

# SACRILEGIOUS ASPECT OF JAVANESE GAMELAN: PAST AND FUTURE

**Henry Susanto Pranoto**  
Satya Wacana Christian University,  
Jl. Diponegoro 52-60, Salatiga, Indonesia  
E-mail: grace\_jhsp@yahoo.com

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## Abstract

This article aims to discuss sacrilegious aspect of Javanese *Gamelan* in the past and what will happen in the future if it is mistreated. The most important, this article will observe the religious aspect that *Gamelan* has as its main function. It also explores a background history of Indonesia as a religious nation, an explanation on *Gamelan* music structures, and its influence toward the Western composers such as Claude Debussy and Lou Harrison in composing their musical works that are emphasizing the sacrilegious aspect of *Gamelan*. It gives some detail studies on their musical works that are influenced by *Gamelan* music in which those composers still gave a highly and rightful respect in their approach toward *Gamelan* music. Lastly, this article also explores the electronic *Gamelan* Music and its effects toward tradition. Meanwhile, it is necessary to preserve the religious aspect of *Gamelan* because it will define Indonesian as religious culture.

## Aspek Kesakralan Gamelan Jawa: Dahulu dan Sekarang

### Abstrak

*Tujuan penulisan artikel ini adalah untuk melihat kesakralan aspek dari Gamelan Jawa di masa lampau dan melihat kepada masa yang akan datang sehingga bisa dilihat apakah ada unsur kesakralan yang telah diselewengkan ataupun pudar. Hal yang terpenting di dalam ulasan artikel ini adalah pengamatan tentang unsur religi yang Gamelan miliki sebagai fungsi yang terutama. Artikel ini juga akan menjelaskan tentang sejarah Indonesia sebagai negara yang berbasis agama sejak awal mula berdirinya sampai saat ini, menjelaskan tentang struktur musik dari Gamelan, dan pengaruh Gamelan bagi komposer musik barat seperti Claude Debussy dan Lou Harrison dalam mengkomposisi musik mereka di mana mereka masih memperhatikan unsur dan fungsi kesakralan dari Gamelan. Analisa tentang komposisi musik mereka juga akan diulas di sini sehingga kita bisa melihat bagaimana komposer-komposer ini masih memberikan apresiasi dan respek yang benar dalam penyajian musik mereka yang terinspirasi oleh Gamelan musik. Pada akhirnya, artikel ini juga akan menjelaskan mengenai Gamelan elektronik yang sedang berkembang saat ini dan efeknya terhadap tradisi budaya Indonesia. Selanjutnya, sangatlah perlu bagi masyarakat Indonesia untuk mempertahankan unsur kesakralan dari Gamelan karena akan dapat mengidentifikasi Indonesia sebagai suatu budaya yang beragama.*

**Keywords:** sacrilegious aspect, Javanese Gamelan, Lou Harrison, Claude Debussy, Gamelan Sekati, Gamelan Kiai Gora, Electronic Gamelan.

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## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as a very religious country in which the people have believed in God, has well known throughout centuries, especially throughout the journey of its development as a country and as a nation. Indonesia as a country was not well known and recognized by the international world until the end of World War II when the country was established as an independent nation. Also, the current Indonesian language was not being used nationally and it did not exist until well after the country was formed. Nevertheless, the importance of Indonesia in the history of the international world began far before Indonesia was established as an independent nation.

The first religious kingdom was called *Dvipantara* or *Jawa Dwipa* is known through the reports of Indian scholars in 100 AD that mentioned the kingdom was located on the islands of Java and Sumatra. The Javanese writing system was also developed during this period by the influence of Indian script, Sanskrit. As a result of the Indian influences, Hinduism also became a part of the early civilizations of the kingdom in Java and Sumatra. The influence of Hinduism in the Javanese Kingdom reached its climax during the *Taruma* Kingdom in West Java around 400 AD. On top of Hinduism, the influence of Buddhism was also introduced around 425 AD. During this period, the Arabs, Persians, Greeks, Romans, and Chinese knew the kingdoms in Indonesia, again, especially in Java and Sumatra. The first strong and widespread kingdom established was the *Sriwijaya* Kingdom, which was established on Sumatra around 500 AD. This kingdom later invaded the kingdoms surrounding it, including the *Malayu* kingdom, and many kingdoms in Java around 686 AD.

Because of the strong religious influence, many kingdoms in Java were converted to Buddhism around 770 AD. The building process of the great Borobudur Temple that is located in Yogyakarta, Central Java, evidences of this religious'

influences. The temple was started under King *Vishnu Dharmatunga* (*Sailendra* dynasty/kingdom) and it was finished by his successor King *Samaratunga* in 825 AD. In addition, Mantle Hood mentioned that "Bas-reliefs of the 8<sup>th</sup>-century Borobudur and early East Javanese temples document the existence of prototypes of all instruments of *Gamelan Sekati* long before the arrival of Islam in the waning years of the Majapahit Empire" (Hood 37). The name, *Gamelan Sekati*, was not known at the time because the religious change and political application directly influenced the name given for the gamelan instrument. At this point, Buddhism influenced Indonesian empire and we do not know what they called it. The important thing is that gamelan instrument was being used and was introduced already at this point. Furthermore, the strength of this kingdom was shown by the defeat of the *Chenla* kingdom (today Cambodia) under king Indra in 790 AD. By the time of King *Samaratunga* passed away, his throne was taken from his son *Balaputra* by his daughter's father in law named *Patapan* from the *Sanjaya* Dynasty. And *Patapan* turned the kingdom to Buddhism in 835 AD. After being succeeded by his son *Pikatan*, *Balaputra* tried to take the kingdom back but he failed. As a result, he escaped to Sumatra and was enthroned in *Sriwijaya* kingdom in about 850 AD. Later on, King *Balitung* of the *Sanjaya* Dynasty was well established in central Java around 898 AD in Mataram. After King *Daksa* succeeded him, Hinduism became dominant again in 910 AD. The *Prambanan* temple was built during this period. The evident of the use of *Gamelan* instruments is also shown at the temple's relief such as cylindrical *kendang*, cymbals, other shapes of *kendangs*, and wooden flute. *Kendang* is the main double sided percussion instrument that is functioned to give rhythmic guidance for *Gamelan* ensembles. After several other successors, *Mpu Sendok* of *Sanjaya* was enthroned in 929 AD. During this time, the empire was moved to East Java. This was probably due to the eruption of the Mount Merapi in about 929 AD.

The next important successor was *Dharmawangsa*. He became the king of *Mataram* in 985 AD. In the same year, he conquered the Balinese kingdom and moved his kingdom to Kalimantan. Beside his ambitions as an invader, he was also known as an important person who commanded the translation of *Mahabarata* works into Javanese. This is a collection of Hindu stories that make up part of the literature of Indonesia. Later on, it was also used for developing the stories used in gamelan music. The most important king of *Sanjaya* Dynasty was King *Airlangga*. He was the founder of a new kingdom called *Kahuripan* in 1019 AD. He is also known, today, as the basic model of Indonesian tolerance concerning religion. In his time he protected both Hinduism and Buddhism while he also made a peace agreement with the *Sriwijaya* kingdom, which was the other major kingdom at that time. Then, he also united the two kingdoms through marriage in 1030 AD.

In 1222 AD, *Ken Arok* founded the new kingdom of *Singosari* because of the separation from the main kingdom. His next important successor was *Kertanegara* who ruled in 1268 AD. He promoted the mixture between Hinduism and Buddhism. Marco Polo was visited Sumatra and Java during his rule. The strength of his empire was proven by the failure of the Mongol invasion under *Kublai Khan* who sent 1000 ships to Java in about 1292 AD. Unfortunately, the allied forces of Mongol and *Wijaya*, who was the founder of *Majapahit* dynasty under the name of King *Kertarajasa Jayawardhana*, in 1293 AD, overthrew this dynasty. During the period around 1330 AD of the *Majapahit* dynasty, *Patih Gajah Mada* had a very significant position. Almost all of Indonesia today was united during his lifetime. In 1350 AD, during the rule of *Rajasanegara*, the Islamic kingdoms that started developing in 1297 in Sumatra under *Sultan Malek Saleh*, who was the first Muslim ruler in Indonesia. He overthrew the *Majapahit* kingdom. Under the ruler *Hayam Wuruk*, the *Majapahit* kingdom was broken down totally as was the remnant of the *Sriwijaya* dynasty in 1377 AD.

The Islamic influence became greater and greater around 1400 AD. This influence caused the shifting of the major religion to Islam in places such as Aceh (located on Sumatra). The decline of the *Majapahit* kingdom also contributed to the switch. The main denomination of the Islamic religion that was widely believed was the school of *Shafi'i* also called *Madhhab*. Its influence can still be seen in today Indonesia. Unfortunately, the Islamic influences in the established kingdoms never brought any peace with any other religions. In fact, many Hindu people had to move from Java to Bali in 1468 AD to escape from *Majapahit* during the rule of *Suraprabhawa*. Because of this, Bali is the central Hindu territory in Indonesia, even today. After the establishment of *Demak* as the main court of *Majapahit* kingdom under *Raden Patah*, the Islamic kingdom was well established by 1478 AD. Therefore, the in first direct contact with European countries, beginning with Portuguese conquest in 1511 AD, Indonesia was known as being engaged in the Islamic religion. Even the use of Islamic terms, such as the titles sultan, wali, and so forth, was enforced.

The influence of Islamic leaders was very important in the cultural, social, and political arenas of Indonesia as a whole. The most important was the influences of *Wali Songo* (Nine Islamic religious leaders entitled as wali). The most influential wali was *Wali Kalijogo*. Besides being a religious leader, "he was also known as an artist at the time, to compose a number of Javanese songs/tunes to interest the people in speeches on Islamic teachings made by various Islamic leaders coming to *Demak* Kingdom for that purpose" (Hood 36). As an adaptation of the gamelan instruments into Islamic activity, they might have given the name *Gamelan Sekati* as it was functioned to accompany the *Sekaten* Festival during *Sekaten* week. In fact, *Gamelan Sekati* will only be played for the ritual of this religious purpose. Therefore, it is very sacrilegious instruments. Through this sample of musical activity, we know that in any elements of Indonesian people's life

*Gamelan* music is often used as the main musical instruments especially in Java. Even though we admit that Javanese *Gamelan* is the traditional instrument of Java, we know that the music of *Gamelan* has its influence from India as the source of Hinduism and Buddhism for many Indonesian kingdoms as mentioned in many temples of religious heritages such as *Borobudur*, *Prambanan*, *Jago*, *Ngrimbi*, *Kedaton*, *Sukuh*, *Tegawanggi*, and so forth in which all of them contains relief of *Gamelan* instruments mainly *kendang*.

The *Majapahit* Empire became the main ancestor from which came the Yogyakarta sultanate and Surakarta Susuhunan. *Sutawijaya* or *Senopati* developed them in 1588. As a result, the main command was in Central Java, specifically in Mataram. These two empires became the important places where the gamelan musical tradition is still well kept. Later on, they became known as Keraton Yogyakarta (under Mangkubumi who is known as Hamengkubuwono I in 1755) and Keraton Surakarta (under Pakubuwono II in 1745). These two Keraton were separated on February 13, 1755 as recognized by the VOC under the *Gijant (Giyanti)* treaty. Their ruling titles were based on their inheritance (within their princely cycle), especially after declared by VOC influenced in 1792. Surakarta Keraton under the title Pakubuwono became known as Solo Susuhunan in 1820 during the rule of *Pakubuwono V*. Today the ruler of Keraton Yogyakarta is *Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono X*, while *Sunan Pakubuwono XII* is ruling in Solo. The other important figures are the Pakualam descendents that were founded in 1812 by Pangeran (meaning Prince) *Natakusuma* who became known as Pangeran *Pakualam I*, of Keraton Yogyakarta descent. *Pakualam IX* is the present ruler that holds that title. In today's Indonesia, *Hamengkubuwono X* is the King and governor over the special region of Yogyakarta. Yogyakarta was pronounced a Special Region in Indonesia for their special contributions in establishing Indonesia even before it was united as a country on August 17, 1945.

## INTERACTION WITH CATHOLICISM

The first interaction between Indonesia and Catholicism was around 1546 AD when Portuguese missionaries under St. Francis Xavier came to visit the eastern part of Indonesia in areas such as Morotai, Ambon, and Ternate. Then, the Dutch started to come in to Indonesia with the business motivations around 1590 AD. Since their rebellion from the King of Spain in 1581 AD the Dutch were free to travel more. The Dutch defeated the Portuguese in Indonesia in 1601 AD, which gave Dutch full control of the trading Indonesia, which inevitably turned into colonization. Through this, Dutch missionaries introduced Indonesia to Christianity during the Sixteenth Century. But the Christian influences did not impact heavily until 1797 (under Dutch Missionary Society or *Nederlands Zendeling Genootschap*). The Dutch colonization company under the name VOC, through many intrigues became the main political power of the Indonesian empires from Sixteen Century until 1945 when Indonesia received independence as a result of World War II. The Dutch colonization of Indonesia lasted for approximately 350 years.

Since the Sixteenth Century, Indonesia has had more active interaction with Western empires, including the Ottoman Dynasty in Istanbul, England (under Elizabeth I), and so forth. In term of music, the *Javanese Gamelan* music has also influenced Western classical music composers such as Claude Debussy and Lou Harrison. *Javanese Gamelan* is different than the *Balinese Gamelan* in sound and in characteristics. Throughout history, we know for sure that *Gamelan* music was already introduced and being used as musical instrument for many Indonesian Kingdoms.

Because of the drastic effect that religion has on culture, it is important to know how the country arrived at any given type of faith. In this case through conquest and war Indonesia transitioned from Hinduism to Buddhism to Islam. Today, Indonesia is predominantly Muslim although the western influence of Christianity is present.

The culture is approximately 98% Islamic. This has a great effect on the music of the nation as well as its uses and philosophy. It is interesting to see how traditional aspects of Indonesian culture and music have fused with the religion of Islam and the way that has shaped other aspects of the culture. There are many forms of musical expression within Indonesian cultures. Nevertheless, *Gamelan* is the most musical instruments that can still symbolize Indonesia as musical culture and religious nation that also has influenced in the western musical cultures.

Different regions of Indonesia have different styles of playing the instrument, and therefore it is necessary to discuss the narrower subject of the *Javanese Gamelan*. In addition, the use of *Gamelan* music has been identified with the ritual or religious aspects of Indonesian culture since the beginning. Therefore, the people really have a high respect for the *Gamelan* instrument as a part of their religion that commands a certain level of treatment as do all religious tools.

### CATEGORIES OF GAMELAN INSTRUMENTS

There are three categories of *Gamelan* instruments that directly relate to their shapes. The first category is the instruments that are shaped as *bilah* or a flat metal or wooden plate like the western xylophone. These instruments are called *Demung*, *Slenthem*, *Saron Barung*, *Saron Penerus* or *Saron Peking*, *Gender Barung*, *Gender Penerus*, *Gambang* (made of wood). Each of these instruments contains different notes that are used for *Slendro* and *Pelog* which refer to set groupings of notes used in gamelan music. There is only one octave (*gembyang*) within each of the *Demung*, *Slenthem*, *Saron Barung* and *Saron Penerus* instruments. In addition, each of the gamelan instruments comes in pairs in which one instrument is pentatonic (five tones) and the other is heptatonic (seven tones). "To play in *laras Slendro* (the pentatonic system), for example, the *Saron* players faced front, and to play in *laras Pelog* (the heptatonic

system) they had to make a quarter-turn to the left" (Capwell 145). And, each tuning system of those tones is called *laras*. The notes that are used are C-D-E-G-A for *laras Slendro*, and C-D-E-F-G-A-B for *laras Pelog*. The most important thing that we should know is that all of these tones are not tuned as the Western scales. The note A or la is probably closer to B flat sound in the Western scale. So, it sometimes referred to as B flat. They are arranged from low to high in terms of pitch. *Demung*, *Slenthem* and *Saron Barung* instruments function to show the melodies of the song in *Karawitan* music. The definition of *Karawitan* is: music, whether it is vocal or instrumental, that applies the melody of *Slendro* or *Pelog* as shown above. *Karawitan* music can stand by itself or can be used as accompaniment for other art forms, such as dancing, shadow puppet shows, and so forth. All of the *Saron* function as the melody maker or to "provide a 'skeletal melody' (*balungan*) whose periodic punctuation (the 'colotomic structure') was provided by other instruments like the *Gong Ageng*" (Capwell 146). The *Gender Barung* is made bronze, brass or iron. It contains nineteen key plates starting from A (an octave below middle C) to E (an octave above middle C) with alternating notes C-D-E-G-A for *Slendro* music. The *Gender Penerus* is smaller than the *Gender Barung* with the notes starting from A (below middle C) to E (an octave above middle C). The *Gambang* is made from wooden plates and it contains four octaves. It starts from G (an octave below middle C) to G (an octave above middle C).

The second category is the instruments that are shaped like gongs but have an extra head that protrudes from the top and functions as a resonator. The head is called *pencu* or *pencon*. These instruments are called *Kenong*, *Kempul*, *Gong Ageng* (the largest in this family), *Gong Suwukan* (a medium size gong), *Gong Siyem* (the smallest gong), *Bonang Barung*, *Bonang Penerus*, *Kethuk*, *Kempyang* and *Engkuk Kemong*. Each instrument has different notes that can be used for *Slendro* and *Pelog* melodies. The *Gongs* function to give an "important

punctuation the end of every completed melody" (Capwell 146). Therefore, it was functioned as what was intended for by the Sang Hyang Guru who, according to Javanese Mythology, was the god who was ruling as king in Java in 230 AD. He used the gong to summon the gods. The *Kethuk* and *Kempyang* are played side-by-side depending on the melodies that are being used (*Slendro* or *Pelog*). The *Kempyang* always has a higher tone than the *Kethuk* (A below middle C for *Pelog*, and D for *Slendro*). The *Kempyang* pitch is C above middle C. The *Kethuk* is played as the mark in between the rhythmic grouping of the *Kenong* and *Kempyang*. The *Kenong* functions to identify the rhythm and to identify each line or a group of four beats (*gatra*) within the poetry, using the appropriate pitch according to whether it is pentatonic or heptatonic (*laras*). The *Kempul* is used to give rhythmic guidelines within the song. The *Bonang Barung* has two octaves (for *laras Slendro* and *laras Pelog*) and it is used to give a sign at the opening of a song and also to give accompanying melodies within the songs. The *Bonang Penerus* has similar notes as the *Bonang Barung* but their tone is one octave higher. All types of the *Bonang* require more skilful players compared with the other instruments because "as the *Kenong* and *Kempul* (play) every fourth beat, the *Bonang Barung* (does) the opposite and (divides) the beat in two, and the *Bonang Penerus* (divides) it into four, doubling or quadrupling each pair of *balungan* pitches" (Capwell 147).

The third category includes all the rest of the instruments that have shapes different from the first two categories. Those instruments are: *Siter*, *Rebab*, *Kendhang*, *Suling* (or bamboo flute, *Suling Slendro* and *Suling Pelog*), *Kemanak* (which is only used for specific *gendhing* or song). The most important instrument in gamelan music is the *Kendhang*. It is functions as a rhythmic and improvisatory guide to the music and the other players. It also shows the varying emotions shown in the music and differentiates one song from another. In addition, *Javanese Gamelan* music uses a form of no-

tation called *titilaras*. The symbols are commonly found in the form of numbers. For example, in we call 1 to represent middle C, then it follows that 2 is D, 3 is E, 4 is F, 5 is G, 6 is A and 7 is B. They also add a dot above the number to identify the intervals above the B above middle C and a dot below the number for intervals below middle C. This is all relative however because each gamelan has its own starting pitch frequency, which is not necessarily middle C nor is it tuned to A 440 as most western instruments are.

Singers are also used in the ensemble. The female soloist is called *pesindhén* and the choruses (male or female) are called *gerongan*. Although singers are used they are not put in the spotlight as in Western music. The gamelan ensembles, including the singers, work hard to consider all parts important in representing the music as a whole cycle of art.

#### SACRILEGIOUS ASPECT OF JAVANESE GAMELAN

From the colonization era, until about World War II many western countries came in and out of South East Asia. During this time, Indonesia was an important part of the Dutch Colony. Because of this many foreign expeditions were arriving with business motivations. They were buying spices, clothing materials, and other goods including musical instruments like the *Gamelan*. As a result of this, gamelan music began to appear in Europe and in America by the end of Nineteen Century. This is how Western composers were introduced to *Gamelan* music. The examples of Western composers who are influenced by *Gamelan* music in their musical style that we are going to observe in this study are such as Claude Debussy and Lou Harrison.

Debussy's first interaction with gamelan music was in 1889 through a performance on the instrument on the Paris Universal Exposition. His admiration of gamelan music is evidenced by the following quote: "there used to be-indeed, despite the troubles that civilization has brought, there still are some wonderful

Example 1. *Estampes, movement 1, Pagodes, mm 80.*

peoples who learn music as easily as one learns to breathe..." (Hugh 2, 2006). His further admiration is shown through his absorbing the style into his own music such as his *Preludes, Images, and Estampes* for piano, *Nocturnes (Nuages)*, and so forth.

Debussy's *Estampes* consist of three movements: *Pagodes, La soirée dans Grenade, Jardins sous la pluie*. Debussy finished the *Estampes* in 1903 and Jacques Durand who was Debussy's correspondent published it in the same year. This work was first performed at the concert of the Société Nationale de Musique, in January 9, 1904. Ricardo Viñes in Salle Erard, Paris, played it. The *Pagodes* was Debussy's reflection after hearing the *Javanese Gamelan* music.

In the *Pagoda* movement, we can hear the rhythmic motive, the sonority and harmonic characteristics of Javanese music throughout the piece. There are some prominent aspects of Gamelan music that show the focal point of its influence within Debussy's musical composition, such as ostinato, pedal point, counterpoint assimilation of gamelan music usage (layered, ornamentation, new tonality), and even gamelan music's philosophy. The ostinato is a short-repeated figure that is similar with the figure of the *Bonang Penerus* or *Gender Penerus* rhythmic pattern within Gamelan music. In Debussy's *Pagodes*, it is represented by the thirty-second notes in the treble clef, for example starting from mm.80 to the end.

The longer sustained notes in the bass clef consisting of tied whole notes applied the pedal point representing the gong sound.

In Debussy's music, the pedal tone was often sustained longer than the pedal tone technique that a Western musician commonly used. It gives the impression of the long and unchanging harmony of eastern music. In addition, the opening section of the *Pagodes* also used a typical opening form of Gamelan music. Then, the Gamelan influence was further emphasized by the used of the pentatonic theme notes. They are G#, C#, D#, F#, and B (discretely used in the bass part). These pentatonic scales represent *Laras Slendro* in the key of B (do-re-mi-so-la). The melodic themes were formed within two measures and were repeated four times, started from mm.3-10.

These themes come back again in mm.80 in the left hand. The middle voices were added starting at m.31. They seem to functioning as the rhythmic figure of *Ketuhuk*, which identified the four note groupings of the top notes of the treble clef. It can be clearly seen in mm. 44-49. In addition, the interlocking of rhythmic patterns that were stacked together into layers within the clef, combining with the thematic melody patten (or motivic) in Gamelan music, made Debussy able to extensively expand his musical horizons.

**Example 2. *Estampes, movement 1, Pagodes*, mm 3-10.**

The image shows a musical score for the piano piece 'Pagodes' from Debussy's 'Estampes'. It consists of four systems of music. The first system is marked 'Modérément animé' and 'pp'. The second system has 'a Tempo' and 'Rit.' markings. The third system also has 'a Tempo' and 'Rit.' markings. The fourth system has 'a Tempo' and 'Rit.' markings. The score is written in G major and 3/4 time.

The musical genius of Debussy was proven through many of his wonderful new musical compositions. He was also known for his creative ornamentation in his musical production. It gave the music a new perspective in tonality beside that which western writers had been using. In addition, "The most important inspiration Debussy found in Javanese music was not any particular musical technique or sound, but rather the general notation that there could be a well-developed, powerful, and beautiful music that had developed totally outside, and often in contradiction to, the established rules and conventions of western European music" (Hugh 11, 2006).

Later on, the first interaction between America and Gamelan music was in 1893 through the Columbia Exposition. It also was given a special historical in The Field Museum's gamelan in Chicago, in which "a couple Dutchmen who owned coffee and tea plantations on Java brought the gamelan to Chicago, along with a group of Javanese musicians and craftsmen, for the Columbian Exposition of 1893, a great world's fair" (Capwell 141). The instrument was first introduced in Chicago and

became popular later on. It also began to have an important role in the music world after being introduced through the work of Lou Harrison.

Harrison was an American composer born in Portland, Oregon in 1917 and died in January 2003. He was a student under Henry Cowell from whom he learned the freedom and the invention technique. Arnold Schoenberg was another of his teachers from whom he learned the method of composition and the disciplinary aspects of composing music. He was also a close friend of John Cage. Harrison's interest in Indonesian music began in 1930. Nevertheless, he never visited Asia (Indonesia) until 1961. His meeting with William Colvig, in 1967, made his interest in cultural music increase through which both men put a strong emphasis on the exploration of the tuning system of foreign musical instruments. Harrison's composition period can be distinguished into three facets. Those are his early period (1917-1943) including most of his dissonant music, his middle period (1943-1961), and his mature composition style (1961-2003). His mature composition style was established and influenced primarily by the gamelan music. Harrison also studied gamelan music under K.R.T Wasitodiningrat also known as Pak Cokro who is a well-known gamelan master.

Wasitodiningrat learned his gamelan skill under the guidance of his father, R.W. Padmowinagum who was the leader of the singing group that was accompanied by the gamelan (called *Karawitan*) of Pakualam palace (*Puro*). It was a part of one of the Indonesian empires that is still in existence. His father's dedication to the empire was passed on to him and Wasitodiningrat also served as a court musician of Pakualam. He also taught at the *Mangkunegaran* musical court (part of the empire at Keraton Solo). Harrison and Wasitodiningrat met in 1975 at the Center for World Music in Berkeley, California. Wasitodiningrat was a Karawitan teacher at the California Institute of the arts from 1970 until he retired in 1992. He did not only teach Harrison how

to approach traditional gamelan music (musical style, performance style, structure of gamelan music of many regions within Indonesia), but also on how to play most of the instruments in the gamelan ensemble. The most important thing that we need to underline is that he has taught Harrison the sacrilegious aspect and religious function of gamelan so that he can compose the music appropriately (rightfully). In fact, it was different than his first trial of composing Gamelan music using trash can, and other recycled stuffs in which had caused him rejection and mockery because it had destroyed the sacrilegious aspect of the music. Under his instruction, Harrison composed about fifty pieces for gamelan and other Western instruments, including *Philemon and Baukis*, *Main Bersama-sama*, *Bubaran Robert*, *Varied Trio*, and so forth.

The work *Varied Trio* consists five movements: *Gending* (means piece), *Rice Bowls*, *Elegy*, *Rondeau in honor of Fragonard*, *Dance*. The *Varied Trio* was first intended as a quintet for William Winant (percussionist), Julie Steinberg (pianist but he played a virginal for this piece with an eighteenth century temperament tuning), David Abel (violinist), William Colvig playing bells, and Harrison himself playing harp. It was first performed in February 28, 1987. The *Gending* movement was one example of the gamelan music influences within Harrison's compositional technique. This *Gending* was influenced by music of the Cirebon region of Northwest Java.

It was after the first quintet performance that Harrison decided to change the *Varied Trio* into a trio of violin, vibraphone, and piano. He changed the bell part into a vibraphone or gong part, and the harp and virginal parts were put into the piano part. In this piece, he uses the strike vibraphone, and the rim of the large tam tam to create the percussive sound. He also applied plucking of the piano strings (imitating the sound of the *Siter*) as well as knocking on the inside part of the piano frame with the yarn mallet to add still more percussive effect in the imitation of the gamelan instruments. The revised work was first perfor-

med for Harrison's seventieth birthday on May 14, 1987.

The *Gending* (which means piece) starts with the opening two measures of the introductory mode of traditional *Solo* gamelan called *buka* (which means open), using *Laras Slendro* of D-E-F# (instead of G)-A-B (instead of C). This half-step difference in the intervals is acceptable since there is no exact tuning configuration of gamelan instrument. The introductory plucking of the piano strings outlines the pitches that make the *balungan* style. After the *buka*, the *balungan* pitches are played as the first in a group of four sixteenth notes and continue this way for six groupings in the sequence. After that the piano is added in the second beat of m.6 and the groups become eighth notes (with a half note as the downbeat of each four group sequence) rather than sixteenth notes with the *balungan* pitches generally falling on the downbeat of the measure. Although the rhythmic values are changing the *balungan* pitch pattern is the same. This rhythmic change creates and mood of calmness and allows the piece to breathe. The changing pattern also creates what is called *irama*, or rhythm, that is typical of gamelan music. In m.12 the *irama* changes again in the piano. The vibraphone maintains what has been going on while the top mine of the piano double is speed and creates more density in the music. However, as is must always do in gamelan music, the *irama* is returned to its original state at the end in m.60. The other notes in the piano are ornamentation that leads and imply the *balungan* pitches. The same is true of the vibraphone when it comes in. Each time a *balungan* note is played the two instruments meet in unison. These unison notes are called 'goal tones'. The violin does not enter until m.13 after the *balungan* style has been well established. The melody of the violin is very lyrical and meant to be reminiscent of the two stringed, bowed gamelan instruments, *rebab*. The violin is meant to be in the *rebab* style but it cannot have the same sound as the gamelan instrument. This is case in all gamelan style music performed on wes-

Example 3. *Varied Trio, Movement 1, Gending, mm 1-5*

tern instruments. The violin part is meant to pair with the thirty-second notes of the right hand of the piano. The violin also meets with the vibraphone and piano on 'goal tones'. For example, in m.14 on the downbeat they play in unison according to the *Laras* that is being used, and specifically *Slendro*. Like the violin is mimicking the *rebab* the thirty-second note figure is an imitation of the *gender* instrument, which is the most difficult instrument to play in the gamelan ensemble.

The most important aspect of Western influence on *Javanese Gamelan* is the use of music notation. Indonesian people have strong beliefs in the spiritual aspects that accompany *Gamelan* music.

"The spiritual power that is invested in old gamelan by tradition in turn invests power in their owners, for which reason they are important components of princely regalia (*pu-*

*saka*), over which battles have been fought in the past. The *gendhing* (musical work) played on these gamelan, too, may have such power that, for example, it was in the past forbidden to hum them casually; in transcribing them into notation—a practice initiated as a result of European influence in the nineteenth century—it used to be considered advisable to make an occasional mistake in order to prevent the power of the tune being used inappropriately" (Capwell 151).

Because of the depth of meaning that the gamelan holds for the Indonesian people, it must be treated respectfully. We understand that the spiritual aspects of *Gamelan* music is highly respected until people were not allowed to notate the tunes, even humming the tunes. Nevertheless, we can now preserve our musical

heritage by notating the music so that our next generation will be able to continue the tradition correctly. This Western influence of putting the tunes into writing is very useful as long we still treat our musical heritage respectfully.

It is wonderful that the gamelan has had a positive influence on other cultures; however, for the sake of its native purpose it should be used only with utmost appropriateness. Many Indonesians would strongly disapprove of Harrison's 'home-made' gamelan because of the materials it was made from, such as trash cans and piping. Although he may have meant no harm, whenever something is borrowed from another culture there should be a level of sensitivity used. Debussy offers a great example of being able to integrate the form and spirit of gamelan without offending.

In our today's society, electronic music has become a major element in many musical developments. Many musician have used electronic instruments such as electric guitar, piano electric, drum electric, and so forth. Furthermore, we have also known that *Gamelan* music has also been elaborated electronically by Indonesian students from Dian Nuswantoro University (UDINUS), Semarang. The main purpose of the e-gamelan making, as mentioned by Kanjeng Pangeran Edy S Wirabhumi from Keraton Solo during the public interview "is to enable people to have an easy access on *Gamelan* Music, especially *Gamelan* instruments so that people will have an easy grasp and easy play on *Gamelan* instruments in their homes as they please" (Estuningsih, Koran Si). It was such a wonderful idea. Nevertheless, it will cause a question for each of us, especially after reading the essay above. Can this electronic *Gamelan* instruments keep the sacrilegious aspect of *Gamelan* music itself? Or, can it keep the sacrilegious realm of *Gamelan* instrument in which *Gamelan*'s sound have been sampled? In this case, can we really hear the sound of *Gamelan* "Kiai Gora" from Keraton Solo without eliminating the sacrilegious aspects of the real *Ga-*

*melan* instruments that have been sampled from? The answer is that we cannot experience the real *Gamelan* music of "Kiai Gora" just by playing or experiencing it electronically. In fact, the process of making the real *Gamelan* instruments took such a long period of time and required some ritual activities such as fasting and praying before producing *Gamelan*. People have to think and to understand deeply in regard to the purpose behind creating and playing the *Gamelan*. In addition, we know that all "Gending" or songs as played by *Gamelan*, have a strong correlation in people's life, such as requesting safety, wedding ceremony, preparing for battle, thanksgiving in which all of those are subjected to God. This makes *Gamelan* music is religious musical instrument that is purposely functioned mostly for religious activities. We need to maintain the sacrilegious aspect of *Gamelan*. As a result, people should not be allowed to play *Gamelan* as they wish without fully understand the religious purpose, the rightful attitude or correct manner and the tradition behind it contextually. If people lost these respects, it would be the same as we lost the *Gamelan* physically as happened before when the *Gamelan Kyai Gora* and *Gamelan Kyai Genta* were stolen from Keraton Solo and found in November 1999. If *Gamelan* has lost its sacrilegious function and people's belief have deceased toward it, so the *Gamelan* will be useless.

We are all aware that the use of *Gamelan* music has been decreasing today. Therefore, we need to introduce our younger generation on knowing, learning and even loving *Gamelan* music as part as their cultural heritage. Nevertheless, we need to consider the basic element that we need to teach our future generation on how to keep the function of *Gamelan* music rightfully, as we have learned from K.R.T *Wasitodiningrat* on how he has taught Lou Harrison, or even when Claude Debussy has used *Gamelan* influences respectably in his compositions. Therefore, the beginning fatal mistake that Lou Harrison did by creating *Gamelan* sound using inappropriate materials, such as trash cans and piping

can be avoided. We need to teach them the correct manners and the sacrilegious matters of the *Gamelan* instead of just giving an easy access on playing them. They need to understand the religious aspects of *Gamelan* and its real function. Therefore, they will have a better respect for their cultural heritage. They will also be able to correctly appreciate it. In fact, if we do not have the right respect on what belongs to us, so other people will have no respect not only to it but to us as well. It is easier for us to be destroyed if we are the one who destroyed ourselves through within. Therefore, our future generations need to know and to learn this important aspect of sacrilegious of the *Gamelan* music while they also have an easy access of the *Gamelan* instruments electronically. As a result, other people will have a correct respect of the *Gamelan* music/instruments and we can also conserve our heritage as a whole (morally, spiritually and physically). In spite of the difficulties of learning another culture and accepting it into one's own culture, it is still very enriching to have Indonesian music and Western music, including modern technology, mutually influence each other as long as we do not have to sacrifice or eliminating the basic being of our own heritage, for instance our religious manner, our eastern heritage, and our cultural norms. Technology is one of the greatest and powerful achievements of mankind that we need to continue developed and used wisely and correctly. We can be enriched through the use of technology in developing, strengthened and promoting our musical heritage physically (or virtually) and religiously that is *Gamelan* music, as long it can represent the *Gamelan* as a whole (morally, spiritually and physically), and Indonesia as a religious country in accordance with its religious cultures.

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