

Calonarang Transformed

The film *Calonarang Transformed* is a retelling of a Balinese tale of transformation and magic. The film arose from a collaborative project called *Matemahan*, which means “transformation” in Balinese, involving choreographer and dancer Ni Madé Pujawati, composer Nick Gray, and anthropologist Mark Hobart.

The *Matemahan* project is an exploration of fluidity and transformation in Balinese music and thought, using *gendér wayang*, new music composition and dance. This collaborative practice-based project explores how Balinese ideas of body, self, cosmology and transformation can impact on contemporary musical creation and performance. The music uses a combination of Balinese gamelan instruments, including *gendér wayang* and *gendér rambat*, with other instruments and electronics.

For more on the background to the project: <https://matemahan.wordpress.com/>

The traditional *Calonarang* legend is set in medieval Java and Bali. Although various prose and poetic versions exist in Bali, it is better known directly through performance. This usually culminates in the appearance of the figure of the witch Rangda and protective beast Barong, accompanied by violent trancing and self-stabbing with *keris* daggers. It would be wrong to see this as a conflict between “good” and “evil” with “good” winning in the end. The story is a celebration of flux and flow between forces and their ever-changing nature.

There are as many variations to the story and way it is performed as there are troupes who perform it. Our version, which radically reinterprets this legend is perhaps closest to: Toeti Heraty, *Calon Arang: the story of a woman sacrificed to patriarchy*. Sanur: Saritaksu Editions, 2006.

The video can be watched here: <https://youtu.be/KPtWYb-URE>

Choreography: Ni Madé Pujawati

Music: Nick Gray

Videography, editing and music production: Rob Shipster

Story concept and narration: Mark Hobart

Dancers and costume design: Dewi Ariati, Ni Madé Pujawati, Andrea Rutkowski (Lila Bhawa Dance Troupe)

Musicians: Rob Champion, Charlie Cawood, Georgia Francis, Paula Friar, Nick Gray, and Rob Shipster (My Tricky Spirit)

Artwork: Miranda Gray-Aragoneses

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(running time: c.32 minutes)