything genuinely new. He said that many Indian classical musicians regarded “new” music as actually having always existed (personal communication, 2000). Creation and creativity have been regarded as theologically paradoxical in the West too (Boden1990:2). Boden asks: “if novelty is grounded in prior ideas, can it really be novelty?” (ibid.:18).

I had never heard Balinese musicians refer to this but felt it would be interesting to ask. Granoka suggested that our own creativity lay in manipulating what we are bequeathed (tape 2002:21b). Buda, too, agreed that seemingly

new ideas often turn out to be based on what already exists, for instance what the composer might have heard before (tape 2002:24a). Locéng compared seemingly “new” ideas with the children and grandchildren of their ancestors: “without a mother and father, how can there be a child” (tape 2002:24b). The players’ responses to the question of whether anything could really be said to be new struck me as very practical: of course we are bequeathed material and can only manipulate what we are given. As Deryck Cooke puts it with reference to Western classical music: “Music as we know it could not be created at all but for the existence of a long tradition of past music” (Cooke 1959:171).<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Mark Hobart suggests that one contrast between Indian and Balinese philosophical systems lies in the “bricolage” aspect of Balinese creativity as opposed to a concern with overarching structure as may be found in India (personal communication, 2000). Thus, art forms can flourish and change in an additive way.

## Chapter 8: Conclusions and new directions

The pieces as described here are like still photographs of a moving object or, rather, an object continually transforming itself into something else. Some of the ways in which this object has changed within living memory can be traced through oral history: Locéng's memories of the histories of individual segments of "Sekar Ginotan" are an example. Like this too, are the stories of Ida Wayan Ngurah and his brother Ida Wayan Oka Granoka about the old style in Karangasem and Gunawan's description of the recent history of *gendér* in Tenganan. This approach, based on the accounts of individuals within history, can be particularly enlightening as it enables multiple voices to be heard (see for instance, Wiener 1995).

I have tried to present this study in a way that enhances the sense of a dialogue, or rather polyphonic interplay of many voices, including my own. This seems particularly appropriate when tackling a subject like improvisation, in which what players feel is as important as what they play. It is particularly tricky to tackle such subjective issues in a culture not one's own (Locéng himself says that these things are hard to talk about). Some opinions were shared and ones that I half-expected. Others surprised me, such as relating the three ideas of *gendér*, improvisation and freedom.

In chapter 3 I cited Bruno Nettl's exploration of the complex cluster of ideas associated with improvisation in contemporary American society, which he then contrasts with the different associations of improvisation in the Middle East. In Balinese *gendér wayang*, improvisation seems to be used to bond the players together in order to enhance the feeling of the piece and give it spirit. It is also used to increase the music's already baffling complexity and thus mystify and delight the audience. It is recognised as a prestigious ability only possessed by top players, although all aspire to it in varying degrees. It is one of the ways that *gendér* players may preserve the genre from the encroachment of hegemonic ideas involved in the political control of some other genres, such as *kebyar*, and is thus a strategy of resistance. This is combined with the ritual strength of the *gendér* tradition, partly due to its association with *wayang*. Thus, a cluster of ideas associating personal freedom and deep spirituality is born of the instrument's (sometimes-exaggerated) difficulty.

At the other end of Nettl's composition to improvisation spectrum, I found ideas about the nature of composition for *gendér wayang* which differ from those associated with making new pieces for *gong kebyar*. Most compositional activity involves reworking pieces to a greater or lesser degree, again depending on the ability and experience of the composer. This working with "given" material reinforces the "*sakra*" quality of the repertoire, which has been handed down from the ancestors, while allowing it to adapt to contemporary circumstances. This is where the important, but elusive role of *pokok* plays a role in determining how much a piece can be changed before it loses its identity. A prolific composer like Locéng spends much of his waking hours working out new versions, going back over old ones and finding new routes through the material. That this reworking also occurs when he makes spontaneous, "improvised" changes is not surprising. Nor is it surprising that Locéng and other players describe such "spontaneous" changes as, in essence, the same as more "worked out" changes.

Thus, one could say that most compositional activity in *gendér* takes place in the middle of Nettl's continuum, reaching out to either end to become what we call "improvisation" and "composition". Alternatively, one might suggest that the common ground between the more worked out and more spontaneous versions is covered by the English word "variation": I had considered giving this thesis the subtitle "composition as variation and variation as composition". However, this would risk applying an oversimplifying label to subtle gradients of change outlined in chapter 6. In that chapter, I found that players did recognise the difference between variations they made in the course of performance and ones they had worked out previously. However, these were both grouped together conceptually under phrases such as *mayasin gending* (to decorate the piece). Thus, I have argued that the situation here is quite contrary to Javanese *gendér*, where, Sutton (1993 and 1998) argues, creating improvised variations is qualitatively different from working out a composition.

Flexibility in performance is a topic that has rarely been discussed with relevance to Balinese music, as the general view has been that most gamelan pieces are fully memorised and that the interlocking of melodic parts precludes improvisation. Even a small amount of variability may have far-reaching musical consequences (like Lenny Bruce's five minutes of new material, mentioned in

chapter 3). I hope I have shown that improvisation is indeed significant for certain types of Balinese gamelan, and that it is important not just in itself but because it feeds into the whole process of composition and players' conceptualisations of this process.

As we have seen, players give different reasons for making changes in *gendér wayang*, among them: boredom through playing often, self-fulfilment, ambition, regional rivalry and so forth. The reasons behind certain types of change have also evolved historically. Personal ambition or rivalry with other players may also play apart but, primarily, the overriding motive is the basic impulse to create, as Buda puts it: "It was humans who made [the pieces] before. I'm also human, so why shouldn't I create?" (tape 2002:19b). The impulse to create may be individual but the direction it takes is often driven by changes in contemporary society. Locéng's proverb compares this with the wind blowing trees. I turned to this phrase with Buda, who said: "Yes, I agree: the wind is like a current. We are all like actors – we just follow the flow" (tape 2002:19b).

I feel this research supports Boden's view that small explorations of conceptual space may lead to radical shifts (see chapter 3 of this study). I would argue all these types of work in *gendér wayang*, whether we label them composition, variation or improvisation are such explorations of the creative space. The players' small changes, decorating the composition – *mayasin gending* – are part of an ongoing creative process that includes constructing larger sections of pieces and complete pieces in themselves. By exploring this creative process with player-composers, I hope I may also have shed some light on aspects of Balinese conceptions of creativity.

## **Final words**

I hope that this thesis has opened up some lines of further enquiry both within the field of *gendér wayang* and Balinese music in general. One of these is the exploration of emic concepts of creativity, only partially touched on by this study. A more complete study of how Balinese player-composers work and how they view their work could, indeed, turn some Balinese concepts onto ourselves (following Wikan 1990) for instance: how do Balinese see creativity in general

and how do they gauge the creative endeavours of Westerners and other non-Balinese? Bi-musicality also opens up the possibility of a new kind of etic enquiry. Following Sudnow's (2001), a study is possible of learning to improvise in *gendér wayang*, though an ethnomusicological study could never be entirely self-reflexive.<sup>88</sup> However, such an approach could build upon Widdess's involvement of players in analysis (Widdess 1994) and result in a truly dialogic exploration of improvisation. Other themes that have emerged could fruitfully become the basis of further comparative research, particularly with Javanese *gendér* traditions. These include a comparative examination of the relationships between improvisation and composition, improvisation and freedom, centres and peripheries, secularisation and re-sacralisation.

Deborah Wong's study of the *wai khruu* ceremony and the ritual repertoire in Thailand has many echoes here, particularly the relationship between tradition and creativity in a ritually significant ensemble: "Tradition is everything ... The only musicians who can innovate are, therefore, those most steeped in the tradition, who can manipulate repertoire in a masterful way – and their innovations become the new paradigm of tradition" (Wong 2001:185–6). Likewise, the master musicians in Bali who devote their lives to *gendér wayang* are able to lift the tradition to new heights through their creative realisation of the repertoire.

Hobart (2000b) draws attention to the flawed interpretations of cultural analysis that insist on forcing Western interpretations onto Bali. He rightly demands that we emphasise Balinese accounts and understandings of themselves. Getting to grips with Balinese terminology, taking the trouble to listen to what Balinese say and ridding ourselves of the arrogance of claiming to possess superior powers of analysis are surely the way forward too for musicologists. As a writer, I know, too, how easily even the words people actually utter can unwittingly be misrepresented. Although this study inevitably makes use of some Western concepts, not least of which is the distortion of Western musical transcription and techniques of analysis, I hope at least to have set up a dialogue within these pages between my own explorations and players' interpretations.

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<sup>88</sup> Ruth Stone's caveat about bi-musicality is pertinent: "It is quite possible to perform in a manner acceptable to a group of musicians while applying one's own particular code to organizing and making sense of sounds" (1982:28).

## Appendix 1: Glossary

*Angklung*: a small gamelan tuned to a four-note *sléndro* scale, used especially at cremations

*Angsél*: a sharp break or accent in music or dance

*Beleganjur* (*balaganjur*): a processional gamelan featuring individually carried gong-chime pots, gongs and drums

*Banjar*: hamlet or neighbourhood association with a hall

*Baté*: fast ostinato pieces to accompany fighting in the *wayang*

*Baté maya* (also *baté majalan*): slow *baté* ostinati to “fill in” between fights

*Bebaturan*: excerpts from *kekawin* poetry adapted to new melodic phrases for use in the *wayang*

*Brahmana budha*: high priests with some elements of Mahayana Buddhism in their ritual

*Brahmana siwa*: Sivaite high priests

*Bumbung*: bamboo resonating tube

(*Ce*)*candétan*: type of interlocking figuration

*Cepala*: cone-shaped hammer held between the *dalang*'s toes, used to punctuate speech and action

*Dalang*: shadow puppeteer (in Java, usually spelt *dhalang*)

*Don*: leaf, key of an instrument

*Durga*: goddess of the death temple; frightening form of the Siwa's consort, the goddess Uma

*Empat*: *sléndro* “fifth”; interval four keys apart with two in between; the secondary consonance after the octave

*Gambang*: old ceremonial ensemble featuring four xylophones with unevenly sized keys and two bronze *saron* metallophones

*Gambuh*: old theatrical form accompanied by long flutes (*suling gambuh*), *rebab* (spike fiddle), drums and punctuating idiophones

*Gangsa*: metallophone in *gong kebyar* and other gamelan

*Gedebong*: banana trunk at the base of the screen for placing the puppets

*Gegebug (gagebug)*: way of striking, playing, characteristic instrumental patterns, l: *pukulan* (see *gegedig*)

*Gegedig*: way of striking, playing, characteristic instrumental patterns, l: *pukulan* (see *gegebug*)

*Gending*: piece, gamelan composition (in Java, usually spelled *gendhing*)

*Gendér wayang*: metallophones that accompany the shadow play

*Gineman*: introduction to a piece, often unmetered

*Gong gedé (gamelan gong)*: old ceremonial gamelan

*Gong kebyar* (often, just: *gong*): modern gamelan with a very dynamic playing style

*Gong luang*: old ceremonial gamelan tuned to seven-note *pélog*

*Halus* (or *alus*): refined; characters such as the good Pandawa brothers

ISI: Institut Seni Indonesia (Institute of Indonesian Arts) in Denpasar, formerly STSI (Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia) and, before that, ASTI (Akademi Seni Tari Indonesia)

*Jégogan (jégog)*: metallophone in gamelan that plays the *pokok*, nuclear melody; sometimes used to describe the left-hand melody in *gendér wayang*

*Jogéd (pejogédan)*: flirtatious dance involving audience participation and the ensemble based on bamboo xylophones used to accompany this

*Juru gendér*: *gendér* player(s)

*Kasar*: coarse, unrefined; characters such as the evil Korawa

*Kawi*: Old Javanese language

*Kekawin (kakawin)*: poem in Old Javanese based on Indian-derived metres

*Kelir*: screen for *wayang*

*Keras*: coarse, strong, hard; characters such as the evil Korawa

*Kidung*: poem in Middle Javanese

*Komposisi*: composition, usually in contemporary style

*Kontémporér*: contemporary music, more avant-garde than *kréasi*

*Kotékan*: interlocking figuration



*Kotékan telu (pukulan tiga)*: interlocking pattern based on three notes

*Kotékan pat (pukulan empat)*: interlocking pattern extended to include the fourth (complementary) note

*Kréasi baru*: “new creation”, composition in modern traditional style

*Kropak*: puppet box with one side loosely attached, against which the puppeteer raps the *cepala*

*Lanang*: male, used of the smaller of a pair of instruments

*Lagu*: tune, melody, piece

*Lakon*: story

*Légong (pelégongan)*: type of dance by young girls and the gamelan that accompanies it

*Lelambatan*: slow ceremonial pieces from the *gong gedé* repertoire, now transferred to *gong kebyar*

*Lontar*: palm-leaf book

*Majapahit*: medieval East Javanese empire, which ended around the end of the fifteenth century

*Malat*: a *kidung* sung at tooth-filing ceremonies

*Manis*: sweet, refined (similar to *halus*)

*Mata belog* or *mata besar*: coarse characters such as the Korawa with large, bulging eyes

*Mata delingan*: characters with slightly rounded eyes

*Mata supit*: refined characters such as the Pandawa, with small, almond-shaped eyes

*Matatah (mapandes, masangih)*: toothfiling ceremony (rite of passage for adults)

*Mayasin*: to decorate

*Ngabén (pengabénan)*: cremation ceremony

*Ngastawa*: worship

*Ngorét (nerek, ngerék)*: melodic ornament with grace notes

*Nolto*: accelerating repeated notes, first damped then allowed to ring freely

*Nyog cag*: type of jumping interlocking figuration

*Odalan*: temple festival

*Ombak*: "waves", acoustic beats caused by tuning the instruments in pairs

*Panggul*: beaters used to play *gendér*

*Panggung*: booth for *wayang* performance

*Pangkat (angkat-angkatan)*: ostinato-based pieces used for movement and action in *wayang*

*Parwa*: stories from the *Mahabharata*

*Payasan*: ornaments, including melodic improvisation

*Pélog*: seven-note tuning system and the gapped pentatonic scales derived from this

*Pemungkah (pamungkah)*: overture to *wayang*

*Pengalang (pangalang)*: short pieces marking the first speech of certain characters in the opening scene

*Pengalangkara (pangalangkara)*: part of the opening suite of pieces, following the *dalang's* first song, during which the *dalang* starts to speak (see *penyacah parwa*)

*Pengawak*: body, main section of a piece

*Pengecét*: faster, final section of a piece

*Pengumbang-pengisep (ngumbang-ngisep)*: paired tuning of instruments (*pengumbang* is the lower and *pengisep* is the higher)

*Penyacah parwa*: part of the opening suite of pieces, following the *dalang's* first song, during which the *dalang* starts to speak (see *pengalangkara*)

*Peniba (pengiwan)*: variation sections following the *pengawak* (see *runtutan*)

*Peselah (penyelah)*: ostinati slightly slower than *batél*, used in between fights in *wayang*

*Petangkilan*: the first scene in a *wayang*, the meeting

*Petegak*: piece played before a *wayang*

*Pewayangan (pawayangan)*: puppetry

*Plawah*: wooden frame of a *gendér*

*Pokok*: “trunk”, nuclear melody, basic melody

*Polos*: basic, unadorned; one of the two interlocking parts (see *sangsih*)

*Ponggang*: two small gongs that play in gamelan *beleganjur*

*Punakawan* (*penasar*, *parekan*): the clown characters in *wayang*

*Pura*: temple

*Puri*: palace

*Raksasa*: demons in stories

*Ramé*: busy, full of activity

*Rasa*: feeling, taste

*Reng*: melodic shape of *kekawin*

*Réong*: gong chime played by four players in *kebyar* and two players in *gong gedé*

*Runtutan*: a term used in Sukawati for the variation sections following the *pengawak* (see *peniba*)

*Sanghyang*: a trance dance

*Sangsih*: differing; one of the two interlocking parts (see *polos*)

*Saron*: metallophone in Balinese gamelan *gong gedé* and in Javanese gamelan

*Seka* (*sekehe*): club, music club

*Selah*: delayed octaves by alternating hands

*Selonding*: a rare, sacred iron gamelan, found mostly in a few villages of East Bali and the central mountains

*Semar pegulingan*: a sweet-sounding court gamelan tuned to seven-note *pélog*

*Sepi*: quiet, empty (opposite of *ramé*)

*Seséndon*: song in *wayang* (see *tetandakan*)

*Sléndro*: scale used by *gendér wayang*, an anhemitonic pentatonic (also called *saih gendér wayang*)

SMKI (KOKAR): secondary school level institute for performing arts

STSI: see ISI

*Sudamala*: purifying ritual after certain performances, when the *dalang* makes holy water

*Tabuh*: piece, playing

*Tabuh lepas*: "free pieces", not tied to any particular dramatic character or situation

*Taksu*: inspiration, inspired, possessed; a messenger spirit; a shrine

*Tangisan*: weeping music

*Tatorékan*: type of interlocking figuration

*Tetandakan (tandak)*: songs in *wayang* accompanied by *gendér*

*Trompong*: gong chime played by a soloist in the gamelan *gong gedé* and *semar pegulingan*

*Ubitan*: interlocking figuration

*Ugal*: lead metallophone in *gong kebyar*

*Upacara*: ceremony, ritual

*Wadon*: female, used of the larger of a pair of instruments

*Wayah*: old, mature

*Wayang kulit*: shadow puppet play

*Wayang lemah (wayang gedog)*: daytime ritual puppet play without screen

## Appendix 2: Bibliography, list of field recordings and discography

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### List of field recordings mentioned in the text

This list excludes numerous lesson tapes and recordings of performances not directly mentioned in the text. All recordings were made by myself, using a Sony Walkman Professional. In addition, I made 8 DVD recordings using a Panasonic NV-DS15. Details of interviewees and performers are given for each quotation or mention in the text.

Tape October 1987 *Kresna Sorga* 1 and 2: *wayang* performance, I Wayan Nartha (*dalang*), accompanied by I Wayan Locéng, I Wayan Sarga, I Ketut Balik and I Wayan Jaya.

Lesson tape February 1988 (Locéng)  
 Lesson tape November 1988:1 (Locéng)  
 Lesson tape January 1989 (Locéng)  
 Lesson tape 1989:2 (Locéng)  
 Lesson tape 1992 (Locéng)

38 audio tapes form the bulk of the research:

Tapes 2000:1–10  
 Tapes 2001:1–2  
 Tapes 2002:1–26

## **Selected discography of commercial recordings by some groups mentioned in the text**

In many cases, no date or number is present.

- Background gamelan music: gender tunggal, Sanggar Guna Winangun* [Tenganan]. CD, Rick's Records/Maharani.
- The best 4 in 1 gamelan from Eastern of Bali, Sekehe Gamelan "Guna Winangun" Tenganan, Karangasem* [Selonding, gendér, rindik and penting]. CD, Rick's Records/Maharani.
- The best of gamelan selonding 1* [Tenganan]. Audio cassette, Rick's Records/Maharani 1985.
- The best of gamelan selonding 2* [Tenganan]. Audio cassette, Rick's Records/Maharani 1985.
- Gamelan gender, Puri Tegal Tamu, Batubulan, vol.1* [actually a young Sukawati group]. Audio cassette, Bali Record B1089.
- Gamelan gender, Puri Tegal Tamu, Batubulan, vol.2* [actually a young Sukawati group]. Audio cassette, Bali Record B1090.
- Gender wayang, Banjar Babakan Sukawati*. Audio cassette, Nakula Stereo Record 35, 1984.
- Gender Sidha Karya, Karangasem*. Audio cassette, Bali Record, Denpasar B936.
- Music for the Balinese shadow play: gender, Banjar Babakan, Sukawati*. Rick's Records/Maharani.
- Music of Bali: gamelan gender wayang, Banjar Babakan Desa Sukawati*. Rick's Records/Maharani GS005.
- Music of Indonesia 14, Lombok, Kalimantan, Banyumas: little known forms of gamelan and wayang*. Smithsonian Folkways CD 40441, 1997.
- Tabuh2 gender wayang Sukawati (Gianyar)*. Audio cassette, Rama Stereo R361.
- Wayang Sukawati: Dharma Dewa, dalang I Ketut Madra*. Three audio cassettes, Bali Record B422.
- Wayang Sukawati: Lakon Anta Kesuma, dalang I Ketut Madra*. Four audio cassettes. Bali Record B366.

## Appendix 3: Tuning measurements

### My *gendér wayang* set measured in cents

My instruments were made in 1988 and have never been re-tuned but, nevertheless, have retained their pitch fairly well. The following measurements were made using a TLA Tuning Set CTS-5 borrowed from the Horniman Museum, London SE23, in July 1998. Tunings are accurate to the nearest 0.5 of a cent. Each instrument's tuning is given from the bottom up. The numbers refer to the Javanese cipher system, while *dong*, *déng*, *dang*, *dung* and *ding* are the Balinese note names.

#### Pengumbang gedé:

Low 2 *dong* = F-11  
Low 3 *déng* = G+11  
Low 5 *dung* = Bb-16  
Low 6 *dang* = C1+42  
1 *ding* = D#1+2.5  
2 *dong* = F1+42  
3 *déng* = G#1-4.5  
5 *dung* = Bb1+30  
6 *dang* = C#2-37  
High 1 *ding* = D#2+26

#### Pengisep gedé:

Low 2 *dong* = F+44.5  
Low 3 *déng* = G#-40.5  
Low 5 *dung* = Bb+18.5  
Low 6 *dang* = C#1-24  
1 *ding* = D#1+31  
2 *dong* = F#1-32  
3 *déng* = G#1+13.5  
5 *dung* = Bb1+47.5  
6 *dang* = C#2-23  
High 1 *ding* = D#2+40

#### Pengumbang cenik:

Low 2 *dong* = F1+44  
Low 3 *déng* = G#1-7  
Low 5 *dung* = Bb1+35  
Low 6 *dang* = C#2-34  
1 *ding* = D#2+25.5  
2 *dong* = F#2-49  
3 *déng* = G#2+39.5  
5 *dung* = B2-39  
6 *dang* = C#3-4  
High 1 *ding* = E3-18

#### Pengisep cenik:

Low 2 *dong* = F#1-34  
Low 3 *déng* = G#1+10  
Low 5 *dung* = Bb1+48.5  
Low 6 *dang* = C#2-21  
1 *ding* = D#2+39  
2 *dong* = F#2-35.5  
3 *déng* = A2-49  
5 *dung* = B2-27  
6 *dang* = C#3+5.5  
High 1 *ding* = E3-11

## Appendix 4: Contents of the accompanying CD

I recorded all selections using a Sony Walkman Professional. Some of these recordings appear as musical examples in chapter 6.

- 1) "Partha Wijaya" excerpt, Locéng, *polos* only, transcribed in **musical example 19, page 145**. The right-hand part is in the top stave (tape 2000:1a).
- 2) "Partha Wijaya" excerpt, Locéng and Ketut Sukayana (tape 2002:26b).
- 3) First part of "Rébong", Buda (*polos*) and Wrespatika (*sangsih*), transcribed in **musical example 20, page 147**. This improvised version is shown as the four lower staves in the transcription, while the top stave shows a simpler version of the *polos* (tape 2002:22b).
- 4) "Alas Harum" excerpt, sung by *dalang* Nartha, accompanied by Sarga, Locéng, Balik and Jaya; story: *Kresna Sorga*, performed for a cremation in the village of Penatih, 8 October 1987. Cadential phrase transcribed in **musical example 21, page 150**, starting 45 seconds into the track.
- 5) "Serempak" excerpt in *cruk-cuk nglanting* style, Mudita, *polos* only; opening transcribed in **musical example 24, page 152** (tape 2002:4a).
- 6) Ida Wayan Granoka demonstrates *sangsih* improvisation, transcribed in **musical example 27, page 157** (tape 2002:21b).
- 7) "Katak Ngongkék", Buda (*polos*) and Wrespatika (*sangsih*), transcribed in **musical example 29, page 162** (tape 2002:22b). The left-hand ostinato is in the second line of the transcription, while the improvised right-hand part is from the sixth line onwards.
- 8) "Katak Ngongkék", played by Locéng's group (same performance as 3, above).
- 9) "Batél", Locéng *polos* only, opening transcribed in **musical example 32, page 184** (lesson tape January 1989a).
- 10) "Batél" in a Sukawati *wayang*: partly transcribed in **musical example 34, page 187** (same performance as 3, above)
- 11) "Batél" in a Budakeling *wayang*: partly transcribed in **musical example 35 page 188**; *dalang* Ida Nyoman Sugata, accompanied by Sutawa, Apriani, Naning and Edo; story: *Kunti Yadhya* (tape 2002:16a).
- 12) "Peselah Batél" excerpt, Locéng, *polos* only; partly transcribed in **musical example 38, page 191**, starting from 18 seconds into the track (lesson tape January 1989a).
- 13) "Peselah Batél" excerpt, Buda and Wrespatika (tape 2002:22b).



- 14) "Mésem" opening section, Locéng, *polos* only. The cadential phrase, 2 minutes 12 seconds into the track, is shown, in slightly different versions, in **musical example 40, page 196** (tape 2000:9a).
- 15) Theme of Sukawati "Sekar Sungsang", shown in **musical example 52, page 220, top line**. The notated example starts 9 seconds into the track (same performance as 3, above).
- 16) Part three (second variation) of Sukawati "Sekar Sungsang", shown in **musical example 52, page 220, third line**. The notated example starts 6 seconds into the track (same performance as 3, above).
- 17) Theme of "Sekar Gadung", Locéng, *polos* only, shown as a slightly different version in **musical example 53, page 222** (lesson tape November 1988:1a).
- 18) "Sudamala" theme, Locéng, *polos* only, shown in **musical example 54, page 220**, starting seven seconds into the track (lesson tape 1989:2b).
- 19) "Kejojo" plus new variation section, Buda, *polos* only, transcribed in **musical example 56, pages 226–7** (tape 2002:22a). He pauses at the first note of bar 25, then goes back to the previous bar before continuing.
- 20) Tenganan "Sekar Sungsang" theme, Gunawan and Dasta, shown in **musical example 57, page 230** (tape 2002:5a).
- 21) Budakeling "Sekar Sungsang" theme, Nick Gray (*polos*), Ida Wayan Ngurah (*sangsih*) (tape 2002:6b). This is slightly different from the version shown in **musical example 58 on page 231**.
- 22) Locéng's *gineman* in progress, *polos* only, opening shown in **musical example 60, page 235** (lesson tape February 1988a).
- 23) Locéng's new *gineman* for "Sekar Gadung", *polos* only, opening shown in **musical example 60, page 235** (tape 2002:18a).
- 24) *Gineman* and theme of "Sekar Ginotan", Locéng and Ketut Sukayana; part of *gineman* shown in **musical example 63, page 240**, 1 minute 26 seconds into the track (tape 2002:26b).
- 25) "Japanese" tune from "Pemungkah" (5 seconds into the track), which moves directly into the "*gambang*" section (21 seconds into the track); these are shown in **musical examples 65 and 64** respectively, **pages 245 and 243** (same performance as number 3, above).
- 26) Locéng sings Japanese song, transcribed in **musical example 66, page 245** (tape 2002:23a).
- 27) "Burisrawa", complete performance (concludes with the final sections of "Krépétan"). Locéng and Ketut Sukayana, shown in **musical example 67, pages 251–2** (tape 2002:26b).

- 28) "Tabuh Suling" excerpt, Gunawan and Dasta, partly shown in **musical example 69, page 255** (tape 2002:3b).
- 29) "Lagu Pejogédan" from Budakeling (same performance as number 10, above). The *polos* is shown in **musical example 70, page 257**.
- 30) "Cangak Merenggang" from Abang: complete performance. Played by Madé Kondra, Nyoman Kota, Madé Putu and Wayan Jira, who presented it as an example of old Karangasem style, as described in chapter 5 (tape 2002:13a).

## Epilogue

In October 2006, I learnt the sad news of the death of I Wayan Locéng. Locéng was my first *gendér* teacher and the main inspiration for this study. Without him, I would not have been able to write this thesis. One of his many remarkable achievements was to have created a sense of family among his many pupils throughout the world: in America, Japan, Germany, Britain and elsewhere.

Following his death, some of his American pupils have set up a memorial website to him ([www.genderwayang.com](http://www.genderwayang.com)), and there was a wide-ranging discussion of his life and work on the gamelan e-mail list.<sup>89</sup> One particular concern was whether or not it was appropriate to make pupils' lesson tapes (as opposed to recordings of actual performances) publicly available through the internet. Locéng often guarded his versions against potential rivals; indeed, this was one of his spurs for creating new versions, as we have seen in this thesis. Some felt that such lesson tapes were "personal documents much like a therapy session" and it would not be appropriate to put them on the web: it would "violate the field ethics of ethnomusicology" (Wayne Forrest). Also, it might increase the inequality of access between Balinese and non-Balinese students and undermine the local teaching community (Andrew McGraw). Others felt it was important to make them available as part of preserving Locéng's legacy. One of the website co-ordinators, Evan Ziporyn, questioned the value such long, possibly meandering lesson tapes might have for others and suggested instead just uploading actual performances. It is impossible to know what Locéng would have wanted, but I feel it is important to preserve his legacy – not just his versions of pieces (which were always changing, as we have seen) but, most importantly, his way of working.

Following this discussion, I felt the best course, as a first step, was to deposit my recordings at the National Sound Archive in London and make reference to this on the Locéng memorial website. This preserves them and makes them accessible with a certain level of control.

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<sup>89</sup> The archives of this list are at <http://listserv.dartmouth.edu/Archives/gamelan.html>. Non-members can log in using e-mail address [gamelan@gamelan.org](mailto:gamelan@gamelan.org) and password [gamelan](#). You can then join the list if you wish. The postings cited in this epilogue are archived under October 2006.