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***Klasik, Kawih, Kreasi: Musical Transformation and the  
Gamelan Degung of Bandung, West Java, Indonesia***

**by**

**Rachel Swindells**

**Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
City University, London  
Department of Music  
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## Abstract

The *degung* is a small *gamelan* that is unique to the Sundanese people of West Java. Originating as a prestigious ensemble for the local nobility and formerly confined to the region's administrative courts, the provincial capital city of Bandung has been the geographic focus for the *degung* tradition since the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Following sixteen months of fieldwork in Bandung, the dissertation examines the evolution of the *gamelan degung* in the musical melting pot of this bustling urban centre. Situating the ensemble within the heterogeneous landscape of Bandung's regional arts scene, it considers the way in which *degung* has come to be positioned as a musical 'common ground' for performers hailing from a variety of socio-cultural and musical backgrounds, as well as a site for the negotiation and assimilation of repertoires and performance practices drawn from across the wider Sundanese music complex. Central to this investigation is the theme of musical transformation, a topic that is explored from several interrelated perspectives.

Piecing together a history of the ensemble, the study correlates musical innovations to socio-cultural, politico-economic and technological developments, as well as to broader shifts in Sundanese music as a whole. Specific attention is paid to the ongoing popularisation of *degung* by the local cassette industry and the role that 'invented' ceremonials have played in the ensemble's postcolonial renaissance. Interweaved into this chronological survey are more focused analyses of the core and specialist skills of the musicians and the intrinsic malleability of the music systems that lie at the heart of such musical change. Transformation is identified as a primary domain of Sundanese musical competence, with processes of transfer and adaptation shown to permeate the creation and realisation of *degung* repertoires. These diachronic and synchronic accounts of musical transformation are considered to complement rather than to contrast with one another; it is argued that the manner in which the *degung* has adapted to its altering 'external' environment over time has been determined, at least in part, by the essential constitution and 'internal' dynamics of the larger musical culture in which the ensemble is rooted.



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## Compact disc track list

- |     |   |      |
|-----|---|------|
| 1.  | <p><b>Seler Degung</b> (fig. 3:2, p.86)<br/> <i>Degung Klasik Vol. 5</i>. LS Kancana Sari, directed by Endang Sukandar<br/>         Endang Sukandar, Entis Sutisna, Achmad Suandi, Anda Lugina<br/>         Jakarta: GNP, 2001</p>                              | 1:51 |
| 2.  | <p><b>Renggong Buyut – Rampak Sekar</b> (p.157)<br/>         RRI Bandung group, directed by Mamat Rahmat<br/>         Eros Rosita, Mamah Suryamah, Ai Sarikartika, Yeti Sumiati<br/>         Bandung: 1976</p>  | 2:18 |
| 3.  | <p><b>9 cycles of Catrik played on cempres by Ade Komaran</b><br/>         (Appendix II, A1-9, p.269)<br/>         Bandung: July 2001</p>   | 3:31 |
| 4.  | <p><b>9 cycles of Catrik played on cempres by Lili Suparli</b><br/>         (Appendix II, B1-9, p.270)<br/>         Bandung: July 2001</p>  | 4:11 |
| 5.  | <p><b>9 cycles of Catrik played on peking by Ade Komaran</b><br/>         (Appendix II, C1-9, pp.271-272)<br/>         Bandung: July 2001</p>   | 4:19 |
| 6.  | <p><b>9 cycles of Catrik played on peking by Lili Suparli</b><br/>         (Appendix II, D1-9, pp.273-274)<br/>         Bandung: July 2001</p>  | 4:27 |
| 7.  | <p><b>Jeruk Manis – Belenderan</b> (fig. 4:20, p.161)<br/>         Mamah Dasimah, <i>juru kawih</i>; Dodi Hamidi, <i>kacapi</i><br/>         Bandung: June 2001</p>   | 3:48 |
| 8.  | <p><b>Jeruk Manis – Belenderan</b> (figs. 4:20 &amp; 4:21, pp.161-162)<br/>         Nunung Nurmalasari, <i>juru kawih</i>; Ade Supaman, <i>kacapi</i><br/>         Bandung: August 2001</p>   | 3:26 |
| 9.  | <p><b>Es Lilin – Senggot</b> (fig. 4:22, p.163)<br/>         Mamah Dasimah, <i>juru kawih</i>; Dodi Hamidi, <i>kacapi</i><br/>         Bandung: June 2001</p>   | 1:17 |
| 10. | <p><b>Angin Peuting</b> (fig. 5:1:i, <i>tembang</i> version, p.173)<br/>         Hendrawati, <i>juru tembang</i>; Endang Sukandar, <i>suling</i><br/>         Yusdiana, <i>kacapi indung</i>; Galih, <i>kacapi rincik</i><br/>         Bandung: August 2001</p> | 3:00 |
| 11. | <p><b>Angin Peuting</b> (figure 5:1:ii, <i>degung</i> version, p.174)<br/> <i>Tilam Sono</i>. Gapura, directed by Koestyara. Ida Widawati, <i>juru kawih</i><br/>         Jakarta: Dian, c. 1978</p>  | 2:54 |
| 12. | <p><b>Gunung Sari</b> (fig. 5:3, p.178 &amp; Appendix III, pp.275-278)<br/>         Ade Komaran, <i>bonang degung</i><br/>         Bandung: July 2001</p>   | 2:02 |

13. **Gunung Sari** (fig. 5:3, p.178 & Appendix III, pp.275-278) 2:10  
Entis Sutisna, *bonang degung*  
Bandung: August 2001
14. **Gunung Sari** (fig. 5:3, p.178 & Appendix III, pp.275-278) 2:07  
Lili Suparli, *bonang degung*  
Bandung: July 2001
15. **Tonggeret** (fig. 5:10, p.191) 4:55  
Iyan Arliani, *juru kawih*  
STSI Bandung group, directed by Lili Suparli  
Bandung: July 2001
16. **Tonggeret (pelog degung)** (fig. 5:11, p.192) 2:09  
Teti Yani, *juru kawih*  
STSI Bandung group, directed by Lili Suparli  
Bandung: July 2001
17. **Tonggeret (madenda)** (fig. 5:11, p.192) 2:09  
Teti Yani, *juru kawih*  
STSI Bandung group, directed by Lili Suparli  
Bandung: July 2001
18. **Sekar Manis (madenda)** (fig. 5:12, p.193) 0:30  
Hendrawati, *juru kawih*  
Ade Komaran, Yusdiana, Matt Ashworth *et al*  
Bandung: January 2002
19. **Sekar Manis (pelog degung)** (fig. 5:12, p.193) 0:30  
Hendrawati, *juru kawih*  
Ade Komaran, Yusdiana, Matt Ashworth *et al*  
Bandung: January 2002
20. **Kabungbulengan** (fig. 6:1, p.217) 2:42  
*Kabungbulengan*. Non Blok, directed by Nano S.  
Nining Meida, *juru kawih*; Tatang RS, *juru suling*  
Bandung: Whisnu, 2000
21. **Sasaka Domas' wedding greeting ceremony: opening sequence** 3:39  
(figs. 7:1, 1-6, p.245, 7:5, p.249 & 7:6, p.250)  
Didin Bajuri, *juru tembang*; A'im Salim, narration  
Sasaka Domas, directed by Mamah Dasimah & Didin Bajuri  
Bandung: August 2001
22. **Jeruk Manis – Belenderan** (see 3.3.5, p.110) 4:20  
*Degung Klasik Vol. 5*. LS Kencana Sari. Endang Sukandar, *suling*  
Jakarta: GNP, Keraton, 2001
23. **Karatagan Pahlawan** (Koko Koswara) 2:41  
*Mangle* (see Introduction, p.2). Sasaka Domas  
Bandung: Hidayat (S-1044), 198?



## Technical notes

### Language

The spelling of Sundanese and Indonesian words cited in this dissertation follows the orthographic conventions introduced by the Indonesian government in 1972. Exceptions to this include the occasional proper name and quotations from books or articles published before this date. Following most Indonesian written publications I do not use diacritical markings.

My research in Bandung was mainly conducted in the Indonesian national language (*bahasa Indonesia*) though, naturally, most of the terminology that specifically relates to the regional music system is Sundanese (*basa Sunda*). In order not to unnecessarily complicate the text I only distinguish between Indonesian and Sundanese terms in the glossary.

Adhering to the conventions of academic writing I have also chosen to omit the honorifics 'Pa' (from *bapa*, literally, father) and 'Ibu' (literally, mother) (respectful titles that are routinely used in Indonesia when addressing or referring to a man or woman older than oneself) when naming specific individuals in this study.

### Musical transcriptions and notation

In the following chapters I use two forms of music notation: Sundanese cipher notation and Western staff notation. The latter is mainly reserved for transcriptions of vocal melodies; the Western stave is better able to represent the intricacies of the singer's vocal embellishments than is the Sundanese cipher system. I also use Western staff notation and note names when comparing the absolute pitches of different tuning systems. For those readers unfamiliar with Sundanese notation, a summary of the way in which the cipher system works in West Java is provided below.

## Sundanese cipher notation

In contrast to Western notation, Sundanese musicians number their scales from high to low. The pentatonic *pelog degung* tuning of the *gamelan degung* is thus represented using the ciphers 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, with 1 being the highest tone and 5 the lowest tone. Similarly, a dot below a cipher indicates that it is to be played in the higher octave, while a dot above a cipher denotes the lower octave.

$\overset{\cdot}{5}$  = lower octave       $\underset{\cdot}{5}$  = higher octave

Each pitch of the *pelog degung* scale also has its own name:

1	2	3	4	5
<i>tugu</i>	<i>loloran</i>	<i>panelu</i>	<i>singgul</i>	<i>galimer</i>
or <i>barang</i> *	or <i>kenong</i> *		or <i>bem</i> *	or <i>singgul</i> *

\* alternative name commonly used by *tembang Sunda* musicians

The tones of the *pelog degung* scale on the *gamelan degung* 'Sekar Enggal' currently housed at City University, London, correspond to the following Western pitches:

<i>tugu</i>	<i>loloran</i>	<i>panelu</i>	<i>singgul</i>	<i>galimer</i>
1	2	3	4	5
G	F#	D	C	B

It is important to note that while *gamelan degung* sets are not tuned to any externally-determined 'absolute' pitch, I have notated all of my Western staff transcriptions at this pitch-level in order to facilitate comparison.

## *Daminatila*

Sundanese musicians, particular those operating within formal music education networks, also label tones with the syllables ‘*da-m-na-ti-la*’. The *daminatila* system functions rather like the Western tonic sol-fa in that the syllables are transposable and denote the modal position of tones in a particular scale rather than indicate fixed pitches (or keys, pots, strings and gongs). This system is deemed to be particularly useful when, as often happens in *gamelan salendro*, two different tunings are used simultaneously and additional modal transpositions take place in the middle of a piece. Nevertheless, in the *pelog degung* scale of the *gamelan degung* the *da-mi-na-ti-la* syllables more straightforwardly correspond to the ciphers 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

<i>tugu</i>	<i>loloran</i>	<i>panelu</i>	<i>singgul</i>	<i>galimer</i>
1	2	3	4	5
G	F#	D	C	B
<i>da</i>	<i>mi</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>ti</i>	<i>la</i>

## *Madenda (sorog)*

Most *gamelan degung* sets are now also built with additional exchange keys, pots and gongs so that the instruments can be retuned to play songs in the *madenda* (also known as *sorog*) tuning. In order to switch from the *pelog degung* to the *madenda* tuning, *degung* musicians swap tone 3/*panelu* (*pelog degung*) with a substitute tone 3 (*panelu sorog*) approximately 200 cents higher in pitch. ‘Accidental’ tones occurring in between the fixed pitches of a scale are denoted using + and – signs. 5+, for instance, indicates a flattened tone 5, and 4- a sharpened tone 4. The sharpened *panelu* tone, *panelu sorog*, is thus notated as 3-.



The *madenda* tuning of the *gamelan degung* 'Sekar Enggal' at City University can be represented as follows:

<i>tugu</i>	<i>loloran</i>	<i>panelu sorog</i>	<i>singgul</i>	<i>galimer</i>
1	2	3-	4	5
G	F#	E	C	B

Notating the *madenda* scale is complicated by the fact that, unlike in *pelog degung*, the absolute pitch *tugu* does not correspond to the modal position *da*. Instead, the *madenda* scale is considered to begin on the pitch *singgul*.

<i>singgul</i>	<i>galimer</i>	<i>tugu</i>	<i>loloran</i>	<i>panelu sorog</i>
4	5	1	2	3-
C	B	G	F#	E
<i>da</i>	<i>mi</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>ti</i>	<i>la</i>

As a result, two contrasting systems of cipher notation have developed to represent the *madenda* scale. In the first, as in the above example, the fixed ciphers 1, 2, 3-, 4 and 5 indicate the 'absolute' pitches *tugu*, *loloran*, *panelu sorog*, *singgul* and *galimer*, respectively. In the second, as in the example below, the *madenda* tuning is first specified and then the cipher numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 (without accidentals) used to correspond to the transposable syllables *da-mi-na-ti-la*.

*surupan madenda (madenda tuning)*

<i>singgul</i>	<i>galimer</i>	<i>tugu</i>	<i>loloran</i>	<i>panelu sorog</i>
1	2	3	4	5
C	B	G	F#	E
<i>da</i>	<i>mi</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>ti</i>	<i>la</i>

Though I mainly encountered the first system in my practical lessons in Bandung, the transposable cipher system was the one that was used to explain aspects of Sundanese music theory to me and is the system that I principally employ in this text. However, for the benefit of readers more familiar with the absolute-system I will also include the fixed *madenda* ciphers in brackets [1, 2, 3-, 4, 5].

## Rhythm and metre

Rhythmically, a single cipher represents one beat or time unit. A single horizontal line placed over two un-spaced ciphers indicates that each tone receives half a beat, whilst two horizontal lines over four ciphers means that the beat is divided into four. Reflecting the influence of Western notation on the development of the Sundanese system, the strong-beat corresponds to the first note in each grouping. In fact, this is at odds with the overriding weak-to-strong beat metrical structure of most *gamelan* music and, as will be seen below, creates difficulties when bar-lines are introduced into the notation.

5 = one beat	$\overline{55}$ = two half-beats	$\overline{\overline{5555}}$ = four quarter-beats
1	1 +	1 + + +

Syncopated rhythms are denoted using a combination of horizontal lines and dots, while a single line over three ciphers specifies something akin to a triplet pattern.

$\overline{\overline{.5.5}}$ or $\overline{\overline{5.5}}$ = syncopated or 'dotted' patterns	$\overline{555}$ = triplet pattern
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Strictly speaking, a dot is used to indicate that the previous tone should be left ringing or sustained, rather than damped or silenced. In practice, a dot is often used to replace a 0, the symbol that signals a rest or an 'empty' (*kosong*) beat.

## Bar-lines

Sundanese ciphers are usually grouped together into 'bars' to make the notation easier to read. In what is a cyclical musical structure, however, there is some dispute as to where precisely the bar-line should be positioned. Musicians are in accord that as important structural tones are conceptualised as destination tones rather than departure tones, points of metric stress should be located at the end (not the beginning) of the bar. Disagreements arise in deciding upon which side of the bar-line to place the weak-beat directly following the destination tone. Some musicians believe that to represent the weak-to-strong beat structure of the music the bar-line should come immediately after the metrically accented tone; in this scheme the subsequent weak-beat is perceived to be already leading towards the next point of destination and is thus deemed to be more logically grouped together with that next destination tone in the following bar.

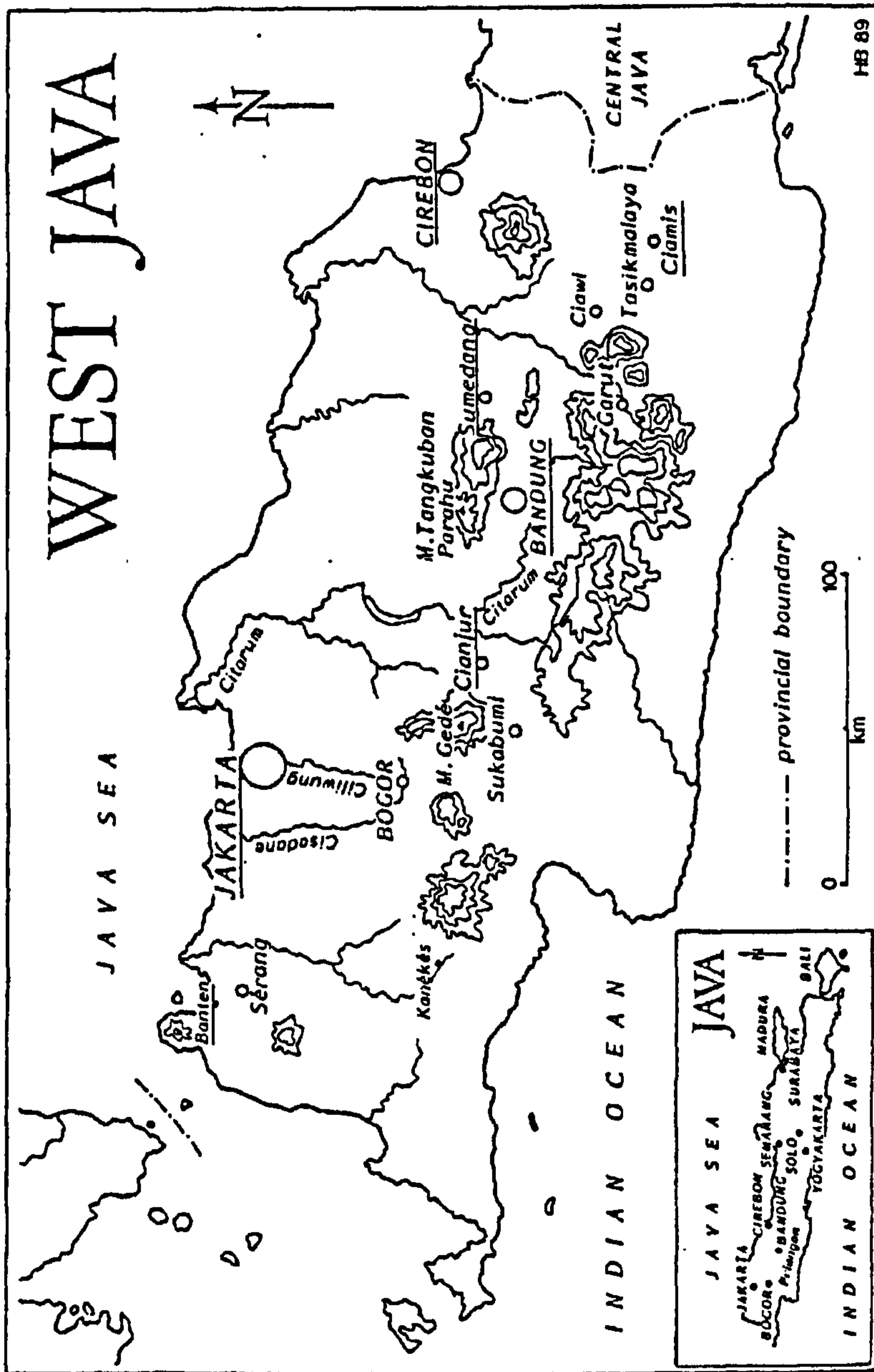
$$\begin{array}{cccccc} \overline{.5} & \overline{55} & \overline{55} & \overline{55} & \overline{5} & \text{etc} \\ 4+ & 1+ & 2+ & 3+ & 4 & + \end{array}$$

Others argue that the notation is easier to read if the bar-line is shifted so that the entire 4<sup>th</sup> beat (weak-beat included) is enclosed in the same bar.

$$\begin{array}{cccccc} \overline{.5} & \overline{55} & \overline{55} & \overline{55} & \overline{55} & \text{etc} \\ 4+ & 1+ & 2+ & 3+ & 4+ & \end{array}$$

As this second method is used in formal educational institutions in Bandung and the one that I personally find the easiest to follow, this is the (albeit imperfect) system that will be used in this text (see Fryer 1989:147-160 for a more detailed discussion of Sundanese notation).

# Map of West Java



Map taken from van Zanten (1989:xiii)  
 (towns/cities mentioned in the text have been underlined)



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*Beber Layar - 'Hoisting the Sail' (a degung song)*

*Matak waas titingalan  
Plungplong taya aling-aling  
Nyawang sakuriling bungking  
Sagara ombak-ombakan  
Katojo ku cahya bulan  
Ombakna umpal-umpalan  
Katingal ti kaangangan  
Ombak lir ngadeukeutan  
Kamudi keur tatan-tatan  
Dek nurunkeun parahuna*

It will make us melancholy.  
To look freely around us, without any obstructions,  
To look at everything around us.  
The ocean is rolling,  
Illuminated by moonlight.  
Its waves are swelling.  
From afar we can see  
The waves, that seem to be coming toward us.  
The sailors are ready  
To push the boat off.

*Beber layar tarik jangkar  
Leong daratan ditilar  
Matak waas matak kelar  
Ngambah lautan Cidamar  
Nya hate bet samar-samar  
Ras emut di Sindangbarang  
Parahuna ting suruwuk  
Beuki tengah beuki jauh  
Ngambang nganclang di sagara  
Ngerab-ngerab banderana*

The sail is hoisted and the anchor heaved.  
It starts sailing and leaves the mainland.  
This evokes nostalgic feelings.  
Sailing along the Cidamar Ocean,  
The heart becomes uncertain,  
It starts thinking of Sindangbarang.  
The boat sails fast,  
Further out, further off.  
It is sailing over the ocean.  
Its flag is waving.

*Hawar-hawar kakupingna  
Sora degung jeung sulingna*

Faintly can  
The sound of the *degung*  
and bamboo flute be heard  
Accompanied by soft singing.  
They blend very beautifully.  
Well, this is the song.  
It is called 'Hoisting the sail'.  
The sound of the bamboo flute is melancholy,  
It makes sad people even sadder.  
The sound of the *degung* is deep,  
And comforts those who are upset.

*Dipirig ku hariringna  
Ninggang pisan wirahmana  
Nya ieu pisan laguna  
'Beber Layar' katelahna  
Lengas-lengis sora suling  
Lir meupeurih nu prihatin  
Sora degung ngelewang  
Ngalilipur nu keur bingung*

Reprinted with kind permission from Wim van Zanten (1987:237-238).

## Introduction

The *degung* is a small *gamelan* ensemble native to the Sundanese people of West Java, Indonesia.<sup>1</sup> Originating as an elite music for the local nobility and formerly housed in aristocratic residences across the province, the city of Bandung became the main focal point for the development of *gamelan degung* during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As the administrative and cultural capital of the region, Bandung is now home to an eclectic assortment of music genres, its urban institutions supporting a range of distinct types of local performing artist. This ethnomusicological study considers the evolution of *gamelan degung* in the musical melting pot of this bustling Southeast Asian city. It explores the way in which the ensemble has come to be positioned as a subsidiary field of specialisation for performers drawn from a variety of musical backgrounds and, at the same time, as a site for the negotiation and assimilation of repertoires and performance practices drawn from across the wider Sundanese music complex. Profiling the different kinds of musicians that make up contemporary *gamelan degung* groups, as well as examining the inherent transformability of the repertoires that they play, musical change will also be correlated to the ensemble's shifting socio-musical function and broader trends in the regional arts scene as a whole.

Though primarily based on fieldwork carried out in Bandung between June 2000 and September 2001, the roots of this study extend back to the summer of 1991 when, as an undergraduate music student at City University, London, I was preparing to take up a last-minute place on an Indonesian government scholarship programme to learn music and dance in Solo (Surakarta), Central Java. Though unaware of the existence of Sundanese music at that time, two unrelated incidents occurred in the days prior to my departure that were to direct the course of my studies throughout that year and, as it turned out, much of the following decade.

Firstly, a British specialist in Sundanese music, Simon Cook, decided to house his collection of Central Javanese instruments at City University and, on hearing about my forthcoming trip at the *gamelan*'s inaugural party, casually invited me to visit him

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix I for an illustration of the individual instruments that make up a standard *gamelan degung* set and for details of each instrument's function in the ensemble.



and his family in Bandung where he was soon to be returning to live. Secondly, knowing that I played the Western classical flute, my then London-based Balinese dance teacher, Nana Naratomo, presented me with a cassette of what she described as “West Javanese flute music” as a parting gift. The cassette, handed to me without a cover or sleeve notes, turned out to be an instrumental *gamelan degung* recording called *Mangle* (pronounced *Manglé*) that was released in the 1980s by the Bandung group Sasaka Domas. This recording made such an immediate impression on me that, in blissful ignorance of the huge schism separating Central Javanese and Sundanese cultures and musics, I arrived in Solo (arguably the cultural heartland of Central Java) enthusiastically requesting to learn *gamelan degung*. Fortuitously this proved possible in the form of private lessons from Cucup Cahripin, an ethnically displaced Sundanese musician teaching at one of the performing arts academies in the city.

It could be argued that the motivation for this dissertation was first kindled in these classes with Cucup Cahripin. My compulsion to pin down the music of the *gamelan degung* was initially provoked by the confusion I felt as I became aware that the pieces that I was being taught to play bore little resemblance to the instrumental arrangements on the *Mangle* recording. My disorientation was further compounded when, on hearing *degung* played live at a wedding reception on my first trip to Bandung, I realised that many of the pieces performed were neither of the type that I had memorised in lessons in Solo nor as featured on the *Mangle* cassette. To begin with I attributed this sense of bewilderment to the fact that I was a *gamelan degung* novice with little command of either the Indonesian or Sundanese language and, therefore, unable to properly question anyone about such discrepancies. Even so, having completed a couple of more substantial fieldwork trips to Bandung and once able to converse more fluently with local musicians, I continued to have the impression that the more ensconced I became in the world of Sundanese music, the more elusive the *gamelan degung* seemed to become.

Not only did locating the precise boundaries of *degung* repertoire prove problematic but there also seemed to be some degree of ambiguity as to the exact constitution of the ensemble’s instrumentation and the definition of its musical personnel. The latter became particularly conspicuous during a return study trip to Bandung in 2000. I realised that although my explicit reason for being in Indonesia was



to learn *gamelan degung*, I was actually taking practical lessons from a selection of singers and musicians whose professed primary domains of expertise lay in the fields of either *tembang Sunda* (Sundanese sung poetry) or *gamelan pelog-salendro* (the *gamelan* used in Sundanese dance and puppet theatre). This sense of intangibility was further exacerbated by the fact that most professional *gamelan* musicians are employed on a freelance basis and, consequently, rarely assembled to perform *degung* outside of the context of paid engagements such as wedding performances or commercial recordings. Working *degung* groups in the city tend not to rehearse on any regular basis and ad hoc practice sessions are generally only convened in preparation for specific events. Aside from my original questions, then, I also began to ponder how Sundanese musicians ever learn to play *gamelan degung* in the first place, as well as how the new songs and instrumental arrangements – which are packaged as highly polished finished-products on cassette – are actually composed, transmitted, rehearsed and recorded.

Turning to the available literature on Sundanese music only provided a partial clarification of some of these issues. Certainly, the repertoire classifications commonly presented in texts did not fully account for the diversity of the material that I variously encountered at performances, in lessons or on recordings. It remains a fact that the plethora of performing art genres found in West Java have been largely overlooked by ethnomusicologists whose work on Indonesia to date has primarily concentrated on the musics of Central Java and Bali. While the scope of literature, in English and Indonesian, pertaining to the most well known Sundanese ensembles is steadily growing, the *gamelan degung* itself has spurred relatively little scholarly research since Max Harrell's dissertation on the subject in 1974. Harrell's work, predating as it does many of the mass media driven innovations that have subsequently come to define the contemporary *degung* tradition and, instead, focusing on an etic analysis of the court-derived 'classical' repertoire, is of limited use in terms of shedding light on the repertoire and function of the *gamelan* as it survives in Bandung today.

Nevertheless, more up-to-date information is provided by Sean Williams (1989) who discusses the popular end of *degung kawih* (light vocal song-based repertoire) in her article on 'pop Sunda', while Simon Cook (1992) also includes a more comprehensive hands-on introduction to the two principal types of *gamelan degung* piece in his indispensable *Guide to Sundanese Music*. In addition, the substantial



crossover of repertoire, playing techniques and instruments between discrete Sundanese art forms means that several dissertations exploring other music genres do include select information about the ensemble. Ernst Heins (1977), for instance, devotes a substantial chapter of his dissertation on the antiquated *goong renteng* to the *degung* ensemble that he hypothesises evolved out of this archaic *gamelan*. Ruth Fryer (1989), on the other hand, surveys the history, instrumentation and function of the *degung* within her wider examination of Sundanese *gamelan* in Bandung. Similarly, Wim van Zanten (1987, 1989) and Sean Williams (1990, 2001) make reference to the areas of overlap between *tembang Sunda* and *gamelan degung* in their separate pieces of work on the former, while Andrew Weintraub (1997) draws attention to the recent use of *degung* songs in Sundanese puppet theatre in his study of *wayang golek*. Even Henry Spiller's (2001) exploration of Sundanese improvisational dance includes a chapter that considers the place of *degung* in the Sundanese wedding celebrations. Readers requiring a more general introduction to *gamelan degung* can now also consult Williams' and Cook's entries on Sundanese music in *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music* (Williams 1998), and *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (Cook 2001) respectively, as well as refer to the overview of *degung* genres provided in *The Rough Guide To World Music: Volume 2 (Latin and North America, Caribbean, India, Asia and Pacific)* (2000).

Indonesian language publications relating to *gamelan degung* mainly consist of introductory-level teaching manuals and notation compilations, though Abun Somawijaya (1986) and Deni Hermawan (1994), both instructors at Bandung's foremost performing arts academy, have undertaken projects to look at the distribution of shared melodic phrases in the classical *degung* repertoire. Likewise, Herlia Tisana (1997), a graduate of the same institution, presents a more analytical study of the role of the *gamelan degung* in the Sundanese wedding ceremony in her undergraduate thesis devoted to this subject. Several Sundanese musicians have also written brief histories of *gamelan degung*, producing short articles in Indonesian periodicals that outline the pertinent junctures in the ensemble's chronological evolution (see Nanda SA. 1977, Sukanda Art 1991, Abun Somawijaya 1997 & Didi Wiardi 2001). Moreover, in July 1999, *Taman Budaya Bandung*, a government-run arts centre in the city, hosted a one-day symposium to take stock of the development of *gamelan degung* in the city. Aside



from performances by leading groups, papers were given by several of Bandung's most prominent *degung* composers including Nano Suratno and Ismet Ruchimat.

In terms of other texts that have been particularly influential in the theoretical framing and shaping of this research, I must first acknowledge Benjamin Brinner's *Knowing Music, Making Music: Javanese Gamelan and the Theory of Musical Competence and Interaction* (1995). The idea of using 'transformation' as a lens through which to explore the music and changing function of *gamelan degung* was initially inspired by the model of musical competence (of which transformation is one domain) developed by Brinner in this ground breaking book. My approach to this topic is also informed by the burgeoning body of literature dedicated to the issue of musical variation, improvisation and cognition. Of special note are two seminal volumes – Bruno Nettl's *In the Course of Performance: Studies in the World of Musical Improvisation* (1998), and Paul F. Berliner's *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation* (1994). Finally, I must also make specific mention of R. Anderson Sutton's comprehensive study of variation in Central Javanese *gamelan* (1993). Though I am aware that drawing direct parallels between Central Javanese and Sundanese musics is an inherently hazardous endeavour, Sutton's generalised description of a "steady state" tradition that eschews more sweeping change in favour of internal dynamism and variation (Sutton 1993:4) has resonance with my own interpretation of musical innovation in West Java. Though Bandung musicians may be justified in their claims that they are more artistically daring and less conformist to 'tradition' than their Central Javanese counterparts, the reality remains that composition in Sundanese music often (though not always) has as much to do with the creative transferral, recombination and adaptation of extant musical elements as with a more radical pursuit of originality or entirely novel invention.

The notion of Bandung's artists efficiently maximising the musical materials at their disposal first took root in my own imagination on a tour of a West Javanese coconut plantation several years ago. The tour-guide's boast that not a single part of the coconut is wasted or thrown away – the husk being considered as a versatile building material and the flesh and the milk used in the production of a wide range of food stuffs, beauty products and oil – immediately struck a chord with my appreciation of the role that processes of recycling and transformation play in the construction, arrangement and



performance of Sundanese musical repertoires. Though I dismissed this intuitive reflection as being rather fanciful at the time, the liner notes of the Bandung-based group Sambasunda's recording *Salsa and Salse* also make a metaphorical link between the multiple utility of one of the region's natural resources and the ingenuity of its musicians. While the cover of this album features the motto "we live, we eat, we play with bamboos", the sleeve notes compare the versatility of two of the musicians on the recording to that of a bamboo plant, adding "there is nothing about them that can not be use [sic]" (*Salsa and Salse*, GNP 2001). This same resourcefulness is also manifest in the way in which musical units of all sizes, ranging from micro-motifs and idiomatic playing patterns to larger-scale tonal frameworks and entire pieces, are constantly reused and reworked across the wider music system as a whole.

This study of *gamelan degung* considers musical transformation from two distinct but ultimately interrelated perspectives. On one level, it historically contextualises the different types of repertoire that are played by contemporary groups in Bandung, charting the ways in which musicians have creatively responded to, as well as more actively shaped their altering environment over time. On another level, cutting across this diachronic examination, is a synchronic analysis of the multiple competences of the performers and the inherent transformability of the musical structures implicated in such musical change. Inevitably, the former is informed by the latter: the manner in which *gamelan degung* has negotiated 'external' socio-cultural, economic, technological and political upheavals having been determined, at least in part, by the core skills of the ensemble's musicians and the associated constitution of the music systems at their disposal. As Merriam observes,

... the degree to which internal change is possible in a culture depends to a major extent upon the concepts about music held in the culture. That is, ideas about the sources of music, composition, learning, and so forth, provide the cultural framework within which change is encouraged, discouraged, or allowed (1964:307).

Different research methods were employed to tackle these different lines of enquiry. The broader ethnographic and historical data that I present, for example, was mainly obtained through extensive fieldwork interviews, by participating in and observing



wedding celebrations, recording sessions and rehearsals, as well as by searching out and combing through relevant written sources, photographs and recordings. In contrast, the emphasis that I place on musical learning, cognition, and analysis is a direct consequence of the fact that I legitimated and filled my day-to-day life in the 'field' by assuming the role of a trainee musician. Given that most *degung* groups in the city rarely rehearse, instrumental and vocal lessons enabled me to sustain regular contact with Bandung musicians. What is more, performance itself proved to be an invaluable research technique and the most fruitful way of gaining insights into the often unnamed processes at the heart of this dissertation.

During my time in Bandung I studied with a variety of Sundanese artists. In addition to my principal *gamelan* teachers, Ade Komaran and Lili Suparli, I received ongoing vocal tuition from the *tembang*-trained singers Mamah Dasimah and Hendrawati, and the *gamelan* singer Iyan Arliani. Apart from one-to-one sessions with individual Bandung-based performers, I also tried to observe as many different types of *degung* group as was possible. At the same time, in order to gain more in-depth information, I attached myself more regularly to the group Sasaka Domas, a distinguished urban troupe headed by my singing teacher Mamah Dasimah and her husband Didin Bajuri (and, coincidentally, the group on the *Mangle* recording).

Clearly, confined as my fieldwork was to particular socio-musical networks in Bandung, it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to detail local variations in repertoire and style or to survey the distribution of *degung* groups across the wider region. While it does appear that musical fashions originating in the city persistently ripple out and impact on the practices of singers and instrumentalists operating in outlying districts, the way in which *gamelan degung* is or is not used in other areas of West Java remains a potentially interesting topic for future research. For now, the spotlight will remain on the mainstream *degung* tradition as propagated in the Sundanese cultural capital.

Chapter 1 pieces together a history of *gamelan degung*, beginning with the ensemble's early origins in the West Javanese courts through to its reinvention and renaissance in postcolonial Bandung. In chapter 2, the focus shifts to the multiple competences of the musicians involved in any performance of *gamelan degung*, as well as the formal and non-formal contexts in which such competence is attained. Chapters 3, 4 and 5, in contrast, present more detailed musical analyses to illustrate some of the

specific transformative practices that are operative in the construction, adaptation and performance of *degung* repertoires. Chapter 3 evaluates the relative malleability of the musical models underpinning the *klasik* and the *kawih* repertoires, while chapter 4 looks at the realisation of the model within two studies of improvisation in *degung kawih*. The first of these reflects on some of the techniques that *cempres* metallophone players use to generate and vary independent melodic lines; the second explores melodic embellishment as a socio-culturally, contextually, as well as musically informed process by means of an examination of Sundanese vocal styles. Chapter 5 then turns to the subject of cross-genre transformation and assesses the ways in which form and tuning facilitate or prohibit the transfer and adaptation of repertoire from other Sundanese genres to *gamelan degung*. Finally, the penultimate and concluding chapters, chapters 6 and 7, continue from where chapter one left off. Charting the development of *gamelan degung* on cassette, and then exploring the contemporary function of the ensemble in the Sundanese wedding, the dissertation closes by contemplating the future of the ensemble in the face of the world music phenomenon and ‘globalisation’.



## Chapter 1

### From *kabupaten* to *kaset*: piecing together a history of *gamelan degung*

#### 1.1 Early history

The early development of the *gamelan degung* remains conjectural; reliable historical evidence is scarce and existing secondary sources are often contradictory. Archive-based research may yet unearth further clues as to the precise location and date of the ensemble's initial emergence. In the meantime, the evolution of *gamelan degung* continues to arouse much lively speculation.

What is known is that the *gamelan degung* was cultivated in the West Javanese courts (*kabupaten*) under the patronage of local regents (*bupati*). Kunst, who was undertaking fieldwork in Java in the 1930s, observed that the *gamelan degung* was “fairly rare” but “found in the *kratons* of Cheribon, and in practically all West Javanese *kabupaten*” (Kunst 1973:68 & 387). Indeed, it is suggested that the term ‘*degung*’ is derived from ‘*Ratu Agung*’ (His or Her Royal Highness) or ‘*Tumenggung*’ (a name for a newly installed regent), titles of the ensemble's early aristocratic benefactors (Somawijaya 1997:56).

Although the exact age of the *degung* remains uncertain, sources indicate that the ensemble was well established by the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Heins, for instance, alludes to a manuscript dating from around 1872 which details the various ensembles housed at the former Sundanese *kabupaten* of Galuh (near present day Ciamis). This court is said to have possessed “as many as six different types of *gamelan*”, including *degung* (Heins 1977:55, 118-119). In addition, Somawijaya refers to a ‘*degung*’ entry in a Sundanese-Dutch dictionary of 1879 (1997:54), while Van Zanten quotes Coolsma (1884) who, presumably referring to the vertical suspension of the *jengglong* gongs, defined *degung* as a “hanging *gamelan*” (1987:105).

Most writers suppose that the *degung* ensemble, at least in the form that it is recognised today, emerged some time in the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> centuries; this was a period in which the Sundanese nobility experienced unprecedented levels of wealth and status under Dutch colonial rule. Williams explains “Regents did well under the Dutch in much

of West Java because the areas under their control provided large profits from agricultural production”. Consequently, “these Sundanese noblemen... had the time and money to patronize various traditional art forms” (1990:38). Supporting a system of musical patronage similar in design to, if not on as grand a scale as the Javanese courts, the Sundanese regents thus began to develop their own distinctive forms of aristocratic musical expression (*ibid.*). Van Zanten concludes,

For almost two centuries from around 1750 till the Second World War, they could presumably pay more attention to the arts than ever before. Today’s two important Sundanese music genres, *gamelan degung* and *tembang Sunda*, developed in this period, probably from origins in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century or in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (1987:20).

### 1.1.1 Cianjur

The *kabupaten* of Cianjur, home of *tembang Sunda*, appears to hold an important, if uncertain position in the history of the *gamelan degung*. Tarya, a *suling* player in the *gamelan degung* ensemble at the *kabupaten* of Bandung recalled performing in Cianjur in the 1920s and the leader of the Bandung group warning, “Kids, you should play very carefully and be on guard, because *this place is the place of degung*” (Tarya in Harrell 1974:226, emphasis my own).

According to the Sundanese historian Nina H. Lubis, the regent of Cianjur (1834-1863), R. Adipati Kusumaningrat (also known as Dalem Pancaniti) deserves specific credit for his role in the development of the *degung* ensemble (1998:243). As a keen sponsor of the arts, Dalem Pancaniti is more commonly associated with his patronage of *tembang Sunda*, a genre that reached “the peak of its development” during the reign of this regent in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (Williams 1990:44). Pointing to the musical similarities between the *tembang Sunda* and *gamelan degung* repertoires, some musicians argue that it is likely the two genres developed in close proximity to one another. Aside from the shared use of the *pelog degung* tuning and the *suling* flute, one subset of the *tembang Sunda* repertoire is called *dedegungan* (in the style of *degung*). Simon Cook speculates that there are also unacknowledged links between *degung*



repertoire and some of the *papantunan* songs (*p.c.*, 2000a); these pieces are widely believed by practitioners to be the oldest type of *tembang Sunda* repertoire.

Other writers contend that the *gamelan degung* developed some time after *tembang Sunda*. Suwarakusumah, for instance, proposes that *degung* emerged towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century under the auspices of Dalem Pancaniti's successor, R.A.A. Prawiradireja (1863-1910) (Durban Ardjo 1998:38). R. Ace Hasan Su'eb, on the other hand, places the *gamelan degung* in Cianjur at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, further implying that the ensemble had existed elsewhere prior to its arrival in Cianjur (1997:18 & 22).

### 1.1.2 Cirebon

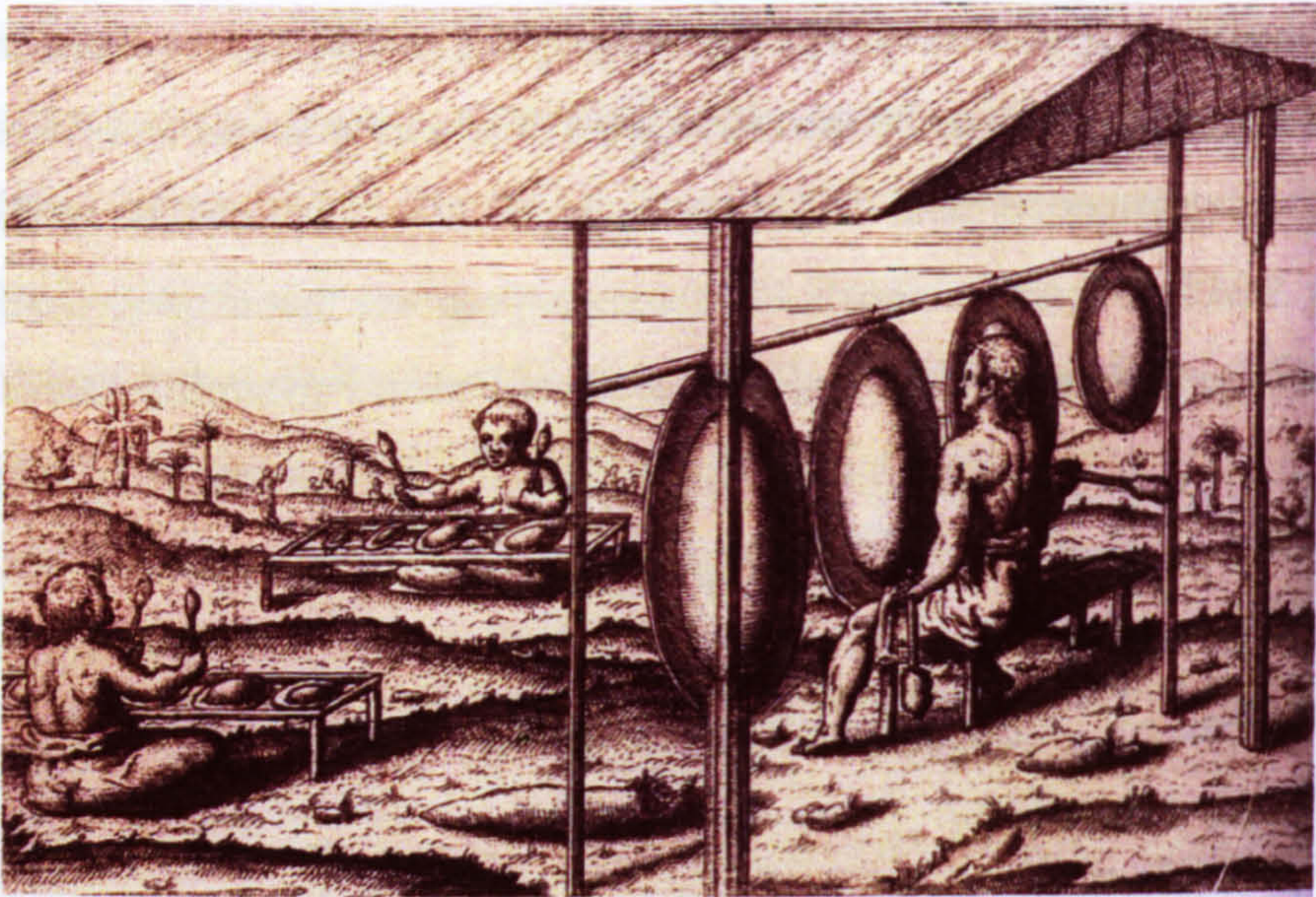
There are several theories in circulation that suggest that the *gamelan degung* predates the 18<sup>th</sup> century. One hypothesis is that the *gamelan degung* was brought to Cianjur from the court of Cirebon, Java's oldest continuous royal city situated on the island's north coast (Enoch Atmadibrata, *p.c.*, 2001). These two courts share an important historical connection in that Cianjur became a regency in 1691 "when the Cirebon court itself sent a member of its household to found an establishment there" (Heins 1977:14). The 'Cirebon theory' is partly based on the existence of a *gamelan degung* set which is housed in the museum at the Kasepuhan court in Cirebon and which, according to museum records, dates from 1426 and originally came from Banten.<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, the experiences of the first Dutch trading voyage to Banten (1595–1597) are recounted in *Historie van Indien* (Lodewijckszoon, Amsterdam 1598). Illustrations from this book, many of which were reproduced as part of a British Library exhibition,<sup>2</sup> include a drawing of a small musical ensemble which, whether Sundanese or Javanese in origin, features a series of four hanging gongs and two single row gong-chimes that are similar in basic design to the *jengglong* and *bonang*; these two instruments are often said to define the *gamelan degung*.

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<sup>1</sup> Notably, Banten, situated at the far west of Java's north coast, was the former seaport of the Sundanese kingdom of Pajajaran (1333-1579, see 1.1.3 below).

<sup>2</sup> 'Trading Places: The East India Company and Asia', an exhibition held at the British Library, 24<sup>th</sup> May-15<sup>th</sup> September 2002. I have Sheila Cude to thank for drawing my attention to this exhibition.





**Fig. 1:1 Lodewijckszoon's depiction of a *gamelan* in Banten 1598**

(Reproduced in Farrington 2002:38)

The Cirebon connection is also supported by Richard North's account of the *gamelan* '*denggung*' that he encountered during visits to Cirebon in 1978 and 1982.<sup>3</sup> In a fascinating paper that describes his "search for the ancient *gamelan* of Sunda", Richard North writes that each of the three palaces in Cirebon houses its own *gamelan denggung*, instruments that "are said to have been brought to Cirebon from the Hindu-Sundanese Kingdom of Galuh" (near present day Ciamis), when this kingdom was defeated by Islamic-Javanese Cirebon in the 15<sup>th</sup> century (2002). North points out that this makes the *denggung* "the oldest gamelan possessed by the three Keraton in Cirebon", noting the irony that "the most ancient musical heirlooms of these Javanese courts" are "not Javanese at all, but Sundanese" (*ibid.*).

<sup>3</sup>*Degung* is called *denggung* in the Cirebon dialect of Javanese (North 2002). Interestingly, there is also a small repertoire of Javanese pieces known in Solo (Central Java) as *denggungan*, which, according to Harrell, show "some basic motifs closely related to the Sundanese" (1974:48-49).



In September 2000, I visited Cirebon in an attempt to track down these mysterious *gamelan denggung*. At the smaller Kecirebonan court I was shown a dusty, cobweb-covered set of partially cracked instruments that were stacked up on shelves in a back room. The palace guide informed me that these now rarely used instruments had, as described in North's account, originally functioned as part of a potent magic ritual performed during an overly long dry season to bring about rain. North, who was fortunate enough to witness a *gamelan denggung* performance at this court in 1982, details the ritual precautions that were taken to prevent any untoward consequences, including on this particular occasion, the onset of rain. Despite such safety measures North recalls, "In the span of a quarter hour a clear, cloudless night sky became quickly filled with menacing thunderheads". As a result, the *denggung* session was brought to a timely close. To his surprise the clouds then "withdrew again and everyone seemed to breathe a sigh of relief" (*ibid.*).

### 1.1.3 Pajajaran

Many Sundanese musicians are convinced that, whatever its more recent evolution, the roots of the *gamelan degung* trace back to the Sundanese Hindu kingdom of Pajajaran. Crucially, like the Cirebon theory outlined above, this hypothesis presupposes that the *gamelan degung* predates the importation of *gamelan* from Central Java (see 1.1.4) and, thereby, endorses the widely held supposition that the ensemble is uniquely Sundanese.

For the Sundanese, the Pajajaran kingdom represents the pinnacle of self-rule (Weintraub 1990:10), evoking "an entire constellation of ideas surrounding identity, nostalgia, lost glory, ancestry, spirituality, and pastoral imagery" (Williams 2001:197). Many Sundanese songs celebrate "Pajajaran's independence and relative power" (Williams 1990:269) and, indeed, claims linking the *degung* ensemble with this former kingdom are primarily supported with accounts of Pajajaran as portrayed in a type of Sundanese sung epic narrative known as *pantun*.<sup>4</sup> Van Zanten, however, argues that it is

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<sup>4</sup> Harrell also considers the link between *pantun* and *degung* from another perspective. "The *degung* scale is one of the scales used by the *pantun* singer, a tradition which is associated with the kingdom of Pajajaran... It is possible that some of the songs of the *pantun* singer were borrowed by the *degung* ensemble" (1974:11). For more information about *pantun* see Weintraub (1990).



too rash to conclude that *gamelan degung* “existed in the Pajajaran kingdom (14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century)... from the mere fact that the name *degung* is mentioned in the *pantun* stories about this kingdom” (1987:105).

Although it may not be possible to substantiate claims that the *degung* originated during the Pajajaran era, such imagined connections are as significant as historical ‘reality’ in terms of the ensemble’s more recent evolution and current position in Sundanese society. The fact that *gamelan degung* is now usually considered as the ensemble of choice in theatrical productions and ceremonies that evoke the Pajajaran and Dutch colonial eras will be discussed in further detail below.

Williams observes that the reason why *tembang Sunda* performers emphasise the mythical aspects of Pajajaran over historical facts has as much to do with the “lack of importance ascribed to historical accuracy” as with the “apparent lack of common factual knowledge” about the kingdom (2001:198). This view is supported by my repeated experiences listening to certain musicians expound upon the prestigious and sacred (*sakral*) status of *gamelan degung*. When I pressed these same performers for more precise historical information, I would almost always be told that musicians are artists, not historians.

#### **1.1.4 Central Java and the *goong renteng***

In contrast to many Sundanese musicians, Heins concludes that all the existing evidence seems to indicate that *gamelan* is an invention of the Muslim, rather than the Hindu era (1977: 31 & 138). Remaining sceptical about any link between *gamelan degung* and Pajajaran, Heins bases these opinions on his evaluation of the descriptions of the smaller instrumental ensembles that historical accounts indicate characterised Hindu Javanese and Sundanese musical life. He argues,



Almost all the component instruments of the gamelan were already present in ancient Java before the advent of Islam in the sixteenth century. But so far no philological or archaeological evidence has been found which shows a slow stylistic evolution leading from the unspecified, noisy *tatabuhan*-groups and the softly humming trios that accompanied shadow-play and female solo dance in Pajajaran and Majapahit times all the way up to the impressive orchestras which adorned the first Moslem courts of Central and perhaps North Java (*ibid.*, 31).

Van Zanten agrees, suggesting that it is significant that a key Sundanese historical source, the 16<sup>th</sup> century manuscript *Sanghyang siksa kandang karesian*, alludes to many types of art but makes no mention of *gamelan* or *gamelan degung* (1987:44-45). Although not popular in Sundanese circles, the most frequently cited hypothesis for the emergence of the *gamelan degung* traces the ensemble back to a type of archaic *gamelan* ensemble that, Heins proposes, was brought to West Java by the Central Javanese.

A critical moment in Sundanese history occurred in 1579 when Pajajaran fell to Islamic Javanese forces from the port city of Banten. As the expansionist Islamic kingdom of Mataram (founded in 1575) approached from the north and the east, most of West Java was forced to surrender to this dominant Central Javanese administration (Heins 1977:11-15). In 1656, Sultan Amangkurat I divided West Java into twelve districts which were then governed by Javanese regents (*ibid.*, 14 & Williams 1990:27). It was around this period that “Javanese became the official language, which it would remain for about 200 years”, and “Javanese poetical forms, theatre and music penetrated the Priangan (notably the *gamelan*)” (van Zanten 1987:18). The influx of Central Javanese values, customs and art forms continued throughout the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century but came to an abrupt end when, after a series of treaties the last of which was signed in 1705, the increasingly powerful Dutch colonial administration replaced the Javanese regents with hereditary Sundanese noblemen (Heins 1977:15). It seems that the Javanese *gamelan*, however, were left behind (*ibid.*).

Heins speculates that the ceremonial *gamelan goong renteng* and *goong ajeng*, the subject of his PhD research, do not only represent an older stage in the development of Sundanese *gamelan*, but are the very *gamelan* left behind by the Javanese Mataram rulers over three centuries ago (*ibid.*, 140). Heins further hypothesises that the *gamelan*



*degung* may have gradually evolved out of these archaic ensembles as the new Sundanese regents began to replace any residual symbols of Javanese domination with their own culturally distinctive art forms (*ibid.*, 142-143).

While Harrell, who characterises the *goong renteng* as a “strong (keras) outdoor ensemble” and *degung* as a “refined (alus) ensemble”, argues that these *gamelan* “belong to two different worlds”, he does acknowledge that the instrumental composition of both is similar (1974:31-32). Instrumentation aside, Heins also points to the fact that the two ensembles may have shared repertoire. Contrasting transcriptions of the *goong renteng* piece *Galatik Nunut* with the *gamelan degung* piece *Galatik Mangut*, Heins demonstrates that, despite the use of different tunings, the two pieces employ an analogous melodic contour (1977:92-94). All the same, Didi Wiardi noted that repertoire borrowing between discrete Sundanese music genres is common practice and that this does not automatically imply any evolutionary connection (*p.c.*, 2001b).

Another point of difference between the two types of ensemble is that while both incorporate an extended-range single-row *bonang*, the instrument is played by two musicians in *goong renteng* and by only one in *gamelan degung* (Heins 1977:75). According to North, however, the *gamelan denggung* performance that he observed in Cirebon also used “a second player on the long single row *bonang*”. Commenting that the resultant music sounded “somewhere between the vigorous and earthy *goong renteng* and the smooth and refined modern *degung*”, he conjectures that the *denggung* ensembles found in the Cirebon courts may represent “a missing link between these two musics” (2002).

### 1.1.5 Early instrumentation

The archaic *gamelan degung* housed in court museums in Cirebon and Sumedang reveal that the early *degung* ensemble was smaller and its instrumentation not as standardised as it is today. It may well be that the early history of this *gamelan* is obscured by the diversity of archaic ensemble types that can be considered to be precursors to, or early versions of *gamelan degung*.



The first *gamelan degung* in Bandung is said to have comprised only *jengglong*, *bonang*, *saron* and *goong* (Soepandi 1974:8). A similar instrumentation constitutes the *degung* exhibited at the Museum in Sumedang (dated 1791), although this set is augmented with a time-keeping *ketuk* pot (North 2002). Harrell also writes that a three-kettle instrument called a *keprak* is included with the *gamelan degung* housed in Cirebon and Sumedang (1974:20-22). While the *suling* and *kendang* appear to have been later additions to the ensemble, Snelleman lists the *rebab* bowed lute as a *gamelan degung* instrument (1918:820 in van Zanten 1987:105). Rather intriguingly, a photograph of a *degung* ensemble taken in Banten around 1900 includes both a *rebab* and *gambang* (xylophone), instruments now typically associated with Sundanese *gamelan pelog-salendro* and commonly believed to have only been incorporated into *gamelan degung* performance since the 1960s.



**Fig. 1:2 *Gamelan degung* in Banten c. 1900**



Whether or not these additional instruments actually belonged to the *degung* group, however, is open to question. It is notable that this photograph of *gamelan degung*,<sup>5</sup> shares an almost identical backdrop to that of a Sundanese *gamelan salendro* group allegedly taken ten years earlier (c. 1890).<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the last three *jengglong* of the *gamelan degung* can be made out in the far right-hand corner of the *gamelan salendro* picture, suggesting that both photographs were probably taken at the same location on the same day. It is possible then that the *gambang* and *rebab* were borrowed from another ensemble in order to create a more elaborate portrait. Whatever the case, it seems that the *jengglong* was formerly the only prerequisite instrument in the ensemble (Kunst 1949:387 in Harrell 1974:26). Indeed, 'degung' is said to be a synonym for the vertically hanging style of *jengglong* found in older *gamelan* sets.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to the lack of a standardised instrumentation, it appears that constituent instruments themselves were (and, to a certain extent, continue to be) also built to idiosyncratic specifications. Most contemporary *bonang degung*, for example, comprise fourteen pots suspended on a V or U shaped frame. However, some accounts suggest that the *bonang degung* originally consisted of nine pots suspended on a single straight rack (Tjarmedi 1974:13). Entis Sutisna pointed out that in many older 'classical' *degung (degung klasik)*<sup>8</sup> pieces only nine pots are actually required as the *bonang* melody rarely goes below the middle-octave tone 5 (*p.c.*, 2001). Conversely, Harrell notes that the *bonang degung* observed by Kunst were made up of between eleven and sixteen pots (1974:23). As illustrated in the photograph below, the *gamelan degung* on display at Cirebon's Kasepuhan court museum includes a sixteen-pot *bonang*.

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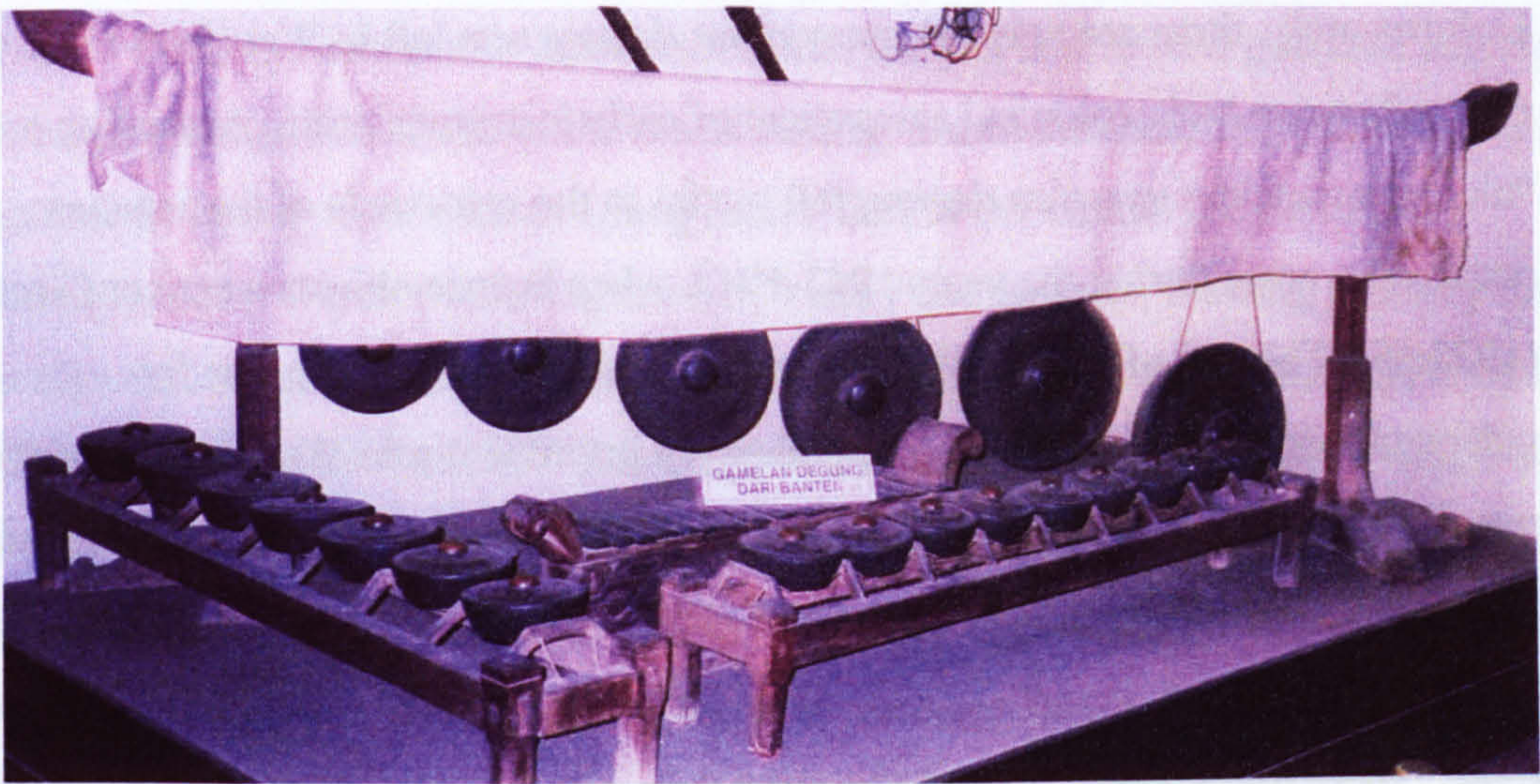
<sup>5</sup> Indexed as image code 3670 on the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean studies online image database (<http://www.iias.nl/institutes/kitlv/hisdoc.html>), accessed 17<sup>th</sup> August 2002.

<sup>6</sup> The photograph of the *gamelan salendro* ensemble is indexed as image code 3687.

<sup>7</sup> North pointed out that 'de-gung' might have been an early onomatopoeic word to describe the sound of the gong. As such, the term *degung* may have been used to refer to both the individual gong-based instruments and the entire *gamelan* ensemble. The term gong (*goong*) is also used in place of 'gamelan' in the case of the Sundanese *goong renteng* and the Balinese *gong kebyar* (North, *p.c.*, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> *Degung klasik* is the name now given to the instrumental repertoire developed by *degung* musicians in the Sundanese courts (see 3.2).





**Fig. 1:3 Gamelan degung housed at the Kasepuhan court in Cirebon (dated 1426)**

In September 2000, I was invited to a commemorative multimedia performance sponsored by the descendants of R.A.A. Wiranatakusumah V, former Regent of Cianjur and Bandung and keen patron of the Sundanese arts. The event organisers had commissioned a special *degung* set for the occasion that had an eighteen-pot *bonang* instead of the now standard fourteen. One family member, Rd. Lalam Wiranatakusumah, authoritatively explained that the additional pots served to expand the highest and lowest ranges of the instrument in line with the ‘original’ design of the instrument. He then demonstrated how certain classical style pieces employ melodies that have to awkwardly bend back on themselves in the higher octave on today’s fourteen-pot *bonang*; adding two extra pots or pitches to the instrument’s top end rectifies this problem (*p.c.*, 2000).

While no musical explanation was given for the two extra pots at the *bonang*’s lower end, another individual involved in the development of this project told me that eighteen was a magic number. The eighteen pots of the *bonang* were said to correlate to the eighteen strings of the *kacapi indung* in *tembang Sunda*, the eighteen letters of the original Sundanese alphabet and eighteen energy centres in the body. These claims were not, however, substantiated with any hard evidence and I will simply note that in the same, albeit riveting conversation, the Sunda region was also linked to the lost city of Atlantis.



Unfortunately, there are now not many older *degung* sets left in West Java for a comprehensive archaeological assessment of early instrumentation. According to Heins, “almost all ancient *gamelan degung* fell victim to the war-needs of the Japanese occupation army during the years 1942-1945, when bronze objects were confiscated” (1977:65). The end of World War II then saw the beginning of the war for independence<sup>9</sup> in which Bandung also played a prominent role. Again, most of the remaining *degung* sets were “destroyed outright” or “simply disappeared” (Harrell 1974:13).

### 1.1.6 *Gamelan degung* at the *kabupaten*

Accounts of *degung* at the *kabupaten* tend to describe the various types of staging associated with the ensemble as well as the sorts of function at which the ensemble was employed. Aside from “state receptions, dinners and public appearances” of the regent (Heins 1977:62), it is suggested that the *degung* was played to welcome important guests, to accompany marriages (Harrell 1974:13), as well as to add an element of grandeur to state inaugurations and other official ceremonial occasions (Hasan Su’eb 1997:22). Harrell notes that at the *kabupaten* of Cianjur “there still exists a sort of bandstand, or gazebo, in the middle of a small pond said to have been used for the *degung*” (1974:13.). R. Ace Hasan Su’eb refers to this pavilion structure as *bale kambang* (1997:34).<sup>10</sup>

The *gamelan degung* is often associated with water and sailing, with the ensemble alleged to have been played at aristocratic fishing parties.<sup>11</sup> It is said that on such occasions “the *degung* was played on a platform placed over two boats” (Harrell 1974:12). Nano Suratno additionally mentioned that the *degung* was sometimes used to accompany a particular type of fishing practice (called *ngabedakeun marak*) which involved draining a pool or river of water and picking out the fish from the dry bed (*p.c.*,

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<sup>9</sup> Indonesian Independence was declared on 17<sup>th</sup> August 1945, but not achieved until late 1949.

<sup>10</sup> *Bale Ngambang* is also the name of a *gamelan degung* piece.

<sup>11</sup> According to Lubis, fishing and hunting were the favoured recreational activities of the Sundanese aristocracy (1998:248-249).



2000a).<sup>12</sup> Other musicians also draw attention to the fact that several *gamelan degung* pieces have names that allude to the sea or sailing. Enoch Atmadibrata, for instance, has questioned whether titles such as *Ujung Laut* ('End of the Ocean'), *Lalayaran* ('Sailing'), *Beber Layar* ('Hoisting the Sail') and *Padayungan* ('Rowing a Boat') could be a sign that certain parts of the *degung* repertoire developed in a coastal seaport such as Cirebon (Wiardi 2001a:10).<sup>13</sup> Similarly, van Zanten cites a *pantun* story which tells that "Mundinglaya [the son of Pajajaran's famed King Prabu Siliwangi] sails away, and 'Sailing' is a *degung* song" (Pleyte 1907b:115 in van Zanten 1989:103). Connections between boats and Pajajaran are also found in *tembang Sunda*. One of the names for the large *kacapi indung* is *kacapi prahu* or 'boat *kacapi*'. Williams notes "Several musicians (not just players of *kacapi*) described the instrument as the 'boat that carries us to Pajajaran'" (2001:212-213).

Aside from this link with fishing and sailing, descriptions of colonial era *degung* performances also frequently refer to the ensemble as being played outdoors on elevated platforms that could be up to several metres high. Kunst notes that in the 1930s, the regent of Bandung still observed an old custom and had his *gamelan degung* placed on a specially designed balcony over the entrance gate on the *alun alun* (town square) side of the wall surrounding his residence (1973:391). The *degung* ensemble is also said to have been placed "on top of a small tower and played during hunting expeditions" (Harrell 1974:13). Entjar Tjarmedi, a *degung* musician at the *kabupaten* of Bandung, described how he had taken part in an annual carnival event known as the *pesta raja* (the king's fête) while still a teenager in the late 1930s. On one such occasion the *degung* group played on a stage that was suspended on top of a large wheeled construction and pulled through the streets of Bandung. Another year, the *degung* group processed through the streets on foot, the instruments carried by non-performers so that the musicians could simultaneously play and walk (Upandi 1997:11). Rachmat Sukmasaputra similarly

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<sup>12</sup> Benjamin Zimmer elaborates that *ngabedakeun* means to distinguish or differentiate, while *marak* means to dam up a stream in order to remove fish. *Marak* is a verb from the root *parak*. Interestingly, many Sundanese villages are called *Parakan*, which might indicate that such fishing practices were also common in village life. Another term possibly linking Sundanese arts and fishing is *nayubkeun*, meaning to drain a pond or lake for fish. The term *nayubkeun* is presented as one possible etymological explanation for the classical dance form *tayuban* (p.c., 2001).

<sup>13</sup> Or perhaps Banten?

recalled that the *gamelan degung* was performed at Bandung's *pasar malam* (night market) on a *ranggon* (wooden stage) that was five metres high (*p.c.*, 2000). Suratno made the comment that *goong renteng* was also housed in a *saung ranggon* (a type of wooden hut erected on stilts in a field) when performed as part of rice harvest rituals (*p.c.*, 2000a). Although the *gamelan degung* has no association with rural agricultural festivities, the use of a similar type of elevated staging is possibly further indication of some link between the two ensembles.

### 1.1.7 *Degung* in Bandung

In 1864 Bandung became the administrative capital of West Java. This resulted in the decline of the regencies of Cianjur and Sumedang but saw the city develop as a focal point for Sundanese culture (van Zanten 1987:19). The regent of Bandung (1846-1874), R. Adipati Wiranatakusumah IV (otherwise known as Dalem Bintang) was a keen patron of various Sundanese art forms including classical dance and *tembang Sunda* (Kunto 1992 in Durban Ardjo 1998:38). Similarly, R.A.A. Martanagara, regent of Bandung (1893-1918), is also renowned for his support of the performing arts and Sundanese literature (Lubis 1998:239). During his administration, a part of the Bandung *kabupaten* complex became a cultural centre for the entire region (*ibid.*, 244). According to Atmadibrata, R.A.A. Martanagara was also known for sending his Bandung musicians to the courts in Cirebon to broaden their knowledge of *gamelan* repertoire (*p.c.*, 2001).

All reports seem to concur, however, that the *kabupaten* of Bandung did not acquire a *gamelan degung* until around 1919/1920. Kunst records its presence in the *kabupaten* in 1921, and Harrell assumes that it was probably established a year or two before that (1974:15). It is significant that R.A.A. Wiranatakusumah V (more familiarly known as Dalem Haji) was inaugurated as regent of Bandung in 1920 because, prior to this, he had served as regent of Cianjur. It is widely believed that the *gamelan degung* was brought from the *kabupaten* of Cianjur to Bandung by this influential nobleman. It is also claimed that the musical director of Bandung's first *gamelan degung* group, Idi, was previously employed as a musician at the Cianjur court (Art 1991:89).

The name of Bandung's first *degung* group was Pamager Sari. Idi and his co-players in Pamager Sari are often credited with having composed many of the long



instrumental pieces that are at the core of what is now considered to be the classical *degung* repertoire. Tarya, for example, listed *Sangkuratu*, *Bima Mobos*, *Karang Mantri* (also known as *Karang Kabendon*), *Mangari*, *Palwa* and *Galatik Mangut* as pieces composed between 1926 and 1929 when he was a *suling* player in Idi's group (Tarya in Harrell 1974:232). Other sources indicate that pieces such as *Palwa* and *Mangari* are older, anonymous compositions. Sundanese pieces are often erroneously accredited to a particular musician or musicians, perhaps because in the past composers were not credited at all. If, indeed, Idi originally played with the *gamelan degung* group in Cianjur, it is likely that he brought older Cianjuran style *degung* repertoire with him to Bandung. Harrell notes that Idi also "had contacts at Sumedang", and speculates that the Bandung tradition probably "began with the collection and assimilation of *degung* music from the surrounding centres" (1974:16).

In fact, little is really known about the music of the *gamelan degung* pre-1920 or as found outside of Bandung. It does appear that each *kabupaten* formerly had its own distinctive repertoire and playing style. Tjarmedi claimed that each regent was associated with a specific *gamelan degung* piece that served as a type of aristocratic signature tune (1991). Unfortunately, these regional *degung* traditions now appear to be largely defunct with most regional groups more likely to play Bandung style pieces. Harrell notes that Cianjur "lost its *degung* in the 1930s" when it was substituted with a "string ensemble [composed of violin, cello, bass, guitars, *kacapi rincik* and *suling degung*] which played the *degung* repertoire" (1974:12).

The predominance and relative homogeneity of the Bandung *degung* style is, at least in part, attributable to the advent of the mass media. Recorded on 78rpm gramophone records in the 1920s/30s, Idi's ensemble was also disseminated on local radio (Harrell 1974:16). A schedule for the Dutch radio station NIROM (*Nederlands Indische Radio Omroep Maatschappij*, 'Radio Broadcasting Society of the Netherlands Indies') dated 27<sup>th</sup> October 1936, reveals that the *degung* group performed a range of *klasik* pieces that were broadcast live from the Bandung *kabupaten* (Fukuoka 2001).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Repertoire performed on this occasion included: *Lalajaran*, *Poeloganti*, *Mantri Kabendon*, *Lengser* (*Palwa*), *Ladrak*, *Beber Lajar* and *Djipang Lontab*.



Harrell suggests that the uniformity of the Bandung tradition is also a result of the fact that players felt that “they owed their loyalty to their teacher, Pa Idi” and, therefore, did not attempt to establish “contact with the *degung* musicians in other centres” (1974:3).

The profile of Idi’s Bandung group was also raised by the ensemble’s involvement in prominent multimedia productions. The most well documented theatrical performance to incorporate *gamelan degung* prior to Indonesian Independence was the *sandiwara* (musical operetta)<sup>15</sup> *Lutung Kasarung*. Funded by the colonial government and receiving additional support from the regent of Bandung, R.A.A. Wiranatakusumah V, *Lutung Kasarung* was performed in the open theatre at the *kabupaten* of Bandung to mark the opening of the Java Institute’s Cultural Conference (Dutch: *Cultuurcongres*) on the 18<sup>th</sup> June 1921 (Durban Ardjo 1998:50). Reports describe this event as a colossal performance (*pertunjukan kolosal*) which took a year to prepare and involved over one hundred and fifty participants (*ibid.*). According to an article in *Java* magazine, the performance opened with a *ruatan* exorcism ritual that was accompanied by *kacapi*. The main performance employed a whole range of ensembles including *kacapi suling*, *gamelan degung* and, interestingly, *goong renteng* (*Java* 1921:253 in Durban Ardjo 1998:50, fn31). Presumably, at this stage, the *degung* ensemble only functioned to perform instrumental overtures and interludes rather than to accompany sung dialogue; all accounts concur that singing was not added to *gamelan degung* until the 1950s.

According to Art, Idi introduced the *suling* and *kendang* to the *degung* ensemble at the time of this performance (1991:89).<sup>16</sup> It is possible, however, that the *kendang* and *suling* were used at some of the other *kabupaten* “independent of Pa Idi’s influence” (Harrell 1974:28). Notably, the photograph of the *gamelan degung* taken in Banten around 1900 (fig.1:2) includes a *kendang*, although as explained above, this does not necessarily prove that the instrument was a standard feature in the ensemble. Van Zanten speculates that the four-hole *suling degung* at least “is such a prominent instrument in the present ensemble that it seems safe to suppose that this flute has been part of the *gamelan degung* since at least a century ago” (1989:103).

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<sup>15</sup> Also known as *tonil* and later as *gending karesmen*.

<sup>16</sup> Soepandi goes as far as to claim that Idi himself developed *gamelan degung* out of the *goong renteng* by adding the *suling* and *kendang* to the ensemble shortly after the 1921 performance (1974:8).



Around 1927, a silent film version of the Sundanese legend *Lutung Kasarung* was made. The first screening of the film was accompanied by piano but the regent of Bandung, R.A.A. Wiranatakusumah V, suggested that the *gamelan degung* would be more appropriate for subsequent shows (Andut in Harrell 1974:225). As a result, Idi's *degung* group began to tour all over West Java with this film, playing in "every city which had a theatre" (Tarya in Harrell 1974:223). Despite its incorporation into such popular theatrical productions it is alleged that prior to 1923 the *gamelan degung* was forbidden from being performed outside of the court environment (Art 1991:89).<sup>17</sup> At the end of that year, the regent of Bandung was approached and asked if the *degung* group was available to be hired for a private wedding party. Permission was granted and the *kabupaten* subsequently began to receive many similar requests for this type of outside performance. In order that the increasing demand could be met without interfering with official court performances, Idi was instructed to form a second *degung* group. A simple iron *degung* set was constructed and a new ensemble formed under the leadership of Oyo, a member of Pamager Sari. This group was named Purbasaka (*ibid.*, 89-90).<sup>18</sup>

The creation of Purbasaka resulted in the further expansion of the *degung* repertoire. According to Tisana, pieces such as *Palwa* and *Layar Putri* were considered to embody the identity of the regent and the *kabupaten* and, as a result, were prohibited from being played in public performances elsewhere (1997:29). Musicians responded by composing imitations of these pieces. *Lambang*, for instance, is said to be derived from *Palwa*, *Beber Layang (Beber Layar)* from *Layar Putri*, *Genye* from *Genre*, and *Wabango* from *Sangbango* (Atmadibrata, *p.c.*, 2001). At the same time, once beyond the protective walls of the *kabupaten* environment the *gamelan degung* became vulnerable to outside commercial pressures. As soon as the Purbasaka group was engaged to play at private functions its musicians became obliged to play the more popular types of piece requested by their fee-paying sponsors. According to Tjarmedi, adaptations of folk tunes such as *Renggong Buyut* and *gamelan* pieces including *Aha Ehe* thus also began to be assimilated into the repertoire of the *gamelan degung* around this time (1991).

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<sup>17</sup> Although she does not supply dates, Lubis states that the district attorney of Bandung also possessed a *gamelan degung* that was played at his residence every Sunday (1998:249).

<sup>18</sup> Harrell claims that Purbasaka split from Pamager Sari sometime in the late 1930s (1974:16-17).



**Fig. 1:4 Gamelan degung timeline: early history to Indonesian Independence**

1333	Pajajaran kingdom founded	Many musicians remain convinced that the roots of <i>gamelan degung</i> trace back to this Hindu-Sundanese kingdom
1426	Date given for the <i>gamelan degung</i> housed at the Kasepuhan Court Cirebon	Museum records indicate that this set originally came from Banten (the former seaport of Pajajaran). An alternative account proposes that the <i>gamelan</i> was brought to Cirebon from the Sundanese kingdom of Galuh (Ciamis)
1579	Fall of Pajajaran	The Sundanese kingdom fell to an Islamic Central Javanese administration
1595 - 1597	First Dutch trading voyage to the port city of Banten	An illustration of a <i>gamelan</i> observed during this expedition depicts an instrumental ensemble that, whether Sundanese or Javanese in origin, appears to be an archaic precursor of <i>degung</i>
1656	West Java divided into twelve districts & governed by Javanese regents	During this period Javanese art forms (including <i>gamelan</i> ) were imported into Sunda. One theory is that the <i>degung</i> evolved out of one of these antiquated Javanese ensembles
1691	Cianjur regency founded by a representative from the Cirebon court	The court of Cianjur - home of <i>tembang Sunda</i> - is widely believed to hold a central position in the history of <i>gamelan degung</i>
1705	The Dutch colonial administration signed a treaty with the Javanese that resulted in the occupying Javanese regents being replaced with Sundanese noblemen	This curtailed the 'Javanisation' of the Sundanese ruling classes
1700s/ 1800s	Sundanese regents prospered under Dutch rule	Many writers speculate that <i>gamelan degung</i> – at least in the form that it is known today – emerged during this period
1864	Bandung became the administrative capital of West Java	The city began to develop as a focal point for Sundanese culture
1893 - 1918	R.A.A. Martanagara served as regent of Bandung	A part of the Bandung <i>kabupaten</i> complex was developed as a cultural centre for the region
1920s ↓	R.A.A. Wiranatakusumah V (Dalem Haji) inaugurated as regent of Bandung (1920)	Dalem Haji was the former regent of Cianjur. It is widely assumed that this noblemen introduced <i>gamelan degung</i> to Bandung
	The <i>kabupaten degung</i> group, Pamager Sari, formed under the musical direction of Idi	Most of the <i>degung klasik</i> repertoire as it is known today is said to have been composed (or compiled) at this time
	<i>Lutung Kasarung</i> (1921)	This high-profile operetta opened the Java Institute's cultural conference. The Pamager Sari <i>degung</i> group is recorded as having been involved in this production
	Bandung's second <i>degung</i> group, Purbasaka, created to meet the demand for performances outside the court (1923)	Harrell (1974) contends that the Purbasaka group was founded sometime in the late 1930s
	Film version of <i>Lutung Kasarung</i> (c. 1927)	This silent film version of <i>Lutung Kasarung</i> was screened at venues across West Java. The musical accompaniment was provided by the Pamager Sari <i>degung</i> group
1930s	<i>Degung</i> began to be recorded & disseminated by the mass media	The <i>kabupaten degung</i> group regularly took part in local radio broadcasts & was recorded on 78rpm gramophone discs
1942- 1945	World War II: Japanese occupation of West Java	Bronze objects were confiscated & many <i>gamelan degung</i> fell victim to the war-needs of the Japanese
1945	Indonesian Independence	Indonesian Independence was declared on 17 August 1945 but not achieved until 1949



## 1.2 Indonesian Independence

Despite “the gradual erosion of the *degung*’s exclusivity”, older musicians agree that *gamelan degung* was not widely known outside of the upper echelons of Sundanese society until the 1950s (Spiller 2001:257). Tjarmedi identified the incorporation of *gamelan degung* in a 1949 theatrical production of *Lutung Kasarung* as an important turning point in terms of the ensemble’s popularisation amongst the general public (1991). It was not, however, until the mid-to-late 1950s that the ensemble began its musical and socio-cultural transformation to become the favourite regional music genre of Bandung’s urban middle-classes.

While some aspects of the *degung*’s development merely reflect wider shifts in Sundanese music as a whole, the ensemble’s unique response to its altered environment deserves specific consideration. As Williams points out, while *tembang Sunda* has survived the transition from the court to the urban environment intact and continues to thrive as an elitist art form with strict codes of performance practice, the *degung* ensemble has undergone a more radical metamorphosis which has seen the classical repertoire “almost abandoned by the new urban performers” (1990:9).

After Indonesian Independence the hereditary rule of the regents was transferred to the new central government. With the subsequent decline in power and wealth of the *kabupaten*, it became necessary for court-based musicians to find new forms of patronage elsewhere. In Bandung, government-owned establishments such as the Bandung branch of the national radio station RRI (*Radio Republik Indonesia*) and state-owned performing arts schools gradually began to provide *gamelan* musicians with alternative forms of employment. In addition to government support, new work opportunities began to emerge in the private sector. Writing in 1977 Heins comments, “Today’s owners of new *gamelan degung* are either successful businessmen or military, or both” (1977:71). In fact, privately-owned and community-based *gamelan degung* clubs began to flourish from the late 1950s, providing musicians with opportunities to perform as well as to lead groups and to tutor amateur players. The emergence of the Indonesian cassette industry in the late 1960s also presented experienced musicians and composers with a further means of supplementing their income. Hugh-Jones writes,



It is now possible for large numbers of people to make some sort of living out of music by combining for instance, teaching, with performance at functions, and by making recordings for the extraordinarily vigorous local cassette industry (1982:21).

As media producers and businessmen became increasingly implicated in the development of *gamelan degung*, so musicians were forced to become more commercially minded. The most entrepreneurial performers began to carve out their own employment niches and, following the advice of broadcasting and recording industry professionals, often began to experiment with new types of repertoire in the hope of hitting upon something with a more readily marketable and mass appeal.

Visitors to Sunda who are under the impression that *gamelan* is an ancient, esoteric art form played by sage musicians indifferent to material concerns, may be surprised by the overt business mentality of many performing artists in the city. Most working *gamelan degung* groups in Bandung today are run as commercial enterprises and even amateur or student players often expect to receive a fee for performances and rehearsals. Likewise, anyone expecting to see only sombre, elderly musicians rigidly adhering to age old performance practices and repertoire will, instead, find that many *degung* groups comprise visibly enthusiastic younger players who evidently enjoy the lively camaraderie that usually characterises Sundanese *gamelan* performance.

The most successful *degung* composers are accustomed to facing a certain amount of criticism about their role in the popularisation and commodification of this formerly elite musical genre. During interviews, the majority pragmatically justified their artistic innovations in terms of both their need to make a living and their overriding obligation to satisfy public tastes. Furthermore, it was routinely pointed out to me that what is often considered controversial by one generation is already perceived as traditional by the next.<sup>19</sup> Older musicians repeatedly told of how now well-established performance practices or bodies of repertoire provoked an uproar of disapproval when they were initially introduced twenty or thirty years ago.

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<sup>19</sup> Indeed, many of the 'traditional' pieces that I was taught while in Bandung date back to the 1960s-1990s.



A number of more practical reasons are also given for the overt commerciality of Sundanese genres such as *gamelan degung*. One musician suggested that Bandung's close proximity to the city of Jakarta is one factor that has contributed to the capitalist mindset of many urban performers. Certainly Bandung's relatively high living costs are commonly attributed to its close links with Indonesia's political and financial capital, as well as to the fact that it is home to some of the country's most prestigious higher education institutions. Others contended that Sundanese ensembles, unlike those in other Indonesian provinces, have been forced to become financially self-sufficient to survive. I frequently heard it said that Central Javanese *gamelan* continues to receive patronage from the Javanese courts and has, in the recent past, been unfairly privileged by a Java-centric government administration. In Bali, on the other hand, the vital role of *gamelan* musics in everyday religious ceremonies is seen to have served as some form of artistic protection, even in the face of mass international tourism. Without the support of the *kabupaten*, *gamelan degung* was left without any equivalent function in urban Bandung. Since Independence, *degung* musicians have had to find their own audiences and invent new performance contexts in this rapidly modernising city.

### 1.2.1 RRI Bandung (*Radio Republik Indonesia Bandung*)

After Independence, RRI Bandung became the most important focal point for several types of Sundanese music. Many of the musicians previously employed at the *kabupaten* were offered salaried positions within in-house radio station ensembles, while other popular artists were invited to take part in regular broadcasts on a freelance basis. Several singers and musicians eventually began to enjoy a degree of celebrity as radio stars and, with four-yearly auditions for both new and existing staff, musicians agree that RRI performances came to be considered as the benchmark against which 'outside' artists and ensembles were judged.

In the mid-1950s, the head of broadcasting at RRI Bandung, R.A Darya Mandalakusuma, decided to try and actively regenerate the *gamelan degung* tradition; regular *degung* broadcasts were consequently scheduled from 1956. Under the artistic leadership of Entjar Tjarmedi, RRI's Parahyangan *degung* group was formed from



*kabupaten* trained *degung* musicians such as Tarya and Ono Sukarna, as well as new players drawn from the radio station's *gamelan* and *tembang Sunda* departments.

As part of this *degung* revival, members of the group were encouraged to write new material for the ensemble, albeit in the idiomatic style of the repertoire developed at the courts. Many of the pieces composed at this time, including *Pajajaran* (by Entjar Tjarmedi) and *Walangsungsang* (by Sulaeman Sutisna), are now accepted as part of the core '*klasik*' repertoire. Imik Suwarsih, a former radio station *gamelan* singer and widow of Tjarmedi, laughingly described how her late husband would become completely absorbed in the composition process, singing or humming a melody to himself wherever he was, whether it be in bed or out in a *becak* (an Indonesian trishaw). She recollected waking up in bed one night to find her husband sat bolt upright, playing an imaginary *bonang* as he formulated what is now one of the most popular of the *degung klasik* pieces, *Pajajaran* (p.c., 2001).

Around 1958, Darya (head of broadcasting) organised a staff meeting at which he encouraged the *degung* group to try and incorporate singing into their performances. Under the direction of Tjarmedi, choral singing (*rampak sekar*) was subsequently appended to several *degung klasik* pieces. Although the existing instrumental parts were not subject to any significant readjustment, this innovation still caused some controversy. After the first broadcast of what became known as *degung rampak sekar*, RRI received many letters protesting that this inclusion of singing would destroy the *degung klasik* genre. Over time, however, the station began to receive more letters of approval than complaint, with many accompanied by requests from individuals wishing to hire the group for private weddings and other functions (Imik Suwarsih, p.c., 2001).

### 1.2.2 Amateur, student and female players

At the same time as the *gamelan degung* started to reach wider audiences via regular radio broadcasts, the ensemble began to attract new types of player. From the late 1950s onwards, various amateur and semi-professional *degung* groups began to emerge throughout the city as *degung* instruments were acquired by community based neighbourhood groups, schools, colleges and after-work clubs set up by the staff of private businesses and local-government departments. In 1958, the government also



created Bandung's first specialist music school, KOKAR (*Konservatori Karawitan*, 'Conservatory of Traditional Music'), which offered formal training in Sundanese traditional music for secondary school age pupils. Juju Sain Martadinata, the first teacher of *gamelan degung* at KOKAR, allegedly undertook three months of intensive one-to-one tuition from Entjar Tjarmedi in preparation for this role (Ade Suandi, *p.c.*, 2000). ASTI (*Akademi Seni Tari Indonesia*, 'Indonesian Dance Academy') then opened its *karawitan* (traditional music) department in 1972, establishing the first higher education diploma courses in Sundanese music.

The aristocratic heritage of the *gamelan degung* invests it with a prestige not shared by other forms of Sundanese *gamelan*. Significantly, this has meant that even outside of the bounds of mixed-sex formal education courses, playing *gamelan degung* has been deemed as a sufficiently respectable pursuit for both male and female players. One of Bandung's first all-female *gamelan degung* groups was set up as an extra-curricula student society at Bandung's prestigious higher education institute, ITB (*Institut Teknologi Bandung*, 'Bandung Institute of Technology'). According to Atmadibrata, an iron *gamelan degung* was purchased from Oyo (former leader of the *kabupaten's* breakaway *degung* group, Purbasaka) in the early 1950s by the student association DAMAS (*Daya Mahasiswa Sunda*, 'Organisation of Sundanese Students'). An all-male student group was initially established but soon fizzled out. Two or three years later, however, the DAMAS organisation was looking for a leisure activity that would be appropriate for its female members. Again, the *gamelan degung* was chosen. Under the tutelage of Oyo's son-in-law, Sukanda Art, this group, which mainly comprised female civil engineering students, proved to be more successful (Atmadibrata, *p.c.*, 2001).

Sukanda Art also trained another influential all-female group belonging to Rachmat Sukmasaputra, an esteemed male *tembang Sunda* singer who worked as a government-appointed regional arts coordinator in Bandung. According to Suratno, this group, called Cahaya Medal, was the first to feature female players in 1956 (*p.c.*, 2000a).<sup>20</sup> Sukmasaputra's group comprised almost entirely teenage girls or young women in their early twenties and was, therefore, commonly known as *degung mojang*

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<sup>20</sup> Other informants, however, suggested that this group was not formed until the early 1960s.



(‘young girl’ *degung*). This ensemble proved phenomenally popular at wedding parties and other formal functions, and some weekends would be booked to play at up to four different venues in one day. Sukmasaputra described how, in the early 1960s, his performers had to adhere to unconventionally rigid schedules in order that they had time to get from one booking to another (*p.c.*, 2000).

The main reason for the success of this group seems to have been the novelty value of its female players. Suratno pointed out that *gamelan* was previously associated with older male musicians who would usually appear to be much more interested in their cigarettes than in the entertainment of the audience at hand. The advent of a traditional music genre that could be performed by elaborately dressed young women thus immediately captured the public’s imagination (*p.c.*, 2000a). Apparently, one of the group’s most prestigious fans was the then Indonesian leader, President Soekarno. Renowned for his ‘appreciation’ of attractive young women, Soekarno is said to have specifically requested this all-female *degung* group when undertaking state visits to Bandung.<sup>21</sup> Any complaints about breaking with tradition or commercialising the *degung* genre were assuaged by the approval of the President, and soon local government officials started to commission new sets of instruments to establish their own *degung* ensembles (Sukmasaputra, *p.c.*, 2000).

As *gamelan degung* grew to become the most popular form of traditional musical entertainment at middle-class Bandung weddings and other types of formal celebration, so the number of active groups proliferated. Tjarmedi observed that from the 1960s onwards, new *degung* groups would spring up all over the city in preparation for the Independence Day celebrations on 17<sup>th</sup> August (1991). Such was the popularity of the ensemble that many *salendro* sets were melted down and re-forged as *gamelan degung* just to keep up with the demand (Suratno, *p.c.*, 2000).

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<sup>21</sup> It is noteworthy that the (male dominated) government administration does not appear to have been threatened by the enormous popularity of ‘pretty’ teenage girls playing *gamelan degung* in the domesticated setting of a wedding in the same way as it was by the increased power and more overt sexuality of female *gamelan* singers performing at *wayang* (see 4.3 & Weintraub 2002).



Providing an overview of the different types of all-female *degung* group (*degung ibu-ibu*) that were active in Bandung in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Heins notes that members were often drawn together because of their “proximity of residence” or the occupation of their husbands (1977:68). Examples include a *gamelan ibu-ibu dokter* (for the wives of doctors) and a *gamelan ibu-ibu tinggi* (for the wives of high-ranking army officers) (*ibid.*, 69). Apparently, during the height of what became a *degung ibu-ibu* craze, these amateur female groups could expect a higher fee for a two hour set than a *wayang* troupe could command for an entire all-night performance (*ibid.*). One of the most highly regarded of the *ibu-ibu* ensembles, Dewi Pramanik, went on to record several successful *gamelan degung* cassettes in the 1970s. Founded in 1968, this group featured the well-known *tembang* singers Euis Komariah and Mamah Dasimah, both of whom were also member of Sukmasaputra’s original Cahaya Medal ensemble. RRI also had its own in-house female *degung* group made up of radio station singers.

While the growth in women-only and amateur groups saw the decline in popularity of the traditional all-male ensemble, experienced male musicians were still in demand to act as group leaders as well as to play the *kendang* and *suling*, instruments that are rarely taken up by female performers. The scarcity of female instrumental specialists is explained in various ways. In the case of the *kendang*, Spiller observes that there is an “essential maleness” to drumming that is at odds with Sundanese perceptions of femininity (2001:205-208). This view is supported by my own experiences of trying to learn the instrument and being repeatedly told that women are not physically strong enough to strike the *kendang* with sufficient force. The *suling* is judged to be more suitable for female players although, notable exceptions such as the celebrated *suling* and *kacapi* player Haji Siti Rokayah notwithstanding, women still tend to eschew this instrument in favour of becoming singers or dancers. Heins speculates that it might be considered unfeminine for a Sundanese woman to be skilled on a technically challenging instrument because “being publicly proficient in music could cause embarrassment to less skilful men” (1977:67).

Whatever the reasons, this “social ban on female instrumental proficiency” (*ibid.*, 69) had far reaching implications in terms of the repertoire performed by the women’s *degung* groups. The classical style pieces associated with the courts were deemed too long and complicated for most amateur players and, instead, *degung* groups began to



perform simple short-form pieces that require less time-consuming memorisation and that are generally regarded as easier to play. These pieces, mainly borrowed from other types of Sundanese *gamelan*, are based on standardised tonal progressions that can function as accompaniments for a limitless number of overlying song melodies and *suling* improvisations. Cook notes that with the help of a couple of professional players, “an amateur group with a repertoire of only four or five pieces would already have enough material” for “a wedding reception lasting several hours” (1992:8). *Gamelan degung* thereby provided female players with the opportunity to “couple respectability with acquired artistry without too much effort, but with maximum result” (Heins 1977:70-71).

### 1.2.3 *Degung kawih*

In *gamelan degung*, these shorter pieces are most commonly used as accompaniments to light vocal songs (*kawih*). The increased popularity of the *degung* ensemble was thus not only due to the presence of female players but also to the introduction of female singers performing a new style of repertoire called *degung kawih*. While the *kawih* repertoire provides a platform for singers, *suling* and *kendang* players to show off their skills, the rest of the *degung* ensemble loses its formerly melodic role and is reduced to performing blander accompanying figuration (see appendix I). Inevitably, such a dramatic alteration of the *degung*'s musical function led to further song-driven ensemble modifications.

Before long, for instance, groups began to receive requests to play popular *kawih* songs in tunings other than *pelog degung*. As a result, additional keys, pots and gongs were commissioned in order that musicians had the necessary substitute pitches to retune the *degung* instruments from the *pelog degung* to the *madenda* scale during performances. Borrowing repertoire and associated playing techniques from other Sundanese *gamelan* also led to the further expansion of the *degung*'s instrumentation; ‘standard’ sets were soon augmented with both the smaller *kempul* gong of *gamelan pelog-salendro* and an extra multi-octave metallophone.



There is some dispute as to which *degung* group was the first to introduce singing into the ensemble. Most accounts identify RRI's appendage of choral singing to the *degung klasik* repertoire in 1958 as the earliest occasion that vocalists featured in *degung* performance. However, Suratno suggests that Rachmat Sukmasaputra's Cahaya Medal ensemble began to incorporate simple *kawih* style songs into their group's repertoire around 1956 (1999). Whatever the case, it is likely that various individuals were toying with the same possibility at the same time as the introduction of singing into *gamelan degung* was part of a wider trend that saw vocal music become increasingly privileged over instrumental genres in Sundanese music as a whole. Cook notes "several of the most often heard genres which now feature singing so prominently, were until between approximately thirty and sixty years ago almost purely instrumental" (2000b:67).

Citing Suanda's comment that a Cirebonese *gamelan* performance "in which the singers do not sing is considered a 'dead' performance" (Suanda 1985:93), van Zanten ponders whether the incorporation of vocalists into *gamelan degung* reflects a deep-rooted tendency to "equate music-making first of all with singing?" (1987:45).

Weintraub also connects the rise of vocal music to the advent of new technologies. The introduction of amplification into Sundanese puppet theatre certainly contributed to the elevation in status of the *gamelan* singer, with radio broadcasts and commercial recordings further enhancing the popularity of 'star' performers (1997:175).

The improved standing of the Sundanese singer was additionally fuelled by the expansion of the *kawih* repertoire, a phenomenon that was, itself, partly tied up in the emergence of the local mass media. Fukuoka notes that from the 1930s, radio broadcasting began to stimulate the composition of new songs as programme producers encouraged musicians to constantly turn out new material in order to generate and maintain audience interest (2001). The proliferation of the *kawih* repertoire was also a direct result of government-sponsored music education initiatives designed to generate new songs for Sundanese children and promote singing in schools (Kunst 1973:394-395).



#### 1.2.4 Koko Koswara

One prominent *kawih* composer – active in both pedagogic and broadcasting spheres – whose musical innovations have gone on to have a tremendous impact on the development of *degung* is the late Koko Koswara (1917-1985) (more commonly known as Mang Koko or Uncle Koko).<sup>22</sup> A hugely influential figure in the modernisation of Sundanese music, Koswara was driven by the conviction that local musics should be modified and updated to suit the changing tastes of the general populace. In addition to a prolific compositional output that totals nearly four hundred songs (Cahripin 1991:21), Koswara was also responsible for the development of novel performance techniques, including the flashy *kawih* style of *kacapi* playing that is still popular amongst students at Bandung's formal music schools. As a pioneering music educator, Koswara also established several private foundations dedicated to the promotion and coordination of Sundanese music training for children, and was later appointed as director of Bandung's specialist state run music schools, KOKAR (later renamed SMKI, *Sekolah Menengah Karawitan Indonesia*, 'Secondary School of Indonesian Traditional Music') 1966-1973, and ASTI (later renamed STSI, *Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia*, 'Academy of Indonesian Arts') 1977-1981 (Jurriëns 2001:131-132).

Self taught on a number of European as well as Sundanese musical instruments, Koswara compositions are clearly influenced by Western popular song forms. Although typically based on extant Sundanese tonal structures, Koswara's compositions often employ a 'verse-chorus' format and incorporate elaborate piece-specific instrumental introductions, interludes and codas. Koswara was also inspired by Western music harmony, incorporating two- and three-part vocal harmony and instrumental chords into his arrangements (Ruswandi 2000:55-59). Another way in which Koswara tried to give his songs a contemporary feel was by giving them commonplace titles such as *Badminton* and *Beus Kota* (City Buses). This sense of modernity also carries over into Koswara's lyrics. Rather than always employing abstract, poetic imagery, his songs often use humorous texts or texts that address topical events of the time, sometimes "including mild social criticism as well as normal lyrics about sentimental love"

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<sup>22</sup> For more detailed information about the life and work of Koko Koswara see Ruswandi (2000).



(Williams 1989:108). Koswara also looked to specific Western popular songs for inspiration. According to Ruswandi, Koswara uses Sundanese translations of entire phrases from an English language song entitled *To Me* in his own song *Ka Abdi* (To Me) (2000:19 & 85-87).

Aside from composing original material, Koswara is also recognized for his development of a new style (*wanda anyar*) of instrumental arrangement (*aransemen*). In these *wanda anyar* arrangements, individual instruments are emancipated from their conventional musical function and idiomatic figuration and, instead, perform sections of through-composed melody that Koswara calls *gending macakal* (*ibid.*, 90). In his *gamelan* arrangements, these 'composed' melodies are often played in unison (*rampak waditra*), although the use of sequential question-and-answer type phrases between two or more instruments or groups of instruments (*gending berdialog*) is also common. While sections of *gending makacal* typically function as introductions, codas and interludes, standard playing patterns are usually resumed during the main body of the song. However, even such passages of more conventional figuration (*gending penuh*) are sometimes subject to varying degrees of arrangement; themes presented in the vocal part may be repeated, varied or answered by instrumental motifs, and pauses in the song melody are invariably filled with elaborate runs or short melodic fragments.

Notably, Koswara himself chose not to compose for *gamelan degung*, believing that the ensemble did not have the same potential for development as the *gamelan pelog-salendro* because of its smaller instrumentation, and the fact that the tuning of the *degung* (at least before sets were built with *madenda* exchange keys/pots/gongs) was confined to a single scale (*ibid.*, 32). Nonetheless, Ruswandi argues that the melodic style of playing that Koswara uses in his *wanda anyar gamelan* compositions finds a precedent in the 'fixed' melodies of the classical *degung* repertoire (1997:65). Another possible reason that Koswara chose not to write for *degung* is that there was some professional rivalry between himself and the director of RRI's *gamelan degung* group, Entjar Tjarmedi. According to Tjarmedi's widow, Imik Suwarsih, both of these strong-willed musicians enjoyed competing against one another to see whose musical innovations (Tjarmedi's *gamelan degung* compositions or Koswara's new style of *kacapi kawih* piece) would become most popular amongst the general public first (*p.c.*, 2001).



Despite his dismissal of the *degung* ensemble as a suitable medium for composition, many of Koswara's songs employ the *pelog degung* tuning and are easily adapted for the smaller *gamelan*. Even more significantly, Koswara's distinctive style of song writing and arrangement has had a profound impact on the subsequent development of the *degung kawih* genre. This has been most conspicuous in the music of Koswara's student protégé Nano Suratno (Nano S.). Acknowledging a direct connection between his own characteristic style of *degung* arrangement and the musical innovations introduced by his teacher, Suratno readily admitted that he chose to write for *degung* precisely because Koswara had not already done so (*p.c.*, 2000a). Suratno's compositions played a fundamental role in the wider popularisation of *degung kawih* in the 1970s and 1980s and he continues to be the leading exponent of the genre today. Indeed, it could be argued that this indirect influence on *degung kawih* is Koswara's most enduring legacy to Sundanese music.

#### 1.2.5 Multimedia performances

The growth of the *degung kawih* repertoire was also a direct result of the ensemble's involvement in several prominent multimedia productions. Musicians and scholars concur that a crucial juncture in the history of the *gamelan degung* was the 1962 DAMAS production of the *gending karesmen* (operetta) *Mundinglaya Sabalangit*. Written and directed by the Sundanese dramatist, Wahyu Wibisana, this theatre piece involved the collaboration of many of Bandung's most eminent performing artists. Entjar Tjarmedi, for example, was responsible for overseeing the music and, in fact, most of the musicians and musical instruments featured in the production were borrowed from RRI Bandung. Likewise, Rachmat Sukmasaputra, leader of the all-female *degung* group Cahaya Medal, took a leading performing role and was additionally responsible for the vocal training of the entire cast.



Based on a well-known *pantun* story of the same name, *Mundinglaya Sabalangit* is a tale of Pajajaran. According to Wibisana, this made the *gamelan degung* and *kacapi suling* ensembles natural choices for this theatre piece; the *pelog degung* tuning is said to evoke feelings of nostalgia for the lost kingdom in the minds of many Sundanese (*p.c.*, 2000). Nevertheless, at the outset of the project, many people complained that the *gamelan degung* was too small an ensemble to accompany such a major dramatic production. After observing rehearsals and in response to these criticisms, Darya (head of broadcasting at RRI) eventually suggested that the ensemble should be further expanded. Accordingly, a *gambang*, *rebab* and two single-octave metallophones (*saron*) were added to the *gamelan degung* for this performance. This type of extended *degung* instrumentation, referred to by Tjarmedi as *degung komplit* (complete *degung*) (1991), was also used on various commercial recordings of the time (see 1.2.7 below).

In addition to augmenting the ensemble with supplementary instruments, this theatre piece demanded further modifications to *degung* performance practice. For example, Enoch Atmadibrata, the choreographer for the production, mentioned that it was necessary to incorporate dance drumming into the musical arrangements that accompanied the operetta's dance sequences. Unlike most Sundanese dancers, Atmadibrata was already accustomed to working with *degung*, having previously experimented with the ensemble in his 1956 choreography *Cendrawasih* – a dance piece inspired and accompanied by the *degung klasik* piece *Palwa* (*p.c.*, 2001).

Although agreeing to the physical expansion of the ensemble, Wibisana contended that he never really considered the smaller instrumentation of the *degung* to be a problem. Instead, Wibisana's main concern was to find fitting repertoire for the performance. In practice, most *gending karesmen* are not written from scratch. Sometimes new tunes are composed to fit existing texts (*ngalaguan rumpaka*) while, more commonly and in this particular instance, new lyrics are sung to established melodies (*ngarumpakaan lagu*). Significantly, as a writer, poet and dramatist, Wibisana was primarily interested in finding melodic material that created the appropriate atmosphere for specific dramatic scenes; unlike many of the musicians involved in the project, he was not particularly concerned about adhering to the conventions of any particular music tradition.



Wibisana described the search for suitable repertoire as a rather casual process; he recalled that on one occasion he had overheard Haji Siti Rokayah quietly singing *Kunang Kunang* to herself and had immediately known that a *degung* version of this song would be ideal to accompany the dance of the *lengser* (the king's ambassador). Over time, pieces were drawn from a range of disparate sources and music genres, including *tembang Sunda*, *gamelan salendro*, the folk genre *ketuk tilu*, *kacapi jenaka Sunda* (comic songs accompanied by *kacapi*) and children's playground songs. Many of the resulting adaptations are still played as *degung* pieces to this day.

Apart from borrowing song melodies in their entirety, traditional pieces were also reworked or chopped and changed for theatrical effect. Wibisana explained that certain scenes only demanded a solo instrumental motif – such as the repeated sounding of the *goong* or a *suling* improvisation – or an evocative wash of sound. Similarly, particular fragments of text only required a single musical phrase rather than a whole song. The melody for one piece was apparently taken from the *gelenyu* (instrumental interlude) of a *tembang Sunda* song. Reflecting the dramatic tension in the plot, however, an extra note was added to alter the final cadence of this melody and thus to create an element of aural surprise. Wibisana laughingly told of the heated protests that such a break with tradition provoked amongst *tembang Sunda* musicians behind the scenes (*p.c.*, 2000). Atmadibrata asserted that the cutting up of songs in this way even resulted in an ongoing polemic in the local newspaper (*p.c.*, 2000).

New pieces were also composed specifically for this performance, several of which went on to outlive the production and become assimilated into the standard *degung* repertoire. Tjarmedi, for example, is alleged to have put together his dynamic *Lengser Midang* sequence whilst working on *Mundinglaya*. Wibisana also wrote a few songs himself when he could not find a suitable tune for a particular text. He remarked that the popular song *Cingcangkeling*, which is usually ascribed as anonymous on cassette sleeves, is one of his own *gending karesmen* compositions (*p.c.*, 2000).



### 1.2.6 *Upacara khusus* (special ceremonials)

The influence of *gending karesmen* on the development of *gamelan degung* is not only limited to the expansion of the ensemble's repertoire and instrumentation but also to the function of the ensemble in contemporary Bandung. The dramatic atmospheres conjured in Wibisana's operettas have continued to be employed within the various types of formal celebration which mark the passing of significant events in West Java.

Aside from writing and directing theatrical productions, Wahyu Wibisana was, and continues to be employed to produce one-off ceremonials (*upacara khusus*) designed for a variety of public and private occasions. These range from society weddings or the opening of prestigious buildings or enterprises, to the reception of important state guests. Acknowledging the direct influence of his experiences working on the *gending karesmen* productions, Wibisana was able to identify specific scenes and musical compositions that he had liberated from their original dramatic contexts and subsequently used to add a sense of solemnity and 'tradition' to these invented ritualised events (*p.c.*, 2000).

Of particular relevance to *gamelan* musicians was the development and popularisation of the *upacara mapag panganten* (wedding greeting ceremony). This is an elaborate processional in which the bridegroom and his family are formally greeted by dancers who act as representatives of the bride's family. Although now widely considered an indispensable part of any traditional Sundanese wedding, Spiller notes that this ceremony originally seems to have been only a "minor Sundanese wedding custom" which does not even get a mention in Soeganda's 1955 publication *Upacara Adat di Pasundan* ('Traditional Ceremonies in the Pasundan') (2001:255 & 258). In fact, the sophisticated, highly choreographed music and dance sequences that characterise most contemporary *upacara mapag panganten* owe much to the theatrical performances and stately ceremonies that were devised by Wibisana in the 1960s. The bridegroom who is bequeathed the title 'king for a day' is, as in *Mundinglaya Sabalangit*, surrounded by the regally dressed characters and stately pomp and paraphernalia associated with the Pajajaran kingdom and the colonial courts. Once again, *degung* is usually the ensemble of choice for this type of ceremony as it is considered to add appropriate grandeur to the proceedings.



Initially confined to marriages of the Sundanese elite, the *dalang* Otong Rasta conjectures that “middle-class Bandung residents saw such spectacles televised in the 1960s and began to request the groups they hired to produce similar affairs for their own weddings” (Spiller 2001:259). During the early 1970s, many groups in Bandung began to create their own versions of this wedding ritual, and today, no two groups will present exactly the same ‘show’. Many musicians and choreographers say that the ongoing reinterpretation of this ceremony is an important creative outlet as well as vital source of employment for Bandung artists. In 2001, there was even talk of organising a competition to provide groups with a platform on which to demonstrate their most imaginative productions to a wider audience (Permana, *p.c.*, 2001). The role of the *gamelan degung* in the Sundanese wedding will be explored in chapter 7.

### 1.2.7 The cassette industry

Finally, any history of *gamelan degung* cannot fail to consider the role of the Indonesian cassette industry in the ensemble’s musical evolution and wider dissemination. The advent of the government-owned national recording company, Lokananta, and the subsequent emergence of privately-owned regional recording houses provided Sundanese musicians with fresh artistic challenges as well as new financial incentives to innovate the *degung* tradition. As Williams notes, the recording industry encouraged composers to come up with “at least one new song” on every cassette (1989:113).

Lokananta, the first Indonesian company to produce recordings of *gamelan degung*, had close links with RRI and mainly used radio station musicians for its recordings (Cook 1991:3). Not surprisingly then, all of Lokananta’s *gamelan degung* recordings feature RRI’s Parahyangan group.

Though Lokananta’s first gramophone recordings of *degung* date from the early 1960s, gramophone discs, let alone players, were beyond the means of most of the Sundanese population and thus only widely heard as part of radio broadcasts. From the early 1970s, however, cassette became the dominant format for commercial *degung* recordings. According to Yampolsky, Lokananta’s output grew from 41,508 discs in 1970, to 898,459 cassettes and only 290 discs in 1975 (1987:2).



In total, Lokananta released six cassettes of *gamelan degung* (*ibid.*, 281-283).<sup>23</sup> These cassettes primarily feature instrumental *degung klasik* style pieces, although a couple of albums also include RRI's distinctive *rampak sekar* unison vocals. More unusually, one of the recordings consists of *gamelan degung* adaptations of Sundanese dance pieces (*ibid.*, 283). This cassette may have been prompted by certain high profile dance-drama performances that utilised *gamelan degung* around this time.<sup>24</sup> The recordings also incorporate adaptations of *gamelan pelog-salendro* pieces such as *Paksi Tuwung*<sup>25</sup> (on *Beber Layar* ACD-042) and novel medleys such as *Kidang Mas* (on *Kidang Mas* ACD-017), which strings together arrangements of shorter *tembang Sunda* interludes and *gamelan* pieces. According to Ade Komaran, these *degung* arrangements were concocted in the studio as players struggled to find sufficiently inventive repertoire to record (*p.c.*, 2000b).

Cook points out that the Lokananta cassettes were recorded and produced in Solo (Surakarta), Central Java, and never actually marketed in Sunda (1991:3). It appears that it was not until the establishment of privately owned cassette companies in Bandung and Jakarta during the late 1960s and early 1970s that the Sundanese musical community began to feel the full impact of this new technology. As Stahl writes “almost everything that was being done musically at this time was in some way affected” (1987:3). In fact, the late 1970s saw the release of several best-selling *degung* albums that signalled the birth of two new *degung* sub-genres; Nano Suratno's distinctive style of *degung kawih* and Ujang Suryana's unique brand of *degung instrumental* have monopolised commercial *degung* recordings ever since. Chapter 6 will examine the rise of *gamelan degung* on cassette in further detail, considering the impact of ‘globalisation’ and the world music phenomenon on *gamelan degung* recordings.

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<sup>23</sup> One of these cassettes, *Alam Priangan*, features *tembang Sunda* on side A and *degung* on side B.

<sup>24</sup> *Gamelan degung* was used to accompany a production of the *Ramayana* dance-drama at a national arts festival in Yogyakarta in 1971 and at an international festival in Pandaan, East Java, in 1972 (Suandi, *p.c.*, 2000).

<sup>25</sup> Imik Suwarsih said that Koko Koswara was “anti-*Paksi Tuwung*”, complaining to Tjarmedi that he thought this piece sounded too Javanese (*p.c.*, 2001).



Fig. 1:5 *Gamelan degung* timeline: Indonesian Independence to the 1970s

Date	Event	Explanatory notes
1949	<i>Lutung Kasarung</i>	A multimedia production that played a role in familiarising the wider populace with <i>gamelan degung</i>
1950s	RRI Bandung's Parahyangan <i>degung</i> group formed under the musical direction of Entjar Tjarnedi	Regular <i>degung</i> broadcasts were scheduled from 1956. Several well-known <i>degung klasik</i> -style pieces were composed around this time
	Cahaya Medal group founded by Rachmat Sukmasaputra (c. 1956)	According to Nano S, this was the first <i>degung</i> group to feature female players
	<i>Cendrawasih</i> (c. 1956)	A choreography by Enoch Atmadibrata that was inspired and accompanied by the <i>degung klasik</i> piece <i>Palwa</i>
	Establishment of community-based <i>degung</i> clubs & student groups (1950s/1960s)	The aristocratic heritage of the former court <i>gamelan</i> meant that <i>degung</i> was deemed to be a respectable artistic pursuit for middle-class men, women & children. Female-only groups became particularly popular
	Singing introduced into <i>degung</i> performance (1950s/1960s)	The <i>degung klasik</i> pieces were deemed too difficult for 'amateur' players. Instead, <i>degung</i> groups began to play shorter pieces that could function to accompany light vocal songs ( <i>kawih</i> ). The introduction of singing into <i>degung</i> performance was also part of a wider trend that saw female vocalists become increasingly prominent in Sundanese music as a whole
	<i>Degung kawih</i>	The emergence of the <i>degung kawih</i> genre led to <i>degung</i> sets being built with exchange keys/pots/gongs that enabled groups to perform songs in both the <i>pelog degung</i> & <i>madenda</i> tunings. The instrumentation of the ensemble was also expanded to include an extra metallophone & the smaller <i>kempul</i> gong of <i>gamelan pelog-salendro</i>
	<i>Degung rampak sekar</i> (c.1958)	Choral singing was appended to several <i>degung klasik</i> pieces. Many musicians are adamant that this was the first time that <i>degung</i> performance incorporated singing
	KOKAR ( <i>Konservatori Karawitan</i> ) opened (1958)	Bandung's first government-run specialist music school began to offer students formal courses in <i>gamelan degung</i>
1960s	First Indonesian-produced gramophone recordings of <i>degung</i> released by Lokananta (1960, 1964)	All of Lokananta's <i>gamelan degung</i> recordings feature RRI's Parahyangan group. Most of the pieces on these recordings were drawn from the standard <i>degung klasik</i> repertoire
	<i>Mundinglaya Sabalangit</i> (1962)	An influential operetta that featured <i>gamelan degung</i> . The repertoire utilised in this production was drawn from across the Sundanese performing arts complex. The instrumentation of the ensemble was also further expanded with a <i>gambang</i> , two single-octave <i>saron</i> & a <i>rebab</i>
	<i>Upacara khusus</i>	Dramatised ceremonials, usually employing <i>degung</i> , became increasingly popular during the 1960s & 1970s.
1970s	<i>Ramayana</i> dance-drama (1971, 1972)	<i>Degung</i> was used to accompany a production of the <i>Ramayana</i> dance-drama at a national arts festival in Yogyakarta (1971) and an international festival in Pandaan, East Java (1972)
	Lokananta released the first cassette recordings of <i>gamelan degung</i> (1972, 1973, 1974)	Like Lokananta's gramophone recordings, these cassettes feature RRI's Parahyangan <i>degung</i> group & primarily comprise <i>degung klasik</i> repertoire
	Rise of private cassette companies & regional recording industry	Private cassette companies encouraged musical experimentation. The 1970s saw the release of several popular cassettes that signalled the birth of two new <i>degung</i> sub-genres. <i>Degung</i> composers such as Nano S. and Ujang Suryana began to achieve local celebrity status



## Summary

The aim of this chapter has been to piece together a history of *gamelan degung* from its aristocratic beginnings in the Sundanese courts to its mass dissemination on commercial cassettes. Exploring divergent accounts of the *degung*'s earliest evolution, as well as the ensemble's subsequent development in the city of Bandung, it has chartered the *gamelan*'s changing musical function, repertoire, personnel and socio-cultural position. Considering the specific urban institutions and organisations that have come to replace the courts as the ensemble's primary patrons since Indonesia Independence, this chapter has drawn attention to the ongoing popularisation of *gamelan degung* and the way in which *degung* musicians have been compelled to develop a more entrepreneurial attitude to their artistic wares in order to develop new audiences and performance contexts in the postcolonial city. Chapter two will now look at these musicians in greater detail, surveying the types of instrumentalist and singer that perform *gamelan degung* in Bandung, as well as reflecting on the different ways in which Sundanese musicians learn their craft.



## Chapter 2

### Musical competence and processes of transmission

In the preceding chapter I present a history of *gamelan degung*. Identifying the institutions and the types of musical association that have come to patronise the ensemble in Bandung, musical change is correlated to socio-cultural and politico-economic shifts and technological innovations. The study now turns to the urban performers who, in creatively responding to and more actively shaping their altering environment, have effected this musical change. More specifically, this chapter considers the multiple competences of the instrumentalists and singers engaged in any performance of *gamelan degung*, and explores the informal and formal contexts within which such competences are attained. As the approach that I have taken to these issues is informed by the model of musical competence developed by Benjamin Brinner (1995), I will outline the key concepts and terminology that I borrow from Brinner's theory before proceeding with the investigation at hand.

#### 2.1 Modelling musical competence

It is inevitable that as ethnomusicologists have increasingly come to value performance as a central research method, the subject of performance practice has begun to replace earlier academic preoccupations with “‘hard musical facts’ such as tuning, scale and mode” (Brinner 1995:34). Nevertheless, musical competence, inextricably bound up as this issue is any consideration of performance, continues to be a marginalized topic in most scholarly accounts of practical music making (*ibid.*, 2).

Describing musical competence as “an integrated complex of skills and knowledge upon which a musician relies within a particular cultural context” (*ibid.*, 1), Brinner proposes a non-hierarchical multidimensional approach to modelling what musicians know (the domains of knowledge) and the manner in which such knowledge and skills are known. The different ways of knowing are listed as contrasting pairs. Knowledge may be explicit or intuitive, active or passive, conscious or automatic, musicians also knowing aspects of a music system declaratively (‘knowing that’) and



procedurally ('knowing how') (*ibid.*, 34-39). These pairs are intended to be applied to domains of competence as dynamic, "continuously variable attributes, rather than strict oppositions" (*ibid.*, 39).

The model also takes into account the way in which knowledge and skills are distributed or, in other words, the "who knows what?" (*ibid.*, 78). Certain types of musical competence are more specialised and only acquired by particular types of musician, for example, while core competences are common to all musicians operating within a particular genre or field. Similarly, a global competence "encompasses all the performance possibilities within a musical community" while a discrete competence has little "overlap or common ground with other competences" (*ibid.*, 77).

Brinner provisionally proposes a set of twelve interrelated "component clusters of knowledge and skills" to constitute the domains of musical competence that embody the substance of what musicians know. These encompass not only aspects of the acts of individual and group performance, but also extend to knowledge of allied performance contexts, systems of symbolic representation, repertoires and associated art forms (*ibid.*, 40-43). As stated in the introduction, one of these domains – transformation – has particular importance for this study.

### 2.1.1 Transformation

The domain of transformation deals with a musician's ability to transfer and apply knowledge and skills from one context to another.<sup>1</sup> Transformative processes permeate Sundanese music making at all levels, the ability to translate and adapt musical entities being simultaneously demanded by and acquired from the earliest stages of the learning process. Brinner, more specifically, delineates transformation as procedural knowledge of techniques such as "transposition, augmentation, diminution, and variation" which

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<sup>1</sup> In these utilitarian times, the related phenomenon of *transfer* has generated much media interest because of claims that studying music has the indirect effect of improving learning in non-musical subject areas (see Staines 1999). While extra-musical transfer is well beyond the scope of this present study, it is worth noting that a *kacapi* player once told me that Sundanese musicians are sometimes offered employment in non-musical administrative posts because proficiency on an instrument demonstrates innate talent, application, as well as a high level of general intelligence.



may be applied to “sound patterns of all sizes including stock phrases, specific pieces, and general melodic or rhythmic parts” (1995:41). Although the focus of Brinner’s enquiry is Central Javanese music, many of the transformative processes outlined in his study have distinctive equivalents in Sundanese music. Sundanese repertoire is often similarly subject to types of modal transposition or transferral from one tuning system to another, as well as to structural shifts from one level of rhythmic density to another. The domain of transformation also encompasses performances practices such as idiomatic melodic embellishment and improvisation as well as wider processes of arrangement, adaptation and composition. Brinner elaborates,

Some transformations are actually translations in the literal sense of carrying over musical material from one framework to another, from one composition to another, or from one performance context to another (adapting a shadow play piece to dance performance practice, for example). Players are constantly translating from other instrumental and vocal idioms to their own instrument as they interact with other musicians (1995:58).

### 2.1.2 Sundanese musical competence: who plays what?

One crucial distinction between Sundanese and Central Javanese regional musics is that the former is not as dominated by a single ensemble type. *Gamelan*, and more specifically *gamelan degung*, is only one of the many traditional genres that compose the heterogeneous musical landscape of Bandung. The domain of transformation thus has particular relevance for any consideration of Sundanese musical competence because Sundanese musicians – most of whom are actively involved in more than one of these genres – are frequently expected to transfer the knowledge and skills acquired singing or playing in one ensemble when performing in another. This is especially true for any discussion of *degung* players.

Nano Suratno refers to *gamelan degung* as a “*terminal*” (as in a bus terminus) because of the way in which the ensemble serves as a musical ‘junction’ or point of intersection for performers and repertoires drawn from different socio-cultural backgrounds and sources (1999). Certainly, amongst professional musicians, *gamelan*



*degung* is almost always an auxiliary, rather than an isolated field of specialisation. Any consideration of musical competence and *gamelan degung* players, therefore, must take into account the multiple roles of instrumentalists and vocalists across the wider Sundanese music complex.

At the beginning of my fieldwork I conducted a survey amongst the singers and instrumentalists that I encountered at *degung* rehearsals, performances and during lessons. This was in the form of a tick-the-box style questionnaire designed to assess the range of core competences and more specialist skills that had been acquired or were in the process of being acquired by individual performers. The exercise was intended to assist my orientation in 'the field' rather than as a means to gather any comprehensive or more scientifically impartial data. Furthermore, the twenty-five replies that I received were limited to those musicians operating within the particular musical networks in which I found myself socially positioned. Nevertheless, the results support the broader conclusions that I reached on the basis of more informal observations of musicians' activities in Bandung. While the considerable amount of variety and overlap of musician-types both within and across separate genres means that no two players share an identical skill profile, sketching out the loose categories within which respondents classify themselves and each other serves as a useful starting point for discussion.

The musicians who completed the questionnaire roughly divide into three broad camps: *tembang Sunda* musicians, *gamelan pelog-salendro* (often *wayang* performers) musicians, and non-specialist players. In fact, the *gamelan degung* can be considered to be positioned somewhere in between the distinct 'worlds' of *tembang Sunda* and *gamelan pelog-salendro*. While as Cook observes, "There is something of a social and artistic divide between these two groups" (2000b:80), *degung* often acts as a secondary field of competence for musicians from both spheres. It seems that the shared aristocratic origins of *tembang Sunda* and *gamelan degung* enables some *tembang* musicians to perform *gamelan degung* without any significant loss of status; indeed, many of Bandung's most highly respected *tembang* singers and *suling* players have featured on commercial *gamelan degung* recordings. At the same time, *gamelan degung* and *gamelan pelog-salendro* have shared players since the *degung*'s earliest days in Bandung. Idi, founder of Bandung's first *gamelan degung* group, is alleged to have "played all (slendro) gamelan instruments including the rebab" (Tarya in Harrell



1974:222-223).<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Entjar Tjarmedi, leader of the influential RRI *degung* group, was also celebrated as a talented *kendang* player in the radio station's *gamelan pelog-salendro* ensemble.

The third group of questionnaire respondents that I identified comprised *degung* players who were not directly affiliated to either *tembang Sunda* or *gamelan pelog-salendro* groups and who had no specific vocal or instrumental specialism. Notably, instead of developing their skills on a particular instrument or by deepening their knowledge of a given genre, several of the players in this category have branched out into other types of music. A couple of respondents, for example, are members of a percussion group that has begun to make a name for itself on the world music stage. Significantly most of the musicians in this group are graduates or students of academy-based music diploma and degree courses. It seems that as the recipients of a broader musical education they demonstrate the most global and widespread competence but the least specialisation (see 2.3).

Before concluding this section it is also worth pointing out that, while *gamelan degung* functions as a musical common ground for disparate types of performer, different groups occasionally treat the ensemble in such radically distinctive ways as to blur the boundaries that distinguish 'degung' as a discrete musical form. For instance, a few of the *gamelan pelog-salendro* players who replied to my questionnaire belong to a *wayang* troupe that is sometimes called upon to play *degung kawih*. So unique is the *wayang*-influenced brand of *degung* presented by this group that it raises important questions of definition. One musician that I spoke to asserted that it is the classical *degung* repertoire, rather than the unique instrumentation of the ensemble that embodies the essence of *degung*. Making this distinction between *degung* as a repertoire and the *degung* ensemble as a medium for the performance of repertoire borrowed from other genres, he argued that in the latter case the ensemble merely functions as a generic form of Sundanese accompaniment that cannot truly be considered as *degung* at all. However, in practice most of the pieces played by *degung* groups in Bandung today are based on structural frameworks and utilise playing techniques that have been adapted from

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<sup>2</sup> *slendro* = *salendro*



*gamelan pelog-salendro*. Moreover, as outlined in chapter 1, the ensemble has also come to serve as a vehicle for repertoire derived from an even wider variety of genres ranging from the art form of *tembang Sunda* to folk and children's playground songs. *Gamelan degung* repertoires will be examined in more detail in chapters 3, 4 and 5.

### 2.1.3 Musical specialisation in *degung* performance

Preparing a budget for fieldwork recordings of *gamelan degung* entailed pinning down the types of core and specialist competences typically required as well as the perceived rankings of these competences, at least in terms of the levels of payment that individual musicians expect to receive. As a concrete example of this I will now list the varieties of performer that the Sasaka Domas group employed on my behalf for a recording of the Sundanese wedding ceremony (see chapter 7). Due to the fact that at the time of my fieldwork economic instability meant that rates of pay were in a state of fluctuation, I have decided not to include precise details of musicians' fees as such information would soon be out-of-date.

Sasaka Domas is headed by a couple of *tembang Sunda* singers: Didin Bajuri and Mamah Dasimah. As both the principal vocalists and group leaders, this husband-and-wife team command the highest fees. If finances permit, one or two secondary female singers may be hired in at slightly lower rates of pay to help to boost the singing and generally enliven the atmosphere. This will almost always include a female *gamelan* singer if the group have been booked to include a *jaipongan* (a modern dance form) set as part of the package of wedding entertainment.

The highest paid instrumentalist in the Sasaka Domas group is the *kendang* player. Although classical *degung* drumming is relatively straightforward and easy to learn, most contemporary *degung* repertoire utilises the more complex form of *kendang* playing typically associated with *gamelan pelog-salendro*. Furthermore, during parts of the wedding ceremony the *gamelan degung* accompanies various types of choreographed movement. This necessitates the employment of a versatile *kendang* specialist additionally skilled in dance drumming. It is also primarily the *kendang* player's job to rhythmically propel a performance forward and to bind musicians and



dancers together. The larger fee thus reflects the higher level of responsibility that comes with this role.

Next down in the payment hierarchy are the *kacapi* and *suling* players. Although the zither is a more recent and optional addition to the *degung* ensemble, the use of *tembang* songs in the Sasaka Domas wedding ceremony demands the deployment of *suling* and *kacapi* specialists with knowledge of both *tembang Sunda* and *degung* repertoires and performance techniques.

Finally, at the lower end of the pay scale are the players of the ‘bronze’ instruments who often only receive around a quarter (or less) of the fee awarded to the singers. All musicians are simply expected to have a basic working knowledge of these non-specialist parts and, in *degung kawih* at least, players at this level are easily interchangeable and replaceable.<sup>3</sup> While the terms *juru* (skilled worker, artisan) and *ahli* (specialist) are often used to describe *suling*, *kendang*, *kacapi* players and singers, I never heard musicians speak of *juru jengglong* or *ahli goong*. In fact, on the day of my recording, the very lowest paid positions – those of the *jengglong* and *goong* player – were filled by allegedly ‘non-musician’ members of the host singer’s family who just happened to be present at the time. According to Ade Komaran, however, specialisation is not the only criterion for determining a musician’s fee. He said that when apportioning payments amongst his own group he also takes into account a player’s seniority, experience and commitment to the group (*p.c.*, 2000b).

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<sup>3</sup> When a performance includes a set of *degung klasik* pieces, however, the *bonang* player may receive a similar fee to that of the *kacapi* and *suling* players in reflection of the more prominent role of the instrument within this genre (see 3.2).



## 2.2 The learning process

Apart from genre affiliation and instrumental or vocal specialisation, musicians also categorise each other according to the type of musical training that they received. Broadly speaking, two types of musician coexist in Bandung: those who have graduated from formal institutions such as STSI and SMKI, and *seniman alam* ('natural artists') or those who have acquired musical competence by more 'traditional' means. In reality, the dividing line between the two is increasingly blurred as the former are encouraged to augment their musical experiences by performing with working groups outside of the school environment, while those classifiable as *seniman alam* are increasingly compelled to legitimise their competence and enhance their general employment prospects by gaining a formal music degree. Still, for the purposes of this investigation it is helpful to separate the two.

Although individual accounts of competence acquisition are often intriguingly vague, identifying and examining the contexts in which fledgling musicians learn their craft provides instructive insights into the construction of musicianship. As Brinner acknowledges, "the manner of acquisition favours the development of certain types of competence and ways of knowing", although it is not always clear "whether the manner of acquisition gave rise to a certain competence or vice versa" (1995:134). As I will explore below, native and foreign students often find quite different aspects of Sundanese music more challenging than others precisely because of the divergent ways in which both approach its study. My own experiences of Sundanese music lessons and rehearsals have been particularly illuminating in this regard. To quote Marcus and Fischer, I thus focus on "the person, the self, and the emotions" as "a way of getting to the level at which cultural differences are most deeply rooted" (1986:46). I will begin, however, by examining the learning strategies of natural or non-formally trained Sundanese musicians.



### 2.2.1 Osmosis: non-formal approaches to learning

For Sundanese musicians, enculturation in one or more traditional sound worlds usually begins in early childhood (if not before). Several of the musicians who completed my questionnaire come from a family of *wayang* musicians and have been surrounded by *gamelan* instruments, music and musicians since birth. Other interviewees, who are not from musical families, also recalled the impact of watching a local *wayang* troupe as children as well as listening to friends and neighbours singing and playing various styles of Sundanese music at home.

According to the questionnaires that I received back, the average age at which respondents began their musical ‘training’ was thirteen, although the age range spans from six to nineteen years. The complex and multifaceted nature of the learning process means that, in practice, it is usually futile to try and pinpoint any precise starting point. In Sunda, the youngest children are welcome at rehearsals and performances, and hands-on musical play is seldom met with disapproval. Cook explains “During a dance or puppetry performance it is common to see children on stage, playing around or falling asleep”. He elaborates,

Sometimes a *goong* or *saron* player may take a child onto his lap, and guide his hands on the instrument. Even when children do not appear to be paying much attention to the proceedings, they are still *learning by osmosis*. In general, Indonesians are extremely indulgent towards children, especially those of other people... Sundanese children are usually quite uninhibited about sitting down and trying out instruments which are not being used. Even if a child picks up a beater and decides to join in during a rehearsal or a performance, the adult musicians’ reaction tends to be very tolerant, and even encouraging...

If a *gamelan* group is short-handed, a child or inexperienced player will be pressed into service to play *goong* and *kempul*... Few children who have grown up around *gamelan* will need to be told how to play *goong* the first time they have to do it: they will already have learned without ever thinking about it much (1998:5, emphasis my own).



Ade Komaran supported this view, remarking that while his now adult children have never shown any interest in becoming *gamelan* musicians, they have developed a basic, albeit passive competence merely by having been brought up surrounded by the music. Thus, although they do not play themselves, they can always tell, for example, when the *goong* player goes wrong (*p.c.*, 2000a).

The notion of acquiring “an initial base of musical knowledge” (Berliner 1994:22) by osmosis is put forward by researchers in a variety of musical domains (see, for example, Hall 1992, Berliner 1994, Brinner 1995 & Green 2001). Hall differentiates between acquired and learned culture, writing that the former, which occurs most dramatically in the first six years of life, “is literally absorbed without the intervention of others or even conscious awareness that anything particular has occurred” (1992:230-231). Interestingly, Green’s critical usage of the term ‘natural’ to designate this type of intuitive or unconscious approach to competence acquisition in Western popular music, finds an obvious equivalent in the employment of the Indonesian *secara alam* or *alami* (natural way) to describe non-formal methods of music learning in West Java. She writes,

... the learning practices of the musicians are indeed more natural than many of those associated with formal education, more akin to the ways in which very young children pick up language, and draw more heavily on enculturation experiences (2001:100).

Anecdotal evidence suggests that Sundanese *gamelan* musicians glean much of their knowledge of musical structure and repertoire, as well as of procedural performance skills, from a prolonged immersion in a musical idiom rather than via explicit tuition or analytical explanation. Weintraub’s comment that Sundanese *dalang* (puppeteers) “learn by doing (*belajar sambil jalan*, literally ‘learn while walking’) and watching, rather than by direct instruction” (1997:36), is equally pertinent to the *gamelan* musicians who accompany them. Budding instrumentalists initially acquire this knowledge by seizing upon opportunities to attend performances and to ‘tag along with’ (*ikut-ikutan*) musician friends whenever possible. Fryer notes that in this way “Most *gamelan* players know the



music well and have a good idea how to play long before they have ‘hands on’ experience” (1989:242).

In fact, a holistic “learning by doing” approach governs *gamelan* playing at all levels. From the outset, Sundanese musicians start by learning from the standard repertoire, their active knowledge of musical styles, individual pieces, as well as of appropriate instrument-specific treatments developing concurrently. Books of technical exercises are employed in formal educational institutions but these do not appear to be used outside of particular classes or deemed of much practical use by working players. In addition, though certain instrumental parts may be simplified for ‘beginners’, it is rare for pieces to be rehearsed at learner-friendly tempos or in easily digestible chunks. It seems that once a piece is up-and-running Sundanese *gamelan* musicians find it difficult to come to an abrupt halt before reaching the end of a cycle or other significant point of cadence, and even more tricky to start up again mid-piece. If, for some reason, the piece does ‘collapse’, players generally go right back to the opening introduction. In this regard, Bakan’s comments about learning Balinese *gamelan* are equally relevant to the Sundanese rehearsal process.

Since... it is the whole rather than its parts that must be emphasized, any method that privileges the smaller picture over the bigger one is undesirable. Musical holism and flow are of the highest priority, and are stressed at a variety of levels throughout the entire music transmission process (1999:289).

### 2.2.2 Learning on stage

As the son of a Sundanese puppeteer, Ade Komaran asserted that he has never taken an instrumental lesson in his life. Now a talented drummer, *gambang* player, *degung klasik* specialist, as well as *gamelan* all-rounder, he began his musical career as a child learning on stage with his father’s *wayang* troupe. Komaran explained that, like most beginners, he began his training on the *goong* and *kempul*. Playing the technically straightforward *goong* part is often cited as a useful way of gaining a deeper understanding of Sundanese musical structures, as well as of widening ones knowledge of the repertoire. Sitting at the *goong* is also said to be a useful vantage point from which to observe and to start



mentally working out what the other instruments are doing. Komaran noted that having memorised a specific instrumental pattern he would wait for an opportune moment, such as a rehearsal break, and then quietly have a go playing the instrument in question. In this unobtrusive manner he gradually progressed to the *bonang* and *saron* and, eventually, to more challenging instruments such as the *gambang* and *kendang* (p.c., 2000a).

The idea of quietly studying one instrument whilst playing another is also put forward by Sumarsam with specific reference to learning to play the Javanese *gender*. Sumarsam notes that the student would first “have to spend much time listening to and observing gender playing”.

He would observe how the mallets are handled and how the keys are damped. He would usually already know how to play other instruments... Therefore, his observation of gender playing would be done mostly while he was simultaneously playing another instrument... Eventually, when this future gender player felt ready to try and play gender for a *gendhing* [Javanese *gamelan* composition], he would try to play as much as he could, or as much as he could remember, in order to approximate what he had heard and observed (1999:5).

While, then, the notion of ‘learning by osmosis’ and, to a lesser extent, ‘learning by doing’ may suggest that knowledge and skills are acquired in a relatively unfocused and sometimes unconscious way, the autodidactic process Ade Komaran and Sumarsam outline also involves a more deliberate and proactive form of observation and memorisation. Green employs the term “purposive listening” to describe the highly concentrated type of listening that has the aim “of learning something in order to put it to use in some way after the listening experience is over” (2001:23-24). Perhaps ‘purposive observation’ would be a more appropriate term to use in this instance as learning to play most *gamelan* instruments is often as much a visual as it is an aural experience.



Purposive observation is part and parcel of what Merriam calls the “universal learning technique of imitation” (1964:158). Identifying the different ways in which this technique may be applied, Brinner distinguishes between the type of “delayed imitation” described in Ade Komaran’s and Sumarsam’s accounts, from the “simultaneous” or “consecutive” forms of imitation that are more typically employed in formal teacher-student interactions (1995:136-137). In the absence of systematic one-to-one instruction, young Sundanese musicians are frequently compelled to construct their knowledge of instrument techniques and repertoire by replicating, as best they can, performance models that were committed to memory minutes, hours, and perhaps even days or weeks earlier. Inevitably, this delay between hearing and imitating a model affects the accuracy of its reproduction (*ibid.*, 135). Indeed, Brinner contends that one of the reasons that Javanese *gamelan* players are so tolerant of individual variability is because of the independent way in which many musicians acquire competence, and the resulting “lack of extensive and specific feedback from a teacher or other more knowledgeable musician” (*ibid.*). Over time, as players become increasingly discerning about what is musically apposite from one context to another, what may have started out as a discrepancy in imitation begins to mature into a distinctive personal style. As Sutton elaborates,

One builds a personal style by incorporating elements from all the musicians one hears and likes and by discerning the methods by which melodic formulas can be varied. One gains a sense of what is appropriate and what is not through one’s particular experience and personality; this sense of appropriateness we may call grammatical though it may differ in significant ways from individual to individual and from region to region (1993:19).

This process ensures the dynamism of the music system; the subtly distinctive playing techniques developed by individual performers eventually feed back into the wider tradition to be imitated by new generations of novice musicians.



The ability to transfer and adapt musical knowledge from one context to another is fundamental to the practice of learning on stage. Early on in their musical education, Sundanese musicians learn to construct their own parts by drawing upon their past experiences of playing analogous repertoire and by simultaneously following and idiomatically translating the real-time realisations of more experienced members of the group. Clearly, some types of music are more conducive to this mode of learning than others. Brinner acknowledges “The incorporation of novice musicians is greatly facilitated by the spectrum of levels of difficulty within the idioms and the repertoire of the *gamelan*” (1995:134).<sup>4</sup> Aside from the technically simple but structurally indispensable *goong* part, the embellishing instruments also offer inexperienced musicians opportunities to learn through performance “because the parts played on these instruments derive from other parts” (*ibid.*). Moreover, unlike the *goong* part, mistakes made on these often higher pitched and softer instruments are not usually conspicuous, especially during live performances when the use of selective amplification may render such parts practically inaudible.

‘Learning by doing’ is also facilitated in Sundanese *gamelan* because instrumentalists have some scope to vary the density of their parts. For example, video footage that I recorded of a relatively inexperienced *degung* musician working out the *jengglong* part to an unfamiliar song reveals that the player gradually fleshed out his part as his knowledge of the piece grew. Initially only joining in with the basic pitches of the accompanying structural framework, the *jengglong* player began to patchily fill-in this sparse tonal outline by inserting additional pitches that were drawn from, or complemented, the overlying melodic model. The cyclic structure of the music provided the musician with the opportunity to build up and hone a satisfactory part without the need for any external instruction from the other players.

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<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, as stated earlier, it is not clear whether the structure of Sundanese *gamelan* music gave rise to this particular approach to competence acquisition or vice versa (see Brinner 1995:134).



### 2.2.3 The role of teachers and mentors

A musician's progression from the *goong* to the more technically demanding instruments is also greatly assisted by the sporadic snippets of informal instruction and the ongoing correction that are proffered by other members of the group. Cook writes that experienced players will sometimes "demonstrate how something is done, before handing the instrument to the learner to take over (often in the middle of the piece)" (1998:5). While outside of formal education institutions and associated musical circles instances of didactic teaching appear to be relatively rare, some amateur group leaders do borrow classroom style methods and notation compilations. Hugh-Jones notes "One sometimes sees a hired *gamelan* with musicians so unskilled that they have numbers chalked on the keys to guide them" (1982:21). Similarly, discussing Bandung's all female *degung* groups Heins observes, "The ladies carry neatly written notebooks in which the compositions of the *degung* repertoire are notated in Sundanese cipher script, and which are frequently consulted during rehearsals and sometimes even during performances" (1977:68-69). More typically, however, hand gestures and vocalisations direct players in rehearsal. More able musicians continually prompt novices by air-beating the *goong* and *kempul* strokes, mimicking the motions of the *kendang* player, clapping the basic pulse, or raising their fingers, one to five, to signal which cadential tone is coming next. When a complete beginner is struggling with a part, a more experienced player may sit on the opposite side of the instrument in question and physically point out the keys or pots to be struck. Singing and humming also permeate rehearsals at all levels. Nonetheless, some specialist performance skills are considered to require more explicit instruction than others.

The exacting art of *tembang Sunda* singing, for example, is usually studied directly from a professional vocalist, with established *tembang* singers often running regular *latihan* (rehearsals) for small groups of student performers. At such events "the main singer acts as an instructor, listening with great care to the vocal ornaments of the students and correcting the smallest details" (Williams 1990:230). Promising *kacapi* and *suling* players may also take advantage of these rehearsals to "request specific ornaments or techniques from more experienced players" (*ibid.*, 235). Off-the-cuff teaching additionally takes place during the impromptu discussions and demonstrations



that arise during the more unstructured time before a rehearsal formally starts or during coffee and prayer breaks. While the casual nature of this ad hoc tuition means that its pedagogical impact is easy to overlook, Williams notes “a single technical question from a young player is enough to establish a teacher-student relationship with an older musician” (*ibid.*). Ade Komaran commented that as a novice *gamelan* musician he would often make use of such free time to play around on the more challenging instruments. This sometimes prompted more experienced musicians to come over to him and give him helpful pointers, or even to take over the instrument and demonstrate how it should be done. Being bold enough ‘to have a go’ – even when it is likely that mistakes will be made – is an important character trait in young Sundanese musicians; the criticism and correction that is provoked by “getting it wrong” imparts trainees with information that they might not necessarily be able to glean via observation and imitation alone (see Ziporyn 1992:35).

Ade Komaran and other established Sundanese *gamelan* musicians, however, all concurred that at the earliest stages of their training they did not dare to bother senior players by asking for advice or tuition. Outside of formal education courses, the onus is on the trainee musician to disentangle, decipher, and synthesise aspects of the music system for his or herself. Sundanese beginners are rarely ‘spoon-fed’ information and must be extremely patient and resourceful learners to earn the respect of potential mentors. Ade Suandi, now a celebrated *suling* player and *tembang* specialist, recalled how as a young teenager and aspiring musician he would regularly turn up to observe *gamelan* rehearsals and broadcasts at RRI Bandung. He described a long period of informal apprenticeship during which he initially functioned as an errand boy who was sent out to buy cigarettes and refreshments for musicians in the group. Suandi explained that as members of the in-house *gamelan* group grew fond of him, he slowly began to be offered fragmentary pieces of instruction and correction. Outlining a similar instrument progression to that put forward by Ade Komaran, Ade Suandi stated that his musical education was ‘indirect’ (“*secara tidak langsung*”) and ‘non-formal’ (“*tidak formal*”) (*p.c.*, 2000).



Occasionally one hears of Sundanese *gamelan* rehearsals that have been specifically set up for the benefit of novice players and which are run by a designated instructor. Experienced musicians, for example, are often brought in to provide school, community or workplace-based *gamelan degung* groups with more explicit tuition and direction. Professional ensembles may also appoint a performer with specialist expertise to coach players through less familiar bodies of repertoire. Indeed, while I was in Bandung, the ‘superstar’ Sundanese puppeteer Asep Sunandar asked Nano Suratno to come and teach his *wayang* musicians a few popular *degung* arrangements.

Even so, some teachers and group leaders assume a more directive and didactic role than others. McPhee’s depiction of the Balinese *gamelan* teacher as a silent figure generally “gazing off into space” (McPhee 1938 quoted in Merriam 1964:152) is reminiscent of several Sundanese *gamelan* teachers that I observed. Bakan provides a detailed description of the non-analytical demonstration-and-imitation mode of transmission known in Bali as “*maguru panggul*” or “teaching with the mallet” (1999:281-291). Referring to this particular pedagogic method, McPhee argues that, from a Western perspective, “The teacher does not seem to teach... He is merely the transmitter; he simply makes concrete the musical idea which is to be handed on, sets the example before the pupils and leaves the rest to them” (McPhee 1954 in Bakan 1999:282). The notion of the teacher as a ‘transmitter’ of the tradition is also echoed by the Sundanese singer and *tembang Sunda* scholar Apung Wiratmadja.

*Penembang ‘memindahkan’ lagu kepada calon penembang. Penembang senior mengajar penembang junior. Begitu seterusnya. Mengajarkan lagu-lagu dengan cara tradisional alami, dari mulut ke mulut (oral), baris demi baris, kata demi kata (Wiratmadja 2001).*

[*Tembang* singers ‘transfer’ songs to trainee *tembang* singers. The senior singers teach the junior singers. And so it continues. Teaching songs in the natural, traditional way, from one mouth to another (oral), line-by-line, word-by-word.]



In fact, practical demonstration is often the only useful way of expressing a particular musical idea as well as of transmitting repertoire from one player to another. Many aspects of Sundanese musical performance lie beyond the scope of existing terminology and systems of notation, or the explanatory reach of established theoretical frameworks. Musicians tend to ascribe their implicit procedural understanding of such unnamed musical processes to a cultivated sense of *rasa* or feel. Ziporyn observes that his Balinese *gamelan* teacher would talk of “feeling” the music when describing a “non-linguistic way of knowing” a particular concept or when thinking musically, “without the intermediary of abstract terminology, or... any immediate, conscious, linguistic thought” (1992:36). Coming full circle, Hall connects this absence of analytical vocabulary to the quality of the initial learning process and the fact that one is dealing with a branch of “acquired culture” (1992:226).

It cannot automatically be assumed, however, that just because musicians do not have the vocabulary to label particular processes that such processes are entirely unconscious or instinctive (Brinner 1995:37). On the contrary, it appears that music is knowable in multiple, often non-verbalisable ways. Berliner, for instance, proposes that jazz improvisers mentally shift between aural, theoretical and visual representations of musical ideas during a performance (1994:175-176). Likewise, Pressing comments that musical performers certainly have the “subjective impression” that “potentially separate yet often interconnected motor, symbolic, and aural forms of memory” exist (1988:142). Brinner even argues that a musician’s ability to execute certain musical processes – such as to simplify complex playing patterns – demonstrates “an awareness of the workings of such patterns that is as explicit as notation or verbal explanation” (1995:37).

Linguistic limitations aside, some aspects of any music system are also simply more teachable than others. Significantly, research suggests that competence in musical improvisation is more successfully acquired through an extended exposure to a specific music tradition rather than via direct tuition. Hall acknowledges “While all of us ‘learn’ things through the process of instruction, improvisation appears to be more closely allied to acquisition than to learning, which is one reason why it has such an ‘individual’ flavour” (1992:227). With reference to learning Indian music Derek Bailey writes, “a Guru doesn’t, or your teacher doesn’t, really tell you how to improvise. That is purely up to the student to gain by experience and to intuit the various methods of playing the



music” (1992:8). Laudan Nooshin similarly remarks on “the absence of discussion of improvisational techniques during training” in Iranian music (1998:75). Proposing that the act of memorising the *radif* (the central body of Iranian classical repertoire and its associated concepts) implicitly “serves to teach musicians the rules of musical variation” (*ibid.*), Nooshin contends that the structure of the music itself constitutes “a form of cognitive, non-verbalised theory” (*ibid.*, 100). Ziporyn also argues that formal understanding in Balinese music is “a by-product of memorisation” (1992:34). Such comments resonate with my own experiences of Sundanese music; one of my *gamelan* teachers explained to me that the act of learning the traditional repertoire by heart would automatically enhance my ability to vary and improvise individual instrumental parts (see 4.2).

#### **2.2.4 Native and non-native approaches to learning *gamelan***

Lacking the musical enculturation and accompanying passive competences gained from having grown up with Sundanese music, and generally without the opportunity to serve a long-term apprenticeship with a particular ensemble, foreign students tend to embark on a very different type of musical training than that undertaken by their Sundanese counterparts. Often further restricted by externally imposed time constraints and possessing long-term goals that differ substantially from those of practising Sundanese musicians, non-Sundanese students have to find ways of fast-tracking the learning process. This is usually accomplished by setting up relatively intensive one-to-one lessons with a specialist performer, a method that results in the visiting student encountering the music from a very different angle than the Sundanese novice.

The holistic nature of the conventional rehearsal process ensures that Sundanese musicians tend to begin by grasping the wider picture and developing a macrocosmic understanding of a particular genre. Starting from such broad foundations, from what Sutton describes as “a hazy conception of the whole” (1993:90), musicians gradually delve deeper, gaining increasingly sophisticated and specialist knowledge of particular instrumental idioms and the defining quirks of individual pieces. In contrast, the private lesson format often encourages non-Sundanese students to start out by tackling the more technically challenging instruments, focusing on what could be considered as surface



detail without any of the background knowledge necessary for the contextualisation of this detail. Brinner writes “Foreign students often learn elaborating parts to pieces that they have never heard before rather than building on previous experience of the piece (or similar pieces) as a Javanese musician would” (1995:148). This was my own experience when learning to play the Sundanese *suling* in 1996. While I quickly acquired an acceptable technique on the instrument, my ability to develop and vary the embellished versions of the pieces that I had been taught was limited because I did not know the vocal melodies or tonal progressions on which these elaborations were based. My *suling* teacher eventually suggested that the best way to improve my playing was to take singing lessons and to learn the songs.

While the individual lesson format may not be a particularly Sundanese way of learning, the private tuition provided by most Bandung performers is generally unlike any pay-per-hour Western music lesson that I have experienced either. Bakan writes at length about the way in which he and his Balinese teacher Sukarata negotiated the unorthodox pedagogical framework within which he came to learn *beleganjur* drumming (1999:292-333). Describing his own feelings of being overwhelmed when, at his first lesson, the teacher sat down and performed a “lengthy variation at full speed” and then expected him to imitate it, Bakan confesses “At first I was not even aware I was being taught” (*ibid.*, 301).

Trained in Western classical music and accustomed to learning from notation, I was similarly initially daunted by the feats of memorisation I was expected to accomplish in private lessons. In contrast to the relatively brief consultation and review type sessions that typified my instrumental tuition in the UK, my lessons in Bandung usually lasted for several hours. Moreover, rather than being encouraged to practise in my own time, I would often be expected to grapple clumsily with a particularly tricky technique or to memorise a long melodic model under the ever present gaze of the teacher and anyone else present. When learning a particular musical passage or technique by rote, teachers would often ask “*sudah masuk?*”. While this loosely translates as “have you got that yet?”, *masuk* literally means to ‘enter’ or ‘go into’ something (‘has that got in yet?’). This verb always felt appropriate to describe the physical way that I imagined the ‘music’ painstakingly making its way into both my finger muscles (on the *suling*) and those parts of my straining brain dealing with



coordination and memory. My memory often proved erratic and inconsistent and I identify with Bakan when he writes, “Where a memory lapse might occur during any given performance was anyone’s guess (including mine)” (1999:308). I would frequently reach a point of saturation and experience hitherto unfamiliar feelings of acute mental resistance and frustration when a teacher, unable to judge my limited faculty for memorisation, would patiently continue to inundate me with new material. At the same time, I also began to re-evaluate my prior experiences of instrumental tuition in the UK, wondering, for example, why I had never made audio recordings of my Western classical teachers playing in lessons in the same way I did Sundanese performers. I also began to feel slightly disappointed at the realisation that despite (or, indeed, perhaps because of) years of formal music education I could still play very little without the now seemingly superficial interface of notation (which I had erroneously come to call ‘the music’). Moreover, this education only seemed to leave me feeling anxious at the prospect of being asked to be ‘creative’ and to embellish or improvise an instrumental part.

In his article on improvisation (1992), the anthropologist Edward T. Hall offers an interesting interpretation of my experience. Introducing the concept of high context communication, in which “most of the information is already known to the recipient” (1992:229), and low context communication, where the “goal is to make the message as complete and as explicit as possible” (*ibid.*, 230), Hall proposes that improvisation (a skill rooted in experience and acquired after years of “programming” and “contexting”) is a higher context form of musical communication than is composition (in which musical material tends to be more explicitly coded and prescribed) (*ibid.*, 231). Questioning the reason why, unlike language, “music in Northern European cultures is acquired only by a few” (*ibid.*, 232), Hall suggests that by consistently opting for low context solutions, including the privileging of a form of music that is written out using a highly explicit (low context) form of notation, Northern European culture has increased “compartmentalization and specialization, but not necessarily understanding” (*ibid.*, 231). Concluding his article he asks,



Has our culture, by a process of lowering the context or approaching music as an imposed, outside-in phenomenon, deprived us of the sense of the source of our natural and innate gift of music? (*ibid.*, 233).

Although existing notation systems are not even capable of accurately representing the subtleties of Sundanese melody and rhythm, my own reliance on 'reading' the music continued to spill over into my instrumental lessons in Bandung because of my deep-rooted distrust of my memory and ears. Using a hybrid form of Sundanese and Western notation to approximate the material that I had covered in a class enabled me to keep track of the repertoire that I had to keep assuring my teachers that I was also memorising. Bakan similarly describes the "performance score" that he gradually compiled by transcribing the drumming patterns presented by his teacher (1999:301-306). Employing the same learning process that he had "used effectively for many years as a percussionist in the Western 'art' music tradition", Bakan planned to "*first learn the notes, then worry about playing them musically*" (*ibid.*, 306, emphasis my own). This seems to be a common trend amongst Western-trained musicians. Comparing Sundanese and non-Sundanese players Cook remarks,

With Western learners... knowledge of the notes (often derived from notation) frequently seems to precede a feel for the piece as a whole, and how the parts might fit together. It is common to hear Western people play the right notes in the right order, but at the wrong time. With Sundanese learners, it is common to hear the wrong notes in the wrong order, but at the right time (1998: 5).

Lili Suparli, a music lecturer at STSI, concurred that from a Sundanese *gamelan* musician's perspective 'the notes' are not the most important element to concentrate on first. Rather inexperienced players should start by gaining a feel for temporal frameworks, rhythmic flow and phrase placement within the *goong* cycle (*p.c.*, 2001c).



### 2.2.5 Native and non-native approaches to learning *degung*

This disparity in learning practices and progressions means that Sundanese and non-Sundanese musicians have rather different perceptions about the relative difficulty of a particular body of repertoire. As a result, it is not always possible to evaluate Sundanese and foreign players by the same benchmarks. My own proficiency playing a number of classical style *degung* pieces, for example, gained me a reputation that was at odds with my inexperience of performing supposedly simpler short-form pieces in a group situation. In fact, I found the *degung klasik* pieces easiest to learn for the very reasons that most Sundanese musicians deem them to be the most challenging.

This discrete body of repertoire particularly lends itself to the private lesson format favoured by most non-Sundanese students for several reasons. Firstly, when learning the *degung klasik* pieces, based as they are on relatively long, idiosyncratic *bonang* melodies (see 3.2), it actually makes sense for players to concentrate on a single instrumental part. Secondly, the fixity of this part provides the teacher with a clear-cut model to demonstrate, as well as concrete series of tones for the student to grasp. Finally, as the *degung klasik* pieces do not significantly change from performance to performance and are not subject to the internal structural transformations that operate in other types of repertoire, the student can successfully perform such pieces without having much experience of group playing and interaction. As a classically-trained, getting-the-notes-right fixated musician I felt much more comfortable memorising this type of preset melody, rather than having to generate my own part as other Sundanese *gamelan* idioms demand. In private lessons, I could repeat a given *bonang* melody until my memorisation of it was secure, my recording equipment further enabling me to document pieces for future reference.

Conversely, many Sundanese musicians seem to consider the *degung kawih* repertoire much easier, mainly, it appears, because such pieces are based on musical models and utilise types of playing pattern extensively employed in other genres. Drawing upon core competences, and transforming knowledge and skills that have usually been acquired from the earliest stages of their training, means that when a Sundanese *gamelan* musician encounters an unfamiliar *degung kawih* song there is generally little novel material to learn. Moreover, the standardised structural frameworks



underpinning this repertoire make it possible for Sundanese musicians to formulaically fudge their way through unknown pieces when necessary and to 'learn by doing'.

Learning *degung kawih* on a one-to-one basis, however, is problematic because, although technically simpler, individual instrumental parts do not make much musical sense when studied in isolation. Rather, each part slots in with and functions as a frame of reference for the others. In addition, this type of repertoire is subject to various types of structural transformation that can only be satisfactorily encountered and practised within an interactive group situation. The on-stage learning environment described above ensures that Sundanese *gamelan* musicians develop such flexibility from the outset of their training. Conversely, having only studied Sundanese music privately, I found my first experiences playing *degung kawih* in a group situation a rather testing and disorientating experience.

It seemed that every time I was on the verge of getting to grips with a particular melodic pattern, the drummer would signal a change of tempo or *wilet* (level of structural expansion or contraction) that demanded that I either condense or elaborate that pattern. Without even a passive knowledge of Sundanese drumming, following rhythmic cues was difficult enough. After a structural transition I would frequently find myself 'at sea', having even lost my sense of the basic pulse. Uneasily busking along as best I could, I would desperately listen out for the *goong*, the central landmark in this fluid musical landscape. On other occasions I would have just worked out a suitable *saron* (metallophone) or *bonang* part when another musician would start to play an interlocking motif (*caruk*) that I would then be obliged to join in with. It often felt as though as soon as I started to enjoy playing a given part with relative confidence there would be a change of piece or I would be prompted to move to a different instrument. Although only a *degung kawih* 'beginner', I felt under a certain amount of pressure to appear competent on such occasions because my knowledge of the *degung klasik* repertoire suggested to the other players that I was a much more accomplished *degung* musician than was the case.

In stark contrast, Sundanese musicians generally consider repertoires that are based on denser, melodically fixed models – such as the *degung klasik* pieces – as the most difficult to learn. In *tembang Sunda*, for example, the *mamaos* songs are deemed



the hardest songs to master because even the smallest of vocal ornaments and dynamic nuances must be accurately replicated. Conversely, the *kacapi rincik*, the most ‘improvised’ instrumental part in *tembang Sunda*, is considered as the most suitable starting point for beginners; the *rincik* player also receives the lowest level of financial remuneration in the group. Sutton concurs that in Javanese *gamelan* playing improvisation is often used as “faking” and “recovery” and that “the inexperienced performer is likely to do more improvising than the experienced one” (1998a:86).

### 2.2.6 The social dimension to learning

The perceived difficulty of the *degung klasik* and *mamaos* repertoires may be, at least in part, attributable to the increased piece-specific memorisation required and the feasibility of such memorisation within conventional learning environments. In an oral musical culture, particularly prior to the advent of notation and recording technology, the opportunity to learn long, melodically fixed pieces was the preserve of those privileged enough to have sufficient access to a teacher-figure and, if relevant, a set of instruments on which to practice. It is a fact that the early history of *degung* in Bandung is often outlined by tracing a lineage of esteemed teacher-players that begins with Idi in the original *kabupaten* group. Idi, for example, is said to have taught Atma and Oyo who both went on to teach Entjar Tjarmedi, former director of the influential RRI *gamelan degung* group. Familial associations play an important role in determining many of these teacher-student relationships, with younger players “inheriting knowledge” and status from their fathers and uncles (see Sukanda in Harrell 1974:226-227). During my time in Bandung, I often heard it lamented that while *tembang Sunda* and *wayang* continue to evolve and thrive, there will soon be no one left to pass on the *gamelan degung* tradition. Such comments refer to the passing away of most of the older generation of veteran *kabupaten* and RRI trained musicians qualified to act as specialist transmitters of the *degung klasik* genre, as well as the general decline of RRI as a government-funded teaching institution and centre of musical excellence.



Outside of formal education establishments, today's Sundanese *gamelan* musicians seldom have the opportunity to work on the *degung klasik* repertoire. This is primarily because *degung* groups tend to be run as commercial enterprises and most Sundanese audiences are considered to prefer modern styles of repertoire. Ade Komaran complained that many of the youngsters in his own *gamelan* group join for financial, rather than for artistic reasons, expecting to get paid for any performances that they participate in from the outset of their training. Accordingly, they are only prepared to invest time learning and rehearsing repertoire that will sell (*p.c.*, 2000b). Cook also observes that as the large *klasik* pieces "have become rather unfamiliar", they have "gained an undeserved reputation for being extremely difficult to play" (1992:8). One of my teachers made the comment that now only foreign students will voluntarily spend the time learning this older style repertoire; while one day the *degung klasik* 'tradition' may be forgotten in Sunda, he continued, at least it might live on in Europe or America.

The reality of the situation is, of course, that foreign students are rarely subject to the same socio-cultural conventions and financial constraints that inhibit the conduct and limit the choices of young Sundanese musicians. Sundanese hospitality is such that even unknown foreigners, male or female, are treated as honorary guests and warmly welcomed and accommodated at most rehearsals and performances. Foreign students also have "an unusual degree of access to master musicians" (Brinner 1995:149). Williams writes that experienced musicians "willingly accept a foreigner as a private student not just for the money, but... for the prestige that having a foreign student brings to the teacher" (1990:234). For Sundanese beginners, on the other hand, gaining initial entrance into a particular socio-musical community often depends on having some form of family or social connection, or at least on being a member of a particular neighbourhood where a group happens to rehearse or perform.

The advent of affordable recording technology and commercially produced cassettes has democratised aspects of competence acquisition to some extent. Nearly all of my questionnaire respondents listed cassettes as a primary learning resource that enables them to keep up to date with the latest repertoire, as well as to emulate the instrumental and vocal techniques of their favourite artists in more studied detail. Nevertheless, the majority of Sundanese musicians do not own their own recording



equipment and mass-produced recordings have a limited use as educational tools. Not only are producers interested only in recording the types of repertoire that they consider to be marketable but, in the final studio mix, certain instruments are always audibly privileged over others. It is thus, for example, much easier to learn *suling* from a commercial cassette than it is *gambang*.

In any event, Sundanese music is first and foremost a social music, and gaining acceptance and recognition within a specialised musical community or network of communities an essential part of becoming a working artist. Moreover, the Sundanese often say that one of the main reasons for becoming a musician is that you will always have lots of friends (Foley 1979). Depicting the *tembang Sunda* rehearsal as a social gathering as well as a music practice Williams writes, “Many say that a *latihan* is more fun if there are more people present, and claim that they attend to give *semangat* or enthusiasm to the proceedings” (1990:225). Sundanese rehearsals are often full of laughter and Sundanese musicians known for their sense of humour and love of comedy. There is, however, a darker side to such laughter as ridicule is also a common method of “social and musical control” (*ibid.*). As Williams notes, “One of the quickest and most effective ways to cause a student to learn quickly is to make him so embarrassed by his mistakes that he never repeats them” (*ibid.*).

Certainly, deep-rooted social and familial affiliations serve to regulate a music tradition as it is transferred from one generation to the next. Apprentice *tembang* musicians, for example, are often restricted in their musical choices because they become beholden to the teachers from whom they inherited their vocal or instrumental technique. Tensions arise when a trainee decides that it is time to branch out and perform with other musicians or to borrow techniques from rival singers or instrumentalists. Furthermore, if a period of apprenticeship ends before the teacher is ready, hard feelings and strained relationships appear to be inevitable.

Nano Suratno suggested that in the post-court urban environment, it is the discipline, loyalty and obligation engendered in such personal teacher-student interactions that has enabled *tembang Sunda* to continue to thrive as an elitist art form with strict codes of performance practice (*p.c.*, 2000b). Without equivalent, or at least sufficiently prohibitive social sanctions, *gamelan degung* musicians have been much freer to drive more radical changes. As *degung* players continue to experiment with



unorthodox playing techniques, novel arrangements and an expanded instrumentation, a few musicians may quietly grumble that no one plays the classical repertoire anymore. However, even the most radical *degung* innovations no longer arouse the passionate public outcries and debate that still result when *tembang* musicians alter the smallest details of performance practice.

### 2.3 *Gamelan degung* in formal education programmes

The first all-student *gamelan degung* groups were established in the 1950s. Since then, several Bandung educational institutions, including ITB and the University of Pajajaran, have continued to run *degung* clubs as part of extra-curricula arts societies. More formal courses in *gamelan degung* are also found on the syllabuses of SMKI and STSI. As the Indonesian government's establishment of such institutions has been critiqued elsewhere (see, for example, Sutton 1991), I will now restrict my remarks to the position of *gamelan degung* in Bandung's state education sector.

In contrast to the relatively specialist apprenticeships undertaken by musicians outside of formal education settings, high school diploma and degree courses demand that music students acquire a more broad-based 'global' competence. As a result, one of the continuing criticisms of institutions such as STSI and SMKI is that the graduates they produce rarely excel "in any single genre or dance style" (Williams 1990:240). Williams outlines a perpetuating cycle of non-specialisation whereby such graduates then go on to become the new generation of teachers at these institutions (*ibid.*, 236-240). One STSI instructor confided to me that the tuition offered by the school is only intended to supply students with a basic foundation in performance skills. Consequently, the teacher in question encourages his current trainees to gain additional experience by attaching themselves to working *gamelan* groups in and around Bandung. Farrell describes a comparable situation in India.

... there is still a widespread cultural assumption that the *guru-shishya perampera* (master-disciple tradition) is still considered the only true way to produce good players, and it is often the case that someone who has been through the college system will go to a *guru* for intensive training afterwards if they have any ambitions to be a professional performer (2001:59).



Formally unqualified 'master' musicians have sometimes been brought into Bandung schools to offer more specialist practical instruction to staff as well as students. Entjar Tjarmedi, for example, was contracted to teach *gamelan degung* to the staff at SMKI, and to students at STSI in the 1970s (Upandi 1997:36). Similarly, another former RRI *gamelan* musician, Sulaeman Sutisna, taught *gamelan degung* at STSI from 1988 to 1999. Despite their higher levels of practical expertise, such 'natural' artists are not permitted to become fully-fledged members of the teaching staff and can only be employed as *dosen luar biasa* ('extra-ordinary instructor'). It remains a bone of contention that without a recognised degree, these extra-ordinary instructors receive lower rates of pay and none of the associated benefits of their 'qualified' counterparts.

On the degree programme at STSI, *gamelan degung* has to compete for timetable space with a whole host of other Sundanese and non-Sundanese genres. *Karawitan* (Indonesian traditional music) students have to take group lessons in every principal instrument and vocal style and to follow courses in all of the main Sundanese *gamelan* and *kacapi* based genres. Aside from Sundanese traditional music, students also take practical tuition in Balinese, Javanese and Sumatran musics, and additional classroom based subjects such as notation, composition, ethnomusicology, arts appreciation and multimedia studies. The *karawitan* course convenor explained that one of the reasons that the programme is so broad is that all Indonesian higher education institutions are obliged to meet the requirements of a government dictated national curriculum. This demands that the scope of the syllabus be cast even wider to incorporate subjects such as English language, religious studies and Indonesian history.

The way in which *gamelan* is taught at STSI and SMKI is also prescribed by a detailed curriculum. I observed staff at SMKI teaching *gamelan degung* from semester-specific job sheets that dictate the specific learning objectives for individual sessions (including, for example, whether the pedagogic emphasis should be on instrumental technique or group playing) as well as the pieces to be taught and the formal methods of assessment to be employed. Sundanese cipher notation is also widely used as a primary means of transmission in classes at both institutions. SMKI lesson plans even specify that students will first 'read', and then take it in turns to play the piece under study. Students are, however, expected to memorise the repertoire for the ongoing tests and end of semester examinations by which they are finally graded.



I was told on several occasions that while *degung* occupies a central place on the *karawitan* syllabus at SMKI, the ensemble holds a much more peripheral and ambiguous position at STSI. In fact, in 2000-2001, the ensemble was only offered as a module for study in one (semester four) out of a total of nine semesters on the STSI degree programme. *Tembang Sunda* and even Javanese and Balinese *gamelan*, on the other hand, could be studied for up to two semesters. Another point of difference between the *degung* courses offered at both institutions is that while the SMKI curriculum covers a wider range of repertoire-types, students at STSI only learn *degung klasik* style pieces. Some members of the STSI staff are openly dismissive about what they consider to be the technical simplicity and commercial ephemerality of the largely derivative *degung kawih* repertoire, arguing that the business mentality driving its creation has no place in a formal music curriculum. At the same time, several teachers at the institution work or have worked as freelance *degung* composers, supplementing their low incomes by writing songs for record companies in Bandung and Jakarta.

The *gamelan degung* is further marginalized at STSI because it is not considered as a sufficiently demanding vehicle for specialisation in the final year performance recital. At a 'degung conference' held in Bandung in 1999, the STSI based composer Ismet Ruchimat was critical of the fact that *gamelan degung* instruments are only ever seen in a final year examination if they are being used as a vehicle for an avant-garde style *kreasi* ('creation') by a student majoring in composition (1999). Nevertheless, more recent changes to the examination system mean that a *suling* specialist can now include a selection of *degung klasik* pieces as a part of their final degree presentation.

Paradoxically, despite having such a low profile on the STSI timetable, many of Bandung's most well-known and respected groups, including Sasaka Domas, mainly draw their rank-and-file *degung* players from STSI circles. Indeed, playing *degung* at Bandung functions continues to be one of the ways in which many music students help to fund their way through college. The influence of STSI/SMKI playing styles, pedagogy and terminology has also spilled over into the wider musical community as many members of staff and students have gained part-time employment working as



*gamelan degung* instructors, composers, and arrangers with privately owned groups and local government-sponsored arts organisations in and around the Bandung area.<sup>5</sup>

That the relative absence of *gamelan degung* instruction at STSI appears to have little bearing on the professional activities of the institution's student and graduate populations is primarily due to the fact that the basic knowledge and skills required to play the more popular *degung* repertoires are largely acquirable in the context of the school's *gamelan pelog-salendro* classes. Young players also have additional opportunities to improve their knowledge of contemporary *degung* idioms by attaching themselves to working groups in the city, as well as by keeping up-to-date with the latest cassettes releases. STSI and SMKI students even have a distinct advantage over non-formally trained musicians when it comes to being recruited to play on new *degung* recordings because they are more familiar with Sundanese cipher notation. The most prominent *degung* composers, such as Nano S. and Iik Setiawan, routinely transcribe their *gamelan degung* arrangements and expect their players to learn selected parts from a written score (see 6.3). In actual fact, as outlined in chapter 1, the through-composed style of instrumental arrangement that dominates the commercial *degung kawih* genre traces back to the musical innovations of the influential pedagogue, Koko Koswara, a former director of both educational institutions.

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<sup>5</sup> For example, the influential Jugala group has consistently looked to STSI trained musicians to act as the artistic directors of their own in-house ensembles. STSI's Ismet Ruchimat led Jugala's *degung* ensemble in 2000-2001, during which time the group was made up almost entirely of STSI students or recent graduates. The previous *gamelan* instructor at Jugala was another STSI alumnus, Iik Setiawan, leader of the popular *degung* group Sulanjana. Similarly, the prolific *degung kawih* composer and erstwhile SMKI instructor (and former Jugala employee), Nano Suratno, continues to employ student and graduate players on his own commercial recordings.



### 2.3.1 UPI and *gamelan degung* in primary and secondary schools

Aside from SMKI and STSI, *gamelan degung* is also taught at UPI (*Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia*, 'Indonesian University of Education'), Bandung's foremost teacher training establishment. Many SMKI graduates opt to continue their studies at UPI, rather than at STSI, in the belief that a university education "offers greater employment potential in a non-musical field" (Williams 1990:239). A degree in music education from UPI also automatically qualifies graduates to work as schoolteachers.

Reflecting music teaching in Indonesian state schools – which mainly consists of singing diatonic Indonesian-language songs and memorising abstract elements of basic Western music theory – the degree in music education at UPI concentrates on Western classical and popular musics. Students take courses in theoretical subjects such as Western music history, analysis, composition, harmony and counterpoint, as well as receive practical tuition on instruments including the piano and guitar. However, as Bandung school children are sometimes given the opportunity to engage in practical Sundanese music making as part of a compulsory 'local curriculum' (*muatan lokal*), student teachers are given the opportunity to learn *gamelan degung* and other Sundanese and Indonesian genres as part of a single module entitled *Musik Nusantara* ('Music of the Indonesian archipelago').

In reality, only a small minority of schools in Bandung are in the privileged position of housing their own *gamelan* sets; even so, the majority of these are *gamelan degung* (Koizumi *et al* 1977:26).<sup>6</sup> Upandi mentions a government programme to distribute iron *degung* sets to schools in the 1980s (Upandi 1997:81 fn42), while a local education department initiative in 1997 saw the allocation of a variety of traditional instruments to a group of select primary schools which have been awarded specialist arts status. These schools, known as SD IPK (*Sekolah Dasar Induk Pengembangan Kesenian*, 'Specialist Primary School for the Development of the Arts'), received *angklung* (tuned bamboo rattles), *kacapi*, *suling*, as well as iron *gamelan degung* sets.

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<sup>6</sup> I heard several explanations for why *gamelan degung* tends to be chosen over *gamelan salendro* in mainstream school settings. These ranged from the relative simplicity of *degung* repertoire and the inherent respectability of this urban ensemble, to the fact that Bandung children are more familiar with the *pelog degung* tuning because they regularly hear *degung* songs at weddings and on pop Sunda recordings.



Apart from such specialist programmes, select secondary school groups also receive *gamelan degung* tuition in after-school classes on the STSI campus.

*Degung* classes at primary and secondary school level usually culminate in competitive *gamelan degung* contests rather than tests or exams.<sup>7</sup> In September 2000, for instance, the local education department in Bandung sponsored an inter-school *degung* competition for those specialist primary schools (SD IPK) in receipt of *gamelan degung* sets. The alleged aims of the competition were to motivate the student groups involved as well as to evaluate the extent to which the instruments were being used. One education official explained that the feedback gained from the event would partly determine whether or not to widen the instrument-distribution programme to other Bandung schools. Education department officials, STSI teachers and other prominent musicians were brought in to judge the event, the victor of which received a large cash prize for the school and the ubiquitous over-sized trophy commonly awarded on such occasions.

The winning primary school *degung* group comprised five female pupils aged between seven and ten years, and a ten-year-old male student. The male student had been studying *kendang* for three years outside of the school with a family member and so was naturally selected to play this instrument. Gender stereotyping was further reinforced as the *suling* was also played by the sole male teacher involved in the project. The group, which rehearses over break-times, is run by members of the general teaching staff who, while extremely enthusiastic, have never received any specific training in Sundanese music. On the day that I attended a rehearsal at the school, all of the parts to the *degung klasik* piece *Ayun Ambing* (the competition set piece) were written out in Sundanese cipher notation on a white board in the centre of the music room. The rest of the walls were covered in the Western staff notation that is used by the school's *angklung* group and choir. Learning from a basic beginner's manual, one of the *degung* group leaders, a full-time teacher at the school, confessed to only ever remaining one session ahead of the pupils.

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<sup>7</sup> See Williams (2003) for further information about Sundanese music competitions.



In fact, compiling books of songs and simple notations for this type of amateur group is another sideline activity for entrepreneurial STSI graduates. Ismet Ruchimat and Iik Setiawan, for example, published a set of three graded practice books to support secondary-school-level local curriculum courses in Sundanese music (see Setiawan and Ruchimat 1996). Aside from introducing students to broader historical and theoretical issues, these books contain hands-on *suling* exercises, traditional songs and basic *gamelan degung* arrangements. Another STSI graduate, Ade Suparman, also put together two books of *suling degung* and *gamelan degung* “etudes” (see Suparman 2000 & 2001a). Published locally, the first run of copies of the *gamelan degung* book sold out within weeks reflecting, Suparman suggested, a current increased demand for such curriculum resources amongst schoolteachers and group leaders (*p.c.*, 2001b).

This type of classroom-focused initiative is not a new phenomenon; as noted in chapter 1, local government schemes to encourage West Javanese school children to sing regional songs date back at least as far as the 1930s (Kunst 1973:394-395). In the early 1950s, Koko Koswara also expressed his intention to widen participation in Sundanese music education by providing young school children with repertoire appropriate for their age group (Ruswandi 1995:17-18). *Cangkurileung* (1), a book of illustrated *kawih* songs for primary school children, was subsequently published in 1955 (*ibid.*, 69). The songs, which are in the *salendro* and *pelog degung* tunings, cover a range of topics including types of children’s games (*Oray-Orayan* and *Maen Bal*) and the joy of singing Sundanese songs (*Hayu Kawih* and *Ngawih*). The earliest books intended to facilitate the teaching of *degung* do not appear to have been available until the 1970s when Tjarmedi *et al* (1974) and Juju Sain Martadinata (1973, 1976) both produced collections of simple notations to serve as material for the formal *gamelan* courses being set up around this time. These publications continue to be used to teach *degung* today and, as such, will be discussed again with reference to *cempres* (metallophone) playing in chapter 4.



## Summary

This chapter has situated the *gamelan degung* within the wider landscape of the Sundanese performing arts complex and reflected on the way in which the ensemble has come to function as an auxiliary field of specialisation for musicians originating from disparate artistic spheres. It has argued that ‘transformation’ (as delineated by Brinner 1995) is a domain of musical competence that has particular relevance for any consideration of Sundanese musicianship because Sundanese singers and instrumentalists are frequently called upon to transfer and adapt the knowledge and skills acquired in one genre when performing in another; this, it was proposed, is particularly true for any discussion of musical competence and *gamelan degung*.

Contrasting informal and formal, native and non-native approaches to musical learning, this chapter has also explored Brinner’s contention that the manner in which skills and knowledge are acquired favours the development of different types of competence or ‘ways of knowing’ (or, from the opposite perspective, that the knowledge and skills demanded by different types of music system privilege distinctive approaches to learning) (1995:134). It was shown that Sundanese and foreign students tend to find different aspects of Sundanese music more challenging than others precisely because of the divergent ways in which both initially encounter such materials.

The chapter concluded by investigating the place of *gamelan degung* on the curricula of primary, secondary and tertiary-level education institutions in Bandung. It was noted that many of Bandung’s leading *degung* groups are made up of student or graduate players and that the *degung kawih* genre is historically rooted in and continues to interlink the ‘worlds’ of formal music education and music commerce. Although the study now moves to a more analytical investigation of *degung* repertoires, the issue of learning and competence acquisition will continue to resurface in subsequent chapters.



## Chapter 3

### *Gamelan degung* repertoire: *degung klasik* and *degung kawih*

This study now turns more specifically to the music of the *gamelan degung*.

Collectively, the following three chapters consider processes of transformation that are operative in the creation and realisation of *degung* repertoires. In order to pave the way for a more detailed investigation of melodic embellishment and improvisation (chapter 4) and cross-genre adaptation (chapter 5), this chapter will first examine the two main musical forms employed in *degung* performance. Exploring the malleability of the models structurally underpinning the *klasik* and *kawih* repertoires, it also considers the scope that different types of piece offer musicians for variation and improvisation. It begins, however, by outlining the key theoretical concepts that inform this discussion.

#### 3.1 Points of departure

Music scholars have previously noted the enormous variety of models that function as “points of departure” for improvised performance (Nettl 1998:12-13) and composition (Nettl 1974:11). Some of these models – be they melodic, harmonic, structural or rhythmic templates – demand a greater degree of novel invention on the part of the performer or composer than others and, even within a specific repertoire, the “density” of obligatory “points of reference” may vary from one piece to another (*ibid.*, 13).

Berliner, for example, notes that certain jazz compositions have only “partial melodies”, providing “space for the player to improvise passages for either a couple of measures or a major harmonic segment of the piece during the melody’s presentation” (1994:70).

Other pieces may only “consist of chord progressions alone” and require “the extemporaneous invention of the entire melody in performance” (*ibid.*). Accordingly, the blueprint underlying any performance may be more or less perceptible to any attending audience. Berliner remarks “Unless listeners have exceptional abilities to grasp and retain musical ideas, they may initially be oblivious to the role of such models... It often requires transcription to bring them to light” (*ibid.*, 238). In practice, models may also be more or less explicitly conceptualised by performers themselves. Sumarsam, for example, proposes that the privileging of a single instrumental line (the *balungan*) as the



principal melodic model in Javanese *gamelan* discourse is a didactic oversimplification. Instead, he suggests that melodic motion is guided by a more elusive melody “which is unconsciously sung” by “musicians in their hearts” (1975:7).

As discussed in chapter 2, the explicitness of a musician’s knowledge depends to a large extent on the nature of the initial learning experience. That a musical model is intuitively or unconsciously known often signals that a performer has been compelled to distil instinctively its defining features without recourse to any external explanatory instruction. In addition, some aspects of a music tradition are simply more complex, ambiguous or implicit than others. Berliner observes that in the face of disparate renditions of a melody or form, jazz improvisers must infer “the core of features that comprise its essence” and develop “flexible conceptual maps of pieces” (1994:88). Similarly, Pressing notes that it is by encountering “multiple versions of important musical entities” that trainee improvisers develop “an appreciation of the intrinsic ‘fuzziness’ of the musical concept” (1988:143). Such multiplicity is not only apparent in the form of alternative versions of specific models, but also in the instance of discrete models operating concurrently. Jazz musicians, for example, integrate knowledge of a piece’s melody and accompanying chord changes in their improvisations, with performers transforming “the harmonic structures of a piece as routinely as they do their melodies” (Berliner 1994:82). Players may also know a single model from hierarchically shifting perspectives. Sutton remarks that there are “different degrees of focus” within the stratified layers of Javanese *gamelan* (1993:103); as musicians move vertically through the multilevel texture, “Filling in becomes... the outline for more filling in” (*ibid.*, 89). Though *gamelan* players are expected to have at least a passive knowledge of all of the ensemble’s constitutive instrumental lines, the fact remains that musicians with different specialist competences may conceive of a shared model from divergent standpoints.

For the purposes of organising this study, I differentiate between those ‘points of departure’ that define a discrete piece of music or composition-type from the voice or instrument-specific procedural or “operational models” that “play a dynamic role in the control of performance” (Brinner 1995:115-116). This chapter emphasises the former – the melodic and structural models at the heart of the *degung klasik* and *degung kawih* repertoires – rather than the multiple ways in which these models are idiomatically



treatable or actively realisable (see chapter 4). Nevertheless, a consideration of the one inevitably draws upon aspects of the other. As Sutton notes with regard to Javanese *gamelan*, “The dividing line between system and act becomes increasingly difficult to draw as one focuses on particular details of Javanese musical construction” (1993:6). Thus one cannot entirely separate what Sutton refers to as “systemic variation”, the obligatory types of variation occurring between those *gamelan* instruments heard simultaneously or as a result of structural expansion and contraction, from “individual variation”, or that which is more conditional upon the personal style and momentary creative whims of a particular performer (*ibid.*, 166). It is also a fact that the obligatory ‘points of reference’ defining a given composition or musical form may be subject to some of the same transformative procedures of expansion, contraction, transposition, embellishment and variation that are operative at higher levels of performance. Indeed, Berliner proposes that the transformation of the model is a central means of generating new repertoire in jazz (1994:70).

Virtually every feature of the music models that players bring to a performance – comprising, at its outset, composed, prefigured, fixed, or known elements – can serve during the performance as a springboard for the conception of an altered version of the model or a new one that meets the same requirements. In either case, the invention may instantly join the artist’s general storehouse of knowledge, where in relatively fixed form, it awaits further use and transformation during the performance or some later opportunity (*ibid.*, 495).

Most *gamelan degung* pieces are classifiable as either *sekar ageung*, large melody-driven pieces, or *sekar alit*, small pieces based on more flexible tonal frameworks. The transformability of the melodic models that constitute the *sekar ageung* of the *degung klasik* repertoire will be the starting point for this particular discussion.



### 3.2 *Degung klasik*

The term *degung klasik* ('classical *degung*') is used to refer to the type of instrumental *gamelan degung* repertoire that was performed for the Sundanese nobility at the *kabupaten*. Though still considered as the ensemble's *lagu khas* (specific repertoire), these pieces have declined in popularity since Indonesian Independence and are now seldom performed outside of formal education courses in Bandung. Rather than referring to any former 'classical' period in the development of *gamelan degung*, it seems that the *klasik* label primarily describes the musical features that delineate this discrete body of repertoire. As outlined in chapter 1, whatever the earliest origins of the ensemble, the *klasik* repertoire as it is known today only reliably traces back as far as the 1920s. Moreover, several of the *klasik* pieces most commonly heard today were not composed until the late 1950s and early 1960s. Indeed, Ade Komaran suggested that there is nothing to prevent musicians from composing new pieces in this idiomatic style if they so wish (*p.c.*, 2000a).

At the core of the *degung klasik* pieces are relatively long, cyclic melodies that are played on the *bonang*. All of the other parts are derived from this central melody and, depending upon their musical function, heterophonically embellish (*peking* and *suling*), paraphrase (*cempres* and *jengglong*) or rhythmically or colotomically punctuate (*kendang* and *goong*) the *bonang* line (see Cook 1992:72-87). While the melodic basis and relative length of these pieces renders them classifiable as *sekar ageung*, Tjarmedi differentiated between weightier *degung klasik* pieces such as *Ladrak* and *Palwa*, and shorter *klasik* style pieces like *Galatik Mangut* and *Lalayaran*; he described the latter as *klasik ringan* (light classical) (1991).

Another distinguishing feature of the *degung klasik* pieces is that, like the oldest *tembang Sunda* songs, they all employ the *pelog degung* tuning. Most begin with a standard *bonang* introduction (*pangkat biasa*) which, with its final cadence leading to *goong* tone 5 and secondary emphasis on tones 2 and 3, embodies the modal character of many of the older melodies in this repertoire.



Fig. 3:1 Standard *degung klasik pangkat (bonang & jengglong)*

.5	55	55	4323	2255	25	1.232	3334	3232	3452	3.454	⑤	( <i>bonang</i> )
				2	1	.	3	5	.5		⑤	( <i>j'glong</i> )

Harrell observes that two of the *jengglong* described in detail by Kunst (1923) only possessed pitches 2, 3 and 5, “while the others had these three with now one, now the other of the remaining two pitches” (1974:49-50). He additionally points out that the *denggungan* repertoire in Solo, Central Java, shares an equivalent mode to that which dominates the *degung klasik* pieces (*ibid.*, 48-49). The musical relationship linking this body of Javanese *gamelan* repertoire and the *gamelan degung* (or, in Cirebon, ‘*denggung*’) may yield additional clues as to the history and evolution of both Sundanese and Javanese ensembles and certainly warrants further consideration elsewhere.

The distinctive style of *bonang* playing at the heart of the *degung klasik* genre is called *gumekan*. The player uses two beaters, fluidly distributing the melody between both hands, performing occasional passages in octaves, as well damping one kettle pot as the next is sounded. Damping is an integral part of the *gumekan* technique and is essential for the clean execution of the *bonang*’s elaborate melodic and rhythmic motifs. Cook suggests that in *degung klasik* damping is not only necessary to “stop the different notes running into each other” but also “because there should be a click which is just audible when a note is damped” (1992:73). “In good *bonang* playing, the clicks and clucks produced by damping with the beaters are intrinsic ornaments” (Cook 2000b:9-10). On the one hand then, *gumekan* is considered as a performance technique, a way of striking the *bonang* and of moving melodically on the instrument; on the other hand, the *bonang* phrases and motifs which constitute this technique are also regarded as an intrinsic part of the melodic models on which the *degung klasik* pieces are constructed. Repertoire and technique, system and act, are not always practicably separated in Sundanese music.



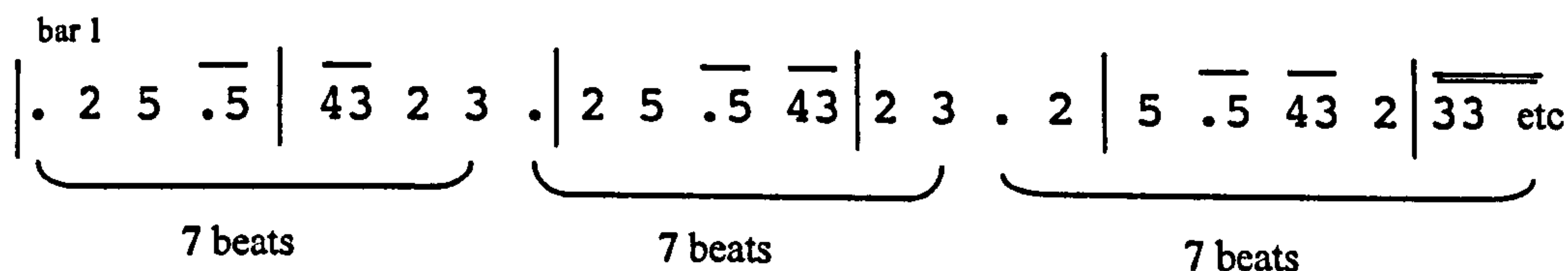




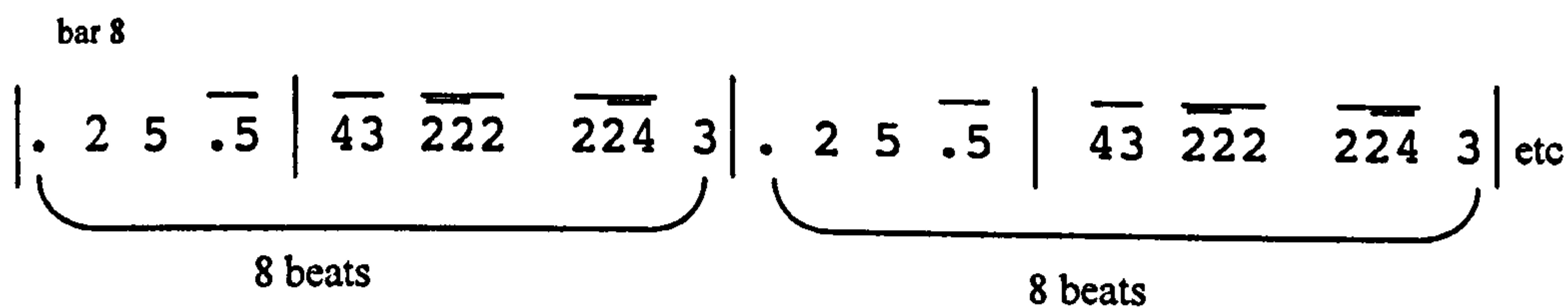
Similarly, *Sang Bango* begins with an irregular seven-beat motif. This same pattern, however, is extended to form a more standard eight-beat motif in the second *goong* phrase of *Sangkuratu*.

Fig. 3:3 Comparison of phrase found in *Sang Bango* and *Sangkuratu* (*bonang*)

*Sang Bango* (opening)



*Sangkuratu* (second *goong* phrase)



(taken from Tjarmedi *et al*, 1997:141-147 & 75-79)

Some musicians claim that this repertoire used to be much more metrically irregular and was originally performed at erratically fluctuating tempi. Tjarmedi suggested that because the *kabupaten* of Bandung *gamelan degung* group was able to retain a relatively fixed personnel, its members had the opportunity to develop and rehearse more idiosyncratic material. The luxury of such specialisation is no longer an option for most freelance *gamelan* musicians in Bandung today and, according to Tjarmedi, there has thus been a tendency to standardise certain rhythmically lopsided motifs, adding or subtracting beats to make up more uniform, even phrase lengths that render the material easier to teach and to notate (1991). Certainly, the *klasik* pieces now tend to be performed at a more homogeneous tempo, without any sudden loss of pace or jolting acceleration. However, it should be noted that this type of supposition is also consistent with a more generalised glorification of the past in which the skills of former generations of musicians are always compared favourably to those of contemporary performers (see Williams 1990:56).



Apart from irregular phrase lengths, many *degung klasik* melodies are also characterised by melodic and rhythmic syncopation. One example of rhythmic syncopation is found at the end of the first, second, fourth and fifth lines of *Seler Degung* (bracketed in fig. 3:2 above). In fact, syncopation, in various instrumental parts, is particularly prevalent towards or at the end of phrases. Harrell, for example, observes that the *degung klasik* drummer signals the approach of a cadence point using a syncopated rhythmic pattern that begins with a *tung* stroke “on every third beat” (1974:153).<sup>1</sup>

Fig. 3:4 *Degung klasik* cadential pattern (*kendang*)

<u>335</u>	<u>1232</u> <u>1525</u>	<u>1.232</u> <u>3334</u>	<u>3232</u> <u>3452</u> <u>3.454</u> (5)	( <i>bonang</i> )
.t..	t..t .t.	t . t . p t	d .tt t t .	( <i>kendang</i> )
3	3 3 2 2 2			

*Kendang* symbols: t = *tung*, p = *pak*, d = *dung*

Similarly, the *jengglong* also commonly anticipates the imminent arrival of a cadential *goong* 5 (also see fig. 3:1 above) by sounding a syncopated repeated tone 5 that cuts across the overriding binary metrical structure of the phrase.

Fig. 3:5 *Degung klasik* cadential pattern (*jengglong*)

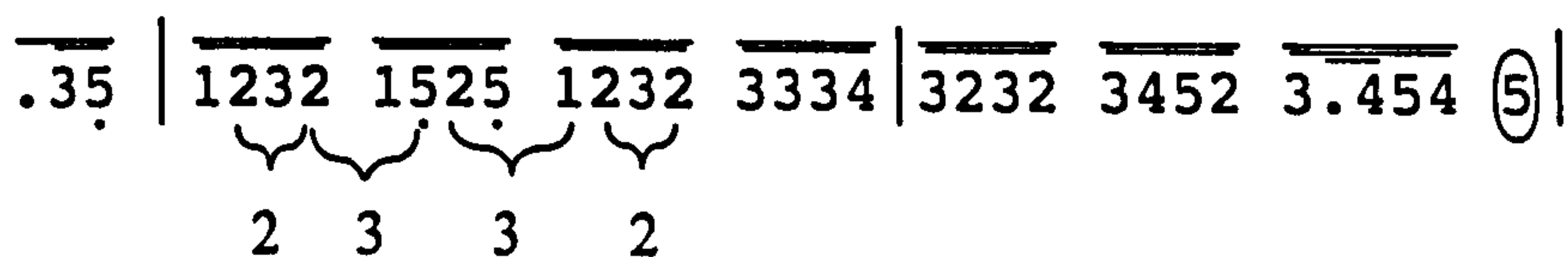
<u>335</u>	<u>1232</u> <u>1525</u>	<u>1.232</u> <u>3334</u>	<u>3232</u> <u>3452</u> <u>3.454</u> (5)	( <i>bonang</i> )
3	1	3	5 . 5 .	(5) ( <i>j'glong</i> )
			3 3	

<sup>1</sup> Spiller notes that in Sundanese *gamelan* the “noncongruence of the grouping of three with the unrelenting duple meter” creates a “sense of acceleration toward the *goong* stroke while maintaining a steady pulse” (2001:86-87).



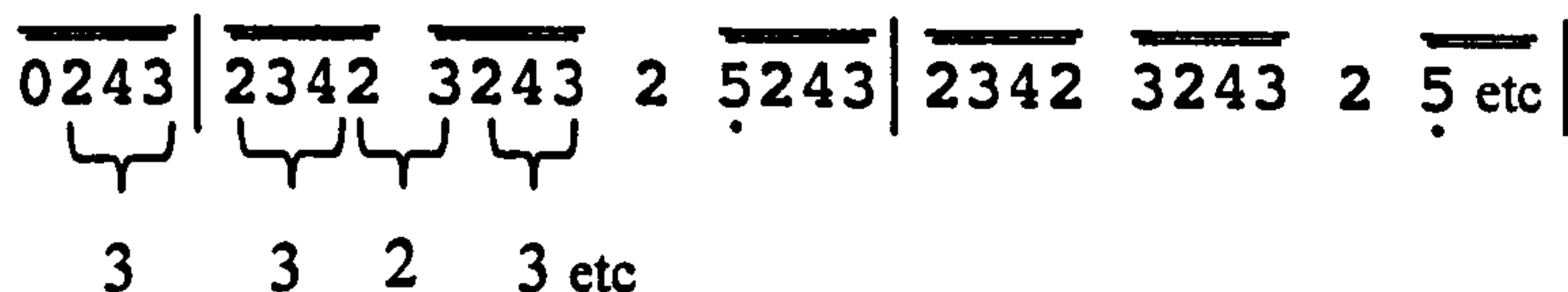
Some of the *gumekan* motifs played on the *bonang* in *degung klasik* are also internally melodically structured so that specific pitches are configured into groups of three. Although using homogeneous rhythmic patterning, the repeated sounding of tone 2 (emphasised by a disjunct 2-5-2 leap) in the first half of this same cadential phrase on the *bonang* creates a similar sense of metrical displacement.

Fig. 3:6 Syncopation in the *bonang* part leading to a cadence point



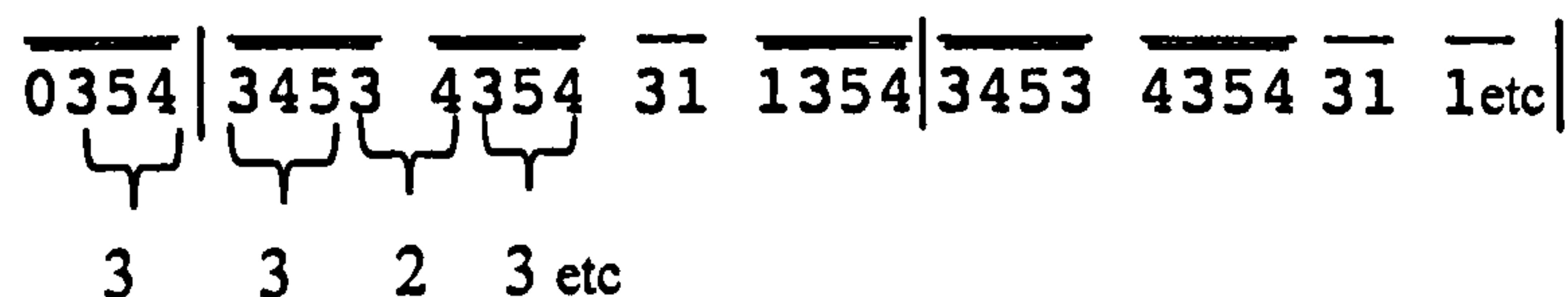
Some *degung klasik* melodies are actually defined by such syncopated 3 + 3 + 2 groupings. Tjarmedi's composition *Lambang Parahyangan*, for example, opens with a repeated motif that is constructed around this type of melodic patterning.

Fig. 3:7 Syncopation in the *bonang* part of *Lambang Parahyangan*



This same motif, transposed down one tone, is also used to add a sense of confusion in the *degung klasik* piece *Lutung Bingung* (Confused Monkey).

Fig. 3:8 Syncopation in the *bonang* part of *Lutung Bingung*





Both of these pieces were allegedly composed for theatrical performances in the early 1960s. Tjarmedi stated that around this time *degung* players began to experiment with developing new *bonang* techniques and that this included borrowing melodic elements from Balinese music (1991). Such melodic syncopation is indeed a feature of the interlocking figuration played on the *reyong* (gong-chime instrument similar to the *bonang*) in various types of Balinese *gamelan*. With reference to *gamelan beleganjur* and *gong kebyar*, Bakan writes that the effect of these “three-note rhythmic groupings... might be likened to the three-against-four syncopation heard in ragtime piano music” (1999:55).

### 3.2.2 The fixity of the *sekar ageung* form

The melodic and rhythmic idiosyncrasies that define individual *degung klasik* pieces mean that transformative processes of structural expansion, contraction and transposition are not operative within this body of repertoire. In addition, the density of the prescribed melodic model leaves players with relatively little room for individual embellishment or variation. Lili Suparli described this repertoire as both ‘standardised’ (*sudah baku*) and ‘melodically prescribed’ (*sudah dipola*) (*p.c.*, 2001a). During lessons, however, it became apparent that certain sections of melody are more rigidly fixed than others. While some phrases offer players limited opportunities for variation, musicians can be quite pedantic about the melodic and rhythmic execution of others.

The opening sections of the pieces *Palwa* and *Lambang*, for example, are almost identical;<sup>2</sup> the only difference between the two is that in the rising sequence transcribed in figure 3:9 below, the lowest tone in the four-note pattern (which is highlighted in bold) remains on a static tone 1 in *Lambang*, but ascends up to tone 4 in *Palwa*. I was surprised to find that I was immediately corrected when I inadvertently incorporated the *Lambang* variant into my realisation of *Palwa*. Confused as to why such a small, seemingly trivial detail seemed to matter so much, Entis Sutisna explained that this subtle difference acts as a signal to let the rest of the group know which of the two pieces is being played (*p.c.*, 2001).

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<sup>2</sup> As stated in chapter 1, *Lambang* is said to have been composed in imitation of *Palwa* when the *degung* ensemble was first permitted to perform outside of the court environment.



Fig. 3:9 Comparison of a phrase found in *Palwa* and *Lambang (bonang)*

*Palwa*

bar 3

| 2223 222 22 5.515 | 5.515 4.454 4.454 3.343 |

| 3.343 2.242 2.242 3.343 | 3.343 2.242 2.242 3334 | etc

*Lambang*

bar 3

| 2223 222 22 5.515 | 5.515 4.414 4.414 3.313 |

| 3.313 2.212 2.212 3.313 | 3.313 2.212 2.212 3334 | etc

(Taken from Tjarmedi *et al*, 1997:116-121 & 127-131)

All the same, while the advent of commercial recordings and notation compilations has led to the increasing standardisation of this repertoire, players still know divergent versions of pieces and their constituent motifs. Harrell even suggests that at one time “each leader of a *gamelan* might make his own version of a piece” (1974:124). Musicians explained that these disparate renditions usually arose when memory lapses led to mistakes that subsequently became fixed as traditional practice. Entis Sutisna recalled that when working alongside Entjar Tjarmedi on a book of *degung klasik* notations in the 1990s (Tjarmedi, Suparman, Sutisna, Resmana 1997) it proved difficult for the assembled musicians to decide which particular versions of pieces to transcribe (*p.c.*, 2001). Learning *gamelan degung* from different teachers, manuals and recordings, such discrepancies become apparent at motivic, as well as wider melodic and structural levels. This is especially true of those *degung klasik* melodies that are now rarely performed. Some players omit entire sections of *Seler Degung* (partially notated in fig. 3:2 above), as well as vary the piece’s melodic and rhythmic details, occasionally adding or subtracting beats from irregular phrases.



### 3.2.3 Shared melodic phrases

While each piece is defined by its own unique melodic contour and resulting structural framework, the *degung klasik* repertoire is united by a corpus of shared melodic phrases. Some of these phrases serve specific functions, such as filling in tonally static sections of the melodic contour or acting as cadential formulae. According to Tjarmedi, this stock of recurring phrases played an important role in the original composition process (1991). As the improvising musician draws upon an existing vocabulary of conventional phrases and gestures in the act of performance, so *degung* players are said to have utilised these extant motifs as melodic ‘building blocks’ to flesh out and contextualise the novel material defining their own *degung klasik* compositions. As Sutton observes with reference to Javanese *gamelan* music, “Composition of new pieces” often consists of “reworking traditional materials and is, thus, essentially the same quality of activity as is musical performance” (1993:45). Thus despite the relative inflexibility of the *degung klasik* melodies as performance models, transformative processes can be seen to operate across the repertoire as a whole. In other words, from a wider perspective, individual pieces and their component motifs can be considered to be expanded, contracted, transposed and variant versions of each other.

Aside from their role in the compositional process these recurring phrases also serve an important mnemonic utility; the element of melodic redundancy that they bring to a piece of music significantly reduces the amount of novel material requiring memorisation. Somawijaya identifies and names seventeen ‘*gumekan* playing patterns’ (*pola tabuhan gumekan*) in a textbook specifically designed to systematise and accelerate the teaching of the *degung klasik* repertoire at STSI Bandung (1986). Only one or two of the pattern names presented in this book appear to be in usage amongst today’s working musicians, although fourteen of them also appear in a list (albeit without notated illustrations) in Tjarmedi (1974). Somawijaya conceded that when developing this pedagogic system much was left to his own imagination, even though at the outset of the project he did research the use of such phrase naming amongst older musicians (*p.c.*, 2001). In addition, he indicated that there are other precedents in Sundanese music for naming isolated melodic and rhythmic patterns. Certain *gambang* motifs, for example, have titles like *akang aceuk* (brother sister) or *calana komprang*



(flared trousers), and occasionally even accompanying lyrics. Lili Suparli explained that in the absence of notation, having an evocative label with which to mentally tag a particular motif or a simple text to sing along to provides beginners with something tangible with which to memorise a given playing pattern (*p.c.*, 2001a).

Nevertheless, abstracting even the most commonly reoccurring *degung klasik* motifs from their wider melodic contexts is by no means a clear-cut process. Evidently, the construction of the *klasik* pieces did not simply entail the patch-working together of discrete melodic units of standardised length. In actual fact, smaller melodic fragments form extended phrases, which themselves act as constituent elements within even larger musical sequences and sections of pieces. Furthermore, many of the most common phrases and their component motifs are also subject to various types of melodic and rhythmic transformation from one piece or performance to another. Pieces are thus connected by a tangle of hierarchically-interrelated morphing motifs, rendering single-dimensional cataloguing problematic.

#### **3.2.4 An examination of common melodic patterns**

One recurring melodic sequence that is commonly ‘named’ by practising musicians is *rugrug* (to collapse or subside), a cadential pattern that functions to end a piece or major section of a piece.<sup>3</sup> The tonally-static octave-wide figuration on pitch 5 at the beginning of this phrase signals the imminent ‘collapse’ of the melody by way of a formulaic descent to a stroke of the large *goong* on tone 5 an octave below. According to Tjarmedi, this octave motif was originally one beat shorter but was extended at some point as part of the wider metrical standardisation of this repertoire mentioned above (1991).

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<sup>3</sup> In STSI circles this phrase is also called *cindek* (to abbreviate or shorten) (Somawijaya 1986:62).



Fig. 3:10 *Rugrug* phrase (*bonang*)

$$\begin{array}{c} \overline{\cdot 5} \mid \overline{5 \cdot 555} \overline{5 \cdot 555} \overline{5 \cdot 555} \overline{5 \cdot 555} \mid \overline{551} \overline{2225} \overline{1 \cdot 232} \overline{335} \mid \\ \\ \mid \overline{1232} \overline{1525} \overline{1 \cdot 232} \overline{3334} \mid \overline{3232} \overline{3452} \overline{3 \cdot 454} \textcircled{5} \mid \end{array}$$

The *rugrug* sequence itself is constructed from a number of commonly reoccurring component motifs. One of these is listed in Somawijaya's catalogue of phrases as *kedet* (wink of the eye or chase) (1986:53). The *kedet* motif is a six-tone end-of-phrase gesture that pervades *degung klasik bonang* melodies. Occurring in every piece (Tjarmedi *et al*, 1974:17) and, indeed, used three times in the *rugrug* phrase above, this motif is used to cadence on every tone of the *pelog degung* scale.

Fig. 3:11 *Kedet* motif on each tone of the scale (*bonang*)

$$\overline{\cdot 5} \overline{1 \cdot 232} 3 \mid \overline{\cdot 1} \overline{2 \cdot 343} 4 \mid \overline{\cdot 2} \overline{3 \cdot 454} 5 \mid \overline{\cdot 3} \overline{4 \cdot 515} i \mid \overline{\cdot 4} \overline{5 \cdot 121} \dot{2}$$

Fig. 3:12 *Kedet* motif within the *rugrug* phrase (*bonang*)

$$\begin{array}{c} \overline{\cdot 5} \mid \overline{5 \cdot 555} \overline{5 \cdot 555} \overline{5 \cdot 555} \overline{5 \cdot 555} \mid \overline{551} \overline{2225} \overbrace{\overline{1 \cdot 232} \overline{335}}^{\text{kedet pattern}} \mid \\ \\ \overbrace{\overline{1232} \overline{1525} \overline{1 \cdot 232} \overline{3334}}^{\text{kedet pattern}} \mid \overline{3232} \overline{3452} \overbrace{\overline{3 \cdot 454} \textcircled{5}}^{\text{kedet pattern}} \mid \\ \uparrow \text{as used in the introductory phrase} \end{array}$$



As illustrated in figure 3:12 above, in addition to the *kedet* motif, the *rugrug* pattern also incorporates the same final cadential sequence that is employed in the standard *degung klasik pangkat* or introductory phrase (see fig. 3:1). This cadential formula, however, may be substituted with one of the variant phrases transcribed below when the *bonang* player wishes to signal that the piece is coming to a final close.

Fig. 3:13 Sequences used to signal the approach of the final *goong* (*bonang*)

- a)  $\overline{335} \mid \overline{1232} \quad \overline{1525} \quad \overline{1.232} \quad \overline{3334} \mid \overline{5551} \quad \overline{2151} \quad \overline{3.454} \textcircled{5} \mid$
- or
- b)  $3 \mid \overline{3334} \quad \overline{5141} \quad \overline{5454} \quad \overline{3334} \mid \overline{5551} \quad \overline{2151} \quad \overline{3.454} \textcircled{5} \mid$

While the *rugrug* pattern is relatively standardised from one performance to another, other motifs are subject to a greater degree of melodic and rhythmic variation. When learning to play a *degung klasik* version of *Lalayaran*, for example, my teacher Sulaeman Sutisna demonstrated a number of alternative ways of varying the approach to tone 3 at the end of the first phrase of the piece. This phrase, which is also found in more substantial *degung klasik* pieces including *Layung Sari* (see Tjarmedi *et al*, 1997:46-48) and *Mangari* (*ibid.*, 157-163), is called *seler putri* by Somawijaya (1986:54). Assigning a letter to the component units of the final cadential approach in this phrase demonstrates that the variant versions that I was taught can be considered to have been generated via the rearrangement of five micro-motifs.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> These motifs are arbitrarily isolated and labelled purely for the purposes of my own etic analysis. I am not suggesting that this is the way in which Sundanese players perceive such variation.



Fig. 3:14 Alternative versions of the *seler putri* phrase (*bonang*)

a)  $\overline{5}25 \mid \overline{4325} \overline{4325} \overline{4323} \overline{224} \mid \overline{3232} \overline{1115} \overline{1.232} \overline{3} \mid$   
*(a b c)*

b)  $\overline{5}25 \mid \overline{4325} \overline{4325} \overline{4323} \overline{2224} \mid \overline{3232} \overline{1525} \overline{1.232} \overline{3} \mid$   
*(a d c)*

c)  $\overline{5}25 \mid \overline{4325} \overline{4325} \overline{4323} \overline{2232} \mid \overline{1525} \overline{1232} \overline{5432} \overline{3} \mid$   
*(d c e)*

d)  $\overline{5}25 \mid \overline{4325} \overline{4325} \overline{4323} \overline{2225} \mid \overline{1232} \overline{5432} \overline{1.232} \overline{3} \mid$   
*(c e c')*

Another way in which this particular melodic sequence is transformed is by using it to lead to a different destination tone. The second section of the piece *Manintin Serang*, for example, employs the same basic melodic sequence but with a transposed *kedet* cadence that jumps up a tone to land on tone 2 rather than tone 3.

Fig. 3:15 *Seler putri* phrase cadencing on tones 2 and 3

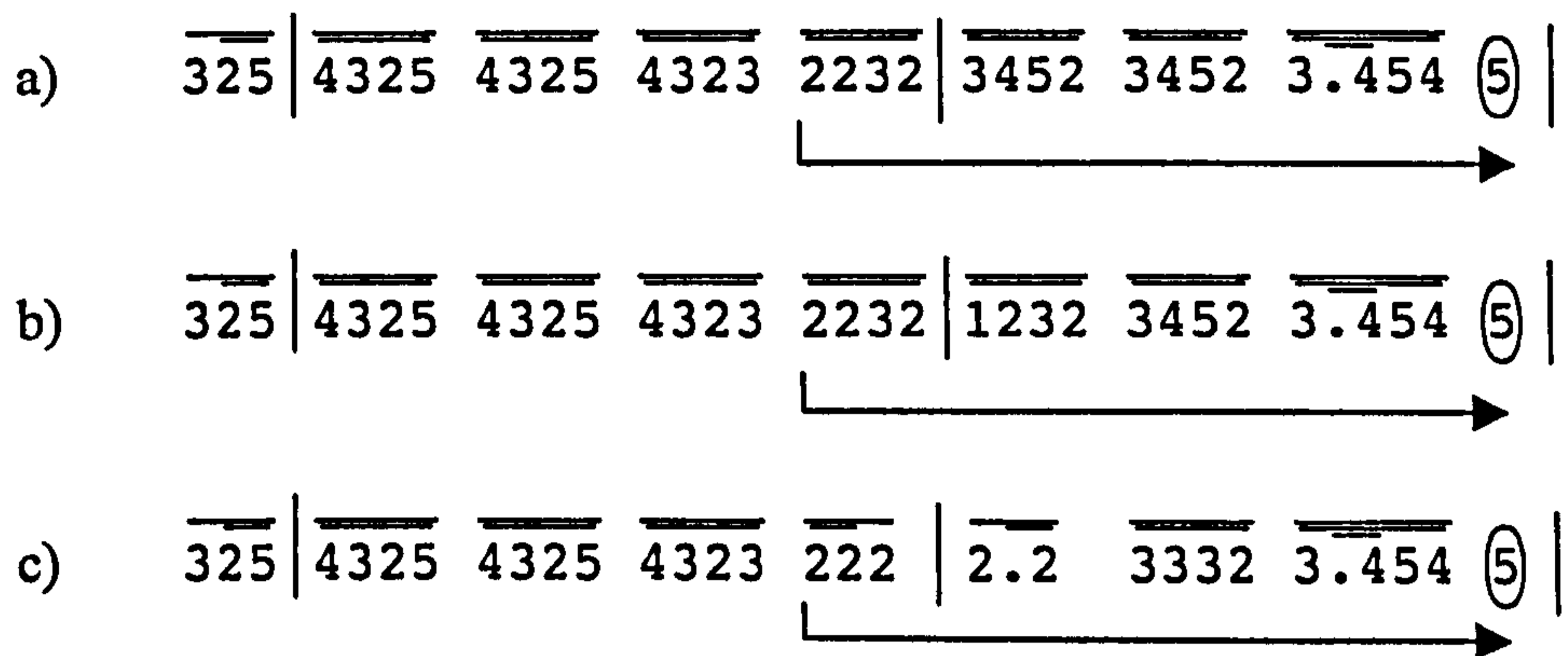
$\overline{5}25 \mid \overline{4325} \overline{4325} \overline{4323} \overline{224} \mid \overline{3232} \overline{1114} \overline{5.121} \overline{2} \mid$  (*Manintin Serang*)  
*kedet pattern*

$\overline{5}25 \mid \overline{4325} \overline{4325} \overline{4323} \overline{224} \mid \overline{3232} \overline{1115} \overline{1.232} \overline{3} \mid$  (*seler putri pattern*)  
*kedet pattern*

Within Somawijaya's scheme, the *seler putri* motif makes up the first half of the larger *layar putri* phrase (1986:63) which, itself, constitutes the first *goong* cycle of the piece *Lalayaran* (see Tjarmedi *et al*, 1997:35-38). The second half of the *layar putri* sequence begins as the first but this time leads to a cadence on tone 5. Again, I was taught to play the cadential sequence at the end of this second phrase in several alternative ways.

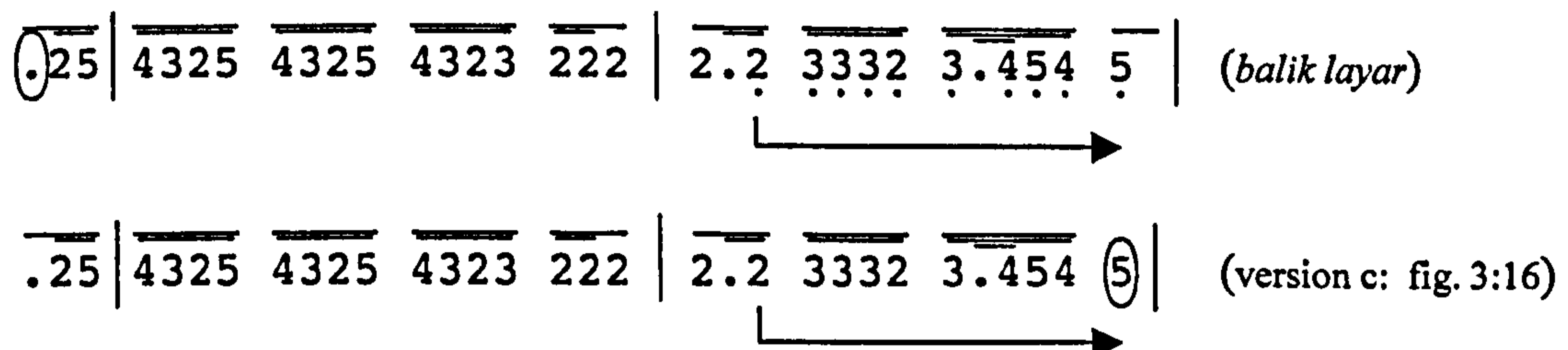


Fig. 3:16 Three versions of the *layar putri* cadence



Version c of this sequence, as notated in figure 3:16 above, is also subject to a specific transformation wherein the second half of the phrase leaps up into the octave above the first. This variant, named *balik layar* by Somawijaya (1986:64), does not serve as a cadential pattern but functions as an opening phrase in *Beber Layar* (see Tjarmedi *et al.*, 1997:84-87) and the second *goong* phrase of *Pajajaran* (*ibid.*, 108-112).

Fig. 3:17 *Balik layar* phrase



Another way in which the *seler putri*, *layar putri* and associated offshoot phrases are varied is by utilising them in contracted form. The sixteen beat *layar putri* sequence, for example, appears as an eight beat phrase at the beginning of *Genye* (*ibid.*, 113-115) and in the second *goong* phrase of *Ujung Laut* (*ibid.*, 88-91). Again, assigning a letter to component units helps to illustrate the relationship between the expanded and contracted phrases. Processes of expansion and contraction will be considered again in sections 3.3.4 and 4.2.4.



Fig. 3:18 *Layar putri* in expanded and contracted forms

(5)25 | 4323 2225 1.232 325 | 4323 2232 3.454 5 | (contracted form)

(5)25 | 4325 4325 4323 2225 | 1232 5432 1.232 3→ } (expanded form)

25 | 4325 4325 4323 2232 | 3452 3452 3.454 (5) | }

Labels for contracted form: a, b, c, a, b, d

Labels for expanded form: a repeated, b, c elaborated, a repeated, b, d repeated

Finally, the cyclical four-note figure at the beginning of the *seler putri*, *layar putri*, and *balik layar* phrases is, itself, sometimes subject to variation.

Fig. 3:19 Variant forms of the opening '2-5-4-3 motif'

a) (5)25 4325 4325 4323 2 (original version)

b) (5)25 .525 .525 4323 2 (variant 1)

c) (5)25 4345 2543 4543 2 (variant 2)

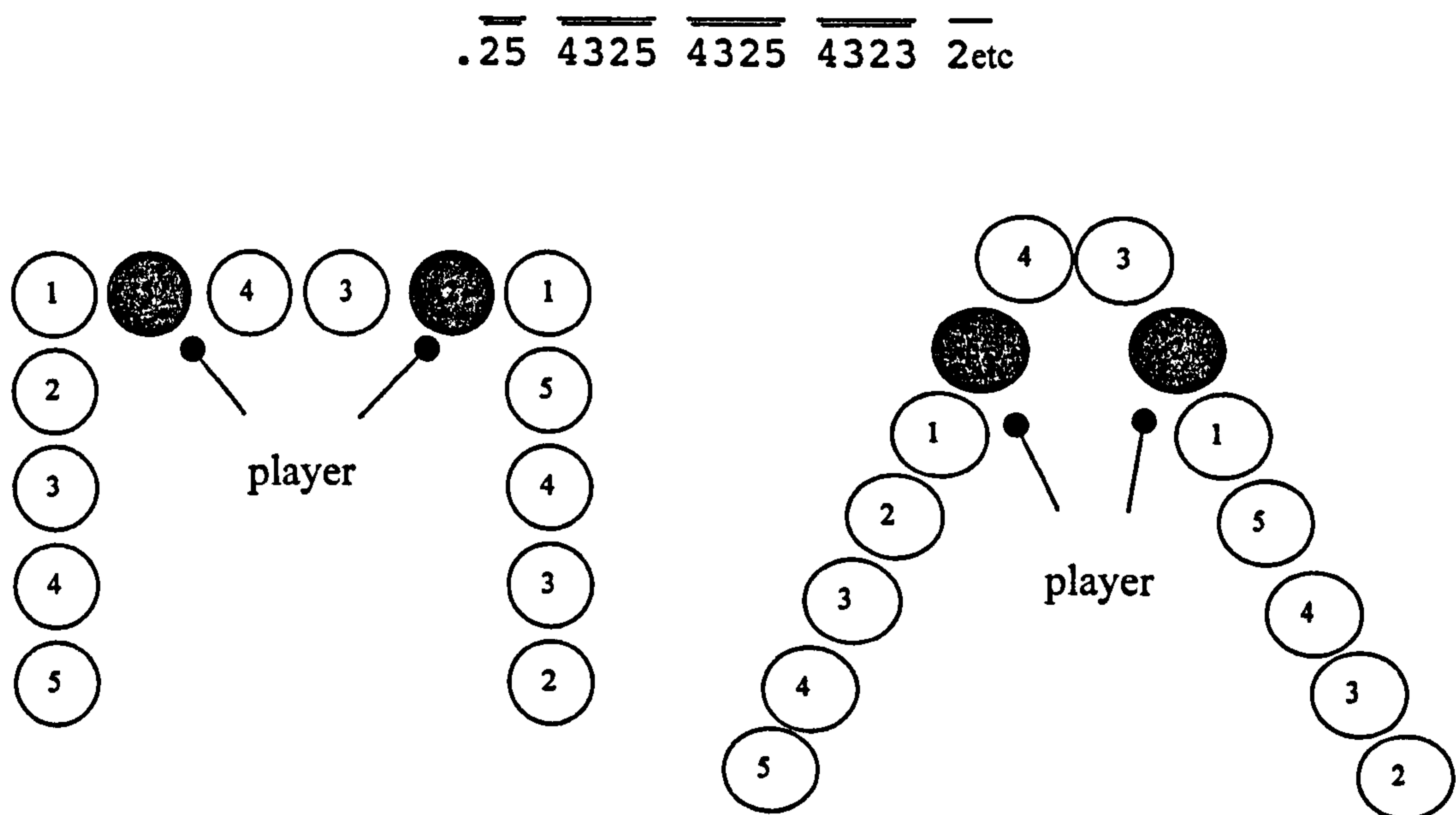
d) (5) 2 5 4 3 2 3 2 (played at the very beginning of a piece)

The 25 43 motif functions as a type of melodic 'filler' and is, therefore, usually found at the beginning of a phrase where melodic movement tends to be more tonally static (see 4.2.9). Sometimes Ade Komaran would simply instruct me to play "gumek on 2" when



he meant for me to play this particular sequence. In fact, this four-tone figure is not confined to a specific series of pitches but can be transplanted onto different series of pots. As illustrated in figure 3:20 below, the pitches 2-5-4-3 at the beginning of the *seler putri* phrase are located at the centre of the *bonang* on both two and three-rack instruments.

Fig. 3:20 '2-5-4-3 motif' on the *bonang*

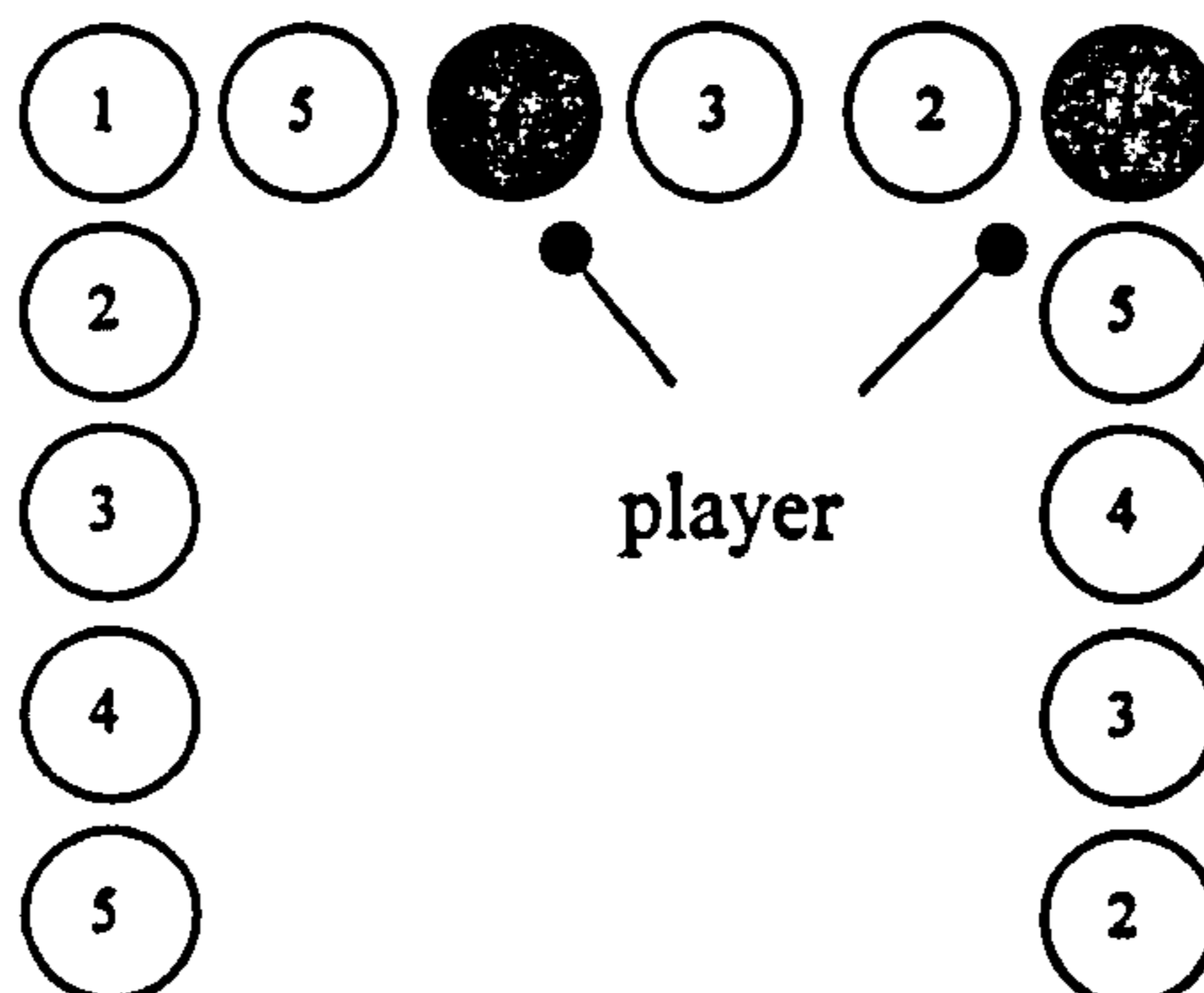


This same melodic sequence is found transposed up one tone or pot (1-4-3-2) without any alteration to the player's movement patterns (see fig. 3:21) in *Maya Selas* (Tjarmedi *et al*, 1997:41-42), *Galatik Mangut* (*ibid.*, 39-40), and *Ayun Ambing* (also known as *Dengkleung*, *ibid.*, 105-107).



Fig. 3:21 '1-4-3-2 motif' on the *bonang*

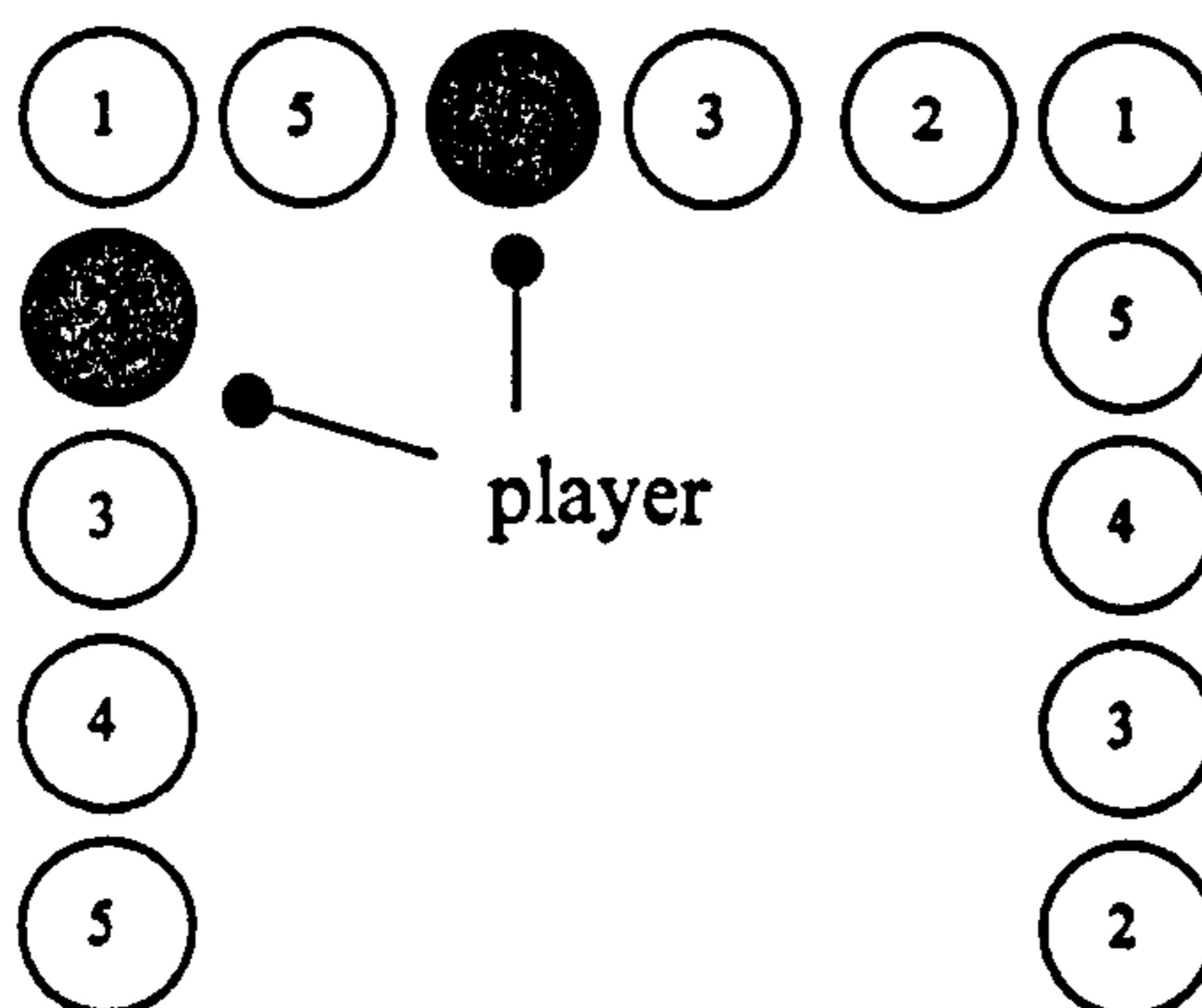
$\overline{414}$   $\overline{3214}$   $\overline{3214}$   $\overline{3212}$   $\overline{1}$ etc



Similarly, in the second part of *Ayun Ambing* and at the beginning of *Kadewan* (*ibid.*, 54-57), the same figure is transplanted down onto pots 4-2-1-5.<sup>5</sup>

Fig. 3:22 '4-2-1-5 motif' on the *bonang*

$\overline{542}$   $\overline{1542}$   $\overline{1542}$   $\overline{1545}$   $\overline{4}$ etc



<sup>5</sup> In *Kadewan*, this same phrase is also played in the octave above.



This is important when it comes to considering the ways in which players may intuitively classify phrases because *bonang* motifs appear to be grasped as visual shapes as well as patterns of movement and sound. The latter is apparent in the disorientation that novice players exhibit when forced to switch from a more familiar two-rack *bonang* to a less familiar three-rack *bonang* (or vice versa), despite an identical ordering of pots on both layouts. Certainly, my own subjective experience of learning the *degung klasik* repertoire was that I memorised and mentally pigeonholed *bonang* phrases according to their physical placement on the instrument, in addition to the movement sequences used to execute them and their melodic result.

During the course of my lessons I came to realise that many of the *degung klasik* pieces open with commanding phrases that are based on the core pitches 2-5, symmetrically positioned in the centre of the *bonang* (see fig. 3:20). *Palwa* (Tjarmedi *et al*, 1997:116-121), *Ladrak* (*ibid.*, 122-126), *Kintel Bueuk* (*ibid.*, 62-65) and *Lambang* (*ibid.*, 127-131), for example, all open with a simple motif that Somawijaya calls *randegan* (stopping or halting) (1986:52).

Fig. 3:23 Two versions of the *randegan* motif

- a)  $\textcircled{5} | 5 \overline{222} \overline{22} 5 | \overline{.5} \overline{222} \overline{22} 5 |$
- b)  $\textcircled{5} | 5 \overline{222} \overline{22} 5 | \overline{2223} \overline{222} \overline{22} 5 |$

Other *degung klasik* pieces begin with variant versions of this phrase that, using the same pitches and hence, basic central position, are distinguished by discrete rhythmic patterning.

Fig. 3:24 Opening *bonang* motifs based on the '2-5 position'

a) *Kulawu* (Tjarmedi *et al*, 1997:80-83).

$\textcircled{5} | \overline{.5} \overline{222} \overline{22} \overline{.5} | \overline{.5} \overline{222} \overline{22} \overline{.5} | \overline{.5} \text{ etc}$



b) *Karang Mantri* (*ibid.*, 152-153).

⑤ |  $\overline{22}$   $\overline{55}$   $\overline{22}$   $\overline{55}$  |

c) *Bale Ngambang* (*ibid.*, 137-140).

$\overline{.55}$  |  $\overline{222}$   $\overline{333}$   $\overline{222}$   $\overline{555}$  |  $\overline{222}$   $\overline{333}$   $\overline{222}$   $\overline{555}$  |

d) *Mangu Mangu* (*ibid.*, 206-208).

$\overline{\dot{2}..}$ $\overline{\dot{3}..}$ $\overline{\dot{2}..}$ $\overline{5..}$	$\overline{\dot{2}..}$ $\overline{\dot{3}..}$ $\overline{\dot{2}..}$ $\overline{5..}$	LH – left hand RH – right hand
$\overline{222}$ $\overline{333}$ $\overline{234}$ $\overline{555}$	$\overline{222}$ $\overline{333}$ $\overline{234}$ $\overline{555}$	

Even so, rhythm appears to be the only defining feature of Somawijaya's *randegan* (halting, stopping) pattern (3:23). This is evidenced by the fact that aside from the *randegan* motif above, Somawijaya also includes what he calls *randegan loloran* (*randegan* to tone 2) within the same classificatory category (1986:52).

Fig. 3:25 *Randegan tunggal* and *randegan loloran*

a) *Randegan tunggal* (*Randegan* to tone 5)

|  $\overline{.5}$   $\overline{222}$   $\overline{22}$   $5$  |  $\overline{.5}$   $\overline{222}$   $\overline{22}$   $5$  |

b) *Randegan loloran* (*Randegan* to tone 2)

|  $\overline{.2}$   $\overline{111}$   $\overline{13}$   $2$  |  $\overline{.2}$   $\overline{111}$   $\overline{13}$   $2$  |

Notably, these two phrases are not transpositions of each other; they are performed using quite distinct motor patterns, and they tend to be found at different structural point in a melody. That the 'halting' rhythmic pattern appears to be the only feature common to both motifs underscores the fact that the *degung klasik* melodies and their constituent motifs can be considered to interrelate in multifarious ways. This does not mean, however, that musicians are necessarily cognisant of all of these interconnections in



performance. In fact, the practice of teaching and learning the *degung klasik* pieces using an inventory of abstracted stock patterns has never really taken root either inside or outside of Bandung's formal education institutions. In all the time I spent with musicians in the city, I only ever heard the *rugrug (cindek)* and *layar putri* sequences actually referred to by their independent pattern names. Thus while the melodic and motivic redundancy built into this repertoire implicitly facilitates the memorisation of it, the idiosyncratic nature of each individual *degung klasik* model means that most musicians continue to approach these pieces as whole *bonang* melodies rather than as sequences of shared phrases.

### 3.3 *Degung kawih*

In *degung kawih*, the bronze ensemble loses its central melodic role and, instead performs *sekar alit* ('small pieces') that function to accompany various types of song or *suling* improvisation.<sup>6</sup> Based on standardised tonal frameworks known as *patokan*<sup>7</sup> or *kenongan*, the *sekar alit* can be likened to blues progressions: a single framework able to serve as an accompaniment for a limitless number of overlying melodies. Nano Suratno also compared this type of Sundanese repertoire to jazz, pointing out that the structure of the *sekar alit* permits a greater degree of improvisation than is found in most other types of Javanese or Balinese *gamelan* music (*p.c.*, 2000b). The simplicity of the *patokan* frameworks not only provides musicians with scope to generate and vary their own individual parts, but also offers wider opportunities for arrangement, composition and cross genre adaptation. In fact, this repertoire now structurally underpins most of the traditional music heard in Bandung today. Consequently, previous studies of Sundanese music have examined the *sekar alit* from a variety of often genre-specific perspectives (see Harrell 1974:52-70, van Zanten 1987:149-161, Fryer 1989:165-190 & Cook 1992 & 2000b). Nevertheless, as an understanding of these frameworks is necessary for any further discussion of *degung* repertoire, I will briefly outline the structure of the *patokan* model again here.

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<sup>6</sup> *Sekar alit* are also known as *lagu leutik*, *lagu alit*, *lagu jalan*, *rancagan*, and *renggongan* (Fryer 1989:182 and Cook 1992:17 fn3).

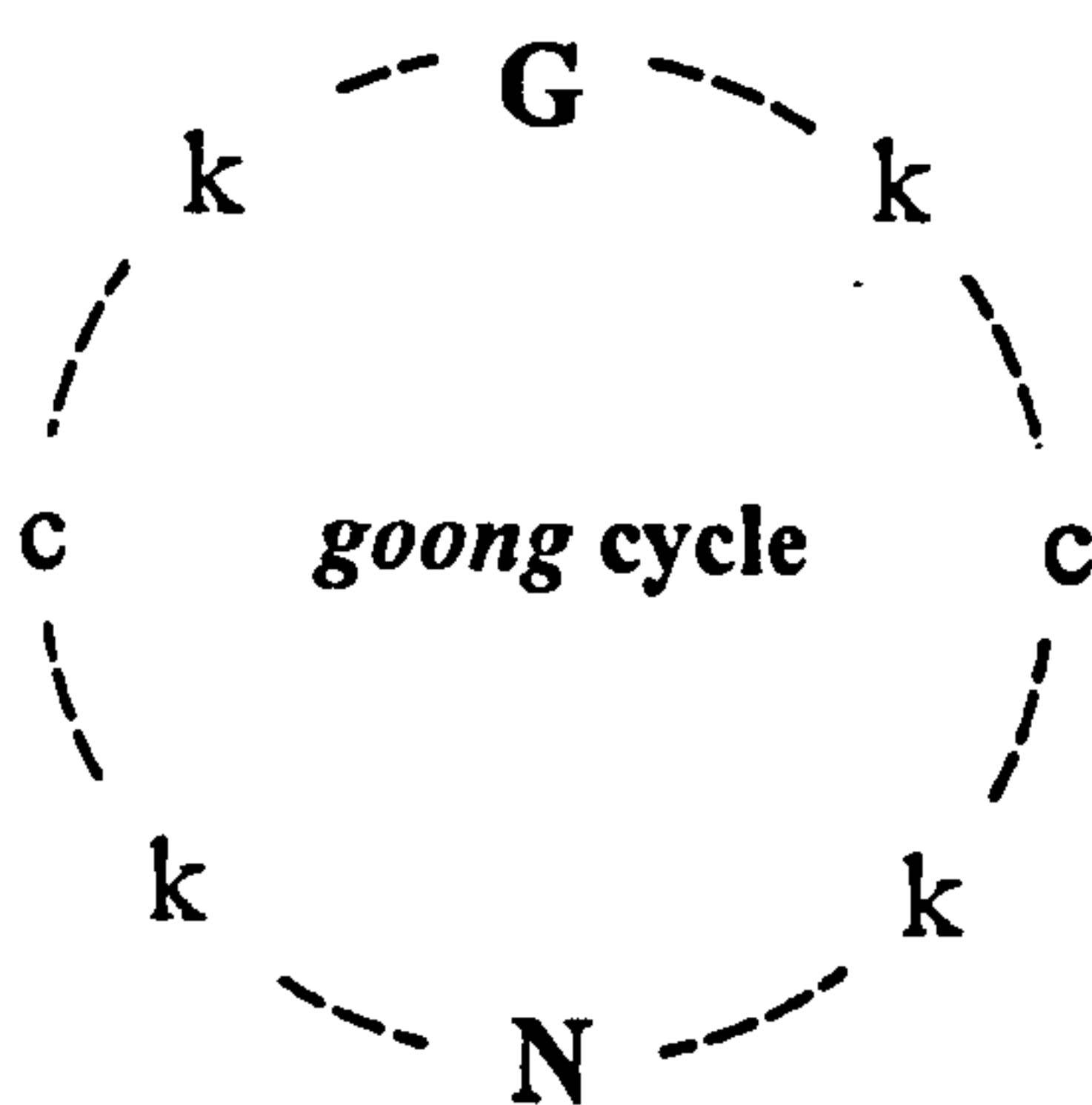
<sup>7</sup> Cook writes that *patok* means a stake for marking out land, and that *patokan* can refer to something "fixed, a rule, norm or standard" (1992:18 fn3).



### 3.3.1 *Patokan* structure

*Patokan*, or *kenongan*, are hierarchically arranged frameworks of destination or target tones. The most important of these structural tones – the *goong* tone – coincides with the sounding of the large *goong* at the beginning and the end of the *goong* cycle or *goongan*. A *sekar alit* may have up to three different *goong* tones, although most *degung kawih* repertoire uses *patokan* with only one or two. Next in the hierarchy is the *kenong* tone which is located at the mid-point of the *goong* cycle. In *gamelan degung*, the *kenong* is a specified tone (or tones) located in a specific structural position; it is not, as in some other types of *gamelan*, the name of an instrument. This basic tonal outline is usually completed with *pancer* or pivot notes (Cook 1992:18); these are tones which are sandwiched in between the *goong* and *kenong* pitches. Secondary pivot tones, sometimes referred to as *pangaget*,<sup>8</sup> may also be inserted on either side of the *pancer* tone (*ibid.*, 19).

Fig. 3:26 *Patokan* structure



G = *goong*, N = *kenong*, c = *pancer* (pivot tone), k = *pangaget* (secondary pivot tone)

Sundanese music theory states that the *pancer* and *pangaget* tones are determined by the modal position of the *goong* and *kenong* tones. Cook notes that in practice, however, the choice of *pancer* is much more flexible and “may vary, even during the course of a performance” (*ibid.*). Suparli similarly described what he calls a *pancer rasa*, or a

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<sup>8</sup> *Pangaget* stems from *kaget* which means startled or taken back (Cook 1992:19 fn19).



*pancer* tone chosen by ‘feel’ rather than theory. He concurred that the specific pitch sequence of an overlying melody or particular instrumental arrangement, as well as the personal preferences and mood of the player, influence the choice of *pancer* as much as any theoretical modal constraints (*p.c.*, 2001a). In fact then, it is only the *goong* and *kenong* tones that are absolutely fixed as the structural and tonal “points of reference” that define the piece (Cook 1992:19). This is reflected in the way players commonly notate this repertoire. *Catrik*, for example, a *sekar alit* underlying many *degung kawih* songs, has *goong* tone 5 and *kenong* tone 2; this piece is usually simply notated as 2 (5).

### 3.3.2 *Patokan* classification

While individual *sekar alit* can be considered as transformations of each other, the criteria by which these pieces are grouped together varies amongst individual musicians and scholars. Van Zanten’s analysis of the *tembang Sunda panambih* repertoire, for instance, illustrates that certain pieces can be considered to be inversions of each other (1987:160-161). One example of this is that the *goong* and *kenong* tones in *Catrik* 2 (5) are presented in reverse order in *Kulu Kulu* 5 (2). Conversely, other pieces are “combinations” of smaller frameworks (*ibid.*, 160). *Senggot* 4 (1) 4 (2), for example, could be regarded as an amalgamation of *Kulu-Kulu Barang* 4 (1) and *Cangkurileung* 4 (2).

Textbooks at STSI and SMKI Bandung, in contrast, tend to present individual pieces as modal transpositions of common structural positions (*posisi*). Thus according to Sundanese music theory, *Catrik* 2 (5) belongs to the *Gendu* family of pieces, all of which employ the underlying tonal structure I (IV). As outlined in figure 3:27 below, the *Gendu* position translates into five distinct pieces when transplanted onto every degree of the scale or, in other words, into each of the five modes or *patet* (*nem* or *barang*, *loloran*, *manyura*, *sanga*, and *singgul*).<sup>9</sup> Theoretically speaking, *Catrik* can thus be considered as the realisation of the *Gendu* position in *patet loloran* or the *loloran* mode.

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<sup>9</sup> For further information about Sundanese modal theory see Weintraub (1993).



Fig. 3:27 *Sekar alit* in the *Gendu* position

Patet (mode)	Gendu position I (IV)	Name of piece
<i>nem</i>	1 (4)	<i>Macan Ucul / Gendu</i>
<i>loloran</i>	2 (5)	<i>Catrik</i>
<i>manyura</i>	3 (1)	<i>Sorong Dayung</i>
<i>sanga</i>	4 (2)	<i>Cangkurileung</i>
<i>singgul</i>	5 (3)	<i>Mitra</i>

(from Upandi 1979:32)

Despite what the textbooks say, Weintraub observes that modal theory “has not generally developed into a system of musical thought among practising musicians” in West Java (1993:33). Although *gamelan* players are often explicitly aware of a modal relationship linking pieces such as *Gendu* and *Catrik* (see 5.5.2), Sundanese music theory and its associated terminology are little known outside of formal education institutions in Bandung. Indeed, the convention of labelling individual *sekar alit* with independent titles is symptomatic of the fact that each modal realisation of a structural position is conceptualised as an autonomous piece. *Patet* classification is generally not considered to have any practical relevance for Sundanese music making and, in fact, many scholars view the development of such modal theories as the inappropriate imposition of an ‘alien’ Javanese concept on Sundanese music (see van Zanten 1987:135 & Fryer 1989:191).

Exploring the divergence between “theory in institutional pedagogy and theory in practice”, Weintraub notes that his teacher, Otong Rasta, “prefers a classification which emphasizes piece structure over modal identity”. Organising the repertoire according to the number of *goong* and *kenong* tones present (but disregarding their modal position), Otong Rasta uses graphic illustrations to represent musical forms as distinct shapes (Weintraub 1993:34-35, also see Fryer 1989:185-190). Within this scheme, *Catrik 2 (5)* is loosely grouped together with other pieces that are constructed from a single *kenong* and a single *goong* tone.<sup>10</sup>

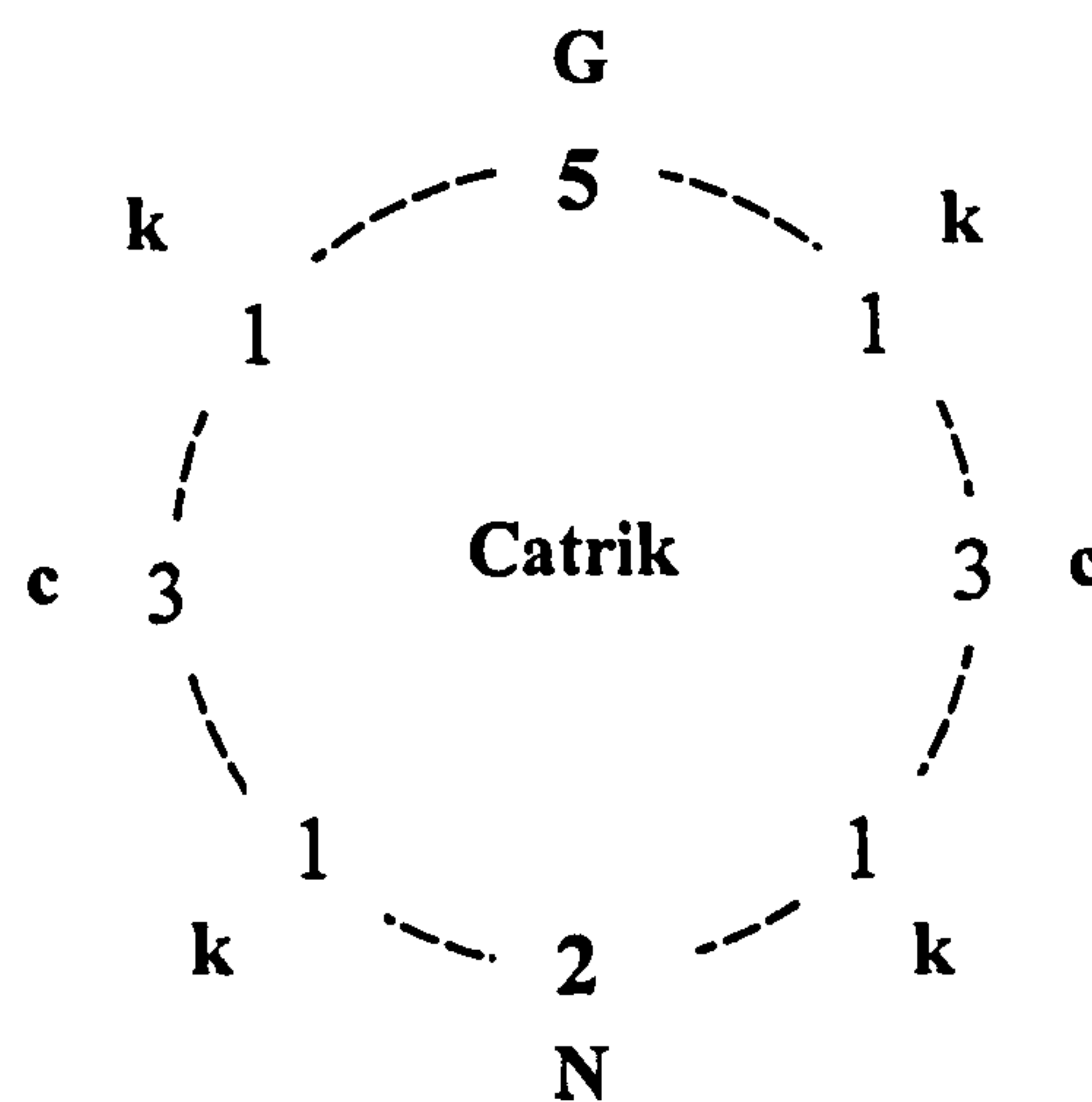
<sup>10</sup> For further information about *sekar alit* classification see Fryer (1989:181-190), Cook (1992:20-21) and Weintraub (1993:34-36).



### 3.3.3 The flexibility of the *patokan* structure

In *gamelan degung*, the *patokan* is realised in its most simple form on the *jengglong*. However, even at this lowest structural level the player has some freedom to vary his part. The basic tonal outline may be fleshed out by including *pancer* and *pangaget* tones and/or by repeating the *goong* and *kenong* tones (Cook 1992:53). Players also have some leeway to determine the density of their own parts, a factor which, as noted in chapter 2, facilitates a ‘learning by doing’ approach to competence acquisition. Cook writes “The *jengglong* is free to play four, or eight, or sixteen times in a goong phrase. The choice depends on the tempo and the mood of the piece, as well as the whim of the player” (*ibid.*, 52). Thus when playing *Catrik 2 (5)*, the *jengglong* player is obliged to sound pitches 2 and 5 at the *kenong* and *goong* positions respectively, but has some freedom to employ or omit *pancer* and *pangaget* tones (in this case, tones 3 and 1, or 1 and 3).

Fig. 3:28 Graphic representation of *Catrik*



G = goong, N = kenong, c = pancer, k = pangaget

Figure 3:29 illustrates nine of the many possible *jengglong* parts for *Catrik*. Four-, eight- and sixteen-tone versions are constructed by inserting or omitting the exchangeable *pancer* tones 1 or 3, and by reiterating or not-reiterating the *goong* and *kenong* pitches. All parts converge at the *kenong* and *goong* positions.



Fig. 3:29 Nine possible versions of the *jengglong* part for *Catrik*

	<b>k</b>	<b>c</b>	<b>k</b>	<b>g</b>	<b>k</b>	<b>c</b>	<b>k</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>k</b>	<b>c</b>	<b>k</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>k</b>	<b>c</b>	<b>k</b>	<b>G</b>
9:	3	1	3	5	3	1	3	2	3	1	3	2	3	1	3	5
8:	1	3	1	5	1	3	1	2	1	3	1	2	1	3	1	5
		<b>k</b>		<b>c</b>		<b>k</b>		<b>N</b>		<b>k</b>		<b>c</b>		<b>k</b>		<b>G</b>
7:		3		1		3		2		3		1		3		5
6:		1		3		1		2		1		3		1		5
		<b>c</b>		<b>g</b>		<b>c</b>		<b>N</b>		<b>c</b>		<b>n</b>		<b>c</b>		<b>G</b>
5:		3		5		3		2		3		2		3		5
4:		1		5		1		2		1		2		1		5
				<b>c</b>				<b>N</b>				<b>c</b>				<b>G</b>
3:				3				2				3				5
2:				1				2				1				5
				<b>g</b>				<b>N</b>				<b>n</b>				<b>G</b>
1:				5				2				2				5
								<b>N</b>								<b>G</b>
								2								(5)

G = goong tone  
 c = pancer tone  
 g = repeated goong

N = kenong tone  
 k = pangaget tone  
 n = repeated kenong

Following Fryer (1989), I have consciously chosen to position the lower density realisations of the piece at the bottom, rather than the top of the diagram. While in *degung klasik* the *jengglong* player abstracts his part from the overlying melodic model, the *jengglong* part in *degung kawih* is often generated from the bottom up. Fryer notes that her *gamelan* teacher Otong Rasta depicted the hierarchical structure of the *sekar alit* in the form of a tree diagram explaining, “The goong is the very base, the root”, which “branches out”, the branches becoming “twigs, with leaves and blossoms at the far ends” (1989:207). In fact, the term *sekar* (‘flower’) is used to mean piece (as in *sekar alit*) or melody, any *kawih* song being only one possible melodic flowering blossoming out of a common tonal position. That tree and flower analogies occur widely in both Sundanese



and Javanese *gamelan* discourse also affirms the idea that these musics are considered to bloom anew with each performance (see van Zanten 1987:29 & Sutton 1993:139). Moreover, the organic, self-perpetuating quality implicit in such comparisons reinforces Fryer's pertinent observation that *gamelan* musicians perceive musical structure in terms of the component units from which a piece is generated or recreated in the act of performance, rather than in the way this structure can be analytically broken down "on paper" (Fryer 1989:173-174)

It is significant that the descriptions given by the Sundanese of *goongan*, *kenongan* and so on, use the words 'made of' and 'consist of' (*terdiri dari*). This contrasts sharply with most western descriptions of *gamelan* musical structure, which talk in terms of 'divisions' and 'subdivisions'. This seems to me to indicate a fundamental difference in the way that people from these different cultural backgrounds perceive the world (*ibid.*, 173).

### 3.3.4 *Wilet*: structural expansion and contraction

Aside from the tempo of a piece and mood of the player, the number of tones played by the *jengglong* is also dependent upon the amount of space that requires filling-in. The *patokan* framework is structurally pliable in that the number of beats in the *goong* cycle can be expanded or contracted, a phenomenon that is described in terms of *wilet*. The three basic structural levels are referred to as *sawilet* (one *wilet*), *dua wilet* (two *wilet*), and *opat wilet* (four *wilet*), although musicians recognise *goong* phrases of even larger, smaller or 'in-between' lengths.<sup>11</sup> If a *sawilet* *goong* phrase is transcribed as eight-beats long, the same *goong* phrase would be doubled to sixteen-beats in *dua wilet*, and expanded again to thirty-two beats in *opat wilet*. Most *degung kawih* repertoire is in either *sawilet* or *dua wilet* (see 5.3). In performance, a *sekar alit* in *dua wilet* will often segue or *naek* (go up) into a *sawilet* version of the same piece. Transitions the other way around are also possible but happen less frequently (Cook 1992:22).

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<sup>11</sup> Upandi also lists *gurudugan* and *kering* III (or *setengah wilet*, 'half *wilet*'), as well as *satu setengah wilet* ('one and a half *wilet*') and *lalamba* (or *delapan wilet*, 'eight *wilet*') (Upandi 1984:7).



*Wilet* indicates the relative rate of tonal change or the amount of room for melodic manoeuvre in a *goong* cycle, rather than the actual speed of the basic pulse. Van Zanten emphasises that *wilet* is “a concept of musical structure, and not... a time unit”, pointing out that “musicians never say that a song ‘lasts’ for two *wilet*, but that a song is two *wilet*” (1987:150). Similarly, Cook writes “You can have a slow, medium or fast pace in any of the expansions. A brisk 2 *wilet* may feel faster than a leisurely 1 *wilet*” (1992:22).<sup>12</sup> However, Weintraub observes that musicians *do* sometimes conflate tempo and structure “because *wiletan* also refers to the way a piece ‘feels’”. He adds that while there is no absolute relationship binding the two “the tempo oftentimes does increase when musicians make a transition from *dua wilet* to *sawilet*” (1997:149).

Generally speaking, musicians have more space to tease out and vary melodic material in the longer phrases of a *dua wilet* realization of a piece than in the shorter phrases of *sawilet*. The *suling* player Endang Sukandar remarked that he finds improvising in *dua wilet* more creatively satisfying because the greater distance between cadence points at this level of expansion enables him to develop more intricate embellishments (Swindells 1996:63). While one may assume that players have even more freedom in *opat wilet* or larger pieces, this is not generally the case. Sukandar stated that most of the pieces at this higher level of expansion have developed as specific songs that are defined by a melodic model to which players must adhere (*ibid.*, see 5.2).

### 3.3.5 The explicit melodic model

This brings us to the most important constraint on variation and improvisation in *degung kawih*: the melodic model. In the absence of a singer, the *sekar alit* often function as stand-alone pieces, with musicians developing their own parts based upon the tones of the *patokan* framework rather than following the contour of any precomposed melodic line. However, when a particular song or *lagu jadi* (‘pre-established melody’) is specified, the *suling* player (at least) is obliged to adhere closely enough to the defining melodic and rhythmic model for that song to be identifiable. The *cempres*, *peking*,

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<sup>12</sup> In fact, if the tempo is sufficiently slow, certain instruments may also be played *dirangkep*, musicians ‘doubling-up’ a particular playing pattern to produce a denser musical texture. This is one way of enlivening a performance without necessarily altering either the overall tempo or dynamic.



*bonang* and *jengglong* players may, or may not, choose to follow the contour and register of the vocal melody, though certain songs have become more standardised in the precise details of their realisation than others.

Players thus tend to have more freedom in live performance situations such as at wedding receptions, where song titles are not announced and the music merely functions as a backdrop for other activities.<sup>13</sup> Conversely, on a recording, the title of the song is usually listed on the cassette sleeve, thereby compelling players to contain their realisation within the bounds of the specified melody. If only the name of the *sekar alit* is presented, the *suling* player can choose whether to perform an established melody that fits over that framework, to improvise phrases leading to the principal tones of that framework, or to combine both approaches. Sometimes, novel ideas spontaneously created during an improvisation eventually go on to become assimilated into the musician's store of stock-materials and models. Stahl cites the example of the piece *Gendu* on the *kacapi suling* cassette *Landangan* as an example of a 'one-off' *suling* improvisation based on *Catrik* that has since come to be recognised as an independent song melody (1987:13-14).

The degree to which a pre-existing melody may itself be transformed in performance varies quite significantly from song to song. While some pieces are too melodically and rhythmically dense to permit any significant deviation from the prescribed model, others offer performers more extensive opportunities for melodic embellishment and variation. Singers and *suling* players often know multiple versions of songs, and can choose to alter particular sections of melody or individual phrases and motifs by selecting from a range of substitutionable alternatives. Some melodies are even subject to the more radical forms of transformation that operate at lower structural levels. While most songs performed with *gamelan degung* are fixed in either *sawilet* or *dua wilet*, some can be stretched or contracted to fit over both levels of expansion, as well as transposed into different tunings.

In Sunda, there is also a powerful socio-cultural dimension to melodic realisation which means that, apart from contextual considerations such as whether a performance

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<sup>13</sup> Endang Sukandar said that after playing for a few hours at a wedding, his *suling* improvisation gets increasingly innovative as he incorporates more daring modulations and unconventional embellishments to prevent boredom and raise a smile from the other players (Swindells 1996:63).



is live or being recorded, a given *kawih* melody may be treated more freely in some musical genres than others. It is a fact that a greater degree of melodic permutation is tolerated, and even encouraged, when a melody is realised in *gamelan salendro* and, albeit to a lesser extent *gamelan degung*, than is when the same melody is performed as a *panambih* song in *tembang Sunda*. Social prohibition also prevents musicians from altering any song melody composed by a well-known artist. While performers happily play around with what are considered to be collectively-owned ‘traditional’ musical materials, a couple of musicians told me that it would be disrespectful for anyone to rework any of the late Koko Koswara’s oeuvre, at least not without first gaining permission from existing members of his family. The issue of ownership and copyright will be explored in chapter 6.

### 3.3.6 Melody and accompaniment: song titles and terminology

*Degung kawih* songs often have two separate titles: one to identify the underlying tonal structure or *sekar alit* and the other to specify the melodic model. The *kawih* song ‘*Kukupu*’, for example, is accompanied by the *degung* piece ‘*Catrik*’. In practice, musicians will typically only refer to one of these titles when compiling set lists or discussing repertoire. Players are simply expected to know that *Kukupu* is one of the many tunes that fit over *Catrik*. This particular example is further complicated by the fact that in *gamelan salendro*, for reasons of tuning that are explained in chapter 5, *Kukupu* is accompanied by the piece *Gendu*, and *Gendu* is sometimes referred to as *Macan Ucul*!<sup>14</sup> As the same musicians tend to play in both *gamelan salendro* and *degung* groups it is fairly common for these specific names to be used interchangeably.

While such complex labelling may bewilder those uninitiated in the tradition, the very existence of individual titles underscores the way in which melody and accompaniment are perceived as separate phenomena within this body of repertoire. The *sekar alit* function as both autonomous pieces as well as ‘accompaniments’ (*pirigan*) to *kawih* melodies that may themselves go on to have discernible ‘lives of their own’ via their association with a particular singer, composer or seminal recording, or by being

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<sup>14</sup> Cook explains that *Macan Ucul* actually refers to a more specific *salendro* melody that is associated with the *Gendu* structure (*p.c.*, 2003b).



subject to further transformation. Even so, Sundanese music terminology remains relatively vague when it comes to identifying the melodic model as a discrete musical entity.

*Lagu*, the word most commonly employed to refer to the melodic line, is also used to differentiate sections of vocal melody (*lagu*) from instrumental interludes (*gelenyu*) and through-composed introductions (*intro*). More commonly, the term *lagu* denotes a piece (from whatever genre) in its entirety. Similarly, the more refined term *sekar* (see 3.3.3) can mean melody, song, piece or form. Another word that pervades discussions of Sundanese melodic realisation is *senggol*. However, while *senggol* may be used to describe a single ornament, an idiomatic motif, as well as a longer phrase or entire melody, the term is mainly used to refer to the instrument or voice-specific ‘building blocks’ that singers, *suling* and *rebab* players draw upon in the act of performance. As such, this term will be explored in further detail within a study of vocal performance practice in section 4.3.

In their search for more universally understood terms with which to label aspects of Sundanese melodic structure, native scholars such as Natapradja (1971) and Somawijaya (1986) have also introduced foreign words and theoretical concepts (such as *melodi*, *cantus firmus* and *balunganing gending*) into Sundanese music discourse. This appropriation of Western and Javanese terminology is problematic as, in the words of Bohlman, “seeking equivalent identities usually impedes the discovery of deeper meanings” (2002:7). In fact, *lagu* connotes something more elastic and multifaceted than is conveyed by the Western notion of ‘melody’, while the Javanese *balungan* model is perhaps even less appropriate to describe the flexibility inherent in many types of Sundanese melodic structure. Cook notes that although some fast passages in Sundanese *gamelan* might sound as though they have a fixed *balungan* style melody, these *saron* melodies are not standardised and are only “one of many possible realisations” (1992:18).

### **3.3.7 *Lagon*: the implicit melodic model**

Sundanese metallophone players have much more freedom than their Javanese counterparts to generate and embellish their own melodic lines (see 4.2). This is



particularly true in repertoires such as *degung kawih* when, in the absence of a fixed melodic model, the cadential tones of the underlying *patokan* structure are said to be the only obligatory points of reference constraining melodic realisation. In actual fact, it is perhaps more accurate to say that the *goong* and *kenong* tones are the only obligatory points of reference that are made explicit within existing declarative theoretical frameworks as, according to Lili Suparli, melodic motion in Sundanese music is also more intuitively guided by something which he calls *lagon*.

Acknowledging that the concept of *lagon* is difficult to pin down, Suparli used the term to describe a type of implicit melodic grammar that is unconsciously acquired by musicians as they memorise the traditional repertoire. He explained that Sundanese melodic structure is so formulaic that, in the past, compositions that *terbau tradisi* (literally, 'have the smell of tradition') would be referred to as *sanggian* (a term that Suparli says is more suggestive of processes of arrangement and compilation), rather than *cipta*an ('compositions') or *kreasi* ('creations'). Traditionally then, the composer draws from his knowledge of *lagon* or, in other words, his intuitively assimilated store of conventional melodic templates, stereotypical contour schemas, gestures, cadences and so forth, to create 'new' vocal melodies. As a result, there is a certain predictability to Sundanese melodic structure that enables experienced musicians to anticipate where a particular phrase is heading, how a given cadence will resolve, and at which points in a melody there will be change of register, even when encountering a song for the first time (p.c., 2001b).<sup>15</sup> Suparli also compared *lagon* to a type of elastic mould or cast (*cetakan elastis*) that is utilised by instrumentalists to generate independent melodic lines in improvised performance. This is most clearly demonstrated when, in the absence of a specified precomposed melodic model, instrumentalists (and singers in *gamelan salendro*) synthesise their awareness of the macro-melodic conventions that govern phrasing, register changes, contour patterning and such like, with their procedural knowledge of micro idiom-specific figuration to formulate *patokan*-based melodic realisations. While no other musician that I worked with in Bandung mentioned this term, Fryer observes that the Sundanese theorist Kusumadinata also refers to *lagon* as *modus*, but that neither term is adequately explained (1989:199). Interestingly, however,

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<sup>15</sup> Lili Suparli provided a practical demonstration of this by improvising question and answer phrases with some of his students at STSI.



Lili Suparli's description of *lagon* does have certain elements in common with Sumarsam's frequently referenced theory of 'inner melody' in Javanese *gamelan*.

Since the 1970s, Sumarsam has questioned the privileging of the limited-range metallophone line (the *balungan*) as the fundamental melodic model in Javanese *gamelan* music, proposing instead that a less easily notated, but implicitly known multi-octave melody ultimately guides melodic flow in Central Javanese *gamelan* performance (1975:7). Moreover, critiquing current theories of *gendhing* (Javanese *gamelan* composition) construction, Sumarsam suggests that by solely concentrating on the single-line *balungan* and the *balungan*'s constituent four-note building blocks (*gatra*), Javanese musicologists have neglected to consider the ways in which "gamelan composition is rooted in vocal melody" (1995:161-206).

The disparity between Central Javanese and Sundanese musics and, more specifically, the fact that Sundanese melodic models usually tend to be more tangibly correlated to particular instrumental or vocal parts, means that Suparli's notion of *lagon* differs somewhat from Sumarsam's conception of 'inner melody'. Sundanese musicians, for example, are emphatic that whatever the historical evolution of the *degung klasik* repertoire, the melodic source of these pieces lays in the *bonang* part. In addition, it is clear that the vocal melodies that were appended to some of these pieces in the late 1950s were unequivocally derived from the *bonang* line, rather than the other way round. In *degung kawih*, on the other hand, vocal melody and instrumental accompaniment continue to coexist as separable, if sometimes overlapping phenomena. Though individual *kawih* songs are often subject to multiple interpretation, the vocal melody remains explicitly identifiable and has not, as Sumarsam suggests has happened in certain types of Javanese *gamelan* repertoire, been heterophonically instrumentalised beyond recognition down through the horizontal strata of the *gamelan* ensemble.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> As a brief aside, it is worth noting Fryer's comment that if, as certain scholars suggest, *gamelan* was brought to West Java from Central Java in the seventeenth century, it is plausible "that West Javanese practice is a development from older Central Javanese forms" (1989:285-286). Given Sumarsam's assumption that vocal melody is the melodic source of many Javanese *gendhing*, is it possible that older Central Javanese repertoires separated melody and accompaniment in a similar way to extant Sundanese musical structures? In fact, Sumarsam alludes to a mid-nineteenth century reference which identifies the oldest form of Javanese repertoire as *gendhing kemanak*, "a type of performance consisting of a unison mixed chorus" accompanied by a small instrumental ensemble comprising *kemanak* (a pair of archaic, bronze instruments shaped like a hollow banana), *kendhang*, *gong* and *kenong* (large gong kettles, horizontally suspended on a wooden rack) (1995:165).



Another point of divergence between Sumarsam's and Suparli's theories is that while 'inner melody' seems to describe the unsounded melodic models guiding the realisation of specific Central Javanese compositions, the concept of *lagon* appears to encompass the intuitively understood conventions governing Sundanese melodic structure more generally.

What does unite 'inner melody' and *lagon*, however, is that both types of implicit melodic model are said to be audibly manifest in the hummed or quietly sung melodic lines that players use to guide themselves through a particular piece or section of a piece. Suparli echoed Sumarsam's observation that this vocalised melody is not imitative of any specific instrumental figuration that is being played and nor is it identical to the song melody (if there is one) as it is performed by the designated singer. The hummed melody does, though, flow "in the manner of all vocal music" (Sumarsam 1975:7).

In fact, humming and singing (either out loud or in one's 'heart') while playing more generally helps instrumentalists to keep track of where they are in a performance and plays an important role in the memorisation of melodic models. Sumarsam observes that when his *bonang* teacher was having difficulty recalling a piece, he would actually leave the room to try to recall it by humming a version of the melody to himself (*ibid.*). Similarly, I repeatedly observed Sundanese musicians put down their beaters, and look away from their instrument and up into the air as they sang, "*ne-ning-nang-nung*", a forgotten section of a melodic model back into their conscious memory.<sup>17</sup> Considering that the stratified structure of most *gamelan* music requires musicians to know multiple interpretations of a single melodic path it is perhaps not surprising that *gamelan* musicians internalise an abstracted model to guide them in performance. Moreover, vocalising melodies in this manner is also one of the main ways in which repertoire is transmitted from player to player in the first place. According to Suparli, for example, a new *kacapi suling* composition would normally be imparted to a *suling* player in the form of a sung or hummed melody; it is then the performer's job to idiomatically interpret this melody (*p.c.*, 2001b).

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<sup>17</sup> Hughes suggests that the choice of such sung syllables is not arbitrary and that there is a natural correlation between vowel colour or vowel acoustic and relative pitch that facilitates memorization and recall. Simply singing "la la la", he suggests, is much less effective (2000:115).



Before concluding this chapter it is worth noting that a glance at the wider ethnomusicological literature reveals that the use of singing in instrumental performance, composition and repertoire transmission is by no means specific to *gamelan* musics. Moreover, studies suggest that the human voice may have played a more implicit role in the actual evolutionary design of many types of melody worldwide. Claiming that there are patterns of melodic motion that transcend musical styles and cultures, Russo and Cuddy put forward a “motor theory of melodic expectancy” that suggests “all facets of melodic processing (i.e., composition, production, and perception)”, may be innately influenced by physical constraints of the human voice (1999). Although now digressing somewhat from the particular conception of ‘inner melody’ in Javanese *gamelan*, it appears as though some of Sumarsam’s observations may have a more universal relevance.

### Summary

This chapter has examined the musical models at the heart of the *degung klasik* and *degung kawih* repertoires. Beginning by looking at the role of stock phrases in the structurally idiosyncratic and melodically fixed *degung klasik* pieces, it identified the ways in which processes of expansion, contraction, transposition, and melodic and rhythmic variation can be considered to operate across this repertoire when it is analysed as a whole. The second part of the chapter continued by considering the inherent flexibility of the *patokan* frameworks underpinning the *degung kawih* repertoire, and the wider possibilities for transformation that such pieces offer individual performers and composers. Noting that melody and accompaniment are conceptualised as discrete models in the *sekar alit*-based repertoire, it was suggested that Sundanese musicians might also be implicitly guided by a type of intuitively grasped melodic grammar, referred to by Lili Suparli as *lagon*. Chapter four now explores the transformation of the model in the act of performance within two studies of melodic realisation in *degung kawih*.



## Chapter 4

### Melodic realisation in *degung kawih*

While the preceding chapter examines the musical forms underpinning the *degung klasik* and *degung kawih* repertoires, chapter 4 now presents two case studies of melodic realisation in *degung kawih*. Building upon concepts introduced in chapter 3, the first focuses on an improvisatory style of playing on the *cempres* metallophone (see appendix I). Throughout this, the more analytical of the two studies, detailed musical examples serve to identify the types of procedural model that beginners and more experienced instrumentalists draw upon to generate *patokan*-based melodies in performance. In contrast the second study considers melodic realisation as a socio-culturally and contextually informed process by means of an examination of the *degung kawih* singer. As outlined in chapter 2, *gamelan degung* has become a musical ‘common ground’ for distinct types of artist, with post-1950s Bandung *degung* groups borrowing specialist singers from disparate fields such as *tembang Sunda* and *gamelan pelog-salendro*. Lacking an indigenous vocal style of its own, *degung kawih* has consequently developed as a highly derivative art form, appropriating both repertoire and aspects of the vocal technique associated with these older ‘parent’ genres. This second study thus provides a broader survey of *tembang* and *gamelan* singing and contemplates the way in which distinctive performance practices – notably divergent styles of vocal embellishment – have been negotiated in this relatively new urban genre.<sup>1</sup> As any discussion of melodic embellishment, variation and improvisation can quickly become mired in problematic questions of definition, I will begin this chapter by briefly reviewing explanations of these processes as expounded in the wider literature.

#### 4.1 Melodic embellishment, variation and improvisation

That the precise meaning of ‘improvisation’ is particularly tricky to pin down is a well-worn issue in ethnomusicological discourse, though, as Nettl concludes, the problem has often been “more a matter of lexicographic niceties” rather than one of

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<sup>1</sup> For more technical information about Sundanese vocal and *suling* ornaments see van Zanten (1989:160-190), Williams (2001:176-191), Rosliani (1998) and Swindells (1996:27-77). Research still remains to be conducted into the vocal practices of Sundanese *pasinden* (*gamelan pelog-salendro* singers).



“conceptualisation (1998:11). While most authors concur that some degree of spontaneous creation, “a significant level or originality” (Sutton 1998a:72) or “real-time composing” (Berliner 1994:221) must occur to justify use of the term, it is generally acknowledged that musicians “are almost never responding to challenges that were entirely unforeseen” (Blum 1998:27). Surveys of improvised musics across the globe suggest that most extemporised performance both springs from and is constrained by some form of precomposed (though not necessarily notated) ‘point of departure’ or model (see 3.1). Consequently, since the 1970s, scholars have tended to agree that improvisation and composition cannot be juxtaposed as entirely separate processes and that the relationship between the two is more accurately represented as the extreme points of a continuum. What, essentially, is considered to distinguish the one from the other is the time lag between the conception of a musical idea and its realisation. However, while composition may initially appear to be the more protracted creative process, Hall argues that improvisation can be judged to be the more time consuming activity because of the years of programming and contexting that lie behind most improvised performance (1992:230).

One of the main difficulties in developing a concise definition of improvisation is that the term holds different connotations depending upon whether it is used as a noun or a verb (Berliner 1994:221). According to Berliner, while the former is primarily reserved to specify an “altogether new” improvised product, the latter positions improvisation as an all-embracing dynamic process. From this second perspective any “unique features of interpretation, embellishment, and variation, when conceived in performance, can also be regarded theoretically as improvised” (*ibid.*, 221-222). This discrepancy explains Sutton’s seemingly contradictory conclusion that “Javanese musicians improvise, but that Javanese music is not improvisatory” (1998a:87). In addition to describing the relationship between processes of composition and performance then, the continuum is an apposite model to represent ‘improvisatory practices’ ranging from interpretation, embellishment and variation, through to improvisation ‘proper’ (see Lee Konitz in Berliner 1994:67). The boundaries dividing these distinct practices are often blurred in performance; musicians fluidly shift from one end of this spectrum to the other as a melody is transformed to varying degrees of intensity.



Researchers have also pointed out that performers may never be called upon to abstract explicitly a defining melodic template from the idiomatic realisation of that template and, therefore, have no practical need to differentiate conceptually between ornamental and non-ornamental pitches, embellished and non-embellished melodic phrases. As Rice comments with reference to Bulgarian *gaida* (bagpipe) players, the fact that musicians conceive of melodic embellishments as physical motions means that melody and ornamentation can be “unified into a single concept as ways of moving from tone to tone” (1994:84). Notably, the Sundanese term *senggol* does not differentiate between individual ornaments, instrument-specific playing patterns and entire chunks of melody as discrete musical entities.

While Bandung musicians may claim that certain West Javanese genres offer players greater scope for melodic invention than is permitted in the repertoires of their Central Javanese and Balinese counterparts, the subject of improvisation in Sundanese music has received little scholarly attention. In contrast, the mechanics of variation and improvisation in Central Javanese *gamelan* has been a chief concern for several of the performer-researchers working in this particular field. Discussing the inherent flexibility of Javanese *gamelan* performance, Sorrell summarises the basic conundrum that writers face as follows:

To state that gamelan music is improvised is likely to convey the impression of a freedom, even looseness, which it does not have; but to try and close the matter there would do the greater disservice of denying it that element of choice and interpretative spontaneity that is crucial to any great musical tradition (1990:75-76).

This “element of choice and interpretative spontaneity” has been explained in several ways. As noted in chapter 3, Javanese *gamelan* music is often discussed in terms of a relatively fixed skeletal outline and more flexible filling in (see, for example, Hood 1975:26 & Sutton 1993:103). Within this hierarchical scheme, each instrumental part or horizontal strata is recognised to have a predetermined function and associated textural density, while still offering players some scope for individual interpretation. Other accounts emphasise the role that stock patterns play in the idiomatic filling in of this multi-level structure. Usually referencing Albert Lord’s seminal study of verbal building



blocks in Serbo-Croatian epic sung poetry (1965), ethnomusicologists frequently describe variation and improvisation in terms of the manipulation of an extant vocabulary of melodic formulae (see, for example, Becker 1980 & Sutton 1993, 1998a). Finally, a third approach to exploring melodic flexibility in Javanese *gamelan* has been to extrapolate the conventions, constraints, or the musical grammar that can be seen to be operative in a particular genre (see Becker and Becker 1979 & Hughes 1988) or instrumental idiom (Sutton 1978). This usually demands a more etic analytical approach because, as my own research demonstrates, these conventions are often tacitly assimilated by performers – known, for example, as appropriate ways of moving on an instrument – rather than theorised as ‘rules’.

While these contrasting accounts offer different perspectives on the workings of melodic realisation, variation and improvisation, these explanations complement rather than compete with one another. As the first study will now illustrate, Sundanese musicians use instrument-specific patterns as a means of filling in a melody or framework while, at the same time, the memorisation of these patterns implicitly serves to teach players the ‘grammar’ governing the melodic idiom in question.

#### 4.2 Melodic realisation on the *cempres*

The *cempres* and *peking* players in *gamelan degung* have much more freedom to generate independent melodic lines than their counterparts in most other types of *gamelan*. There is, for example, no equivalent of the Javanese *balungan* unison melody in Sundanese music, with individual metallophone players in *gamelan degung* having some leeway to determine the density of their part as well as the type of figuration they use. In addition, although instruments are not standardised from one ensemble to another, the *cempres* and *peking* each have a range of at least two and a half octaves and musicians have some choice as to the octave in which they play. Generally speaking, the higher pitched *peking* is played in the octave above the *cempres*, although there is inevitably some overlap in the middle ranges.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the *peking* usually plays motifs that are twice as dense as those performed on the *cempres*, although factors such as structural expansion and contraction, and tempo changes often prompt individual

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<sup>2</sup> This shared register is deliberately exploited when the instruments play interlocking *caruk* patterns with one another.



musicians to double up or half the number of tones that they are playing in a given cycle. Nevertheless, the *cempres* part tends to be the more 'singable' in that it is closest to the vocal part in terms of both register and melodic density. Furthermore, while *cempres* patterns typically move in a continuous, uniform rhythm, the *peking* is freer to incorporate more whimsical syncopated elaborations.

As an examination of all the performance techniques open to *cempres* and *peking* players in *gamelan degung* is beyond the confines of this investigation, the study will focus on a melodic style of playing referred to as *ngamelodi*. This technique requires that players construct melodic phrases that either idiomatically follow the contour of a given melodic model or more generically fill in and cadence on the important tones of the underlying *patokan* framework. Using my own experiences of the learning process, as well as observations of amateur group rehearsals and notations taken from instruction manuals, I consider the ways in which Sundanese *cempres* players learn to vary and 'improvise' melodic material. In addition, comparing professional players' *cempres* realisations of *Catrik* in both *sawilet* and *dua wilet*, I identify some of the conventions governing improvisation on this instrument at more advanced levels of performance. The transcriptions on which most of this analysis is based are of fieldwork recordings of my *gamelan* teachers Ade Komaran and Lili Suparli. These transcriptions, which are presented in full in appendix II [CD tracks 3-6], comprise nine cycles of *Catrik* played on *cempres* and *peking* by both players. Each cycle is coded (A1, A2, B1, etc) to allow the reader to cross reference the musical examples presented in this chapter with the transcriptions found in the appendix. I decided to make these recordings without a singer or *suling* player present and so my analysis does not consider the ways in which a musician may choose to follow or ignore the specific pitch contour and register of a prescribed *kawih* melody (if, indeed, there is one). As a result, I am able to focus more clearly on the way in which *cempres* and *peking* players learn to generate and transform melodic material which is based only on the core tones of the *patokan* framework.

#### 4.2.1 Memorisation as a basis for variation and improvisation

In chapter 2, I suggest that processes of improvisation and variation are rarely explicitly taught. As a native speaker primarily learns his or her own language by being



surrounded by that language from birth, so performers acquire these transformative skills by being immersed in a musical idiom rather than by studying lists of rules. Most writers agree that practices of imitation, approximation and memorisation are fundamental to the development of improvisational skill, with fledgling musicians intuitively grasping the conventions of a musical style from their increasing knowledge of a particular body of repertoire and instrument-specific patterning (see, for example, Hood 1975, Ziporyn 1992, Kippen 1992, Silkstone 1993 & Nooshin 1998).

My own experience learning to play Sundanese *gamelan* and my observation of other novices confirms this view. When beginners play in the *ngamelodi* style on the *cempres*, they initially tend to stick to a small number of stereotypical playing patterns or larger scale melodic templates. These, albeit non-standardised, non-codified and unnamed performance models are sometimes referred to as *pola* (pattern or model). Observing a Bandung primary school *degung* ensemble in rehearsal, it quickly became apparent that the young *cempres* and *peking* players in the group were performing fixed versions of pieces from memory. In other words, unlike experienced players, they did not vary their parts from one *goong* cycle to another. When performing *Catrik*, for example, the eight-year-old *cempres* player in the school group reused the following realisation with each repetition of the piece.

Fig. 4:1 *Cempres* part for *Catrik*

| .  $\overline{.5}$   $\overline{54}$  3 |  $\overline{.2}$   $\overline{12}$   $\overline{51}$  2 | .  $\overline{.5}$   $\overline{12}$  3 |  $\overline{.2}$   $\overline{12}$   $\overline{34}$  (5) |

c N c G

G = *goong*, N = *kenong*, c = *pancer*

In fact, this *cempres* part is that which is notated in Juju Sain Martadinata's book of *degung* notations, *Sekar Gending Degung I* ('*Degung* songs and accompaniments I') (Martadinata 1976:18)<sup>3</sup> and, attesting to the widespread influence of such notation

<sup>3</sup> Although in the book this melodic sequence is notated as a *peking* rather than a *cempres* part.



compilations, also happens to be the first *cempres* part that I was taught in lessons with a formally trained STSI teacher. Another widely used manual, Tjarmedi's *Penuntun Pengajaran Degung* ('Manual for teaching *degung*'), presents a longer version of this same model which, spanning three cycles of the piece, moves from a lower into a higher octave and back again (1974:30-31).

Fig. 4:2 Metallophone parts for *Catrik*

(Martadinata):	$\cdot$ $\overline{.5}$ $\overline{54}$ 3   $\overline{.2}$ $\overline{12}$ $\overline{51}$ 2   $\cdot$ $\overline{.5}$ $\overline{12}$ 3   $\overline{.2}$ $\overline{12}$ $\overline{34}$ (5)
(Tjarmedi) 1:	$\cdot$ $\overline{.5}$ $\overline{54}$ 3   $\overline{.2}$ $\overline{12}$ $\overline{51}$ 2   $\overline{.2}$ $\overline{15}$ $\overline{12}$ 3   $\overline{.2}$ $\overline{12}$ $\overline{34}$ (5)
2:	$\cdot$ $\overline{.5}$ $\overline{54}$ 3   $\overline{.2}$ $\overline{12}$ $\overline{51}$ 2   $\overline{.1}$ $\overline{51}$ $\overline{54}$ 3   $\overline{.2}$ $\overline{12}$ $\overline{34}$ (5)
3:	$\overline{.1}$ $\overline{51}$ $\overline{54}$ 3   $\overline{.5}$ $\overline{43}$ $\overline{51}$ 2   $\overline{.2}$ $\overline{15}$ $\overline{12}$ 3   $\overline{.2}$ $\overline{12}$ $\overline{34}$ (5)
	<span style="margin-right: 100px;">c</span> <span style="margin-right: 100px;">N</span> <span style="margin-right: 100px;">c</span> <span>G</span>

*Cempres* parts are not standardised and these textbook examples by no means represent the only *ngamelodi* patterns that a novice student might initially encounter. They are, however, fairly representative of the type of melodic sequence a fledgling player may perform and, moreover, serve to illustrate the primary constraints governing this type of melodic realisation. In all four examples the *cempres* lands on the specified tones (in the case of *Catrik* pitches 2 and 5) at the *kenong* and *goong* positions. In my own experience, this is the only cast-iron 'rule' that is commonly made explicit verbally. In the above examples, the *cempres* also performs linear phrases leading to the *pancer* tone (in this case, tone 3). In fact, convergence at the *pancer* position is not an obligatory requirement of the music system but does provide players with an additional structural hook on which to hang their melodic realisations.

In section 3.3.3, I outline some of the possible ways in which the *jengglong* player constructs his part. Following Cook (1992), I note that instead of, or as well as, inserting *pancer* and/or secondary *pancer* tones, players may also repeat the *goong* and





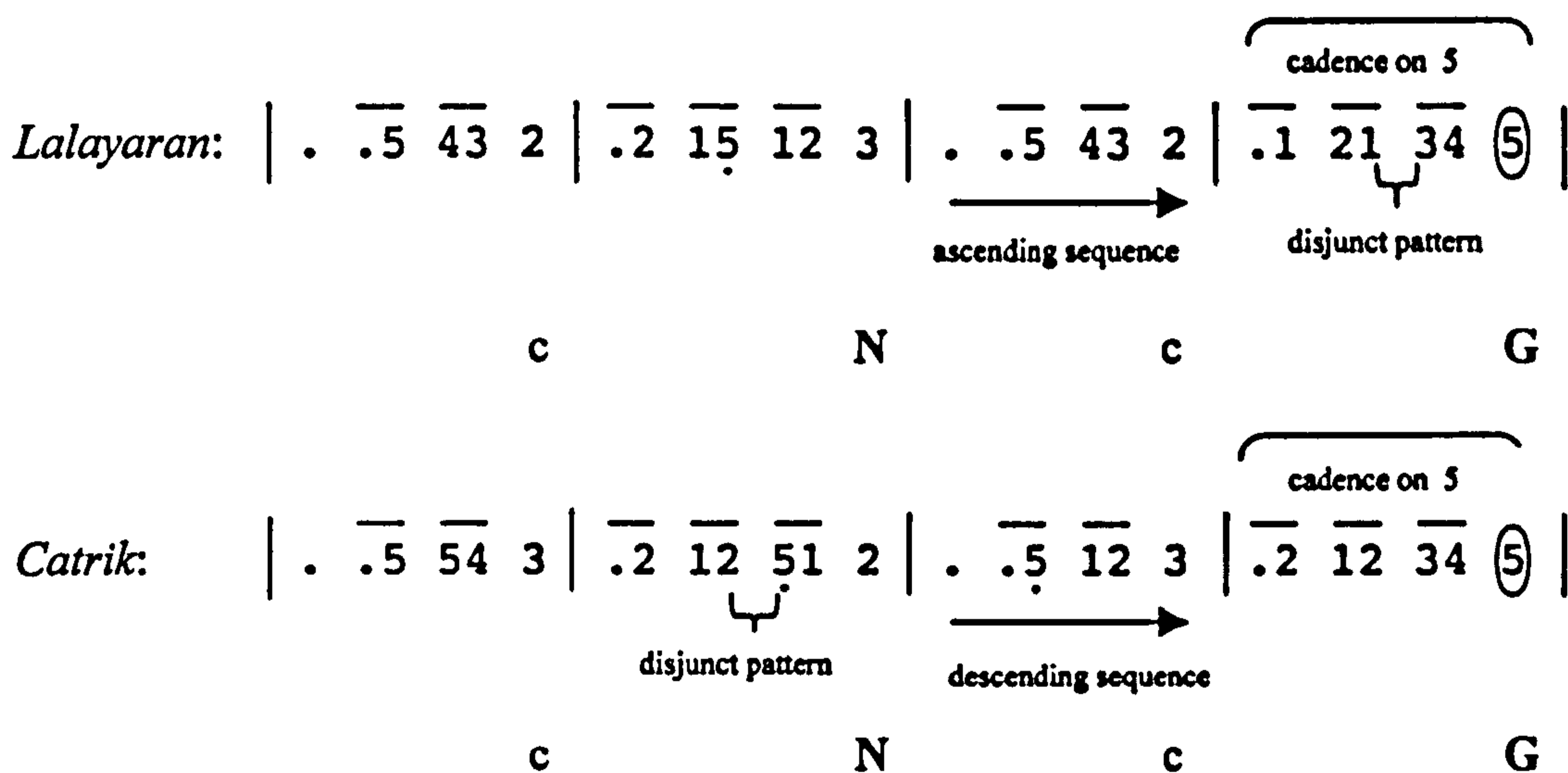






another or shifting a particular kinetic pattern onto a different sequence of pitches. Musicians also learn to remould the patterns that they already know in order to cadence on different tones. Again, novice musicians may initially be presented with fixed ways of doing this. Figure 4:6 compares the metallophone parts that Martadinata notates for *Catrik* and *Lalayaran*, and illustrates the way in which both melodic templates share a similar macro-contour but divergent micro-patterning.

Fig. 4:6 Metallophone parts for *Catrik* and *Lalayaran* (Martadinata 1976:34-35)



It is notable that while *Lalayaran* and *Catrik* end on the same *goong* tone, Martadinata notates a different pattern to lead to tone 5 in each piece. Scouting through his book it is also apparent that *Cirebonan* and *Belenderan*, pieces that also have a *goong* tone 5, similarly feature alternative cadences to this same *goong* tone.



Fig. 4:7 Metallophone patterns to *goong* tone 5 (as notated in Martadinata 1976)

<i>Lalayaran:</i>	2 <u>      </u> $\overline{.1}$ $\overline{21}$ $\overline{34}$ (5)	(page 34: bars 3-4)
	c conjunct	G
<i>Cirebonan:</i>	1 <u>      </u> $\overline{.2}$ $\overline{32}$ $\overline{34}$ (5)	(page 24: bars 7-8)
	c conjunct	G
<i>Catrik:</i>	3 <u>      </u> $\overline{.2}$ $\overline{12}$ $\overline{34}$ (5)	(page 18: bars 3-4)
	c conjunct	G
<i>Belenderan:</i>	3 <u>      </u> $\overline{.5}$ $\overline{45}$ $\overline{34}$ (5)	(page 31: bars 3-4)
	c disjunct	G

One explanation for this variation is that as the *pancer* tone preceding the cadential pattern to tone 5 is different in the first three pieces, Martadinata has adapted the opening of the final phrase in each case in order to maintain a conjunct melodic line (see 4.2.6). Nevertheless, this is not the case in *Belenderan* (see figure 4:7) in which there is a disjunct leap from *pancer* tone 3 down to tone 5. Whether or not this alternative version was consciously introduced for pedagogic purposes, it remains a fact that as players work their way through the repertoire they not only learn to reuse playing patterns across comparable musical contexts but also to assimilate substitutionable versions of these patterns that are then, themselves, subject to further transformation. Sometimes the introduction of variant patterns is deliberate; the teacher presents a novice with a substitute or more complex version of a particular motif in accordance with his increasing technical skill and capacity for memorisation. Lili Suparli said that once he sees that a student has got to grips with a *dasar* (basic) motif, he presents them with *kembangan* (flowerings, developments) or more elaborate ways of embellishing or varying that motif (*p.c.*, 2001b). More commonly, however, musicians inadvertently feed students modified patterns simply because they cannot remember the precise details of what they played from one lesson, piece, or even cycle of a piece, to the next. The more patterns a musician memorises the greater the chance that the ‘original’ version, be it didactically taught or deductively grasped, will be forgotten and that new hybrid



patterns or combinations of patterns will be automatically generated. In addition, young players may also inadvertently come up with their own variations because, as outlined in chapter 2, learning on stage does not offer many opportunities for verbatim repetition.

Sundanese musicians are ultimately responsible for developing their own instrumental technique and for enriching their vocabulary of idiomatic playing patterns by 'searching' for new performance models.<sup>4</sup> Although, as will be discussed below, teachers rarely discuss the aesthetics qualities necessary for successful variation or improvisation, my *suling* teacher Endang Sukandar equates an over-reliance on a limited number of melodic formulae to musical poverty (Swindells 1996:65). Similarly, Ade Komaran said that he encourages his own students to assimilate *pola* from as wide a variety of sources as possible (*p.c.*, 2000a). While cultivating an individually distinctive technique is not a prerequisite of, and may even be considered as detrimental to competent *cempres* playing, some performers have become known for the particular way in which they play such non-specialist instruments. This became apparent to me when I played an old RRI *gamelan degung* recording to a couple of elderly musicians who were immediately able to identify the *peking* player on the cassette by the type of idiosyncratic melodic patterning that he was using.

### 4.2.3 Linking patterns

As well as expanding their store of performance models, budding *cempres* players learn to integrate different types of pattern and to link these patterns together to create longer, seamlessly interconnected phrases. Figure 4:8 presents actual *cempres* realisations of *Catrik* as played by Lili Suparli and Ade Komaran. Lili Suparli created his part by alternating the *caruk* pattern (fig. 4:5) (which he employed to lead to the *pancer* tones) with the arch motif (fig. 4:4) (which he used to cadence on the *kenong* and *goong* tones). Ade Komaran, on the other hand, constructed his part using an extended version of the arch motif, introducing a disjunct variant of this pattern at the *goong* cadence. While

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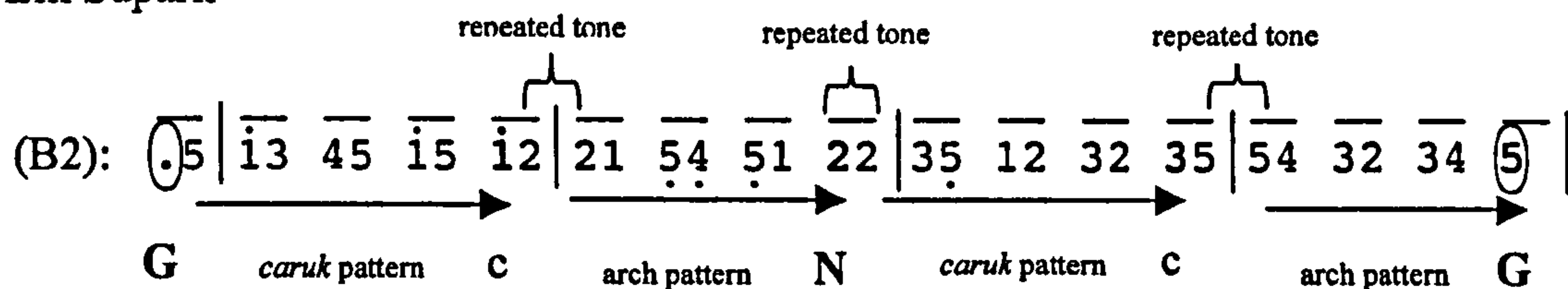
<sup>4</sup> In his study of variation in Central Javanese *gamelan* music Sutton argues, "The idea of searching is rather different from that of innovative creation, for it assumes the prior existence of the object sought" (1993:199).



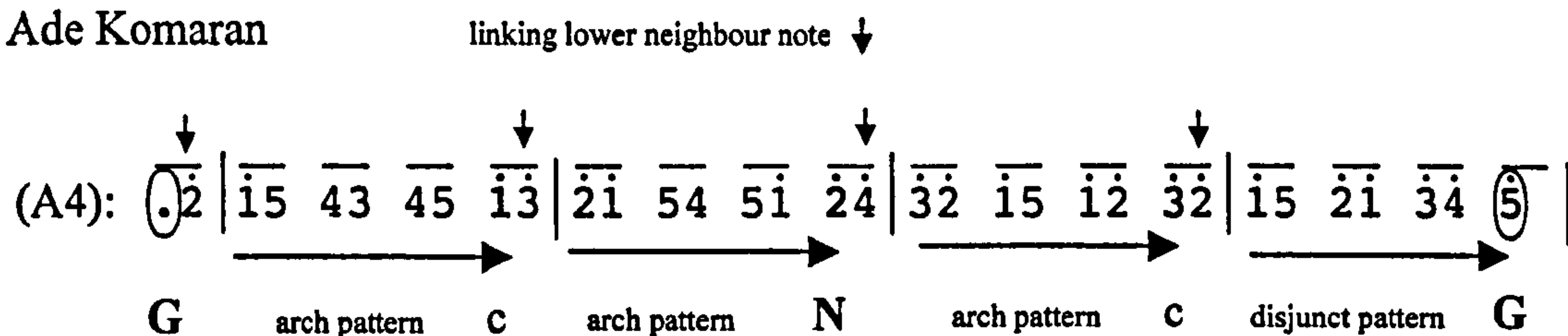
Suparli used single-tone repetition as a linking device, Komaran inserted a lower neighbour note to connect one motif with another.

Fig. 4:8 *Catrik* performed on *cempres* (Lili Suparli & Ade Komaran)

Lili Suparli



Ade Komaran



Though the resulting continuous melodic line is a defining characteristic of the *cempres* idiom, Pressing identifies the “stringing together” of an “existing movement vocabulary” to formulate “larger action units” as a more general feature of the intermediate stages of skill development amongst improvising musicians (1988:139). In Sunda, the music system itself insures that musicians learn to string together and to elongate and abbreviate melodic formulae in accordance with changes in tempo and *wilet*. Depending upon the space to be filled, *cempres* and *peking* players must be able to transform four-, eight- and sixteen-tone sequences into sixteen-, 32-, 64- and 128-tone sequences and vice versa.<sup>5</sup> What is more, not only can processes of expansion and contraction be considered to operate in the horizontal unfolding of a single part but also, across the ensemble as a whole, in the vertical relationships between the stratified melodic layers

<sup>5</sup> In his study of Thai classical music, Silkstone argues the same musical grammar governs both processes: operating in the ‘outward’ mode to elaborate a given contour and in the ‘inward’ mode to simplify it (1993:247).



that are sounded simultaneously. The very fact that musicians learn to play all of the bronze instruments of the *gamelan degung* means that their ability to conceptualise a single melodic path at multiple densities is developed right from the outset of their musical training. As Sutton observes (in relation to Javanese *gamelan*), “simultaneous and sequential variation” are “aspects (or realms within) a single phenomenon... processes operating in one realm are found in the other” (1993:196).

Comparing 32-tone sequences played on the *cempres* in *dua wilet* with 32-tone sequences performed on the *peking* in *sawilet* reveals that despite differences in register, rhythmic delivery and density, the two instruments may employ virtually identical melodic patterning. Figure 4:9 contrasts the second half of *Catrik* (from the *kenong* to the *goong*) as realised on the *cempres* in *dua wilet* and the *peking* in *sawilet* by Ade Komaran. The striking similarity between these two examples highlights the fact that learning to play *peking* implicitly teaches musicians patterns which they can also use in their expanded *cempres* realisations, and vice versa.

Fig. 4:9 Parallel versions of *Catrik* (from the *kenong* to the *goong*) performed on *cempres* in *dua wilet* and *peking* in *sawilet* (Ade Komaran)

*cempres (dua wilet)*

(A:8)  $\overline{24}$   $\overline{32}$   $\overline{15}$   $\overline{12}$   $\overline{15}$   $\overline{25}$   $\overline{12}$   $\overline{32}$   $\overline{32}$   $\overline{15}$   $\overline{21}$   $\overline{54}$   $\overline{32}$   $\overline{3}$   $\overline{2}$   $\overline{32}$   $\overline{34}$  (5)  
 N c G

*peking (sawilet)*

(C:2)  $\overline{24}$   $\overline{32}$   $\overline{15}$   $\overline{12}$   $\overline{15}$   $\overline{15}$   $\overline{112}$   $\overline{32}$   $\overline{32}$   $\overline{15}$   $\overline{21}$   $\overline{54}$   $\overline{32}$   $\overline{.2.2}$   $\overline{.2}$   $\overline{34}$  (5)  
 N c G

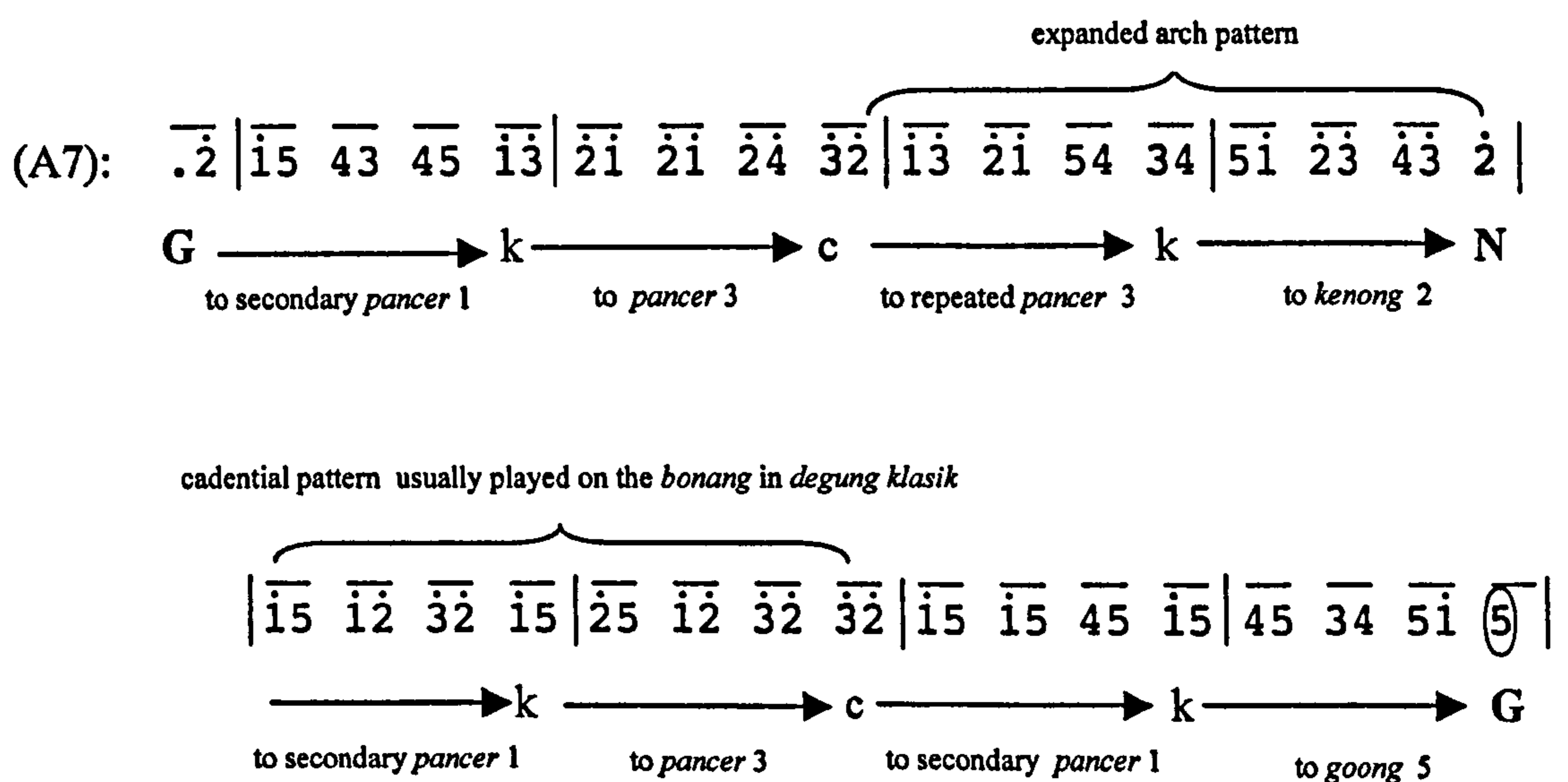


It is also worth noting that the transfer of idiomatic playing patterns also occurs between instruments that are not as closely related as the *cempres* and *peking*. Embellishing instruments are particularly eclectic in their assimilation of melodic formulae. When learning to play *gambang*, for example, Ade Komaran demonstrated how *kacapi tembang* and *bonang degung klasik* patterns could be transplanted onto the instrument. As illustrated in figure 4:10 below, Komaran also incorporated types of stereotypical *degung klasik* style *bonang* figuration into his *cempres* and *peking* improvisations.

#### 4.2.4 Strategies of melodic expansion and contraction

Musicians use different techniques to expand and contract melodies. Melodic expansion can, for example, be approached from the bottom-up, with instrumentalists fleshing out the underlying framework on which their realisations are based by conceptually inserting additional structural tones. In other words, musicians continue to play *sawilet* length patterns but to twice the number of destination tones. In the following *dua wilet* realisation of *Catrik*, Ade Komaran played melodic phrases that coincide with secondary *pancer* (*pangaget* [k]) and *pancer* tones, as well as *goong* and *kenong* tones.

Fig. 4:10 *Cempres* realisation of *Catrik dua wilet* (Ade Komaran)





Players can also approach melodic expansion from the top-down, expanding a melodic sequence by doubling the length of the micro playing patterns themselves. In fact, an alternative way of reading the musical example above (fig. 4:10) is to consider the expanded arch motif leading from the *pancer* to the *kenong*, and the *degung klasik* style cadential sequence immediately following the *kenong*, as longer *dua wilet* patterns. Lili Suparli systematically used this second approach on the day of my fieldwork recording, constructing his *dua wilet* elaborations by elongating the *caruk* and arch patterns that form the basis of his *sawilet* realisations. Figure 4:11 compares *sawilet* and *dua wilet* versions of *Catrik* and illustrates the way in which Suparli expanded the eight-tone patterns of the former to form equivalent sixteen-tone patterns in the latter.

Fig. 4:11 *Sawilet* and *dua wilet* versions of *Catrik* played on *cempres* (Lili Suparli)

*sawilet*

(B2):  $\overline{0.5} | \overline{13} \overline{45} \overline{15} \overline{12} | \overline{21} \overline{54} \overline{51} \overline{22} | \overline{35} \overline{12} \overline{32} \overline{35} | \overline{54} \overline{32} \overline{34} \overline{5} | \text{etc}$   
 G      *caruk* pattern      C      arch pattern      N      *caruk* pattern      C      arch pattern      G

*dua wilet*

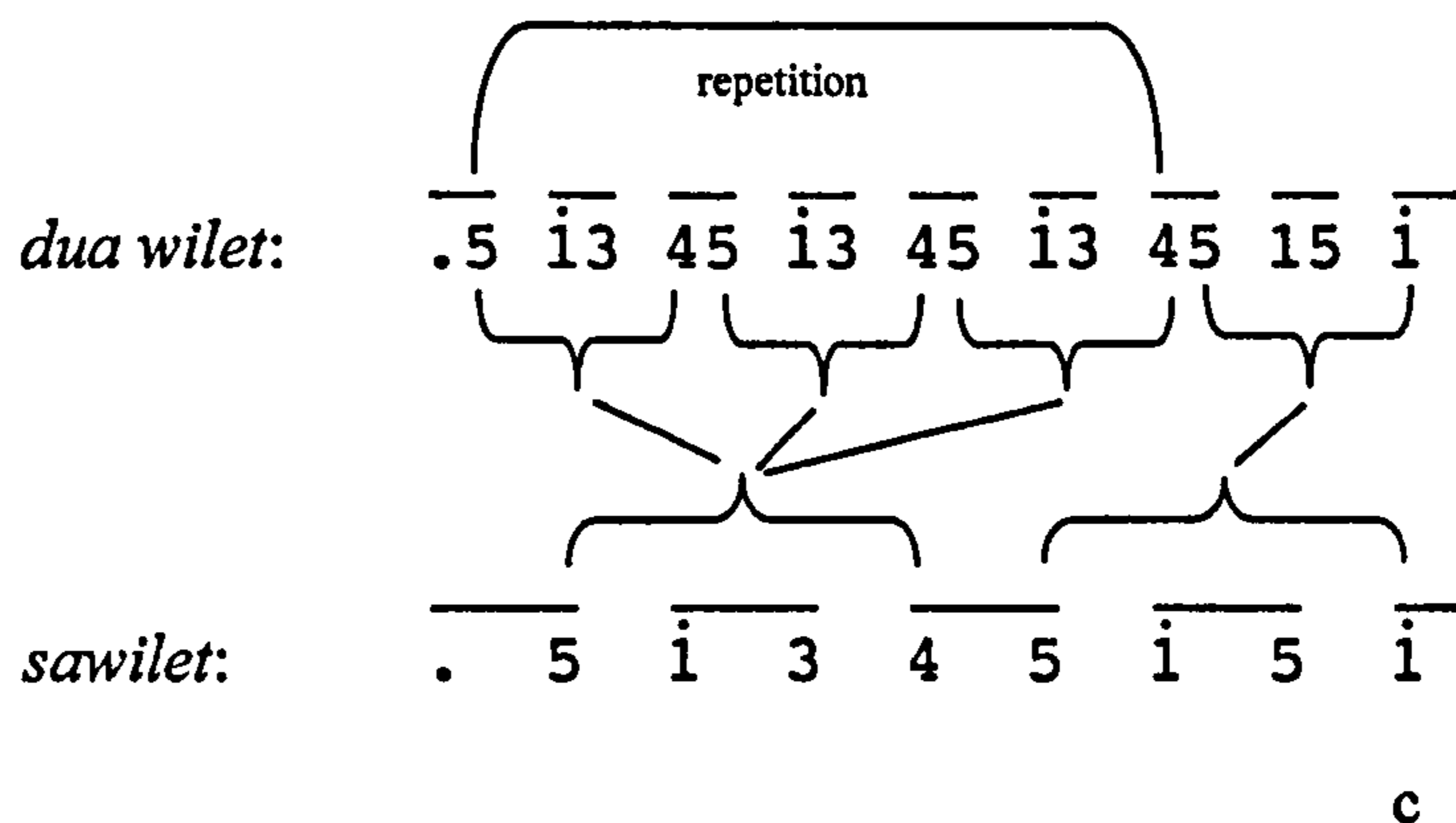
(B6):  $\overline{0.5} | \overline{13} \overline{45} \overline{13} \overline{45} | \overline{13} \overline{45} \overline{15} \overline{12} | \overline{23} \overline{23} \overline{21} \overline{54} | \overline{54} \overline{51} \overline{21} \overline{2}$   
 G      expanded *caruk* pattern      C      expanded arch pattern      N

$\overline{2} | \overline{35} \overline{12} \overline{35} \overline{12} | \overline{35} \overline{12} \overline{32} \overline{35} | \overline{54} \overline{34} \overline{54} \overline{34} | \overline{32} \overline{32} \overline{34} \overline{55} |$   
 expanded *caruk* pattern      C      expanded arch pattern      G



One of the simplest ways of lengthening a given pattern is to reiterate it in its entirety or to repeat constituent motifs within it (see also fig. 3:18). A closer look at the *caruk* pattern transcribed in figure 4:11 reveals that the *dua wilet* version is constructed by repeating the first four tones of the *sawilet* version.

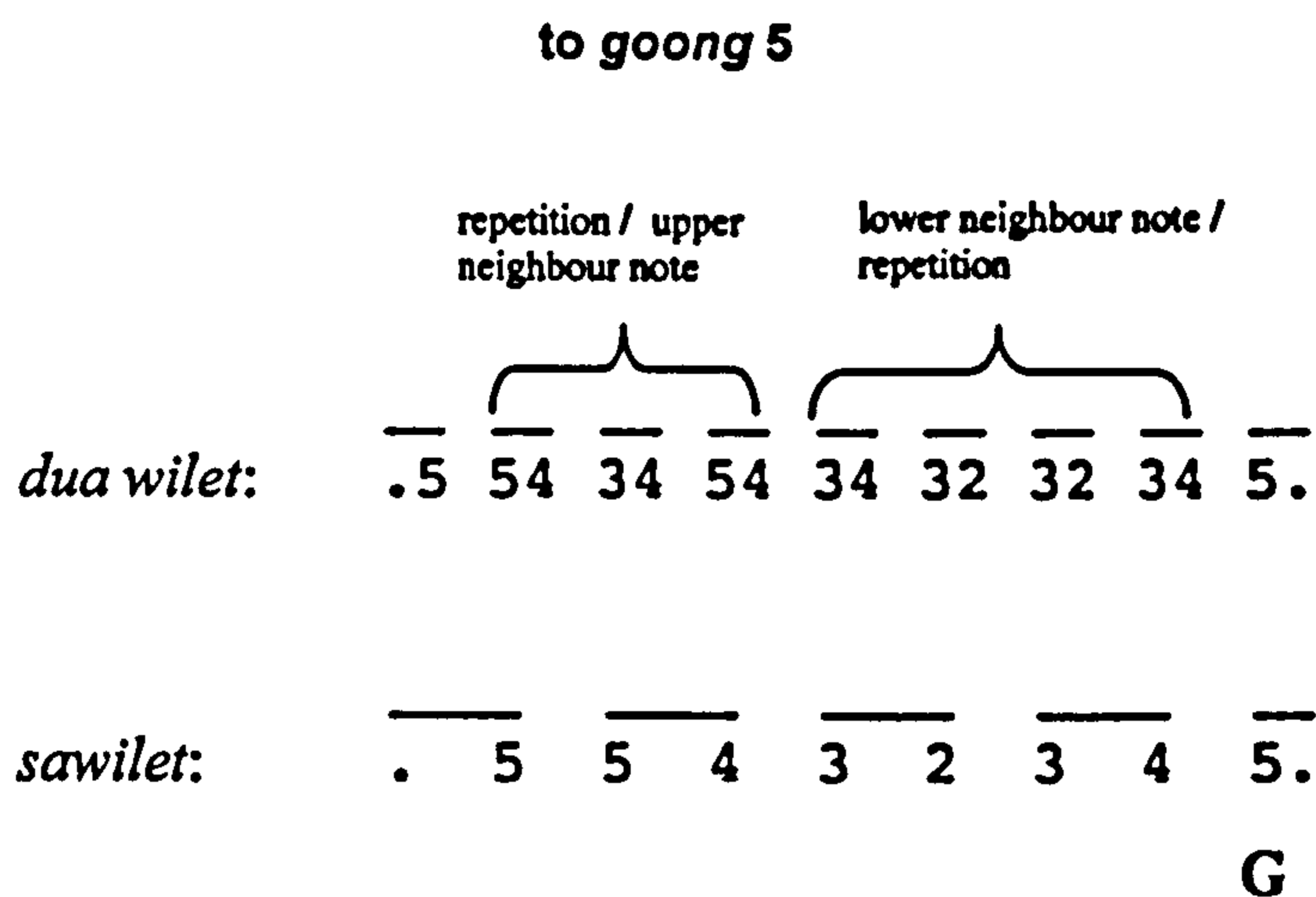
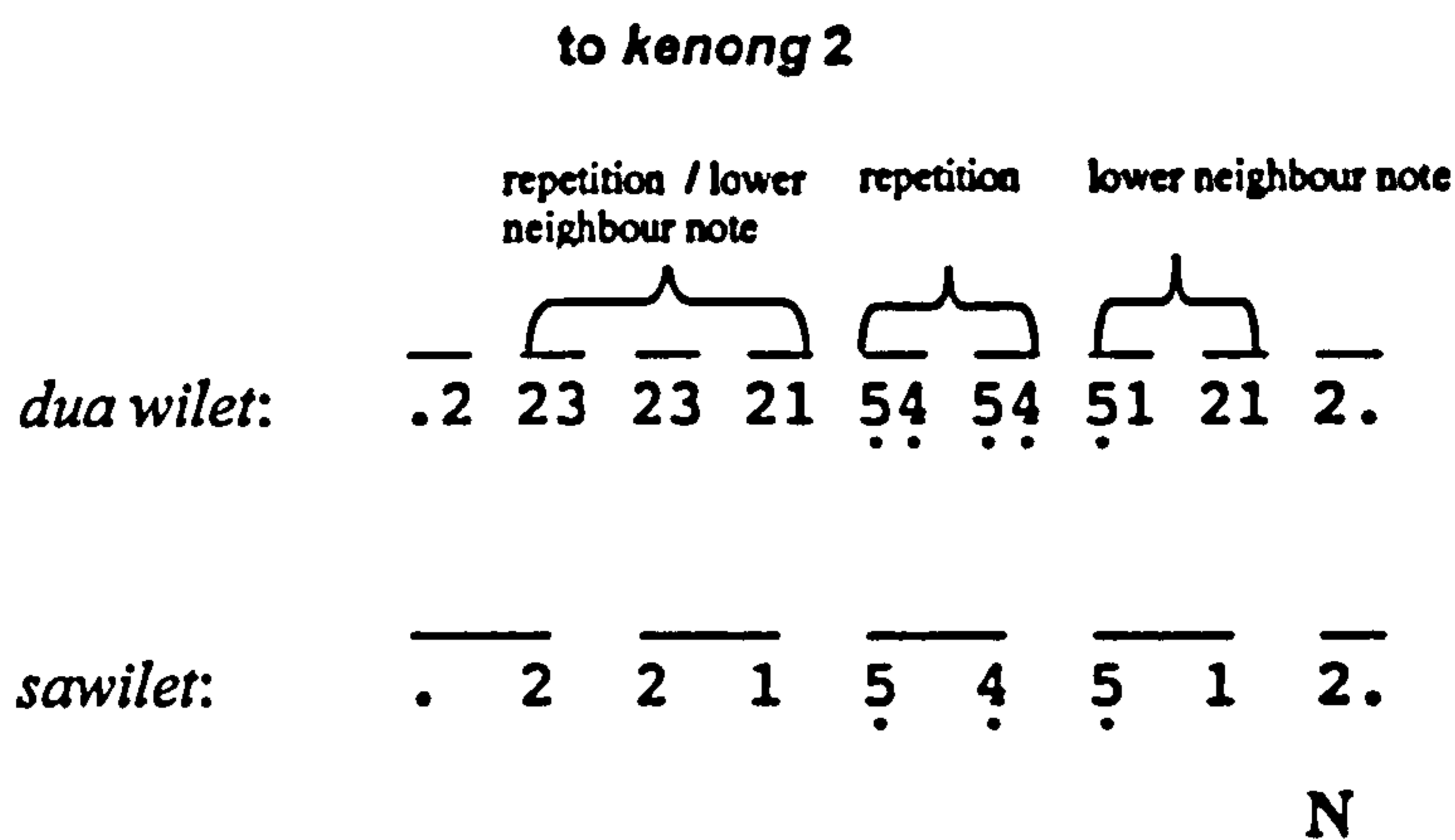
Fig. 4:12 *Caruk* pattern to *pancer 1* in *sawilet* and *dua wilet*



The expansion of the arch motif from an eight-tone *sawilet* pattern to a sixteen-tone *dua wilet* pattern employs more internal variation. Figure 4:13 illustrates the way in which Lili Suparli inserted upper and lower neighbour notes as well as repeated two-tone groupings to expand the arch contour leading to *kenong 2* and *goong 5* as presented in figure 4:11. It is interesting that musicians sometimes use the term *lilitan* (coil, twist) to describe the melodic role of the *peking* in the *degung* ensemble. The repeated interweaving of upper and lower neighbour notes in *peking* and larger scale *cempres* realisations supports this impression of embellishment winding or coiling around the basic melodic contour.



Fig. 4:13 Arch patterns to *kenong 2* and *goong 5*



#### 4.2.5 From memorisation to improvisation

The act of memorising a stock of formulaic playing patterns not only provides *cempres* players with a vocabulary of melodic building blocks with which to construct their parts, but also implicitly imparts an aesthetic awareness of the conventions and constraints governing melodic realisation on the instrument. This awareness is manifest procedurally in the types of melodic sequence that players choose to use in their improvisations, rather than as part of any declaratively known theory of melody. In fact, musicians verbal comments often convey the impression that, aside from coincidence with the *goong* and *kenong*, the *cempres* part is just “*improv*” and almost entirely free. As discussed in chapter 2, this attitude can be traced back to the quality of



the initial learning process and the fact that the student of Sundanese music is typically left “to infer completely on his or her own the ways in which improvisation or variation may occur by an appreciation of the intrinsic ‘fuzziness’ of the musical concept” (Pressing 1988:143).

Acquiring knowledge in this highly intuitive manner means that Sundanese performers do not have any shared analytical vocabulary with which to label many aspects of musical structure; instead, their awareness of stereotypical melodic and rhythmic patterning and contour schemas is usually attributed to their cultivated sense of ‘feel’. This is of no practical consequence to most Sundanese musicians. Moreover, as Blum argues, “It is fortunate for all concerned that performers can never tell us every last detail about their modes of performance; if they could, the performances would be superfluous as well as lifeless” (1998:28). Nevertheless, musicologists are often obliged to go beyond emic explanation and to spell out the “rules”, “exceptions” or “tendencies” and “norms” (Hughes 1988:30) informing this feel. Although I am not going to attempt to follow the approach taken by writers such as Sutton (1978), Becker and Becker (1979), Hughes (1988), or Kippen (1992) and produce a comprehensive grammar to account for the process of idiomatic elaboration on the *cempres*, I will make explicit some of the basic conventions influencing melodic realisation on this instrument.

#### 4.2.6 Conjunct motion

Many aspects of melodic motion on the *cempres* reflect wider trends in Sundanese melodic structure in general and are, as a result, so elemental as to be unseen or at least not considered to be worth discussing by musicians. One such characteristic is that *cempres* realisations are based on pentatonic stepwise motion. As part of a collaborative project to construct a computer programme designed to generate *cempres* parts, Christophe de Bezenac (2003) undertook a statistical analysis of my own fieldwork recordings (transcribed in appendix II). This analysis confirmed that 83% of all single step movements performed by Ade Komaran and Lili Suparli on these recordings are conjunct. Aside from keeping intervallic leaps to a minimum, experienced players also tend to avoid successive repeated tones. When pressed for a verbal comment on this



matter, Lili Suparli explained that the direct repetition of tone is best kept to a minimum unless it functions, as in his own playing (illustrated in fig. 4:8), as a linking device at the very beginning of the phrase. Suparli added that a common mistake amongst beginners is to arrive on a destination tone too soon, and that repeating a note immediately prior to the *kenong* or *goong* tone simply sounds wrong (*p.c.*, 2001b).

Nonetheless, intervallic skips – including octave leaps – are often a defining feature of playing patterns and may be deliberately introduced to break-up long sequences of conjunct movement. Snyder suggests that melodic skips also have a more archetypal function in stabilising the pitch range of a melody: the gap created by the leap ‘expecting’ to be filled in with stepwise motion moving in the opposite direction to the leap (2000:147-148). Indeed, de Bezenac observes that 94% of melodic skips in Ade Komaran’s and Lili Suparli’s *cempres* realisations coincide with a change in direction that serves to place a melodic line on track for conjunct linear motion back towards a destination tone (2003).

#### 4.2.7 Stereotypical melodic contours

When describing the experience of playing *cempres*, Rasita Satriana, a Sundanese musician based at STSI Solo, Central Java, said that he feels that he is flowing (*mengalir*) in one direction (*arah*) and then another direction, no longer thinking of specific playing patterns or micro-figuration, but in terms of longer musical sentences and broader melodic shapes (*p.c.*, 2003). This account resonates with Pressing’s conclusion that at advanced stages of performance, improvisation is characterised by a “feeling of mindful ‘letting go’”, all motor functions “can be handled automatically (without conscious attention)” and musicians can attend “almost exclusively to a higher level of emergent expressive control parameters” (1988:139). The way in which musicians depict the melodic realisation of the *patokan* model suggests that playing around with different stereotypical melodic shapes is one such “expressive control parameter” for Sundanese *cempres* players.



Over the course of my fieldwork several musicians compared melodic realisation to a journey in which the musician must arrive at certain preordained destination points but may alter the details of the route taken. These explanations were often illustrated spatially, a pointed finger outlining the different types of melodic contour that may be used to fill in the gaps between these points of arrival. This supports Snyder's supposition that melodic schemas or archetypal melodic contours, "are related to spatial image schemas... to the very basic ideas about our human relationship to physical space" (2000:136). In Sunda, an implicit procedural understanding of these contour schemas and the ways in which they can be idiomatically elaborated undoubtedly constitutes part and parcel of what Lili Suparli refers to as *lagon* (see 3.3.7).

#### 4.2.8 The arch contour

One type of contour prevalent in *cempres* realisations and, again, in Sundanese melody in general, is the melodic arch;<sup>6</sup> a rising contour peaking somewhere towards the middle or the end of the phrase is frequently followed by a descending contour leading to the destination tone. The predominance of linear descending patterns at cadence points perhaps explains why Sundanese musicians speak of falling on (*jatuh ke*) the cadential tone.<sup>7</sup> The arch contour, of which one particular manifestation is the arch motif illustrated in figure 4:4, can be idiomatically embellished, expanded, contracted, as well as inverted. In figure 4:14 I use Sundanese cipher notation and accompanying graphs to illustrate examples of this melodic shape as employed to lead from *pancer* tones 3/1 to *kenong* tone 2 in *sawilet* and *dua wilet cempres* realisations of *Catrik* by Lili Suparli and Ade Komaran.

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<sup>6</sup> I borrow this term from Snyder (2000:154).

<sup>7</sup> However, Cook cautions that there is an ambiguity as to which way is considered 'up' and which way is considered 'down' in Sundanese music that means one has to be careful about making any assumptions about rising and falling patterns. He notes that Sundanese scales are numbered from 'high' to 'low', the lower-numbered tone 1 being 'higher' in pitch than higher-numbered tone 2. Notably, when a *rebab* player uses the word 'high' in a musical context he is often referring to those tones that are produced using a high hand position but that are low in pitch. Low, conversely, may refer to a lower hand position and a higher pitch (1992:3-4).

Fig. 4:14 Sawilet and dua wilet versions of the arch contour (Lili Suparli & Ade Komaran)

Lili Suparli - sawilet

4									
5									
1									
2									
3									
	c								N

(B1):  $\overline{3 \ 2} \quad \overline{2 \ 1} \quad \overline{5 \ 4} \quad \overline{5 \ 1} \quad \overline{2.}$

Ade Komaran - sawilet

5									
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
	c								N

(A2):  $\overline{3 \ 5} \quad \overline{4 \ 3} \quad \overline{2 \ 1} \quad \overline{5 \ 1} \quad \overline{2.}$

Lili Suparli - dua wilet

4														
5														
1														
2														
3														
	c													N

(B6):  $\overline{1 \ 2} \quad \overline{2 \ 3} \quad \overline{2 \ 3} \quad \overline{2 \ 1} \quad \overline{5 \ 4} \quad \overline{5 \ 4} \quad \overline{5 \ 1} \quad \overline{2 \ 1} \quad 2$



4																	
5																	
1																	
2																	
3																	
4																	
5																	
	c																N

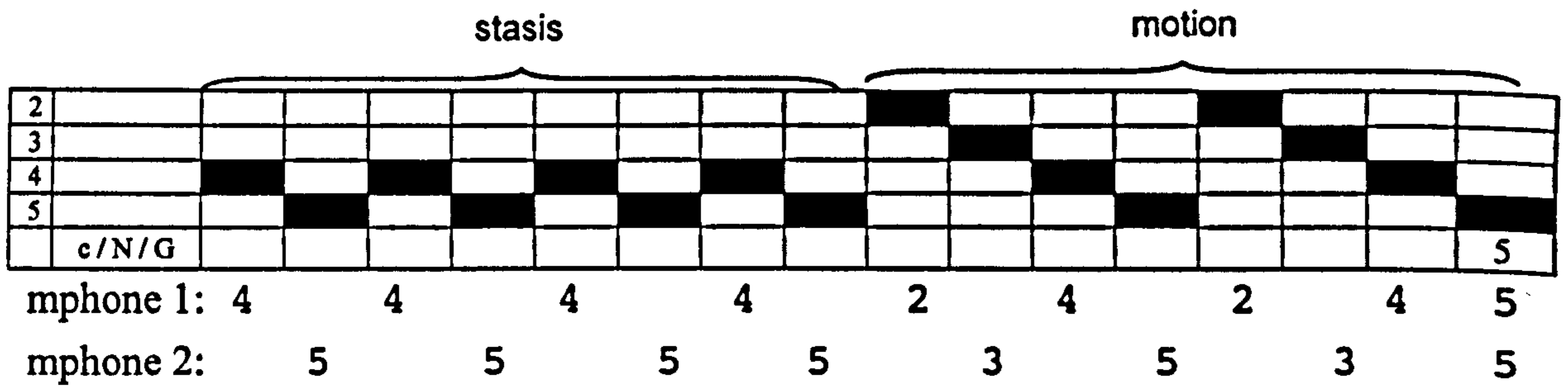
(A8):  $\overline{3 \quad 5} \quad \overline{4 \quad 3} \quad \overline{2 \quad 3} \quad \overline{2 \quad 1} \quad \overline{5 \quad 4} \quad \overline{1 \quad 4} \quad \overline{5 \quad 4} \quad \overline{5 \quad 1} \quad \overline{2}$

The structuring of the arch shape is highly predictable. The peak of the pattern is typically two or three tones above (or, less commonly, below) the destination pitch. In addition, players usually move to the pitch two tones above the destination pitch, or less commonly the destination pitch itself, half way through the phrase. Again, these conventions are not systematised by Sundanese musicians within any declarative theory of mode or melody and further analysis would be needed to develop a more comprehensive set of rules or melodic grammar.

#### 4.2.9 Gravity: motion and stasis

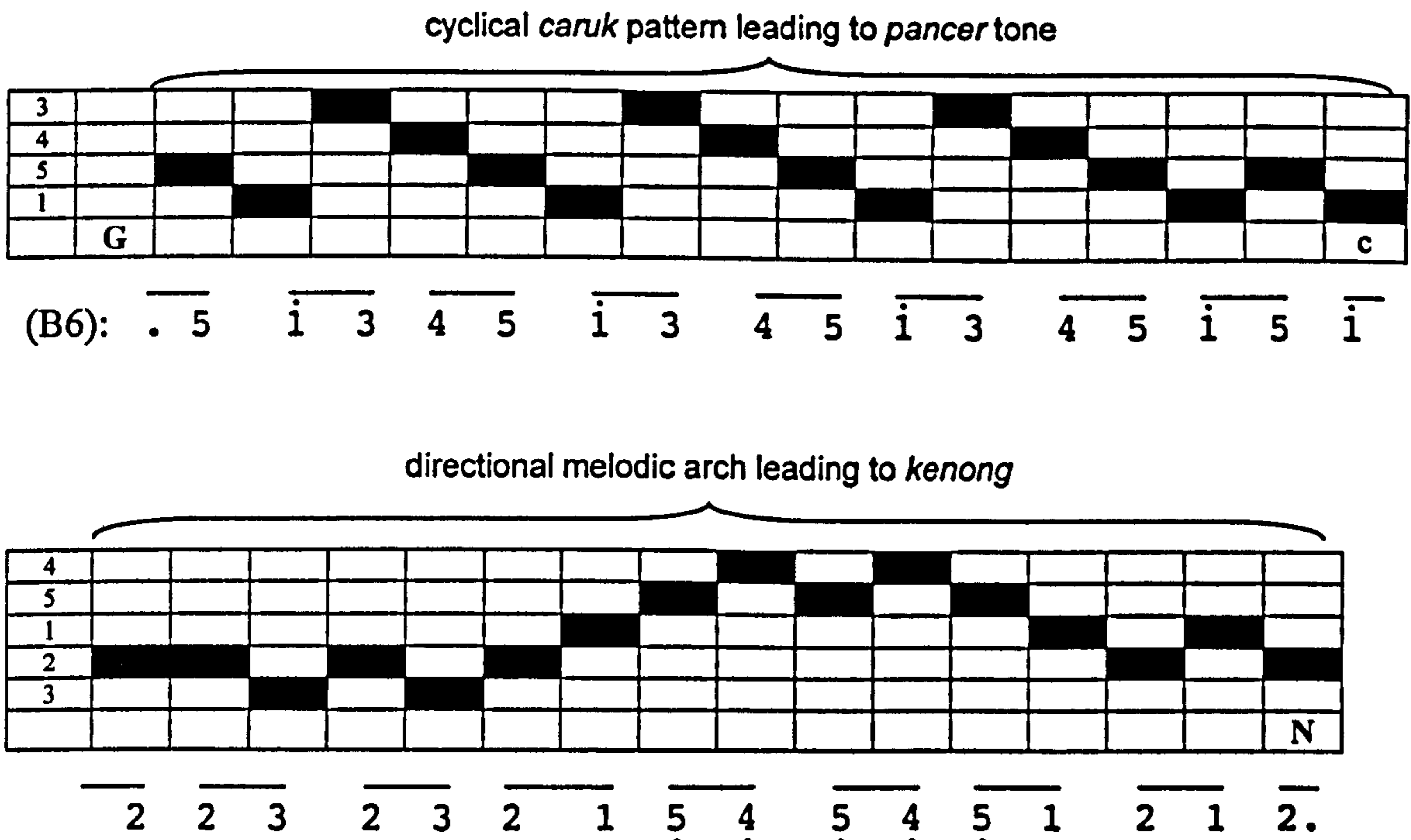
Writing about melodic structure in Balinese *gamelan* Tenzer notes, “gong punctuations” and other points of metric stress “exert ‘pull’ or ‘gravity’ on melodic motion”, causing the music that leads up to them to become more dynamic in character (2000:4.2). This gravity operates hierarchically: the “more important the arrival in relation to the overall meter, the more powerful the force exerted”. Conversely, “just after such arrivals the pull is weakest” and the “melody may then transform and become static, as if unable to budge from a single tone” (*ibid.*). Motion and stasis can also be seen to operate hierarchically in Sundanese music, functioning at micro and macro levels of melodic realisation. One example of this gravitational pull on the *cempres* line is the predominant use of linear ascending and descending patterns at *kenong* and *goong* points. Another manifestation of this fluctuating dynamic is found in the interlocking *caruk* figuration that is played by the two metallophones to lead to *goong*, *kenong* and *pancer* tones.

Fig. 4:15 *Caruk* figuration between two metallophones (mpphones 1 & 2)



Principles of motion and stasis also govern larger scale realisations; this is evidenced by Lili Suparli's consistent use of the cyclic, tonally static *caruk* pattern to lead to *pancer* tones, and the directional arch motif to cadence on *kenong* and *goong* tones.

Fig. 4:16 *Catrik dua wilet* on *cempres* (Lili Suparli)

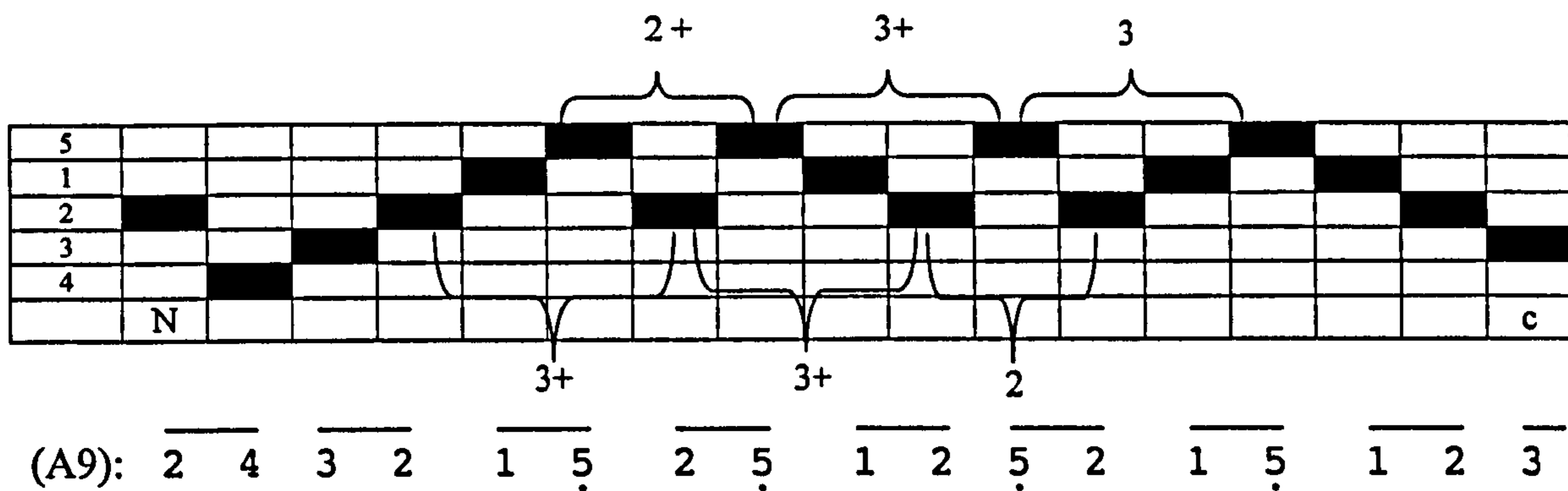




#### 4.2.10 The zigzag contour

Tonally static playing patterns are more commonly found in larger scale melodic expansions in which there is more space to fill in. Ade Komaran incorporates a particularly interesting form of zigzagging figuration to elongate phrases and postpone the cadential point in his *dua wilet* realisations. This type of axial pattern<sup>8</sup> is characterised by a snaking contour that twists and turns around one or more repeated axis tones. Though mainly employing conjunct motion, this pattern also incorporates melodic skips that serve to configure these axis tones into syncopated groups of two and three.<sup>9</sup> Figure 4:17 illustrates a tonally static axial pattern that Ade Komaran used to lead from *kenong* tone 2 to *pancer* tone 3 in one of his *dua wilet cempres* realisations of *Catrik*. The contour graph highlights the shifting internal symmetry that is a common feature of such patterning.

Fig. 4:17 A zigzagging axial pattern (Ade Komaran)



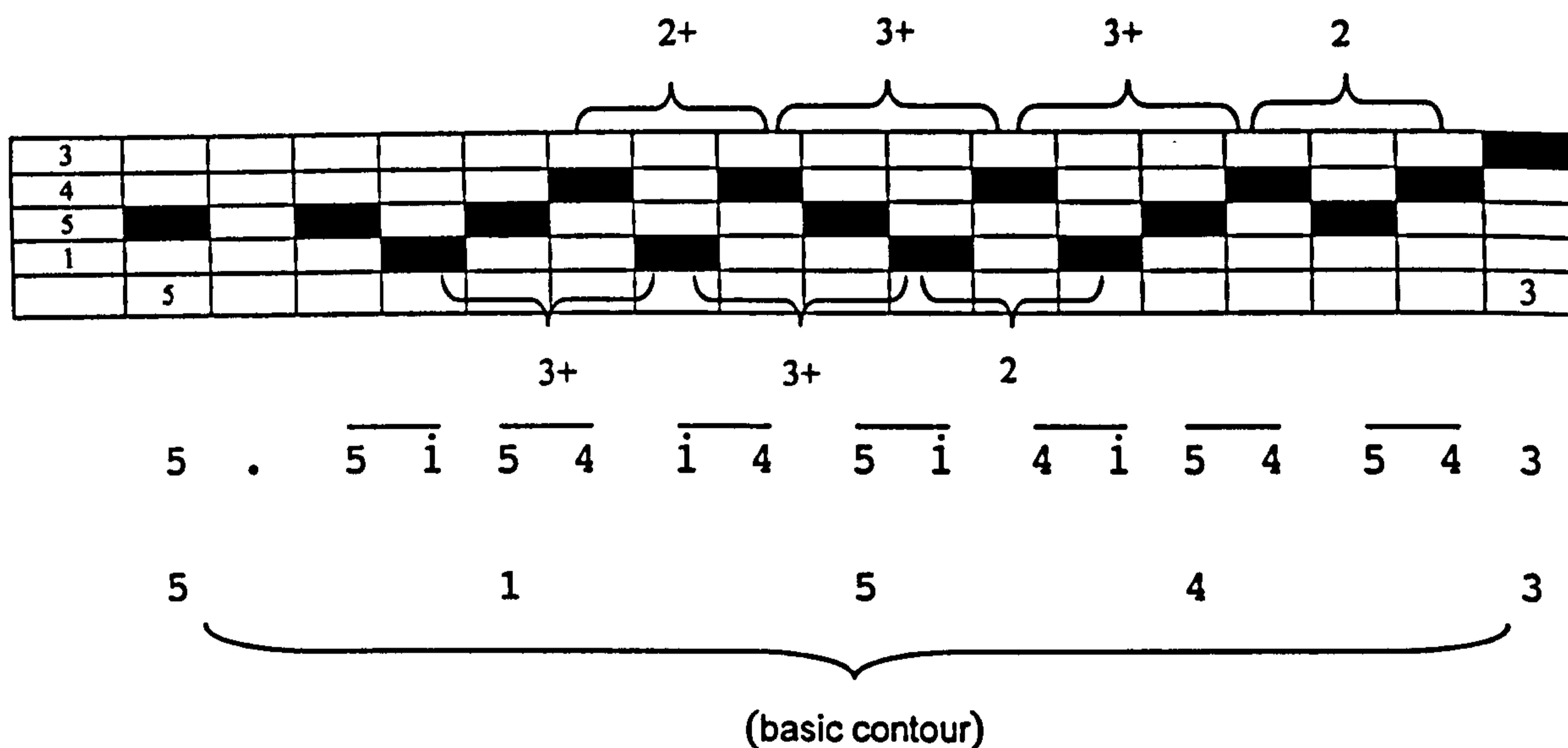
Although on the occasion of my fieldwork recording, Lili Suparli did not employ this particular type of melodic contour, Entis Sutisna, another prominent Bandung *gamelan* musician and protégé of the late Entjar Tjarmedi, specifically identified this type of axis tone insertion as an means of drawing out a melodic phrase. Figure 4:18 presents a sequence taken from an exercise that Entis Sutisna devised to teach his students melodic

<sup>8</sup> I borrow this term from Snyder (2000:154).

<sup>9</sup> As discussed in 3.2.1, this type of melodic syncopation is a feature of several *degung klasik bonang* melodies.

expansion on the *cempres* and *peking*. Entis Sutisna demonstrated this pattern to me on every degree of the scale, although I only illustrate the version beginning on tone 5 below.

Fig. 4:18 Axial motif (Entis Sutisna)



Interestingly, this type of zigzagging melodic patterning was also brought to my attention during fieldwork for my MA thesis on *suling* ornamentation (Swindells 1996). My teacher Endang Sukandar mentioned a specific type of melodic turn – which he called *lelol* – in which the primary pitch or pitches of the underlying skeletal framework or melody function as pivot points around which the player creatively meanders.<sup>10</sup> Sukandar explained that, on the *suling*, this type of disjunct motion was aesthetically important as it prevented the melodic line from being too “*lurus*” or straight (‘unembellished’) (*ibid.*, 55-56). Furthermore, Sukandar cited the ability to perform imaginative and varied *lelol* as an indication of proficiency on the instrument, commenting that some musicians’ technique never evolved to incorporate such elaborate embellishments (*ibid.*, 57).

<sup>10</sup> The *Kamus Istilah Karawitan Sunda* (‘Dictionary of Sundanese Music Terminology’) (Soepandi 1988) defines *lelol* in terms of the physical movement required to perform the ornament on the *rebab* (bowed lute), the instrument with which this ornament appears to be primarily associated.



While *suling* improvisation is sometimes evaluated in terms of being particularly creative, or conversely pedestrian, *cempres* and *peking* playing rarely triggers any specific verbal feedback. Although I have overheard players laughing or yelling at each other for hitting the wrong *kenong* or *goong* tone, I have never heard *degung* musicians admire a *cempres* player for coming out with a particularly imaginative musical phrase.

The *cempres* is a non-specialist instrument which all Sundanese *gamelan* musicians are simply expected to be able to play adequately enough. On all such core-competence instruments it seems that, rather than the instrument being considered as a vehicle for the musician's creativity, the musician is first and foremost considered as a 'cog in the wheel', subservient to the overriding idiomatic function of the instrument within the ensemble. Thus as Sutton tentatively suggests in relation to Central Javanese metallophone performance practice, unimaginative playing that conforms to all the obligatory idiomatic constraints tends to be considered preferable, if not particularly desirable, to more exuberant improvisation which does not consistently observe compulsory points of convergence with the underlying structural framework (1998a:87). In addition, as far as non-specialist instruments are concerned, breadth of knowledge appears to be more important than depth of knowledge. Novice *gamelan* musicians initially focus on developing a broad knowledge of the repertoire on as wide a range of instruments as is possible, rather than perfecting their technique on any one. As Weintraub observes "it does not matter how many ways a player can realise a certain passage, but rather, how many pieces can be played with a correct and tasteful realization" (1985:33).

There is, however, also a powerful socio-cultural dimension to melodic realisation and competence evaluation in Sundanese music. The playing patterns a musician uses often conveys to other musical 'insiders' information about the age and educational and/or geographical background of that musician and, particularly in the case of specialists such as singers and *suling* players, the teachers or role-models that have been influential in the development of the musician's technique. Indeed, a fundamental, though again often implicit, part of any Sundanese musician's training is to learn to adapt the content of their realisations in accordance with the '*sikon*' (*situasi dan kondisi*, 'situations and conditions') or circumstances in which they play. As Brinner writes "Knowledge of context frames the performance and thus defines appropriate

conduct and musical choices” (1995:311). Certain Sundanese instruments explicitly require musicians to alter their playing technique in accordance with the genre or repertoire that is being performed. *Kendang* and *suling* players, for instance, draw from a discrete vocabulary of playing patterns when realising the *degung klasik* pieces, while *kacapi* players use a completely different technique when playing in *kawih* and *tembang* styles. As performance practices fluidly evolve and impact on other genres, creative tensions arise as players negotiate what is to be considered musically acceptable or preferable from one socio-cultural or musical context to another.

As discussed in chapter 2, the *gamelan degung* is socio-culturally and musically positioned somewhere in between the distinct ‘worlds’ of *gamelan* and *tembang Sunda*, and since the late 1950s and early 1960s has become a point of interface for performers and repertoire originating from both genres. Consequently, *gamelan degung* is one arena in which such musical contest and negotiation have taken place. This has been particularly conspicuous in the different types of vocal performance practice that are utilised in *degung kawih*. The second study in this chapter thus focuses on melodic realisation as a contextually and socio-culturally informed process via an examination of the *gamelan degung* singer.

### 4.3 Vocal performance practice

A variety of different types of singer perform *degung kawih* at live performances and on cassette. Indeed, singing with *degung* groups at wedding receptions and other functions provides an important source of additional income for student and professional vocalists alike. Many *tembang* and *gamelan* singers consider *degung* as a subsidiary domain of specialism, and star performers from both of these distinct worlds have featured on seminal *degung kawih* recordings.

This mix of vocalist can be traced back to the moment when the *gamelan degung* first began to incorporate singing; RRI’s influential *Parahyangan* group drew its *rampak sekar* singers from both the radio station’s *gamelan* and *tembang* departments. Since the 1970s, however, this style of choral singing has declined in popularity, with the local cassette industry instead promoting and professionalising the solo female singer. Popular contemporary artists such as Nining Meida and Elis Wizakmsi are, whatever other types



of ensemble they may perform with, now principally known for their prolific output of *degung kawih* cassettes. In addition, while prior to the late 1950s there was no such thing as a ‘*degung* singer’, the relative technical simplicity of *degung kawih* means that it now commonly functions as a way in to traditional Sundanese music for many aspiring vocalists. This type of song is more easily studied from cassette, enabling those without connections in either *tembang* or *gamelan* circles to acquire a basic vocal technique and knowledge of the repertoire without direct access to a teacher. One young Bandung based vocalist that I spoke to confided that after singing along to *degung kawih* cassettes in her bedroom for a couple of years, word eventually got out that she was a competent singer and she was subsequently inundated with offers of paid work.

Nevertheless, *degung kawih* is still very much considered as market-driven light entertainment, lacking the deep-rooted tradition and artistic weight of either *tembang Sunda* or *wayang*. Consequently, any singer serious about Sundanese music seems to be expected to apprentice themselves to a professional operating within one of these two ‘parent’ genres with the view to becoming either a *tembang* specialist (*juru tembang*) or *pasinden wayang* (*gamelan* singer in Sundanese puppet theatre).

#### 4.3.1 The *kawih-tembang* divide

Spiller notes that Sundanese discourse maintains a “sharp divide” between “*tembang*” and “*kawih*” styles (2001:65). According to Komarudin, although Indonesian musicologists have failed to agree as to the precise meaning of these terms, most definitions dichotomise aspects of vocal performance practice as well as the repertoire with which both styles are associated (2001). Thus, for example, it is generally said that while *kawih* songs are based on metrically fixed tonal frameworks that offer singers some opportunity for melodic transformation, *tembang* songs are melodically fixed but metrically free.<sup>11</sup> Texts are often presented as another point of difference, with *kawih* lyrics not necessarily bound to any particular structural form and *tembang* lyrics more likely to be cast in specific poetic metres (Spiller 2001:65). Van Zanten, who provides a

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<sup>11</sup> Komarudin points out that in practice there are *kawih* songs with metrically free solo sections and that certain *tembang* songs (including most *panambih* songs) or sections of *tembang* songs are metrically fixed (2001:51-53).

more detailed historical overview of ‘*kawih*’, ‘*tembang*’ and other Sundanese terms used to denote singing (1987:27-34), also notes that the language level of *tembang Sunda* poetry is “refined (*lemes*), or of the intermediate level (*sedeng*)”, while *kawih* songs have many *kasar* (lower level or coarse) words (*ibid.*, 81).<sup>12</sup> This, he argues “is another indication of the fact *tembang Sunda* is an art form of the upper and middle classes” (*ibid.*). Several writers also contend that the pitch level of an instrument, ensemble or body of repertoire is also inversely correlated to its perceived socio-cultural status (Kusumadinata 1969:18-19 in Williams 2001:44 & van Zanten 1987:118-120). It is true that *tembang* songs, which do tend to be performed at a lower pitch level than *kawih* songs, are usually considered as the most artistically weighty Sundanese vocal repertoire. Nevertheless, while van Zanten contends that *kawih* “is the simpler (*kasar*), less refined form of vocal music... as compared to the more refined (*lemes*) and ideologically higher valued genres” (1987:29), Spiller points to Andrew Weintraub’s alternative characterisation of *kawih* as more “popular”, “fun”, “direct” and “improvised” (2001:65 fn24).

**Fig. 4:19 Comparison of *kawih* and *tembang* repertoires**

<b><i>Kawih</i></b>	<b><i>Tembang</i></b>
Popular entertainment	Serious art
Higher pitched	Lower pitched
Metrically fixed	Metrically free
Improvisation permitted	Embellishment fixed
Text: may/may not use standard metres	Text: usually in a standard poetic metre

<sup>12</sup> Cook argues that, in practice, many *tembang* texts (especially older ones) do feature coarse words, although he acknowledges that there is a general trend, particularly amongst the younger generation, towards using more refined language (*p.c.*, 2003a).



When Sundanese musicians talk of *tembang* songs they almost always mean the non-metrical *mamaos* songs at the heart of the *tembang Sunda* genre.<sup>13</sup> Demarcating the precise boundaries of *kawih* repertoire, however, is more problematic. Some musicians use the term *kawih* to denote a specific body of songs composed by Koko Koswara which are accompanied by a flamboyant style of *kacapi siter* playing called *kacapi kawih*.<sup>14</sup> Others use *kawih* more loosely to describe any body of metrically fixed Sundanese vocal repertoire. Thus the *panambih* songs of *tembang Sunda* – many of which are adaptations of *gamelan* pieces – may be referred to as *kawih* even when performed in a *tembang* style.

This brings us straight to the even thornier issue of defining *tembang* and *kawih* vocal performance practices. While singers and musicians regularly speak of *senggol tembang* or *senggol kawih* (*tembang* or *kawih* embellishments), my ongoing questioning around this subject never yielded a comprehensive listing or practical demonstration of the specific musical features or types of ornament that distinguish the one from the other. It seems that part of the reason for this lies in the ambiguity inherent in the term *senggol* itself.

While *senggol* may be used to refer to a single ornament, the term more commonly describes the gestures, motifs and melodies, incorporating constituent micro-ornamentation, with which singers, *suling* and *rebab* players idiomatically interpret, fill in or flesh out a melodic line or tonal framework.<sup>15</sup> Significantly, Sundanese musicians tend to learn pieces as sequences of *senggol* from the outset of the learning process, thereby making it difficult for them to distinguish “a single ornament from a musical phrase” and melodic “decoration from the melodic line” (van Zanten 1987:165). The programming of a singer’s voice with *senggol tembang* and/or *senggol kawih* thus begins the moment that the fledgling vocalist learns to perform their first song, the vocalist’s knowledge of the repertoire and of specific vocal techniques developing simultaneously. Singers consequently grasp ornaments as ways of moving idiomatically

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<sup>13</sup> Komarudin notes that *tembang* simply means ‘song’ when used in the title of national TV programs such as *Sepuluh Tembang Terbaik Mancanagara* (‘Top Ten Foreign Songs’) or *Tembang Kenangan*, a show which nostalgically recalls popular songs from the past (2001:46).

<sup>14</sup> This type of *kawih* song is sometimes referred to as *kawih wanda anyar*.

<sup>15</sup> Sundanese musicians sometimes interchange the term *senggol* for *cengkok*, the flexible melodic formulae used on the embellishing instruments in Javanese *gamelan*. Unlike *cengkok*, however, *senggol* have not been systematised or codified within any modal theory equivalent to that of *patet* in Central Java.



on or between certain tones rather than as optional decorations to be superimposed onto some previously memorised skeletal melody. Indeed, Sundanese musicians and singers even seem to retain some degree of idiomatic embellishment when quietly humming a melody to themselves.

When vocalists talk of *senggol tembang* or *senggol kawih* it thus seems that they are often referring to broader aspects of the technique characteristic of each style of singing rather than to specific ornaments. Moreover, this technique is intimately connected to body of repertoire with which each type of singer is primarily associated. One musician explained that it is not so much a question of singers choosing between discrete sets of *tembang* and *kawih* ornaments, but that the repertoire each performs demands fundamentally different approaches to melodic embellishment.

Learning the *mamaos* (metrically free) songs of *tembang Sunda* endows the *tembang* singer with a detailed knowledge of, and skill in executing, an array of intricate vocal ornaments. The ornamentation of specific pitches using types of trill, mordent, turn, slide, vocal break and vibrato is at the heart of *tembang* vocal practice, a fact that is emphasised in every account of the subject. Van Zanten describes *tembang* singing as “a continuous flow of embellishments”, noting that these decorations are not considered as optional extras but “are very much obligatory, and not to be used at will” (1987:162-163). Similarly, Williams writes that the “deepest secrets of *tembang Sunda* lie in the proper performance of vocal ornaments” (2001:187); during rehearsals the instructor listens “with great care to the vocal ornaments of the students... correcting the smallest details” (*ibid.*, 126). That *tembang* ornamentation is inseparable from *tembang* repertoire is also reflected in the fact that certain types of embellishment are said to be the ‘*ciri khas*’ (distinctive feature or trademark) of specific subcategories of *mamaos* repertoire. For examples of specific vocal ornaments used in *tembang Sunda* see van Zanten (1989:160-180), Williams (2001:186-191) and Rosliani (1998).

In contrast, *kawih* singing is much freer and usually thought to be much less demanding than *tembang* singing; this perhaps explains why so little has been written on the subject. Williams writes, “Kawih songs generally contain much less ornamentation than *mamaos* (free rhythm) songs... and are considered much easier to sing than *mamaos*” (2001:46). Though it is true that *kawih* singing does not typically employ the same degree of detailed embellishment as *tembang* singing – *pasinden* are not generally



known for debating the exact number of peaks and troughs in a particular trill as *tembang* singers sometimes do – this commonly perpetuated assumption left me completely unprepared for my first encounter with the virtuosic vocal gymnastics of West Java’s leading *gamelan* singers.

In fact, the strength of the *pasinden* does not lie in the ornamentation of individual pitches but in the embellishment and improvisation of larger scale melodic phrases. In a similar way to the *cempres* player, *gamelan* singers sometimes have to draw upon their vocabulary of *senggol* to construct their own melodic lines based on the *kenong* and *goong* tones of the underlying *patokan* framework. According to the STSI based *pasinden*, Iyan Arliani, *gamelan* singers also have much more freedom to play around with song texts. Sometimes this involves doubling up a phrase and fitting two lines into the space of one to create the effect of rapid-fire recitative, or extending a melodic line by adding textual fillers such as ‘*aduh*’, ‘*dunungan*’, or even ‘*la li la li la*’.

*Pasinden* are also known for their use of long melismatic slides (*leotan*). Cook writes that a “*tembang* teacher might upbraid his pupil” with a comment such as “don’t slide like that: that’s a *senggol sinden*” (1992:23).<sup>16</sup> Williams also comments that slides are “used sparingly in modern *tembang* Sunda” because “this ornament is used quite often in kawih-style singing, and *tembang* Sunda vocalists tend to avoid sounding as if they bear any influence from kawih” (2001:190-191). The *pasinden*’s long melismatic phrases often soar into the very highest ranges of the voice or elaborately tumble into the lowest register, with the most talented singers frequently incorporating more daring pitch bends, modal transpositions and wilder modulations that contort the melodic line through a completely different tuning system

The *pasinden*’s vocal style is also characterised by untranscribeable microtonal inflections and subtle changes of timbre as singers direct their voice into the nose by closing the soft palate, or deliberately exploit the distinct resonances of the head and chest voice. In fact, the most immediately striking difference between *tembang* singers and *pasinden* is the distinctive *warna suara* (vocal colour, timbre) with which each is associated. I was repeatedly told that the *keras* (loud, strident), nasal timbre characteristic of the *pasinden* is judged too unrefined for *tembang*, while *tembang*

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<sup>16</sup> *sinden* = *pasinden* (*gamelan* singer)

singers are not considered feisty enough or their voices powerful enough for *wayang*. The *wayang* singer Nunung Nurmallasari used the term *ngeuyeumbeu* (slowly flowing water) to describe the vocal style of *tembang Sunda*, contending that this sound is not sufficiently vigorous or dynamic for a singer who has to project herself above an entire *gamelan* ensemble (p.c., 2000).

#### 4.3.2 Socio-cultural perceptions of the *tembang* singer and the *pasinden*

While I never heard vocal style explicitly correlated to imagined moral character or social conduct, there seems to be a modesty in *tembang* singing – manifest in a sweeter, subdued timbre, highly controlled use or ornamentation and more constrained tonality – that confirms the respectability of the *tembang* singer. Though, as Spiller observes, “In West Java, respectable women simply do not perform music... in public” (2001:31), *tembang* singing provides the most cultivated and refined way for them to do so. That *tembang Sunda* is considered reputable, if not virtuous, is reflected in the fact that Hidayat Suryalaga, an instructor at a Bandung university, chose this genre as the medium for the performance of his own Sundanese translations of selected verses from the Qur’an. Zimmer notes that during the month of Ramadhan in December 1999, the Bandung state-run television station, TVRI, began broadcasting a regular musical program in which a group of professional singers (wearing Islamic dress rather than more conventional tight-fitting, low-cut performing outfits) sang these religious texts to established *tembang* melodies. He concludes “Perhaps the most surprising aspect of Suryalaga’s work is that it has thus far attracted virtually no controversy” (2000:12-13).

In contrast to such sanitised urban performance, the roots of the *gamelan* singer trace directly back to the *ronggeng*, the female singer-dancers and often suspected prostitutes who in legends and myths are linked to the rice goddess (*Dewi Sri*) of the agricultural harvest and rural fertility rituals (see also Spiller 2001:27).<sup>17</sup> Some *pasinden* have deliberately tried to shake off the negative sexual connotations that are still associated with the profession by taking up teaching posts at government run institutions

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<sup>17</sup> According to Wessing “Human sexual behaviour is often taken as the model on which nature operates, and in Southeast Asia, sexual practices and taboos are part of the process of growing rice” (1998:49).



or by making repeated pilgrimages to Mecca (see Foley 1979:92). Nevertheless, performing mainly at night and being continuously surrounded by male musicians means that *wayang* singers still occupy an ambiguous position within Sundanese society.

In addition, and again in contrast to the seemingly demure behaviour of the *tembang* singer, *gamelan* singers exhibit a brazen, creative boldness that is sometimes visibly manifest in dancing movements of the head and upper body, as well as audibly in the untamed modulations and freer improvisation that characterise the *pasinden*'s art. The retired RRI *gamelan* singer Imik Suwarsih acknowledged that this profession has never been one for the timid, adding that she has always preferred singing in the *salendro* tuning because she finds the *pelog* and *madenda* tunings too 'weak' (*p.c.*, 2001). A younger, widely admired *pasinden* also told me that she sometimes liked to improvise like an insane (*gila*) person, testing out her vocal dexterity and fooling around with new vocal sounds to amuse herself during a *wayang* performance. This particular singer is originally from Subang, a region of West Java that is said to be renowned for the audacity of its *gamelan* singers, many of whom are reputed to use magic to improve their vocal technique and to make themselves appear more physically alluring on stage. The use of a certain type of charm inserted under the skin (*susuk*), for example, is said to enable even older, less attractive singers to appear youthful and to mesmerise younger men in the audience. Williams comments that there is a belief among female performers that "supernatural and sexual powers are deeply linked, and both inform the character of their musical expression" (2001:86).

Such is the potency of the *pasinden*'s power that it has even been considered to threaten the stability of the natural social order. Indeed, at one point in time this threat was deemed sufficiently serious to provoke government intervention. Outlining what has been dubbed as the *krisis sinden* (*pasinden* crisis), Weintraub notes that during the late 1950s and early 1960s the female singer began to eclipse the puppeteer as the principal focal point of audience interest at *wayang* (1997:176-177). Accounts from this time causally link the *pasinden*'s singing, dancing and general wayward stage behaviour to the "dangerous commotion" and "wild scenes" of the audience members running amok (*ibid.*, 177). Certain singers from around this period are still remembered as powerful sexual icons. In his recent study of the late Titim Fatimah, Ismet Ruchimat described

this *pasinden* as the erstwhile “Madonna [as in the US pop star] of West Java” (p.c., 2001). Notably, while the *pasinden* crisis was a symptom of wider political instability and chaos, Weintraub notes that it is “still used to incite passion against women whose voices threaten to bring down the nation” (2002).

### 4.3.3 Stylistic modification and crossover

Though Sundanese musicians can usually immediately tell whether a professional singer is *gamelan* or *tembang* trained from their technique alone, the subtleties of vocal performance practice are lost on most of the wider population at large. Williams points out that “many urban Sundanese simply do not understand either the smaller or greater differences between various Sundanese ensembles, between the Western and traditional Sundanese tuning systems, or between the Western and Sundanese ensembles” (2001:59). As the following anecdote suggests, it is often only Sundanese music insiders that can appreciate the finer nuances of both *tembang* and *kawih* styles.

The *tembang* singer Hendrawati related that she was invited to make a guest appearance on a popular Indonesian television quiz show in which contestants have to guess from a line-up of three alleged experts, of whom only two are genuine, who is the charlatan. The specialists may be drawn from any number of lines of work, but on this particular show the competitor had to listen to three Sundanese singers perform a selection of *tembang* and *kawih* song extracts and then to judge who was the false *pasinden*. Hendrawati laughingly recalled that as a *tembang* singer she was the impostor, but that anyone who did not have first hand knowledge of Sundanese music would have had some difficulty in working this out. In fact, the contestant was from Sumatra with little understanding of the intricacies of Sundanese performing arts. What is more, the two *bona fide pasinden* had previously studied some *tembang*, while Hendrawati (a former student of SMKI and STSI) had also undertaken a rudimentary training in *gamelan* singing. The story ends with the contestant guessing wrong and, having fooled him, Hendrawati winning a large colour television set (p.c., 2000).



This anecdote serves to highlight two important points. On the one hand, almost all serious Sundanese singers specialise in one vocal style over the other. Spiller notes that one of West Java's most famous *pasinden*, Idjah Hadidjah, explained that she had to give up *tembang* "to avoid ruining her *kawih* voice" (2001:65 fn25). Although a few vocalists have achieved some success in both styles, I overheard a couple of older *wayang* musicians criticising one well known 'bi-musical' singer as *gadungan* (fake or bogus), unable to perform either with any real conviction. On the other hand, many singers, especially those who have received a formal music education, have dabbled in both *tembang* and *kawih* genres. The *tembang* singer Euis Komariah, for instance, "started her career singing *kawih*" (*ibid.*), while Nunung Nurmallasari claimed that most of Bandung's leading *pasinden* have assimilated certain *tembang* ornaments into their vocal technique. It seemed to me that, in the musical melting pot of Bandung, it was more difficult to find a 'pure' *tembang* or *kawih* singer who had not been contaminated by some degree of exposure to both styles.

In fact, the most versatile singers also modify their vocal technique in accordance with the specific musical and social circumstances in which they find themselves performing. Brinner acknowledges that socio-cultural milieu is an important factor in shaping evaluations of competence – a "generalized ideal competence" being manifest in "localized or particularized competences" (1995:89-90). Rather as a Sundanese speaker negotiates the hierarchical levels of the Sundanese language, choosing his or her words in accordance with the status of the person with whom he or she is engaged in dialogue and the bounds of their own linguistic ability, competent melodic realisation in Sundanese music usually has much more to do with a performer's appropriate interpretation of, and ability to adapt to, specific texts and contexts rather than with creative spontaneity or technical virtuosity. Only occasionally is the latter a demand of the former.

One contextual factor which musicians identify as having a bearing on the way in which they play or sing is whether the performance is live or being recorded. Casual performance situations enable musicians to 'let loose', as well as often compel them to 'make do', in a way that would not withstand the closer scrutiny of the recording studio or more formal concert situation.

I once attended a Bandung wedding at which the *pasinden* for the *gamelan salendro* set did not turn up and the *tembang* singer who had sung throughout the main ceremony was persuaded to take her place. The *tembang* singer in question later confided to me that she had felt terribly uncomfortable to be put into this position because she could not sing *kawih* very well. Despite these claims, the singer was considered sufficiently competent to bluff her way through the performance and the wedding guests, at least, did not seem to notice that anything was amiss.

However, what is passable for such largely uninformed audiences and what can be considered as acceptable for other musicians and music connoisseurs are usually two separate things entirely. As Brinner suggests, musicians may underplay their abilities and even become less technically competent in the presence of an intimidating higher authority (1995:312-313). During the process of making fieldwork recordings it became apparent that the singers I was working with were much more musically cautious during one of the specific recording sessions that I had convened than, for instance, at a rowdier wedding performance. Presumably one reason for this was that the artists in question were not certain who would eventually get to hear these recordings.

My plans to conduct experimentally controlled recording sessions in order that I could explore the way in which singers from different backgrounds render specific *degung kawih* songs were also dashed as it became clear that the repertoire I chose, as well as the instruments and instrumentalists I brought in to provide the accompaniment, had a direct influence on the vocal style that resulted. The difficulties began at the very beginning of this project when I decided that it would be more practical to record singers with a *kacapi*, rather than a complete *gamelan degung* accompaniment. This decision was not merely a matter of economics; taking a *kacapi* player to each singer's home or place of work was much more feasible than was arranging larger scale recording sessions at which, I knew, not everyone would attend. I soon discovered, however, that the type of *kacapi* used (a factor which was often taken out of my control), be it a *kacapi indung* (zither used in *tembang Sunda*) or *kacapi kawih* (*kawih* zither), had a direct bearing on the singer's vocal practice. Part of the reason for this is that *kacapi indung* tend to be tuned to a lower pitch level than *kacapi kawih*, and singing in a lower vocal register inevitably influences a singer's timbre and, in turn, other aspects of their vocal technique. Iyan Arliani, a *pasinden* who has studied some *tembang* also commented that



as soon as she heard the distinctive playing patterns of the *kacapi indung* she could not stop herself from moderating her vocal timbre and singing in a *tembang* style (*p.c.*, 2001). Finally, the tuning of the *kacapi* also has an impact on vocal performance practice. The song *Kukupu*, for example, is a *pelog degung* song that can be sung with a *pelog degung* (as happens in *gamelan degung*) or *salendro* accompaniment (see 5.6.3). My accompanist sometimes decided to retune the *kacapi* for this song, a modification which, albeit inadvertently, proved that only a *salendro* accompaniment provides the tonal space for a *pasinden* to freely flaunt her vocal technique.

Aside from wider contextual considerations, a degree of stylistic crossover is also demanded by certain bodies of repertoire. There are, for example, a body of *kawih* songs that are sometimes described by singers as *lagu kaleran* ('northern songs'). The term '*kaleran*' refers to the musical style associated with northern Sundanese cities such as Cirebon and Indramayu and the north coast region bordering Central Java where Sundanese and Javanese cultures converge. This type of song is melodically characterised by the use of what are sometimes called *senggol kaleran*; these are *kawih* style phrases which Cook describes as "a large number of syllables crammed into rather few beats, followed by melismas which modulate wildly" (1992:23). While such phrases are 'improvised' by the *pasinden* in *gamelan salendro*, *tembang* and *degung* singers learn relatively fixed versions of such motifs. Euis Komariah explained that when adapting *kaleran*-style *gamelan* pieces – such as the enormously popular *Senggol Kaleran* – as *tembang* (and to a lesser extent *degung*) songs it is important to retain the stylistic flavour of the repertoire, but to idiomatically reinterpret the melody using *tembang* ornamentation in order that it be contained within the bounds of conventional performance practice (*p.c.*, 2001). An interesting future project would be to compare *gamelan* songs and their derivative *tembang panambih*, analysing this process of melodic translation in further detail.

#### 4.3.4 Negotiating *kawih* and *tembang* styles in *degung* performance

Without any indigenous vocal practice of its own, *degung kawih* has been one musical arena in which the *kawih-tembang* divide has been more explicitly negotiated. Though the *degung* singer is usually referred to as a *juru kawih* (a title that also serves as a euphemism for *pasinden*), I was frequently told that *tembang* vocal practice is more fitting for *gamelan degung* performance than *gamelan* singing. The former RRI musician Koestyara made the comment that the *halimpu* (soft, sweet) timbre of the *tembang* singer suits *gamelan degung* better than the *keras* (loud, strong) tone of the *pasinden*. Apparently, it was for this reason that he used the *tembang* singer Ida Widawati on the seminal *degung* cassette *Tilam Sono* (6.2.3), rather than a *gamelan* singer such as his wife, the RRI based *pasinden* Yetty Sumiati (*p.c.*, 2000). This argument is fully supported by the *pasinden* I spoke to; Nunung Nurmallasari even provided me with an on-the-spot demonstration of how she radically softens her sound when switching from a *gamelan salendro* to a *gamelan degung* accompaniment. One musician suggested that the gentler tone of the *tembang* singer matches that of the *suling* (as used in *tembang Sunda* and *gamelan degung*), while the *pasinden* has a strident timbre more like the *rebab* (as used in *gamelan salendro*). Yet another explanation that I was given is that as *tembang Sunda* and *gamelan degung* share the same aristocratic heritage and tuning systems, it is appropriate that they use a similarly refined vocal style.

Even so, a comparison of recordings of the RRI *degung* group dating from the 1960s and 1970s with contemporary releases reveals that performance practices have altered over the last three or four decades. The choral and solo singing heard on older *degung* recordings generally sounds much shriller and more nasal than that heard on *degung* cassettes today (see CD track 2). One *kacapi* player equated this mellowing of vocal timbre to the fact that Bandung's traditional music scene has become so *tembang Sunda* dominated that aspects of *tembang* vocal practice have come to impact on the technique of many different types of singer living within the area. Nevertheless, according to Williams, *tembang* singing itself has been subject to a similar transformation. Noting that voices on *tembang* recordings dating from the 1920s and 1930s are "more shrill (*lengking*) than is acceptable in modern performance practice", Williams equates this change of timbre to the fact that the pitch level of early *tembang*



*Sunda* performance was considerably higher than it is today (2001:43). Prior to advent of microphones and sound systems (which are now an indispensable part of any *tembang*, *degung* and *gamelan* performance) Williams posits that “people had to sing at a high pitch and volume in order to be heard” (*ibid.*, 44). An alternative explanation for this change of vocal timbre is that, at some point in the twentieth century, performers deliberately sought to move away from Javanese singing – which is very high pitched – and to assert their own Sundanese identity (*ibid.*, 43).

The issue of timbre notwithstanding, a couple of *tembang* singers also expressed the opinion that *degung kawih* singing sounds more ‘complete’ if it incorporates *tembang*-style ornamentation. While neither *tembang* nor *gamelan* singers get to display their full technique within the constraints of a *degung* performance, the *degung kawih* vocalist does typically employ a variety of *tembang* style trills, mordents, turns, and slides. Indeed, at the more commercial end of the market, *degung kawih* and pop Sunda singers have been accused of exaggerating aspects of *tembang* vocal practice to a point that traditional practitioners find distasteful. Williams observes that pop singers’ attempts to sound Sundanese may result in “an overenthusiastic use of vocal ornamentation”, adding though, that if these vocal ornaments are missing altogether “the song or performance is either said to be ‘lacking’ (*kurang*) or, worse (by Sundanese standards), that it even ‘smells Indonesian’ (*bau Indonesia*)” (1989:133). There is a certain irony in the fact that the vocal technique associated with the mass mediated genre of pop Sunda appears to owe more to the aristocratic art form of *tembang Sunda* than it does to the more populist *kawih* style of the *pasinden*.

Nonetheless, many areas in West Java and population groups within Bandung are not as favourable towards *tembang Sunda*, rejecting the aristocratic tastes and feudal values of a music that, since its emergence at the regency of Cianjur, continues to be associated with the Priangan region.<sup>18</sup> Outside of *tembang* strongholds one is more likely to encounter *degung* performances (if one encounters *gamelan degung* at all) at which the *juru kawih* is a *gamelan* singer. On a trip to the northern Sundanese city of Karawang, for instance, I stumbled across a wedding at which a local *pasinden* was performing *degung kawih* accompanied by a Jakarta based (though STSI Bandung

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<sup>18</sup> The Priangan is the region of West Java that encompasses Bandung and the surrounding cities of Garut, Tasikmalaya, Ciamis, Sumedang and Cianjur.

trained) *degung* group. In Bandung itself, I also attended a wedding at which the music was supplied by a family of *wayang* musicians from Cimahi on the outskirts of the city. This group, Galura, performed a particularly raucous version of *degung kawih* in which the singer's improvisations sometimes modulated well out of the tonal bounds of the *degung's pelog* and *madenda* tunings. The addition of sporadic sections of *alok* (interludes sung by a male *gamelan* singer) and constant yelping cries, whoops, verbal heckling and cymbal crashes gave the performance a distinctive *wayang* feel that was far removed from the decorousness of most *gamelan degung* and *tembang Sunda* performances in Bandung.

My own experience of attending city weddings suggests that while this type of *degung* performance is particular to this *wayang* affiliated group, it is not uncommon for *degung* singers, especially if they are *gamelan* trained, to improvise at informal live performances in a way that they would not contemplate on commercial recordings. On one occasion I went to a wedding with an STSI based *degung* group whose singer was a former *pasinden wayang*. Carried away by the joviality of the wedding party, and at a point in the proceedings where the guests were too busy eating and chatting to be actively listening, the singer began to spice up a performance of the *degung kawih* song *Jeruk Manis* by incorporating a few more daring *senggol kawih*. The subtle change in this performance was initially brought to my attention by the fact that after each innovative turn of phrase, the male *degung* players in the group shouted their approval and encouragement while the singer in question quietly laughed with a slight air of embarrassment. Without wanting to read too much into what can be simply regarded as on-stage musical joking and play, I did sense that the incorporation of these *kawih* style 'licks' was at least nudging at the boundaries of conventional *degung* vocal practice. The singer's nervous laughter seemed to have something to do with, if not exactly unleashing the creative power of the *ronggeng*, then concern about being seen to have overstepped some mark of propriety or, more simply, to be immodestly showing off. Certainly, I could never get the same singer to perform *Jeruk Manis* in quite the same liberated way in the recording studio although, aside from not knowing who would eventually gain



access to my recordings, this could have also been because of the lack of authentic on-stage interaction with a live group.<sup>19</sup>

Though aware of the limitations of studio-based recordings, this event did prompt me to make multiple recordings of *Jeruk Manis* in an attempt to compare the ways in which singers from different backgrounds realise this song. While *Jeruk Manis*, fixed as it is in the *pelog degung* tuning, is not subject to larger scale cross-genre transposition or structural adaptation, it is sufficiently flexible for singers to vary the way in which they embellish the melodic line. During the course of these recording sessions it became clear that most singers, whatever their background, know several different versions of this particular song.

From a research perspective, the most interesting rendition of *Jeruk Manis* was performed by the *gamelan* singer Nunung Nurmallasari. Apart from her use of a more strident timbre, the most notable difference between Nunung Nurmallasari's version of the song and the others that I recorded is that, after the first verse and refrain, she 'improvised' a new melodic line with each repeated cycle of the piece. *Jeruk Manis* is based on the *sekar alit Belenderan* [4 (5) 1 (2)] and Nurmallasari, as a competent *wayang* singer, is capable of extemporizing a melody to fit over this tonal framework. This is a skill that is not normally demanded of *tembang* or *degung* singers. *Tembang* singers may know alternative *senggol* with which they can vary a particular *panambih* melody, but these are generally pre-rehearsed and memorised from seminal cassette recordings of the song. Cook notes that improvisation is not acceptable in *tembang Sunda* performance and that even when a *tembang* singer tries out a new *senggol* in a *panambih (kawih)* song "people start getting hot under the collar" (1992:23).

Nunung Nurmallasari's version of *Jeruk Manis* also features specific phrases which, characterised by the types of pitch bend and melismatic slides outlined in my general description of *kawih* vocal practice above, were later identified as examples of *pasinden* style embellishments. The example below compares two versions of the phrase leading to *goong* tone 5 in the second half of the song. The first, performed by the *tembang* and *degung kawih* singer Mamah Dasimah, is the more conventional in terms

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<sup>19</sup> Davidson and Torff have questioned the validity of "laboratory work" to investigate aspects of music cognition, arguing that the "burgeoning body" of psychology research "casts doubt on whether responses of subjects under artificial circumstances reflect their work in real-world contexts" (1992:130).

of current *degung kawih* performance practice. The second is the '*pasinden* version' performed by Nunung Nurmalasari. While Mamah Dasimah primarily renders the text syllabically, embellishing the melodic line at the cadence point with a specific type of ornamental turn, Nunung Nurmalasari performs a more languid melismatic phrase which slowly slides its way to the *goong* tone.

Fig. 4:20 Comparison of *senggol* used in *Jeruk Manis*

⊙ CD tracks 7 & 8

Mamah Dasimah

5 4 3      5 5 5      3 4 3 4 5 4 5      5  
 pun la - was      ke - te - mu      ma -      ning

Nunung Nurmalasari

5 4 3      3 4 5      1 3 4 5      1 3 4 5 4 5 5  
 wis la - was      ke - te - mu      ma -      ning

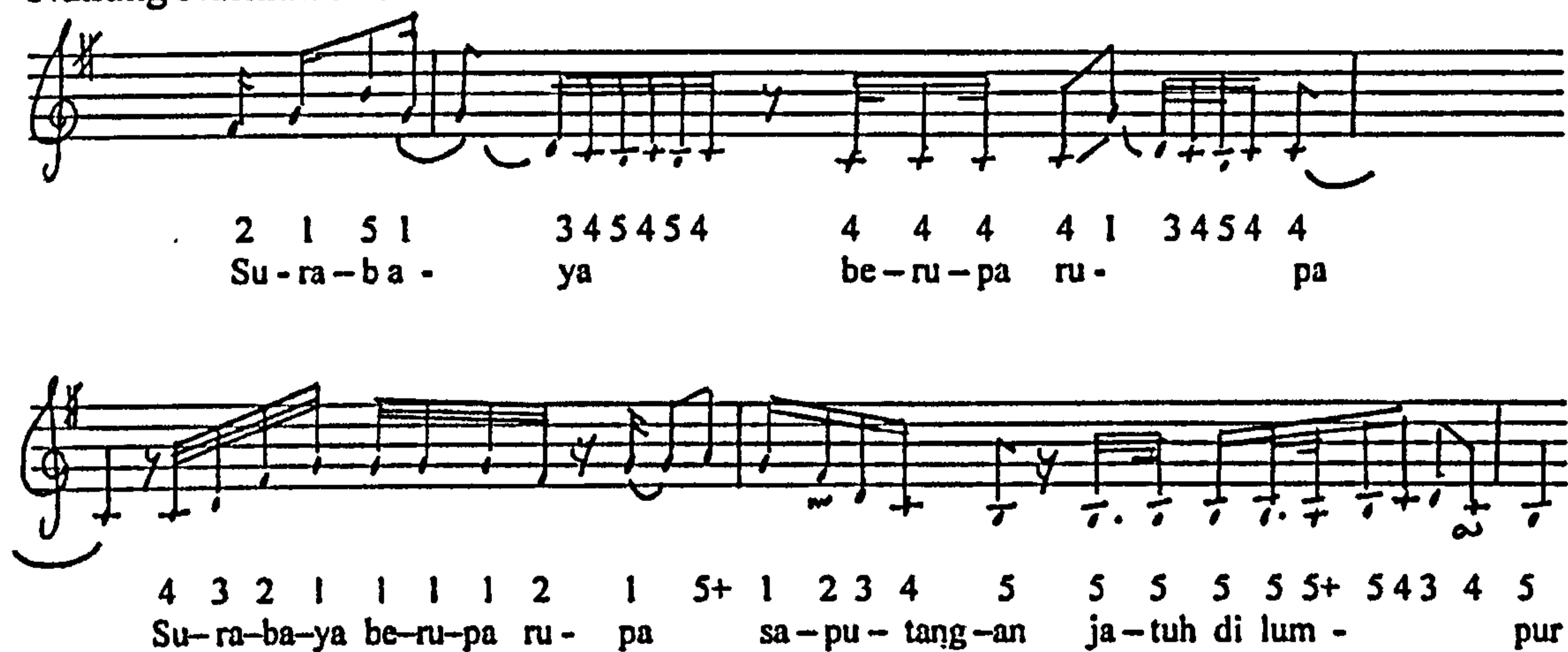
It is at the opening of the second verse of the song that Nunung's '*pasinden* voice' really comes to the fore. The phrases leading to *kenong* 4 and *goong* 5 at the beginning of this second cycle are rendered in a much more nasal tone and feature more dramatic tonal inflections, slides, as well a short extract of the type of rapidly delivered, syllabically-packed recitative not commonly heard in the context of *degung kawih* performance. Although I present a transcription of this passage below, neither Western staff nor Sundanese cipher notation can accurately represent the subtle nuances of timbre and pitch, complex ornamentation or rhythmic elasticity that characterise Sundanese vocal practice. The process of transcribing my fieldwork recordings only emphasised the fact



that many of the key differences between *tembang* and *gamelan* singing that are immediately perceptible to the ear are visibly lost when one is left only with that which can be written down on paper.

Fig. 4:21 Opening of the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle of *Jeruk Manis*  CD track 8

Nunung Nurmalasari



2 1 5 1      3 4 5 4 5 4      4 4 4 4 1 3 4 5 4 4  
 Su - ra - ba -      ya      be - ru - pa      ru -      pa

4 3 2 1 1 1 1 2 1 5+ 1 2 3 4 5 5 5 5 5 5+ 5 4 3 4 5  
 Su - ra - ba - ya be - ru - pa ru - pa      sa - pu - tang - an      ja - tuh di lum -      pur

Another feature of the *kawih* ‘licks’ that are sometimes incorporated into *degung kawih* performance is that they often incorporate some form of passing modulation. Though not demonstrable in *Jeruk Manis*, Mamah Dasimah illustrated one such modulating ‘*senggol kawih*’ for me in the context of the popular song *Es Lilin*. *Es Lilin* is a *madenda* song that, based on the *sekar alit Senggol* [2 (4) 2 (5) transposable *madenda* ciphers; 5 (2) 5 (3-) fixed ciphers], can be performed in either *sawilet* or *dua wilet*. While *degung* singers tend to perform relatively fixed versions of the song, Mamah Dasimah taught me several substitute *kawih* motifs with which to embellish the basic melodic contour. One of these phrases, used to cadence on the second *kenong* 2 [5 fixed cipher], begins on tone 3 [1 fixed cipher] and then follows a twisting descent that includes several ‘accidental’ tones before eventually arriving at the *kenong*. In true *kawih* fashion, this sequence does not end on the destination tone but finishes with a throwaway melodic tag on 1- 2+ 1- 5 [4- 5+ 4- 3- fixed ciphers]. *Gamelan* singers often use such modulating melismas to elongate and fill in the gaps between individual phrases.

## Mamah Dasimah

3 4+ 5 5+ 1 5+ 1 2 1 2 2 1- 2+ 1- 5  
 ku sa - da - ya - na

While *degung* singers may experiment with more inventive *senggol* in informal rehearsal and performance situations, commercial cassettes continue to disseminate a more homogenous brand of *degung kawih*. One notable exception to this is an album of what Nano Suratno has marketed as *kliningan degung* (*gamelan pelog-salendro* repertoire performed on *degung*). *Kawaas* (Dian Records) is a *degung kawih* recording that, featuring one of West Java's most celebrated *wayang* singers, Ijah Hadijah, includes several adaptations of *gamelan pelog-salendro* songs not commonly performed on the smaller *degung* ensemble. According to Suratno, the project's artistic director, combining the distinctive vocal style of Ijah Hadijah with a conventional *degung kawih* group was the creative starting point for this particular recording; this fact itself further emphasises the unconventional nature of this mix of performance styles (*p.c.*, 2001). While it is doubtful that this one-off album signals a wider change in *degung kawih* vocal performance practice, the growing popularity of *gamelan selap* (see 5.5.1) at *wayang* shows, and the subsequent inclusion of popular *degung* arrangements in such performances, may mean that Sundanese musicians and audiences will become increasingly accustomed to hearing *pasinden* interpret the latest *degung kawih* 'hits'. What is certain is that Sundanese music is extremely dynamic in its evolution and that vocal performance practice is no exception. As will be discussed in chapter 6, *degung kawih* is first and foremost considered as market-driven entertainment and, in the ongoing bid for commercially successful cassettes, producers have encouraged singers to replicate stylistic elements from a range of Sundanese, Indonesian and non-Indonesian 'pop' genres that are mass mediated in Bandung and beyond. If changes to *degung* repertoire over the last decade or so are any indication of future trends, prospective



researchers are less likely to be puzzling over the subtleties of *tembang* and *kawih* embellishment as to be picking out the *dangdut*, *keroncong*, ‘Arab’, and *diatonis* (diatonic) sounding ‘licks’ with which a new generation of *degung kawih* artists have begun to colour their compositions and melodic realisations.

## Summary

This chapter has explored two case studies of melodic realisation in *degung kawih*. The first, focusing on an improvisatory style of playing on the *cempres* known as *ngamelodi*, outlined the initial learning progression that furnishes musicians with the skills necessary to generate their own parts, as well as identified some of the wider conventions governing melodic motion on this instrument. The second looked at the different types of singer who perform *degung kawih* in Bandung, and reflected on the fact that *gamelan degung* is one arena in which *tembang* and *kawih* vocal styles have been more explicitly negotiated. Vocal performance practice will be considered again within a broader survey of the cassette industry in chapter 6.

Chapter 5 will now probe the subtleties of repertoire classification and examine the ways in which form and tuning facilitate or complicate the adaptation of repertoire from *gamelan salendro* and *tembang Sunda* to *gamelan degung*.

## Chapter 5

### Cross-genre adaptation

#### 5.1 Repertoire borrowing and adaptation

One form of transformation that pervades Sundanese music making occurs across distinct genres within the regional performing arts complex. Bandung musicians are masters of the art of adaptation – adept at idiomatically reworking material to fit different combinations of instruments and musical styles. The practice of borrowing and adapting pieces from one genre to another has played a significant role in the modernisation of several of the most prominent Sundanese music genres, with many resulting arrangements having been assimilated into the staple repertoire of recipient ensembles.

One body of repertoire that initially evolved in this way is the metrically fixed *panambih* songs of *tembang Sunda*. Many of these pieces were originally derived from the repertoires of *gamelan pelog-salendro* and *gamelan degung* and, indeed, such borrowing continues to be one way of expanding this particular genre. In August 2001, the *tembang* singer Euis Komariah gathered together a group of *tembang* and *gamelan* musicians to work out *panambih* versions of several older *gamelan pelog-salendro* songs. While the primary purpose of this exercise was to create ‘new’ repertoire for a forthcoming *tembang Sunda* competition, a subsidiary aim was to stimulate a renewed interest in the songs themselves. Euis Komariah stated that she deliberately chose pieces that are seldom performed by contemporary *gamelan* groups in the hope that a revival via the medium of *tembang Sunda* might prompt *gamelan* singers to start learning them again (*p.c.*, 2001).

Cross-genre adaptation is also often a consequence of practical or economic necessity. The diversity of performance situations in Bandung requires that musicians be resourceful if they are to be employable, while urban patrons constantly demand musical products that can be promoted as ‘special’ or ‘new’. Players are frequently called upon to produce one-off arrangements or to undertake on-the-spot composition to meet the needs of a particular performance situation as well as to create functioning ensembles



from whatever collection of instruments is available to them. One example of this is found at wedding receptions in Bandung. The repertoire played at such events mainly consists of popular *kawih* songs that can be accompanied by a variety of different *gamelan* or *kacapi* based ensembles. The musical genre chosen often depends as much upon the budget of the host as the particular arts group contracted to perform. Most professional outfits offer clients a range of musical packages; a complete *gamelan salendro* or *degung*, for example, can be replaced with a smaller zither-based ensemble when production costs need to be kept to a minimum. It is for this reason that Spiller describes the *tembang Sunda* ensemble as a “budget” version of *degung* when it is employed as wedding entertainment (2001:63). The widespread employment of electronic amplification to emphasize key vocal and instrumental parts means that there is often little audible difference for the guests.

While then not restricted to *gamelan degung*, cross-genre adaptation has played a particularly significant role in the expansion of *degung* repertoire since the ensemble’s revival in the late 1950s and early 1960s. This has not been a one-way process; *degung* pieces have concurrently found their way into the repertoires of other genres. Nonetheless, the boundaries of my research had to be drawn somewhere and so in this chapter I will only consider the way in which the *gamelan degung* has appropriated, rather than conferred, repertoire. More specifically, this chapter explores Sundanese classificatory and tonal systems and assesses some of the ways in which form and tuning facilitate, complicate or prohibit the process of adapting repertoire for *gamelan degung*. By its very nature, any examination of cross-genre transformation demands both breadth as well as depth of knowledge. Any conclusions I reach, therefore, are intended to instigate further discussion rather than to provide a comprehensive survey of this hitherto largely overlooked but fundamental aspect of Sundanese music.

## 5.2 Repertoire taxonomy

In an attempt to delimit the types of piece that have been assimilated into the repertoire of the *degung* ensemble, I found myself endlessly asking my teachers “can this be played on *degung*?”. This question was usually answered with an emphatic “*bisa*” (“it can be”). I soon realised, however, that I should be differentiating between that which is technically possible from that which is aesthetically desirable and commonly done. A *gamelan* musician, for example, told me that a certain piece could be arranged for *degung* (*bisa!*), while a singer subsequently described such an adaptation as tantamount to ‘musical rape’. Orientating my way through the heterogeneous repertoire that I encountered during practical lessons, on recordings and at performances, I also grappled with Sundanese systems of taxonomy. My conception of individual classificatory categories seemed to be in a continual state of flux as I gradually became aware of the interrelationships linking repertoire both within and across specific genres, as well as the inherent ambiguousness of Sundanese taxonomic schemes themselves.

Sundanese musicians categorize repertoire in a variety of ways and existing taxonomies are not standardised or employed consistently by either performers or theorists. Labels such as traditional (*tradisional*), folk (*rakyat*), classical (*klasik*) and pop (*pop*) are also in common usage but as elsewhere, these broad classifications are open to subjective interpretation across different socio-cultural groups. While the *degung klasik* repertoire is unanimously identified as being both ‘*klasik*’ and ‘*tradisional*’, *degung kawih* comprises a wide range of diverse repertoires that arguably encompass all of the styles listed above. Furthermore, while certain older musicians may equate *degung kawih* to ‘pop’, for many Sundanese the mere presence of a *gamelan* signifies that the music must be traditional.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The difficulty of classifying repertoire in this way was brought home to me when I showed a video of a ‘traditional’ English brass band from my home village to one of my Sundanese singing teachers. The band was in the middle of playing an arrangement of the Bangles’ (a US pop group) 1980s hit *Eternal Flame*, when my teacher asked if it was an example of English classical or traditional music.



Another way in which pieces are informally classified is by grouping them according to their genre-of-origin. Musicians still tend to differentiate between *lagu gamelan* (*gamelan pelog-salendro* pieces), *lagu tembang* (*tembang Sunda* pieces), *lagu degung* (*degung* pieces) and so forth, despite the considerable overlap of repertoire across these separate genres. Even so, certain bodies of repertoire seem to be considered as more genre-specific than others. The discrete body of repertoire known as *degung klasik*, for example, is so synonymous with the *degung* ensemble that *kacapi suling* arrangements of these pieces are referred to as *dedegungan* ('in the style of *degung*'). *Kacapi suling* arrangements of more commonly heard *gamelan pelog-salendro* pieces, on the other hand, are not typically accorded any special title.

Musicians also categorize pieces in accordance with factors such as genre-specific performance contexts. The *wayang* musician Otong Rasta mentioned a category of *lagu dagelan* (joking or clowning songs) that comprises lively instrumental *gamelan* pieces such as *Kalkun* and *Gudril* (p.c., 2000). Pieces of this type are typically employed in the instrumental opening section (*tatalu*) of a *wayang* performance, as well as to accompany the *lengser* (King's ambassador) character found in many Sundanese theatrical productions and ceremonials; in the latter, they are usually performed as *degung* adaptations (see chapter 7). Although these pieces also fall into other classificatory categories, Otong Rasta's perception of them as a distinct group illustrates that musicians may know a body of repertoire in multifaceted ways. A given piece, then, may hold quite different musical and contextual associations for a *wayang* or dance musician than it may for a *tembang* professional.

It appears that the most common approach to repertoire taxonomy involves classifying pieces according to their underlying structural form. As previously discussed, most *gamelan degung* pieces loosely fall into one of two major categories: *sekar ageung* (large pieces) and *sekar alit* (small pieces). The *sekar ageung* category encompasses most of the *degung klasik* repertoire, as well as a number of larger, melodically based *gamelan pelog-salendro* pieces that are sometimes played on *gamelan degung* (see 5.4). The *sekar alit* category, on the other hand, covers most of the more popular varieties of Sundanese vocal music, including the majority of *degung kawih* songs. In actual fact, many pieces are more idiosyncratic and possess multiple defining attributes that complicate precise classification within the broad parameters of *sekar alit - sekar*



*ageung*. The reality of the situation is that certain bodies of Sundanese repertoire fall somewhere in between the ‘big-small’, ‘melodic model-structural framework’ dichotomies outlined in chapter 3.

For example, most pieces in *opat wilet* are considered to be large expansions of standard *sekar alit* in *sawilet* and *duawilet*. Musicians “say things like ‘Renggong Bandung? Oh, that’s just Angle in 4 *wilet*’” (Cook 1992:37). In practice, the realisation of these larger pieces is not just a simple matter of formulaic expansion: most *opat wilet* repertoire is also melodically fixed and the underlying accompaniment idiosyncratically adjusted to fit the piece-defining song melody (*ibid.*, 36 & Cook 2000b:86-89). While then the *opat wilet* pieces may retain aspects of the melody and accompaniment format more typical of *sekar alit*, these songs are also sufficiently lengthy and melodically prescribed as to be classifiable as *sekar ageung*.

In contrast, more straightforwardly classifiable *sekar ageung*, such as the *degung klasik* pieces, are based on less pliable melodies that function as the principal model for the entire ensemble. Thus while in *degung klasik* the core melody is rendered by the *bonang*, it is also embellished and abstracted (rather than accompanied) throughout the stratified layers of the ensemble. Interestingly, despite the fact that such heterophonic *sekar ageung* are not subject to changes of *wilet*, pieces of this type may, like the *opat wilet gamelan pelog-salendro* piece *Paksi Tuwung*, happen to be melodically fixed at a standard level of expansion. Size, therefore, is not necessarily any indication of melodic structure and texture, or vice versa.

Fryer cites a third classificatory category – *sekar tengahan* (middle-size pieces) – that the Sundanese theorist Kusumadinata appears to have created to cover those pieces “that would not fit either of the other two categories” (1989:179-180). In *gamelan degung*, this potentially encompasses melodically prescribed *dua wilet* songs such as *Gaya* and *Renggong Buyut* (both of which originate from the folk genre *ketuk tilu*) as well as the children’s song *Kunang Kunang*, which includes an unusual double *goong* phrase (*goong dobel*). This catchall classification has particularly fuzzy boundaries, however, and most musicians are vague as to what exactly should be included in it. Fryer concludes that “a *sekar ageung* in one person’s taxonomy is a *sekar tengahan* in another’s and vice versa” (*ibid.*,180).



Brinner argues that in an oral tradition, such discrepancies and inconsistencies are less important than the basic mnemonic value of taxonomic schemes (1995:63). It is a fact that classificatory systems, no matter how personally formulated or unconsciously conceived, enable Sundanese musicians to keep track of a vast body of diverse repertoires. In the musical melting pot of Bandung, musicians generally perform a heterogeneous mix of repertoire, often in more than one ensemble type. Identifying a piece of music with, for example, a specific genre-of-origin, provides performers with a simple point of reference from which to mentally map out subsequent transformations in secondary genres. My teacher Ade Komaran would thus sometimes explain that a certain piece that I was learning on *gamelan degung* was really a *lagu gamelan* (a *gamelan pelog-salendro* piece) but that it also functioned as a *panambih tembang Sunda*. This type of basic associative network can then be filled out with additional information detailing: alternative versions, or possibilities for transforming the piece; other structurally and/or contextually interrelated repertoire; the particular performer(s) and composer(s) involved in the original conception or seminal recordings of the piece; as well as musicians' individual autobiographical encounters performing or hearing it.

Aside from facilitating the memorisation of large bodies of repertoire, classification also plays a vital role in the initial learning process. If a piece can be broadly pigeon-holed as a particular type, musicians can determine suitable methods of realisation based on their past experiences of performing analogous repertoire. Sundanese classifications such as *sekar alit* and *sekar ageung* thus not only indicate underlying form but also convey limited information about appropriate idiomatic treatment. Nevertheless, existing declarative categorisations do not comprehensively represent the multifaceted ways in which Sundanese musicians more intuitively discriminate between repertoire types as performance models. As Brinner notes, "language does not necessarily structure cognition or fully reflect a person's powers of differentiation" (1995:45). In the complex act of performance, procedural knowledge (which may be consciously or unconsciously, explicitly or intuitively known) and "declarative knowledge about a certain piece – mesh and reinforce one another" (*ibid.*, 63). The realisation of the taxonomically ambiguous *opat wilet* songs is one instance of such 'meshing': Sundanese *gamelan* musicians mix their procedural knowledge of the

*sekar alit* repertoire with their awareness of any structural deviations determined by what are often considered to be *sekar ageung* length melodies.

### 5.3 Cross-genre adaptation in the style of *degung kawih*

The simple *sekar alit* pieces of *gamelan pelog-salendro* now constitute the greatest body of shared Sundanese repertoire. As outlined in chapter 3, these malleable tonal frameworks structurally underpin most of the traditional music performed in Bandung today, including the bulk of the *degung kawih* repertoire. Describing the way in which this type of piece is realised on both forms of Sundanese *gamelan* Cook writes, “Broadly speaking, *sekar alit* work in much the same way on *gamelan degung* as they do on *gamelan salendro/pelog*” (1992:65). Musicians do, though, have to adapt playing patterns in accordance with the smaller instrumentation of the *degung* and the different technical specifications of the individual instruments that make up both ensembles. Thus in *degung kawih*, the single *bonang* player often performs figuration that amalgamates both the *bonang* and *rincik* (higher pitched *bonang*) patterns as employed in the larger *gamelan pelog-salendro* ensemble. Similarly, the multi-octave metallophones in *gamelan degung* provide more scope for melodic improvisation than is possible on corresponding *salendro* instruments.

The fact also remains that not all types of *sekar alit* based repertoire are as easily or satisfactorily adapted for *gamelan degung*. It is evident that most of the *kawih* songs played by *degung* groups use *sawilet* or faster tempo *dua wilet* accompanying frameworks. Conversely, performances of *opat wilet* and slower *dua wilet* songs on *gamelan degung* are much more rare. Lili Suparli suggested that one reason for this is that the smaller instrumentation and resulting sparser texture of the *gamelan degung* mean that the ensemble does not have the musical momentum to carry the longer phrases of *dua wilet* and *opat wilet* songs as convincingly as the larger *gamelan pelog-salendro* (p.c., 2001a). In the latter ensemble the *gambang* fulfils a particularly important space-filling role, playing highly repetitive, dense figuration that helps to ‘glue’ the other parts together. Moreover, the vocalist and *rebab* players are usually the principal focus of melodic interest in *gamelan salendro*, elaborating the rhythmically



fluid and drawn out phrases of more expansive songs using improvisatory techniques that do not always successfully translate as *degung kawih* songs. A major obstacle is that these melodies may involve a degree of modulation that simply cannot be accommodated within the more limited confines of *gamelan degung* tunings (see 5.6.5).

Paradoxically, while the *gamelan degung* may be perceived as too small to satisfactorily perform certain types of *gamelan* piece, it has the disadvantage of being relatively cumbersome when it comes to the realisation of more convoluted *tembang panambih* songs. Many *panambih* melodies do not fit over standard *sekar alit* but are instead accompanied by piece-specific tonal frameworks (*posisi khusus*, 'specific tonal positions'). While this poses no problem for the lone *kacapi indung* specialist of the *tembang* ensemble, *degung* groups have to spend much more time working out and practising such idiosyncratic material. Consequently, in a musical environment where most rehearsals occur 'on stage', *degung* arrangements of longer *panambih* songs are more commonly heard on studio-based cassette recordings than at live performances. Cook writes,

*Gamelan* involves a group of people who have to work together to reach a common realization of a piece. Any individual variation in *gamelan* playing has to fit in with what the other players expect. In *panambih* Cianjuran the *kacapi indung* player bears sole responsibility for the musical structure, since the other two instrumentalists simply follow his lead. Thus there is more room for flexibility on the *kacapi indung* than in *gamelan* (2000b:79).

Adapting non-standardised *tembang Sunda* songs for *gamelan degung* may thus also demand some degree of structural alteration. An example of this is illustrated in figure 5:1, which compares *tembang Sunda* and *gamelan degung* versions of the *panambih* song *Angin Peuting*. The basic tonal outline of the *kacapi indung* (*tembang Sunda*) part (i) was sketched out for me by the *kacapi* player YUSDIANA (Yus) using his own form of shorthand notation. I transcribed the *jengglong* part (ii) of the *gamelan degung* adaptation of this song from the commercial cassette *Tilam Sono*. As a seminal cassette of the late 1970s this recording will be discussed in more detail in 6.2.3.

*pangkat*..... 4

—

gelenyu / interlude

| . . . 5p | . . . 4 |

*lagu* / song....

| . . . 4 | . 3p . 3 | . p . 4 | 2 . . 2 |

| 3 . . 3 | . p . 5 | <sup>9</sup>2 . . 3p | . . . 2 |

| 5 . . 1p | 4 . . 4 |

*p* = passing *pancer* tones rather than *goong* tones <sup>2</sup>

(principal tones underlined to facilitate comparison with fig. 5:1 ii overleaf)

<sup>2</sup> Because there is no actual hanging *goong* instrument in *tembang Sunda*, *kacapi* players have come to employ the term 'goong' to refer to the destination tone at the end of each phrase rather than at the end of a complete cycle as in *gamelan*.



*pangkat*.....(4)

modified *gelenyu*  
 1  
 | . 5 . 4 | . 5 . (4) |

*lagu / song*...

| . 1 . 4 | . 1 . 3 | . 1 . 4 | . 1 . (2) |

7  
 | . 5 . 3 | . 5 . 2 | . 1 . 5 | . 1 . (2) |

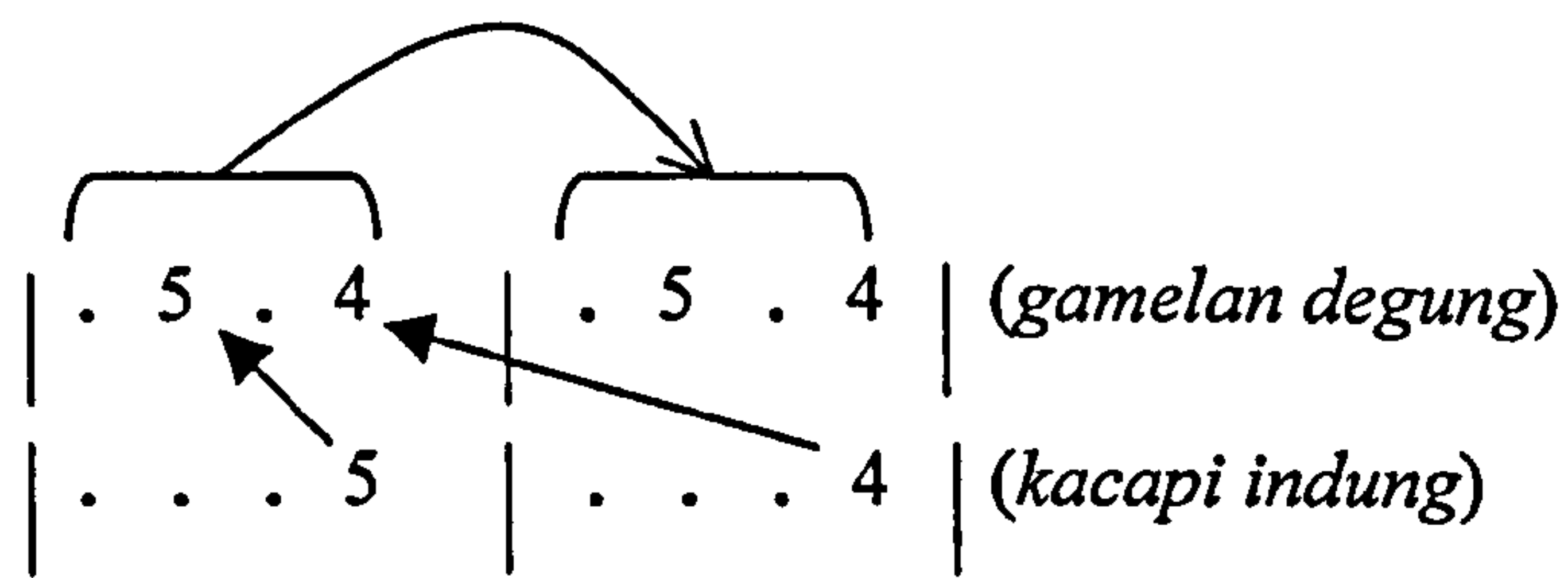
bonang on 2 →

additional *gelenyu*  
 11  
 | . 5 . 2 | . 5 . 2 | . 5 . 4 | . 1 . (4) |

bonang on 5 → 4

The *degung* adaptation is characterised by two main structural modifications. Firstly, the *degung* version of the song is two bars longer than the *tembang Sunda* version. These additional bars (ii:11-12) function as a second *gelenyu* (interlude) in which new melodic material is improvised by a male *gamelan* singer (*juru alok*). Koestyara, the former director of *Gapura* (the group that devised this arrangement), explained that these extra bars were necessary in order that the main body of the song be extended from 10 to 12 bars, thereby maintaining the standard four-bar by four-bar metrical structure (*goong* and *kempul* patterning) and rhythmic sequences that conventionally underpin *degung kawih* repertoire of this type (p.c., 2000). Secondly, the *gelenyu* that opens *Angin Peuting* is also adapted to suit the larger *gamelan degung* ensemble. In the original *tembang* version the *kacapi* player performs a longer pattern that, moving via a pivot tone 5, does not cadence on tone 4 until the end of the second bar. In the *degung* version, this section is performed at twice the original density: the *jengglong* arrives at tone 4 at the end of bar one; the second bar then simply repeats the first (fig. 5:2).

Fig. 5:2 Comparison of the *gelenyu* for *Angin Peuting*



According to Yusdiana, the denser tonal framework of the *gamelan degung* version makes it easier for the *kendang* player to establish a clearer tempo, thereby supporting the musical cohesion of this larger group of musicians. He compared the tempo-establishing function of this *gelenyu* to that of a *pangjadi*, a piece-specific unison melody that is sometimes played at the beginning of larger scale *gamelan pelog-salendro* songs to help stabilise the tempo (*p.c.*, 2001).<sup>3</sup>

Aside from structural alteration, this *degung* adaptation of *Angin Peuting* also serves to demonstrate that in songs of this type, the defining melodic model often overrules the standard conventions governing *patokan* realisation. The *bonang*, for example, ‘breaks free’ from its usual symmetrical anticipating and reiterating patterns (see appendix I) on a couple of occasions in the arrangement. One instance of this is found in bar 8 (ii): the *bonang* moves to anticipate tone 2 as would be expected but then, completely disregarding destination tone 5 in the following bar, remains on this pitch until the end of the *goong* phrase. It seems that the reason for this lies in the song melody which, at this point, features a passing modulation using ‘accidental’ tones 5+ and 4-. By staying put on a relatively neutral tone 2 the *bonang* avoids clashing with the ambiguous tonality of the vocal and *suling* line. An examination of the *tembang* version of the song confirms that the *kacapi* also lingers on tone 2 at this point in the melody (i: bars 9-10). Another example of ‘structurally-liberated’ *bonang* occurs at the end of bar 12 (ii). In this instance not only does the *bonang* player change position at the end rather than in the middle of the bar (as is usual), but he also moves to a relatively unexpected

<sup>3</sup> However, this device is not normally used in either *gamelan degung* or *tembang Sunda*.



tone 5, rather than to the destination tone 4 suggested by the *jengglong* part in bar 13 (ii). Again, the reason for this only becomes clear when one considers the *bonang* line in relation to the vocal part. In fact, the *bonang* pattern on tone 5 functions as an instrumental cue for the penultimate phrase of the song melody.

While adapting *tembang Sunda panambih* for *gamelan degung* may necessitate some form of structural readjustment, this type of cross-genre transformation demands little in the way of melodic alteration. Not only do both *tembang* and *degung* ensembles share the same *pelog degung* and *madenda* tunings, but the *suling* player also employs an identical technique to fulfil an equivalent melodic role in both genres. Similarly the majority of *degung kawih* singers use a vocal style derived from *tembang Sunda*. Indeed, as previously discussed, it is often the same artists performing in both genres.

#### 5.4 Cross-genre adaptation in the style of *degung klasik*

Most *degung* adaptations are idiomatically treated in the style of *degung kawih*, with the bronze ensemble providing the accompaniment to an overlying vocal or *suling* melody. Sometimes, however, borrowed repertoire is reworked in the style of *degung klasik* and the melody transferred to the *bonang* and realised using the *gumekan* technique characteristic of this genre. Resulting adaptations can have quite a different feel to their original versions; loud, lively *gamelan* tunes such as *Kalkun*, for example, have translated as rather gentle and subdued *bonang* and *suling* melodies in *degung klasik* style arrangements.

Lili Suparli contended that it is appropriate to adapt larger melody-based *gamelan pelog-salendro* pieces in the style of *degung klasik* because both of these repertoires share certain compatible features. Firstly, both the *degung klasik* pieces and *gamelan sekar ageung* share a similar stately or grand (*ageung*) character. Secondly, and of more practical significance, both types of piece are based on melodic models that – confined to a single pentatonic tuning – can be abstracted and embellished throughout the stratified layers of the ensemble. This type of melody is thus more easily distilled

and reinterpreted as a *degung klasik* style *bonang* melody because experienced *gamelan* musicians already know other instrumental versions of that melody (*p.c.*, 2001a).<sup>4</sup>

In *gamelan degung* lessons with Ade Komaran, I was introduced to a wide range of repertoire that was idiomatically treated in this way. Pieces ranging from the *ketuk tilu* song *Renggong Buyut* to more substantial *gamelan* pieces such as *Candiranrang* and *Gunung Sari* were all taught to me as *gumekan*-style *bonang* melodies. Ade Komaran usually worked out these *bonang* parts during the lessons themselves, thereby providing me with the opportunity to observe the idiomatic transformation of the original *salendro* or *pelog* melodies (that he would convey by humming) at first hand. Notably, at less well defined points in the melodic contour, Komaran would sometimes simply instruct me to play “*gumek*” to tone x, y or z, expecting me to choose a stereotypical *bonang degung klasik* motif to lead to the designated pot over the specified number of beats. This experience contrasted with that of learning *degung klasik* ‘proper’ in which the *bonang* part was generally presented as a fixed melodic model that left little room for individual embellishment (see 3.2). Observing the *gumekan* style of playing utilized as a more flexible vocabulary of melodic motifs was interesting because it provided a glimpse of the way in which some of the *degung klasik* repertoire could have originally evolved. It is clear that while some pieces were specifically composed for this genre, others certainly started life elsewhere.

*Ayun Ambing*, for example, is a folk lullaby that has been arranged as a *panambih tembang Sunda* (when it usually known as *Dengkleung*) as well as a *degung klasik* piece. The *degung klasik* version of this piece is now well established in the repertoire, although I encountered rather distinctive SMKI and RRI versions of it. Other *degung klasik* style adaptations are even less standardised, with players altering the tonal content of a piece as well as having considerable freedom to construct their own *gumekan*-style *bonang* variations.

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<sup>4</sup> When *sekar ageung* such as *Gunung Sari* are performed on *gamelan pelog-salendro*, for instance, the *gambang* usually follows the contour of the vocal melody using a style of playing known as *cacagan* (see Cook 2000b:76-77).



When recording *degung* versions of the *gamelan pelog-salendro* piece *Gunung Sari*, for example, an interesting anomaly became apparent. In some arrangements, the penultimate phrase of the song cadences on tone 2, while in others, as in the original *gamelan pelog-salendro* version, this phrase ends on tone 1. Similarly, some musicians then move to tone 5, while others land on tone 4, before finally cadencing on *goong* tone 1. Figure 5:3 compares the way in which three musicians (Ade Komaran, Entis Sutisna, and Lili Suparli) realised the final phrases of *Gunung Sari* on the *bonang* (see appendix III for the complete transcriptions).

Fig. 5:3 Final phrases of *Gunung Sari* performed on *bonang degung*

⊙ CD tracks 12-14

Komaran:	$\overline{\cdot}$	$\overline{1}$	$\overline{1}$	$\overline{\cdot 1}$	$\overline{\cdot}$	$\overline{5}$	$\overline{11}$	$\overline{1}$	$\overline{112}$	$\overline{3}$	$\overline{2}$	$\overline{1}$	$\overline{5}$	$\overline{111}$
Sutisna:	$\overline{1.111}$	$\overline{1.111}$	$\overline{1.111}$	$\overline{1.111}$	$\overline{112}$	$\overline{3334}$	$\overline{3231}$	$\overline{2222}$						
Suparli:	$\overline{1.111}$	$\overline{1.111}$	$\overline{1.111}$	$\overline{1.111}$	$\overline{112}$	$\overline{3333}$	$\overline{2225}$	$\overline{111}$						
	//													
Komaran:	$\overline{1}$	$\overline{4}$	$\overline{3}$	$\overline{2}$	$\overline{3.454}$	$\overline{555}$	$\overline{5}$	$\overline{53}$	$\overline{4443}$	$\overline{4.515}$	$\overline{\dot{1}}$			
Sutisna:	$\overline{5555}$	$\overline{3333}$	$\overline{5}$	$\overline{3}$	$\overline{4441}$	$\overline{5454}$	$\overline{3334}$	$\overline{5}$	$\overline{345}$	$\overline{\dot{1}}$				
Suparli:	$\overline{1}$	$\overline{3}$	$\overline{333}$	$\overline{3}$	$\overline{332}$	$\overline{444}$	$\overline{4}$	$\overline{4}$	$\overline{5553}$	$\overline{4.515}$	$\overline{\dot{1}}$	<sup>5</sup>		

<sup>5</sup> Lili Suparli also pointed out that in keeping with the *degung klasik* idiom, the *kempul* part that is used in the *gamelan pelog-salendro* version of *Gunung Sari* is omitted in the *degung* adaptation. The only colotomic punctuation used is thus the striking of the large *goong* at the very end of the piece.

Lili Suparli explained that, although the phrase leading to tone 2 does not sound incongruous in the *pelog degung* version of the song it is, technically speaking, still incorrect. He guessed that *tembang* musicians are to blame for this variation, commenting that *gamelan* songs are often altered when adapted for the *tembang Sunda* genre (*p.c.*, 2001a). This is corroborated by the fact that the only professional recording of *Gunung Sari* that I have found that includes the anomalous penultimate phrase to 2 is the *tembang Sunda* cassette *Nyawang Bulan* (Hidayat). Cook concurs that many *tembang* adaptations of *gamelan* songs have taken on a life of their own. Citing the example of the *degung klasik* derived *panambih Beber Layar*, he recalled hearing a *gamelan degung* musician actually changing the original piece-defining *bonang* melody to accommodate a *tembang* singer's mutated *panambih* phrases (*p.c.*, 2000a).

## 5.5 Tunings and transposition

The term *didegungkeun*, which means to have been idiomatically treated in the style of *degung* (to have been 'degung-ised'), is often used to refer to the process of adapting repertoire for *gamelan degung*. It may also be used more specifically to describe the transposition of material into the *pelog degung* tuning. While cross-genre adaptation does not always necessitate a change of tuning or modal transposition, the way in which *gamelan pelog-salendro* repertoire is translated for *gamelan degung* demands further consideration of Sundanese tuning systems.

Attempts to accurately describe and represent Sundanese tunings have proven problematic for both Indonesian and non-Indonesian scholars. Firstly, Sundanese instruments are tuned to each other rather than to any externally standardised or absolute pitch. Exact frequencies thus vary from one set of instruments to another. Secondly, musicians have a number of uniquely Sundanese scales at their disposal, in addition to the more commonly known *pelog* and *salendro* tunings (and variants thereof) that are also found elsewhere in Java and Bali. While not a problem in itself, some of these scales exist in multiple, subtly distinct genre-specific versions. Thirdly, and finally, the way in which tunings, scales, and modes are perceived is, at least in part, determined by the particular instrumental or vocal specialism of a given musician and the music genres



with which he or she is conversant. *Kacapi* and *rebab* players, for example, may comprehend individual tunings as well as the relationships between these tunings in quite different ways (see Fryer 1989:144).

Existing theories of Sundanese tunings developed by the Sundanese theorist R.M.A Kusumadinata have been criticised by several scholars (see van Zanten 1987:113, 1989:124-126 & Weintraub 1997:98) because of the divergence between theory and practice.<sup>6</sup> It is common for academy-based Sundanese musicians to explain a musical concept according to the theory and then to subsequently demonstrate what really happens in practice (see Tatang Benjamin Koswara's comment in Fryer 1989:134). Kusumadinata's theory is further complicated by the use of terminology that is not widely understood, clearly defined or, consequently, consistently employed by subsequent writers on the subject. Nevertheless, a study of *gamelan degung* is not a particularly appropriate place to provide an exegesis of the "jungle growth" (Heins 1977:85fn) of Sundanese theories of scales and tunings. In addition, Kusumadinata's work has been previously disentangled and critiqued by Fryer (1989:123-157 & 191-206) and Weintraub (1997:97-113). The tunings employed in *tembang Sunda* have also been subject to rigorous analysis by van Zanten (1987:113-161). Accordingly, this chapter only presents aspects of the theory that were presented to me during lessons with Lili Suparli in answer to specific questions about repertoire adaptation, transposition and *gamelan degung*. Lili Suparli is both a widely respected *gamelan* musician and an STSI lecturer and therefore uniquely placed to offer possible verbal explanations for what appear to be largely tacitly understood aspects of musical practice.

### 5.5.1 *Pelog degung* and *pelog jawar*

The *gamelan degung* is identifiable by its own uniquely Sundanese tuning: *pelog degung*. Oman Suganda suggested that this tuning predates and, indeed, defines the ensemble, proposing that this type of *gamelan* was named after the old scale that was "used by the pantun player on his *kacapi* which was called *pelog degung*" (Oman Suganda in Harrell 1974:220). Confusingly, although often simply referred to as '*pelog*',

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<sup>6</sup> Although Weintraub points out that certain theories have subsequently "contributed to the development of musical practice" (1997:98).

the five-tone *pelog degung* scale of the *gamelan degung* is not the same as the seven-tone *pelog* tuning of Sundanese *gamelan pelog*. Several authors have noted that the *pelog degung* scale sounds more diatonicised than either the *pelog* or *salendro* scales and, after much empirical analysis, van Zanten concludes that the “Western equal-tempered model” is the best one for the *pelog degung* and *madenda (sorog)* tunings used in *tembang Sunda* and *gamelan degung* (1987:129).

In *gamelan pelog* three five-note *pelog* scales are used: *pelog jawar*, *pelog sorog* and *pelog liwung* (Cook 1992:6). According to Cook, *pelog jawar* does not sound unlike the *pelog degung* scale, although when compared side by side, tone 4 “is (relative to its neighbours) of lower pitch in *pelog degung*” (*ibid.*,10). Similarly, Sukanda remarks that the “original *degung* songs cannot be played on *gamelan pelog jawar*” because pitch 4 is “incorrect” (Sukanda in Harrell 1974:233).

The intervallic difference between the two scales is significant enough to be accommodated in the design of *gamelan selap*, a type of *gamelan* ensemble in which *salendro*, *pelog*, *pelog degung*, *madenda* and other scales are brought together on specially elongated instruments.<sup>7</sup> Describing the lay out of these multiple scales on the eleven key *saron* in the *gamelan selap* of the Sundanese puppeteer Dede Amung Sutarya, Ashworth illustrates that both the *pelog jawar* and *pelog degung* scales share the same *saron* keys apart from those used to play tone 4.

Fig. 5:4 Layout of *pelog degung* and *pelog jawar* scales on 11 key *saron*

key number	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
<i>pelog degung</i>	1		5	4		3		2	1		5
<i>pelog jawar</i>	1		5		4	3		2	1		5

(abstracted from Ashworth 2000:6)

<sup>7</sup> Weintraub (1997) has coined the term *multi-laras gamelan* to describe this type of multi-scale ensemble.



*Pelog degung* is now the dominant *pelog* scale in the Priangan region of West Java. Apart from *gamelan degung*, the *pelog degung* tuning is employed in genres ranging from *gamelan selap* and *gamelan salendro* (see 5.5.2 below) to *kacapi suling* and *tembang Sunda*. *Gamelan pelog*, on the other hand, is now rarely performed outside of academic establishments in the city; its position as ‘the Sundanese *pelog gamelan*’ has long since been usurped by the *gamelan degung*.<sup>8</sup> Certainly, many *gamelan pelog* pieces are now more commonly heard performed on either *gamelan salendro* or *gamelan degung*. In my following examination of cross-genre transposition I will thus mainly focus on the adaptation of *gamelan salendro* repertoire for *gamelan degung*.

### 5.5.2 *Pelog degung* and *salendro*

Given the above, it initially seems extraordinary that Kusumadinata’s theory classifies the *pelog degung* and *madenda* scales as part of an all-inclusive *salendro*, rather than *pelog* model. However, the reason for this is that in certain Sundanese genres *pelog degung* and *madenda* melodies are performed with *salendro* accompaniments. With reference to the development of Kusumadinata’s *salendro* model Weintraub explains,

... the *degung*, *mataram*, and *madenda* scales were perceived to be part of an all-inclusive *salendro* model because, in practice, melodies using these scales were played on variable-pitch instruments in conjunction with the fixed-pitch instruments of the *gamelan salendro*. These scales could be derived from the 5-tone *salendro* by raising or lowering certain tones, resulting in an overarching model or tuning system constituted by several scales (1997:110).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Although *gamelan pelog* is rarely performed, it does appear that its *pelog* tuning may be beginning to enjoy a revival via the growing popularity of *gamelan selap* at *wayang golek* performances.

<sup>9</sup> Kusumadinata’s theoretical model seems to overlook the fact that the *pelog degung* tuning of the *gamelan degung* might possibly predate the arrival of *gamelan salendro* (and its bi-tonal repertoire) in West Java.

*Gamelan salendro* is an extremely practical medium, capable of accompanying songs in a range of scales and modes without the need for additional sets of instruments or retuning. This versatility is undoubtedly one of the reasons why the *salendro*-tuned *gamelan* became more prevalent than its *pelog* counterpart during an era in which the female singer came to be considered as the principal point of musical interest at performances (Spiller 2001:59 fn.19). Nonetheless, not all *pelog degung* and *madenda* songs can be satisfactorily performed on *gamelan salendro*. To be compatible, both melody and accompaniment must converge at *goong* and *kenong* points. In other words, the *pelog degung* and *madenda* scales used must have two or three pitches in common with the underlying *salendro* scale, and the song melody internally structured so that these shared pitches coincide at points of metric stress. In this type of bi-tonal repertoire the fixed-pitch *salendro* instruments never assume a melodic role and are, instead, consigned to the less conspicuous filling-in of the underlying tonal framework. Spiller explains that any dissonance between the “mismatched pitches” is minimized because “they occur primarily as passing tones in figurations that Sundanese listeners hear as propelling toward a cadential tone” (*ibid.*, 231). The now obligatory use of PA systems further obscures any tonal clashes as the singer, *rebab* and *kendang* tend to drown out the rest of the *gamelan*. While the audience may still be able to identify the conventional rhythmic motifs that structurally anchor the amplified melody, the specific tonality of the accompanying ensemble may be rendered practically inaudible.

This is not to suggest that the tonal friction created by the superimposition of two tunings systems has no aesthetic significance. I heard a *gamelan* singer complain that performing certain *madenda* songs with a *madenda* accompaniment does not feel right. In fact, the *salendro* tuning provides a more tonally accommodating and impartial backdrop against which *gamelan* singers are freer to develop more daring improvisations and modulations. In addition, the tuning of the accompaniment further transforms the song melody because the intervals of the *pelog degung* and *madenda* scales used in *gamelan salendro* are not identical to those employed in *gamelan degung* or *tembang Sunda*. Cook explains that this is because the interval between the roughly equidistant tones of the *salendro* scale is about 240 cents; that is slightly wider than the interval of around 200 cents (or one whole tone) that occurs between tones 4 and 5 [2 and 3-] in *madenda* and tones 3 and 4 in *pelog degung* as used in *gamelan degung* and *tembang*



Sunda (1992:26). Sundanese musicians are extremely tolerant of such intervallic discrepancies, deeming the scales similar enough to share the same names, theoretical models and bodies of repertoire.

Lili Suparli illustrated the relationships between various scales (*salendro*, *pelog degung* and *madenda*) that are performed on the *rebab* in *gamelan salendro* in table form (fig. 5:5). In this diagram, the fixed *salendro* tones are represented as absolute pitches using both tone names and corresponding ciphers: Tugu (1), Loloran (2), Panelu (3), Galimer (4) and Singgul (5). The *degung* and *madenda* scales, on the other hand, are notated using transposed ciphers that denote relative, rather than absolute tones. The term *surupan* refers to the specific modal position of these flexible scales in relation to the fixed *salendro* tuning. Thus in the first *madenda* scale, *madenda surupan 4 = T*, tone 4 in *madenda* corresponds to Tugu or pitch 1 in *salendro*. Notably, *pelog degung T = 3* is usually perceived as an independent tuning rather than as a specific modal transposition of *pelog*; as such this scale is more commonly known as *mataram*, *kobongan*, or, in *tembang Sunda*, *mandalungan* (see Williams 2001:105-106).

Fig. 5:5 Lili Suparli's scale chart

Tunings	Relative position of <i>salendro</i> , <i>pelog degung</i> & <i>madenda</i> scales																					
<i>salendro</i> (names of tones)	T	.	.	S	.	.	G	.	.	P	.	.	L	.	.	T	.	.	S	.	.	G
<i>salendro</i> (fixed ciphers)	1	.	.	5	.	.	4	.	.	3	.	.	2	.	.	1	.	.	5	.	.	4
<i>pelog degung</i> : <i>surupan</i> T = 1	1	.	.	5+	.	5	4	.	.	3	.	3-	.	.	2	1	.	.	5+	.	5	4
<i>pelog degung</i> : <i>surupan</i> T = 2	2	1	.	.	5+	.	5	4	.	.	3	.	3-	.	.	2	1	.	.	5+	.	5
<i>pelog degung</i> : <i>surupan</i> T = 3	3	.	3-	.	.	2	1	.	.	5+	.	5	4	.	.	3	.	3-	.	.	2	1
<i>madenda</i> : <i>surupan</i> 4 = T	4	3	.	3-	.	.	2	1	.	.	5+	.	5	.	.	4	3	.	3-	.	.	2
<i>madenda</i> : <i>surupan</i> 4 = P	2	1	.	.	5+	.	5	.	.	4	3	.	3-	.	.	2	1	.	.	5+	.	5
<i>madenda</i> : <i>surupan</i> 4 = G	.	5+	.	5	.	.	4	3	.	3-	.	.	2	1	.	.	5+	.	5	.	.	4

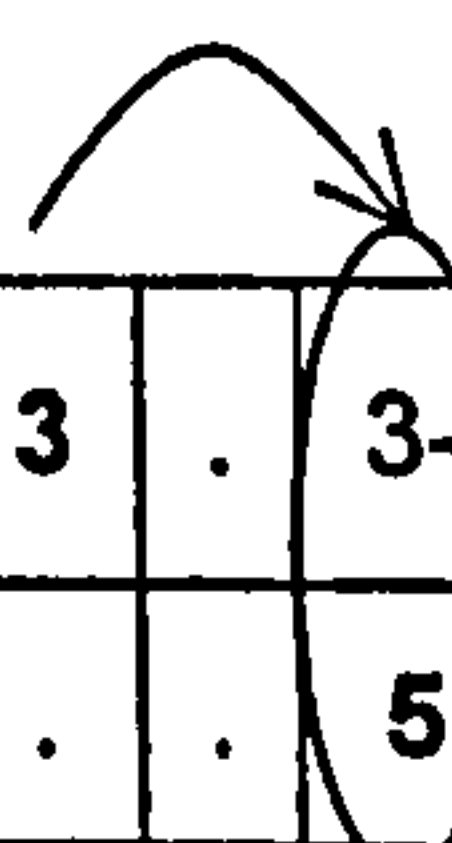
Tone names

- T = Tugu (1)
- S = Singgul (5)
- G = Galimer (4)
- P = Panelu (3)
- L = Loloran (2)

### 5.5.3 The theoretical tuning model and *gamelan degung* scales

It was previously noted that *degung* sets are now usually built with additional exchange keys, pots and gongs so that the instruments can be retuned from *pelog degung* to *madenda*. Lili Suparli explained that within Kusumadinata's theoretical model, both of these scales are regarded as the 'children of the parent *salendro* tuning' (*anak laras salendro*). As such, the *pelog degung* and *madenda* tunings of the *gamelan degung* are considered as metallic solidifications of more flexible vocal or *rebab* scales: two out of a range of transposable *salendro*-derived modes fixed in bronze (*p.c.*, 2001b). In practical terms, the switch from *pelog degung* to *madenda* on the *gamelan degung* involves exchanging all of the keys, pots and gongs that correspond to tone 3 (*pelog degung*) with 3- replacements that are approximately two hundred cents higher in pitch. As outlined in the technical notes at the beginning of this text, tone 3- in *pelog degung* [fixed ciphers] subsequently functions as tone 5//a [transposable ciphers] in *madenda*. According to Lili Suparli's table (fig. 5:5) these two scales equate to *pelog degung* T= 2 and *madenda* 4 = T.

Fig.5:6 Relationship between *pelog degung* and *madenda* on *gamelan degung*



<i>pelog</i> T = 2	5	4	.	.	3	.	3-	.	.	2	1
<i>madenda</i> 4 = T [transposable ciphers]	2	1	.	.	.	.	5	.	.	4	3

Clearly, within the microcosmic world of *gamelan degung*, the *pelog degung* and *madenda* scales operate as autonomous tunings rather than as part of any absolute *salendro* model or pan-Sundanese tonal system. Moreover, the relative position of each scale is not relevant because melody and accompaniment are bound together in a single tuning system. Nevertheless, Lili Suparli's table serves as a useful tool to discuss transposition from *gamelan salendro* to *gamelan degung*.



## 5.6 Transposition

A variety of different processes can be glossed as transposition in Sundanese music. These range from changing the absolute pitch-level at which pieces are performed to subtly modifying the internal intervallic structure of individual tunings and completely reworking material in different scales and modes. It seems that the most common reason for transposition within a given genre is to accommodate the vocal range of a particular singer. Singers may request that a *kacapi* player tunes to a different *suling* if, for example, they feel the instrument is pitched too high or low for comfort. The result of this type of transposition most closely resembles a change of ‘key’ in Western music. Unlike Western diatonic instruments, however, Sundanese instruments are not designed to be transposable in this way. To alter the overall pitch-level of an ensemble without affecting intervallic change usually requires retuning prior to performance (in the case of string instruments) or the substitution of one set of *gamelan* instruments for another.

The impracticality of the latter has compelled Sundanese musicians to find other ways of transposing vocal melodies. Sometimes, the pitch-level of a song is adjusted by using some form of modal transposition. In *gamelan salendro*, for instance, the *pelog degung* song *Kukupu* is normally accompanied by the *sekar alit Gendu 1 (4)*. Lili Suparli suggested that if a singer finds a particular *gamelan* too high, the *salendro* accompaniment may be modally transposed down from 1 (4) to 2 (5); the song can then be performed without significant melodic alteration at this lower pitch-level (*p.c.*, 2001d).<sup>10</sup> Musicians may even change tuning in search of a more appropriate vocal register. Cook cites the example of the *tembang* song *Campaka Kembar*, a *madenda (sorog) panambih* that many singers find “uncomfortably high” and which, as a result, is sometimes performed a fourth lower in the *pelog* tuning (1993:64).

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<sup>10</sup> Suparli commented that such transposition would, however, result in technical difficulties for the *rebab* player.

### 5.6.1 Transposing repertoire for *gamelan degung*

The absolute pitch-level of the majority of *gamelan degung* sets is higher than that used in *tembang Sunda*, but lower than most *gamelan salendro*. Musicians generally use the length of a corresponding six-hole *suling* to describe the pitch of an ensemble. Most *degung* are tuned to a *suling* of *ukuran* (size) 56 to 57 cm, although sets may be as low as 58 cm or as high as 53 cm. *Tembang Sunda* groups, on the other hand, tend to tune *kacapi* to *suling* ranging from 60 to 62 cm, while *gamelan salendro* seem to be fixed somewhere around *ukuran* 52 to 53 cm. A *wayang* singer once remarked to me that she did not enjoy singing with *gamelan degung* because the lower pitch of the ensemble means that she finds it difficult to project her voice as powerfully as usual. *Tembang* singers, in contrast, more frequently complain that a particular *degung* set is too high for comfort. Apart from transplanting material from one pitch-level to another, adapting *gamelan salendro* repertoire for *gamelan degung* also demands the intervallic ‘ironing-out’ of the melodic contour, as well as more substantial changes of tuning and/or mode.

### 5.6.2 Transposition: *pelog/salendro* and *pelog degung* $T = 1$

One form of transposition operating between *gamelan pelog-salendro* and *gamelan degung* is the relatively straightforward substitution of one tuning for another: tone 1 in *pelog* or *salendro* translates as tone 1 in *pelog degung*. While the cipher representation of the melodic contour (and on certain instruments the motor patterning used to play it) thus remains constant, the sizes of individual intervals are radically transformed. Although, to the uninitiated ear the resulting transposition may sound unrecognisably mutated, the melody is instantly identifiable as the ‘same’ to any experienced Sundanese musician.

This type of adaptation is most appropriate for *gamelan pelog-salendro sekar ageung* such as *Gunung Sari* in which the entire piece, including the vocal and *rebab* parts, are confined to a single tuning. Nonetheless, some pieces in this category exist in distinct *salendro* and *pelog* versions and players have to decide which version to transpose for *degung*. When I came to learn the piece *Candiranrang* on *gamelan degung*, for example, Ade Komaran bewildered me by asking if I wanted to learn the



version that ends on *goong* tone 5 or the version that ends on *goong* tone 3. Some months later I discovered that in *gamelan pelog-salendro Candirangrang* is played in *salendro* with *goong* tone 5, and in *pelog sorog* with *goong* tone 3 [5+ fixed ciphers]. The *pelog* version appears to be the one most commonly adapted for *gamelan degung*.

### 5.6.3 Transposition: *salendro* and *pelog degung* T = 2

Adapting bi-tonal repertoire (songs in which the melody and accompaniment are in different tunings) from *gamelan salendro* to *gamelan degung* is slightly more complicated. As discussed above, the *pelog degung* and *madenda* scales used in *gamelan salendro* are not identical to those in *gamelan degung* because the former have to stretch over the wider intervals of the *salendro* accompaniment. Thus when adapting a *pelog degung* or *madenda* song from *gamelan salendro* to *gamelan degung*, singers have to adjust to both the altered pitch-level and the specific intervallic structure of the tuning of the accompanying ensemble; the latter necessitates the subtle remoulding of the melodic contour. Perhaps more importantly, the *salendro* frameworks structurally underpinning *gamelan salendro* songs of this type also have to be transposed into either the *degung's pelog degung* or *madenda* tuning. Notably, in this type of adaptation the tuning of the instrumental accompaniment is dictated by that of the vocal melody. This is easier to explain by means of a concrete example.

As stated above, the *pelog degung* song *Kukupu* (*pelog degung* T = 2) is usually accompanied by the *gamelan salendro* piece *Gendu* 1 (4). When performing *Kukupu* on *gamelan degung*, however, both melody and accompaniment must be realised in the bronze ensemble's *pelog degung* tuning. Thus *Gendu* 1 (4) is transposed into the tuning of the vocal melody (*pelog degung surupan* T = 2) to become 2 (5), or the *sekar alit* known as *Catrik*. Players often claim that, despite their different names, *Catrik* and *Gendu* are the 'same' piece because tones 1 and 4 in *salendro* share the same modal function as tones 2 and 5 in *pelog degung*.

Fig. 5:7 Relationship between *salendro* and *pelog T = 2* scales

<i>salendro</i>	T	.	.	S	.	.	G	.	.	P	.	.	L	.	.
<i>salendro</i>	1	.	.	5	.	.	4	.	.	3	.	.	2	.	.
<i>pelog T = 2</i>	2	1	.	.	.	.	5	4	.	.	3	.	.	.	.

#### 5.6.4 Melodies that are realisable in multiple tunings

The song *Tonggeret* is an interesting case study for transposition because in *gamelan salendro* the vocal melody is realisable in three separate tunings: *salendro*, *madenda 4 = T*, and *pelog degung T = 3* (or *mataram*, *kobongan* or *mandalungan*). *Tonggeret* is often performed with three verses and each verse sung in a different tuning. Naturally, the *gamelan salendro* accompaniment is fixed in *salendro* throughout. Figure 5:8 illustrates the skeletal tonal structure of *Tonggeret*, the principal *goong* and *kenong* tones, 4, 1 and 2, outlined in box form.

Fig. 5:8 Tonal outline of *Tonggeret*

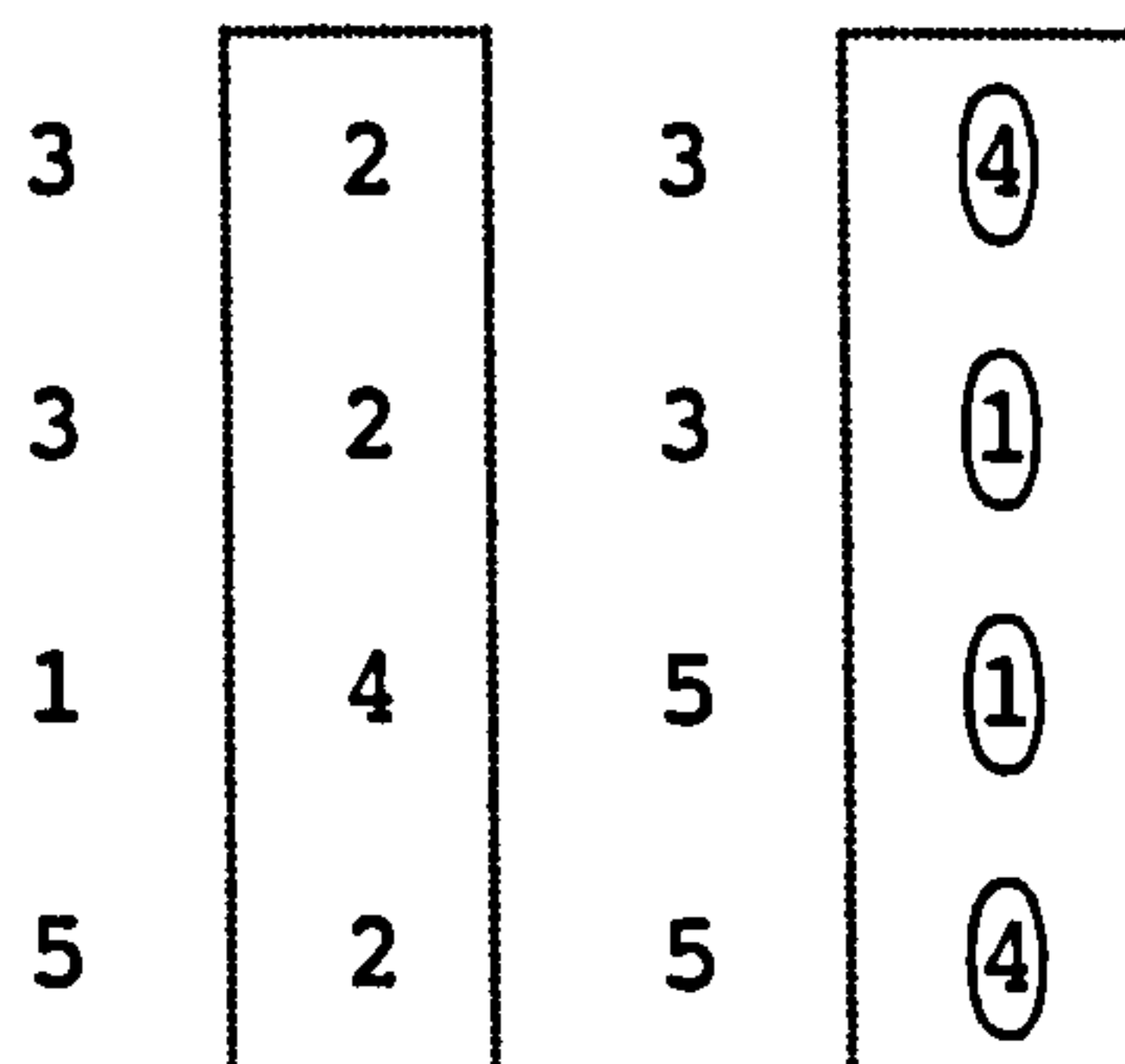




Figure 5:9 demonstrates how the *salendro*, *madenda 4 = T*, and *pelog degung T = 3* (*mataram*) scales correspond to the principal pitches of this accompanying tonal framework.

Fig. 5:9 Comparison of *salendro*, *pelog T = 3* and *madenda 4 = T* tunings

<i>salendro</i>	T	.	.	S	.	.	G	.	.	P	.	.	L	.	.
<i>salendro</i>	1	.	.	5	.	.	4	.	.	3	.	.	2	.	.
<i>pelog T = 3</i>	3	.	.	.	.	2	1	.	.	.	.	5	4	.	.
<i>madenda 4 = T</i>	4	3	.	.	.	.	2	1	.	.	.	.	5	.	.

Figure 5:10 presents the basic melodic contour of the first *goong* phrase of *Tonggeret* as realised in all three tunings in *gamelan salendro*. In order to facilitate comparison, the notated examples have been transcribed at the same pitch-level as the equivalent *degung* examples below (fig. 5:11) and take no account of rhythmic delivery or embellishment. Western notation demonstrates that each transposition shares the same ‘absolute’ *goong* and *kenong* tones (notated here as pitches B, F# and E), but is distinguished by a discrete sequence of intervals. Sundanese ciphers emphasise the modal disparity between the three versions.

Fig. 5:10 Comparison of the first *goong* phrase of *Tonggeret*

CD track 15

i) *salendro*

3 4 4 3 2 3 2 2 2 2 3 3 3 3 2 2 2 1 3 4 4  
 Tong-ge-ret, tong-ge-ret, tong-ge-ret di-ge-ret pang-set, di-ge-ret pang-set

ii) *madenda* (4 = T)

1 2 2 1 5 1 5 5 5 5 5 1 1 2 1 5 4+ 4 3 1 2 2  
 Tong-ge-ret, tong-ge-ret, tong-ge-ret di-ba-wa leum-pang, di-ba-wa leum-pang

iii) *mataram* (*pelog degung* T = 3)

5 1 1 5 4 5 4 4 4 4 5 1 1 5 4 4 3 4 5 3 4 5 1 2 1  
 Tong-ge-ret, tong-ge-ret, tong-ge-ret sa-da ti beu-rang, sa-da ti beu-rang

*Tonggeret* can be performed in both *pelog degung* and *madenda* on *gamelan degung*, though the *pelog* version is the better known. The *madenda* realisation of the song in *gamelan degung* is simply an intervallically ironed-out version of that which is performed in *gamelan salendro* (compare figure 5:10ii with 5:11ii) though, of course, the accompanying tonal framework also has to be transposed into *madenda* accordingly (see 5.6.3). However, the *pelog degung* version of *Tonggeret* that is used in *gamelan degung* and *tembang Sunda* does not use the same sequence of intervals as the *pelog degung* T = 3 (*mataram*) transposition employed with a *salendro* accompaniment. Instead, the *pelog* version on *gamelan degung* replicates the *madenda* model, simply flattening *madenda* tone 5 [3- fixed ciphers] so that it functions as tone 3 in *pelog*



*degung*  $T = 2$ .<sup>11</sup> In other words, once the *degung* set has been retuned from *madenda* to *pelog degung*, musicians employ the same keys, pots, and gongs to realise the song in both tunings, the absolute pitch of the *goong* tone remaining unaltered from one version to the next. When transcribed using Western notation it is instantly apparent that the *pelog degung* and *madenda gamelan degung* versions of *Tonggeret* only differ by a single tone. Conversely, transposable Sundanese ciphers emphasise the modal discrepancy between both versions. In *madenda*, the song ends on *goong* 2 [5 fixed ciphers] while the *degung* version finishes on *goong* 5.

Fig. 5:11 Comparison of the first *goong* phrase of *Tonggeret* (*gamelan degung*)

⊙ CD tracks 16 & 17

i) *pelog degung*

4 5 5 4 3 4 3 3 3 2 3 4 5 4 3 3 3 3 2 3 4 4 3 4 5 4 5  
Tong-ge-ret, tong-ge- ret, tong-ge-ret di-ge-ret pang-set, tong-ge-ret di-ge-ret pang-set

ii) *madenda*

1 2 2 1 5 1 5 5 5 3 4+ 5 1 1 2 1 5 4+ 4 3 1 5 1 2 1 2  
[4 5 5 4 3- 4 3- 3- 1 2+ 3- 4 4 5 4 3- 2+ 2 1 4 3- 4 5 4 5]  
Tong-ge-ret, tong-ge- ret, tong-ge-ret di-ge-ret pang-set, di-ge-ret pang- set

<sup>11</sup> The *pelog degung*  $T = 2$  version of *Tonggeret* cannot be played with a *gamelan salendro* accompaniment because this *pelog* scale does not have any pitch in common with tone 2 (the *kenong* tone in this piece) in *salendro*.

This is not, however, the only form of transposition that occurs between *pelog degung* and *madenda* in *gamelan degung*. The *madenda* song *Sekar Manis*, for example, is accompanied by the *sekar alit Lalayaran* 3 (5) [1 (3-) fixed ciphers]. When transposed into *pelog degung* the entire song is shifted down a perfect fourth so that the both the *pelog* and *madenda* versions end on *goong* tone 5 [3- fixed ciphers]. This means that in contrast to *Tonggeret* above, the modal function of individual tones remains constant from one tuning to the other but musicians have to change the actual keys, pots, and gongs that they play. Transposable ciphers emphasise the modal similarity between both versions of the song, while Western staff notation highlights the intervallic discrepancies and shift in absolute pitch that differentiates the one from the other.

Fig. 5:12 First phrase of *Sekar Manis* in *madenda* and *pelog degung* tunings

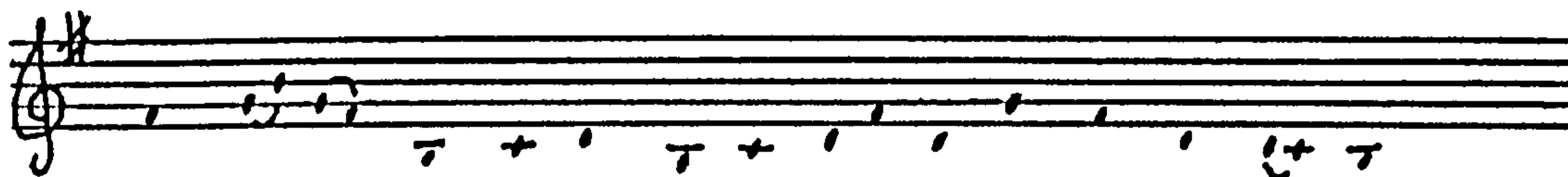
⊙ CD tracks 18 & 19

(i) *madenda*



2 15 12 5 4 3 5 4 3 2 3 1 2 3 34 5  
 [5 43- 45 3- 2 1 3- 2 1 5 1 4 5 1 12 3-]  
 Ku - lu - cu ma - la - ti, nu a - ya di, ta - man ta - man sa - ri

(ii) *pelog degung*



2 15 12 5 4 3 5 4 3 2 3 1 2 3 34 5  
 Ku - lu - cu ma - la - ti, nu a - ya di, ta - man ta - man sa - ri



*Degung* musicians could not always provide a declarative explanation as to why in the context of a specific piece one type of transposition, tuning or mode is preferable to another. To this end, existing Sundanese music theory is limited in that it seems to emphasise mode at the structural rather than melodic level and, moreover, considers the *pelog degung* and *madenda* scales in relationship to an all-encompassing *salendro* model rather than in direct relationship to each other. Nevertheless, the practical problems of vocal range aside, musicians do implicitly express modal preferences when they state that a song does not sound right in a certain tuning or that a certain melodic contour works better in one modal transposition than another. My research on the Sundanese *suling* suggests that smaller melodic units are also governed by intuitively understood modal conventions. Whilst learning to play this instrument I discovered an interesting modal correspondence between the fingering patterns used on the four-hole *suling* (*suling degung*) in *pelog* and the six-hole *suling* in *madenda*. I found, for example, that cadential flourishes leading to tone 5 (all holes closed) in *pelog* on the four-hole instrument, and to tone 5 [3- fixed ciphers] (all holes closed)<sup>12</sup> in *madenda* on the six-hole instrument, often employ analogous fingering patterns. Significantly, these same movement patterns do not successfully translate onto the six-hole *suling* in *pelog* because the altered modal result is considered to sound unusual and inappropriate (Swindells 1996:70-77). A larger scale analysis of the ways in which individual motifs, phrases and melodies can be ‘satisfactorily’ (to Sundanese ears) transposed onto different pitches, as well as into separate tunings, would be one way of gaining further insights into the microstructure of mode and melody in Sundanese music.

### 5.6.5 Pieces less suitable for *degung* adaptation

Many Sundanese melodies are not pentatonic. Songs, such as *Tonggeret*, incorporate tones occurring outside of the fixed scale of the accompanying ensemble. In *gamelan degung*, these ‘accidental’ pitches also serve as an important means of melodic embellishment for the vocalist and *suling* player. However, the *suling* does not have the extensive tonal range of the *rebab* and, along with the *degung* singer, is restricted to

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<sup>12</sup> In fact, the bottom hole on the six-hole *suling* is only partially closed to play tone 5 [3-] in *madenda*.

performing passing modulations that do not substantially conflict with the fixed *pelog degung* and *madenda* tunings of the accompanying *degung* ensemble. As discussed above, a *salendro* accompaniment serves as a more tonally impartial canvas against which singers and *rebab* players are freer to develop melodies that stray into other tunings and modal transpositions. Consequently, when adapting certain *gamelan salendro* songs for *gamelan degung*, tonal compromise is unavoidable.

As part of a fieldwork recording session I asked the *gamelan* singer Iyan Arliani to perform a *gamelan degung* version of the *opat wilet gamelan salendro* song *Kulu Kulu Bem*. I was specifically prompted to do this after hearing a couple of musicians discussing the merits of a *degung* adaptation of this song that is included on Nano Suratno's *degung kawih* cassette *Kawaas*. Although usually considered a *madenda* song, the tuning of the vocal melody in this song is obscured by the constant borrowing of tones from *pelog* and *salendro* systems. In fact, in Pandi Upandi's book of *opat wilet* notations, *Hubungan antara Gending dengan Sekar pada Lagu-lagu Opat Wilet* ('The Relationship between Instrumental Accompaniments and Vocal Melodies in the *Opat Wilet* Repertoire'), the melodic outline of *Kulu Kulu Bem* is notated in "*salendro & degung 2 = T*" (1989:54). Tellingly, Iyan Arliani politely declined my recording request explaining that, although theoretically possible, she personally felt that the song would have to be forced to fit the *madenda* tuning of the *gamelan degung* and that in her opinion the melody would be 'violated' (*diperkosa*).

Some *gamelan salendro* songs involve an even more significant change of *laras* (scale) or *surupan* (mode) mid-piece. In other words, certain melodies 'modulate' from one tuning to another or from one modal transposition of a scale to another. Describing the latter, Cook points to the example of the song *Renggong Gancang* [2 (1) 3 (4)]. In the first half of the song the singer uses the *madenda* scale (*madenda 4 = T*) "which has 1 2 4 in common with *salendro*". In the second half, she makes a modal switch to the *madenda* scale (*madenda 4 = P*) "which has 1 3 4 in common with *salendro*" (Cook 1992:25). On Lili Suparli's diagram, these two *madenda* scales correspond to the *salendro* tuning as follows:



Fig. 5:13 Comparison of *madenda* modes used in *Renggong Gancang*

<i>salendro</i>	T	.	.	S	.	.	G	.	.	P	.	.	L	.	.
<i>salendro</i>	1	.	.	5	.	.	4	.	.	3	.	.	2	.	.
<i>madenda 4 = T</i>	4	3	.	.	.	.	2	1	.	.	.	.	5	.	.
<i>madenda 4 = P</i>	2	1	.	.	.	.	5	.	.	4	3	.	.	.	.

As the *gamelan degung* is limited to a single version of the *pelog degung* and *madenda* scales, the ensemble cannot accommodate such radical internal transposition without a major reworking or, indeed, ‘violation’ of the original melodic line.

### Summary

This chapter has explored the process of cross-genre adaptation, a specific type of transformation that constitutes an important creative outlet in Sundanese music.

Sundanese musicians are masters of arrangement and adaptation, the borrowing and idiomatic translation of repertoire from one genre to another being a principal means by which Bandung artists have chosen to innovate their musical traditions. As outlined in chapter 1, cross-genre adaptation has played a particularly significant role in the development of *gamelan degung* post-1960, with Bandung groups appropriating pieces from sources as diverse as the folk genre *ketuk tilu* and the formerly aristocratic art form of *tembang Sunda*. It is, however, from the repertoires of *gamelan pelog-salendro* that the *degung* has borrowed most freely.

At the beginning of this chapter, an examination of Sundanese classificatory schemes paved the way for a more focused discussion about the ways in which different types of musical form facilitate or complicate the process of adapting repertoire for *gamelan degung*. That structural modification is often a necessary part of such transformation was demonstrated via the analysis of *degung* versions of *tembang Sunda* and *gamelan pelog-salendro* pieces. The spotlight then shifted to Sundanese tuning systems and cross-genre transposition. Using existing theoretical constructs presented to me in lessons with Lili Suparli, the chapter concluded by relating Sundanese music

theory to *degung* performance practice and identifying the various ways in which *gamelan salendro* repertoire is, or is not, transposable into the fixed *pelog degung* and *madenda* scales of the *gamelan degung*.

Chapter 6 will now chart the development of *gamelan degung* on cassette, exploring the way in which the local recording industry has functioned as one of the main catalysts for new types of composition, arrangement and adaptation.



## Chapter 6

### Negotiating the local and the global: *degung* on cassette

#### 6.1 'The rise of the regional cassette industry

Since the first gramophone recordings and radio broadcasts of the 1920s/30s,<sup>1</sup> the mass media has functioned as an increasingly important source of patronage for *gamelan degung* musicians. As outlined in chapter 1, the establishment of RRI Bandung's in-house *degung* group in the mid 1950s is widely considered to have brought the ensemble back from the brink of near extinction. However, while the RRI group was active for over three decades, radio soon began to be eclipsed by the emergence of a dynamic local recording industry. From the early 1970s onwards, mass-produced cassettes came to be the foremost media for the transmission of *degung* music.<sup>2</sup> This chapter charts the development of *gamelan degung* on cassette and identifies the key figures implicated in the ensemble's recording industry driven evolution.

Cassette technology has revolutionised the dissemination, transmission and consumption of musics in many parts of the developing world. Manuel writes that in contrast to vinyl, the affordability of cassettes and cassette players has rendered the medium accessible to a wider range of rural and lower-income groups (1993:xiv). At the same time, the simplicity and lower costs of cassette manufacturing has also resulted in the proliferation of smaller recording companies seeking to promote regional genres and home grown local stars. "The net result is a remarkable decentralisation, democratisation, and dispersal of the music industry at the expense of multinational and national oligopolies" (*ibid.*).

In the wake of Indonesia's Lokananta recordings (see 1.2.7) came a new breed of entrepreneurial cassette producer. The establishment of privately owned recording companies in Jakarta and Bandung in the late 1960s and early 1970s began to offer a wider pool of Sundanese musicians the opportunity to achieve some degree of media

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<sup>1</sup> The first recordings of *gamelan degung* were released on 78 rpm discs by foreign companies such as Odeon and Ultraphone (a comprehensive review of the early history of the recording industry in Indonesia remains to be conducted). Legal radio broadcasting in Indonesia began in 1925, with *gamelan degung* performances known to have been broadcast at least as early as the mid-1930s (see 1.1.7).

<sup>2</sup> For further information about the impact of the Indonesian cassette industry on Sundanese music see Williams (2001:94-107) and Jurriëns (2001:77-85).

recognition and commercial success. *Degung*, particularly prior to the peaking of the *jaipongan* craze in the late 1970s and early 1980s, appears to have been the industry's Sundanese *gamelan* of choice. Heins, who undertook fieldwork in Bandung in 1967-1968 and again in 1973 and 1975, contrasts the number of mass-produced *degung* cassettes available in Bandung shops at that time with the virtual absence of *gamelan pelog-salendro* recordings (1977:65).

Like radio broadcasting and multimedia performances in the 1950s and 1960s, the cassette industry also served as a creative catalyst, stimulating the ongoing expansion and modernisation of *degung* repertoires. Discussing the marketing of *tembang Sunda* recordings Williams notes, "Each cassette is expected to have at least one musical feature which separates it from any other previous cassette" (1990:193). The competition for a commercially successful *degung* cassette similarly prompted *degung* musicians to experiment with novel forms of arrangement, composition and instrumentation. At the same time, the *degung klasik* pieces, associated as they are with the outmoded values of the aristocracy and the colonial-era courts, became increasingly marginalized on recordings.<sup>3</sup>

It has previously been noted that the Indonesian cassette industry was instrumental in the emergence of the Sundanese genres *jaipongan* (Manuel 1988:213-219) and *kacapi suling* (Cook 1991:4-5). In a similar way, cassette production also led to the creation of more popular forms of *degung* repertoire. Novel *degung* compositions and arrangements are often referred to as *degung kreasi* (*degung* creations), although in some circles the term *kreasi* more specifically denotes the avant-garde style of composition propagated at formal education institutions. In fact, there is now some disparity between the types of *degung* piece promoted by the recording industry, the working repertoires of groups in Bandung and the styles of piece found on the curricula of institutions such as STSI and SMKI. Furthermore, while *gamelan degung* groups at weddings do commonly play the latest 'hit' songs that they have learnt from cassettes, some types of repertoire promoted by the recording industry have never made the transition from tape to live performance (see 6.2.2).

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<sup>3</sup> Some musicians are actively trying to redress the imbalance. In 2002, GNP records released a series of seven albums of *degung klasik* under the artistic direction of the *suling* player Endang Sukandar.



In 2000-2001, music shops in Bandung were stocked with a relatively large assortment of *gamelan degung* cassettes ranging from new releases to recordings dating back to the 1970s. These cassettes are found on a variety of different commercial labels. The most well known of the Bandung-based (or formerly based) production houses to have commissioned *gamelan degung* recordings include Whisnu, SP (Suara Parahyangan) Records, Asmara, Jugala and Hidayat. GNP (Gema Nada Pertiwi) and Dian Records, both located in Jakarta, have also produced numerous *degung* cassettes.

Despite the wide selection of *degung* recordings available, charting the history of *gamelan degung* on cassette is problematic. Not only are older titles, often on now defunct labels, difficult to get hold of but also new recordings that have not sold in sufficient numbers (*tidak laku*) are routinely withdrawn from shop shelves and returned to cassette companies to be reused as blank tapes for future releases. As master copies are often reused in the same way, many recordings have been irretrievably erased in the process. In addition, producers tend not to include recording dates on cassette sleeves in the fear that if an album is seen to be too old the public will refuse to purchase it. Consequently, it is not always possible to ascertain the precise order in which recordings emerged and, therefore, to identify cassettes that were in some way musically pioneering from the subsequent imitations that such releases typically spawn. Nevertheless, certain cassettes stand out as having made more of an impact on both the musical community and wider public than others. Indeed, several commercially successful cassettes dating from the late 1970s not only came to be treated as blueprints for subsequent *degung* recordings but have, themselves, continued to dominate the market ever since.

## **6.2 Seminal post-Lokananta cassette releases of the 1970s and 1980s**

### **6.2.1 *Degung instrumental***

The oldest cassette production company in Bandung, Asmara, opened in the early 1970s. As with the Lokananta recordings, RRI's Parahyangan ensemble was the first *degung* group to record on this label, producing a series of albums under the artistic direction of Entjar Tjarmedi. It appears as though these early commercial recordings were profitable because by the mid-to-late 1970s other cassette companies decided to try to replicate the success of "Tjarmedi's group" (Koestyara, *p.c.*, 2000).

Koestyara, a former RRI *gamelan* musician and erstwhile member of the Parahyangan troupe, recalled how he was approached by a producer from Dian and persuaded to organise a *degung* recording for this Jakarta-based company. Koestyara's Gapura group – itself made up of RRI musicians – began by collaborating with the female *tembang* singer and songwriter Saodah (Saodah Harnadi Natakusumah) on an album of *degung* music to accompany parts of the Sundanese wedding ceremony. This was swiftly followed by a compilation of *degung klasik* pieces. Unfortunately, copies of these recordings are no longer available for analysis as both proved to be commercial flops and were quickly withdrawn from sale. Third time around, however, Gapura came up with *Sangkala* (c. 1978), one of the most popular *degung* cassettes of all time. According to Koestyara, *Sangkala* means 'time';<sup>4</sup> members of Gapura are said to have chosen this name because they rather aptly considered that their time had come to make a mark on the Sundanese arts scene. *Sangkala* comprises lively instrumental versions of popular Sundanese songs and *gamelan pelog-salendro* pieces in a style that Koestyara describes as “*degung instrumental yang tidak klasik*” (non-classical instrumental *degung*) (p.c., 2000). This type of *degung* arrangement is now usually known as *degung instrumental*.

A wide range of musical influences are discernible on the album. Koestyara's title track, *Sangkala*, like Tjarmedi's *Kidang Mas* (Lokananta ACD-017), for example, was constructed by stringing together *degung* adaptations of existing pieces. Other tracks, such as *Baramaen* and *Goyang Karawang*, are more clearly influenced by Koswara's *wanda anyar* style of prescribed melodic arrangement. The piece *Sangkala* also stands out because it incorporates a *suling* solo that is improvised over a *gamelan* tremolo in the manner popularised in theatrical productions and ceremonials in the 1960s. Koestyara argued that the album owes much of its success to the *tembang* musician, Burhan Sukarma, whose *suling* playing is less shrill and hectic than that found on many older *degung* recordings. Gently lilting melodies on the *suling* are underpinned by the persistent rhythmic patterns of the *kendang*, an instrument that is audibly privileged in the final recording mix. The rhythmic groove is also accentuated by the then unorthodox use of the *kecrek* (a *gamelan* instrument consisting of percussive metal plates which are chinked together using a beater). Some of Koestyara's RRI colleagues were initially critical of this addition, accusing him of damaging the *degung* tradition for

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<sup>4</sup> *Sangkala* (= *sengkalan*) is translated as “chronogram” in Echols & Shadily (1997).



the sake of financial gain. He laughingly recollected that these same musicians soon began to use the *kecrek* in their own groups, the instrument swiftly becoming a standard feature on subsequent *degung* recordings (*p.c.*, 2000). Despite attempts to replicate the success of *Sangkala*, including the release of *Sangkala II* and *Gentra Sangkala*, Gapura's subsequent *degung* albums remain overshadowed by the enduring popularity of the original recording.

### 6.2.2 Ujang Suryana

Ujang Suryana – now the leading exponent of *degung instrumental* – also emerged on the cassette scene in the late 1970s. His group, Suara Parahyangan (later known as Gentra Pasundan and Suryana Group) produced their first *degung* recording shortly after the release of *Sangkala*. Unlike Koestyara, who was a *wayang* musician prior to his employment at RRI, Ujang Suryana's early musical interest lay in Western popular ballads, Hawaiian style songs and *keroncong*. In the early 1960s, whilst still only in his twenties, Suryana began to turn his attention to Sundanese music. Beginning by learning to play some of Koswara's compositions on the *kacapi siter*, he soon began to try and write songs of his own. Suryana also became increasingly interested in *gamelan* music and, in the early 1970s, began to teach himself to play *degung* by setting up a working group to perform at weddings and other functions.

Suryana's debut recording, an album of *kacapi biola* (an ensemble comprising *kacapi siter* and violin) arrangements, was released in 1975. His first *degung* recordings followed in 1978/1979. Although Suryana's first two *degung* recordings, *Karembong Kayas* and *Kabaya Bandung*, were both well received, it was his third album, *Sabilulungan* (SP Records c. 1979) released later that year that was to rival *Sangkala* in terms of its ongoing popularity and commercial success. *Sabilulungan*, the title track of which is an instrumental arrangement of the popular Koko Koswara song of the same name, remains like *Sangkala* one of the biggest selling *degung* cassettes to this day (Suryana, *p.c.*, 2000).

Suryana's *degung instrumental* arrangements are immediately identifiable by their uncomplicated, childlike feel, with 'the Suryana sound' encapsulated by the composer's own trademark style of unembellished *suling* playing. According to Ceppy



Anungsang Riyana, the chief sound engineer at Bandung's Jugala studios, many fans consider Suryana's lack of specialist competence on the *suling* to be a central part of his music's charm. Producers will sometimes even ask for quirky mistakes to be kept in the final mix, considering the odd slip up to enhance a recording (*p.c.*, 2000). In more recent years, Suryana has further exploited his distinctive *suling* sound by producing cassettes of *degung rampak suling* in which multiple *suling* tracks are sounded in a homogenous unison. Simple instrumental melodies are also a defining feature of Suryana's arrangements. Again, influenced by Koswara's *wanda anyar* style of composition, tuneful themes are presented in a clear-cut question and answer format, the *cempres* and *peking* usually performing alternate phrases with the *suling*. Also conspicuous in Suryana's recordings is the mechanical quality of the underlying beat which, following *Sangkala*, is emphasised by the use of the *kecrek*. In fact, many *degung instrumental* and *degung kawih* recordings now routinely use a drum machine.

Operating on the fringes of more formally established networks of musicians (such as those based around institutions like RRI or STSI), Suryana's music is created exclusively for the cassette industry; as a result, it is somewhat disengaged from Bandung's wider musical community. Since, outside of the studio situation, attractively dressed female singers are considered an indispensable part of any *degung* performance, Suryana's instrumental pieces are rarely performed live. Cook also points out that this type of instrumental arrangement demands the selective amplification of the *degung* ensemble and a carefully engineered sound mix that is difficult to achieve outside of the studio setting (*p.c.*, 2003b). Nevertheless, a younger generation of *degung* musicians do consider Ujang Suryana to be a significant figure in the *degung* 'tradition'. Suryana told me that many STSI students and graduates are now keen to join his group, with a couple of younger composers also having requested his permission to rework some of his better-known compositions on their own *degung* recordings. There is certainly no doubt that Ujang Suryana's music is hugely popular with the general public at large. With a greater commercial output than any of his contemporaries, Suryana stated that since the late 1970s, barring a period during the Indonesian financial crisis in the late 1990s, he has released on average one cassette every three months (*p.c.*, 2000). In 2002, Ceppy Anungsang Riyana (at Jugala) tellingly made the comment that *degung* recordings were currently few and far between, "apart from, of course, Suryana releases" (*p.c.*, 2002).



The young *degung* composer, Iik Setiawan, suggested that Suryana's commercial success could be explained in terms of the immediacy of the *degung instrumental* genre's uncontroversial appeal. Without *tembang Sunda*'s overt ties to the feudal past and lacking the more risqué connotations of other types of more erotic or animistic rural folk genres, Suryana's catchy arrangements serve to provide Bandung's Muslim middle classes with a cheerfully inoffensive form of regional background music that is suitable for both private and public consumption (Setiawan, *p.c.*, 2000). *Degung* cassettes often replace or supplement live ensembles at traditional functions in Bandung and are also played to audibly reinforce the ethnic identity of Sundanese cafés and restaurants in West Java and beyond. On various occasions I overheard Bandung musicians express pride in the fact that, unlike most Indonesian regional musics, several Sundanese genres have found new audiences outside of the cultural confines of West Java. Interestingly, recordings of *degung instrumental* have proved particularly popular in Bali where they commonly function as a type of exotic easy listening in many of the shops and eateries lining the streets of the island's tourist hotspots.

It is often commented that *degung* is the most accessible *gamelan* music to non-Indonesian ears. *Degung instrumental* particularly lends itself to non-Sundanese audiences because uninitiated listeners generally seem to find the foreign song texts and alien timbres of unfamiliar vocal styles more abstruse. Indeed, both *Sabilulungan* and *Sangkala* continue to be tremendously popular with foreign holidaymakers on Bali, the island's cassette retailers not appearing to be unduly concerned that their customers may be under the impression that this music is local to Bali. As Stokes points out, the "disintegration of history and authenticity has been promoted by, and is in turn a product of, the media industries who, after all, have to sell their product to as many people as possible" (1994a:21). In fact, the commodification of *degung* has recently been taken a stage further by Balinese record producers eager to cash in on the success of *degung instrumental*. In 2000, several volumes of *Degung Bali* (Bali Records), a computer-generated Balinese pastiche of Suryana's inimitable *degung* sound, were on sale in music shops across the island. Although the *gamelan* timbre employed on these recordings has the characteristic shimmer of Balinese metallophones, the unison melodies, synthesised *suling* and ubiquitous 'chinking' of the *kecrek* clearly mimic the original Sundanese product. In what appears to be a counter-response to this Balinese

appropriation of a Sundanese musical form, the Bandung-based group Sambasunda have released two cassettes of Sundanese music performed on a retuned Balinese *goong kebyar* (see 6.4.3).

### 6.2.3 *Degung kawih* on cassette

Apart from *degung instrumental*, the late 1970s also saw the release of several influential *degung kawih* cassettes. For example, around the same time as they were working on *Sangkala*, Koestyara's Gapura group were also involved in a recording project with the *tembang* singer Ida Widawati. The resultant cassette, *Tilam Sono*, became another commercial success for the Dian label. Featuring a range of *kawih* songs drawn from genres as diverse as *ketuk tilu* and *tembang Sunda*, this recording also brought together musical personnel from distinct Sundanese genres. As noted in chapter 4, Koestyara chose to feature the vocalist Ida Widawati on this particular album because he felt that the softer timbre of this *tembang* singer was a better match for the *degung* than the more strident vocal tone of the Sundanese *pasinden*. The decision to utilise a single singer was criticised by some of Koestyara's RRI contemporaries who believed that he should have used the institution's trademark *rampak sekar* choral style. However, far more controversial at the time was his decision to utilise the male *gamelan* singer Dadi Rosadi on the recording. Having a female *tembang* singer performing with a male *gamelan* singer, particularly on *tembang* songs such as *Angin Peuting* (see 5.3), provoked much heated debate. The pairing of Ida Widawati with Dadi Rosadi breached an important social as well as musical gulf, and many *tembang* musicians did not welcome this contravention of a culturally entrenched socio-musical boundary. Even so, most *tembang* performers are said to have been pleasantly surprised when they heard the final result (Koestyara, *p.c.*, 2000).

### 6.2.4 Nano S.

The prolific composer Nano Suratno also released his first *degung* recording in the late 1970s. Unlike both Koestyara and Ujang Suryana, Nano Suratno is a former student of KOKAR (now SMKI) and ASTI (now STSI), and as such, one of the first generation of cassette composers to have emerged from Bandung's formal music education scene.



Suratno is now mainly identified with *degung kawih* and pop Sunda in much the same way that Ujang Suryana is associated with *degung instrumental*. Nevertheless, this was not Suratno's original intention; his first *degung* cassette, *Panglayungan* (Ria Records c. 1977), combines original songs sung by Lien Herlina with instrumental compositions and *degung klasik* pieces. It is, though, indisputably as a songwriter that Nano Suratno has since been most prolific. His *kawih* compositions have not only been disseminated by his own group Genra Madya (founded in 1972), but have also been commissioned by many of Bandung's other leading *degung* ensembles. The year after *Panglayungan*, for instance, the Jugala-based Dewi Pramanik group released *Tegang Asih*, a *degung kawih* cassette that features four of Suratno's songs performed by the *tembang* singer Euis Komariah. Over the years many of West Java's other leading singers (including Ida Widawati, Tati Saleh, Mamah Dasimah and Idjah Hadidjah) have also starred on Suratno's *degung* recordings; the composer explained that he usually embarks on a new song with a particular singer's vocal sound already in mind (*p.c.*, 2000a).

As outlined in chapter 1, Nano Suratno's compositional style is heavily influenced by the *wanda anyar* style of arrangement pioneered by his teacher Koko Koswara. This is evident in Suratno's earliest *degung* recordings which feature songs with longer and more elaborate piece-specific introductions and interludes than those generally found on contemporaneous cassettes such as *Tilam Sono*. Musicians sometimes even refer to this body of repertoire as '*lagu lagu intro*' (intro pieces) or '*degung wanda anyar*'. Koswara's influence is also manifest in Suratno's incorporation of the *kacapi siter* in the *degung* ensemble. Borrowing the innovative style of *kacapi kawih* playing developed by Koswara in his *anggana sekar* (solo songs accompanied by *kacapi siter*), Suratno employs the *kacapi* as a melody instrument in passages of through-composed arrangement, though players usually revert back to more formulaic accompanying figuration during sections of vocal melody. While Suratno suspects that his debut album, *Panglayungan*, was the first *gamelan degung* recording to include *kacapi siter*, the distinctive timbre of the *kacapi* has, like the *kecrek*, come to be a relatively common feature on subsequent *degung kawih* recordings.

Despite the fact that this novel style of *degung* arrangement was immediately successful with the public, Nano Suratno has never been complacent about his achievements and has continued to search for ways in which his music could be further

modified to appeal to an even wider audience. During the 1980s, he began to ponder how the Sundanese youth might be encouraged to take more of an interest in their own musical heritage, as well as how *gamelan degung* might be made more attractive to Sundanese audiences outside of the Priangan region. Suratno's songs and, in fact, *gamelan degung* in general, had hitherto made little impact outside of this cultural heartland (see Williams 1989:113). In the process of modernising *degung kawih*, Nano Suratno not only succeeded in coming up with one of the best-selling Sundanese cassettes of all time but also in redefining pop Sunda and pop *degung*.

Suratno's biggest hit song to date, *Kalangkang*, was released on the Whisnu label in 1986. Williams suggests that *Kalangkang* stands out from other *kawih* songs of the time because of its catchy melodic hook which, characterised by a an "unusual descending melodic line", includes pitches borrowed from *musik* (diatonic music) (*ibid.*, 115). In fact, Suratno did not actually compose this motif but borrowed it from the stock of improvisatory patterns employed by Yoyoh Supriatin, a popular *kawih* singer from Purwakarta (a town in between Jakarta and Bandung) (*ibid.*, 113). The popularity of this song is also due to the fact that it incorporates elements from the Western pop idiom. Instead of the more abstract poetics of traditional song texts, *Kalangkang's* lyrics more daringly depict fashionable Westernised "urban teenage behaviour" such as "kissing, embracing, and walking arm-in-arm" (*ibid.*, 117). The song's refrain also features a handclapped Western style backbeat (*ibid.*). Nining Meida, the singer on the original *degung* recording, is also widely accredited with having given the song its modern feel. However, the 'sexy' breathy timbre that she produces by affixing an 'h' sound to the end of certain vowels is an, albeit exaggerated, stylistic feature borrowed from *tembang Sunda* vocal practice (see Rosliani's description of the *inghak* ornament 1998:45).

Suratno is keen to emphasise that *Kalangkang*, along with his other popular compositions, are all based on *karawitan* (traditional music) (Jurriëns 2001:133). Aside from employing Sundanese vocal ornamentation, *Kalangkang* uses a traditional tonal and metrical structure, as well as a Sundanese language song text. Moreover, not only is the song's construction rooted in traditional practices of recycling and adaptation but also the composition itself has subsequently been subject to various types of cross-genre transformation. *Kalangkang* "has been performed regularly in all three of the primary Sundanese tuning systems" and by ensembles as diverse as *kacapi-suling*, *gamelan*



*salendro* and *kendang pencak* (an ensemble which accompanies the Sundanese martial arts form *pencak silat*) (Williams 1989:119). Several *degung instrumental* arrangements of the song have also been released, including a version by Ujang Suryana. Finally, the success of the song has additionally generated a whole host of imitations, many of which use the word *Kalangkang* in the title, the chorus or in the first line of the song (*ibid.*, 123-125). Ceppy Anungsang Riyana commented that while in 2002 the recording industry was going through a quiet spell, it would only take one ‘hit’ like *Kalangkang* to come along to propel the industry back into a flurry of activity (*p.c.*, 2002).

The pop Sunda adaptation of *Kalangkang*, performed by a Western-style band (electric guitar, bass, drum kit and keyboards) with Sundanese *kendang*, was released six months after the original *degung kawih* recording.<sup>5</sup> This version of the song, which again features the singer Nining Meida, has been of particular interest to scholars because of the way in which it is considered to syncretise “East with West” (Jurriëns 2001:142). Yampolsky draws particular attention to the compatibility between Sundanese music forms and the Western pop idiom, noting that the former sometimes seem “to overwhelm the Pop elements, turning Pop Sunda into Sundanese music played on Western instruments” (1989:15). Following Waterman (1990), Jurriëns suggests that this type of syncretism is a result of distinct music genres “having been *made compatible*”, musical fusions being the result of more fundamental socio-cultural processes rather than a matter of combining pre-existing musical forms (2001:140).

In any event, many musicians consider pop Sunda to be a type of repertoire rather than a specific genre using a particular combination of instruments. This definition means that any recent *degung kawih* composition by Nano Suratno may be considered as pop Sunda, regardless of whether or not it has ever been performed on Western instruments (Williams 1989:128). Jurriëns argues that songs like *Kalangkang* thus transcend categorisations that are “based on, arbitrary, in a certain sense neo-colonial, principles” (2001:142). The inadequacy of simplistic binary distinctions such as ‘traditional versus modern’, ‘art versus pop’, ‘regional (or ethnic) versus Western’, and so on, to accurately classify what are culturally complex contemporary Sundanese music genres will be discussed in further detail below.

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<sup>5</sup> For further information about pop Sunda see Williams (1989) and Jurriëns (2001:123-160).

### 6.3 Composition and transmission

The promotion of 'star' *degung* composer-arrangers by the cassette industry raises interesting questions about the creation and ownership of new musical repertoire. As previously discussed, composing for *gamelan degung* usually involves processes of transformation that are also operative in related practices of adaptation, arrangement, and even performance. All, to varying degrees, involve the assimilation and/or reworking of extant musical materials. According to Williams, about ninety percent of Suratno's compositions are based on standard tonal frameworks (1989:128); *Kalangkang* is a pertinent example. Not only did Suratno borrow the song's defining melodic hook from the singer Yoyoh Supriatin but also the entire song is structurally based on the short-form piece *Catrik*. Although, inevitably, some new *degung* pieces are more inventive than others, their creation almost always falls into what Nettl would categorise as "model-bound" rather than radically innovative composition (1974:11).

The question of musical ownership is also intriguing because, the recycling of 'traditional' materials notwithstanding, composers are heavily reliant upon the skills of individual performers to idiomatically flesh out or fill in given instrumental or vocal parts. Any Sundanese composition, no matter how original, is rarely prescribed in full (see 6.3.3). One up-and-coming *suling* player told me that he had once sold a couple of his most imaginative improvisatory 'licks' to a composer for use on a *degung* recording in the belief that his creative contribution to a song should receive some form of financial recompense. However, this is not common practice; the artistic input of improviser-performers rarely receives any public acknowledgment, let alone additional monetary remuneration.

Confronted with polished recordings of *gamelan degung* arrangements by sleeve-note credited composers, I was curious to find out to which parts of a piece or song are actually precomposed and how this composition is represented and transmitted. Furthermore, given the complex relationship between original and traditional elements in most new cassette-driven *degung* pieces, I was keen to explore how musicians and producers negotiate the issue of musical copyright.



### 6.3.1 The business of composing for cassette

It seems that while musicians sometimes approach a cassette label with a proposal for a new recording, the initial impetus for a particular release often comes from the producer. Recording industry personnel, most of whom are neither musically trained nor ethnically Sundanese, are influential in determining what types of repertoire make it onto cassette. Nano Suratno stated that he often has to barter with producers, agreeing, for example, to work on an album of pop Sunda on the condition that the company will also commission a new *degung* cassette at the same time (*p.c.*, 2000a).

Most recording companies have developed longstanding relationships with individual musicians and their groups. Since *Sangkala*, for instance, Gapura have continued to record on the Dian label. The success of this album also led to its artistic director, Koestyara, becoming employed as Dian's Sundanese music coordinator, a position that he held until the late 1980s. Similarly, Suratno explained that it was out of loyalty to Bandung's SP Records, a company that was particularly supportive of him during the early stages of his career, that he began to use the new name Non Blok,<sup>6</sup> rather than Gentra Madya, when he transferred to the Whisnu label in the mid 1980s. The new name also proved commercially fortuitous as the contemporary international associations that it conjured instantly communicated to the public that this was an updated style of *gamelan degung* while, at the same time, the Gentra Madya brand was safeguarded for more conservative fans (Suratno, *p.c.*, 2000a). Williams also suggests that name changing is one way that performers skirt contractual obligations that legally bind them to a particular record label (1990:190). Indeed, RRI musicians, prohibited from playing outside of the context of radio station authorised performances, requested not to be named on cassette sleeves for this very reason (Van Zanten 1989:41). Problems have arisen when musicians have contravened the exclusivity clause that is often written into their contracts. Koestyara, for example, remarked that after Dian released *Tilam Sono*, it emerged that Ida Widawati was in breach of her contract with Asmara records. It is for this reason that the *tembang* singer Imas Permas appears on Gapura's subsequent *degung kawih* recordings (*p.c.*, 2000)

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<sup>6</sup> The name Non Blok was taken from a cold war term used to refer to neutral countries, including Indonesia, that were not aligned to either the former Eastern or Western blocks.

As a result of their dealings with the commercial media, many *degung* composers have developed a business mentality towards their music. Indeed, several musicians that I spoke to differentiated between what they referred to in English as “product-driven” and “market-driven” pieces; the latter are also sometimes described as *lagu komersial* (commercial pieces). One criticism often directed at the most commercially successful artists is that their music is *pasaran* (music for the market), a charge that is countered in various ways. Nano Suratno, for example, defied his critics to pinpoint how his own compositional process differs from that used by ‘traditional’ artists (*p.c.*, 2000a). Iik Setiawan, a young composer who is considered by many to be Suratno’s natural successor, also argued that it is actually more challenging to write a song that the public want to listen to and which may go on to form a part of the standard repertoire, than it is to compose an experimental piece of music simply to gratify some artistic urge within oneself (*p.c.*, 2000).

Iik Setiawan admitted to consulting with industry officials and cassette wholesalers before embarking on any recording, often choosing projects based on his knowledge of the market. He observed that in 2000, cassettes of wedding music were selling well, along with established albums such as *Sabilulungan* and *Sangkala*, and compilations of popular tracks taken from older cassettes. Suryana concurred that while in the 1970s and 1980s producers were clamouring for new material, by the end of the 1990s cassette companies were more interested in rerecording cover versions of his most well known compositions (*p.c.*, 2000).

Although changes in cassette content may be partly down to evolving public tastes, Setiawan was critical that many *degung* recordings, particularly those released by lesser-known groups, are not as commercially successful as they deserve to be because companies do not invest in marketing. Cassettes of traditional music are not launched or advertised in any way and market research does not extend beyond counting how many product units have left the shelves. As a result, the young composer took it upon himself to conduct a small survey of Bandung cassette shops in order to try and find out why customers decide to purchase one *degung* cassette over another. Visiting separate stores, Setiawan observed that while more informed members of the public might ask for the latest Nano S. or Ujang Suryana release, most consumers simply ask for any *degung instrumental* or *degung kawih* recording. Another type of common request that he



identified was for *degung* cassettes that would be suitable for use as background music at a wedding or similar function. Setiawan noted that most shop assistants, who generally have little understanding of the music they are selling, will then typically hand over better known albums rather than try to promote new releases. In complete contrast, amateur and professional musicians tend to seek out specific recordings with a view to using them as learning tools, as well as to keep track of what their rivals are producing. This latter group appear to constitute a small but significant market; Setiawan attributed the poor sales of a *degung mandalungan* (*degung* in the *mandalungan* tuning) cassette that he produced to the fact that the pieces on the recording could not be replicated by other musicians on conventional *degung* instruments (*p.c.*, 2000).

Another factor influencing the types of *degung* repertoire that make it onto cassette is copyright law. Copyright law was introduced in Indonesia in 1982 in order that the country be brought into line with “the rules of a global media market” (Jurriëns 2001:81). Now, legally speaking, royalties are required to be paid if a copyrighted song is played in a public space (be it as part of a radio broadcast, in a hotel foyer, aeroplane or karaoke bar) or rerecorded on cassette. Moreover, the Indonesian government is theoretically entitled to receive these royalties when, as in the case of most traditional music, the composer of the song is unknown (*ibid.*). Historically, it seems as though Sundanese musicians have not taken the concept of copyright particularly seriously, considering it an essentially Western invention that has little relevance for their own traditional musics.<sup>7</sup> As Jurriëns notes, many Indonesians do not believe that copyright fits in with their culture because “musical performances, which often function as central parts of ceremonies” are “regarded as public property” (*ibid.*, 83). Other musicians that I spoke to are more pragmatic about the issue, pointing out that keeping track of performances of generic accompanying pieces such as *Catrik* or *Kulu Kulu* is just not feasible. Indeed, copyrighting this type of repertoire would be the equivalent of patenting standard chord sequences in Western popular music.

Despite such ambivalence, copyright law does appear to be becoming increasingly difficult for recording artists to disregard entirely. Ujang Suryana

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<sup>7</sup> Nano Suratno recalled that on one occasion buskers came to his door singing *Kalangkang*. He joked with them that they should be paying him royalties; they joked back that he should be paying them commission for promoting the song (*p.c.*, 2000b).

commented that, while in the 1970s and 1980s it was possible to record a song without having to consider royalty payments, “these days copyright is increasingly managed” (p.c., 2000). Another prominent composer confessed to having rewritten an existing song – altering the melodic contour in a couple of places and changing the title and lyrics – in order to present it as a new piece and circumvent the issue altogether. The foundation and growth of organisations set up to protect the rights of artists also attests to the increased importance of copyright law on a national level. Van Zanten notes that musicians are increasingly united in the union PAPPRI (*Persatuan Artis Pencipta Lagu dan Penata Musik*, ‘Union of Composers and Performing Artists’) (2001), while Jurriëns discusses the role of the non-profit organisation YKCI, (*Yayasan Karya Cipta Indonesia*, ‘Indonesian Foundation of Creative Works’) which, established in 1990, now collects royalties for around 1500 members (2001:81-82).

That musicians themselves have tended to be complacent about breaches of copyright in the past is also largely due to the fact that they are usually only ever paid a one-off fee for any composition or recording. Even when a cassette sells exceptionally well or a song is re-released, musicians rarely receive additional royalties or bonus payments. Presumably this is one reason for the increasing prevalence of compilation albums such as *Seleksi Degung: 8 Lagu Top* (‘*Degung* Selection: 8 Top Songs’) (Whisnu) and *Lagu-Lagu Abadi I and II* (‘Timeless songs volumes I & II’) (Dian), which were both put together using tracks from older recordings. Jurriëns also equates the “passive attitude of Indonesian artists toward their own rights” to “the fact that most of them are afraid to establish a commercially ‘bad’ reputation and lose precious contracts with their record companies” (2001:83-84). While performing on or composing for *degung* cassettes will never finance a superstar lifestyle, recordings do offer musicians an important means of exposure, confer prestige and provide an additional form of much needed financial support. One of my teachers, for instance, was able to negotiate cash loans with his record company, usually in the form of advanced payments for future recording projects.

Nevertheless, many musicians do feel let down by their recording companies. A couple of *degung* composers expressed disappointed that they had only received minimal one-off payments for popular cassettes which, recorded over twenty-five years ago, are still on sale today. One older musician that I spoke to was particularly upset to



discover that the rights to one of his albums had been sold overseas without his record company ever having informed him; he only found out because an American ethnomusicologist turned up to interview him armed with the US vinyl version of the recording in question. Trust has also been broken when musicians have found their name on the cover of recordings with which they have not actually been involved. This has caused particular suspicion and resentment when it has led to situations whereby one composer is mistakenly led to believe that a friend or colleague has rerecorded one of his songs without first requesting permission.

Unfortunately, the situation for musicians does not look likely to improve. A sharp rise in music piracy and turbulent economy means that cassette companies themselves are now experiencing increased financial pressures. According to Nano Suratno, the thriving trade in pirated VCDs (Video Compact Discs), a format that has come to replace videotape in Indonesia over the last few years, threatens the very existence of many of the recording companies that disseminate traditional music. Not only can the public buy illegal VCDs for less than cost of legitimate cassettes, but a song can now be copied from a promotional TV video and put on sale before the official recording has even been released. While Indonesian news broadcasts often show clips of police units confiscating counterfeit VCDs, the scale of the problem is such that most musicians are pessimistic about the government's ability to combat music piracy any time in the near future (see Jurriëns 2001:82-85).

### 6.3.2 The 'art' of composing for cassette

Although many Sundanese composers attribute their creative skills to some abstract source of inspiration, several that I spoke to outlined a more down-to-earth approach to the development of their craft. Iik Setiawan, for example, spent time analysing the structure of Nano Suratno's compositions, initially modelling his own pieces on the tried-and-tested formats devised by his former teacher. Both Suratno and Setiawan said that when composing a new *degung kawih* piece, the composition of the song melody (*lagu*) usually precedes that of the *gamelan* accompaniment; the latter can then be arranged to incorporate melodic motifs borrowed from the vocal part. In contrast, Asep Solihin (an STSI lecturer and composer of *degung kawih*) usually works from the

bottom up; he first decides the *posisi lagu* (position of the song) or, in other words, the *sekar alit* on which the song is to be based and then constructs a melody that will fit over it. He explained that writing songs for 'standard accompaniments' (*pirigan yang sudah baku*) is practical because *degung* groups can learn them with minimal rehearsal. Thus, even when a song melody has come to him 'out of the blue' he has adjusted it to conform to a pre-existing tonal framework (*p.c.*, 2000). Iik Setiawan admitted that he employed the same formulaic approach when composing his best-selling song *Satia* which is based on *Catrik*. Setiawan further suggested that appending an existing *sekar alit* to an incomplete composition is a common way of making the piece longer (*p.c.*, 2000). Several musicians additionally mentioned that they have sometimes created new vocal melodies that they have subsequently discovered happen to fit a particular *sekar alit*. It thus seems that composers' melodic choices may also be unconsciously guided by their implicit knowledge of common tonal progressions.

The actual composition of *degung kawih* melodies and lyrics is often depicted as a rather casual process. On one occasion, I coincidentally hailed down a taxi driven by Iik Setiawan's regular Dian Records-employed driver. Chatting about my research, he laughingly told me how Setiawan would regularly make up songs in the car on the journey from Bandung to the Dian headquarters in Jakarta. Months later, the driver would then hear these same songs on cassette. Similarly, Nano Suratno commented that he often finds himself humming a new tune as he is going about his normal daily household chores. Working in this way, it only took him about an hour to come up with the song *Kalangkang*. However, many of his less successful pieces took much longer to compose (*p.c.*, 2000a).

As discussed in chapter 2, most *degung kawih* composers, many of who are graduates of Bandung's formal music courses, do spend time notating through-composed introductions, interludes and piece-specific accompaniments. One exception to this is Ujang Suryana, who, as both a visually impaired and self-taught musician, uses a cassette recorder to work out and document his own arrangements. Suryana explained that he sings or uses a *kacapi* or *suling* to record individual instrumental parts onto cassette, sometimes using a second machine so that he can superimpose one melodic line over another. Once he is satisfied with the result another member of the group will transcribe the arrangement for the rest of the group to read (*p.c.*, 2000).



Iik Setiawan confessed that he does not usually present the members of his *degung* group Sulanjana with this notation until they are in the recording studio, expecting the musicians to sight-read their parts. Sometimes this is the first and last time that this particular *degung* group, who now rarely play live, will perform a particular composition. As a result, Setiawan stated that he no longer remembers many of his earlier pieces; on one occasion he even attended a wedding at which a *degung* group were playing a strangely familiar song that it took him some time to realise was one of his own (*p.c.*, 2000).

### 6.3.3 *Kabungbulengan*: the transmission of a new composition

In August 2000 Nano Suratno invited me to observe a rehearsal of a song that he had written earlier that same morning. The song, *Kabungbulengan* (grieving for love), performed by Nining Meida and the Non Blok group was released on the Whisnu label several months later. With an introduction-verse-refrain form, *Kabungbulengan* is not based on any single *sekar alit*. Instead, the song melody is accompanied by a piece-specific arrangement. Bearing in mind the relatively non-directive nature of most Sundanese *gamelan* rehearsals, I was intrigued to find out how Suratno approached the transmission of such an idiosyncratic composition.

In *Kabungbulengan*, as is the case in most *wanda anyar* style *degung* arrangements, the *cempres* and *peking* play through-composed melodies and riffs that, while essentially functioning to frame or accompany the vocal part, often serve as a melodic model for the other instrumental parts. Prior to the rehearsal, Suratno had written out the metallophone part in full (see fig. 6:1), although following Koswara, a straight line leading to a note was used as short-hand to indicate that players should use conventional idiomatic figuration to lead to that tone (see Ruswandi 2000:90). Despite the fact that the other instrumental parts were not notated, a couple of melodic interjections that were assigned to the *bonang* were also integrated into this single-line score; these motifs were circled to distinguish them from the *cempres* and *peking* part.

Fig. 6:1 Skeletal score for *Kabungbulengan*  CD track 20

*Pangkat* (opening):  $\overline{11.1}$   $\overline{33.3}$   $\overline{44.4}$  1  $\overline{4512}$   $\overline{3432}$   $\overline{1234}$  (5)

(Intro and interlude)

$\parallel$  0  $\overline{112}$   $\overline{15}$   $\overline{454}$  |  $\overline{345}$   $\overline{112}$   $\overline{15}$  4 | 0  $\overline{343}$   $\overline{51}$   $\overline{212}$  |  $\overline{34}$   $\overline{5555}$   $\overline{43}$  2 |  
 $\parallel$   $\overline{1232}$   $\overline{145}$   $\overline{.1.3}$  2 |  $\overline{1232}$   $\overline{151}$   $\overline{.2.3}$  4 |  $\overline{11.1}$   $\overline{33.3}$   $\overline{44.4}$  1 |  
 $\parallel$   $\overline{4512}$   $\overline{3432}$   $\overline{1234}$  5 | x 2

(Verse)

↓ (singers entry)

$\parallel$   $\overline{22.2}$   $\overline{11.1}$   $\overline{55.5}$  4 |  $\overline{22.2}$   $\overline{11.1}$   $\overline{55.5}$  4 |  $\overline{11.1}$   $\overline{55.5}$   $\overline{44.4}$  3 | — 2 |  
 $\parallel$   $\overline{11.1}$   $\overline{22.2}$   $\overline{33.3}$  4 |  $\overline{11.1}$   $\overline{22.2}$   $\overline{33.3}$  4 |  $\overline{44.4}$   $\overline{33.3}$   $\overline{22.2}$  1 | — 5 |  
x 2

(Refrain)

$\parallel$  1 5 4  $\overline{33}$  |  $\overline{43}$   $\overline{.3}$   $\overline{43}$   $\overline{.3}$  |  $\overline{43}$   $\overline{.3}$   $\overline{43}$   $\overline{.3}$  |  $\overline{43}$   $\overline{.3}$   $\overline{43}$   $\overline{.3}$  |  
| 2 3 4  $\overline{55}$  |  $\overline{15}$   $\overline{.5}$   $\overline{15}$   $\overline{.5}$  |  $\overline{15}$   $\overline{.5}$   $\overline{15}$   $\overline{.5}$  |  $\overline{15}$   $\overline{.5}$   $\overline{15}$   $\overline{.1}$  |  
|  $\overline{21}$   $\overline{.1}$   $\overline{21}$   $\overline{.1}$  |  $\overline{21}$   $\overline{.1}$   $\overline{21}$   $\overline{.1}$  |  $\overline{21}$   $\overline{.1}$   $\overline{21}$   $\overline{.1}$  |  $\overline{21}$   $\overline{.1}$   $\overline{21}$   $\overline{.1}$  |  
|  $\overline{21}$   $\overline{.1}$   $\overline{21}$   $\overline{.1}$  |  $\overline{21}$   $\overline{.1}$   $\overline{21}$   $\overline{.5}$  | ————— | ————— 5 | x 2

At the beginning of the rehearsal the assembled musicians, who were all either SMKI, STSI or UPI graduates, sight-read their way through the piece's instrumental introduction. Sitting facing the *cempres* and *peking*, Suratno helped to familiarise the players with the new material by singing and clapping out the metallophone line as they played it through. The formal training of all of the musicians present was reflected in the way in which the instrumental parts were vocalised using 'da-mi-na-ti-la' syllables (see



technical notes), rather than the less specific ‘*ne-ning-nang-nong*’. Having mastered the introduction, the players began to work their way through the rest of the song, Suratno eventually putting in the vocal melody.

Although employing a more didactic teaching style than is generally found in other types of Sundanese music rehearsal, getting this song together was still what Hall (1992) might classify as a relatively ‘high context’ operation (2.2.4). While the *cempres* and *peking* players were provided with notation and some form of direct instruction, the other instrumentalists were expected to have sufficient knowledge of the idiomatic conventions employed in this type of *degung kawih* repertoire to deduct their own parts. For example, apart from the two *bonang* motifs circled in the written score, the *bonang* player had to decide when to play in unison with the metallophones and when to play the off-beat chords (*kempyung*) that are typically used in arrangements of this sort. Furthermore, while Suratno clapped out the rhythm of the *bonang* part, the *bonang* player also had to work out which tones to play. In fact, chords using tones 1 and 4, and 2 and 5 (as used in this instance), are commonly employed in such *wanda anyar* inspired *degung* arrangements and so this was a relatively straightforward task for any musician au fait with Suratno’s work.

Fig. 6:2 Introduction to *Kabungbulengan* (*cempres/peking & bonang*)

0	112	15	454	345	112	15	4	0	343	51	212	34	5555	43	2
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.

*Bonang kempyung* on tones 1 & 4 and 2 & 5

.	145	.1.3	2	.	151	.2.3	4	11.1	33.3	44.4	1	etc
1232	1	.	.	1232	1	.	.	11.1	33.3	44.4	1	.

*Bonang* plays in unison with *cempres & peking* to end of intro

After the *cempres* and *peking* players had taken a few minutes to work out the notes of the introduction a more conventional rehearsal process was resumed. As the piece was cycled round, Suratno would sometimes make pointed comments or gesticulate in some way to alert players to particular omissions or mistakes. Nevertheless, this only rarely resulted in the group being brought to a complete standstill or asked to repeat difficult passages in isolation. Similarly, while players would occasionally forewarn or correct each other with verbal prompts such as “*awas caruk!*” (‘watch out, there’s interlocking figuration coming up!’), “*sakali deui*” (‘one more time’) or snatches of instruction such as “*habis kenong mi-na-ti-la*” (‘after the *kenong* it goes *mi-na-ti-la*’), there was little in the way of explicit explanation or demonstration. Though providing continuous correction and cueing via singing and clapping, as well as ‘conducting’ the group with hand and head motions, at no stage in the rehearsal did the composer pick up a beater to illustrate a particular instrumental part.

Even alterations to the written notation were presented without verbal justification. Hearing, for example, that the cadential sequence at the end of the introduction sounded too chaotic at speed, Suratno decided to simplify the last three beats.

**Fig. 6:3 Kabungbulengan: two versions of the cadence at the end of the introduction**

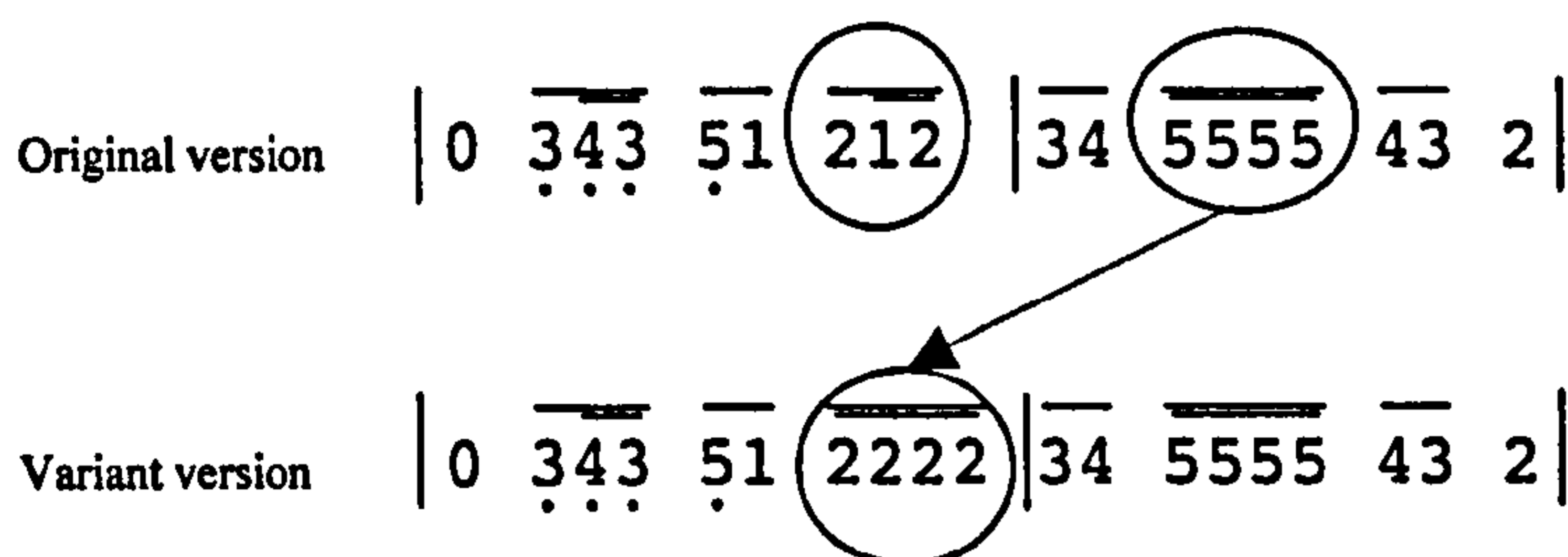
Original version	•	$\left  \overline{11.1} \quad \overline{33.3} \quad \overline{44.4} \quad 1 \quad \left  \overline{4512} \quad \overline{3432} \quad \overline{1234} \quad 5 \right  \right.$
Revised version		$\left  \overline{11.1} \quad \overline{33.3} \quad \overline{44.4} \quad 1 \quad \left  \overline{4512} \quad 3 \quad 2 \quad 5 \right  \right.$

Suratno conveyed this amendment simply by changing what he was singing – the assembled players fluidly responding to this new information without thinking to question this divergence from the written score. Accustomed to a composition developing in rehearsal, Sundanese musicians approach notation as a flexible guide rather than an authoritative model. The *cempres* and *peking* players eventually even



began to make small adjustments to their own parts without being corrected by Suratno. One modification that survived onto the final recording is found on the fourth beat of bar 3 of the introduction; the metallophone players substituted the original rhythmic pattern as notated in the score with that found on the second beat of the following bar (see fig. 6:4). Such variation is inevitable in view of the fact that after the first few play-throughs the notation was put to one side and the musicians began to play from memory.

Fig. 6:4 *Kabungbulengan*: bars 3 & 4 of the introduction (*cempres* & *peking*)



After lunch, the *degung* singer and *Kalangrang* star, Nining Meida, arrived at the rehearsal chaperoned by a producer from Whisnu records. The group played *Kabungbulengan* through a couple of times, Nano Suratno singing the vocal part to familiarise Meida with the melody. The composer then proceeded to go through the melody phrase by phrase, paying closer attention to specific ornaments and points of articulation. Having been provided with a photocopy of the lyrics, Nining Meida eventually began to join in, occasionally annotating the text with personally devised mnemonic squiggles intended to help her remember particular ornaments and motifs.

As composers rarely, if ever, notate vocal melodies, songs are frequently subject to ongoing alteration, particularly, though not exclusively, during the early stages of transmission. Watching Nano Suratno teach *Kabungbulengan* to Nining Meida it became evident that while certain sections of the song were already predetermined to the tiniest details of ornamentation, other phrases were more melodically ambiguous and continued to evolve during the rehearsal. Also conspicuous was the fact that Suratno did not overrule Meida when she initiated micro-changes of her own. It is a fact that the singers and *suling* players involved in any commercial *degung* recording play an important role in crystallising the melodic contour of any new songs that are featured.

Since, in the absence of notation, composers are prone to altering a particular song melody from one rendition to another, it is the first recording of a new piece that is taken as the standard for how it should be subsequently performed (Williams 2001:102). Nonetheless, most cassette-driven popular *degung kawih* songs tend to consist of relatively short melodic phrases that are tightly and syllabically bound to the lyrics and which, therefore, do not offer singers much leeway for individual interpretation or variation. Melismatic licks do feature in many popular *kawih* pieces but, as in *Kalangkang*, these meandering motifs are fixed as defining attributes of the melodic model rather than considered as optional embellishments. According to Suparli, as soon as a new composition has been concretised on cassette, successive singers are obliged to conform to the recorded version of the song. Phrase substitutions and other improvised deviations from what, in effect, comes to be regarded as a definitive aural score, are subsequently considered as ‘errors’ rather than as creative enhancements (*p.c.*, 2001c).

#### 6.4 A new generation of *degung* composers

With the gradual cessation of regular *gamelan degung* broadcasts and rehearsals at RRI during the late 1980s and the consequent atrophy of the radio station’s in-house group, educational institutions such as STSI have increasingly come to serve as the main breeding grounds for a new generation of professional *gamelan degung* musicians and composers. Most of Bandung’s best-known *degung* groups such as Gentra Madya, Non Blok, Sasaka Domas and Jugala, now derive the bulk of their players from the student and graduate populations of Bandung’s formal music courses. More recently, Nano Suratno has also sought to evolve his own style of *degung kawih* by searching out younger musicians with knowledge of both Sundanese and Western musics; hence Gatot Winandar and Ega Cahyar Mulyana, both graduates of the music education course at UPI, appear as composer-arrangers on several of Suratno’s post-*Kalangkang* recordings.

When asked to summarise the ways in which Nano Suratno’s *degung* output has changed over the last two decades, several players commented that his compositions have become more rhythmically dynamic and texturally complex; the lilting flow of 1970s and 1980s *kawih* arrangements is said to have been replaced with more jolting syncopation and, less frequently, fluctuating metres. Such changes are commonly



correlated to the influx of younger, formally trained male players into Suratno's groups. Older players often differentiate their own style of playing from that of 'today's youngsters' (*anak sekarang*), generally noting the relative lack of experience but energy and creative audacity of the latter. As outlined in chapter 2, the curricula covered on Bandung's formal music courses provides a more global music education that, encompassing a wide range of Sundanese and non-Sundanese genres in both traditional and contemporary styles, promotes a liberal ethos of musical experimentation that is manifest on several more recent *gamelan degung* recordings. As one STSI graduate maintained, "*degung* is not religion but an artistic vehicle which, as such, is open to ongoing innovation" (Permana, *p.c.*, 2001). Another boasted that Sundanese musicians are known for their musical daring, noting that in any Nationwide festival, young Sundanese composers from STSI Bandung are always the "most mischievous" (*paling nakal*) in terms of pushing the boundaries of traditional music and shocking their Central Javanese and Balinese counterparts (Hartana, *p.c.*, 2000).

Several of the players who have worked their way through the ranks of Bandung's foremost *degung* groups have subsequently gone on to achieve commercial success in their own right. Iik Setiawan, a graduate of SMKI and STSI, and erstwhile member of Nano Suratno's Gentra Madya and Non Blok groups, is now an established figure in several professional music circles. As a prominent songwriter and leader of the cassette-mediated *degung* group Sulanjana, Setiawan was also appointed as the Sundanese music coordinator for Dian Records following Koestyara's retirement. While most of Iik Setiawan's compositional output is not dissimilar to that of his elders – one journalist even describing him as a "young Nano S." – Setiawan and some of his contemporaries from STSI have been involved in several more radical *gamelan degung* recording projects.

In the early 1990s, Iik Setiawan and another influential *degung* innovator, Ismet Ruchimat, collaborated on a *degung* album devoted to instrumental adaptations of Western pop songs. While a pop band can approximate *pelog degung* and *madenda* tunings without much difficulty, performing diatonic pop songs on Sundanese instruments demanded the construction of a *degung diatonis* (diatonic *degung*). The resultant recording, *Dedikasi* (Dedication) (GNP 1993), features *degung* arrangements of songs including *Imagine* (by "John L. [*sic*]") and *I Will Always Love You* (Dolly Parton).

The group's follow up album, *Dedikasi II* (GNP 1994), includes *degung* adaptations of regional pieces from across the Indonesian archipelago, while *Degung for Christmas* (GNP 1995) presents a selection of carols and seasonal songs such as *Silent Night*, *Jingle Bells* and, rather incongruously for the tropics, *White Christmas*. Iik Setiawan remarked that although these recordings were relatively successful in terms of record sales, the diatonic *degung* project as a whole was not profitable because of the high costs involved in constructing additional instruments as well as the excessive length of time it took to arrange and rehearsal such 'alien' material.

In addition to absorbing influences from Western and Sundanese (namely *jaipongan*) popular musics, Somawijaya notes that over the last decade *degung* repertoire has also appropriated stylistic elements from other Indonesian music genres including *keroncong* and *dangdut* (1997:62). This is partly due to the fact that Sundanese instrumentalists and singers occasionally venture into these fields. In Bandung's relatively self-contained musical community there is a constant cross-fertilization of creative ideas as individuals carry their experiences with them from one *gamelan* group or musical genre to another. Neneng Fitri, daughter of the late RRI *kacapi* player Uking Sukri, for example, has established herself as both a *tembang* vocalist and a *keroncong* singer. Notably, she draws upon her knowledge of both styles on Nano Suratno's *degung kawih* cassette, *Taroskeun* (Whisnu), an album which incorporates a couple of *keroncong* inspired tracks (Suratno, *p.c.*, 2000b). Most striking in this regard is the refrain of the song *Morojengja*, in which the *gamelan degung* accompaniment is arranged to imitate the pizzicato strings of a *keroncong* band.

#### 6.4.1 Globalisation and world music

*Degung* cassettes have also been influenced by wider trends in performance practice elsewhere in Indonesia. Ujang Suryana's release of an album of *degung campursari* (*degung* with keyboard) (Marina 2000), for example, is in line with the vogue for adding keyboard to Central Javanese *gamelan* at *wayang* performances and on commercial recordings. Sundanese musicians have also begun to look further a field and to experiment with the broader variety of popular Western music genres promoted by the international recording industry. Jurriëns notes,



From the late 1980s through the 1990s... artists moved Sundanese music in the direction of a whole range of other Western musical genres... such as house..., rap..., jazz (the *Krakatau* band, which includes the Sundanese multi-instrumentalist Yoyon Darsono) and world music (*Zithermania*, a band led by the Sundanese zither player Dedy Satya Hadianda) (2001:136-137).

*Gamelan degung* instruments have often been incorporated into these exploratory cross-cultural collaborations, some of the recordings of which have begun to be packaged as 'world music'. The Jakarta based jazz-fusion band Krakatau (mentioned in Jurriëns' above quote), for example, began to integrate traditional Sundanese instruments into their standard Western-band line up of keyboards, fretless bass, drums and percussion, in 1993. Krakatau's album *Magical Match* (Kita Music 2000) features several STSI Bandung-trained *gamelan* musicians, including the lecturer Yoyon Darsono, whose extended technique *suling* playing has also found its way onto more conventional *gamelan degung* recordings such as Nano Suratno's *Bentang Kamelang* (Whisnu) and the STSI-produced *Degung Milenium III* (SP Records). A 'global-village' philosophy fuels much of this cross-cultural musical experimentation, a fact which supports Bohlman's contention that the phenomenon of world music is inseparable from that of globalisation (2002: preface). The liner notes of Krakatau's album *Magical Match* state that aim of the group is to "break through the musical barriers between Western and Eastern traditions" until "there will be no more saying East is East and West is West, one world for anyone is our global miracle" (Kita Music 2000).

'Globalisation', however, is by no means a new phenomenon in Indonesia. Writing of cultural pluralism in Central Java Sumarsam comments, "One of the characteristic features of Javanese history is the continuous exposure of the Javanese people to foreign cultures and ideas" (1995:2). Bandung, in particular, is a city that is known for having been receptive to outside influence from the West. It seems that as far back as the "Culture Polemic of the 1930s", "the supposed East-West antagonism, much discussed in Yogyakarta and Jakarta, did not exist to the same extent in Bandung which had been a very westernised Dutch colonial city" (Spanjaard 1990:65 in Jurriëns 2001:141). After the departure of the Dutch, foreign influences continued to enter Sundanese society "through such means as... tourism, business and the electronic

media” (Jurriëns 2001:123). Nonetheless, the 1990s witnessed several specific changes to Indonesia’s mediascape that have rapidly rendered a much greater variety of foreign musics accessible to a broader section of the population.

Of particular note was the relaxation of Indonesia’s media laws at the end of the 1980s and the end of over a quarter of century during which the government-controlled television channel, TVRI (*Televisi Republik Indonesia*, Republic of Indonesia Television), monopolised the nation’s airwaves. With the dawn of private television stations came new types of music broadcasting including, from the early 1990s, pop video shows produced by MTV. Discussing some of the types of popular music now seen on Indonesian television, Sutton reminds us that successive Indonesian governments have “been wary of globalisation”, Sukarno banning “Western rock and roll during the latter part of his presidency (early 1960s)” and the Suharto regime constantly warning of “the aesthetic and moral dangers of excessive exposure to Western popular culture at the expense of local expression” (1998b:11). However, over the past ten years, MTV, with its global motto “One World, One Image, One Channel”, has broadcast “great quantities of foreign pop music” to significantly large numbers of young Indonesian viewers (*ibid.*, 4 & 10).

Recent surveys indicate that MTV reaches some 16 million households in Indonesia, that MTV shows are watched by 80% of urban Indonesian youth at least once a week, 33% watching at least some MTV every day... While these survey results are suspected by many to be inaccurate, this type of programming is unquestionably popular (*ibid.*, 6).

The emergence of the World Wide Web and the proliferation of *warnet* (*warung internet*, ‘internet cafes’) in towns and cities throughout Indonesia in the late 1990s, has also revolutionised the way in which Indonesian residents can access the rest of the world. One member of the STSI-based group Sambasunda, for instance, told me that he had built his own *djembe* drum following instructions that he found on the Web. Just as importantly, the Internet has also made it easier for the rest of the world to communicate with Indonesia; Sambasunda are an interesting case in point. Running their own site (<http://surf.to/Sambasunda>), the group’s guest book includes messages from around the globe. At the time of writing, for example, a posting from a DJ in Belgium (dated 25<sup>th</sup>



October 2002) informs the group that he is planning to play some of Sambasunda's tracks on his radio show. Similarly, a message from a Belgian percussionist planning a visit to Java (dated 4<sup>th</sup> January 2002) asks if it would be possible to meet the group.

Such contact is significant. Western influence on Sundanese music is not only a result of one culture imitating or borrowing from another, but also a consequence of face-to-face encounters and collaborations between foreign musicians and local artists. A constant trickle of overseas musicians, mainly from wealthier nations in North America, Australasia, Europe and Asia, pass through Bandung to record, and to study with Sundanese instrumentalists and singers. Sundanese artists have also performed with Western musicians of various descriptions as part of overseas festivals or work and study trips abroad.

#### 6.4.2 Ismet Ruchimat

Ismet Ruchimat, an STSI lecturer who Nano Suratno identified as one of the most creative and influential of the new generation of *degung* composers, has undertaken a couple of residencies as a lecturer at the University of Oslo, Norway, as well as performed at various music festivals around the world. In addition, Ruchimat has contributed to several world music albums produced by European-born instrumentalists working in Bandung. In 1993, a chance visit to Bandung's Jugala studios led to Ruchimat playing *kacapi* in a cross-cultural 'jam' session that resulted in the release of the cassette *Sunda Africa* (SP Records 1993). While *The Rough Guide to World Music* says of this album, "African and Indian percussion gently steer *degung* into a new rhythmic direction", the recording does not actually feature *gamelan degung*. Instead, *kacapi*, *suling*, *kendang* and *genggong* (bamboo jew's harp) are combined with *tabla*, *djembe* and congas, the latter all performed by the "globetrotting percussionist of Spanish origin" and the album's producer, Vidal Paz (Broughton and Ellingham 2000:141). All but one of the track titles, which include *No Risk No Fun*, *The Wandering Gypsy* and *Journey to India*, are in English, and the culturally eclectic, new-age feel of the album is further underscored by the accompanying sleeve notes which include a quote from the *I-Ching*:

Music has power to easy [*sic*] tension within the heart and loosen the grip of obscure emotions (*Sunda Africa*, SP Records 1993).

Since *Sunda Africa*, Ismet Ruchimat and Vidal Paz (who is also known as Django Mango) have worked together on a range of other world music projects including *Moon Magic: India Meets Java and Africa* (GNP 1998). This album uses a similar line up to *Sunda Africa*, but replaces the *suling* with the Indian *bansuri* flute (played by the Indian flautist Hariprasad Chaurasia). Song titles such as *One World* and *Song to Madhu Bamba: the Marabau of Senegal* further reinforce the album's global feel. Apart from Vidal Paz, Ismet Ruchimat has also developed a close working relationship with the British born songwriter and producer Colin Bass (alias Sabah Habas Mustapha) who is famous in Indonesia for writing the pan-Asian pop hit, *Denpasar Moon* (Wave, Japan 1994). In 2000, Colin Bass collaborated with Ismet Ruchimat and a Bandung group known as the Jugala All Stars on the album *So La Li* (Kartini Music 2000). This recording brings together a range of stylistically diverse songs which, sung by the Sundanese *kawih* singer Tati Ani Mogiono, are accompanied by a combination of traditional Sundanese instruments augmented with guitar, bass guitar and violin. Unlike the studio-produced ambient instrumental improvisations produced by Vidal Paz, the popular songs on *So La Li* are more suitable for live performance. The Jugala All Stars have undertaken several international tours, performing in Europe during the summer of 2002.

Jurriëns suggests that syncretism can be considered as “the more celebratory outcome of a multiple identity”, or quoting Homi Bhabha “the cultural condition of people who live in-between” (1999:69). Certainly, the global awareness and vision that Ismet Ruchimat has acquired working both outside of Indonesia and with foreign artists in Bandung has influenced the approach that he has taken to his own homegrown musical projects. This is particularly evident in the world music recordings released by Ruchimat's group Sambasunda, an STSI-based ensemble whose first album could be considered to represent a new wave of *degung instrumental*.



### 6.4.3 Sambasunda: a new direction for *gamelan degung*?

The roots of Sambasunda<sup>8</sup> trace back to the early 1990s when Ismet Ruchimat and some of his student friends at STSI began to improvise together on a regular basis. Now a lecturer at the institution, Ruchimat continues to direct the group, which has grown from its original core membership of eight to a collective of between fourteen and twenty players. Many of these musicians also freelance in other experimental groups such as the Jugala All Stars and Krakatau, as well as perform in Bandung's more conventional *gamelan* ensembles.

Although Sambasunda have developed an innovative and unique sound, members of the group are eager to point out that they primarily use traditional instruments, playing techniques and, perhaps more pointedly, rehearsal methods. Unlike many standard *degung* groups preparing for recordings in Bandung today, Sambasunda do not use notation to document or transmit their compositions and arrangements. Instead, starting from a single musical idea – be it an extant tonal pattern, traditional song, melodic riff or rhythmic groove – material gradually evolves out of the improvisation that constitutes the group's regular practice sessions. Ruchimat explained that pieces continue to be modified throughout the rehearsal and recording process, and that nothing is fixed until the final take (*p.c.*, 2001). A couple of musicians remarked that they particularly enjoy being members of Sambasunda because, unlike other Bandung ensembles, the group operates relatively democratically. While Ismet Ruchimat, as musical director, will illustrate and tweak individual instrumental parts, all of the participating musicians are encouraged to have a hand in the creative process. As time consuming and labour intensive as this method of composition is, the group are able to capitalise on the fact that the STSI campus can be accessed twenty-four hours a day; the student and graduate players in the group are accustomed to rehearsing well into the early hours of the morning. Several students also rent rooms in Ruchimat's family home, his living room serving as an alternative venue for the group to get together. Sambasunda's first commercial release, *Sambasunda* (GNP 1998), combines an extended *gamelan degung* (each individual instrument is augmented with additional

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<sup>8</sup> The name Sambasunda was adopted in 1997. Samba, not only refers to the well-known Latin-American dance rhythm but also to a young and inquisitive character in Cirebonese masked dance-drama.

itches 3- and 5+) with a series of *calung* (xylophones) and bamboo *jengglong*. The wooden instruments were specially constructed for the group by the brother of one of the players. Added to this core ensemble are *kacapi*, *suling*, *angklung*, violin, *bangsing* (a type of transverse bamboo flute from Cirebon) and a range of Sundanese and non-Sundanese percussion, including *djembe* and congas. The compositions on the album are characterised by dynamic, highly syncopated unison melodies that are performed over repeated rhythmic riffs and which, according to the album's sleeves notes, reflect a range of stylistic influences including "Kebyar, Gambang Kromong, Jaipong and Samba" (*Sambasunda*, GNP 1998).

Sambasunda's follow up albums, *Bali Jaipong* (GNP 2000) and *Sunda Bali* (GNP 2000), go one step further and replace the *gamelan degung* with a Balinese *gong kebyar* ensemble. The other instruments, however, including the group's now trademark bamboo instruments, violin and extended percussion, are retained. The mixing of two distinct regional styles, in this instance using Balinese instruments and performance techniques to play Sundanese repertoire, can be partly attributed to government policy dating from the 1950s. The first leaders of the fledgling Republic sought to use state-run educational institutions to promote an Indonesian national culture in the belief that some degree of assimilation between regions was desirable (Sutton 1991:175). Given the comparable amount of time that is allocated to *gamelan degung* and Balinese *gamelan* on the current STSI Bandung timetable it is perhaps only surprising that graduates from this institution do not produce more of this type of cross-regional fusion.

While, then, not using *gamelan degung*, *Sunda Bali* features *degung* repertoire, including a Balinese *gamelan* arrangement of the *degung klasik* piece *Lutung Bingung* (a piece which was allegedly influenced by Balinese *gamelan* in the first place, see 3.2.1). Coming full circle, the album also incorporates an arrangement of Koswara's *Sabilulungan*, a song made famous throughout Bali by Suryana's 1970s *degung* cassette of the same name. Finally, *Sunda Bali* also includes original compositions such as Ismet Ruchimat's atmospheric *Millenium [sic] Ritual* and Yadi Cahyadi's *Sweet Talking With Oling*.

It is significant that Sambasunda, like Krakatau, often give their compositions English titles, as well as embellish their sleeve notes with cryptic English quotations such as:



The Drum is beaten for the lunatic, the Angklung is played for the simpleton (*Sunda Bali* and *Bali Jaipong*, GNP 2000).

It seems as though the inclusion of these phrases is not solely for the benefit of the international market; English language excerpts also serve to imbue the album with a certain cosmopolitan sophistication for the local audience. Williams notes that slipping English words into a conversation in Indonesia is “considered stylish and educated and worldly, in much the same way that an American’s use of French (*laissez faire* or *je ne sais quoi*) could be” (1989:109). Similarly, Sutton observes that Indonesian MTV VJs (video jockeys) incorporate English expressions such as “now listen up” or “well that’s it”, into Indonesian language broadcasts, this employment of English legitimising “the show as part of MTV’s global Kingdom” (1998b:5).

Unlike GNP’s other traditional Sundanese recording artists (currently including Ujang Suryana and Endang Sukandar) who are released on the company’s subsidiary Keraton label, Sambasunda’s output is classified together with recordings such as *Moon Magic* and *Sunda Africa* and released on GNP’s World Music Label (WML). This is a deliberate promotional tactic rather than an inadvertent oversight on the part of record company marketers. Speaking to musicians in the group it is apparent that Sambasunda’s ideal target audience is national and international as much as it is the regional population. Furthermore, Sambasunda are also attempting to appeal to a section of the local audience, including what could be glossed as the ‘MTV generation’, that is itself more familiar with Western style pop than with Sundanese regional genres.

According to Nano Suratno, many Indonesians in this socio-cultural bracket consider traditional musics to be parochial (*kampung*) and old fashioned (*p.c.*, 2000b). Of much more practical concern to most Sundanese musicians is the fact that performers of traditional music are considered as the ‘poor relation’ of pop, jazz or Western-style classical artists, generally receiving much lower levels of financial remuneration than their Western-musical-instrument-playing Indonesian counterparts.<sup>9</sup> While Sambasunda is a collective of young musicians who visibly gain much enjoyment from creating and performing their own version of Sundanese music, the group is also caught up “in socially acknowledged games of prestige and power” (Stokes 1994b:97), its members

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<sup>9</sup> As Stokes observes, a musician’s “value in a locality is often perceived to be precisely their ability to transcend the cultural boundaries of that locality” (1994b:98).



endeavouring to carve out a living for themselves in politically, economically and culturally turbulent times. As Stokes argues, music does not simply reflect identity and place, but is a means “by which the hierarchies of place are negotiated and transformed” (1994a:4). Adopting the marketing strategies of Western producers and decontextualising their unique brand of Sundanese music by branding it as world music provides Sambasunda with a potential way of ‘globalising’ their local product and positioning themselves alongside more powerful international artists on the world stage.

Apart from the way in which their recordings are labelled, Sambasunda have also reached out to their local audience in other novel ways. Capitalising on the fact that Bandung is a city known for its fashionable cafes, bars and clubs, the group have chosen to play in venues usually reserved for more ‘hip’ Western and Western-style Indonesian pop and rock bands. In addition, Sambasunda were the only ‘traditional’ music group to take part in *Indomusik Expo 2000*, a music industry sponsored exposition that was held in Jakarta to showcase new Indonesian pop and rock talent. As noted above, unlike most *gamelan* groups in Bandung, Sambasunda also run their own Internet site as well as sell group merchandise such as T-shirts that feature the Sambasunda logo. Articles about the group have also been included in glossy music magazines like *Gong* and *NewsMusik*, which are aimed at Indonesia’s more affluent and Western-orientated urban youth.

Critiques of Sambasunda in this type of publication generally position the group as ‘ethnic’ music. *NewsMusik* writes that at the time of their first album, Sambasunda were “still exploring Sundanese ethnic music” (*masih melakukan eksplorasi pada musik etnis Sunda*). *Sunda Bali* and *Bali Jaipong*, on the other hand, are said to “marry two ethnic music cultures together” (*mengawinkan dua kultur musik etnis*) (*NewsMusik*, 8<sup>th</sup>–29<sup>th</sup> November 2000: 98). As Sutton observes, “The very fact that the term ‘ethnic’ (*etnik*) is now widespread in the discourse about Indonesian regional musical traditions... is indicative of the marginalized space accorded these various traditions among popular musicians” (1998b:10). In fact, the term ethnic (*etnik* or *etnis*) tends to refer to some marginalised ‘other’ even when employed by traditional musicians themselves. At SMKI Bandung, for example, students on the *seni musik* (diatonic music) programme study Sundanese *gamelan* as part of a module in ethnic music (*musik etnis*). *Musik etnis*, in this case, is taught along side modules in *musik klasik* (Western classical music), *musik pop* (pop music), and *musik tari-tarian* (music for dance). In contrast,



*gamelan* is positioned at the heart of the mainstream curriculum for those students on *karawitan* (traditional music) courses. For *karawitan* students, the term 'ethnic' is, instead, usually reserved to denote more obscure folk genres that are specific to a particular village or region *elsewhere* in West Java, Indonesia or the world beyond.

Tellingly, Sambasunda musicians often point to their predominant use of *alat-alat musik etnis* (ethnic instruments) when explaining their group ethos. In contrast to other fusion groups, such as Krakatau, Sambasunda do not always include electronic instruments such as synthesisers or electric guitars in their line up; neither do they always perform repertoire modelled on the Western pop song format. Rather than taking an anti-Western stance, however, this non-conformism to the Western pop idiom seems to have much more to do with an awareness of the current demand for "ethnic musics" on the international music market. As Sutton acknowledges, the very notion of "world music/world beat" is, itself, fuelled by Western notions of "exoticism" (1998b:10), with musical difference constructed to "suit the strategies of multinational corporate industry" (Fiona Magowan 1994:153).

#### 6.4.4 World music and pop Sunda

Contrasting Sambasunda's musical output with the pop Sunda recordings of Nano Suratno, one is confronted by the paradox that the latter remains, at least for now, a more unambiguously 'local' (regional, and to a lesser extent, national) music, even when performed on Western instruments. Part of this reason for this may be that in pop Sunda, as indicated by the interchange of repertoire between pop Sunda bands and *degung kawih* groups, the specific make-up of the accompanying instrumentation is of secondary importance to the songs themselves. Another explanation may be that the so-called Western instruments in question have been used in the archipelago for such a lengthy period of time that they may now be considered to be just as much a part of Indonesian culture as of European or African-American culture. Western music and musical instruments have a long history in Indonesia, the earliest instances of European music in Java probably dating back to the sixteenth century and the arrival of the Portuguese (see Sumarsam 1995). Dutch colonial rule then resulted in the introduction of European military marching bands and dance orchestras into Central Javanese court



life (*ibid.*) with, from 1925 (long before the arrival of MTV), colonial radio stations broadcasting a wide range of popular and classical Western musics. While Sutton comments that a part of MTV's strategy is to make the foreign pop music it disseminates seem "as if it 'belongs' in Indonesia" (1998b:10), many Indonesians take it for granted that it already does. Interviewing *degung* composers about their early musical experiences, several unblinkingly included Western artists in their lists of formative influences. Ismet Ruchimat mentioned Queen and Deep Purple as favourite childhood bands (*p.c.*, 2001), while Ujang Suryana, a teenager in the 1960s, was a fan of American crooners such as Dean Martin (*p.c.*, 2000). A comment by the African musician Youssou N'Dour seems particularly germane at this juncture: "When people say my music is too Western, they must remember that we, too, hear this music over here. We hear the African music with the modern" (quoted in Monson 1999:57).

Despite its trappings of modernity, pop Sunda's unmistakable provincial sound means that it is not competing for the same audience as MTV disseminated Western or Western-style pop. Pop Sunda, to borrow Sutton's observations about *dangdut*, "is NOT trendy, does not give its viewers a finger on the pulse of the world, of the global now" (1998b:8). Jurriëns equates the localness and 'Sundanese-ness' of Nano Suratno's pop Sunda compositions to the fact that the composer has "resisted business strategies and governmental policies that serve to decontextualise regional artistic traditions and adjust them to the demands of a global commercial marketplace" (1999:59). In complete contrast – and even though primarily using indigenous acoustic instruments, rehearsal methods and often performing traditional repertoire – Sambasunda's enthusiastic adoption of Western marketing strategies and deliberate positioning of their recordings as world music, demonstrates a more explicit 'global' consciousness. Thus, in very different ways, both of these musics further support Sutton's conclusion that Indonesian popular genres challenge "the too-facile dichotomy between traditional/regional/non-Western on the one hand and modern/international/Western on the other" (1998b:8).

To what extent the innovations of groups like Sambasunda will impact on, or even replace more traditional styles of *degung* playing remains to be seen. Nevertheless, the Sambasunda 'sound' has already spilled over onto more conventional *degung* recordings, if only because members of the group are creatively involved in such projects. The *degung kawih* cassette *Imut Pangjajap* (Whisnu 2000), for example, is the



result of a collaboration between musicians from Sulanjana and Sambasunda. Featuring the distinctive sound of Sambasunda's violinist Yadi Cahyadi and female vocalist Tati Ani Mogiono (the singer on *Jaipong Bali* and *So La Li*), Ismet Ruchimat was responsible for the album's instrumental arrangements, the resultant texture of which are clearly derivative of Sambasunda's first album (*Sambasunda*, GNP 1998). Sambasunda themselves have also returned to the medium of *gamelan degung*, producing an unreleased recording of reworked *degung klasik* pieces. Ujang Suryana made the interesting comment that he saw a natural successor in Ismet Ruchimat (*p.c.*, 2000). Perhaps this is because both composers are predominantly known for their cassette-industry driven instrumental music and share a large fan base in the international and tourist markets. Only time will tell whether Sambasunda's music will have the longevity and wider influence of cassettes such as *Sangkala* and *Sabilulungan*.

### Summary

The chapter began by charting the development of *gamelan degung* on cassette. Identifying some of the seminal releases of the 1970s and 1980s, it reviewed both the musical content of these recordings and the composers, performers and recording companies implicated in their production. Having first reflected upon the relationship between cassette production companies and Sundanese artists, and the ways in which issues such as marketing and copyright law are (or are not) managed, the chapter continued by exploring the different approaches to composition employed by *degung* musicians. This discussion paved the way for a more detailed examination of the transmission process by means of a descriptive account of a rehearsal that Nano Suratno organised in preparation for a specific *degung kawih* recording. The third part of this chapter investigated changes to *degung* recordings since the 1990s and focused on the impact of 'globalisation' on Bandung's traditional music scene. Contrasting the music fusions produced by groups such as Sambasunda, with the modern regional genre of pop Sunda, it concluded by considering the way in which contemporary *degung* genres collapse the boundaries that distinguish 'Western from non-Western' (or ethnic), 'art from pop', 'traditional from modern' and 'local from global'.

Finally, Chapter 7 will now look at how all of these different musical categories converge in the artistic extravaganza that constitutes the Sundanese wedding.

## Chapter 7

### King for a day: performing tradition at the Bandung wedding

#### 7.1 The role of *gamelan degung* in wedding celebrations

A Bandung taxi driver once casually remarked to me that whenever he hears *gamelan degung* he begins to feel hungry. This Pavlovian response is indicative of the fact that most Sundanese only ever hear the ensemble played live at *hajatan*, a type of formal party at which an elaborate buffet meal is served to celebrate a significant life event. That *degung* is rarely encountered by non-musicians outside of such contexts is also reflected in comments that more explicitly link this smaller *gamelan* to weddings. One female friend, a social worker, noted the sound of *tembang Sunda* and *gamelan degung* make her feel wistful that she is still single, while another acquaintance, a manager at a textile factory, remarked that she would not have considered herself to be properly married if she had not had a *degung* group at her own wedding.

Weddings are big business in Bandung, a fact which, alongside the emergence of the cassette industry, has prompted Sundanese musicians to develop a more commercial approach to trading their wares. Although Laing claims that “ceremonial music” is amongst those musical activities that “have no connection, or only a tenuous connection, to markets” (2003:319), performing at wedding ceremonies provides *degung* musicians with one of their main sources of regular income. I repeatedly heard it said that many *gamelan* groups in the city owe their continuing survival to the public’s penchant for elaborate life cycle celebrations. At the same time, the local community’s taste for glitzy tradition is attributed to the creativity of the artists who continue to reinvent these ceremonial productions.

Travelling around Bandung, one often sees small handmade placards hanging at the end of alleyways or above shop fronts, advertising *degung*, *jaipongan* and *upacara adat* (‘traditional ceremony’). The city also seems to be littered with boutiques and salons hiring out wedding attire for the bride and groom as well as offering bridal makeup (*rias panganten*) packages to fashion the wedding couple’s hairdos, face-paint and costumes in keeping with the regional tradition. Two *lingkung seni* that I worked



with have also branched out into this area, running a bridal hire and makeup service as a sideline to the group's mainstay performing activities. These groups also rent out the elaborate ceremonial furniture and associated paraphernalia that decorates the venue or venues where the wedding is held. Luxurious furnishings such as shiny satin bedspreads, wall and door hangings, elaborate floral displays and throne-like chairs are all used to transform selected rooms in the bride's family home and to set up the bridegroom as 'king for a day' (*raja sadinten* or *raja sehari*). If the wedding reception is held in a hired hall (*gedung*), the imported decor may also consist of more substantial staging including ornately carved wooden backdrops, ice sculptures and even running water features.

The reason that *gamelan degung* is the ensemble of choice at such urban functions seems to be that its aristocratic heritage lends an additional element of prestige and tradition to an occasion while, at the same time, groups are still able to perform up-to-date repertoire in the form of the latest cassette-mediated pop Sunda hits. Both of these aspects are accentuated at different points in the day. As discussed in chapter 1, the *degung*'s origins in the Sundanese courts and imagined connections with the Pajajaran kingdom mean that it is the favoured ensemble to accompany the historic scenes of stately pomp enacted in the *upacara mapag panganten* or wedding greeting ceremony. Once concluded, however, the *degung* group's next task is to provide entertainment for the wedding reception, a drop-in party at which guests congratulate the newly married couple and partake of the celebratory meal. Thus, having musically functioned to evoke feelings of nostalgia for the glorified Sundanese past conjured in the greeting ceremony, the *degung* thereafter typically serves as a vehicle for the most commercially successful brand of *kawih* repertoire; most wedding parties that I attended in 2000-2002 were dominated by the songs of Nano S.

Considering the role of the *gamelan degung* in the Sundanese wedding is therefore a particularly apposite way of concluding this study because the music performed at such events often encompasses all of the repertoire-types discussed in this dissertation. Furthermore, as will be discussed below, the wedding ceremony itself can also be considered as a large-scale exercise in adaptation and transformation. *Tembang* and *gamelan* musicians, dancers and dramatists, all come together to devise and execute the scripted sequence of ceremonial gestures, dances, songs and poetic narration that make up contemporary *upacara mapag panganten* performances.



## 7.2 The wedding reception

Nano Suratno explained that most weddings follow a relatively standardised timetable, the actual wedding itself and the complex array of rituals linked to it usually taking place over several hours during the morning.<sup>1</sup> The *gamelan degung* then typically heads the entertainment at the reception party, playing a selection of *kawih* songs and, more occasionally, *degung klasik* pieces from around 10am to midday. Since the early 1980s, this *degung* set has usually been followed by or interspersed with several *jaipongan* dances. Suratno stated that the *jaipongan* craze of the late 1970s and 1980s brought *gamelan salendro* back into fashion at such celebrations, the ensemble having previously waned in popularity due to the phenomenal success of the all-female *degung* groups that dominated wedding receptions in the 1960s and 1970s (*p.c.*, 2000b). All the same, for reasons of economy, groups like *Sasaka Domas* only bring *gamelan salendro* instruments to the most extravagant of wedding parties. Instead, the group's *jaipongan* dance presentation is usually performed with a cassette accompaniment. Once the traditional music sets have been exhausted, a pop Sunda group, *dandgut* group or electronic keyboard player and singer usually take over for the rest of the afternoon.<sup>2</sup> This generally relieves the *gamelan* and *tembang* musicians who, having been either playing or preparing to play for up to six or seven hours, can then pack up, help themselves to the buffet if they have not already done so, and finally head home.

The diversity of entertainment typically found at Bandung weddings means that the city's traditional musicians are accustomed to sharing a stage with different types of local 'pop' artist. Indeed, entrepreneurial group leaders often take on the role of commission-deducing middlemen, subcontracting in 'outside' performers to supply those musical genres that lie beyond their own troupes' domains of competence. On several occasions I encountered a musician friend in a frantic search for a freelance keyboard player, a PA system and even a set of *gamelan* instruments that he had previously promised to supply for an imminent wedding booking. The diversity of musical requirements of families hosting such events has also encouraged some traditional musicians to branch out into more popular music idioms. Spiller, for example,

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<sup>1</sup> See Bratawidjaja (1997) and Herdiana (1980) for descriptions of the various ceremonies that make up the contemporary Sundanese wedding.

<sup>2</sup> The wealthiest families will then complete the day's celebrations with an all-night *wayang* performance.



notes that members of the Rawit *gamelan* group often perform what they refer to as “*semi-dangdut*” at weddings; this involves “the goong, the kendang, and some other unpitched percussion instruments” being played in conjunction with an electronic keyboard (2001: 264-265, 268). Similarly, while *Sasaka Domas* employ an *elekton* (electronic keyboard) player and female cabaret singer to perform Indonesian and Western diatonic ballads at the tail end of the reception, Didin Bajuri (the co-director of *Sasaka Domas*) usually makes a couple of guest appearances with this duo. The ease with which musicians and guests negotiate the eclectic mix of traditional, modern, local, national and often international styles performed as part of these wedding celebrations was encapsulated for me in the way that Didin Bajuri would effortlessly switch between performing the reverential *tembang* song *Rajah* in the greeting ceremony, to a moving Frank Sinatra inspired rendition of *My Way* at the reception. Nevertheless, while Didin Bajuri has won national competitions for performing both types of song, this particular type of bi-musicality seems to be fairly unusual amongst Sundanese singers.

What these anecdotal examples serve to demonstrate is that the exact musical content of Sundanese wedding celebrations varies from group to group, with musicians and groups exploiting their individual skills and adapting their services according to the demands of specific performance contexts. The most lavish wedding parties that I attended, for instance, took place in the evening rather than during the afternoon. At one such function, held in a rather grand Bandung hotel, the music provided included a set of *degung klasik rampak sekar* songs. According to Endang Sukandar, the musician who booked the *degung* group for this event, the large number of singers involved served to underscore the exclusivity of the occasion. In contrast, and as mentioned in chapter 5, it is common to see a small *kacapian* (zither-based ensemble) or *tembang* group replace the *gamelan degung* at lower key events.

Whatever type of music is performed, the ultimate goal of the entertainment at the wedding reception is to generate a *ramé* (lively) atmosphere, the *hajat* ideally remaining “crowded and lively throughout the day” (Spiller 2001:253-254). One way in which such an ambiance is created and maintained is by encouraging interaction between the performing artists and the invited guests. Wedding guests often request specific songs from the musicians and some even take to the stage to sing (*kaul*) one or two numbers themselves. As a foreign music student I was forcefully encouraged to



'repay' my hosts in this way at every wedding I attended. Often awkwardly trussed up in a traditional Sundanese female costume, complete with heavy hairpiece (*sanggul*) and thick makeup, I, as a curiosity, would often prompt much more cheering and applause than the competent professionals present. On one occasion my discomfort reached new heights as the master of ceremonies began to inform the assembled wedding guests about my PhD topic, the incongruous phrase "*doktor degung*" reverberating out of the PA system just as a microphone was thrust into my hand and I was motioned to start singing. Spiller notes that his own presence at such performances similarly helped to produce the requisite lively atmosphere, one group leader openly informing him that his "novelty value as a *bule* (BS: literally albino, but more colloquially European-looking) performer was a welcome addition to the group's saleability" (ibid., 262).

Another way in which a large crowd is assured is by opening the reception with an *upacara mapag panganten* or wedding greeting ceremony. I was told that this colourful multimedia spectacle encourages guests to turn up at the beginning of the wedding celebrations, thereby ensuring that there is a long line of relatives, friends and neighbours queuing up to pay their respects to the wedding party by the time the food is ready to be served up. Conventionally, this pageant is employed prior to the formal marriage ceremony (*akad nikah*); the groom and his family are formally greeted twenty metres or so from the home of the bride where the wedding will take place and to which, escorted by dancers acting as representatives of the bride's family, they then ceremonially process. However, in recent years it has also become popular for the newly married couple and their families to receive a similarly staged welcome when arriving at receptions held in a hired hall. Again, I was told that this is one way of ensuring that the host family do not suffer the humiliation of turning up to an empty venue.

### 7.3 Invented tradition

Although commonly referred to as a traditional ceremony, the wedding greeting ceremony as it exists today is an artistic creation, or at least a theatrical reworking of a formerly ad hoc custom that is now promoted as 'tradition'.<sup>3</sup> It seems that prior to the

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<sup>3</sup> For this reason, some scholars and artists prefer to describe contemporary ceremonials as *upacara karesmen* ('embellished' or 'beautified ceremony') or *upacara khusus* ('special ceremony').



1960s and 1970s, the business of meeting and accompanying the groom to the bride's home was a modest affair of courtesy that lacked the drama and perceived symbolic significance of today's extravaganzas. However, inspired by the opulent scenes enacted in Wahyu Wibisana's ceremonials and *gending karesmen* performances, Bandung arts groups began to offer increasingly sophisticated versions of this processional. Now, routinely featuring characters and imagery drawn from the Pajajaran-based *pantun* tales, these productions fall into Hobsbawm's definition of "invented tradition" as a set of repeatedly executed practices "of a ritual or symbolic nature" that imply a "continuity with the past" and where possible, "continuity with a suitable historic past" (1983:1).

Hidayat Suryalaga claimed that most ceremony-directors have no real interest in historical 'authenticity' or in accurately representing the regal characters or associated paraphernalia that now form an indispensable part of the wedding procession. He cited the widespread use of the ceremonial parasol (*payung* or *songsong*), a grandiose relic from the aristocratic courts, as a case in point. The historian Nina H. Lubis explains that the *payung* was an important status symbol for any Sundanese nobleman, the colour and patterning used on the parasol denoting his particular social ranking (1998:187-189). Nevertheless, *payung* of all colours and sizes regularly appear in wedding ceremonies, the parasol simply functioning as a decorative prop to add a touch of colonial glamour to the occasion. Suryalaga also pointed out that according to *kabupaten* etiquette it would have been considered as indecorous to use a *payung* indoors, let alone as part of a dance performance (*p.c.*, 2000). Both practices are common in Bandung *upacara*, with some groups even utilising four horizontally held parasols to represent 'wheels' in moving formations that are configured to resemble train carriages.

In fact, the resurgence of interest in recovering and elaborating, if not inventing and fabricating Sundanese traditions reflects broader socio-cultural changes in Indonesia as a whole. Pemberton, who provides a thought provoking critique of Soeharto's oppressive New Order politics and the practice of Javanese 'tradition', notes an analogous reworking of Central Javanese weddings in the early 1970s. Particularly germane to this study is Pemberton's observation that, as part of this process, many of the trappings of Javanese *wayang wong* (human puppet theatre) were converted into "ritual scenes of dramatic 'tradition'" (1994:226). At the same time, many of the art forms incorporated into these revised ceremonials were themselves subject to a similar



form of upgrading and standardisation. Discussing the effects of nationalist ideology on the evolution of Sundanese dance, Spiller discusses the consequent marginalisation of improvised participatory dancing and the promotion of fixed choreographies that “could be shown off to non-Sundanese as examples of ‘high’ Sundanese art, alongside similar ‘classical’ dances from Central Java and Bali” (2001: 301-302). Significantly, this type of presentational dance is a core feature of most wedding greeting ceremonies, with Sundanese ‘tradition’ demonstrated to be every bit as elaborate and impressive as its Javanese and Balinese counterparts. Conceived of as a theatrical spectator event rather than as a participant-centred ritual, the wedding procession has even been performed in hotel lobbies for the entertainment of foreign tour groups.

Since the 1970s, Bandung artists have become masters of invented tradition, developing ceremonies for events ranging from weddings and circumcisions to high school graduations and the launch of new shops and businesses. Anecdotes about the creation of new rituals abound. One prominent *degung* musician related that several years ago a general from a local army division had approached him because he wanted to stage a ‘traditional’ military procession. In the absence of any precedent the musician concocted what he came to call the *Parade of the Seven Steps*. Apparently, no one has ever questioned the origins of what has since become a regular annual event.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Hidayat Suryalaga commented that he developed the *ngaras* ceremony, at least in its current form, with the group Sasaka Domas in 1983 (*p.c.*, 2000).<sup>5</sup> This custom, now extremely popular amongst Bandung’s more affluent middle classes, is convened by the parents of the bride or bridegroom the day before the wedding and involves their soon-to-be-wed son or daughter kneeling before them, publicly apologising for their shortcomings, and washing and scenting their feet (often with expensive imported perfumes such as ‘Chanel no.5’). The parents then usually reciprocate by telling of their love for their child. Suryalaga explained that, as an ethnic group, the Sundanese (unlike the Javanese) are known for being easily provoked to laughter or to tears and that

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<sup>4</sup> As previously discussed, however, certain bodies of so-called traditional musical repertoire only date back to the 1970s, 1980s and even 1990s. It seems that in Sunda the term ‘*tradisional*’ is often used to refer to the ‘regional’ or the ‘local’; it does not necessarily imply any continuity with a distant past.

<sup>5</sup> Suryalaga claimed that he based this ceremony on an older aristocratic practice. In fact, Pemberton makes reference to a 1916 source which describes a wedding in West Java. In this account, the term *ngaras* refers to a ritual in which the groom kissed the knees of his father-in-law, an Islamic official (1994:218).



various parts of the wedding celebrations deliberately exploit both emotional extremes. The *ngaras* ceremony undoubtedly emphasises the latter; the gentle strains of *tembang Sunda* and *kacapi suling* function to musically contain the communal sobbing that typically infuses such affairs. On one occasion, even some of the musicians had tears in their eyes as the rather stern looking father of the groom took his son into his arms and quietly told him that he did not have to wash his feet.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, retaining sufficient personal control, the *suling* player managed to respond to this situation, urgently whispering a quick change to the more melancholic *madenda* tuning.<sup>7</sup>

According to Iik Setiawan, the *degung* is not normally employed in the *ngaras* ceremony (or any of the other wedding rites that precede the *upacara mapag* procession) because, unlike the more portable *kacapi*, *gamelan* instruments are simply too cumbersome to cart around from venue to venue (*p.c.*, 2000). Several recording companies have, however, released *degung* cassettes specifically designed to accompany all of the various stages of the Sundanese wedding, including these preliminary rituals.

#### 7.4 The *upacara mapag panganten*

Each *lingkung seni* develops its own version of the wedding greeting ceremony, musicians and dancers often working in collaboration with dramatists and Sundanologists to develop the script and stage-plan (*naskah*) that details the texts, music and action sequences that make up contemporary presentations. Over time, individual groups have come to be recognized for the distinctive spin that they have put on the procession. Sasaka Domas, for example, are known for emphasising dance in their productions, while another group that I regularly observed, Kandaga Sari, are identified for their liberal use of *tembang* singing.

As with Wahyu Wibisana's multimedia productions of the 1960s, most of the ceremony's musical and choreographic content is imaginatively pieced together by recycling and transforming existing materials drawn from across the Sundanese

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<sup>6</sup> The elderly grandmother of this particular groom told me that this type of event never took place when she was young but that the event is useful as it marks a transition in the parent-child relationship and makes the son or daughter aware of the seriousness of the marriage contract that they are about to enter.

<sup>7</sup> Most Sundanese musicians seem to agree that *madenda* (*sorog*) sounds more melancholic than *pelog*. However, some *madenda* songs, such as the popular *Es Lilin*, are considered to be jolly pieces.

performing arts complex. Sometimes, it is only the narrated and sung texts that are specifically composed for this purpose. Bearing in mind that this is a culture in which there is an ongoing flow of freelance players and dancers from one group to another and in which practices usually take place in an impromptu fashion in the moments immediately prior to a performance, the use of music and dance repertoires that are already familiar to performers usefully minimises the rehearsal time needed for a particular ceremony. Even so, several musicians mentioned that developing *upacara* that are sufficiently visually and audibly arresting, but that also meet the practical requirements of a specific occasion, still constitutes an important creative challenge. Iik Setiawan observed that there is a fine line between putting on an impressive, star-studded show, and cramming in songs and dances that go on for too long and leave the wedding party suspended in ceremonial limbo. Recalling that as a young musician he would often notice members of the bridal entourage looking at their watches in frustration or stifling yawns, Setiawan now usually customises his own productions to suit the tastes of individual clients. Thus, for example, while it is standard practice for the groom and his entourage to be escorted by dancers to the bride's home (or the venue where the wedding will take place), he has adapted the ceremony so that the bride's parents also join the procession. Reasoning that it is more polite for the bride's parents to greet and usher the groom themselves, Setiawan also rationalised that as it is usually the bride's family who finance this part of the wedding it is only fair that they should play a more involved role in the proceedings (*p.c.*, 2000).

### **7.5 Sasaka Domas' version of the *upacara mapag panganten***

While there is a fair degree of flexibility built into this greeting ritual, most wedding ceremonies employ the same basic format and key personnel. Figure 7:1 presents a performance flow chart for Sasaka Domas' version of the *upacara mapag panganten* as utilised to welcome a newly married couple to a wedding reception in a hired hall. An examination of this particular adaptation of the ceremony will provide a framework in which to discuss the different repertoires and musical devices that are used in performances of this type in greater detail. Firstly, however, I will introduce the



principal characters involved in the production and outline the basic action sequence that defines this event.

### 7.5.1 The action sequence

The cast list for the Sasaka Domas ceremony comprises:

- the *lengser* (the king's ambassador or envoy)
- the *payung* bearer (the ceremonial parasol bearer)
- a pair of *pongawa* dancers (male courtiers)
- a group of *umbul umbul* dancers (male dancers carrying brightly-coloured flags, banners or parasols)
- a group of *pagar ayu* dancers (young female dancers)
- a group of *Tari Merak* dancers (peacock dancers) (only in larger productions)
- a master of ceremonies (set apart from the main proceedings and often dressed in a Western-style suit rather than in regional dress)

At the very beginning of the ceremony the *lengser* escorts the wedding entourage to the initial point of greeting or starting position (fig. 7:1, 3). In tales of Pajajaran, the *lengser* is the king's envoy, a character that acts as an intermediary between the world of the nobility and the world of the mass populace living beyond the palace walls. Though considered to be a wise and prudent dignitary, the *lengser* is often depicted rather comically.<sup>8</sup> However, apart from adding a much-appreciated element of humour to the proceedings, the dancer playing this part is also responsible for making sure that the bride and groom (and their parents) navigate their way through the ceremony without any difficulties. Such is the importance of this role that Asep Setiadi claimed that he earns the bulk of his living as one of Bandung's few professional *lengser*. More recently, his detailed knowledge of *upacara* protocol has also led to him to start devising and directing his own ceremonials (*p.c.*, 2000).

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<sup>8</sup> Ade Suparman said that many wedding guests, particularly in rural areas, look forward to the humorous entrance of the *lengser* in much the same way that they anticipate the arrival of the comic clown *cepot* in Sundanese *wayang* theatre (*p.c.*, 2001b).

Fig. 7:1 Performance flow chart for Sasaka Domas' wedding greeting ceremony

No.	Musical event	Description	Repertoire source	Function and correlation to action sequence
1.	<i>Goong</i>	3 <i>goong</i> strokes	n/a	Signals the start of the proceedings
2.	<i>Narangtang</i>	Male vocalist accompanied by <i>kacapi suling</i> with <i>degung</i> tremolo	<i>Tembang Sunda</i>	A musical bridge. A formal way of leading into the main performance
3.	Overture 1	Dramatic opening piece performed on <i>degung</i> and <i>kacapi siter</i>	<i>Gamelan degung</i> (composed for this ceremony)	The <i>lengser</i> escorts the wedding party to starting position
4.	Narration	Narration with musical accompaniment	n/a	Welcome speech
5.	Overture 2	Imposing instrumental overture	<i>Gamelan degung</i> (composed for this ceremony)	<i>Lengser's</i> entrance
6.	<i>Tumenggungan kering</i>	Fast dance piece	<i>Gamelan pelog-salendro</i>	Flag or banner ( <i>umbul umbul</i> ) dance
7.	<i>Tumenggungan kendor</i>	Slower version of 6	<i>Gamelan pelog-salendro</i>	Male courtiers ( <i>pongawa</i> ) dance & <i>lengser</i> dance
8.	<i>Rajah</i>	Male vocalist accompanied by <i>kacapi suling</i> . Female singer adds vocal harmony	<i>Tembang Sunda</i>	Entry and formation of female dancers. <i>Lengser</i> genuflects before bridal couple
9.	<i>Candrawulan</i> or <i>Salaka Domas</i>	Female vocalist with <i>kacapi suling</i> accompaniment	<i>Tembang Sunda</i>	Ceremonial parasol ( <i>payung</i> ) dance
10.	<i>Cacagan</i>	Repeated triplet pattern on tones 2 & 5 (all instruments)	n/a	Parasol placed behind bridal couple
11.	<i>Tinawuran (Catrik)</i>	Choral singing accompanied by <i>degung</i>	<i>Gamelan degung</i>	Entire group slowly processes towards the stage area
12.	<i>Triul</i>	Rapid, ascending triplet sequence on <i>bonang</i>	n/a	Signals end of procession
13.	<i>Pangapungan</i>	Alternating male and female vocalists accompanied by <i>kacapi suling</i>	<i>Tembang Sunda</i>	Dance using the ceremonial <i>keris</i> dagger
14.	<i>Guruh</i> (thunder) / <i>jerit</i> (screaming) <i>suling</i>	<i>Gamelan</i> plays slow, repeated tone 5s while <i>suling</i> improvises in the high register	n/a	<i>Lengser</i> shows off the <i>keris</i> dagger
15.	<i>Sulintang (Catrik)</i>	Instrumental arrangement	<i>Gamelan degung</i>	Petal throwing ( <i>tawur kembang</i> ) sequence
16.	<i>Tari Merak</i>	Instrumental adaptation	<i>Gamelan pelog-salendro</i>	Peacock ( <i>Merak</i> ) dance
17.	<i>Jiro Catrik / Gambir Sawit</i>	Conventional 'exit' music	<i>Gamelan degung</i>	Group line up, bow and leave stage area



As soon as the wedding party are in position there follows a welcome speech by the master of ceremonies (fig. 7:1, 4). In contrast to other parts of the wedding in which an omnipresent narrator usually provides an ongoing commentary and interpretation of the events at hand, the *upacara mapag panganten* then typically unfolds without any substantial verbal interjection. The context-specific song texts that are written especially for this event do, however, frequently make reference to the institution of marriage, the splendour of the bride and groom and the various characters involved in the greeting ceremony itself.

Once the short introductory address is concluded, the *gamelan* strikes up with an instrumental overture and the *lengser* majestically parades into the performance space to mark the beginning of the performance proper (fig. 7:1, 5). On the heels of the *lengser* follow the *umbul umbul* who, carrying multi-coloured banners (*umbul umbul*) or parasols, perform a routine that concludes with the dancers splitting off into two groups and lining up on either side of the pathway along which the wedding party will eventually process (figs. 7:1, 6 & 7:2).



**Fig. 7:2 Entrance of the *umbul-umbul* dancers**

As soon as these banners or parasols are in position, the *pongawa* (male courtiers), *lengser* and *pagar ayu* (female dancers) enter in turn. Each group performs a short synchronised dance sequence and then positions itself into static formations that



transform the performance space into an ever changing theatrical tableaux (figs. 7:1, 7-8 & 7:3). Indeed, central to the structuring of the group dances, as well as to the choreography of the ceremonial as a whole, is the use of complex floor plans (*bloking*) to configure the assembled dancers into visually pleasing symmetrical patterns (Spiller 2001:305-306).



**Fig. 7:3 *Pagar ayu* dance formation**

Next in the proceedings comes the *payung* bearer who, weaving his way through the other performers, approaches the wedding party and in a moment of dramatic climax places the ceremonial parasol behind the bride and groom (fig. 7:1, 9-10). This marks the beginning of the wedding procession; the bridal couple and their retinue, along with the amassed performers, slowly promenade towards the staged area that serves as the focal point for the final part of the *upacara* as well as the ensuing reception party (fig. 7:1, 11-12).

Once the procession is complete and the wedding party are seated there follows a short suite of presentational dances. Sasaka Damas begin with a *keris* dagger dance; the wavy bladed *keris* is believed to be charged with supernatural powers and is, as a result, considered to be a valuable heirloom (*pusaka*) in aristocratic circles (fig. 7:1, 13-14). Then follows the flower scattering dance; the *pagar ayu* dancers kneel at the foot of the staged area and throw handfuls of petals towards the bride and groom (fig. 7:1, 15).



Finally, the ceremony concludes with a brief performance of *Tari Merak*, the popular Peacock dance that was choreographed by Tjetje Somantri in the 1950s (fig. 7:1, 16).<sup>9</sup> As this dance draws to a close, all of the performers assemble at the foot of the stage, bow to the bridal party and swiftly leave the performance area (figs. 7:1, 17 & 7:4).



Fig. 7:4 Led by the *lengser*, the assembled dancers bow before the bridal party

### 7.5.2 The music sequence: overtures and dramatic gestures

While the musical medley accompanying the various stages of this action sequence is mainly put together using existing bodies of traditional repertoire, most groups compose their own instrumental ‘overture’ to open the performance. According to Iik Setiawan, contemporary performance practice dictates that these melody-based overtures should be played at a fast tempo and in a *kompak* (compact or tight) unison that shows off the technical virtuosity of the players (*p.c.*, 2000). This appears to be a relatively recent innovation; older musicians concurred that when such ceremonies first emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s, *degung* groups simply used standard *bubuka* (opening pieces). I was told that the emergence of more complex group-specific arrangements


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<sup>9</sup> According to one of Spiller’s informants, *Tari Merak* was first included in the *upacara adat* in around 1978 during preparations “for a wedding hosted by Ibu Tien Suharto (the wife of the former Indonesian president Suharto), who was a fan of the dance” (2001:260).



coincided with the decline of all-female groups and a resurgence in all-male *degung* ensembles, a phenomenon which was influenced by the *jaipongan* 'explosion' of the late 1970s and the resultant renewed demand for more specialist *gamelan* players at Bandung *hajat* (Suratno, *p.c.*, 2000b). The development of increasingly sophisticated musical accompaniments also reflected wider changes to urban *upacara* as a whole including, for example, the introduction of more flamboyant costumes and stage props as well as ever more elaborate dance routines. As part of this trend, many younger musicians now deliberately set out to 'wow' audiences with the daring inventiveness of their group-specific compositions (Suryalaga, *p.c.*, 2000).<sup>10</sup>

The Sasaka Domas version of the greeting ceremony includes two instrumental overtures, one positioned on either side of the narrator's welcome speech. The first, which opens with a vibrant upbeat figure on the *kacapi*, is based on an exuberant descending motif that is realised in instrumental unison (*rampak waditra*) (figs. 7:1, 3 and 7:5).

Fig. 7:5 Opening of Sasaka Domas' *upacara mapag panganten*  CD track 21

<i>kacapi</i>	$\overline{\cdot 3}$ $\overline{23}$ $\overline{23}$ $\overline{234}$ $\overline{53}$	$\overline{23}$ $\overline{23}$ $\overline{234}$ $\overline{5}$
<i>rampak waditra</i>	$\cdot$ $\cdot$ $\overline{.55}$ $\overline{5}$	$\cdot$ $\cdot$ $\overline{.55}$ $\overline{5}$

<i>rampak waditra</i>	$\overline{\overline{1231}}$ 2 $\overline{\overline{4514}}$ $\overline{5}$	$\overline{\overline{1231}}$ 2 $\overline{\overline{4514}}$ $\overline{5}$	x 2 etc
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*rampak waditra* = unison instruments

<sup>10</sup> The Jugala group is a case in point. The music employed in its own version of the wedding greeting ceremony is performed using an unusual combination of *gamelan degung* and *gamelan salendro* (tuned so that the two ensembles have two pitches in common) that enables the assembled player to make dramatic switches from the *pelog degung* to the *salendro* tuning and back again. Iik Setiawan and Ismet Ruchimat, who have both directed this ensemble, explained that aside from the striking visual effect, juxtaposing the two *gamelan* in this way creates a powerful sound that is better suited to Bandung's more prestigious venues.



The second 'overture', which is used to accompany the initial entrance of the *lengser*, begins with a solo *kendang* pattern (a device previously used in Entjar Tjarmedi's 1960s *gending karesmen* composition *Lengser Midang*). The *cempres* and *peking* then perform a repetitive ostinato pattern on tone 4, over which the *bonang* plays striking fanfare-esque gestures (figs. 7:1, 5 & 7:6).

Fig. 7:6 Second 'overture' in Sasaka Domas' *upacara mapag panganten*

⊙ CD track 21

<i>kendang</i>	. D $\overline{D.D}$ .	. D $\overline{D.D}$ $\overline{..D}$	$\overline{DDD}$ $\overline{.DD.}$ D $\overline{..D}$	$\overline{DDD}$ $\overline{.DD.}$ D $\overline{.D}$
<i>rampak waditra (rw)</i>	. . . ①	. . . ②	. . . ③	. . . ④

<i>kendang</i>	D $\overline{.D}$ D .	$\overline{Pt}$ P $\overline{.DD}$ D
rw	. 1 . 2	. 3 . ④④

rw	$\overline{44}$ $\overline{44}$ $\overline{44}$ $\overline{44}$	$\overline{44}$ $\overline{44}$ $\overline{44}$ $\overline{44}$	$\overline{44}$ $\overline{44}$ $\overline{44}$ $\overline{44}$	$\overline{44}$ $\overline{44}$ $\overline{44}$ $\overline{44}$
<i>bonang</i>	. . . .	. $\overline{.54}$ $\overline{35}$ 1	. . . .	. $\overline{.54}$ $\overline{35}$ 1
<i>goong / kempul</i>	p p p p	p p p p	p p p p	p p p p

rw	$\overline{44}$ $\overline{44}$ $\overline{44}$ $\overline{44}$	$\overline{44}$ $\overline{44}$ $\overline{44}$ $\overline{44}$	$\overline{44}$ $\overline{44}$ $\overline{44}$ 1	2 3 4 ⑤
<i>bonang</i>	. . . .	. $\overline{.54}$ $\overline{35}$ $\overline{154}$	$\overline{35}$ $\overline{154}$ $\overline{35}$ 1	2 3 4 ⑤
<i>goong / kempul</i>	p p p p	p p p p	p p p p	p p p G

D = *dung*, P = *pak*, t = *tung* (*kendang* sounds),  
 rw = *rampak waditra* (unison instruments), p = *kempul* G = *goong*

The *bonang* flourishes in the above example, as with much of the musical content of the ceremony, are intended to reflect the pomp and circumstance of the occasion. To this end, the conventions of standard performance practice are sometimes put to one side and individual instruments used more freely to evocatively set the scene. For example, the Sasaka Domas version of the *upacara* begins rather solemnly (like Tjarmedi's *Lengser Midang*) with three strokes of the *goong* (fig. 7:1, 1). This is a dramatic device that, according to Wahyu Wibisana, traces back to the one-off ceremonials that he designed in the late 1950s and 1960s (*p.c.*, 2000). Fragmentary motifs are also used to mark specific points in the action sequence; the positioning of the ceremonial parasol behind the bridal couple and the end of the wedding procession are both signalled by theatrical triplet gestures (fig. 7:1, 10 & 12). Elsewhere in the performance, atmospheric washes of sound are created by the use of tremolo on the bronze instruments of the *degung* as well as by introducing the distinctive timbre of the bamboo jew's harp (*karinding*). Similarly, 'thundering' (*guruh*) repeated tone 5s on the metallophones, pots and gongs, coupled with a high-pitched 'screaming' (*jerit*) *suling* solo, help to reinforce a sense of mystery and awe as the magical *keris* dagger is presented to the bridal couple by the *lengser* (fig. 7:1, 14).

### 7.5.3 Music to accompany movement

Though most *upacara* make use of an eclectic mix of musical styles, the fact remains that some types of piece occur with more regularity than others. Inevitably, the repertoire chosen for a particular ceremonial is partly determined by the dramatic scope and choreographic content of the production, with composer-arrangers obliged to include material that can function to accompany specific dances and action sequences. The Sasaka Domas group, for example, employ a *degung* adaptation of the *gamelan pelog-salendro* piece *Tumenggungan* (a dance and *wayang* piece) for the flag bearers' and male courtiers' dances (fig. 7:1, 6-7). Similarly, a reworked version of *Tari Merak* accompanies a condensed form of the choreography after which this dance-specific musical arrangement was named (fig. 7:1, 16). The wedding ceremony is also one occasion when mainstream *degung* repertoire is used to accompany dance. Sasaka Domas, for instance, perform a group-specific instrumental arrangement of *Catrik* in



conjunction with the petal-throwing sequence (fig. 7:1, 15), while the generic closing piece (*panutup*) *Gambir Sawit* serves as 'exit music' for the dancers at the end of the performance (fig. 7:1, 17).

The musical construction of the *upacara adat* has not, however, been subject to any significant degree of standardisation. Although Asep Setiadi listed a handful of pieces that he has observed are recurrently used to accompany the entrance of the *lengser* (*p.c.*, 2000),<sup>11</sup> most musicians that I questioned were insistent that there is no clear-cut correlation between particular ceremonial characters and specific bodies of repertoire. Instead there are said to be innumerable pieces with the appropriate feel and rhythmic structure to complement any given choreography or section of the procession. According to Hidayat Suryalaga, the *kendang* is the main focus in this type of multimedia 'show', and the melodic content of a performance very much of secondary importance to the strident dance-drumming patterns that bind dancers and musicians together and drive the ceremony forwards (*p.c.*, 2000).

In fact, wedding ceremony performances were the only context in which I ever witnessed Sundanese *gamelan* musicians also following an external 'conductor'. The reason for this is that at many venues the main presentation unfolds out of direct view of the *kendang* player. The choreographer A'im Salim fulfils this role within the Sasaka Domas group. He could be regularly observed at wedding performances peering over his shoulder or on his tiptoes to catch a glimpse of how the action sequence was progressing before turning back to the instrumentalists and clapping out a tempo change, gesticulating for the ensemble to grow softer or louder, or signalling a repeat or a sudden stop. Players must always be ready to lengthen, cut short or even cut out the pieces on their set list in accordance with various logistical factors such as the amount of time that it takes to manoeuvre a wedding party through a particular stage of the ritual or the length of ground that the procession has to cover.

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<sup>11</sup> The pieces that Asep Setiadi listed included: *degung klasik* compositions such as *Lutung Bingung* and *Lengser Midang*; *lagu dagelan* (joking or clowning songs) such as *Gudril*, *Kodehel* and *Kalkun*; and popular *kawih* songs such as *Kunang Kunang* and *Renggong Buyut*.

#### 7.5.4 Choral songs and *tembang Sunda* repertoire

Another type of piece that is popular in theatrical performances is *lagu rampak sekar* or songs with a clearly defined melody that can be sung in choral unison. Tuneful pieces such as *Inten Dewata* (originally composed for a 1960s *gending karesmen* of the same name), *Ninun* (originally a *tembang Sunda* song) and, in the Sasaka Domas production, *Tinawuran* (fig. 7:1, 11), are a stock feature in Bandung ceremonials; the addition of group singing is considered to brighten up a performance.

In contrast, *tembang Sunda* repertoire is used to bolster the sense of gravity that imbues such events. The Sasaka Domas wedding greeting ceremony opens in a particularly formal manner with the formulaic *narangtang* musical bridge that conventionally precedes and concludes a set of *papantunan* songs in a *tembang Sunda* performance (fig. 7:1, 2; CD track 21). The invocational *tembang* song *Rajah* has also become a relatively standard feature in Bandung *upacara*. The Sasaka Domas group position this reverential piece at a climatic point in the ceremony when the *lengser* assumes a devotional pose at the feet of the bride and groom (fig. 7:1, 8). Perhaps even more surprisingly, *tembang* repertoire is also used in conjunction with more highly choreographed scenes; indeed, the *mamaos* songs *Candrawulan* or *Salaka Domas* and *Pangapungan* function to accompany the parasol bearer's dance (fig. 7:1, 9) and the ceremonial *keris* sequence (fig. 7:1, 13), respectively.

Decontextualising and functionalising parts of the *tembang Sunda* repertoire in this way is presumably the type of activity that led to the angry disputes amongst *tembang* musicians alluded to by Wahyu Wibisana and Enoch Atmadibrata in relation to 1960s *gending karesmen* performances (see 1.2.5). Certainly, it is suggested that many *tembang* aficionados feel that incorporating this type of piece into theatrical productions is inappropriate because “*tembang* should not be performed in a large concert hall... the music should be heard and not watched, and... the audience would have no interest in the music” (Gelanggang Mahasiswa Satra Indonesia 1975:16 in Williams 2001:59-60). Nevertheless, the reality is that *tembang Sunda* singing has come to play an increasingly significant role in urban *upacara* over the last two decades, even infiltrating ceremonies that were originally executed without any form of musical accompaniment. Moreover, while *tembang* specialists may publicly agree with Bohlman's contention that the more



music is engaged to do “cultural work, the more its ontology as an aesthetic object is sullied” (2003:55), many musicians and singers privately welcome the extra income that performing at weddings affords them.

## 7.6 Recent trends

The current demand for *tembang Sunda* groups at Sundanese weddings is partly a consequence of the financial difficulties that many Bandung residents have experienced since *krismon* (*krisis moneter*, monetary crisis) hit Indonesia in 1997. The catastrophic collapse in value of the *rupiah* and the subsequent rise in bankruptcies, unemployment as well as in basic living costs,<sup>12</sup> has meant that many previously affluent families are no longer in a position to host expensive *hajatan* celebrations (see Williams 2001:35-36). While this has resulted in dwindling employment opportunities for most Bandung artists, *tembang* musicians have been able to capitalise on the situation to a certain extent because *tembang Sunda* groups are not as costly to hire as a complete *gamelan* group or pop band.

During my fieldwork in 2000-2001, I was repeatedly told that Bandung had not really been affected by the outbreaks of violence and large-scale political protests that, prompting the resignation of President Soeharto in 1998, erupted in various parts of Java in response to the deteriorating financial situation. Even so, while day-to-day life in the city may have remained relatively stable, a precarious economic climate continues to make life extremely difficult for most performing artists. Mamah Dasimah commented that Sasaka Domas productions have had to be drastically scaled down since the economic downturn and the group forced to cut back on the numbers of musicians and dancers that they employ (*p.c.*, 2001). Asep Setiadi similarly remarked that between 1990 and 1996 he had been inundated with offers of work as a *lengser*, but that since *krismon*, performance opportunities had been much more thin on the ground (*p.c.*, 2000). All the same, one type of performance that appears to be bucking this trend and growing in popularity is the *upacara mapag panganten 'gaya Islami'* or ‘Islamic-style’ wedding greeting ceremony.

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<sup>12</sup> Ruth Fryer, a former long term resident of Bandung, observed that in the eight months preceding Soeharto’s resignation her monthly housekeeping bill tripled from 600,000 *rupiah* to 1,800,000 *rupiah* (*p.c.*, 2003).



While West Java is generally regarded as one of the most strongly Islamic areas in Indonesia, critiques of Islam in the region have generally emphasised the way in which many Sundanese Muslims continue to maintain certain pre-Islamic Hindu and animist beliefs and practices. Still, in urban centres at least, large sections of the middle classes appear to be moving further away from their “localized syncretic past and closer to a more nationalized version of Islam” (Williams 2001:30). Iik Setiawan noted that a growing number of families have begun to reject the ostentatious displays of grandeur depicted in conventional *upacara* and have instead begun to request ceremonials with an Islamic, ‘Arabian’<sup>13</sup> flavour (*p.c.*, 2000). While Setiawan said that he believes that this trend will continue to dominate *upacara* in the future, Ade Komaran suggested that the current demand for this type of performance has more to do with a fashion for all things Middle-Eastern in Sundanese culture rather than a more profound religious revival.<sup>14</sup> This, he added, explains why Islamic songs are sometimes used to accompany wedding ceremonies, such as the pre-marital *siraman* bathing ritual, that are clearly Hindu in origin (*p.c.*, 2000b). That Sambasunda released *Takbir & Shalawat* (an album which features a range of Islamic style percussion, Arabic language songs and a young *santri* Islamic scholar chanting holy verses) in 2001, also suggests that the popularity of this type of repertoire may be partly attributable to do the current vogue for ‘world music’. Certainly, it appears that this particular recording is more a product of the group’s entrepreneurial spirit than an expression of its members’ religious zeal. One musician explained that there is always an increased volume of devotional recordings released around the time of important religious festivals and that Sundanese artists were simply beginning to exploit the commercial potential of the local Muslim market.<sup>15</sup>

This blending of the local performing arts with the national Islamic culture is not an entirely new development. According to Nano Suratno, Sundanese composers have written religious songs, or at least songs that address religious topics, at least since the 1920s. It is also widely known that Koko Koswara composed several Islamic-inspired

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<sup>13</sup> Setiawan used the adjective ‘Arab’ which translates as either ‘Arab’, ‘Arabian’ or ‘Arabic’. I have used what I consider to be the more poetic ‘Arabian’ as it seems to better reflect the fact that these Islamic-style ceremonies are artistic inventions rather than ritual practices imported from any specific Arab culture.

<sup>14</sup> It was, however, drawn to my attention that in recent years there has been a dramatic increase in the number of young Sundanese women choosing to wear the Islamic *jilbab* (a head scarf that covers the ears, neck and hair).

<sup>15</sup> In fact, in 2000, members of the same group were also employed as freelance musicians on an album of ‘Christian *degung*’ produced by a Philippino student who was studying at STSI Bandung at the time.



*kawih* songs including *Hamdan* and *Lebaran*; the former is said to be the song of choice for “overtly devout women” who wish to sing at a performance “without compromising their Islamic beliefs” (Williams 2001:29). Suratno himself also collaborated with the writer and dramatist R. Ading Affandie (more commonly known as RAF) on an Islamic-themed *gending karesmen* called ‘*1 Syawal*<sup>16</sup> *di Alam Kibur*’ in 1977 (Maulana 1997).

In any event, today’s artists appear to have few qualms about inventing Islamic-style ceremonials, much of the content of which appears to be as imaginatively contrived as the Sundanese history that is re-enacted in standard productions. As in the dramatic re-creation of the Pajajaran and colonial courts, putting on a glamorous spectacle seems to take precedence over any concerns about ‘authenticity’. For instance, at one Islamic-style wedding procession that I observed, the female dancers wore tight-fitting gold outfits with semi-veiled headdresses that, I was informed by one of the singers, were modelled on those worn by the female cabin crew on Emirates airlines. To my great surprise, though carrying small Islamic drums and dancing to Arabic songs, the entrance of these dancers was greeted by an irreverent wolf whistle from one of the male guests.

The music played to accompany such productions again varies from group to group but usually comprises medleys of Arabic (albeit Indonesianized Arabic) language songs accompanied by a combination of frame drums (*terbang* or *rebana*) and Sundanese instruments such as the *kacapi siter*.<sup>17</sup> On closer inspection, it is apparent that this repertoire is still very much rooted in traditional Sundanese performance practices. Typically these Arabic songs are rhythmically compatible with standard Sundanese metrical frameworks, with some even fitting over extant tonal structures. At the Islamic-style ceremonials that I observed, the music was always performed by the usual body of *tembang* and *gamelan* musicians who would simply work out a few suitable rhythmic riffs on the *rebana* in the moments prior to the performance. I only met one Sundanese instrumentalist who confessed to having any specialist tuition in ‘Arab’ music, this being a result of time that he had spent working collaboratively with musicians in Turkey. It was suggested to me though, that one reason that many musicians are able to sing the

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<sup>16</sup> Syawal is the 10<sup>th</sup> month in the Arabic calendar.

<sup>17</sup> It seems that this use of ‘Arabic’ or Indonesianised Arabic songs (with titles such as ‘*Shalallahu*’, ‘*Shalawat Badar*’ and ‘*Tahlil*’) and the employment of handheld wooden frame drums (*terbang* or *rebana*) are the two principal musical features defining these ‘Islamic style’ (*gaya Islami*) ceremonials.



Arabic songs used in such performances so convincingly is that many Sundanese learn Qur'anic recitation (*pangajian al Qur'an*) from childhood.<sup>18</sup>

As far as I could ascertain, *gamelan degung* has not yet been incorporated into these Islamic ceremonials. Nano Suratno, who was himself working on a cassette of Islamic-inspired songs after a pilgrimage to Mecca in 2001, explained that certain sections of the Sundanese population still have some difficulties conflating *gamelan* with *agama* (religion) because certain instruments (particularly the *goong*, *suling* and *kendang*) are identified with a whole host of incongruent animist beliefs and superstitions (*p.c.*, 2001).<sup>19</sup> Ade Komaran supported this view, noting that there are still areas in and around Bandung where there are strictly upheld musical taboos. The *goong*, for example, is forbidden from ever being brought into one particular geographical locale on the outskirts of the city because of a deep-rooted conviction that doing so will bring about some type of natural disaster. Replete with stories of devastating floods and fires, residents in this community insist that *gamelan* groups leave their *goong* at home when performing at *hajat* in this region. Komaran remarked that ensembles now overcome this problem by playing the *goong* part on an electronic keyboard instead (*p.c.*, 2000). Despite the persistence of such entrenched beliefs, Nano Suratno suggested that as artists keep pushing the boundaries of acceptable performance practice it may only be a matter of time before the urban population becomes accustomed to seeing and hearing a greater variety of Islamic songs performed on a wider variety of Sundanese instruments (*p.c.*, 2001). As one musician only half-jokingly suggested to me, "in the future, Sundanese wedding parties might be sailing away with the *gamelan degung* to some imaginary 'Arabia' rather than back to the lost kingdom of Pajajaran".<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> It has previously been suggested that the pervasiveness of Qur-anic chant may have even implicitly influenced indigenous forms of Sundanese vocal practice including *tembang Sunda* (See van Zanten 1987:43 & Williams 2001:29-30).

<sup>19</sup> See Williams for further information about animist beliefs surrounding the *suling* (2001:208-209).

<sup>20</sup> When one considers that *tembang Sunda* – a genre that is sometimes described as a bridge back to the ancestors and to Pajajaran (see Williams 2001) – has already been utilised as a medium for the performance of Sundanese translations of Qur'anic verses, this begins to sound less improbable.



## Summary

This chapter has considered the role that *gamelan degung* plays in Bandung wedding celebrations. It has argued that *degung* is the ensemble of choice at such events because this former court *gamelan* can satisfy both a desire on the part of the bridal party for prestige and 'tradition' and the need for more popular entertainment in the form of the latest cassette-mediated *kawih* hits. Having described the diverse musical styles that are typically performed to generate the requisite 'lively' atmosphere in the wedding reception, the focus of the chapter then shifted to the *upacara mapag panganten* or wedding greeting ceremony. Though promoted as a traditional custom (*upacara adat*), it was noted that this greeting pageant is in fact a theatrical invention that grew out of innovative multimedia productions dating from the 1960s. An examination of Sasaka Domas' version of this ceremonial was then used to illustrate that the musical content of these ceremonies tends to be imaginatively pieced together by recombining and adapting existing materials drawn from a variety of 'traditional' performing arts genres. Very few sections are 'composed' from scratch. Finally, the chapter concluded by contemplating recent changes to ceremonial productions and, more specifically, the rising demand for productions with an Islamic or 'Arabian' flavour.



## Wider summary and conclusions

The overriding purpose of this study of Sundanese *gamelan degung* has been to fill a perceived gap in the ethnomusicological literature. Despite the fact that *degung* is one of the few regional musics in Indonesia to have a conspicuous cassette-disseminated presence both within and outside of its own cultural borders, this popular *gamelan* has attracted surprisingly little scholarly attention since Max Harrell's study in 1974. Harrell's work, predating as it does many of the mass media driven innovations that have defined the recent history of *degung*, is primarily devoted to an etic modal analysis of the ensemble's court-derived repertoire. Given the changed profile of the *gamelan* (as well as of the nature of the discipline of ethnomusicology) three decades on, a review of *degung* as it survives in Bandung today seemed to me to be long overdue.

Taking an integrative approach to its subject, the *degung*'s musical and socio-cultural transformation has been considered from interconnecting diachronic and synchronic perspectives. These perspectives, while principally intended to provide a more holistic account of this former court *gamelan*, have also served to offer a broader commentary on aspects of Sundanese music making more generally. The *degung* has not developed in a musical vacuum; tracing its evolution has thus necessitated widening the frame of reference of the enquiry to encompass allied performing arts genres and associated repertoires, taxonomic schemes, tuning systems, performance practices and musical personnel.

Charting the history of *gamelan degung* 'from court to cassette', the study began by outlining existing theories of the ensemble's initial emergence. It was hypothesised that, notwithstanding the scarcity of material evidence and reliable primary sources, the *degung*'s earliest beginnings may be obscured by the heterogeneous instrumentation of the ensemble's archaic precursors. Further research in this intriguing area remains to be carried out; the history of *degung* may have implications not only for those working in the field of Sundanese music but also for the way in which the origins of *gamelan* in Java are more broadly understood.



Chronicling the *degung*'s relocation to Bandung and detailing its radical metamorphosis following Indonesian Independence, the historical survey continued by correlating changes in the *gamelan*'s function, repertoire and personnel to specific socio-cultural and politico-economic shifts. Particular emphasis was placed on the role that government and private institutions played in popularising the ensemble once it had been divested of the secure patronage and artistic protection formerly provided by the *kabupaten*. Branches of the local mass media were identified as having actively encouraged musicians to refashion existing repertoire and to create new artistic products that would appeal to mainstream public tastes. At the same time, an increased commercial awareness was also shown to have prompted entrepreneurial artists to invent and exploit new performance contexts and employment opportunities in the city. In addition to playing on radio broadcasts, cassette recordings or as part of wedding or other formal celebrations, a number of musicians were also noted to have secured positions as musical instructors and group leaders. It was claimed that a central aspect of the *degung*'s urban renaissance was the emergence and proliferation of student and 'amateur' *degung* clubs which, quite apart from providing established musicians with new teaching opportunities, opened up the ensemble to a whole new breed of player. Certainly, the enormous success of the all-female troupes that dominated the *degung* scene during the 1960s and 1970s is commonly attributed as having played a pivotal role in rendering this smaller *gamelan* the favourite regional ensemble of Bandung's burgeoning middle classes.

While the recent history of *gamelan degung* can be usefully outlined in terms of musicians' adaptive responses to their altering 'external' environment over time, this study has also explored the 'internal' dynamics of the macro musical culture in which the ensemble is rooted, and the inherent transformability of the repertoires at the centre of the *degung*'s evolution. As Alan Merriam explains (paraphrasing the anthropologist H.G. Barnett 1953), "all individuals must of necessity work out of a cultural background which provides them with certain *potentials for innovation* and certain conditions within which they must operate" (Merriam 1964:313, emphasis my own).



The case was made that innovation in Sundanese music usually has more to do with the imaginative recycling, recombining and reworking of extant musical elements than with a more radical pursuit of originality or novel invention. Analyses of the *degung's klasik* and *kawih* repertoires established that musicians are constantly required to resourcefully maximise the traditional materials at their disposal by varying, translating, transposing, expanding and contracting musical units of all sizes from one phrase, piece, instrument or genre to another. Significantly, it was also demonstrated that some of the same transformative processes that are operative in the act of performance lie at the heart of interrelated practices of composition, adaptation and arrangement. Transformation, or “the ability to transfer and adapt knowledge from one context to another” (Brinner 1995:57), was thus identified as a key domain of Sundanese musical competence.

An examination of the learning process concluded that Sundanese musicians acquire the basic transformative skills essential for the creative perpetuation of their traditions from the earliest stages of their training. In the absence of explicit instruction, novice players must rapidly develop the ability to recognise analogous musical situations in order that they can fully exploit their growing store of performance models and deductively extemporise their own parts. It was observed that this is a particularly challenging approach for foreigners accustomed to the ‘spoon-feeding’ of a formal Western music education. The notion that Western pedagogic techniques might be guilty of fostering a certain teacher-dependency and consequent passivity in recipient learners was conveyed to me by the degree of autonomy, ingenuity and perseverance that is commonly demanded of aspiring Sundanese instrumentalists and singers.

It was posited that, apart from the methods of transmission employed, Sundanese music structures themselves further ensure transformative competence. A concrete illustration of this was presented within a study of *cempres* playing in *degung kawih*. It was shown that as young musicians work their way through the *sekar alit* pieces they discover how to reuse and remould playing patterns in accordance with the different combinations of *goong* and *kenong* tones that define individual *patokan* frameworks, as well as in line with changes in tempo and density. Moreover, the act of learning to play all of the bronze instruments of the *gamelan* implicitly imparts trainees with many of the skills necessary to realise a single melodic contour at multiple densities (Sutton 1993).



Having ascertained that transformative practices pervade Sundanese music making more generally, it has been argued that this domain has a particular relevance for any study of *gamelan degung*. This was explained in terms of the ensemble's 'floating' position in the musical landscape of postcolonial Bandung. Situated somewhere in between what are perceived to be the artistically weightier and more culturally entrenched traditions of *tembang Sunda* and *wayang golek (gamelan pelog-salendro)*, *degung* now functions as a subsidiary field of competence and point of musical interface for specialists drawn from both spheres. A specific type of transformation is called into play as these versatile musicians are required to transfer knowledge and skills acquired within these 'parent' genres when realising certain *degung* repertoires (and, though less often, vice versa).

The integration of distinct types of professional musician and, as described above, amateur players in *degung* ensembles was also noted to have had important ramifications in terms of the repertoire performed by post-1950s groups. According to Nano Suratno, mixing musical personnel in this manner weakened the social frameworks and teacher-student bonds that serve to regulate a tradition as it is transmitted from one generation to the next. This might partly explain why, in contrast to *tembang Sunda* which continues to thrive as a highly specialist art form with strict codes of performance practice, the post-court *degung* ensemble has been permitted to be the subject of more bold experimentation. A direct connection was also made between this widening of participation and a specific type of transformative process that has played a fundamental role in the expansion and modernisation of *degung* repertoire: cross-genre adaptation. It was contended that just as *gamelan degung* became a common ground for different kinds of musician, so it developed as a site for the assimilation of an equally eclectic mix of repertoires-types. From the 1960s, the original *klasik* repertoire of the courts began to be abandoned by performers, with groups instead playing idiomatically reworked – often structurally modified and/or transposed – versions of pieces drawn from other genres. As part of this process the ensemble also emerged as one arena in which distinctive performance practices have been contested, negotiated and transformed. A conspicuous example of this was shown to be the way in which *tembang* and *gamelan* singers adapt (or do not adapt) their vocal technique when performing *degung kawih*.



Borrowed repertoire and playing techniques were additionally demonstrated to form the basis of most types of 'novel' composition. An examination of seminal *degung* recordings not only served to contextualise and critique landmark cassettes, but also to illustrate that the majority of such releases feature new *kawih* songs and instrumental arrangements that are based on extant tonal frameworks as well as, in some instances, melodic models. Nano Suratno's hit song *Kalangkang* is a case in point; structurally underpinned by the *sekar alit Catrik*, this piece also utilises a catchy melodic hook taken from the improvisatory store of one of West Java's leading *kawih* singers. Similarly, the musical content of the invented ceremonials that are now a standard part of formal urban celebrations was revealed to be largely put together by recombining and adapting pre-existing repertoire drawn from across the regional arts complex. It was remarked that while drawing upon what are considered to be collectively-owned traditional materials in this way usefully reduces the amount of rehearsal time needed to prepare a group for a particular performance or recording, this practice does sit comfortably with the Western capitalist notions of artistic ownership that have been introduced into Indonesia in the form of copyright law. Although most Sundanese artists have previously been dismissive of such legislation it seems that as the authorities step up enforcement, so musicians are increasingly questioning their rights as composers and even improvisers.

Both the penultimate and final chapters of this dissertation concluded by contemplating possible future directions for *gamelan degung*. It was determined that while 'globalisation' has a long history in Indonesia, the 1990s saw sweeping changes to the nation's mediascape which have rendered a greater selection of foreign musics accessible to broader sections of the population. Perhaps not surprisingly, then, the last decade has also witnessed a new generation of Sundanese composers embark on more exploratory artistic collaborations and venture into hitherto alien musical terrains. *Degung* instruments have often been incorporated into these experimental *kreasi* and cross-cultural 'ethnic' fusions which, inspired by the marketing strategies of the international recording industry, have begun to be packaged as 'world music'.

As I worked on the first draft of this conclusion in June 2003, this global perspective was foremost in my mind because of communications that I received from Indonesia that month. Firstly, I was sent a letter from my former *suling* teacher, Endang Sukandar, with news of a 'teach yourself *suling*' VCD (Video Compact Disc) that he



had been working on. Requesting that I undertake some Indonesian-English translation for this project, Sukandar expressed the hope that this learning aid would be of interest to students of Sundanese music both in Indonesia and abroad. The establishment of Sundanese *gamelan* groups in Europe, North America, Japan, Australasia and beyond is a topic that has not been addressed in this dissertation but which deserves further consideration elsewhere.

Secondly, I received an email from a friend in Sambasunda informing me that the group were to be performing at the high-profile WOMAD ('World Of Music And Dance') world music festival in the UK in July 2003. Cognisant of this news (as well as of the way in which I have more recently come to rely upon text messaging friends in Indonesia to resolve last-minute research queries), Bohlman's remark about the "history of encounter from which world music has emerged" has a particular resonance.

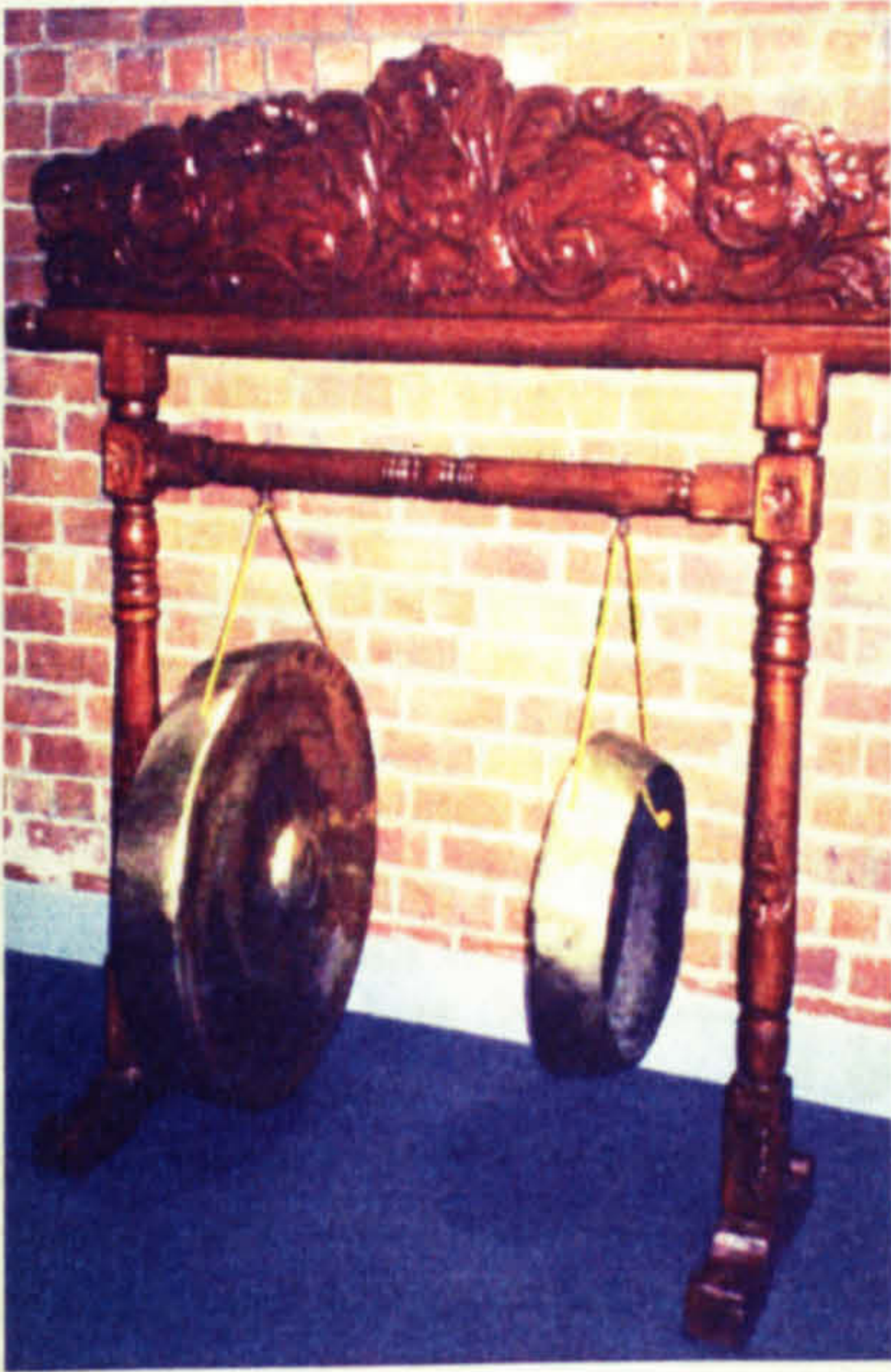
Each of us – ethnomusicologist, musician, avid amateur, passive listener – will increasingly encounter the music of the world in a growing variety of ways, drawing us ineluctably into a world, the identity and culture of which is no longer separable from our own lives (2002:150).

This observation is as relevant for the Sundanese artists that I have been privileged to encounter, as for myself and those ethnomusicologists, musicians, avid amateurs and passive listeners whom I imagine to be the main readership of Bohlman's book. Whether or not *gamelan degung* ever comes to play a part in the Islamic-style ceremonials of the contemporary Sundanese wedding or to what extent groups like Sambasunda will be able to impact on the international world music market remains unknown. What does seem certain given Indonesia's profound economic difficulties, as well as in the face of rampant 'globalisation' in such locally pervasive forms as the Internet and regionalised MTV, is that ambitious young Sundanese musicians will continue to look beyond their own provincial and national borders in order to export their art forms and generate new audiences outside of West Java. By the same token, these local musicians' experiences of the global – both firsthand and virtual – will undoubtedly continue to feed back into the *degung* tradition as it survives in 21<sup>st</sup> century Bandung.



## Appendix I

### The principal instruments of the *gamelan degung*



*goong and kempul*



*jengglong*



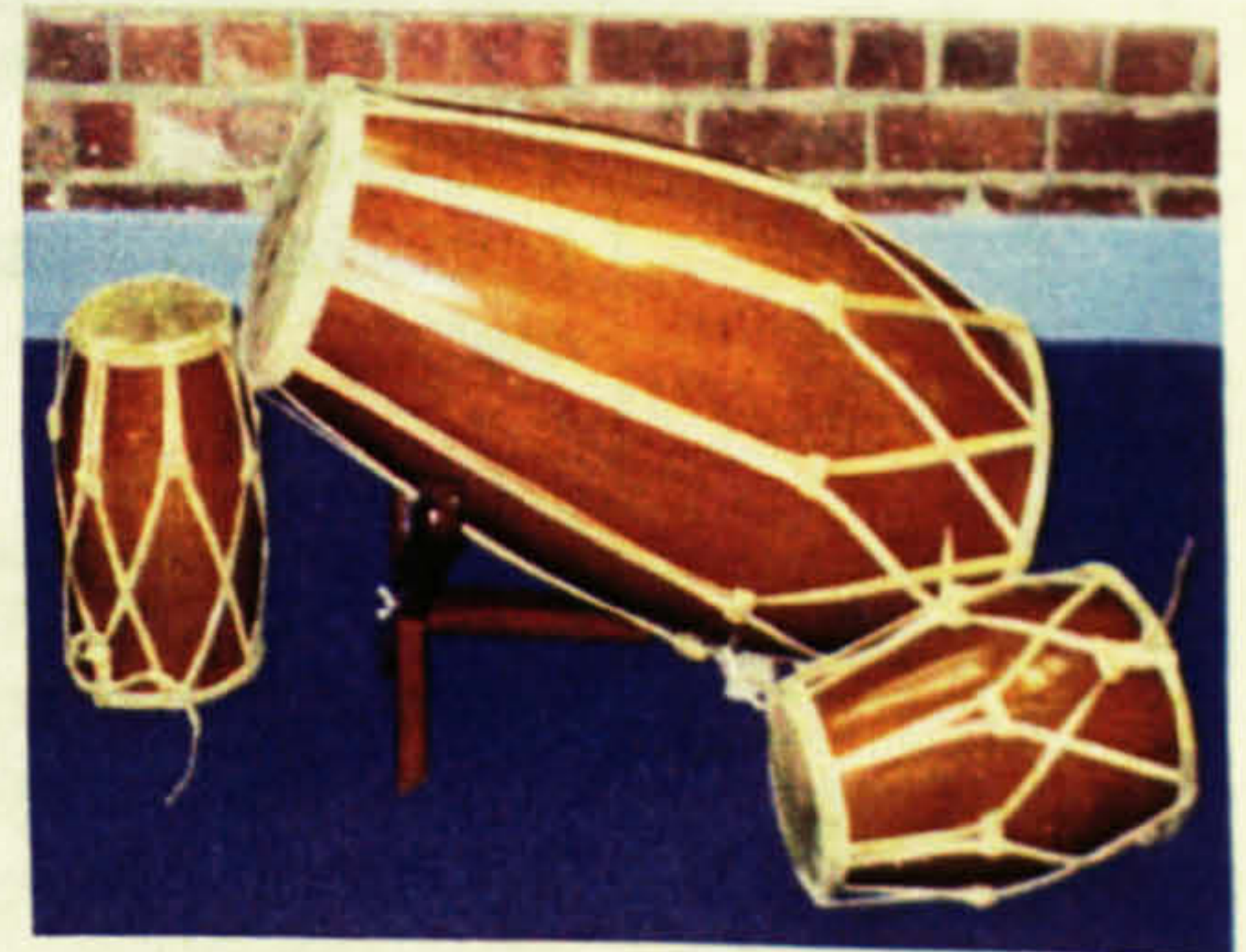
*bonang*



*cempres and peking*



Endang Sukandar plays a  
four-hole *suling degung*



*kendang*



Summary of the roles of individual instruments in *degung klasik* and *degung kawih*

Instrument	<i>Degung klasik</i>	<i>Degung kawih</i>
<b>bonang</b>	Performs the 'fixed' melody that defines each <i>degung klasik</i> piece using a distinctive style of playing called <i>gumekan</i> (see 3.2)	Plays simple off-beat octave-patterns ( <i>kemprangan</i> ), or variants thereof, which anticipate and reiterate the <i>patokan</i> -dictated <i>goong</i> & <i>kenong</i> tones (see 3.3)
<b>cempres</b>	Plays an idiomatically paraphrased version of the <i>bonang</i> melody. The <i>cempres</i> generally realises this melody at half the density of, and in the octave below, the <i>bonang</i> using a steady, even rhythm	'Improvises' melodic phrases which lead to the <i>goong</i> , <i>kenong</i> and, possibly, <i>pancer</i> tones in a style of playing called <i>ngamelodi</i> (see 4.2); these phrases may or may not also relate to a specific <i>kawih</i> song melody. Alternatively, the <i>cempres</i> may play more standardised interlocking figuration ( <i>caruk</i> ) in combination with the <i>peking</i> or <i>bonang</i>
<b>peking</b>	Plays an idiomatically embellished version of the <i>bonang</i> melody. The <i>peking</i> part is typically realised at the same density as the <i>bonang</i> line but is characterised by more frequent syncopation. The <i>peking</i> tends to be played in the same octave as, or in the octave above, the <i>bonang</i>	'Improvises' often-syncopated melodic phrases leading to the <i>goong</i> , <i>kenong</i> and, possibly, <i>pancer</i> tones (usually at twice the density of, and in the octave above, the <i>cempres</i> ); these phrases may or may not also relate to a specific <i>kawih</i> song melody. Alternatively, the <i>peking</i> may also play interlocking figuration with the <i>cempres</i>
<b>jengglong</b>	Plays a skeletal version of the <i>bonang</i> melody. The <i>jengglong</i> typically sounds one tone for every eight on the <i>bonang</i> but this is not standardised	Sounds the core tones ( <i>goong</i> , <i>kenong</i> and <i>pancer</i> ) of the <i>patokan</i> frameworks which structurally underpin repertoire of this type. The <i>jengglong</i> may fill in this tonal outline by repeating these tones (see 3.3.3) or by abstracting additional pitches from an overlying <i>kawih</i> melody
<b>goong &amp; kempul</b>	The <i>goong</i> is sounded at the end of the introduction and at other important points of cadence. The <i>kempul</i> is not employed in <i>degung klasik</i> pieces	Colotomically marks out the <i>goong</i> cycle using a standardised <i>goong</i> [G] and <i>kempul</i> [p] sequence: [p . p . p p p G]
<b>kendang</b>	Rhythmically punctuates the <i>bonang</i> melody using a simple style of stick drumming that is unique to this body of <i>degung</i> repertoire	Rhythmically leads the ensemble, directing changes in tempo and <i>wilet</i> . Employs the same style of hand/foot drumming ( <i>ditepak</i> ) that is used in <i>gamelan pelog-salendro</i>
<b>suling</b>	The four-hole instrument is normally used in this repertoire. The <i>suling</i> plays an idiomatically embellished version of the <i>bonang</i> melody	Four-hole or six-hole instruments may be used. The <i>suling</i> shadows and cues the singer, whilst also taking the melodic lead in instrumental interludes (and in the absence of a vocalist). The <i>suling</i> either plays an idiomatically embellished version of a specific <i>kawih</i> song melody or improvises melodic phrases to fit a specified tonal framework
<b>voice</b>	Choral singing ( <i>rampak sekar</i> ) was appended to certain pieces in this formerly instrumental repertoire in the 1950s. These 'fixed' vocal lines were derived from the <i>bonang</i> part	A solo female singer ( <i>juru kawih</i> ) performs 'precomposed' <i>kawih</i> songs (see 4.3). In the absence of a singer the <i>suling</i> becomes the focus of melodic interest



In order to more clearly illustrate the differences between the functions of the individual bronze instruments in the *degung klasik* and *degung kawih* repertoires I have notated two contrasting versions of the *degung* piece *Lalayaran* below. The first is a *degung klasik* arrangement of the piece: the *bonang* plays the piece-defining central melody while the other bronze instruments heterophonically paraphrase, embellish or punctuate this melody. The second is a *degung kawih* arrangement: in this version the *bonang* loses its melodic role and instead the bronze ensemble performs blander *patokan*-generated figuration which serves to accompany a sung *kawih* melody or *suling* improvisation. For more detailed information about Sundanese vocal, *suling* and *kendang* performance practices see: van Zanten (1987, 1989), Williams (1989, 2001), Rosliani (1998); Harrell (1974), Swindells (1996); and Cook (1992), Spiller (2001) respectively.

i) *Lalayaran* in the *degung klasik* style

pangkat / introduction

*bonang*: .5 55 55 4323 2255 25 1.232 3334 3232 3452 3.454 (5)25

*jengglong*: 2 1 . 3 5 . 5 (5)

//

<i>bonang</i> :	4325	4325	4323	224	3232	1525	1.232	325
<i>cempres</i> :	2 5	4 3	2 3	2 4	3 2	1 5	1 2	3
<i>peking</i> :	.321	.321	.321	215	.215	.5.5	.512	321
<i>jengglong</i> :	.	4	.	2	.	1	.	3

//

<i>bonang</i> :	4325	4325	4323	22.2	3452	3452	3.454	(5)25
<i>cempres</i> :	2 5	4 3	2 3	2 4	3 2	1 2	3 4	(5)
<i>peking</i> :	.321	.321	.321	2 32	.432	.2.2	.234	(5)21
<i>jengglong</i> :	.	4	.	2	5	. 5	.	(5)

etc



ii) *Lalayaran* in the *degung kawih* style

pangkat / introduction

<i>bonang</i> : LH	<u>2̇2̇</u> <u>3̇3̇</u> <u>2̇2̇</u> 3̇ 5̇ 1̇ 5̇ .
RH	22 33 22 3 5 . 5
unison instruments:	(5) G

//

<i>bonang</i> : LH	5̇ . 5̇ 2̇	3̇ . 3̇ .
RH	5 . 5 2	3 . 3 .
<i>cempres</i> :	. . 5̇ 4̇ 3̇ 2̇	. 2̇ 1̇ 5̇ 1̇ 2̇ 3̇
<i>peking</i> :	<u>5̇1̇5̇4̇</u> <u>3̇2̇.2̇</u> <u>.2̇3̇4̇</u> <u>5̇3̇2̇</u>	<u>3̇4̇3̇2̇</u> <u>1̇5̇.5̇</u> <u>.5̇1̇2̇</u> <u>3̇3̇2̇</u>
<i>jengglong</i> :	. 1 . 2	. 1 . 3
<i>goong</i> :	. p . .	. p . .

//

<i>bonang</i> : LH	3̇ . 3̇ 2̇	5̇ . 5̇ .
RH	3 . 3 2	5 . 5 .
<i>cempres</i> :	. . 5̇ 4̇ 3̇ 2̇	. 2̇ 1̇ 2̇ 3̇ 4̇ (5)
<i>peking</i> :	<u>3̇4̇3̇2̇</u> <u>1̇5̇.5̇</u> <u>.5̇1̇2̇</u> <u>3̇5̇4̇</u>	<u>5̇1̇5̇4̇</u> <u>3̇2̇.2̇</u> <u>.2̇3̇4̇</u> <u>(5)5̇4̇</u> etc
<i>jengglong</i> :	. 1 . 2	. 1 . (5)
<i>goong</i> :	. p . p	. p . G

G = goong      p = kempul



## Appendix II

Nine cycles of *Catrik* played on *cempres* by Ade Komaran CD track 3

*sawilet*

A1. (5) | .  $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{1}2$   $\bar{3}2$  |  $\bar{2}1$   $\bar{5}4$   $\bar{5}1$   $\bar{2}4$  |  $\bar{3}2$   $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{1}2$   $\bar{3}2$  |  $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{4}5$   $\bar{3}4$  (5)  $\bar{2}$  |

A2. |  $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{1}2$   $\bar{3}5$  |  $\bar{4}3$   $\bar{2}1$   $\bar{5}1$   $\dot{2}$  |  $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{1}2$   $\bar{3}2$  |  $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{4}5$   $\bar{3}4$  (5)  $\bar{4}$  |

A3. |  $\bar{3}5$   $\bar{4}3$   $\bar{4}2$   $\bar{3}5$  |  $\bar{4}3$   $\bar{2}1$   $\bar{5}1$   $\bar{2}4$  |  $\bar{3}2$   $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{1}2$   $\bar{3}4$  |  $\bar{5}1$   $\bar{2}1$   $\bar{3}4$  (5)  $\bar{2}$  |

A4. |  $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{4}3$   $\bar{4}5$   $\bar{1}3$  |  $\bar{2}1$   $\bar{5}4$   $\bar{5}1$   $\bar{2}4$  |  $\bar{3}2$   $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{1}2$   $\bar{3}2$  |  $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{2}1$   $\bar{3}4$  (5) |

A5. |  $\bar{1}2$   $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{3}2$   $\bar{3}2$  |  $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{1}4$   $\bar{5}1$   $\bar{2}4$  |  $\bar{3}2$   $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{1}2$   $\bar{3}5$  |  $\bar{5}2$   $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{3}4$  (5) |

----- slowing down for *naek* into *dua wilet*----- xx =  $\bar{x}\bar{x}$

*dua wilet*

A6. |  $\dot{2}$   $\dot{1}$   $\dot{5}$   $\dot{1}$  |  $\dot{2}$   $\dot{3}$   $\dot{4}$   $\dot{3}$  |  $\bar{2}1$   $\dot{2}$   $\bar{2}1$   $\bar{5}4$  |  $\bar{4}$   $\bar{5}1$   $\bar{2}3$   $\dot{2}$  |

|  $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{1}2$   $\bar{3}2$   $\bar{1}5$  |  $\bar{4}3$   $\bar{5}4$   $\bar{3}2$   $\bar{3}4$  |  $\bar{5}1$   $\bar{5}2$   $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{4}3$  |  $\bar{4}2$   $\bar{3}4$   $\bar{5}1$  (5)  $\bar{2}$  |

A7. |  $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{4}3$   $\bar{4}5$   $\bar{1}3$  |  $\bar{2}1$   $\bar{2}1$   $\bar{2}4$   $\bar{3}2$  |  $\bar{1}3$   $\bar{2}1$   $\bar{5}4$   $\bar{3}4$  |  $\bar{5}1$   $\bar{2}3$   $\bar{4}3$   $\dot{2}$  |

|  $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{1}2$   $\bar{3}2$   $\bar{1}5$  |  $\bar{2}5$   $\bar{1}2$   $\bar{3}2$   $\bar{3}2$  |  $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{4}5$   $\bar{1}5$  |  $\bar{4}5$   $\bar{3}4$   $\bar{5}1$  (5)  $\bar{2}$  |

A8. |  $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{4}3$   $\bar{4}5$   $\bar{1}2$  |  $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{2}5$   $\bar{1}2$   $\bar{3}5$  |  $\bar{4}3$   $\bar{2}3$   $\bar{2}1$   $\bar{5}4$  |  $\bar{1}4$   $\bar{5}4$   $\bar{5}1$   $\bar{2}4$  |

|  $\bar{3}2$   $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{1}2$   $\bar{1}5$  |  $\bar{2}5$   $\bar{1}2$   $\bar{3}2$   $\bar{3}2$  |  $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{2}1$   $\bar{5}4$   $\bar{3}2$  |  $\bar{3}2$   $\bar{3}2$   $\bar{3}4$  (5) |

A9. |  $\bar{5}4$   $\bar{3}2$   $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{1}2$  |  $\bar{3}4$   $\bar{5}4$   $\bar{3}2$   $\bar{3}5$  |  $\bar{4}3$   $\bar{2}4$   $\bar{3}5$   $\bar{4}3$  |  $\bar{2}1$   $\bar{2}1$   $\bar{5}1$   $\bar{2}4$  |

|  $\bar{3}2$   $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{2}5$   $\bar{1}2$  |  $\bar{5}2$   $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{1}1\bar{2}$   $\bar{3}4$  |  $\bar{5}1$   $\bar{5}2$   $\bar{1}5$   $\bar{1}5$  |  $\bar{4}3$   $\bar{4}2$   $\bar{3}4$  (5) |



Nine cycles of *Catrik* played on *cempres* by Lili Suparli  CD track 4

*sawilet*

- B1. (5) |  $\overline{54}$   $\overline{32}$   $\overline{32}$   $\overline{32}$  |  $\overline{21}$   $\overline{54}$   $\overline{51}$   $\overline{22}$  |  $\overline{35}$   $\overline{12}$   $\overline{35}$   $\overline{123}$  |  $\overline{45}$   $\overline{15}$   $\overline{34}$  (55) |
- B2. |  $\overline{13}$   $\overline{45}$   $\overline{15}$   $\overline{12}$  |  $\overline{21}$   $\overline{54}$   $\overline{51}$   $\overline{22}$  |  $\overline{35}$   $\overline{12}$   $\overline{32}$   $\overline{35}$  |  $\overline{54}$   $\overline{32}$   $\overline{34}$  (55) |
- B3. |  $\overline{13}$   $\overline{45}$   $\overline{15}$   $\overline{12}$  |  $\overline{21}$   $\overline{54}$   $\overline{51}$   $\overline{22}$  |  $\overline{32}$   $\overline{15}$   $\overline{12}$   $\overline{35}$  |  $\overline{54}$   $\overline{32}$   $\overline{34}$  (55) |
- B4. |  $\overline{15}$   $\overline{43}$   $\overline{45}$   $\overline{12}$  |  $\overline{21}$   $\overline{54}$   $\overline{51}$   $\overline{22}$  |  $\overline{35}$   $\overline{12}$   $\overline{32}$   $\overline{35}$  |  $\overline{54}$   $\overline{32}$   $\overline{34}$  (55) |
- B5. |  $\overline{43}$   $\overline{45}$   $\overline{45}$   $\overline{12}$  |  $\overline{21}$   $\overline{51}$   $\overline{23}$   $\overline{22}$  |  $\overline{35}$   $\overline{12}$   $\overline{32}$   $\overline{35}$  |  $\overline{54}$   $\overline{32}$   $\overline{34}$  (55) |

----- slowing down for *naek* into *dua wilet*----- xx =  $\overline{xx}$

*dua wilet*

- B6. |  $\overline{13}$   $\overline{45}$   $\overline{13}$   $\overline{45}$  |  $\overline{13}$   $\overline{45}$   $\overline{15}$   $\overline{12}$  |  $\overline{23}$   $\overline{23}$   $\overline{21}$   $\overline{54}$  |  $\overline{54}$   $\overline{51}$   $\overline{21}$   $\overline{22}$  |
- |  $\overline{35}$   $\overline{12}$   $\overline{35}$   $\overline{12}$  |  $\overline{35}$   $\overline{12}$   $\overline{32}$   $\overline{35}$  |  $\overline{54}$   $\overline{34}$   $\overline{54}$   $\overline{34}$  |  $\overline{32}$   $\overline{32}$   $\overline{34}$  (55) |
- B7. |  $\overline{13}$   $\overline{45}$   $\overline{13}$   $\overline{45}$  |  $\overline{13}$   $\overline{45}$   $\overline{15}$   $\overline{12}$  |  $\overline{23}$   $\overline{23}$   $\overline{21}$   $\overline{23}$  |  $\overline{21}$   $\overline{54}$   $\overline{51}$   $\overline{22}$  |
- |  $\overline{35}$   $\overline{12}$   $\overline{35}$   $\overline{12}$  |  $\overline{35}$   $\overline{12}$   $\overline{32}$   $\overline{35}$  |  $\overline{54}$   $\overline{51}$   $\overline{54}$   $\overline{34}$  |  $\overline{32}$   $\overline{32}$   $\overline{34}$  (55) |
- B8. |  $\overline{13}$   $\overline{45}$   $\overline{13}$   $\overline{45}$  |  $\overline{13}$   $\overline{45}$   $\overline{15}$   $\overline{12}$  |  $\overline{23}$   $\overline{23}$   $\overline{21}$   $\overline{54}$  |  $\overline{54}$   $\overline{51}$   $\overline{21}$   $\overline{22}$  |
- |  $\overline{35}$   $\overline{12}$   $\overline{35}$   $\overline{12}$  |  $\overline{35}$   $\overline{12}$   $\overline{32}$   $\overline{35}$  |  $\overline{54}$   $\overline{51}$   $\overline{54}$   $\overline{34}$  |  $\overline{32}$   $\overline{32}$   $\overline{34}$  (55) |
- B9. |  $\overline{15}$   $\overline{43}$   $\overline{15}$   $\overline{43}$  |  $\overline{15}$   $\overline{43}$   $\overline{15}$   $\overline{12}$  |  $\overline{43}$   $\overline{23}$   $\overline{43}$   $\overline{23}$  |  $\overline{21}$   $\overline{25}$   $\overline{13}$   $\overline{22}$  |
- |  $\overline{35}$   $\overline{12}$   $\overline{35}$   $\overline{12}$  |  $\overline{35}$   $\overline{12}$   $\overline{32}$   $\overline{35}$  |  $\overline{51}$   $\overline{51}$   $\overline{54}$   $\overline{34}$  |  $\overline{32}$   $\overline{32}$   $\overline{34}$  (5) |



Nine cycles of *Catrik* played on *peking* by Ade Komaran  CD track 5

*sawilet*

- C1.  $\textcircled{5}$  |  $\overline{5\ 5}$   $\overline{1\ 2}$   $\overline{3432}$   $\overline{2\ 23}$  |  $\overline{2121}$   $\overline{54.4}$   $\overline{.4.451}$   $\overline{2\ 32}$  |  
 |  $\overline{11232}$   $\overline{1525}$   $\overline{11232}$   $\overline{3432}$  |  $\overline{1525}$   $\overline{11232}$   $\overline{1234}$   $\textcircled{5}.\overline{54}$  |
- C2. |  $\overline{3215}$   $\overline{1212}$   $\overline{3454}$   $\overline{3543}$  |  $\overline{2154}$   $\overline{3453}$   $\overline{4351}$   $\overline{2432}$  |  
 |  $\overline{1512}$   $\overline{1515}$   $\overline{11232}$   $\overline{3215}$  |  $\overline{2154}$   $\overline{32.2.2}$   $\overline{.234}$   $\textcircled{5}.\overline{54}$  |
- C3. |  $\overline{32.2}$   $\overline{3452}$   $\overline{1521}$   $\overline{3243}$  |  $\overline{2154}$   $\overline{5345}$   $\overline{1451}$   $\overline{2432}$  |  
 |  $\overline{11232}$   $\overline{1525}$   $\overline{11232}$   $\overline{3543}$  |  $\overline{4543}$   $\overline{2125}$   $\overline{11234}$   $\textcircled{5}.\overline{2}$  |
- C4. |  $\overline{1512}$   $\overline{3454}$   $\overline{3212}$   $\overline{3543}$  |  $\overline{2154}$   $\overline{33453}$   $\overline{4351}$   $\overline{2\ 551}$  |  
 |  $\overline{2512}$   $\overline{5215}$   $\overline{2512}$   $\overline{3543}$  |  $\overline{2125}$   $\overline{1232}$   $\overline{3234}$   $\textcircled{5}.\overline{3}$  |
- C5. |  $\overline{2125}$   $\overline{1234}$   $\overline{5432}$   $\overline{3\ 35}$  |  $\overline{4321}$   $\overline{5453}$   $\overline{4351}$   $\overline{2\ 15}$  |  
 |  $\overline{.215}$   $\overline{.5.512}$   $\overline{3432}$   $\overline{3215}$  |  $\overline{4154}$   $\overline{32.2}$   $\overline{3451}$   $\textcircled{5}$  |

-----slowing down for *naek* into *dua wilet*----- xx =  $\overline{xx}$

*dua wilet*

- C6. |  $\overline{8\ 5}$   $\overline{1\ 12}$   $\overline{3\ 2}$   $\overline{1\ 5}$  |  $\overline{4\ 5}$   $\overline{1\ 2}$   $\overline{3\ 4}$   $\overline{3}$  |  
 |  $\overline{2432}$   $\overline{.212}$   $\overline{1515}$   $\overline{4353}$  |  $\overline{44514}$   $\overline{5345}$   $\overline{1451}$   $\overline{215}$  |  
 |  $\overline{1252}$   $\overline{1512}$   $\overline{5215}$   $\overline{1234}$  |  $\overline{3215}$   $\overline{.5.512}$   $\overline{3454}$   $\overline{3213}$  |  
 |  $\overline{2152}$   $\overline{1545}$   $\overline{4342}$   $\overline{33451}$  |  $\overline{2313}$   $\overline{2154}$   $\overline{3234}$   $\textcircled{5}.\overline{5}$  |



C7.  $\begin{array}{|cccc|cccc|} \hline \overline{5554} & \overline{32334} & \overline{5154} & \overline{5152} & \overline{1324} & \overline{3215} & \overline{4514} & \overline{5123} \\ \hline \overline{2432} & \overline{3215} & \overline{1514} & \overline{55123} & \overline{4535} & \overline{4321} & \overline{5451} & \overline{2\ 32} \\ \hline \overline{1512} & \overline{15112} & \overline{3215} & \overline{1234} & \overline{3543} & \overline{2221} & \overline{2342} & \overline{3213} \\ \hline \overline{2152} & \overline{1515} & \overline{4543} & \overline{42334} & \overline{5123} & \overline{1321} & \overline{5434} & \overline{5215} \\ \hline \end{array}$

C8.  $\begin{array}{|cccc|cccc|} \hline \overline{44515} & \overline{44512} & \overline{3432} & \overline{3543} & \overline{2154} & \overline{3451} & \overline{2342} & \overline{3543} \\ \hline \overline{2432} & \overline{1321} & \overline{5215} & \overline{4353} & \overline{44514} & \overline{5123} & \overline{4543} & \overline{2\ 13} \\ \hline \overline{2125} & \overline{11232} & \overline{1232} & \overline{3543} & \overline{2125} & \overline{1234} & \overline{3212} & \overline{3213} \\ \hline \overline{2151} & \overline{5454} & \overline{3432} & \overline{33451} & \overline{2313} & \overline{2154} & \overline{3234} & \overline{5\ 54} \\ \hline \end{array}$

C9.  $\begin{array}{|cccc|cccc|} \hline \overline{3232} & \overline{3435} & \overline{4342} & \overline{3451} & \overline{5432} & \overline{1234} & \overline{5432} & \overline{3541} \\ \hline \overline{5213} & \overline{2432} & \overline{1514} & \overline{55123} & \overline{4535} & \overline{4321} & \overline{4451} & \overline{2215} \\ \hline \overline{1215} & \overline{1132} & \overline{1525} & \overline{1215} & \overline{4512} & \overline{5125} & \overline{1232} & \overline{3451} \\ \hline \overline{5451} & \overline{5434} & \overline{3212} & \overline{3451} & \overline{5432} & \overline{32.2} & \overline{33454} & \overline{5} \\ \hline \end{array}$



Nine cycles of *Catrik* played on *peking* by Lili Suparli  CD track 6

*sawilet*

D1. (5) |  $\overline{5\ 4}$   $\overline{5\ 1}$   $\overline{5154}$   $\overline{3\ 23}$  |  $\overline{2345}$   $\overline{4323}$   $\overline{2121}$   $\overline{2443}$  |  
 |  $\overline{2125}$   $\overline{1232}$   $\overline{1512}$   $\overline{3551}$  |  $\overline{5154}$   $\overline{3432}$   $\overline{3234}$  (5)  $\overline{515}$  |

D2. |  $\overline{4345}$   $\overline{1543}$   $\overline{4345}$   $\overline{1\ 23}$  |  $\overline{4543}$   $\overline{2321}$   $\overline{5121}$   $\overline{2235}$  |  
 |  $\overline{1235}$   $\overline{1235}$   $\overline{1232}$   $\overline{3554}$  |  $\overline{3454}$   $\overline{3232}$   $\overline{.2.234}$  (5)  $\overline{515}$  |

D3. |  $\overline{44345}$   $\overline{1543}$   $\overline{4345}$   $\overline{1223}$  |  $\overline{4543}$   $\overline{2321}$   $\overline{5121}$   $\overline{2235}$  |  
 |  $\overline{11235}$   $\overline{11235}$   $\overline{1232}$   $\overline{3451}$  |  $\overline{5154}$   $\overline{33454}$   $\overline{3234}$  (5)  $\overline{515}$  |

D4. |  $\overline{4345}$   $\overline{1543}$   $\overline{4345}$   $\overline{1\ 23}$  |  $\overline{4543}$   $\overline{2343}$   $\overline{2151}$   $\overline{2235}$  |  
 |  $\overline{1235}$   $\overline{1235}$   $\overline{1232}$   $\overline{3451}$  |  $\overline{5154}$   $\overline{3432}$   $\overline{3234}$  (5)  $\overline{514}$  |

D5. |  $\overline{5154}$   $\overline{3453}$   $\overline{4515}$   $\overline{1221}$  |  $\overline{5453}$   $\overline{4514}$   $\overline{5121}$   $\overline{2232}$  |  
 |  $\overline{1512}$   $\overline{3215}$   $\overline{1232}$   $\overline{3215}$  |  $\overline{4345}$   $\overline{1554}$   $\overline{3234}$  (5)  $\overline{5}$  |

----slowing down for *naek* into *dua wilet* -----xx =  $\overline{xx}$

*dua wilet*

D6. |  $\overline{1\ 3}$   $\overline{4\ 5}$   $\overline{1\ 5}$   $\overline{4\ 3}$  |  $\overline{4\ 5}$   $\overline{1\ 5}$   $\overline{1\ 5}$   $\overline{1.2}$  |  
$\overline{2323}$   $\overline{2121}$   $\overline{2321}$   $\overline{5123}$	$\overline{2343}$   $\overline{2321}$   $\overline{5151}$   $\overline{232}$
$\overline{1515}$   $\overline{1232}$   $\overline{1515}$   $\overline{1232}$	$\overline{1515}$   $\overline{1232}$   $\overline{1232}$   $\overline{351}$
$\overline{5151}$   $\overline{5154}$   $\overline{3454}$   $\overline{5154}$	$\overline{3432}$   $\overline{.432}$   $\overline{3234}$  (5)  $\overline{54}$



D7.  $\left| \begin{array}{cccc|cccc} \overline{3234} & \overline{5154} & \overline{3451} & \overline{5154} & \overline{3451} & \overline{5454} & \overline{3451} & \overline{5121} \\ \overline{2321} & \overline{5123} & \overline{2321} & \overline{5321} & \overline{5321} & \overline{5454} & \overline{5121} & \overline{2\ 21} \\ \overline{55121} & \overline{5121} & \overline{55121} & \overline{5121} & \overline{5154} & \overline{5154} & \overline{3454} & \overline{3451} \\ \overline{5151} & \overline{5151} & \overline{5154} & \overline{3432} & \overline{3432} & \overline{3232} & \overline{.2.234} & \overline{5554} \end{array} \right|$

D8.  $\left| \begin{array}{cccc|cccc} \overline{3234} & \overline{5432} & \overline{3234} & \overline{5154} & \overline{33451} & \overline{5154} & \overline{3451} & \overline{223} \\ \overline{4321} & \overline{2321} & \overline{2321} & \overline{5154} & \overline{5154} & \overline{5154} & \overline{33451} & \overline{2232} \\ \overline{1515} & \overline{1232} & \overline{1515} & \overline{1232} & \overline{1515} & \overline{1232} & \overline{1232} & \overline{1551} \\ \overline{5154} & \overline{5154} & \overline{5154} & \overline{3432} & \overline{.432} & \overline{.432} & \overline{.2.234} & \overline{5515} \end{array} \right|$

D9.  $\left| \begin{array}{cccc|cccc} \overline{4343} & \overline{4515} & \overline{4343} & \overline{4515} & \overline{4345} & \overline{1215} & \overline{4345} & \overline{1\ 23} \\ \overline{4543} & \overline{2345} & \overline{4543} & \overline{2321} & \overline{2321} & \overline{5123} & \overline{2151} & \overline{2\ 32} \\ \overline{1515} & \overline{1232} & \overline{1515} & \overline{1234} & \overline{3232} & \overline{1515} & \overline{1512} & \overline{3\ 54} \\ \overline{5154} & \overline{5154} & \overline{5154} & \overline{3432} & \overline{3432} & \overline{3432} & \overline{3234} & \overline{5} \end{array} \right|$







Komaran:	$\overline{4} \quad \overline{5} \quad \overline{1} \quad \overline{2}$ $\underline{\underline{44.4}} \quad \underline{\underline{55.5}} \quad \underline{\underline{11.1}} \quad \underline{\underline{23}}$	$\overline{3.2} \quad \overline{1525} \quad \overline{1.232} \quad \overline{3.3}$
Sutisna:	$\overline{4} \quad \overline{5} \quad \overline{1} \quad \overline{2}$ $\underline{\underline{4444}} \quad \underline{\underline{5555}} \quad \underline{\underline{1111}} \quad \underline{\underline{23}}$	$\overline{334} \quad \overline{5434} \quad \overline{1.232} \quad \overline{3.3}$
Suparli:	$\overline{4} \quad \overline{5} \quad \overline{1} \quad \overline{2}$ $\underline{\underline{4}} \quad \underline{\underline{4}} \quad \underline{\underline{5}} \quad \underline{\underline{5}} \quad \underline{\underline{1}} \quad \underline{\underline{1}} \quad \underline{\underline{23}}$	$\overline{334} \quad \overline{5434} \quad \overline{1.232} \quad \overline{3.3}$

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Komaran:	$\overline{3.333} \quad \overline{3.333} \quad \overline{3.333} \quad \overline{3.333}$	$\overline{3} \quad \overline{334} \quad \overline{5551} \quad \overline{5454} \quad \overline{333}$
Sutisna:	$\overline{3.333} \quad \overline{3.333} \quad \overline{3.333} \quad \overline{3.333}$	$\overline{334} \quad \overline{5551} \quad \overline{5454} \quad \overline{3}$
Suparli:	$\overline{.3} \quad \overline{3.3} \quad \overline{.3} \quad \overline{3.3} \quad \overline{3.3}$ $\underline{\underline{.3}} \quad \underline{\underline{3}} \quad \underline{\underline{.3}} \quad \underline{\underline{.3}} \quad \underline{\underline{3}} \quad \underline{\underline{.3}}$	$\overline{.34} \quad \overline{5551} \quad \overline{5454} \quad \overline{333}$

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Komaran:	$\overline{3} \quad \overline{1} \quad \overline{1112} \quad \overline{1} \quad \overline{1} \quad \overline{54}$	$\overline{445} \quad \overline{1545} \quad \overline{2.343} \quad \overline{4}$
Sutisna:	$\overline{1112} \quad \overline{1112} \quad \overline{1514} \quad \overline{54}$	$\overline{445} \quad \overline{1545} \quad \overline{2.343} \quad \overline{444}$
Suparli:	$\overline{3} \quad \overline{1} \quad \overline{1113} \quad \overline{2121} \quad \overline{544}$	$\overline{444} \quad \overline{444} \quad \overline{45} \quad \overline{43} \quad \overline{444}$

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Komaran:	$\overline{4545} \quad \overline{1112} \quad \overline{1515} \quad \overline{4445}$	$\overline{4345} \quad \overline{1111} \quad \overline{25} \quad \overline{12} \quad \overline{355}$
Sutisna:	$\overline{4} \quad \overline{45} \quad \overline{1112} \quad \overline{1515} \quad \overline{444}$	$\overline{4} \quad \overline{45} \quad \overline{1115} \quad \overline{1.232} \quad \overline{345}$
Suparli:	$\overline{4} \quad \overline{45} \quad \overline{1112} \quad \overline{1515} \quad \overline{444}$	$\overline{4} \quad \overline{45} \quad \overline{1115} \quad \overline{1.232} \quad \overline{355}$



Komaran:	<u>5.515</u> <u>5.515</u> <u>5154</u> <u>3334</u>	<u>3232</u> <u>3452</u> <u>3.454</u> <u>5</u>
Sutisna:	<u>5.515</u> <u>5.515</u> <u>5154</u> <u>3334</u>	<u>3232</u> <u>3452</u> <u>3.454</u> <u>5</u>
Suparli:	<u>2</u> <u>2</u> <u>5 5 5</u> <u>5 5 5</u> <u>5154</u> <u>3334</u>	<u>3232</u> <u>3452</u> <u>3.454</u> <u>555</u>

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Komaran:	<u>85</u> <u>3. 3</u> <u>2.343</u> <u>444</u>	<u>44</u> <u>5 53</u> <u>4.515</u> <u>i.4</u>
Sutisna:	<u>.5</u> <u>3333</u> <u>2.343</u> <u>444</u>	<u>44</u> <u>5553</u> <u>4.515</u> <u>i</u>
Suparli:	<u>55</u> <u>3333</u> <u>5 53</u> <u>444</u>	<u>44</u> <u>5553</u> <u>4.515</u> <u>iii</u>

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Komaran:	<u>4.454</u> <u>4.454</u> <u>4543</u> <u>222</u>	<u>2 2</u> <u>3 31</u> <u>2.343</u> <u>4</u>
Sutisna:	<u>i i</u> <u>44 45</u> <u>4343</u> <u>2223</u>	<u>2121</u> <u>2341</u> <u>2.343</u> <u>4.2</u>
Suparli:	<u>i 15</u> <u>44 45</u> <u>4343</u> <u>222</u>	<u>2. 2</u> <u>3331</u> <u>2.343</u> <u>4</u>

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Komaran:	<u>2</u> <u>2</u> <u>1</u> <u>2</u> <u>2</u> <u>2</u> <u>1</u> <u>222</u>	<u>221</u> <u>5 1</u> <u>4.515</u> <u>1</u>
Sutisna:	<u>. 2</u> <u>2. 2</u> <u>. 1</u> <u>2.2</u>	<u>.1</u> <u>5551</u> <u>4.515</u> <u>1</u>
Suparli:	<u>2223</u> <u>2223</u> <u>2121</u> <u>222</u>	<u>21</u> <u>5551</u> <u>4.515</u> <u>11</u>



Komaran:	$\overline{4444}$ $\overline{5555}$ $\overline{1111}$ $\overline{23}$	$\overline{334}$ $\overline{5434}$ $\overline{1.232}$ $\overline{325}$
Sutisna:	$\overline{4444}$ $\overline{5555}$ $\overline{1111}$ $\overline{23}$	$\overline{334}$ $\overline{5434}$ $\overline{1.232}$ $\overline{3.2}$
Suparli:	$\overline{44}$ $\overline{55}$ $\overline{11}$ $\overline{23}$	$\overline{334}$ $\overline{5434}$ $\overline{1.232}$ $\overline{3.2}$

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Komaran:	$\overline{43}$ $\overline{25}$ $\overline{43}$ $\overline{25}$ $\overline{43}$ $\overline{23}$ $\overline{22}$ $\overline{23}$	$\overline{21}$ $\overline{21}$ $\overline{54}$ $\overline{14}$ $\overline{5.121}$ $\overline{2}$ $\overline{2}$
Sutisna:	$\overline{2.222}$ $\overline{2.222}$ $\overline{2.222}$ $\overline{2.222}$	$\overline{2.222}$ $\overline{2.222}$ $\overline{23}$ $\overline{21}$ $\overline{2222}$
Suparli:	$\overline{.2}$ $\overline{2.2}$ $\overline{.2}$ $\overline{2.2}$ $\overline{2.2}$	$\overline{.2}$ $\overline{2}$

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Komaran:	$\overline{55.5}$ $\overline{11.1}$ $\overline{2}$ $\overline{2}$ $\overline{334}$	$\overline{5}$ $\overline{51}$ $\overline{2151}$ $\overline{3.454}$ $\overline{5}$ $\overline{.1}$
Sutisna:	$\overline{5555}$ $\overline{1111}$ $\overline{22}$ $\overline{22}$ $\overline{345}$	$\overline{5}$ $\overline{51}$ $\overline{2151}$ $\overline{3.454}$ $\overline{5}$ $\overline{.1}$
Suparli:	$\overline{25}$ $\overline{1115}$ $\overline{1.232}$ $\overline{3334}$	$\overline{5551}$ $\overline{2151}$ $\overline{3.454}$ $\overline{5.111}$

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Komaran:	$\overline{.1}$ $\overline{1.1}$ $\overline{.1}$ $\overline{.5}$ $\overline{111}$	$\overline{112}$ $\overline{32}$ $\overline{15}$ $\overline{111}$
Sutisna:	$\overline{1.111}$ $\overline{1.111}$ $\overline{1.111}$ $\overline{1.111}$	$\overline{112}$ $\overline{3334}$ $\overline{3231}$ $\overline{2222}$
Suparli:	$\overline{1.111}$ $\overline{1.111}$ $\overline{1.111}$ $\overline{1.111}$	$\overline{112}$ $\overline{3333}$ $\overline{2225}$ $\overline{111}$

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Komaran:	$\overline{14}$ $\overline{32}$ $\overline{3.454}$ $\overline{555}$	$\overline{553}$ $\overline{4443}$ $\overline{4.515}$ $\overline{(i)}$
Sutisna:	$\overline{5555}$ $\overline{3333}$ $\overline{53}$ $\overline{4441}$	$\overline{5454}$ $\overline{3334}$ $\overline{5345}$ $\overline{(i)}$
Suparli:	$\overline{13}$ $\overline{333}$ $\overline{3332}$ $\overline{444}$	$\overline{44}$ $\overline{5553}$ $\overline{4.515}$ $\overline{(i)}$



## Appendix IV



The RRI-based Parahyangan *gamelan degung* group (1950s)

*bonang*: Tjarmedi, *cempres*: Encas Casmita, *panerus*: Absar, *jengglong*: Uking Sukri, *suling*: Ono Sukarna, *kendang*: Mamat Rahmat, *goong*: Aduy (photo courtesy of Didi Wiardi).



Nano Suratno (Nano S.) and his wife Dheniarsah make an impromptu appearance on stage at a wedding reception.



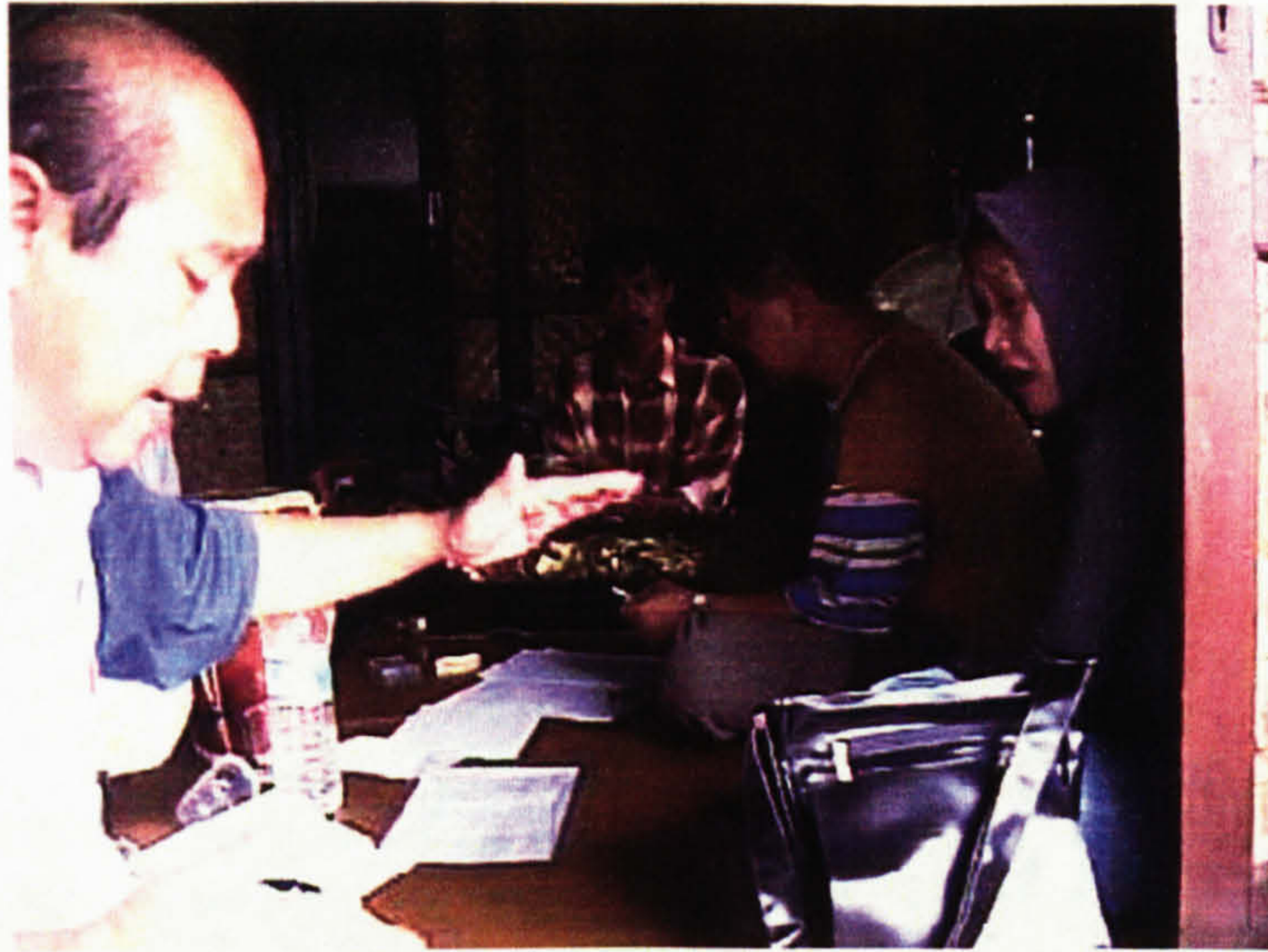


Didin Bajuri, from the group Sasaka Domas, sings *My Way* at a wedding reception



A child sits in with the Sasaka Domas *degung* group at a wedding reception





Nano S. teaches Nining Meida the song *Kabungbulengan* before a *degung* recording



Iyan Arliani sings with a *degung* group at a wedding



Mamah Dasimah



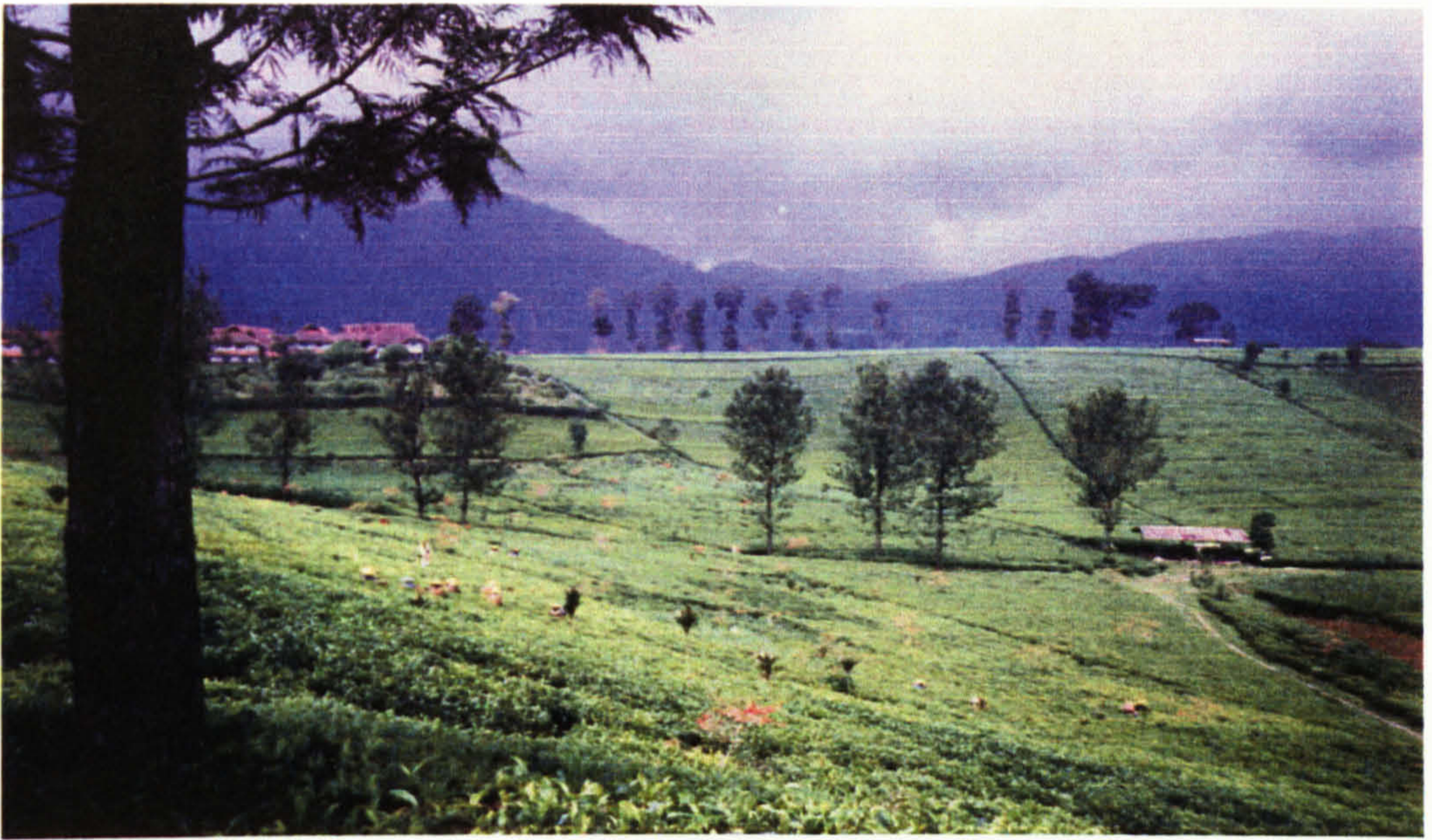


Iik Setiawan (accompanied by Agus Super) notates a *degung* arrangement prior to a rehearsal with his group Sulanjana



A Sambahunda 'jam' at STSI Bandung

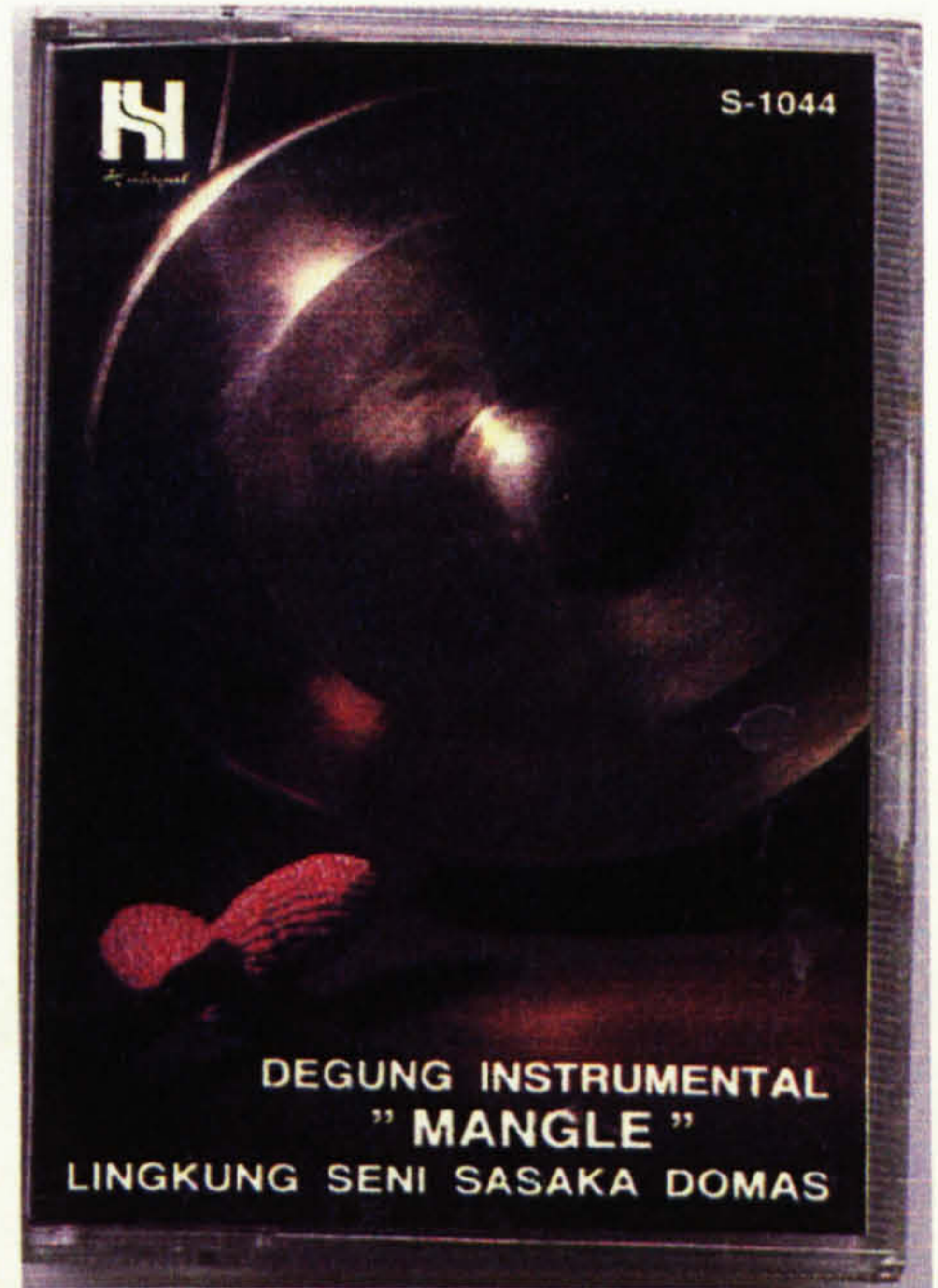




A tea plantation south of Bandung



Ade Komaran tunes a *gambang*



The cover of the Mangle cassette



## Glossary

### Abbreviations

BI: *Bahasa Indonesia* (Indonesian)

BS: *Basa Sunda* (Sundanese)

BJ: *Basa Jawa* (Javanese)

<i>agama</i> (BI)	religion
<i>ahli</i> (BI)	expert, specialist
<i>akad nikah</i> (BI)	formal marriage ceremony
<i>akord (acord)</i> (BI)	musical chord
<i>alat alat musik etnis</i> (BI)	ethnic musical instruments
<i>alok</i> (BS)	interludes sung by a male <i>gamelan</i> singer ( <i>juru alok</i> )
<i>alun alun</i> (BI)	town square
<i>anggana sekar</i> (BS)	solo singing (the opposite of <i>rampak sekar</i> )
<i>angklung</i> (BS)	tuned bamboo rattle
<i>aransemen</i> (BI)	arrangement
<i>baku</i> (BI)	standard
<i>balungan</i> (BI/BJ)	skeletal melody (Javanese <i>gamelan</i> term)
<i>bangsi (bangsing)</i> (BI)	transverse bamboo flute
<i>bonang</i> (BS/BJ)	gong-chime instrument
<i>bubuka</i> (BS)	opening piece
<i>bupati</i> (BI)	regent or regional official
<i>calung</i> (BS)	bamboo idiophone
<i>campur sari</i> (BS)	a music fusion using a combination of Western and Sundanese or Javanese instruments
<i>caruk</i> (BS)	interlocking figuration



<i>cempres</i> (BS)	multi-octave, deeper-pitched metallophone used in <i>gamelan degung</i>
<i>cengkok</i> (BJ)	melodic pattern
<i>ciptaan</i> (BI)	composition
<i>ciri khas</i> (BI)	distinctive feature
<i>dalang</i> (BS)	puppeteer
<i>dangdut</i> (BI)	Indonesian popular song style influenced by Indian music
<i>dedegungan</i> (BS)	literally, ‘in the manner of <i>degung</i> ’ – describes a body of <i>tembang Sunda</i> repertoire, as well as arrangements of <i>degung klasik</i> pieces for <i>kacapi suling</i>
<i>degung</i> (BS)	1. term used to refer to the repertoire, instruments and <i>pelog</i> tuning of the Sundanese <i>gamelan degung</i> 2. the former name for a hanging <i>jengglong</i>
<i>degung ibu-ibu</i> (BS)	all-female <i>degung</i> ensemble
<i>degung instrumental / instrumentalialia</i> (BS)	cassette-driven, instrumental <i>gamelan degung</i> genre
<i>degung kawih</i> (BS)	light vocal songs accompanied by <i>gamelan degung</i>
<i>degung klasik</i> (BS)	the original repertoire of the <i>gamelan degung</i>
<i>degung mojang</i> (BS)	<i>degung</i> group comprising teenage girls or young women
<i>denggung</i> (BS/BJ)	<i>degung</i> (in Cirebon)
<i>didegungkeun</i> (BS)	to adapt for <i>degung</i> or to ‘ <i>degung-ise</i> ’
<i>dirangkep</i> (BS)	technique whereby a playing pattern is ‘doubled-up’
<i>elekton</i> (BI)	electronic keyboard or synthesiser
<i>etnis (etnik)</i> (BI)	ethnic
<i>galimer</i> (BS)	tone 4 in <i>gamelan</i> circles – (tone 5 in <i>tembang Sunda</i> circles!)
<i>gambang</i> (BI/BS)	xylophone



<i>gambang kromong</i> (BI)	popular urban genre mixing Chinese, Indonesian & Western instruments and musical styles
<i>gamelan degung</i> (BS)	small Sundanese <i>gamelan</i>
<i>gamelan pelog-salendro</i> (BS)	term used to refer to the repertoire and instruments of Sundanese <i>gamelan</i> which may be tuned to the <i>pelog</i> or <i>salendro</i> scales
<i>gamelan salendro</i> (BS)	Sundanese <i>gamelan</i> tuned to the <i>salendro</i> scale
<i>gamelan selap</i> (BS)	type of <i>gamelan</i> in which multiple scales are arranged on a single set of instruments.
<i>gelenyu</i> (BS)	instrumental interlude played between sections of a vocal melody
<i>gender</i> (BJ)	metallophone used in Javanese <i>gamelan</i>
<i>gending</i> (BJ/BS)	musical composition
<i>gending berdialog</i> (BI/BS)	sections of a piece in which the melody is divided between two or more instruments using question-and-answer phrases (a term coined by Koko Koswara )
<i>gending karesmen</i> (BS)	theatrical form featuring dance and sung dialogue
<i>gending macakal</i> (BI/BS)	sections of through-composed melody (a Koko Koswara term)
<i>goong</i> (BS)	1. large hanging gong 2. point in the musical structure
<i>goong ajeng</i> (BS)	archaic <i>gamelan</i> ensemble
<i>goong renteng</i> (BS)	archaic <i>gamelan</i> ensemble
<i>gumekan</i> (BS)	<i>bonang</i> technique used in <i>degung klasik</i>
<i>guruh</i> (BI)	literally, thunder – a term used to describe a dramatic monotone ostinato played on the <i>gamelan degung</i> in the wedding ceremony
<i>hafal</i> (BI)	to know by heart or to memorise
<i>hajatan</i> (BI/BS)	celebratory feast
<i>halimpu</i> (BS)	melodious, sweet, soft



<i>inghak</i> (BS)	type of vocal ornament, literally means ‘sob’
<i>jaipongan</i> (BS)	modern Sundanese dance form
<i>jejemplangan</i> (BS)	division of the metrically-free <i>tembang Sunda</i> repertoire
<i>jengglong</i> (BS)	large gong-chime instrument used in Sundanese <i>gamelan</i>
<i>juru</i> (BI/BS)	specialist or skilled worker
<i>kabupaten</i> (BI)	regency or official residence
<i>kacapi</i> (BS)	zither
<i>kacapi biola</i> (BS)	instrumental genre with violin and <i>kacapi</i>
<i>kacapi indung</i> (BS)	literally, ‘mother <i>kacapi</i> ’ – a large eighteen-string boat shaped zither used in <i>tembang Sunda</i>
<i>kacapi jenaka Sunda</i> (BS)	slapstick Sundanese folk genre combining comedy routines and music
<i>kacapi rincik</i> (BS)	small fifteen-string zither used in <i>tembang Sunda</i>
<i>kacapi siter</i> (BS)	portable zither with twenty strings
<i>kacapi suling</i> (BS)	instrumental genre with <i>kacapi indung</i> , <i>kacapi rincik</i> and <i>suling</i>
<i>kacapian</i> (BS)	vocal genre in which the main instrument of accompaniment is the <i>kacapi siter</i>
<i>kaleran</i> (BS)	literally, northern – describes a music style associated with the north-easterly region of Sunda that borders Central Java
<i>kampung</i> (BI)	parochial, provincial
<i>karawitan</i> (BJ)	traditional pentatonic music
<i>karinding</i> (BS)	bamboo jew’s harp
<i>kaul</i> (BS)	literally, ‘a vow’ – refers to performing on-stage as a guest at a wedding or other celebration in honour of the host
<i>kawih</i> (BS)	type of light vocal song and a style of singing



<i>kecrek</i> (BS)	percussion instrument comprising two metal plates that are struck together using a beater
<i>kembangan</i> (BI)	flowerings or embellishments
<i>kemprangan</i> (BS)	<i>bonang</i> technique in which the instrument is played in off-beat octaves
<i>kempul</i> (BS)	small hanging gong
<i>kempyung</i> (BS)	interval approximating a Western 4th or 5th
<i>kendang</i> (BS)	drum
<i>kenong</i> (BS)	structural tone found half-way through a <i>goong</i> cycle in <i>sekar alit</i> pieces
<i>kenongan</i> (BS)	see <i>patokan</i>
<i>keprak</i> (BS)	archaic gong-chime instrument
<i>keraton</i> (BI)	palace
<i>keris</i> (BI/BS)	wavy, double-bladed dagger
<i>keroncong</i> (BI)	popular Indonesian music genre that has its roots in Portuguese song
<i>ketuk</i> (BS)	single pot gong-chime
<i>ketuk tilu</i> (BS)	literally, three <i>ketuk</i> – a type of folk dance
<i>klasik</i> (BI)	literally ‘classic’ or ‘classical’ – term now used to describe the type of instrumental <i>degung</i> repertoire originally developed in the Sundanese courts
<i>kliningan</i> (BS)	‘concert music’ played on <i>gamelan pelog-salendro</i>
<i>kobongan</i> (BS)	alternative name for the <i>mandalungan</i> / <i>mataram</i> tuning
<i>kompak</i> (BI)	compact or tight
<i>kreasi</i> (BI)	new composition or creation
<i>kunci</i> (BI)	key



<i>lagon</i> (BS)	term used by Lili Suparli to mean a type of implicit melodic grammar
<i>lagu</i> (BI/BS)	song, piece or melody
<i>lagu dagelan</i> (BI/BS)	joking or clowning songs
<i>lagu jadi</i> (BI/BS)	fixed song melody
<i>laras</i> (BI)	tuning system or scale
<i>latihan</i> (BI)	rehearsal
<i>lelol</i> (BS)	ornamental turn
<i>lengser</i> (BS)	kings' ambassador – a central character in Pajajaran-based legends and in the Sundanese wedding ceremony
<i>leotan</i> (BS)	note bend or slide
<i>lilitan</i> (BI)	coil or twist
<i>lingkung seni</i> (BI)	arts circle (performing arts group)
<i>loloran</i> (BS)	name given to tone 2 - also known as <i>kenong</i>
<i>lurus</i> (BI)	straight
<i>madenda</i> (BS)	Sundanese pentatonic tuning
<i>mamaos</i> (BS)	non-metrical songs of <i>tembang Sunda</i>
<i>mandalungan</i> (BS)	Sundanese pentatonic tuning that is a modal transposition of <i>pelog degung</i>
<i>mataram</i> (BS)	another term for <i>mandalungan</i>
<i>muatan lokal</i> (BI)	local content (a type of school curriculum)
<i>nada sisipan</i> (BI)	literally, inserted tones – accidental pitches occurring outside of the fixed tuning system
<i>naek</i> (BS)	to make a musical transition from one piece to another, or one level of structural expansion to another
<i>narangtang</i> (BS)	musical passage that functions as a 'bridge' between sets of <i>tembang Sunda</i> songs



<i>ngamelodi</i> (BS)	style of playing used on the metallophones in <i>degung</i>
<i>ngaras</i> (BS)	pre-wedding ceremony in which the bride or groom apologise to their parents for their shortcomings
<i>ngeuyeumbeu</i> (BS)	slowly flowing water
<i>pagar ayu</i> (BS)	beautiful female dancers or ‘ladies-in-waiting’ of the Sundanese wedding ceremony
<i>panambih</i> (BS)	metrical songs used in <i>tembang Sunda</i>
<i>pancer</i> (BS)	pivot tone
<i>panelu</i> (BS)	tone 3
<i>panerus</i> (BS)	low pitched metallophone, see <i>cempres</i>
<i>pangaget</i> (BS)	secondary pivot tone
<i>pangjadi</i> (BS)	opening section of a <i>gamelan</i> piece – has a tempo regulating function and/or serves to identify the piece in question
<i>pangkat</i> (BS)	introductory phrase
<i>pantun</i> (BS)	Sundanese epic narratives sung by a blind bard who accompanies himself on the <i>kacapi</i>
<i>papantunan</i> (BS)	division of the <i>mamaos</i> repertoire
<i>pasinden</i> (BS)	female <i>gamelan</i> singer
<i>patet</i> (BJ/BS)	mode
<i>patokan</i> (BS)	type of hierarchically organised tonal framework structurally underpinning the <i>sekar alit</i> repertoire
<i>payung</i> (BI)	umbrella or ceremonial parasol
<i>peking</i> (BS)	high-pitched metallophone
<i>pelog</i> (BS)	1. seven-tone tuning system that comprises the <i>pelog jawar</i> , <i>pelog liwung</i> and <i>pelog sorog</i> modes 2. <i>pelog degung</i>
<i>pelog degung</i> (BS)	uniquely Sundanese five-tone <i>pelog</i> scale



<i>pencak silat</i> (BI)	system of self-defence
<i>pesindhen</i> (BJ)	Javanese <i>gamelan</i> singer
<i>pirigan</i> (BS)	accompaniment
<i>pola</i> (BI)	pattern, template
<i>pola tabuhan</i> (BI)	playing patterns
<i>pongawa</i> (BS)	court official
<i>pop Sunda</i> (BI)	Sundanese popular music using pentatonic tunings
<i>posisi lagu</i> (BI)	tonal structure of a piece
<i>pusaka</i> (BI/BS)	heirloom
<i>raja sadinten</i> (BS)/ <i>raja sehari</i> (BI)	king for a day
<i>rakyat</i> (BI)	folk
<i>ramé</i> (BS)	lively, busy
<i>rampak sekar</i> (BS)	unison choral singing
<i>rampak waditra</i> (BS)	unison instrumental part
<i>ranggon</i> (BS)	wooden stage erected on stilts
<i>Ratu Agung</i> (BS)	title meaning His or Her Royal Highness
<i>rebab</i> (BS)	two-string bowed lute
<i>rebana</i> (BI)	Islamic style frame drum
<i>rias panganten</i> (BS)	bridal makeup and styling
<i>rincik</i> (BS)	small high-pitched <i>bonang</i> used in <i>gamelan pelog-salendro</i>
<i>ronggeng</i> (BS)	female singer-dancer
<i>salendro</i> (BS)	pentatonic tuning system with near-equidistant intervals
<i>sandiwara</i> (BI)	theatrical form (see <i>gending karesmen</i> )



<i>sanggian</i> (BS)	arrangement, compilation or composition
<i>sanggul</i> (BS)	hair bun
<i>santri</i> (BI)	student at a Muslim school or strict adherent of Islam
<i>saron</i> (BS)	metallophone
<i>saron barung</i> (BS)	one-octave metallophone
<i>sekar</i> (BS)	literally flower – used to mean piece, song or melody
<i>sekar ageung</i> (BS)	large piece(s)
<i>sekar alit</i> (BS)	small piece(s)
<i>sekar tengahan</i> (BS)	middle-size pieces
<i>senggol</i> (BS)	1. melodic pattern 2. melody 3. ornamentation.
<i>seniman alam</i> (BI)	natural (formally untrained) artist
<i>singgul</i> (BS)	tone 5
<i>siraman</i> (BS)	pre-wedding bathing ritual
<i>songsong</i> (BS)	ceremonial parasol
<i>sorog</i> (BS)	Sundanese pentatonic tuning – also known as <i>madenda</i>
<i>suling</i> (BS)	bamboo fipple flute
<i>suling degung</i> (BS)	four-hole bamboo flute used in <i>gamelan degung</i>
<i>suling tembang</i> (BS)	six-hole bamboo flute used in <i>tembang Sunda</i>
<i>surupan</i> (BS)	tuning or mode
<i>tarawangsa</i> (BS)	bowed lute
<i>tari merak</i> (BI)	peacock dance
<i>tatalu</i> (BI)	instrumental overture
<i>tembang</i> (BS)	1. sung poetry 2. singing 3. a specific style of singing (see <i>tembang Sunda</i> below)



<i>tembang Sunda</i> (BS)	aristocratic genre in which sung poetry is accompanied by <i>kacapi suling</i>
<i>terbang</i> (BS)	Islamic style frame drum.
<i>tonil</i> (BI)	theatrical form (see <i>gending karesmen</i> ).
<i>triul</i> (BS)	triplet figure
<i>tugu</i> (BS)	tone 1 – also known as <i>barang</i>
<i>Tumenggung</i> (BS)	title for a newly installed regent
<i>ukuran</i> (BI)	size or measurement – the length of the <i>suling</i> in centimetres is often used to describe the pitch-level of an ensemble
<i>umbul umbul</i> (BS)	flags or banners
<i>upacara adat</i> (BI)/ <i>upacara khusus</i> (BI)/ <i>upacara karesmen</i> (BS)	scripted ceremony featuring music, dance and narration
<i>upacara - mapag panganten</i> (BS)	wedding greeting ceremony
<i>wanda anyar</i> (BS)	new style (primarily refers to the form of instrumental arrangement developed by Koko Koswara)
<i>warnet</i> (BI)	acronym for <i>warung</i> (food stall) and <i>internet</i> – a type of pay-per-hour internet access point
<i>wayang golek</i> (BS)	rod-puppet theatre
<i>wilet</i> (BS)	denotes the relative length of a <i>goong</i> cycle – levels include <i>sawilet</i> (one <i>wilet</i> ), <i>dua wilet</i> (two <i>wilet</i> ) and <i>opat wilet</i> (four <i>wilet</i> )



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