

ABSTRACT

Title of thesis: *LELAMBATAN* IN BANJAR WANI, KARAMBITAN,
BALI

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The ceremonial music genre *lelambatan* originated from the *gamelan gong gede* orchestras in the courts of Bali. The once luxurious *gamelan gong gede*, funded by the *rajas*, has long departed since Dutch colonization, democratization, and Indonesian independence. Today the music is still played for ritual occasions, but in a new context. *Gamelan gong kebyar* instruments, melted down and rebuilt from those of the *gong gede* and handed down to the villages from the courts, are utilized in *lelambatan* because of their versatility and popularity of the new *kebyar* musical style. The result is remarkable: music from the court system that represents the lavishness of the *rajas* is played with reverence by the common class on gamelans literally recast to accommodate an egalitarian environment. A case study in Karambitan, Bali, examines the *lelambatan* music that has survived despite, or perhaps with the assistance of, history and cultural policy.

LELAMBATAN IN BANJAR WANI, KARAMBITAN, BALI

by

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to my teacher and friend, I Nyoman Suadin – you have touched the lives of more people than you will ever know.

Acknowledgements

For the preparation of this work I am deeply indebted to I Nyoman Suadin, for his friendship, tireless work teaching gamelan, answering endless questions, and inviting me into his home. Thank you also to the Suadin family and the people of Banjar Wani, Karambitan for allowing me to conduct my research. Without the guidance and dedication of Professor Jonathan Dueck this work would have never materialized, thank you so much. For your direction through the ethnomusicology program and direction on my committee, thank you Professor Robert Provine and Carolina Robertson. Thanks to the University of Maryland for the research opportunities and facilities to complete my degree.

Thank you to my friends and colleagues, Xóchitl Ysabela Tafoya and Aja Burrell Wood for your constant support, love and friendship, you are queens among women. Thanks to Rebekah Moore, a great travel and research partner. Last I would like thank my parents, Janice and Ronald Muehrer as well as my siblings, Rebecca Muehrer, Michael Muehrer, and Scott Procknow for unconditional support and love throughout the degree process and more importantly my life. I love you all.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

On July 1st, 2006, I witnessed a ceremony for a three-day old baby in Banjar¹ Wani, Karambitan. The ceremony was a *kepus pungsed* (Poffenberger & Zurbuchen, 1980, 126), a ceremony for the break of the umbilical cord that warrants what Jane Belo refers to as *melepasaon*, a purification ceremony that takes place in a family's house. Belo also suggests that the translation of *melepasaon*, "loosing of the ashes," may relate to the offering of cooked rice mixed with ashes (Belo 1970, 9). Let me offer some observations concerning the events taking place outside of the house, centering around the gamelan performance.²

Certain qualities of this performance struck me as unique, including the participation of the community (as well as those of us performing fieldwork), the music performed, and the instruments played. Initially, while in the field, I did not question the instruments the banjar gamelan played on. They were those with which I was most familiar: instruments of the *gamelan gong kebyar*. The pieces at this ceremony seemed slower than the *kebyar* I had played in the United States

Later, after reviewing the tapes many times, I inquired as to the structure of the music. My teacher (and guide through the experience of fieldwork, research, and writing), I Nyoman Suadin, told me that this music is *lelambatan*, a genre quite different from *kebyar*. I quickly set out to learn of this genre. I found that the music of *lelambatan* dates back to the courts of ancient Bali and was originally played on another ensemble, the *gamelan gong gede*.

¹ The word *banjar* refers to a division within the village similar to a neighborhood.

² Much scholarship has been written concerning Indonesian and Balinese music, dance, and art, dating to some of the first ethnomusicological inquiries. This thesis builds on the work of some of these scholars such as Colin McPhee, Micheal Tenzer, Lisa Gold, and those who have influenced their work.

My initial response was confusion: how did this music, composed and played for the courts on a ridiculously large ensemble, the *gamelan gong gede*, end up in Banjar Wani, being performed on a *gamelan gong kebyar*, outside of a ceremony?

In the following work I use the *kepus pungsed* as a central point to examine this performance tradition. By investigating this event from different angles, the community relationships, the performance aesthetic, the history and the music, I hope to come to a better understanding of *lelambatan* in Banjar Wani, Karambitan, Bali. An in depth history of the original ensemble the genre *lelambatan* was played on, *gamelan gong gede*, reveals the social and political events that have influenced *lelambatan* from pre-colonial Bali to the present. Further, by comparing a selection of the repertoire performed at this *kepus pungsed* with previous documentation of *gamelan gong gede* repertoire and a recording of the music on a *gamelan gong gede*, one can understand ways in which the music has changed through history. Some of the social and political influences on *lelambatan* include Dutch colonization, Japanese occupation during WWII, and independence. As a result communities have modified the music and the ensembles to adapt to local performance contexts. Consequently, the instruments are different, but the structure of the music has been maintained. *Lelambatan* has taken on a layer of meanings. When played, the performers are at once rejecting feudalism, embracing community, and facing modern independence with a glance towards the past.

The following is an outline of the chapter structure. Within the work, personal fieldnotes are italicized and dated.

Chapter 2 is an outline of the community, the atmosphere in which I performed research, the relationships I formed, and the opportunities these relationships afforded me, including participation in the *kepus pungsed* on July 1st.

Chapter 3 examines the community atmosphere of the ceremony, the participation of all involved, and the aesthetic of *ramé* at this particular event.

Chapter 4 is a description of the history and social factors in which *lelambatan* has developed.

Chapter 5 is a closer look at the *lelambatan* music played at the baby naming ceremony, and a comparison of this music to the *lelambatan* documented by Colin McPhee.

Chapter 6 is composed of the conclusions I have reached through my involvement in fieldwork and my research on the topic.

Chapter 2: A Researcher's Position in the Community

Fieldnotes 6/27/05

After dinner, a few more of Suadin's friends trickled in, through with their day. All the guests established their smoking groove and had their tea or coffee in hand, and everyone was comfortable. Suadin pulled out the bamboo joged instruments and distributed them for us to play. He played the gerantang, one of his friends played the drum, and Xóchitl played the "gong," two large metal keys struck together. Rebekah played the ketuck, a long concave piece of bamboo struck with a stick. I played the cengceng and we started with the joged piece Nyoman had transposed for gamelan kebyar and taught us in the Washington D.C. Gamelan Mitra Kusuma. We rotated playing different instruments, trying to learn different parts and the way in which everything interlocked.

As the music permeated the evening, a few more people trickled in to listen and participate. The whole house became like a clubhouse or meeting place, everyone smoking, participating, and helping us with our parts. Often someone would indicate my cengceng part by alternating their hands over their folded knees, and mouthing the syllables simultaneously "cha— cha-cha—cha!" When Xóchitl got lost in the gong part, a random person would hold their hand up in the air and bring it down as if striking the instrument at the correct time, yelling, "gong." After about an hour, the Americans got tired and we gradually left the instruments, quickly being replaced by more experienced players. Nyoman Jenki and Made sat in front of the gerantang, and instantly they ripped through the famous joged dance piece. They played the interlocking rhythms with

amazing agility and buoyancy. The entire group played together as if they had been playing for years (which they probably had).

The above fieldnote introduces the collaborative fieldwork I pursued in Banjar Wani, Karambitan. I traveled to Bali with two other University of Maryland ethnomusicology graduate students, Xóchitl Tafoya (Xóchi), and Rebekah Moore (Bekah). Our host, I Nyoman Suadin, our gamelan teacher at the University of Maryland and the Washington D.C. gamelan, had invited us to stay at his family house in the village of Karambitan, in Banjar Wani, providing us with instant access to a Bali outside of the tourist circles.

Although only Xóchi and I were planning to write our theses about this trip, all three of us (Bekah, Xóchi, and I) conducted research. While we lived in the same place and went to many of the same village functions, all of our experiences in Karambitan were different. We spent many hours discussing what we had seen and experienced, and there in the field, we learned together, exchanged ideas, and evaluated our encounters.

Nyoman was an omnipresent resource, available for information, transportation, gamelan lessons, and connections to any and all musical or cultural events in the area. These factors created a remarkable fieldwork experience, which no doubt had an influence on the collection and synthesis of information.

The following chapter will discuss how the rapport with my fellow researchers, Xóchi and Bekah, and our relationship with my teacher, Suadin, contributed to my research. As researchers, Xóchi, Bekah, and I formed a group, yet we maintained unique identities and socialized and observed in different ways. The combination of these factors led to richly textured interactions, collaborative fieldwork, and perhaps a new position for fieldworkers within the community.

I Nyoman Suadin

My experiences in Bali were strongly influenced not only by my identity as an American, but by my affiliation with my sponsor and teacher, I Nyoman Suadin, and access to all his resources and reputation. Suadin is a Balinese gamelan teacher at the University of Maryland, at Joe's Movement Emporium in Mt. Ranier, where the Washington D.C. gamelan rehearses, Cornell University, Eastman School of Music, and Swarthmore College.

I met Suadin (and also Bekah) during my first semester as a graduate student in ethnomusicology at UMD when members of the University of Maryland Gamelan Saraswati gathered after a rehearsal for a drink. I was interested in gamelan music and had participated in the Florida State University gamelan the year before. Xóchi, a friend who was also in her first semester of the ethnomusicology graduate program, was a member of the group at that time, and invited me out after her rehearsal. When I was introduced to Suadin, I mentioned my involvement with the FSU gamelan and my interest in Balinese music in general. I explained that I could not fit the UMD gamelan into my schedule, and he invited me to participate in the Washington D.C. Gamelan Mitra Kusuma. This began my involvement with Gamelan Mitra Kusuma, and a long lasting friendship with Suadin.

During the 2004-2005 school year Xóchi, Bekah, and I were invited to Suadin's home in Bali. At this point in my life, my first year in the University of Maryland master's program in ethnomusicology, I had never performed fieldwork nor traveled off of this continent, so this was an exciting prospect for me. As soon as I convinced myself it was worth the loan, I decided to go. From then on, at every rehearsal with Suadin, the

topic of conversation was how much fun we would have in Bali. Finally, we bought our tickets and received some coaching from Latifah, Suadin's wife who would not be in Bali while we were there.

Our group's association with Suadin proved to have many consequences, predominantly positive. Suadin had a prominent place in Banjar Wani, which had an effect on our reception. He went to school at KOKAR, the State High School for the Arts in Denpasar, Bali. There he learned Balinese traditional dance and music. When he returned to Banjar Wani after schooling, he taught the village gamelan what he had learned. Later in his life he moved to the United States, where he began working for the Indonesian embassy as a musician. Afterward he was offered a job teaching gamelan at the University of Maryland, and also began an ensemble in Washington D.C., began teaching at Eastman School of Music and Swarthmore College, and as of this fall began additionally teaching at Cornell College.

Suadin has lived in the United States for twenty years, and considers himself American. He returns to Bali every two years (this is as often as he can afford) for an entire summer, and will often invite friends from the United States to join him.

Suadin's residence and employment in the United States has a tremendous impact on his position within his community in Bali. To his village, he lives in a vividly imagined country known as "America." He has been a teacher, supported the community economically, and brought in tourists who contribute economically and donate to the village. He supports most of his family: his brother and sister-in-law live in and take care of his house when he is not there, and he supports his parents and another relative who live in his parent's house. He bought his brother Made Pasek a cassette store, which is also of benefit to his brother's friends as a place to socialize and listen to music every

day. The community is used to Suadin bringing Americans to visit, and if they see an American they assume he or she is associated with Suadin in some way.

The status Suadin holds had an immediate influence on the communities which hosted us. Because of his position as a gamelan teacher in the United States, Bali, and his banjar in Karambitan, he had access to musical happenings at many levels of professionalism and community involvement. Additionally, most of the American visitors that had accompanied him to Bali in the past had been gamelan students. As a result it was no surprise to members in the village that we were interested in gamelan music, and our presence at musical events was acceptable. The group that picked us up from the airport was an indication of the various groups we would interact with:

Fieldnotes 06/27/05

Bekah and I walked out into the warm night to find a crowd of people waiting to meet their arrivals, some with signs, others hugging, others talking. The airport had seemed deserted, which contrasted with the crowd outside. At the very end, closest to where we walked, was Suadin, smiling and waving in his t-shirt and shorts, with his hair frizzing in the humidity. He introduced us to his entourage as they shook our hands and politely took our luggage. He brought his friend, Pak Sarga, who looked about in his 40s, his brother, Made Pasek, in some sort of metal band t-shirt and shorts, 30, and a younger looking skinny boy, Bandam, 16. All of them were clean cut, none with long hair like Suadin. They were excited to meet us, and indeed it was surprising finding so many people there to meet us.

This group of men was representative of the social and musical groups we would interact with the most during our stay. Pak Sarga was a drummer in Suadin's gamelan. My interaction with Pak Sarga created a direct "in" with the gamelan, which, as I will

discuss later, allowed me to perform with the gamelan frequently. Pak Sarga often visited Suadin's house to play the drum with him and mingle, and sometimes other members of the gamelan and village would visit and play joged bumbung.

Through this community I learned about music and socialization in the village, played gamelan at a *kepus pungsed* ceremony and a toothfiling ceremony, a rite of passage in which a teenager's teeth are filed to purge him or her of animal like qualities.³ During my stay I also learned how to play joged bumbung, learned about community gamelan, and met many adult members of the community I might not otherwise have had access to as a twenty-three-year-old American female.

Made Pasek, one of Suadin's younger brothers, was not only a member of the family, but because he owned the cassette store, also a direct link to the group of young men who socialized there daily. We began lovingly referring to this group as "The Lost Boys," because most of them were unemployed as jobs are difficult to obtain in the area. They spent most of their days across from Made Pasek's cassette store socializing, riding their motorcycles, or spending time at the *warungs*, vendors along the road. When I first met them, I was slightly put off by their lack of employment, but it took me no more than an hour to realize how close they were with their families, the community, and each other, and how giving and considerate they were.

Made Pasek is also a member of the rock group Amnesti, which played after one of the toothfiling ceremonies. The story of Amnesti and the group's influences gave me great insight into youth involvement with rock music and its influence on gamelan.

Bandam was another member of the youth, but interacted with us in a slightly different way. Often he helped out at the cassette store, but Suadin also hired him and

³ Tooth-filing ceremonies are discussed further in Covarrubias (1956, 135-136) and within the context of village economics and rights of passage in Poffenberger and Zurbuchen, 1980.

another young man, Mancok, to accompany us on road trips and other outings as “tour guides.” Bandam, Mancok, and another of Suadin’s friends, Kebik, were extremely protective of us, and took such good care of us that often they would walk out into the street, put a hand up to stop traffic, and wave us across.

We called these young men our “bodyguards,” or would refer to them as “security” (nicknames they were particularly proud of). I would spend many hours outside the cassette store daily, talking with Bandam and Made Pasek in English, discussing music, Bali, America, and school. Through interaction with this group I learned about youth involvement in Western rock and roll, rock Bali (the Balinese genre of rock), and gamelan. I also traveled throughout Tabanan with them, learned about wood-carving, had a Green Day jam session, drank, learned Balinese slang and some Indonesian, and learned how to properly relax and “be” in Bali.

Suadin’s affiliation also provided an introduction to I Gusti Ngurah Kertayudha. Pak Ngurah is a dancer for the Indonesian Consulate in Chicago, and Suadin and Latifah invited him to dance with the Washington D.C. Gamelan Mitra Kusuma at a performance we had in Baltimore in the spring of 2005. There we met Pak Ngurah and told him we would visit Bali in the summer, and he formally invited us to his daughters’ tooth-filing ceremony in July. Once he arrived in Bali, about a week after I did, we were able to witness the preparation of the toothfiling ceremony as well as observe the backstage events before the performances that went on during the three-day-event.

Pak Ngurah is also a member of a higher caste than Suadin, so the toothfiling ceremony he hosted was a completely different atmosphere than a lower caste toothfiling we attended. Additionally, his fluency in English assisted my research, and

his residence in Chicago meant that I was able to perform follow-up interviews with him over email.

Suadin himself was and is an extremely valuable resource. On days that we were able to spend more time at home, he gave me private drumming lessons. He was our “cultural broker” in that he translated for us, took us to famous tourist spots, showed us beautiful places in Bali, alerted us of any event going on in Karambitan and the surrounding villages, and introduced us to many musicians, store owners, and other artisans. Suadin provided us with a place to stay, daily food, the experience of village life within his family, as well as making sure we were always safe. Additionally he rented a car for the full three weeks we were in Karambitan, made sure we visited anywhere we wanted to, and provided us with anything we asked for. It was important to him (and everyone we met) that we were always comfortable, having fun, and well fed. I owe much of my experience to him: my research, my knowledge of gamelan within the village of Karambitan and throughout Bali, and an overall wonderful experience in Bali. It is important to note that because I did not have a good grasp of English, and Suadin was one of the few people I spent time with in Bali that spoke English fluently, he was my main informant for this work.

The Researchers

My “research group” consisted of Bekah, Xóchi, and me. Additionally, Abram, a member of Gamelan Mitra Kusuma, joined us a week into the trip. This formed the group we called “The Suadin Crew,” because although we were not continuously around each other, we went to events together, and were generally considered a group by those

around us. Bekah, Xóchi and I planned the trip together, and therefore felt responsible for each other, besides the fact that we are good friends.

Our association with each other had several important effects. We shared equipment. This worked out fine since, while we were all focused in different aspects of gamelan music, we were interested in attending the same events. During trip planning we agreed to share much of our data, including video footage, audio recordings, and pictures.

However, we did come to the understanding that if anyone felt another member was encroaching upon their research focus, that member would not use the data in question. More than one person recording data did have many benefits. Though each of us became sick on different occasions, we did not have to worry about missing events. Although we would not have the full experience of participant-observation, we could “catch up” later with descriptions from the others, and would have access to audio or video of the event.

However, the three of us were constrained in several ways. Although we had no agreement that we would attend everything together, we all felt some pressure to do so, and because of transportation costs it was easier for all of us to travel together.

Additionally, because we were associated with each other, our behavior affected one another. For example, the second day he was in the village, Abram went to the *warung* to buy some water. He got lost, wandered around the streets for some time, and eventually, Kebik found him and walked him back home. After this incident, everyone was worried about us walking around by ourselves.

Although we were looked upon as a group, we unintentionally formed bonds with different groups and people. Bekah spent a great deal of time with the children,

specifically Suadin's niece and her friends. The younger ones had spent so much time with her, in fact, that they called all three of us by the name "Bekah." She also hung about the house and tried to observe Suadin's sister-in-law, Manilu, and her domestic responsibilities. She learned how to make offerings with the girls and attended temple on a holy day with the girls and Manilu. Bekah also socialized with Suadin and his friends and met people that way.

Xóchi had other interactions. One of her friends, Lisa, met us in Bali and stayed for a week, and the two of them often traveled together. Xóchi also interacted with the children, but spent more time with the young men ("The Lost Boys"). Xóchi also formed specific relationships with individuals, especially Leyon, the son of the owner of a *warung* we frequented, and Wayan, a member of The Lost Boys who was interested in becoming more fluent in English. She often socialized one-on-one with Mancok or Bandam. She also went on a motorcycle day trip with one of Suadin's friends, where she met many more people from a town over. Additionally, Xóchi was able to visit Pak Sarga's house when the rest of us could not.

I spent most of my free time across from the cassette store with The Lost Boys. We talked for hours in English, to the best of our ability, about music, Bali, and whatever struck our fancy. I tried to buy them beer and cigarettes once in a while, and was able to interview them about their musical tastes, their involvement with gamelan, their ideas about America, and the band Amnesty.

The parties or social occasions that we participated in that were not affiliated with village ceremonies were often with these young men: bar visits, parties, and informal sessions involving playing guitar and talking at Suadin's house in the evenings. Additionally, some of them took me to the local studio, which consisted of a drum set,

guitar, and bass with amplification equipment, and invited me to play songs I knew along with them.

The time I spent beyond socialization with The Lost Boys and sightseeing was a combination of playing gamelan, mingling and playing instruments in the house, and walking around the village with Xóchi, and/or Bandam and Mancok.

My introduction to Pak Sarga allowed me many interesting experiences with gamelan. The first occurred at the birth ceremony we attended, when I was invited to play the *tawa-tawa*.

This was a pivotal event in my fieldwork. I no longer felt that my research was an encroachment upon village life. I understood at this point that my research was welcome – Suadin’s position in the village, and the Americans that had visited in earlier years had established a sense of trust that I quickly benefited from. Because I did not speak Balinese, it was hard to understand the sentiment that villagers had toward me as a researcher, no matter how many times Suadin told me “You are an American, its ok if you do that,” referring to behavior and dress, or any other taboos I accidentally breached. This action communicated to me that my presence, research, and involvement was acceptable. And although I would remain very self-conscious of my existence as an American within a Balinese village, I was more comfortable with my presence. In fact, when I first returned to America, I was uncomfortable that no one stared at me when I passed on the street or in a store.

This initial performance with the gamelan opened doors for me, even if only psychologically. I asked permission from Pak Sarga to perform with the gamelan the first morning of the second toothfiling we attended. After obtaining permission from the women who were getting their teeth filed, I played with the *gamelan gong kebyar*

outside the house of the toothfiling the whole morning. I was offered a chance to play all the instruments, although I declined because I did not want to cause irreparable damage to any piece. Subsequently, most of the members of the gamelan were extremely cordial with me, and were disappointed when I had other things scheduled and was not able to perform with them the next day.

Another point of participation that changed my position in village life was the joged dance that occurred after the toothfiling ceremony for Pak Ngurah's daughters:

Fieldnotes 7/12/05

The last dancer approached me again, and Pak Ngurah pleaded with me to go, "just for a minute," so this time I went up and really strutted my stuff, and danced for as long as I could bear. I tried to imitate the square shoulders and arms of the dancer while rotating my hands with my fingers flexed. I moved my hips and one of the referees came out to help me with this move. This was a big hit, and Xóchi, Bekah, and the Lost Boys cheered, pleased with my attempt. They really liked to watch me make an ass of myself.

The following day, while walking home, I received much attention:

Fieldnotes 7/13/05

On the walk home I was stopped by a couple that remembered me from the night before and wanted me to come in for lunch. I was very flattered at the celebrity the joged had earned me, but politely declined in favor of a nap. I continued home, stopping to say hi to passers by and stopping at warungs to visit. When I finally got home, I realized I was truly getting used to the "Balinese way" that had earlier been described to me. I had stopped to visit so much on the way home that it took me 1/2 hour to make a 5-minute walk.

Up to this point I had become close with The Lost Boys and Suadin's family, but now rather than receiving the usual a-white-person-is-walking-by stares, people smiled and stopped to talk to me despite the fact that they knew I did not speak their language and could only respond to a few small questions.

Through connections with Suadin, I also took two trips with Pak Ngurah. Initially Pak Ngurah was aware that we would be doing research, and gave us permission to document his daughters' toothfiling ceremony (although we were by no means the only ones with video cameras or digital cameras). I had specifically asked Pak Ngurah for an interview, and if time permitted, a fishing trip, as I had never been fishing in the ocean. Although the fishing trip never worked out, I was able to accompany Pak Ngurah to his house in Denpasar on an outing to take his brother to the airport. On the last day I was in Bali, we finally managed to schedule an interview, and in lieu of the fishing trip, Pak Ngurah took me on a motorcycle trip to the mountains outside of Tabanan. Here I experienced another beautiful side of Bali, and was able to meet people in another village, as well as stopping for coffee, a snack, and the interview.

My interaction with the village of Karambitan was privileged. My short stay of three weeks would have been tremendously different had I not been associated with Suadin or the other Americans visiting. I am sure that because of Balinese hospitality, politeness, and pure good will, I would have been accepted into the community, but I simply would not have had the experiences I did without the Suadin family. These qualities of my fieldwork, the collaborative and the community settings, are what guided me to my research in *lelambatan*.

Chapter 3: *Ramé* and Community

One of the most important aesthetics for the efficacy of Balinese ritual is the idea of *ramé*. Lisa Gold defines *ramé* as an aesthetic of ritual energy achieved by crowdedness or fullness (Gold 2005, 7). Gold describes *ramé* in connection to the *odalan*, or temple festival: “The boisterous, full atmosphere, known as *ramé*, is essential to a successful ceremony and requires the active participation of the entire community” (Gold 2005, 7).

Ramé can be achieved by playing multiple gamelans, lots of simultaneous activity, and community participation. This atmosphere is desired because its opposite, *kosong*, or emptiness, can attract demons and witches (Gold 2005, 7). Other Balinese scholars mention *ramé* in similar contexts: Sumarsam describes it in regards to the seventeenth-century courts of Java and states that it was created when multiple gamelans were playing and other activities went on (Sumarsum 1995, 59), Tenzer describes it in relation to the *pura*, or temples (Tenzer 2000, 79), and Conner mentions it in the context of cremation ceremonies, characterizing it as busyness and excitement (Conner 1995, 539).

However, there is another side to *ramé*. Although Gold describes the safety of the atmosphere, others mention the dangers and risks associated with the chaos, mostly in the context of ancient practices. Vickers writes that *ramé* is energy associated with ritual, but it can be “given various associations, from positive tumultuous gaiety to dangerous chaotic or immoral behavior” (Vickers in Tenzer 2000, 79). In his article, *Risk, Ritual, and Performance*, Leo Howe (2000, 73) also writes of the risks of *ramé*, despite its place within ritual. This atmosphere, full of people, entertainment, and activity is important as a measure of status for those holding the ritual and also an indication of efficacy of the

occasion.⁴ However, the chaos invites dangerous and unruly behavior. Yet if this energy can be channeled, it “brings the ritual closer to a successful conclusion” (Howe 2000, 73). Howe adds that the level of *ramé* attributed to the rituals which took place hundreds of years ago is still recreated to some extent during the *odalans* and other large-scale events that are held in present day Bali.

To what extent does *ramé* exist in ritual activity in present day Bali? My fieldwork presented an opportunity to observe this in Bajar Wani, Karambitan, at the *kepus pungsed* for a newborn baby.

Fieldnotes 7/1/05

Everyone around was offered refreshments. There weren't really any women around, and most of the men were in the uniform of the gamelan. Not all of them played; they were mostly there to move the instruments, and some of them were apprentices to the group. Lots of children hung around the site playing, even during the performance, although many of them watched. Some women did come later to watch, all crowded at one end. The ceremony was for a baby who had been born three days earlier, and we were outside their family's house. The gamelan was set up on the street outside the house. The instruments were positioned up and down the street, only two instruments deep. There were two rows of cengceng players, then two jegogan with two gangsa in front of them. The drums sat in front of the gangsa, and next down the street was the trompong with the reyong in front of it. Farther down were the gongs and the rest of the members of the gamelan who weren't playing.

By breaking down this scene we may observe the way in which *ramé* factored into the ceremony. Although this is far removed from the spectacle of the ceremonies in

⁴ Although Howe mentions this within the framework of pre-colonial Bali, it explains the origins of this aesthetic.

the pre-colonial court system, a *ramé* atmosphere is still present. The fieldnote sketches a picture of only one part of the ceremony, that is, what was happening on the outside of the household compound. On the inside, a woman chanted, ringing a bell over the baby's crib. Family members gathered and mingled, sharing refreshments with visitors, and the parents of the baby were blessed by a priestess.

Although the main logistics of the ritual took place inside the family compound, another performance took place outside on the street. The gamelan played *lelambatan* ceremonial music, as members of the community passed through, looked on, and mingled, and children played. Those far removed had only to walk by in order to become part of the festivities, and the longer they stayed to observe, the better.

The value attributed to a *ramé* atmosphere allows for ceremony to be performed in a public and communal space — both a literal location and a figurative space — a forum for all to be involved. While some of the ceremony and its main actors were inside the family compound, the gamelan was literally in the street. When I asked why the gamelan was played outside of the compound, Suadin simply told me that there was no room within (personal communication). I received the same response from Pak Ngurah when I asked why the gamelan was outside of his home for his daughter's toothfiling ceremony (personal communication).

Other choices made during the performance reflect the interactive space constructed by the group. There was no formal stage. People were permitted to weave in and out of the instruments before the music began, and children were allowed to play on them while the members of the *sekha* enjoyed refreshments. There was no separation between the instrumentalists and the onlookers.

While this many not seem unusual, a few days later at a toothfiling ceremony, there *was* a stage for dancers. The presence of a stage created different interactions between musicians and observers. At the *kepus pungsed*, children ran by and played during the performance, people walked by with their scooters or carrying food, some stopped to listen, and some continued on their way. Instrumentalists often got up to switch instruments, get coffee, or leave, and someone else would take their place. There were long breaks in between pieces so that the performers could have a coffee or a cigarette, and there was no “beginning” or “end” to the performance. When people were ready to play, someone began practicing on an instrument, and others sat down to situate themselves. None of these activities affected the continuity of the performance. When the songs had been performed, the instruments were slowly packed up and transported back to the village *balé*.

The attainment of *ramé* happens through all of these events becoming part of the ceremony. Everyone is a performer in this context: the children playing and yelling, those handing out refreshments, the villager carrying water down the street, a baby crying, and even the researchers recording the event. Not only were we, the researchers, well-off Americans attending the ceremony, but we had expensive equipment recording the occasion. I was offered a unique opportunity at this first event I attended:

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...We arrived a little early and talked to people, took pictures of the kids, etc. I was worried about video taping the event. I didn't want to look too much like a ridiculous tourist. We all had felt awkward earlier when the little girls had called us tourists. I began videotaping, and right away, members of the gamelan handed us small cakes and coffee. Everyone around was offered refreshments....

A few minutes into my taping of the pre-performance, something remarkable happened. Pak Sarga called my name and asked me to play the ketuk part on the tawa-tawa. At first I refused, thinking that I needed to record. I quickly realized how stupid I would have been to pass up this offer, so I gave Xóchi the camera and sat down in between Sarga and the cengcengs. Smiles all around. Pak Sarga repositioned the instrument in my lap, and struck it so that I could hear the proper way it should be played. The whole group started up, and we were off. I began playing fine. Then the second song I lost my place and slowed down too much. Everyone started banging their hands on their legs to indicate my part until I got back on beat. I watched Suadin (who had joined the cengcengs section) very carefully. He told me when to slow down and when to stop by mouthing or yelling to me. During the whole performance, kids were running up and down the street, and towards the end, a group of women had gathered to watch the festivities.

At the moment I was asked to play with the group and handed the *tawa-tawa*, I became a different kind of actor in the event, no less important than other players or those looking on. Everyone's presence made them a performer in the event, and this state of simultaneous and intense presence is *ramé*.

This requirement of presence serves other purposes for the village and participants. Before the gamelan started playing at this particular ceremony, two boys, one a young teenager and one no more than two or three, sat in front of a *jegogan* next to an older player. The younger boy held a large mallet and hit the keys quickly, not playing anything in particular, but getting a feel for the instrument. At a cremation ceremony I attended, a group of young boys sat with the *gamelan anklung* after the formal members of the group had finished playing. Ed Herbst describes the value of this kind of activity:

“Another important ingredient of the aural learning process is the cumulative effect of casual listening, important in any culture, but of particular significance in the lives of young rural Balinese and Javanese” (Herbst 1977,155).

This kind of activity prepares aspiring musicians by giving them experience with the gamelan; there is no formal training in the village *sekha*. Once one has been exposed to the repertoire and is familiar with the instruments, he or she takes part in the rehearsals. Even the act of children observing gamelan rehearsals or performances gives children a “deep kinesthetic sense of the music” (Herbst 1977, 156).

This type of oral tradition relies on a communal learning experience – and the authority of what is learned comes not from a book, but from experience. The following fieldnote, describing the cremation ceremony illustrates this point well. My colleague and I had met an Australian man at the cremation who informed us that his fiancée’s grandmother and brother were being cremated. He explained to us what he understood about the happenings:

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Toward the end of this conversation we were joined by his fiancée, a short Balinese woman wearing a black lace shirt and sarong, and red lipstick... She explained to us what her fiancée had told us, and said that he had asked her earlier exactly what was going on. She didn’t really know, the elders were the ones who were familiar with these ceremonies, so she had gone to ask her relatives. They explained the significance of everything to her, she came back and reported to him, and he explained it to us. She said most young people didn’t really know or think to ask what was going on at the cremation, they just followed their elders, did what they were told, and learned through experience.

Here again presence is key to learning and enculturation.

The gamelan does more than contribute to the aural atmosphere of an event. The presence of as many onlookers as possible creates substance for the ceremony and contributes to its efficacy. The music and the sheer spectacle of the instruments provide attendants with a point of focus, a reason to be an actor in the ritual, whether or not they have ties to the family sponsoring the event. The music, played outdoors, rings through the open air inviting all to participate and become actors in the ceremony.

It is precisely this *ramé* quality of the gamelan that allowed me to learn about lelambetan, and its meaning to the community, as a participant:

This is good thing, about gamelan, anybody can join. But it's not American right? Its not American way... Yeah, because you can't go to the concert, and then just take the... the violin, and play it but ... This what's great about the Balinese, anybody can join, you know, it doesn't, they don't mind, you know. (Suadin personal communication 3/7/06).⁵

⁵ Suadin made this comment while viewing my footage of the ceremony, commenting on the fact that Rebekah Moore and I had been invited to play in the gamelan.

Chapter 4: *Lelambatan* in Context

Lelambatan is a genre of music in the center of Balinese gamelan repertoire. This genre originated in the court system on the huge *gamelan gong gede* orchestras. Although there are only two remaining *gong gede* orchestras on the island, the music of *lelambatan* is still played at the time of *odalan* as well as at a large portion of ceremonies that take place throughout the Balinese year.

The music is now played on a smaller version of *gong gede* called *gamelan gong*, or the much more prevalent *kebyar* instruments, a style of ensemble, music, and performance that took the island by storm in the 1920s and has become extremely popular. New pieces are composed with *lelambatan* structure for the *gamelan gong kebyar* instruments, enmeshing tradition with a new virtuosic popular style.

The question of how *lelambatan* has survived the restructuring of social and political systems that had such a dramatic effect on Balinese music in general is immense and fascinating. What has this music represented on a musical, social, and political level and how have these ascribed meanings changed over time?

The Context

Michael Tenzer's work describes the genre the most thoroughly. Tenzer defines *lelambatan* as follows: "(Lit., slow music.) Composition in *pegambuhan* or *pegongan* repertoire, using one of the longer *tabuh* meters for its *pengawak*; or a similarly constructed new composition (see *kreasi lelambatan*)" (Tenzer 2000, 452). He refers to *pegongan* as a repertoire related to *gamelan gong gede*, and *pegambuhan* as the repertoire of the *gamelan gambuh* ensemble (Tenzer 2000, 453). Tenzer describes the genre in more

detail in his book *Balinese Music*, a more comprehensive view of all genres of music that exist on the island:

At the other end of the spectrum are the majestic long forms that comprise the heart of the classical repertoire. In the temple at ceremony time, one gamelan usually holds forth with *lelambatan* (lit. slow music) for the pleasure of the visiting deities. Here Balinese music reaches its zenith of structural development with long and convoluted compositions that take up to 45 minutes to perform. Adapted from the repertoire of the gamelan gong gede of the courts, these pieces are distinguished by the presence of the trompong and the boom of kendang played with mallets; they are also accompanied by the constant clash of the giant cengceng kopyak. The sheer weightiness of the sound of *lelambatan* gives a good indication of its significance (Tenzer 1998, 52).

Lelambatan is introduced as ceremonial music, in contrast with *gamelan gong kebyar* and secular dances like *joged*. The music is played in the temple, at the time of the temple ceremony that takes place once every 210 days, or *odalan*. McPhee writes, “All ceremonies of magnitude, religious or otherwise, are opened with a traditional repertory of pieces known as the *gending gong*, compositions for the *gamelan gong* (McPhee 1966, 63).”

Tenzer also dates *lelambatan*'s pinnacle to the post-Majapahit era in the late fifteenth century. Some Balinese scholars refer to this time as the “middle” period in history, characterized by Hindu Javanese influences in Bali (Gold 2005, 17). Tenzer writes that *lelambatan* “in many ways can be thought of as the soul of Balinese orchestral music (Tenzer 1998, 23).” The style of music is much simpler than the flashy, virtuosic acrobatics of *gong kebyar*, yet the music holds tremendous importance:

These are the pieces closest to the hearts of most Balinese. They hear them regularly in the temple from childhood on, and associate their dignified demeanor with the rarefied spiritual world that they encounter there (Tenzer 1998, 54).

Lelambatan is significant on an aesthetic and emotional level, and perhaps this significance has helped sustain it through history.

Lisa Gold describes the genre as slow music played during the time of *odalan*, but discusses it in the context of the ensemble on which it is played, *gamelan gong gede*, the gamelan of the great gongs.

In playing this type of piece, the local *gamelan* was evoking a rare, ancient type of ensemble known as *gamelan gong gede*, formerly used for such pieces...It is easy to understand why older pieces are fitting for the more sacred contexts – they create a mood and a time out of time (Gold 2005, 22).

Gold notes a correspondence between spaces of the temple courtyard and the genres of music and type of ensemble played in each space. The three courtyards of the temple are representative of different eras of music. Although she writes that “in traditional Balinese thought there is no distinction between sacred and secular life,” (Gold 2005, 17), she goes on to add that the deeper into the temple and the more sacred the space, the older the music becomes. Additionally, the most inner courtyard therefore usually houses *lelambatan* music played on what she calls a *gamelan gong*. Also in this space are two types of sacred chanting in Kawi, ancient Javanese, and *gender wayang*. The middle courtyard houses *gamelan gambuh* accompanying the dance drama *gambuh*, as well as the processional *gamelan beleganjur*. The outer courtyard, which Gold classifies as a more secular space or *jaba*, is where the *gamelan gong kebyar* is staged (Gold 2005, 21-24).

It is interesting that Gold describes the *lelambatan* as played on the *gamelan gong*⁶ ensemble. This has been characterized as a short-lived gamelan that represents a transition between *gamelan gong gede* and *gamelan gong kebyar*. It was a smaller version of the *gamelan gong gede* used for ceremonial music.

⁶ Lisa Gold does not elaborate on the *gamelan gong* as a unique ensemble, which is confusing as most *gamelans* fit under this generic heading. Michael Bakan does mention the existence of the *gamelan gong* briefly in his work *Music of Death and New Creation: Experiences in the World of Balinese Gamelan Beleganjur*.

McPhee writes of the *gong gede* orchestra in *Music in Bali*:

Foremost of Balinese gamelans is the *gamelan gong*, whose stately ceremonial music may be heard at all formal and festive occasions. As formerly maintained in the larger Balinese courts, this orchestra included some forty musicians and was known as the *gamelan gong gedé*, the gamelan with great *gongs*. Such large ensembles are now rare. Reduced to some twenty-five instruments this orchestra, while still including the large *gongs*, is generally referred to simply as the *gamelan gong*, and in almost every village is maintained primarily for temple festivals... (McPhee 1966, 63)⁷

The terminology used by scholars to describe *lelambatan* is worth noting.

McPhee, Tenzer, and Gold refer to stately ceremonial music and sacred contexts, but only Gold alludes to the music as sacred. In an interview with Suadin I inquired as to why a court genre would be considered sacred. I quickly learned I had been operating under a false assumption. He stated that the music was used to “make noise,” and to signal to the gods that an event was underway. Why, then, not play another form of music, for example *kebyar*? To this question Suadin replied, “We have a saying in Bali, ‘*desa, kala, patra* (Suadin personal communication 3/7/06)’” — in other words, appropriate time, place, and circumstance. *Kebyar* is not appropriate for a ceremony during the day when people are bringing offerings to the temple. *Lelambatan* is played during ceremonies when people are presenting offerings, paying respect to ancestors, and worshiping, and the slow, grounding music is the most appropriate for the occasion.

According to Suadin, sacred music, in contrast, includes that played on *gamelan selonding* and *gamelan luang*, and in these cases it is the *gamelan* that makes the music sacred, rather than the other way around (Suadin interview). The music complements sacred offerings, but taken out of context does not necessarily have sacred significance.

⁷ Here McPhee is referring to the *gamelan gong gede* which is also commonly called *gamelan gong*.

Therefore rather than a sacred genre, *lelambatan* is a signifier of an important occasion and an accompaniment to sacred events.

Gamelan Gong Gede

In order to understand the repertoire of *lelambatan*, it is necessary to understand the history of the ensemble on which it originated. Many other authors mention *lelambatan* in the context of its original orchestra, *gamelan gong gede*. The genre originated with this large stately ensemble that was maintained by the courts. This gamelan could have up to fifty musicians, and was a marker of a court's magnificence. Tenzer mentions that "More is better in gong gede" (Tenzer 1998, 88). The more glorious the *gong gede*, the more glorious the court; but a large ensemble was also important to obtain the gods' attention during ritual.

The instruments also measured up to the larger-than-life character of the *gamelan gong gede*. The signature instruments of the ensemble were huge brass gongs, a *reyong* with only four pots, large drums played with a mallet, *cengceng kopyak* (large handheld cymbals), and the lead instrument, the *trompong*.

Colin McPhee's *Music in Bali* describes the instrumentation and music form of *gamelan gong gede*. The *trompong* plays the solo "extended melody," and larger ensembles have a smaller *trompong barangan* double the solo an octave higher (McPhee 1966, 64). The lead *trompong* player begins a composition and leads the rest of the group in by playing a solo that must "transform the *pokok* [core melody] tones into fluid melody ornamented with light embellishments" (McPhee 1966, 67). While the *trompong* player has the freedom to improvise rhythmically and melodically, the *pokok* must still be present and correspond with the rest of the ensemble.

Melody figuration is played by two musicians on the four-tone *reyong*, hardly audible because of the drums and cymbals, but nonetheless played in a continuous rhythm called *reyongan*: “Limited to a series of four tones, the *réongan* is the antithesis of the *trompong* solo in its confined range of movement” (McPhee 1966, 75). The rhythms of the individual *reyong* players are irregular, but interlock to form an interdependent, continuous melodic variation. The rhythmic speed is eight to one in relation to the *pokok* (McPhee 1966, 76).

Sarons or *gangsas* percussively play the main tones of the composition (McPhee 1966, 67). McPhee mentions two sizes of *gangsas* without naming them, there are also two sizes of *gangsas* in the *gamelan gong kebyar*, *pemedede* (larger) and *kantilan* (smaller). The larger metallophones, lower and more resonant, are the *jegogans* (the lowest in pitch) that play the *pokok*, or an inversion of the *pokok*, at rhythmic intervals. The *jublags*, and the *penyachahs* double *gangsas* parts. McPhee describes them as “adding sweetness and prolonging the nuclear tones with their vibrant resonance (McPhee 1966, 67).” The other rhythmic elements are the two large drums and the *ceng ceng kopyak*.

There are two drums: the *kendang wadon*, the lower-pitched female drum that leads the section and the ensemble, and the *kendang lanang*, the higher-pitched male drum which echos and interlocks with the *wadon*. The style of playing that utilizes the drumstick is called *chedugan* which is “based primarily on the interplay of stick accents between the two drums” (McPhee 1966, 100). The drums’ rhythm in *lelambatan* music is usually played at the rhythmic rate of four strokes to one *pokok* tone. The drums often anticipate the *pokok*’s double in speed by doubling the rate of strokes played (McPhee 1966, 99). In the *pengawak* section the drum’s role is to reinforce the colotomic cycle.

The *cengceng kopyak* section is comprised of four or more men playing tightly interlocking rhythms. The largest gamelans have eight pair (*chakap*) of *cengceng*. The rhythmic speed in relation to the *pokok* is the same as the *reyongan*. McPhee's extended explanation of the *cengcengs* illustrates the importance of this element in the music:

...all groups include a pair of musicians to stress in turn the beats and offbeats, and an interdependent pair to perform the syncopated *chandetan*. Unlike the *réongan* however, cymbal rhythms, simple or complex, do not unfold. Base on a unit of four, eight, or sixteen fractional beats, patterns are mere rhythmic clichés which are given an almost mechanical repetition. Because of the individual timbres of the different sized cymbals, each separate rhythmic current can be clearly distinguished. At the same time, all parts merge to create a homogeneous whole, a composite repeat-pattern in which each fractional beat is heard in one part or another (McPhee 1966, 81).

These instruments have the most power to create dynamic changes in a composition. The most dramatic changes occur between a fortissimo and the moment when the *cengcengs* drop out of the piece. These instruments thus contribute to the pomp of the *gong gede* orchestra.

The Politics of Gamelan

McPhee notes that:

The greater courts of Bali once boasted of at least five different orchestras to supply ceremonial and recreational music. In the outer courtyard stood the great *gamelan gong gedé*, whose forty-odd musicians played each morning for an hour or so. Handsomely carved with dragons or baroque foliage, the instruments gleamed with lacquer and goldleaf; the resonant orchestra rang out majestically, filling the air with vibrant sound. (McPhee 1966, 13)

The *gamelan gong gede* was a signifier of court affluence in the early Hindu era of Bali, around the first century A.D.(McPhee 1966, 3-4).⁸ The *rajas*, or kings, divided their courts into areas of rule, or *nagara*. Only the best performers and musicians were allowed to participate in art in the courts, and the support of the arts by aristocrats led to refined art forms, such as *lelambetan*, that are now known as “classical” (Ramstedt 1992, 60).

In the mid-nineteenth century the Dutch had gained power over Northern Bali, and by 1908 the entire island was under Dutch rule. The Dutch redirected the power of the aristocracy by either placing members in officiating positions, or simply relieving them of their power. The *rajas* no longer gained money directly from taxation and therefore were unable to support the lavish arts they had cultivated. At this point many of the gamelans were handed down to village music and dance groups.

At first the Dutch promoted education to lower caste members (*jaba*) by sending them to Westernized schools in Java, but soon realized that the maintenance of the caste stratification was to their benefit. With the conservative aristocracy on their side,⁹ they could thwart the growing Indonesian independence movement that was gaining momentum in the 1920s (Ramstedt 1992, 61).

As democratization spread through Bali, the form of *kebyar* emerged. Ramstedt suggests that *kebyar* “can be understood as a distinctly *jaba* response to the socio-cultural change induced by the Dutch” (Ramstedt 1992, 62). *Semar pagulingan*, *pelegongan*, and

⁸ Lisa Gold (2005, 17) describes three periods of history which music can be traced. These are: “Old,” pre-Hindu Bali or *Bali Aga*, “Middle,” a time period when Bali was influenced by Hindu-Javanese, and “New,” twentieth-century styles that emerged from the “Middle.” This would put the *gong gede* in the beginning of the “Middle” category.

⁹ Many of these aristocrats feared that Independence meant colonization by the Javanese and a conversion to Islam (Ramstedt 1992, 62).

gamelan gong gede ensembles were melted down and recast into these ensembles, which were styled after *gamelan gong gede* orchestration.

Kebyar spread quickly not only because it was a symbol of democratization and social and cultural change, but because its size made maintenance easier and it could play its own repertoire as well as traditional repertoires:

This was a sign that the traditional micro- and macrocosmic order, to which all the older genres referred, had already ceased to enjoy common consent. This is shown by the fact that the *kebyar* first appeared in North Bali, where the first “inlandsche schoolen”¹⁰ had been founded. As the villagers had been provided with the artistic means by the royal courts, they could no longer afford to keep up their former standard in regard to the arts, and chose topics from their daily life rather than that of the courts, which no longer enjoyed the prestige of serving as a model in every aspect of life for the entire population (Ramstedt 1992, 63).

The invasion by Japan during World War II wreaked havoc on Bali’s resources, and left the island in poverty. However, the Japanese improved the school system, made education more available, and instituted *Bahasa Indonesia* (Malay) as the official language. These factors accelerated the spread of the independence movement. The Dutch returned to the island after the war to find that Indonesia had proclaimed the unification of the islands as a republic (Ramstedt 1992, 64). In 1949 Bali joined the Indonesian state.

The new government worked to distance itself from feudalism; the court system and *rajas* were considered the most “anti-Indonesian” (Ramstedt 1992, 66). This meant that the court genres of music were discouraged and while *gamelan kebyar* styles encouraged, because of their origins with the people. The government created programs that oversaw and funded the arts and opened the Conservatory for Traditional Balinese

¹⁰ “Inlandsche schoolen” were “Western” schools set up by the Dutch colonial powers which affected the caste system, because before Dutch invasion only high caste members were privileged with education.

Music (KOKAR) which hired prominent artists to train youth who would return to their villages to teach what they had learned. *Kebyar* works were composed to celebrate the common people, and nationalistic songs were written. Music was becoming more political, secular, and professional, and classical forms were fading (Ramstedt 1992, 71).

In October of 1965, a political coup took place, and a new order (*Orde Baru*) was proclaimed. The new political climate was anti-communist, and the government worked to revive local cultures and created a policy of cultural tourism as one of the steps to improve the economy. Bali became one of the tourist centers, and the new government worked to restore the court genres (Ramstedt 1992, 73). Other programs to promote Balinese identity and cultural tourism have included the creation of the *Akademi Seni Tari Indonesia*, ASTI, as well as the Art Centre in Denpasar. Both of these institutions have worked to preserve traditional musics and encourage new and innovative compositional styles, including *kreasi lelabatan*, a style that combines the aesthetics of *kebyar* music with the structure of *lelabatan* in order to invoke tradition in a more modern context.

The court genre *lelabatan* is still played today, and held in high esteem for its slow stately sound. There is no way to determine precisely whether the repertoire has changed, but it certainly has not been consciously reconstructed.

Although the music may well have remained the same, the gamelan it is played on is different. When the *gong gede gamelans* were melted down to make smaller, more versatile *gamelan kebyar* orchestras that accommodated the lives of the common people, the *lelabatan* material was adapted to the *kebyar* orchestra.

And thus the paradox created by colonial policies and modernization: a music that represents the lavishness of the *rajas* is now played with reverence by the common class, on gamelans literally recast to accommodate an egalitarian environment.

Chapter 5: *Lelambatan* in Banjar Wani

“I called my father... 2 weeks ago...[to] find out, when did you have the gamelan? He doesn’t tell me the specific date... like 1920 or something.... They just...[wanted] what do you call this, this fun... group... they doesn’t want to have like a big group...[they] buy gamelan two, and another one, and another one... [until they had] the group... [of them]. So this’s what my father’s told me, about - about the gamelan... it’s [a] complete gamelan already right now. You know... they work very hard to find the gamelan. They bought the gamelan in West Bali,[a city] called Jembrana... so they, they don’t have any transportation all the time, they walk there, like 100 kilometers. So they bring the gamelan from there.” (Suadin personal communication 3/7/05)

The Banjar Wani *gamelan sekha* (gamelan club) raised money from the village and set out to slowly acquire a gamelan. Once they had the instruments, they hired gamelan teachers from all over Bali to come to the banjar and teach. One of those teachers was Pak Beratha, a famous composer of *kreasi lelambatan* mentioned frequently in Michael Tenzer’s works. Some of the music Beratha taught them, and the subject of this inquiry, was *lelambatan*, the genre outlined in the previous chapter.

When the Banjar Wani Gamelan was first learning the music, they practiced in individual houses rather than the *balé banjar* and padded the rehearsal spaces with mattresses, learning the music bit by bit. The goal was to keep the music secret and to keep the first performance a surprise for the rest of the banjar. When I Nyoman Suadin was studying in KOKAR, the arts high school where he learned to play and dance, he returned every three months to teach the village *kebyar* style pieces including some *kreasi lelambatan* (Suadin personal communication).

Membership to the Banjar Wani Gamelan is required for any married man. It is not required that everyone knows how to play the instruments; anyone can carry them or do organizational work. There are separate *sekhas* for each gamelan: the main group is for the *kebyar* ensemble, and the other gamelans include a *gender wayang*, and the rare ensemble, *gamelan luang*. If one of the smaller groups needs help someone is pulled from the *kebyar* to help. If the group plays for a ceremony held by one of its members, they pay only half price. Anyone else pays more to have the group play for them, and even at “free” performances the sponsor provides coffee, cigarettes and tea. The money the group earns goes in a pool, and every so often the group slaughters a pig and splits it among the members.

The rehearsal schedule is on-again-off-again. Every six months there is a temple ceremony, and about three months before they begin to rehearse vigorously for the event. The repertoire they play at the temple ceremonies, youth organizations, and toothfiling ceremonies includes this *lelambatan* music as well as *kebyar* styles. *Lelambatan* is used to accompany ceremonies during the day, while *kebyar*, *baris*, and dances are performed after dark. The repertoire played at the *kepus pungsed*, which I describe here, is standard in the banjar for ceremonies of this kind. In fact, they play the same songs each time.

The Instruments

The Banjar Wani Gamelan is a full *gamelan kebyar*, as noted earlier. However, at the time of the *kepus pungsed*, the *sekha* did not bring all the instruments. Those that were present for this occasion played eight *cengceng kopyak*, two *calungs*, two *gangsas*, one four person *reyong* (with twelve pot gongs), one *trompong*, the *tawa-tawa*, a female and male drum, *kendang wadon* and *kendang lanang* respectively, and three gongs: the

gong ageng, the male and female pair (*gong lanang*, male and slightly smaller and higher in pitch, and the *gong wadon*, the female, slightly bigger and lower in pitch), and the *kempur*, about one third the size of the *gong wadon*. There were twenty-two instrumentalists, half that of the smallest reports of the *gamelan gong gede*.

Galang Kangin

One of the pieces played at the *kepus pungsed* is called “Galang Kangin.” A *gong gede* CD recorded in 1990, *Gamelan Gong Gede of the Batur Temple*, includes a piece with the same title. This *gong gede* ensemble is one of the few remaining on the island of Bali. I consulted this recording for two reasons: to compare the sound and aesthetic of the two groups, and to determine if there were any similarities in the two performances of the piece. Little information is available about the *gong gede* in the recording. However, it provides a valuable opportunity to compare the sound of the two orchestras and may shed light on factors surrounding the movement from *gamelan gong gede* to *gamelan gong kebyar*.

This piece “Galang Kangin,” which translates to “the light from the east” (Koichi 1992, 10) is in the metric form of the *tabuh nem*. In *lelambatan* music, there are six different metric schemes, or *tabuhs*. These are characterized by the unit called a *palet* in the middle section of the piece, or *pengawak*. Each *palet* is made up of sixteen beats, with the *kempur* struck in the middle of each *palet*. The *tabuh* is named for the number of times the *kempur* is struck in the *pengawak* (McPhee 1966, 87-88) in this instance 6 (*nem*) times, which means the movement is 96 beats (6 *palets* x 16 beats). *Figure 1* is an illustration of the the gong cycle in the *pengawak*:

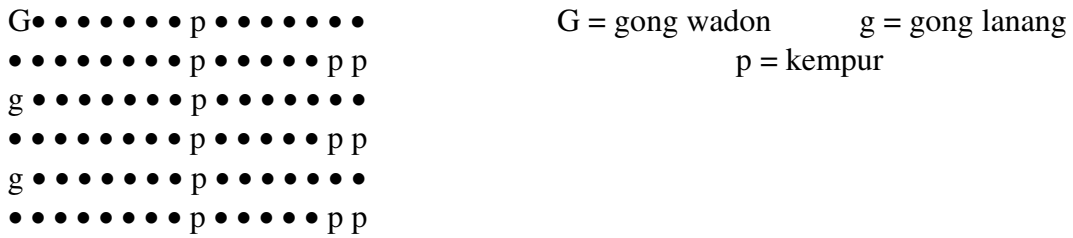


Figure 1: Pengachetgong cycle, Br. Wani.

In this gong cycle the *kempur* is actually played twelve times because of the extra punctuation at the end of every other *palet*, but the *tabuh* is named for the number of punctuations in the middle of each *palet*. McPhee documented two versions of the piece (Figure 1 & Figure 2) with the following gong cycles in the *pengawak*:

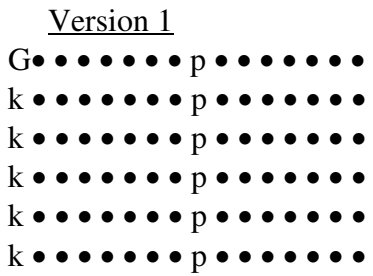


Figure 2. Galang Kangin gong cycle, McPhee

(McPhee 1966, App. 4: 402-403)

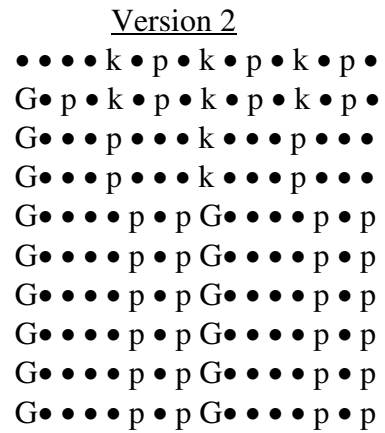


Figure 3. Galang Kangin gong cycle alternate version, McPhee

The k in this figure represents the *kempli*, not present in the Banjar Wani Gamelan, although there was a female and male *gong ageng*. The gong cycle played in Banjar Wani is most similar to that of Version 1 with two *kempur* punctuations before the *gong ageng*.

“Galang Kangin,” as played by the Banjar Wani Gamelan, lasted around ten minutes and twenty seconds, and was the longest piece played that afternoon, half as long as the version recorded in Batur, which lasted 20 minutes and 40 seconds.

The form of the piece played in Banjar Wani differed both from the form of the Batur *gong gede* performance and accounts of *gong gede* performances by McPhee.

The recording of the Batur ensemble begins with the *kawitan* (first movement) played on the *trompong*, the drums enter and speed up the tempo, and the rest of the ensemble joins, starting the *pengawak* (second movement). The *pengawak* is repeated twice, the *pengisep* (an optional movement) follows, the *trompong* plays another solo, and the orchestra moves into the final movement, or *pengechet*¹¹ (Koichi 1992, 10-11).

McPhee’s first chart of the piece includes a *pengawak*, *pengaras* (introduction to *pengechet*), and *pengechet* (McPhee 1966, 402-403). The *pengaras* can be compared to the *trompong* solo in the Batur performance that prefaces the *pengechet*. The second version that he documented includes only two movements, the *pengawak*, shown in the gong cycle above, and a *pengachet*.

However, when “Galang Kangin” was played in Banjar Wani in 2005, there was no *trompong* solo at the beginning. The *reyong* and *gangsas* played a melody together, the *trompong* added ornaments, the *calungs* punctuated the important notes, and the *cenceng kopyak* punctuated the beats. The main theme was as follows:



Figure 4. *Kawitan* theme played by Br. Wani Gamelan

Figure 5 is the representation of slendro scale tuning of the Banjar Wani Gamelan:



Figure 5. *Slendro*

The *kawitan* begins slowly, and speeds up to a climax when the drum plays slow strokes with the mallet to signal a ritard to end the movement and begin the *pengawak*.

¹¹ Koichi mentions in his notes that the piece ends with a *tabuh telu*, which is generally thought of as the melody associated with the *pengawak* (Tenzer 156) .

With the *pengawak* comes the colotomic gong structure illustrated above, and the drum moves into a slower and more consistent rhythm. At this point the *gangsa* and *reyong* play a *kotekan* (interlocking pattern) that supports the *trompong* solo. The theme of the *trompong* (*Figure 6*) is similar to that played in the *tabuh telu* at the end of the version played by the Batur group:



The simple melody, shown in *Figure 7*, played by the *trompong* in the *pengawak* of Banjar Wani's performance is:



The *trompong* melody played in Banjar Wani begins with a skeletal version of the theme from the *kawitan*, and then plays something similar to the *tabuh telu* from the Batur *gong gede*, shown in *Figure 7*. The tonal center is the same, with the soloist resting on the low C# and the higher G#, using the G as a passing tone. The rhythmic values are almost doubled, an interesting fact to note considering the Banjar Wani version is played at twice the speed.¹²

¹² The melodies of the two gamelans have not been transposed; the five notes to which they most closely relate on a Western scale are the same.

The *cengceng kopyak* repeat an interlocking pattern seven times during the Banjar Wani *pengawak*. Although not all the rhythms are distinguishable, four of the patterns are demonstrate in *Figures 8-11* :

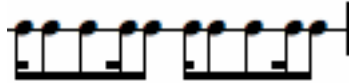


Figure 8. Cengceng kopyak, Br. Wani Gamelan



Figure 9. Cengceng kopyak, Br. Wani Gamelan



Figure 10. Cengceng kopyak, Br. Wani Gamelan

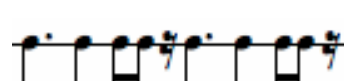


Figure 11. Cengceng kopyak, Br. Wani Gamelan

Notice that the rhythm in *Figure 8* and *9* are the same, but they begin on different beats of the cycle.

McPhee describes the smaller *cengceng kopyak* section in the *gamelan gong gede* as four players divided into groups of two interdependent parts. One player plays the *chandetan* on small cymbals while the other player plays the *nyachah* on the beat and the *nyangsih* on offbeats. The first half of the *chandetan* part is the same rhythm as those in *Figures 8* and *9* above.

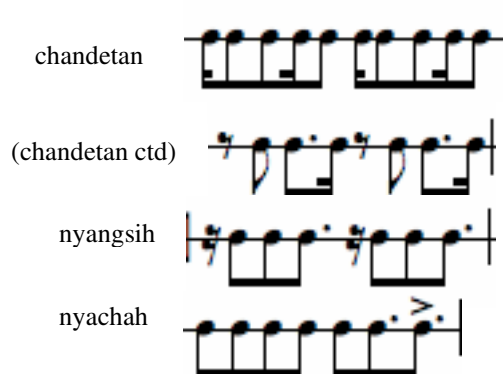


Figure 12. Cengceng Ex. 40, McPhee
(McPhee 1966, 81)

In contrast, the Banjar Wani Gamelan had eight *cengceng* players split into at least four parts and all of the cymbals were the same size. Another rhythm played in Banjar Wani, as shown in *Figure 11*, correspond the following rhythm given by McPhee in Ex. 40 (McPhee 1966, 81).

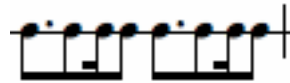


Figure 13. Alternate chandetan section, McPhee

The final section, the *pengachet* of “Galang Kangin” played by the Banjar Wani Gamelan is arranged similarly to the *kawitan*. The *gangsas* and *reyong* play a melody, the *trompong* add ornamentation, the *calungs* punctuate the *pokok*, the *cengcengs* accent the beat, and the drum part becomes more dynamic. The following melody (*Figure 16*) was played in the *pengachet*:



Figure 16. Melody played in pengachet, Br. Wani Gamelan

Although the two versions of “Galang Kangin,” that of the Banjar Wani Gamelan and the Batur Temple Gamelan *gong gede* are very different, several threads unite them. The instruments are dramatically different, yet the structure of the music is held in common. In addition, the same *tabuh* or melody is recognizable (as shown in *Figures 6* and *7* above) in recordings sixteen years apart in different areas of Bali, on dramatically different ensembles. The documentation by McPhee, over forty years old, is remarkably similar to present-day performances of a genre that many thought was in danger of

extinction. The survival of the form and aesthetic of this music is a testimony to its place in Balinese life.

Lelambatan is indeed the most “appropriate” style for the time, place, and situation of many village ceremonies. Yet the music is not static despite efforts to preserve the style. Individual communities tailor the music and instruments according to their social, economic, and aesthetic needs. Teachers travel Bali disseminating their version of a piece, and memory and personal style lend a hand in keeping the music dynamic. *Lelambatan* is both a valuable traditional music, and a music which has changed to accommodate its local performance contexts.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

The rich history of *lelambatan* contributes to its many layers of meaning.

Lelambatan has traveled through five periods of history: pre-colonial Bali, in which the music flourished on the *gamelan gong gede*, Dutch colonialism, when the courts could no longer support the large orchestra, the move to independence which prompted the spread of *gamelan gong kebyar* (both the style and the orchestra), the re-appropriation of *lelambatan* with *kebyar* instruments, and the newest movement, *kreasi lelambatan* (which I do not discuss at length in this thesis, due to lack of space).

The onset of colonialism prompted a move away from the feudal system both as a political system and as a philosophy. Colonial Indonesia began a movement toward modernization that stressed ideas of the Enlightenment (Vickers 1966, 15), prompted and sustained by education systems started by the Dutch and the Japanese.

Kebyar, as exemplified by its emergence in the area of North Bali where the first Dutch school was founded, was a manifestation of these new ideas. With independence came new struggles of modernization and new political philosophies that affected Bali on the local level, especially the endeavor to unify Indonesia. While the state struggled with modernization and independence, the people created their own art that reflected their sentiments and the struggles of modernity, creating the most Western music the archipelago had seen. The new ensembles that were created from older instruments shed the lavishness of the *gong gede* and with it the feudalism of the courts.

The *rajas* of the past had allowed only the most talented musicians to represent their courts and take part in music making. With the feudal system stripped of its power, the common people were invited to inherit the power over musical traditions and to

ascribe new meaning to the music. Thus *kebyar* was born, and with it an emphasis on things novel and creative.

Yet with modernization comes much struggle and contradiction. The desire for change and rejection of predecessors prompted a longing for an essentialized past (Vickers 1996, 3). Musics considered “classical” acquired importance and authority, and further defined communities and created authority.

The Indonesian state established its own way to face modernity by embracing the diverse cultures of its nation in the face of global homogenization. In order to protect the sanctity of Indonesian spiritualities, categories of music were created based on differing degrees of “sacredness.” The people faced modernity by embracing tourism and through performing their culture, defined what it is to be Balinese (Seebass 1996, 27).

Another move to protect the valuable artifacts of Balinese culture was STSI’s program to preserve dying musics, one of them *lelambatan*. The effort of the school to recover these styles and distribute them among the people set the stage for the reappropriation of *lelambatan*. This was a strategy of modernization that embodies the contradictions of what Vickers describes as the modern condition in Bali. Embracing *kebyar* and rejecting *gong gede* was a move towards modernity, yet the “rebirth” of *lelambatan* allowed tradition to continue to exist in a society where ritual is extremely valuable. *Lelambatan* remains a classical rather than a religious symbol, while creating a necessary aesthetic for the ritual occasion.

Lelambatan has been reframed within the structure of the village. The aesthetic of a virtuosic musician sustained by patronage has been discarded for the idea of music created as a collective unit. The genre is now performed within the structure of the *sekha*, community organizations that exist for business and pleasure and emphasize the

importance of relationships. The acquisition of the *gamelan* for the Banjar Wani *sekha* exemplifies the community effort that initiates and nourishes these groups. The *gamelan* is placed on the street, not only within reach of the common man, but present for anyone to interact with. Indeed it is a duty to help sustain the group. The music, musicians, and community live in a symbiotic relationship.

In this way the music of *lelambatan* acquires a new significance, “of the people, for the people.” The history of the music has not lost value; it is still evoked in performance. Indeed this is the quality that sustains the music. But the history helps to create a shared sense of time in the ritual space it is performed, a public and communal aesthetic of *ramé*. The music finds its appropriate place in the communal sphere of ritual in Banjar Wani: “*Desa, kala, patra.*”

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