

*Flexing the Frame in Javanese Gamelan Music**Playfulness in a Performance of Ladrang Pangkur*

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The composition of central Javanese gamelan music chosen for analysis in this chapter exemplifies many of the techniques evolved in Java for distorting and enriching symmetrical, periodic melody. It is perhaps no surprise—yet nonetheless a wonder to contemplate—that this venerated large ensemble music, largely founded upon such elegant and logical binary structures, allows for them to be stretched to the limits of perception in ways that challenge and satisfy listeners and performers alike. We shall examine the extent of at least some of these distortions in one particular performance, relating them back always to their regular substrate and the conventions that govern the tradition as a whole, and in so doing provide a reading of the music as flexible, multi-dimensional, and, in many aspects, anything but regular.

The Indonesian island of Java is home to an enormous variety of musical traditions, including a number of regional gamelan traditions. In this country of roughly five thousand inhabited islands and more than two hundred ethno-linguistic groups, each with its own particular approaches to music-making, the Javanese represent the largest single group, numbering more than seventy-five million. The music under consideration is associated with the court city of Surakarta (known more familiarly as “Solo”) and the inland areas nearby; and if we visited regions within central and eastern Java remote from Solo we would likely find musicians playing at least some music in Solonese style, though other styles persist. If we travel to the western portion of the island, the province of West Java, we would encounter a substantially different set of traditions, not “Javanese,” but “Sundanese.”

The piece we explore, *Ladrang Pangkur* (CD track 13) is not attributable to any known composer, living or deceased. It is known to have existed in some (probably many) forms for several centuries at least, and many musicians have contributed to the actual shapes that it takes in performance. The performance here, dating from the 1970s, is by Condhong Raos, one of the top two or three gamelan groups of Java from the late 1960s through the 1980s, under the direction of master musician-composer-shadow puppeteer Ki Nartosabdho (1925–1985).¹ The performance is part of a medley from an audio cassette commercially released by a company no longer in existence and widely available throughout central and eastern Java during the late 1970s and 1980s.

Although not every Javanese is intimately familiar with gamelan music, all have heard it in public ceremonies, family rituals (especially weddings and circumcisions), and through the mass media (radio, television, and recordings). The extent to which casual listeners are aware of the structure of the music—the relationships between the many parts heard simultaneously and the shape given by the musicians to the piece as it unfolds—is difficult to say. Although many Javanese would claim little or no “theoretical” understanding of gamelan music, most would know, for example, that the sounding of one of the largest hanging gongs articulates the largest phrases of the piece, that the musicians respond primarily to the drummer’s signals for changes in tempo and dynamics, and perhaps that the main melody (called *balungan*, lit. “skeleton,” “outline”) is generally played by some or all of the single-octave metallophones (*saron*). Many have had at least some instruction in gamelan music during primary or secondary school, and others may have more extensive experience. What we intend to convey in this chapter is something approaching what gamelan musicians themselves and knowledgeable gamelan music lovers would “hear” and “understand” in the particular rendering of a single piece of music. *Ladrang Pangkur* is one of the best known and most frequently played items in the entire repertory, which consists of several thousand pieces generally identified as “traditional” (i.e., known for at least several generations), and a rapidly growing body of new, mostly light pieces composed since about 1950 (after Indonesia gained its independence from the Netherlands).

As Tenzer points out (see chapter 6) with respect to Balinese gamelan music, Javanese gamelan music seems to play with our sense of time, stretching and compressing it through its unique approaches to rhythm and tempo. The performance we have chosen undergoes a number of shifts in tempo, both gradual and abrupt, leading the knowledgeable listener through eight succes-

1. For a short biography of Ki Nartosabdho, told mostly in his own words, see Sutton (2002:307–312).



Instruments of the Javanese gamelan at Pura Pakualaman, Yogyakarta, in 1974—(clockwise from top left) gendèr panerus (foreground) and gendèr barung; kendhang gendhing; gambang; kemplu (left) and gong ageng (right). Photos by Valerie Mau Vetter.

sive statements of a main phrase, followed by one statement of a (partially) contrastive phrase. In a variety of interesting ways, the underlying sense of repetition is constantly disrupted and obscured by changes in tempo, changes in emphasis on different instrument types and voices, and omission and substitution of melodic material. Indeed, in comparison to the way many Javanese pieces are performed, this one is among those that frequently undergo some of the most radically playful alterations, in which the basic framework is, as we have indicated in the chapter title, “flexed” (but not broken). A number of textbook descriptions of Javanese gamelan music² stress the regularity and recursive-

2. Including a chapter by one of the current authors; see Sutton (2002).

ness of gamelan musical formal structure and performance practice, its binary symmetry and predictability. Indeed, the simpler renditions of the simpler pieces are remarkably regular, recursive (some would say monotonously repetitive), and predictable. Yet musicians of even modest accomplishment do not limit themselves to the simpler renditions of simpler pieces. Most would readily attest to the greater musical depth and aesthetic delight taken in playing and listening to pieces performed with changes in tempo and with melodic variation, pieces whose performance leads the listener through differing aural worlds, corresponding to different moods and different technical challenges.

Javanese “Compositions” for Gamelan Ensemble: Gendhing

Javanese refer to compositions for gamelan ensemble with the word *gendhing*. They may use the term *komposisi* (an Indonesianization of the *compositie*, the Dutch word for “composition”), but usually in reference either to the process of composing, or to a new work in which most or all of the parts have been determined by a composer. A printed collection of “compositions” would normally contain all the parts written out, perhaps with additional verbal explanation by the composer as to how parts should be realized. A *gendhing*, by contrast, takes its particular shape in performance. Multiple performances of the “same *gendhing*” can actually differ quite substantially from one another, but will share at least the same, or very similar main melody (*balungan*), and the same or very similar patterns of punctuation by the large gongs and other punctuating gong instruments.³ Details of melodic variation, number of repetitions, tempo, and dynamics are all at least partially determined in performance, often in response to the unique demands of the dance or puppet drama they accompany, though limited by a shared knowledge of prior performance conventions (what we might call a shared knowledge of the “tradition” of rendering that particular *gendhing* and others of similar structure and mood).

Javanese *gendhing*, as realized in performance, produce a complex texture that some have characterized as “stratified polyphony” (Hood and Susilo 1967) others as “heterophony” (Sutton 1993, *inter alios*). One useful way to conceive of the texture—that is, the nature of simultaneous sound structures—is to think of the following layers:

1. a main melody, or melodic skeleton (*balungan*), is usually played by single-octave metallophones;

3. Three performances of the Javanese *gendhing Ketawang Puspawarna* are compared in Vetter (1981).

2. this main melody is punctuated in a (mostly) regular, repeated pattern known to musicologists as “colotomic” punctuation, played on various knobbed gong instruments, some hanging vertically, others mounted in wooden cases;
3. other melodic instruments, playing at faster densities (usually 2, 4, 8, 16, or 32 times faster than the beat of the main melody), provide melodic elaboration, in complex heterophonic relation to the main melody and to each other (and to the vocalists, if present);
4. (in many, but not all *gendhing*), voices and several non-percussion instruments perform less rhythmically rigid, sometimes florid melodic lines; these include fiddle (*rebab*), flute (*suling*), a florid vocal line performed by a solo female vocalist (*pesindhèn*), and a more rhythmically regular vocal line performed by male chorus (*gérong*), all in heterophonic relation to the main melody, to each other, and to the elaborating instrument parts;
5. one or two drums (out of three at the drummer’s disposal) sound patterns which may simply be *gongan* (the melodic phrase between consecutive strokes of the largest gong)-length ostinatos (played on the largest drum or a combination of the largest and smallest drum) or more complex and lively patterns, usually originating from dance or dramatic accompaniment (played on the middle-sized drum).

These five layers are all interdependent and involve complex codes of interaction in performance, a topic thoroughly explored by ethnomusicologist Benjamin Brinner in his book on competence and interaction in Javanese gamelan music (1995).

Ladrang Pangkur

Rather than proceeding with further generalizations about *gendhing* we turn now to *Ladrang Pangkur*, or, to give its complete designation, *Ladrang Pangkur laras sléndro pathet sanga*. The full title of the *gendhing* conveys important information about formal structure (*ladrang*), the particular melody (*Pangkur*), tuning system/*laras* (*sléndro*) and mode/*pathet* (*sanga*).

The word “*ladrang*” tells us the pattern of punctuation used: the large hanging gong (*gong ageng*) plays every 32 beats, marking off the largest cyclic phrase unit, known as a *gongan*; the large horizontal kettle gong (*kenong*) plays every 8 beats, marking off the secondary phrase units, known as *kenongan*;⁴ a

4. In Javanese and Indonesian, plural is not marked when implied from context; thus, we speak of a piece in *ladrang* form having four *kenongan* (not four “kenongans”).

smaller hanging gong (*kempul*) plays at the midpoint in the second, third, and fourth *kenongan*; and the small, single horizontal kettle gong (*kethuk*) plays on the second and sixth beat of each *kenongan*. Thus, the *kenong*, *kempul*, and *kethuk* each mark different levels of subdivision of the 32-beat *gongan*, interlocking to form a regular, recursive pattern as follows (with t standing for *kethuk*, n for *kenong*, p for *kempul*, w for *wela*, a “rest” in the punctuation, and g for *gong*, sounding simultaneously with every fourth *kenong* stroke): t w t n t p t n t p t n t p t n/g. The *kenong* strokes mark the quarter points in the cycle ($1/4$ of the way through, $2/4$ of the way through, etc.), the *kempul* (or *wela*) mark every other of the eighth points ($1/8$ of the way through, $3/8$ of the way through, etc.) and the *kethuk* every other of the sixteenth points ($1/16$ of the way through, $3/16$ of the way through, etc.). These audible guideposts make for a highly predictable sequence that, especially in more complicated pieces, can actually help musicians and dancers keep (or regain) their bearings, knowing “where they are” in the flow of the piece. As we will see in the analysis below, referring to these structure points is essential in understanding both the frame and the flexing thereof.

The word “*Pangkur*” identifies the main melody of this piece as distinct from the many hundreds of other such melodies with *ladrang* structure. In the narrower sense, this is the core title of this *gendhing*. By itself, the term *pangkur* refers to one of more than a dozen common sung poetical forms, differentiated from one another by verse structure (number of lines, number of syllables per line, and final vowel of each line) as well as melody. In fact, there are several different *pangkur* melodies, all with the same verse structure, each melody identified by additional words: *Pangkur Dhudha Kasmaran* (“Widower/Divorcé in Love” *Pangkur*), *Pangkur Ngrenasmara* (“Enjoyment/Pleasure of Love” *Pangkur*). Sometimes the *pangkur* that forms the basis of the *gendhing* we have chosen is referred to as *Pangkur Paripurna* (lit. “Whole/Complete” *Pangkur*) although there is nothing “incomplete” about the other *pangkur* melodies.

The words “*laras sléndro*” tell us in which of the two tuning systems (*laras*) the *gendhing* is played. *Sléndro* is a tuning system (in this case also a scale system) involving five tones per octave, separated by nearly equidistant intervals (each larger than a major second and smaller than a minor third). The other tuning system is *pélog*, comprising seven tones per octave, with uneven intervals, ranging from roughly a minor second to a minor third. Many whole pieces in *pélog*, or phrases within them, employ one of several possible pentatonic scales built of small (S) and large (L) intervals (e.g., S, L, S, S, L, etc.). In fact, *Ladrang Pangkur* can be played in two different *pélog* scales, with contours mostly similar, but intervallic structures markedly different from one another.

The final portion of the full title tells us the Javanese modal (*pathet*) category in which the *gendhing* is played. In *sléndro* there are three *pathet* in all (*nem*,

sanga, and *manyura*), usually interpreted as differing in register (*nem* being the lowest, *manyura* the highest), but in actuality determined by a number of factors, including featured and avoided tones, contours, and their positions within the formal structure of the *gongan*. Although Javanese musicians and theoreticians discuss and argue more extensively about *pathet* than most other aspects of Javanese music, it is not essential for an appreciation of this performance. Had we time and space to analyze a large number of *gendhing*, questions of *pathet* designation would emerge naturally.⁵ Suffice it to say at this point that musicians whose parts are partially created as they perform must have a sense of the *pathet* of the *gendhing* in order to make idiomatic choices.

A great deal has been written and published already about the instruments of the Javanese gamelan and the singers that often join with the gamelan music for performances of *gendhing* such as *Ladrang Pangkur*; in fact, nearly all gamelan performances in recent times involve singers and a large combination of instruments, both “soft-playing” and “loud-playing.” Besides the punctuating gong instruments already mentioned, the “loud-playing” ensemble consists of three octaves of single-octave metallophones (*saron*), two kettle gong chimes (*bonang*), and a set of three drums (*kendhang*). The “soft-playing” ensemble incorporates the florid melodic playing of a two-stringed fiddle (*rebab*) and end-blown flute (*suling*), and the rhythmically regular and binary elaborating instruments: multioctave metallophones (*gender*), xylophone (*gambang*), zither (*celempung* or *siter*), and a soft-playing, single-octave metallophone (*slenthem*) that usually is also played for “loud-playing” style as well. Note that in current practice, the “loud-playing” instruments keep playing, albeit softly, for pieces or sections of pieces in “soft-playing” style. In most cases, when the soft-playing instruments are used, vocalists also join the ensemble, usually consisting of female soloists (*pesindhèn*) and a small male chorus (*gérong*).

Treatment (Garapan): Realizing Ladrang Pangkur In Performance

The performance we have chosen to analyze exhibits a number of features that are typical in most or all performances of this particular *gendhing*, or of all *ladrang*, or even of all *gendhing*. For example, nearly all *gendhing* begin with a melodic solo introduction (*buka*) joined first by the drum and then the other instruments at the first gong stroke. In many cases the *buka* identifies the *gendhing* to knowledgeable listeners; and in this largely oral tradition, musi-

5. For extensive discussion of *pathet*, see especially Kunst (1949/1973), Hood (1954), Becker (1980), Powers (1980), McDermott and Sumarsan (1975), and Perlman and Powers (2001).

cians may not be informed beforehand what *gendhing* they will be playing, or in what order, but will recognize the *buka* and play appropriately. The *buka* played for this performance is most closely associated with *Ladrang Pangkur*, but in fact can be used for several closely related pieces as well.

In the course of our analysis, we need to cover a number of topics. These include the following: tempo levels (*irama*), changes between levels (I, II, III, and IV), and resultant melodic expansion and contraction; various kinds of instrumental variation (simultaneous and sequential); contrastive drumming styles and signals; male and female vocal melodies, vocal solos, and vocal text; and the dynamics of interaction among musicians as the *gendhing* is performed. See the key to transcriptions for information.

In its most basic, reduced form, *Ladrang Pangkur* (here in *laras slendro pathet sanga*) consists of a 32-beat melody, often conceived and taught as a succession of eight measures (*gatra*) of four beats. (Slight variations of this melody exist, but this version is standard within the Solonese tradition.) For close to one hundred years, the notation system used most frequently to represent this and other *gendhing* basic melodies (*balungan*) is a cipher system. The main transcriptions we will analyze for the remainder of this chapter are given in standard Western notation, modified to accommodate, as best as possible, the musical features of gamelan music. But readers should know that Javanese almost never use Western notation to learn or study gamelan music. Instead they would write the basic 32-beat melody of this version of *Ladrang Pangkur* as follows, each line representing a *kenongan* of eight beats, that is, two *gatra*.⁶ A slightly larger space is given between the two *gatra* than between the individual numerals within each *gatra*, not to indicate greater rhythmic duration but simply to make it easier to see each *gatra* as one unit, comparable to a measure or bar in Western music:

2 1 2 6 2 1 6 5
 6 5 2 1 3 2 1 6
 2 3 2 1 5 3 2 1
 3 2 1 6 2 1 6 5

This notation has not only proven very practical (compact, easy to read, easy to type or enter on a computer), but also shows the binary symmetry that characterizes the *ladrang* form. Indeed, most Javanese musical forms are based on

6. This “basic” version is the one played at the faster tempo levels (*irama* I and II); a more elaborated main melody, in some sections containing two melody tones per structural beat is played at the slower tempo levels (*irama* III and IV).

a comparable symmetry, with the number of beats per *gongan* equaling some factor of 2 (i.e., 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, or 256 beats per *gongan*).

The Macro-Form

Now, let us take a close look at figure 7.1, what we are calling the “macro transcription,” which shows the introduction (*buka*), and *saron* melody and colotomic punctuation as actually played for the entire performance.⁷ We are using the Western five-line staff but in many ways, because of the nature of gamelan music, our transcription requires some substantial explanation. First, we chose in the macro transcription to place the strongest beat at the end, rather than the beginning, in order to conform with Javanese conceptions of beat, identifying the strongest beat—that is, the one corresponding with the gong stroke—as the last, not the first beat. Thus, in *ladrang* form, the main melody beat heard simultaneously with the gong stroke is beat 32, not beat 1, even though Westerners not familiar with gamelan music would almost certainly identify this strongly weighted beat as the “downbeat” (or “first beat”).

We also chose to represent pitches that do not correspond exactly to the Western pitches implied by the notation. In the key to the transcriptions we provide fairly precise measurements of the actual pitches used, showing divergences from Western pitches in “cents” (one octave consisting of 1200 cents; i.e., 100 cents for each semitone of the Western tempered scale). Most important, however, is to realize that the intervals between what appear as major seconds are slightly larger than major seconds, and between what appear as minor thirds are slightly smaller than minor thirds, as this tuning system tends toward equidistant intervals (five per octave, as explained above). The “translation” we have used assigns the Javanese *sléndro* tones as follows: 1 = d; 2 = e; 3 = g; 5 = a; 6 = c. (Note: there is no tone 4 in *sléndro*; 3 and 5 are conjunct.⁸)

7. The *saron* melody played here is nearly always what Javanese would identify as the main melody (*balungan*), the only exceptions being the quarter note (double time) variations played in the middle of sixth and seventh *gongan* (pitches [c e g a], leading to [c]) instead of what in this context would be half notes (pitches [c e g])—the standard *balungan*, as can be seen in comparable passages between *kenong* (n) and *kethuk* (t) at the same horizontal position in previous lines.

8. The omission of “4” in the ciphers for *sléndro* is very likely due to the Western origin of this notation system, in which the tone 5 (not 4) is a fifth above tone 1. In *sléndro* this interval is slightly larger than a tempered fifth, but is close. Also in older Javanese nomenclature, though the first three tones are *barang* (“thing”), *gulu* (“neck”), and *dhadha* (“chest”), the next two have long been known as *lima* (“five”) and *nem* (“six”).

Key to transcriptions.

(A) Pitch

actual pitch 230 260 235 265 210 cents

-10 +20 -20 +15 -20 -10

transposed pitch (used in transcriptions)

-10 +20 -20 +15 -20 -10

(B) Drum Sounds

small drum head (for ciblon)
large drum head

mnemonics: tak tong lung ket dung ket din dit dlang
or
du

(C) Form

$\left[\text{p}, \text{p}, \text{o}, \text{||o||} \right] = 32$ structural beats/*gongan*
 $\left[\text{p}, \text{p}, \text{o}, \text{||o||} \right] =$ note value of a structural beat

(D) Colotomic Events

g = *gong ageng*
 s = *gong siyem*
 n = *kenong*
 p = *kempul*
 t = *kethuk*

(E) Tempo

$(\text{♩}, \text{♩}, \text{♩}, \text{||o||}) = 48$ tempo of the structural beat
 (in beats per minute)

(F) Tempo Level (*irama*)

I = *irama tanggung*
 II = *irama dadi*
 III = *irama wilet*
 IV = *irama rangkep*

(G) Interruptions

// = a momentary cessation
 to the flow of the performance
 (*andhegan*)
 pes. = solo *pesindhèn*
 following a halt

(H) Timings

2:02 timing (elapsed)
 V of an event

The *buka*, played by *rebab*, ends on pitch “a” (tone 5) at which point the full ensemble joins in, including the two most important colotomic punctuators: the large gong (*gong ageng*) and the *kenong*. The drummer enters part way through the *buka* to guide the tempo and confirm the formal structure. As shown, each of the subsequent lines of the transcription represents one *gongan* (full melodic phrase),⁹ which may take as little as nineteen seconds (the first *gongan*) to as long as three minutes sixteen seconds (the last *gongan*). This fact by itself gives you some sense of the degree to which the basic framework of the *gongan* can be flexed with respect to duration alone. This dimension of flexibility is generally talked about in relation to the Javanese concept of *irama* level. Observe that:

- The first five lines after the *buka* (i.e., first five *gongan*) are played in *irama* I (also sometimes called *irama tanggung*, meaning “in between” or “not yet settled”). The actual duration can vary slightly; what makes all of these “*irama* I” is the ratio between the main melody (the part shown in its entirety in figure 7.1) and the subdividing parts. Figure 7.2, which shows many (but not all) of the instrumental parts played in the first *gongan*, reveals that both the *bonang barung* (medium sized gong chime) and the *saron peking* (smallest and highest pitched single-octave metallophone) subdivide the basic melody (played by *saron barung* and *saron demung*)¹⁰ at a ratio of 2:1.
- In *irama* II, as shown in the first portion of figure 7.5 (and portions of figures 7.3 and 7.4; and sometimes called *irama dadi*, meaning “settled”) the main melody, played on the *saron barung* (and others not notated here) has slowed to about half of what it was in *irama* I, now shown as half notes instead of quarter notes, and the *saron peking*, playing at more or less the same rate as in *irama* I, and therefore shown as eighth notes, is subdividing the *saron barung*’s half notes at a ratio of 4:1. In this performance, it is only the middle portions of the sixth and seventh *gongan* that are performed in *irama* II.
- *Irama* III (also called *irama wilet*, meaning “intricate”—referring to the nature of the elaborating parts), as one might expect, is realized with a ratio of 8:1, with one beat of main melody represented by a whole note; and

9. We decided not to add bar lines but simply offer a time signature that shows relative tempo and the number of beats per *gongan*.

10. Not shown is the *slenthem* part, which also plays the main melody, but an octave lower than *saron demung*.

FIGURE 7.1. Macro transcription of the performance of Ladrang Pangkur by Condhong Raos, Ki Nartosabdho, director (source: "Aneka Pangkur," P.T. Wisanda cassette WD-508. n.d.).

The figure displays a macro transcription of the performance of Ladrang Pangkur. It consists of five systems of musical notation, each on a single staff in treble clef with a 3/2 time signature. The lyrics are written below the notes, and various performance markings are present.

- System 1:** Labeled "buka: (♩ = 126)". The tempo is marked as 126 beats per minute. The lyrics are "t n t p t n t p t n t p p t p". A "rit." marking is placed above the final notes. The system ends with a double bar line and the time signature ":07".
- System 2:** Labeled "I (♩ = 103)". The tempo is marked as 103 beats per minute. The lyrics are "t n t p t n t p t n t p p t p". A "rit." marking is placed above the final notes. The system ends with a double bar line and the time signature ":26".
- System 3:** The lyrics are "t p p t n t p p t n t p p t n t p p t p". The system ends with a double bar line and the time signature ":49".
- System 4:** The lyrics are "t p p t n t p p t n t p p t n t p p t p". The system ends with a double bar line and the time signature "1:11".
- System 5:** The lyrics are "t p p t n t p p t n t p p t n t p p t p". The system ends with a double bar line and the time signature "1:34".

Vertical time markers are placed at the end of each system, and a vertical line separates the first system from the others. The lyrics "n g" are written below the final notes of each system.

FIGURE 7.1. *Continued*

5 *accel.* 1:55

6 *rit.* 2:02 *pes.* II ($\text{♩} = 48$) 2:16 ($\text{♩} = 46$) *pes.* *accel.* I ($\text{♩} =$) 2:36

7 *rit.* 2:44 *pes.* II ($\text{♩} = 50$) 3:00 ($\text{♩} = 46$) *rit.* III ($\text{♩} =$) 3:27

8 3:54 4:22 4:50 5:19

9 *rit.* 5:51 ($\text{♩} = 10$) 6:08 6:28 ($\text{♩} = 9$) 6:43 6:56 7:13 ($\text{♩} = 9.5$) 7:29 *accel.* 7:54 ($\text{♩} = 13$) *rit.* 8:35

Figure 7.1 shows five staves of musical notation. Staff 5 is a single line with a treble clef, 3/2 time signature, and a 32-measure repeat sign. It contains a sequence of notes with lyrics 't p p t n t p p t n t p p t n t p p t p n g' and an 'accel.' marking. Staff 6 starts with a 32-measure repeat sign, followed by a 'rit.' marking and a 2:02 time signature. It then has a 'pes.' marking, a 32-measure repeat sign, a tempo change to II ($\text{♩} = 48$), a 2:16 time signature, a tempo change to ($\text{♩} = 46$), another 'pes.' marking, and finally an 'accel.' marking and a tempo change to I ($\text{♩} =$). Staff 7 follows a similar pattern with 'rit.', 'pes.', II ($\text{♩} = 50$), 3:00, ($\text{♩} = 46$), 'rit.', and III ($\text{♩} =$). Staff 8 consists of a single line with a treble clef, 3/2 time signature, and a 32-measure repeat sign, with lyrics 't t n s t p t n s t p t n t p t n g' and time markings 3:54, 4:22, 4:50, and 5:19. Staff 9 starts with a 32-measure repeat sign, 'rit.', 5:51, a 32-measure repeat sign, IV ($\text{♩} = 10$), 6:08, 6:28, a 32-measure repeat sign, 'pes.', a 32-measure repeat sign, ($\text{♩} = 9$), 6:43, 6:56, 7:13, ($\text{♩} = 9.5$), 7:29, 'accel.', 7:54, ($\text{♩} = 13$), and 'rit.' 8:35.

FIGURE 7.2. Gongan 1 and 2, illustrating contrastive *garapan* (treatments) within irama tanggung (1).

The musical score is arranged in a system with the following parts from top to bottom:

- sindhènan**: Vocal line in treble clef, 3/8 time signature. It features a melodic line with lyrics: "Dé-wá tir-tá,wanta hé a - ma-ngun nèn -". Measure numbers :07, :12, :17, :21, and :26 are marked above the staff.
- gérongan**: Vocal line in bass clef, 3/8 time signature.
- bonang panerus**: Instrumental line in treble clef, 3/8 time signature, featuring a complex rhythmic pattern.
- bonang barung**: Instrumental line in treble clef, 3/8 time signature, featuring a complex rhythmic pattern.
- saron barung**: Instrumental line in treble clef, 3/8 time signature, featuring a complex rhythmic pattern.
- peking saron demung (sru lower)**: Instrumental line in treble clef, 3/8 time signature. It includes a tempo marking "1 (♩ = 108)" and a "rit." (ritardando) marking.
- kendhang**: Instrumental line in bass clef, 3/8 time signature. It includes markings for "kendhang loro" and "kendhang ciblon; cue for kébar treatment".
- colotomic**: Instrumental line in bass clef, 3/8 time signature. It includes markings for "sru basso" and "n g".

The lyrics are: Dé-wá tir-tá,wanta hé a - ma-ngun nèn -

:32 :38 :43 :49
 dra Wong ta - ru - ná wong ta - ru - ná ra ma ra ma pang-gah a - la - buh na - ga - ra
 sing sa - yuk sing ru-kun o é o o é a é a é yè
 (♩ = 86)
 kendhang ciblon
 t p p t n t p p t n t p p t n t p p t p g
 8va bass

- *irama* IV (also called *irama rangkep*, meaning “double density”) is realized at a ratio of 16:1, with one beat of main melody represented by a double whole note. *Irama* III and IV appear only during the last two cycles, as described later.

The eighth *gongan* is in *irama* III and, as can be seen in figure 7.1, is characterized by a combination of some whole notes, representing a slowed down version of the same melody we have heard in all the previous *gongan* ([e d e c e d c a]; or 2 1 2 6 2 1 6 5), followed by a passage with more varied rhythm (half notes, dotted whole notes, and even quarters at the end of the *gongan*) and a melodic contour that, while tracing the same basic path as in *irama* I up to near the end of the line, diverges somewhat.

The main melody (and hence all the other melodic parts) in the ninth and final *gongan* of this performance contrasts markedly with those in all the previous *gongan*. This ninth *gongan* is referred to as the *lik* (verb form *ngelik*, lit., “to get small”; that is, to go up to the high register). It is, strictly speaking, an optional section, one that is only played in response to a signal from the lead melodic instrument, the *rebab*, which goes “up” (Javanese say “gets small”) to high [d] (tone 1) near the end of the previous *gongan*, between the final *kempul* and *kethuk* strokes (at 5:09). The other instruments and voices follow, the *pesindhèn* and *gérong* clearly singing in the high register and the *saron* instruments playing the ascending scalar passage of quarter notes approaching the end of the line (see last line of figure 7.6). Thus, one of the important ways in which the frame can be flexed is for this contrastive *gongan* to be played. Another is the slowing of the tempo in this *gongan* in approach to the first *kenong* stroke (at 5:51, melody on pitch [a], tone 5). At this point the *irama* level drops from *irama* III to *irama* IV and the elaborating parts double their density, even though the tempo of the main melody in *irama* IV has not dropped to half that of *irama* III. Because the subdividing parts must therefore play faster in *irama* IV than in any other *irama* level, this is often considered the most challenging for the musicians playing those parts. Also, because the *gongan* is stretched to such a remarkable length (more than three minutes) it can be more of a challenge not to get lost at this *irama* level than at the others.

Toward the end of the *ngelik gongan*, beginning with the last *gatra* of the third *kenongan* (c.7:45) and continuing through most of the fourth *kenongan*, the main melody, still in *irama* IV, is identical to that of the “normal” *Ladrang Pangkur* melody of *irama* III (eighth *gongan*). The acceleration of the tempo in approach to the final gong prepares for the end of this stretched-out *irama*-IV playing, but instead of going back to the regular *irama*-III *gongan*, the *rebab* plays a high [d] (tone 1, at 8:34) and the drumming changes just before the

gong beat to lead without interruption into *Ayak-ayakan laras sléndro pathet sanga*, and from there to still other pieces, before finally ending (*suwuk*).¹¹

Rather than let each line of figure 7.1 represent roughly the same amount of clock time, we chose to let each one present the *saron* melody for one *gongan*. This was to facilitate comparison between the various *gongan*, the first five of which consist of identical *saron* lines in *irama* I, the next two of which involve some interruptions and passages in *irama* II (shown here as half notes). In each line, the prevailing *irama* level is given in the time signature: 32 over a quarter note means 32 “*irama*-I” beats per *gongan*; 32 over a half note, as found right after the first gaps in sixth and seventh *gongan*, means 32 *irama*-II beats per *gongan*. Although the “value” of the beat may change (i.e., to use Western notation terminology, from a quarter to half-note, etc.), these changes in *irama* are never predetermined by a composer, however, but rather are signaled during performance by the drummer, who can decide to change tempo by playing a particular combination of drum strokes, which must in turn be heard and correctly interpreted by the musicians. Without the specific signals, the musicians would not change *irama* level, but simply keep repeating the *gongan* at the same tempo. Similarly, to end (*suwuk*) or proceed to another *gendhing*, the musicians also follow the tempo lead of the drummer, and a lead melodic instrument player (*rebab* or *bonang barung*).

An important aspect of the performance that leaps out at us from the macrotranscription (figure 7.1) is the appearance of gaps part way through the sixth, seventh, and ninth *gongan*. These represent short time intervals, leading up to which the instrumental music has been brought to a halt by the drummer’s special pattern and during which the *pesindhèn* sings a short solo, only to be joined again by the instrumentalists just a bit further on in the *gongan*. Listen again to the sixth *gongan*, and look at figure 7.3. Analytically we can see that the *pesindhèn* fills a portion of the *gongan*, her short solo replacing a *gatra* (four beats) of the normal measured rhythm we have heard in the main melody, its elaborators, and the drumming through the first five *gongan* and in most of the subsequent ones as well. This coordinated halt in the middle of the *gongan* is known simply as *andhegan* (lit., a “stop”) and is an intentional and playful interruption of the regular and predictable binary rhythm that has led up to it, and will return following it. Socially, an *andhegan* is a time for spe-

11. They could have ended their performance with a return to the regular *irama* III *gongan* of *Ladrang Pangkur*, or even gone back to *irama* I (*kébar*). But here the *rebab* and the drum signal *Ayak-ayakan*, not a surprising choice for those knowledgeable of the range of performance possibilities. (Because of time limitations, we have not included the subsequent pieces of this medley on the book CD.)

cial focus on the female singer, whose voice, and often whose dress and manner, are often found to be appealing, even erotic, by the many male audience members.¹² Musicians and seasoned listeners (again, mostly male) often sigh at the end of the *pesindhèn's* solo, simultaneously marking the transition from free, florid time back to measured instrumental rhythm and expressing a kind of stylized, flirtatious appreciation for the *pesindhèn's* melody. (A bit more will be said in relation to figure 7.3.)

Before turning our attention to the particular details of this performance that are shown in the subsequent transcribed figures, let's consider what else is evident in this macrotranscription. For most of the first line, we see the standard colotomic punctuation pattern for *ladrang*, but toward the end of even this line, in addition to the *kempul* (p) sounded on the fourth beat (pitch c) after the *kenong* beat (its "normal" point in *ladrang* structure), we see two additional *kempul* strokes: one on the very next beat (pitch e) and another in between the following pitches (d and c). This livelier *kempul* part is not simply an arbitrary choice made by the *kempul* player, but rather is a response to the change in drumming style from the calmer *ladrang* ostinato, played on the large and small drums (*kendhang gendhing* and *kendhang ketipung*, referred to in combination as *kendhang loro*, lit. "two drums") up to the third *kenong* stroke, to the much livelier dance-oriented drumming played on the middle-sized (*ciblon*) drum from that point until the end of the piece. The *kethuk* part also becomes somewhat more active just before gong in the sixth and seventh *gongan*, sounding on the half beats immediately before and after the *kempul* stroke. We will say more about this as we scrutinize figures 7.2 and 7.3 more closely. Finally, although the large gong (*gong ageng*) only plays at its appointed colotomic point, the final beat of each *gongan*, we hear the slightly smaller gong (*gong siyem* (s)), play at certain other points in some *gongan*, for example, a low [c] (6) at the end of the first and second *kenongan* of *irama* III (eighth *gongan*, at 3:54 and 4:22) and at end of the first *kenongan* in the *ngelik gongan* (the moment of "arrival" at *irama* IV; 5:51). These additions enrich the sound with their deep, resonant tones, often stressing the main tone in the passage immediately following, but do not articulate formal structure.

12. Although many individual Javanese *pesindhèn* rebuke flirtatious advances by male audience members, their appearance at events that often last all night, such as shadow puppet (*wayang kulit*) performances or all-night gamelan concerts (*klenengan*), with instrumentalists who are all, or nearly all, male continues to suggest a degree of sexual availability greater than that of most Javanese women. And the historical antecedents of the Javanese *pesindhèn* are the *talèdhèk* (or *ronggèng*), female singer-dancers who often served the sexual desires of their male audience members (see further Sutton [1987], Walton [1996], Tohari [2004]).

FIGURE 7.3. Gonggan 6, illustrating trommel rem treatment with andhegan.

The musical score is divided into four sections, each marked with a time signature and a 'V' symbol:

- Section 1:** 1:55 to 2:00. The vocal line (sindhènan) features a melodic phrase. The instrumental accompaniment (slenthem and colotomic) includes a tempo marking of $I (\text{♩} = c. 112)$ and a *rit.* (ritardando) instruction.
- Section 2:** 2:05 to 2:16. The vocal line continues with the lyrics: "Ru - jak dli - mã ru - jak - é pu - tri u - tà - mã". The instrumental accompaniment includes a tempo marking of $II (\text{♩} = 48)$ and an *implied* instruction.
- Section 3:** 2:16 to 2:30. The vocal line continues with the lyrics: "sar - wã ce - thã la - be - té tan - sah ti nã - tà () sar - wã ce thã la - be - té tan sah ti - nã - tà". The instrumental accompaniment includes a tempo marking of $II (\text{♩} = 48)$ and an *implied* instruction.
- Section 4:** 2:30 to 2:35. The vocal line continues with the lyrics: "sar - wã ce thã la - be - té tan sah ti - nã - tà". The instrumental accompaniment includes a tempo marking of $I (\text{♩} = 112)$ and an *accel.* (accelerando) instruction.

The score also includes labels for the instruments: *kenong*, *kethuk*, *kempul*, *gong*, and *8va basso*. The sections are labeled as *kenongan 1*, *kenongan 2*, *kenongan 3*, and *kenongan 4*.

*Enriching the Form: Tempo Changes, Interruptions, and Irama Shifts**Gongan 1 and 2*

Figure 7.2 offers a detailed look at the first two *gongan*, both played in *irama I*, but contrasting in a number of aesthetically significant ways. Since it is the drumming style that is the primary determinant of the stylistic orientation employed in many of the other instrumental and vocal parts, let us look at that part first. Up to the third *kenong* stroke (at 0:21) the drummer plays a standard *ladrang* pattern on the large and small drums, at a fast steady tempo. But at this point he switches to the medium-sized (*ciblon*) drum and slows the tempo a bit (with no *irama* change), thereby signaling a shift to what is known as *kébar* treatment. The drumming in the following *gongan*, as can easily be seen in the transcription and heard on the CD (starting after 0:26), is much livelier and more varied than the highly repetitive drumming motif used over and over again in the standard *ladrang* drumming. This same style continues through the third, fourth, and fifth *gongan*, and into the sixth *gongan* until it is interrupted by an *andhegan*. *Kébar* drumming might sound lively and spontaneous, but it is actually a mostly fixed accompaniment for the *kiprah* (preening) movements of the flirtatious female dance known as *gambyong*. Even though no dancer is present, the drummer here, and in much of the remainder of the performance, plays *gambyong* dance patterns, following, as it were, an imagined choreography.

Let's consider now what this change to *kébar* style (or *kébar* "treatment") means for the other parts. Though some *saron* (the lower pitched *demung*) continue to play the main melody, the two *saron barung* play in a lively interlocking style (*imbal*), the composite of which is four times the rate of the main melody (here the *imbal* is shown as sixteenth notes against the quarter notes of the main melody). One *saron barung* plays on each beat of the main melody and half way in between ("on beat"), as the other *saron barung* plays in between those beats ("off beat"). The resultant melody is mostly conjunct, and follows the melodic contour of the main melody quite closely, pairing two notes at a time.

The two *bonang* (*barung* and *panerus*) for most of the first *gongan* have employed a technique known as *pipilan* (lit. "pick off one at a time"), in which each one varies the main melody two tones at a time by playing each pair in alternation, one at a time (the *panerus* at twice the rate of the *barung*). However, in response to the *ciblon* drum, the two *bonang* switch just after the gong stroke at 0:26 to an *imbal* technique, playing interlocking octaves with the *bonang barung* mostly anticipating every second tone of the main melody and the *bonang panerus* playing the tone one step (or, more often, one octave and

one step) above that of the *bonang barung*. Despite the octave transposition, the ear tends to hear these two parts as creating mostly conjunct interlocking, like the *saron barung*, as the lower tone of the *bonang panerus* is always conjunct with either the higher, or (more rarely) the lower tone of the *bonang barung*. Together the two styles of interlocking (both generally referred to as *imbal*) create a very lively feeling Javanese would identify as *sigrak* (“lively”), *lincah* (Ind., “lively,” “light-hearted”), even a little *urakan* (“unmannerly,” “rude,” “bawdy”).

Adding to the lively feeling of this *kébar* passage are the vocalizations of the male chorus, here mostly vocables (syllables with no lexical meaning), such as “o é o” and “a é”, the phrase *sing sayuk*, *sing rukun* (lit., “that which is congenial, that which is compatible/harmonious”). In addition to vocalizing, the male chorus members perform interlocking handclapping to add to the liveliness. The *pesindhèn* also enters, singing light-hearted, didactic verses in a form known as *wangsalan*. The *pesindhèn* inserts short phrases (*abon-abon*) between the lines of the main *wangsalan* text to fill the *gongan*. Her melody floats over the steady beats of the instrumental parts, guided by the structural framework, but partially obscuring it or, as it were, softening its edges, by arriving at the important goal tones (usually those at the end of *gatra*, i.e., the *kenong* tones and the tones half way in between) late. This delayed arrival creates a layer of heterophony much appreciated by Javanese musicians and listeners, who will criticize a *pesindhèn* who arrives “too soon” at those goal tones.

The main melody in the *kébar* passages remains the same as beforehand, although it is only the *saron demung* (and *slenthem*, an octave lower, not shown) that continue to play the main melody, the *saron barung* having switched to *imbal* technique. The colotomic punctuation still articulates the *ladrang* form, but the *kempul* part becomes more active, playing on the fourth and fifth beats of each *kenongan* (instead of only the fourth beat of only the second, third, and fourth *kenongan* that characterizes the basic form and “standard” playing). And near the end of the fourth *kenongan* it also adds a syncopated stroke between the sixth and seventh beats, right before the gong beat. Thus, even among the instruments whose function is generally described as the articulation of formal structure, the *kempul* playing responds to and enhances the livelier mood with added strokes.

Gongan 5, 6, and 7

In the midst of what begins as the fifth *kébar gongan* (the sixth *gongan* in *irama I*), the drummer’s signal brings the musicians to an abrupt halt just before the first *kenong* stroke (2:02). He has hinted at his intentions by accelerating the tempo towards the end of the previous *gongan*, and confirms it by the special

pattern he plays for the second half of the first *kenongan*. The instrumentalists drop out and pause before playing the *kenong* beat, seemingly floating in measureless time. This kind of acceleration and fast first *kenongan* in *irama* I, leading to a sudden halt is sometimes referred to as *trommel rem*, which translates literally as “drum-brake(s)” — a pun on the word *trommel* (borrowed into Javanese from Dutch) as it is the *ciblon* “drum” which, as it were, slams on the brakes (*rem* in Javanese, also borrowed from Dutch) in this playful flexing of the *gendhing*.

After a moment of silence, the *pesindhèn* then enters alone and the drum soon resumes, inviting the other instrumentalists to join in again, but now at *irama* level II (main melody shown in half-notes). No sooner have they done so than the drummer signals yet another stop, and the main melody instruments respond with a double time (quarter-note) ascending passage (2:13–2:16), at variance with the standard main melody. The progression of measured musical time stops again, the *pesindhèn* sings, and again the drummer enters and brings the other instrumentalists back in, playing in *irama* II up to the end of the *gongan*.

Figures 7.3 and 7.4 show in more detail some of the parts played in this frame-flexing sixth *gongan*. Figure 7.3 shows the *pesindhèn*'s part (the *sindhènan*), along with the main melody (here shown on *slenthem*) and the colotomic punctuation. Here we can see clearly how the vocal part floats rhythmically over the instrumental playing, in the same florid style whether in the moments of instrumental silence (the *andbegan*) or with the instrumentalists playing. The words are in a light, playful poetical form known as *rujak-rujukan* because each couplet begins with a description of one or another form of *rujak* (a spicy salad snack food, often sold by street vendors).

The play of *irama* level is a bit tricky here. Following the first halt and the first few syllables of the *pesindhèn*'s short solo (“*rujak dlima*”) the drum, colotomic (and some other) instruments join in, now suddenly in *irama* II. The main melody ([d g e d], now in half notes) is implied, but not actually played by any instrument. When the main melody instruments rejoin, they play the variant melody [c e g a c] as the drummer signals a second halt. After the second halt, again the *pesindhèn* sings a few syllables (“*sarwa cethā*”) at which point all but the main melody instruments join back in, in *irama* II, the main melody instruments joining at the end of this third *kenongan* on [d] (tone 1) and continue in *irama* II up to the final beat of the *gongan*. At this point, if the tempo has neither been gradually slowed nor gradually accelerated, one might normally expect the musicians to continue by playing the next *gongan* in *irama* II. Figure 7.4 shows that the *irama* level suddenly shifts back to *irama* I at the gong stroke (2:36), for a second *trommel rem* (drum brake) passage. This is in response to a slight acceleration and particular configuration of

FIGURE 7.4. End of gonggan 6 and beginning of gonggan 7, illustrating shift from irama dadi (II) to irama tanggung (I).

The musical score consists of five staves, each representing a different instrument. The top staff is for the *saron baru*, which is in treble clef and 3/2 time. It features a melodic line with a tempo change from $\text{II} (\text{♩} = 46)$ to $\text{I} (\text{♩} = 112)$. Above the staff, the time markers 2:25, 2:30, 2:35, 2:40, and 2:45 are indicated. The middle three staves are for the *peking* (treble clef), *gambang* (treble clef, with the note "(r.h. only, sounds 8th lower)"), and *kendhang ciblon* (soprano clef). The bottom staff is for the *colotomic* instruments: *kenong*, *kethuk*, *kempul*, and *gong*, in bass clef. The score includes dynamic markings such as *accel.* and *rit.*, and a section labeled *8^{vo} basso* at the end.

drum strokes, which tell the musicians that at the gong stroke (2:36) the *irama* level will suddenly shift back to *irama* I. Here the *saron barung* (and other main melody instruments) jump back to the faster tempo characteristic of *irama* I. The *peking* reverts to its *irama* I style, merely sounding and echoing the main melody tones, and the *gambang* (along with other soft-playing elaborating instruments) drop out altogether.

In the subsequent (seventh) *gongan* the same treatment occurs again, but with the *pesindhèn* taking slightly more of the unmeasured time in between the “stop” (*andhegan*) and the reentrance of the instrumentalists. And instead of speeding suddenly back to *irama* I yet again, the drummer slows the tempo gradually, and the performance makes a seamless transition from *irama* II to *irama* III.

Moving Between Irama Levels

This kind of seamless shift is a hallmark of Javanese rhythmic treatment and is difficult to show accurately in staff notation. Different instruments shift their ratio of subdivision of the main melody beat (i.e., their *irama* level) not all at the same point, but where it is “comfortable” (*kepénak*) for the individual player and the idiom of his particular instrument. Look now at figure 7.5, which shows the transition from *irama* II to *irama* III at the end of the seventh *gongan*. The drummer directs this transition with a special sequence of drum strokes, beginning at the third *kenong* stroke (at the very beginning of figure 7.5, just before 3:10, and continuing to the gong beat at the end of the fourth *kenongan*, at 3:27). This leads directly into the first of a number of *ciblon* patterns (repeated sequences of strokes, ranging in length from two to six main melody beats) that fill out the *gongan* in *irama* III. This first one is called *lampah sekar* (lit., “flower walk/movement”), the first portion of which appears in the latter part of figure 7.5 (3:27 to 3:35). In longer performances of this and other comparable *ladrang* pieces, each *gongan* in *irama* III involves a different main *ciblon* drum pattern, corresponding, as in *kébar*, to one of the dance movements of the female dance *gambyong*. In this performance, we hear the second pattern (*pilesan*) in the final *gongan*. Integrated into the main pattern of each *gongan*, transitional drum patterns—mostly the same from one *gongan* to the next—articulate the formal structure, leading to *kenong* strokes, the final *kempul* stroke, and a new drum pattern just before the gong stroke.

The point by which one could say that the performance has fully reached *irama* III is the beat at which the gong plays (the [a] just slightly before 3:27). From this moment on, for this *gongan* and the first part of the next, the subdividing parts have all shifted to the level of subdivision appropriate for *irama* III. We show in the transcription a shift from 32 half-note beats per *gongan* to

FIGURE 7.5. *End of gongan 7 and beginning of gongan 8, illustrating shift from irama dadi (II) to irama wilet (III).*

II (♩ = c.40) rit. 3:10 3:15 3:20 3:25 III (♩ = 16.5) 3:30

saron
barung

peking

gambang
(r.h. only,
sounds
8^{va} lower)

[drum cue]

kendhang
ciblon

kenong
kethuk

colotomic
kempul
gong

8^{va} basso

The musical score is arranged in five staves. The top staff is for saron barung, showing a melodic line with time signatures 3:10, 3:15, 3:20, 3:25, and 3:30. Above the first measure is the tempo marking 'II (♩ = c.40) rit.' and above the last measure is 'III (♩ = 16.5)'. The second staff is for peking, showing a rhythmic accompaniment. The third staff is for gambang (right hand only), showing a complex rhythmic pattern with a 'III' marking above a specific section. The fourth staff is for kendhang ciblon, showing a drum pattern with a 'drum cue' marking and a 'III' marking. The fifth staff is for colotomic, showing a sparse melodic line with a '8^{va} basso' marking at the end.

32 whole-note beats per *gongan*, as the tempo of the main melody structural beats by this point has slowed to about half of what it was in *irama* II (in the first part of figure 7.5) to accommodate the shifts in subdivision. But some instruments, including drum and *gambang*, have shifted a few beats beforehand. It is perhaps easiest to hear, and to see in the transcription, the moment where the rhythmically regular playing of the *gambang* has slowed to the point that the player feels comfortable to double his speed, moving from an *irama* II ratio (8:1 with the main melody) to *irama* III ratio (16:1 with the main melody). At the moment that this happens, the *gambang* playing literally jumps from a speed that is rather slow (for *gambang*) to one twice as fast, but which will undergo immediate, steady ritard until it has reached the “comfortable” range for *gambang*. We show the *gambang* part shifting (at 3:21) from sparser and sparser sixteenth notes to tightly crunched thirty-second notes. By the gong stroke, however, where we commence to show the main melody in whole notes, we adjust the *gambang* notation back to sixteenth notes, to show that the *gambang* speed is the same or similar to its speed in the steady portions of *irama* II immediately preceding.

Varying the Main Melody

Also note the shift in the *peking* part, which plays at a ratio of 4:1 with the main melody in *irama* II, to a ratio of 8:1 in *irama* III. The *peking* plays simple variations of the main melody. In *irama* I it almost always just sounds the main melody, but articulates each tone twice: once on the beat, and once “echoing” it a half a main-melody beat later.¹³ In *irama* II, as you can see in the first half of the passage shown in figure 7.5 the *peking* part takes two successive tones of the main melody, reiterating one, then the other, then the first again, then the second again, ending this little figuration just one *peking* beat after the second main melody tone has been played. After the first tone (*kenong* beat, melody tone [d]) the main melody sounds [g] and [e], then [d] and high [c]. The *peking*, in the octave register above the *saron barung*, takes these tones, a pair at a time, playing [g g e e g g e e], and then [d d c c d d c c] (c’s high). When the *peking* shifts to *irama* III, right at the gong beat (3:27), it becomes a little more independent from the main melody, still playing *peking* style [x x y y], but adding tones other than the main melody tones to create figures leading to

13. In the regional styles of Yogyakarta (south central Java), and Semarang (north coast of central Java) the *peking* “anticipates” by sounding the main melody tone a half beat before the main melody beat and then reiterating it on the beat (no echoing after the beat).

each tone of the now slow-moving main melody, beginning with [g g e g g e e] to lead to main melody pitch [e], then [g g d d e d d] to lead to main melody pitch [d].

This variation, though still quite limited, gives us a glimpse of the simplest kind of melodic *garapan* or variation treatment that characterizes many of the elaborating and vocally oriented (freer rhythm) parts. Although not “flexing” the frame in the sense of rhythmic alteration, the many layers of *garapan*—from the simple *peking* variations to the more elaborate meanderings of the *gambang* (shown here) and other instruments, including *gendèr*, the zithers, *rebab*, *suling*, and the vocal parts—flesh out the main melody, which, you will recall, the Javanese appropriately have designated by the Javanese word for skeleton (*balungan*). We can think of these melodic variations as yet another flexing of the basic melodic frame, in the dimensions both of pitch and of melodic density.

Before we focus in on the particulars of instrumental playing in this expanded *gongan*, mention should be made of the vocal texts here and throughout this performance. In the first *gongan*, *irama* I, we only hear the *pesindhèn* enter following the drummer’s switch to the lively *ciblon* drum, and she sings different kinds of texts (*wangsalan*, *abon-abon*, and *rujak-rujukan*) that are typical of many *gendhing* performances, but bear no relationship to the particular sung poetic form from which this piece takes its name (*pangkur*). Finally, in the first *kenongan* of *irama* III (c.3:27 to 3:54), the *pesindhèn* sings the first line of a famous *pangkur* text, from the nineteenth century didactic treatise known as the *Serat Wedhatama*. Following the first *kenongan*, the *gérong* join in and sing the remainder of the verse in a rhythmically measured melody, with the *pesindhèn* singing the same text, but in a much more florid, rhythmically free style, heterophonically trailing the *gérong*. The text of the first verse, with English translation by the Javanese language scholar Stuart Robson is given below (Robson 1990:20–21):

<i>Mingkar mingkur ing angkara</i>	Turning away from selfish motives,
<i>Akarana karenan mardi siwi</i>	As one is pleased to give instruction to sons,
<i>Sinawung resmining kidung</i>	It is cast in the form of a delightful song,
<i>Sinuba sinukarta</i>	Finely finished and well turned,
<i>Mrih kretarta pakartining ngèlmu luhung</i>	In the hope that they may prosper in their practice of noble sciences
<i>Kang tumrap nèng tanah Jawa</i>	That pertain to the land of Java,

*Agama ageming aji*¹⁴

As the spiritual tradition adhered
to by its kings.

In *irama* I, and the portions of the sixth and seventh *gongan* in *irama* II, the basic melodic contour of the main melody and, consequently, the vocal parts, has been derived from the melodic contour of the usual *pangkur* melody associated with this piece (*pangkur paripurna*). But not until this *irama* III *gongan* are the text and the vocal melody both “fully” *pangkur*; and for this reason many Javanese musicians consider this more expanded (*irama* III) *gongan* to be the “real” *Ladrang Pangkur*, the *irama* I (and II) being like something of a condensed introduction, although sometimes played without ever slowing and expanding to *irama* III. In the *ngelik gongan*, which in contemporary practice nearly always proceeds to *irama* IV toward the end of the first *kenongan* and thereby eliminates the possibility of a *gérong* part (never present in *irama* IV), the vocal melody sung by the *pesindhèn* follows the contours of this variant main melody and thus can be said to be “not *pangkur*” (melodically) even though the text is *pangkur* (second verse), and the section is identified musically as “the *ngelik* section of *Ladrang Pangkur*.” Javanese listeners place great importance on the vocal parts, particularly the florid patterns of the *pesindhèn*.

Many of the *garapan* instruments cover a range of several octaves, and players conceive the *balungan* part in multioctave format, even though its manifestation on the *saron* is, as it were, folded in.¹⁵ Thus, a pattern of main melody such as the final four beats of the *gongan* in *Ladrang Pangkur* ([e d c a]) is conceived of as a conjunct descent from [e] down to [a], though on the *saron* and *slenthem*, limited as they are to one octave (or just slightly more, ranging from [c] up to [d] in the higher octave), the part is played with a leap up from the [d] to the [c] above, followed by conjunct descent to the [a].

The thick texture of Javanese gamelan music makes it difficult to hear all of the *garapan* parts completely, as most of them involve dense and constant activity, often overlapping and coinciding with one another. Moving in diverse directions between predictable points of repose (described by some musicians as *nunggal-misah*, lit. “join and separate”), this kind of texture is a defining fea-

14. Final syllables with an open “a” vowel and penultimate syllables with “a” preceding these final syllables are pronounced “aw” and rendered in the transcriptions for this article as “ä,” but here we reproduce the text as it would normally be written in Roman alphabet (and as given in Robson [1990]).

15. In fact, all competent musicians recognize that acceptable *garapan* sometimes diverges from the *balungan*, even in its multioctave form. Some have theorized about an inherent, conceptual melodic line, referred to by Sumarsam and others as “inner melody.” (See Sumarsam [1975], Sutton [1979], Sumarsam [1984], and Perlman [2004].)

ture of good Javanese ensemble playing. The melodic patterns performed by most of the *garapan* instruments and voices are known as *céngkok*, some of them identified by specific names, others simply by the final tone (and the *pathet*) of the passage in which they are used. Several book-length studies have been devoted primarily to the theory and practice of *garapan* and *céngkok*;¹⁶ here we would like to draw your attention to a few examples in the *gambang* part. Javanese explain that the *garapan* parts “lead to” a particular tone, or that they “fill” a particular melodic context, usually a *gatra* (four beats of main melody).

As an example, we can talk about the *gambang céngkok* going to 6 (c) filling the *gatra* 3 2 1 6 ([g e d c]) in *sléndro pathet sanga* by scrutinizing the pattern filling the first *gatra* shown in figure 7.5 (the first *gatra* of the fourth *kenongan*, seventh *gongan*), and compare it to the *gambang* part played for the same passage, same *irama* level (II), of the previous *gongan* (the first *gatra* of the fourth *kenongan*, sixth *gongan*) as shown in figure 7.4. The transcriptions both begin with the third *kenong* tone [d] (tone 1, which is actually the last tone of the sixth *gatra* of the piece), followed by this *gatra* [g e d c] (3 2 1 6 in Javanese cipher notation). We can see in figure 7.5 that the *gambang* part (like the *peking* part) starts from the main melody tone at the *kenong* (tone d), but climbs more than an octave over the next eight sixteenth notes to sound a high [e] (tone 2) simultaneously with the next main melody tone [g] (tone 3). By the next main melody tone [e] (tone 2), it has descended an octave to join the main melody in unison, then proceeds down to a low [g] (tone 3) with the main melody tone [d] (tone 1) and finally up to join the main melody again at the end of the *gatra*, on [c] (tone 6). In the “same” passage in the previous *gongan* (figure 7.4), the *gambang* climbs to [a] (tone 5) against the first main melody tone [g] (tone 3), rather than all the way up to high [e] (tone 2). On the remaining three beats of this *gatra*, the *gambang* part actually articulates the same pitch degree as the main melody ([e], [d], and [c]; or 2, 1, and 6), but it soars up to high [a] before descending more almost two octaves to land at the end of the *gatra* on a low [c]. In keeping with the constraints of the modal system (*pathet*), the *gambang céngkok* emphasizes the prominent tones of *pathet sanga* (5, 1, and 2, here [a], [d], and [e]) and avoids giving emphasis to the weak or “enemy” tone (3, here [g]). The *gambang*’s [g] (tone 3) against the main melody’s [d] (tone 1) in figure 7.5 actually does not emphasize this “enemy tone” as it is immediately followed by three successive [e]s (2’s).

Thus this “same musical context”—that is, the “same *gatra*”—is realized differently in successive occurrences in the *gambang* part. Some musicians would

16. See especially Marc Perlman’s *Unplayed Melodies* (Perlman [2004]); Brinner (1995), Sutton (1993).

say the *gambang* player chose a slightly different *céngkok*. Others would say that the two are similar enough to be called the same *céngkok*, since they start and end on the same tone and have other similarities in shape, but are, instead, different *wiletan* (i.e., different “meanderings,” from the same Javanese word, *wilet*, used to refer to irama III, where playing can become intricate and winding around).¹⁷ As is characteristic of the *gambang*, and most other *garapan* parts, the melodic motion is continuous. Thus, it does not rest (or sustain) even for one brief subdivision, but instead continues immediately into the next *céngkok*.

Other instrumental parts work in similar ways to the *gambang*, stringing variable *céngkok* together, one after the other, in a seamless progression through the *gendhing* as it unfolds. Vocal parts also consist of *céngkok*, in two contrasting styles: (group) *gérong* and (solo) *pesindhèn*. The male chorus (*gérong*) sing melodies that exhibit regular, proportional durations, almost always ending their phrases on the same tone as the main instrumental melody at the same rhythmic moment that the instrumental parts reach the same tone (albeit in different octave registers, depending on the tessitura of the instrument). The *gérong* part moves heterophonically with the main melody, tracing a similar contour overall, but often contrasting in motion between these moments of repose (*sèlèh*, in Javanese). The exact melodic shape and rhythmic particulars are variable, at least in some instances, but because it is sung by a small chorus of voices, and expected to sound as a single melodic line, the *gérong* part is usually worked out prior to the moment of performance, rather than being sung spontaneously (although exceptions to this occur). The *pesindhèn* part, though based on extant *céngkok*, is more variable, with individual preferences and spontaneous decisions determining the shape and sequence of *céngkok*. Figure 7.6 presents the vocal parts for the entire eighth *gongan*, in irama III, where the first verse of the *pangkur* poem is sung. We have identified the repose (*sèlèh*) tones of the main melody, encasing each in a shaded box, and similarly identified the ends of each vocal phrase in both the *gérong* and the *pesindhèn* parts.

17. *Wiletan* can be understood as the precise realization of a *céngkok* in all its details, variable in performance. But musicians do not agree universally on just how different two passages have to be to constitute a difference in *céngkok* rather than “merely” a difference in *wiletan*. One often hears musicians say something to the effect that so and so plays the same *céngkok* as someone else, only the *wiletan* are different, or that a single player enriches his performance by playing different *wiletan* of the same *céngkok* for passages that repeat in performance. Maximum variation is not the goal, but exact repetition in *gambang* and other *garapan* parts is considered overly rigid and the mark of a beginner (on variation in gamelan performance, see further Vetter [1981], Sutton [1993], Sutton [1998], Perlman [2004]).

There are six phrases in the *gérong* part, two in each of the last three *kenongan* of this *gongan*. (By convention, only the *pesindhèn* sings in the first *kenongan* of pieces such as this in *irama* III, the *gérong* joining in the second *kenongan*.)¹⁸ The transcription shows the *gérong* phrases, two per system (as each system presents one *kenongan*), ending on the same pitch degrees as the main melody at those points: [d] and [c] in the second *kenongan*, [d] and [d] in the third, and [c] and [d] in the fourth.¹⁹

These are not the only moments at which the *gérong* part is in unison with the main melody (and, of course, with many of the other instrumental parts as well). The first *gérong* phrase (second system of the transcription) begins on pitch [c] while this same pitch is being sustained in the main melody. Near the middle of the second phrase, on the syllable “*bā*” (of “*sinubā*”) both the *gérong* part and the main melody sustain pitch [e] before moving, each in its own idiom, to the phrase final [c]. Similarly, both the *gérong* and main melody sustain pitch [e] near the middle of the fourth phrase, on the syllable “*ning*” (of “*pakartining*”). The fifth phrase (first part of the fourth *kenongan*) shows an even closer relationship between these two parts, as the *gérong* melody moves through each successive pitch of the main melody [a c e d a e d c], albeit with auxiliary tones that make it an idiomatic *gérong céngkok*. The sixth and final phrase is a response to the *rebab*'s signal, beginning just after the previous *sèlèh* tone [c], directing the singers and players of multioctave instruments to proceed to the upper register, ending on pitch [d] with the gong stroke, in transition to the *ngelik gongan*.

In contrast to the *gérong* part, with its proportional and metric rhythms and its arrival at repose tones simultaneously with the main melody, the *pesindhèn* part seems to float freely over the measured rhythms of the other parts, in *parlando* style, always arriving at phrase-ending tones well past the moment when the main melody, the *gérong*, and most other instrumental parts have reached the end of their *céngkok*. We have inserted arrows in the transcription to link the final tone of each *pesindhèn céngkok* with the main melody tone that guides her singing. In most cases her *céngkok* is rather independent of the intermediary main melody tones, but in all cases except one, she sings a *céngkok* that ends on the same tone as the *sèlèh*. Because the *pesindhèn* phrase lags behind the others, as it were, we have had to draw arrows between systems to show, for ex-

18. This is very likely so because in most *ladrang* pieces, *irama* III, the *gérong* text is set in a poetical form consisting of six lines of eight syllables each (*kinanthi*), each line conveniently filling one half of one *kenongan*, ending with the last syllable coinciding with the gong stroke at the end of the fourth *kenongan*.

19. The final phrase ends on high [d], rather than the usual low [a] because the *rebab* has signaled a transition to the *ngelik gongan*.

FIGURE 7.6. Gonggan 8 in irama wilet (III), illustrating contrastive vocal styles (female and male) and their relationship to one another and to sèlèh (goal) tones.

III (♩ = 16-17)
3:27

sindhènan

Ming-kar ming-kur-ing ang - kâ - rã, A-ka-rã-nã kare nan (ing) mar-di

gérongan

saron barung

colotomic

n g t t n s

3:54

s.

si - wi, Si-na-wung res - mi - ning' ki - dung, Si-nu - bã si - nu - kar -

g.

Si - na - wung res - mi - ning - ki - dung, Si - nu - bã - si - nu - kar - tâ,

s.b. (plésèdan)

c.

(n) t t n (s) p s

4:22

FIGURE 7.6. *Continued*

(4:22) 4:50

s. *tä, Mrih kre - tar - tä pa - kar - ti - ning ngèl - mu lu -*

g. *Mrih kre - tar - tä mrih kre - tar - tä pa - kar - ti - ning ngèl - mu lu - hung,*

s.b.

c. (n) t p t n
(s)

(4:50) 5:19

s. *hung, Kang tum - rap nèng ta - nah ' Já - wã, A - gã - mã a - gc - ming ' a - ji.*

g. *Kang tun - rap nèng ta - nah Já - wã, A - gã - mã a - gc - ming a - ji.*

s.b.

c. (n) t p t n
(s) g

* rebab to high register I [d] (ngelik signal)

ample, that the pitch [c] she reaches in the first part of the third system, is actually determined by the final [c] in the main melody of the previous system. The exception occurs at the beginning of the second system, in which, instead of ending her phrase on the final pitch of the first *kenongan*, pitch [a], she makes a “slip” (*plèsèd*) to pitch [c], as it assumes special prominence in the main melody at this point, being both reiterated and sustained for the first quarter of the second *kenongan*.

We can get a sense of the variability of vocal *céngkok* by comparing the successive approaches to pitch [d] in the third system. In both the *gérong* and the *pesindhèn* parts the *céngkok* contours for the first phrase differ significantly from those for the second. The differences are partially a result of the contrasts between the main melody in each half, and also between the implied, underlying or “inner” melody for each half (see footnote 15). Of the two, the *gérong* is more constrained by these contrasts than the *pesindhèn*, whose *céngkok* choice is determined mainly by phrase final and by personal preference. In this *gongan*, for example, note that the very first *pesindhèn céngkok*, starting on pitch [d] and descending somewhat circuitously to pitch [c] in the lower octave, is nearly identical to the first phrase in the last *kenongan*, even though the main melody is different. Through their choice of *céngkok*, then, the singers, like the instrumentalists, contribute to flexing the melodic framework of this piece in terms of pitch and, in the case of the *pesindhèn*'s later arrival at *sèlèh* tones, also in terms of rhythm. The ways in which these two vocal styles vary the main melody and contrast with each other constitute an important dimension in gamelan musical aesthetics.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have taken a Javanese musical piece that might be analyzed solely in reference to its main instrumental melody, whose abstract structure presents a binary symmetry typical of nearly all Javanese pieces but whose particular sequence of tones belongs to this piece alone. Javanese writing for other Javanese do this routinely, but can assume of their readership a familiarity with the many processes that come to bear as the piece is realized by an ensemble of performers. Writing here for readers who mostly have little or no familiarity with such processes has made it imperative for us to foreground these performance processes, and we have done so in reference to a particular performance. This rendition of *Ladrang Pangkur* proceeds in just over eight minutes through four different tempo (*irama*) levels, each with characteristically different treatment by melodic instruments, singers, and drummer. In several places the in-

strumentalists stop altogether, with only the female singer continuing, later joined by the ensemble to finish out the phrase as if the loss of beat and momentum were only a passing memory. Transcriptions have illustrated aspects of interplay between melodic instruments, contrasts in drumming style, and laid out some of the various changes in tempo and treatment that make for an aesthetically rich and exciting performance, maintaining the integrity of the formal structure but roaming wild within it. Symmetry is never sacrificed; rather, it is radically offset by changes in tempo, melodic shape, and a whole range of factors that at times may seem intended to obscure or even obliterate the formal frame. What these techniques in fact do is intensify the power of the music by stretching the cognitive capacities of its performers and listeners, creating a magnificent, hardwon experiential realm unlike any other in Java or the world. The music's range and depth of expression, fully accessible only to practiced insiders, is the product of centuries of sustained generational collaboration and transmission among Javanese artists.

It is hardly surprising that scholarship on Javanese music, by Javanese and foreign scholars alike, has emphasized—even celebrated—formal balance and regularity, as this importantly models the music's simple, elegant basis. Many musics in the world can be described in terms of such conceptually clear, often fundamentally binary and periodic structures. But this level of understanding does not reflect the more human, artistic, and culturally specific properties of music, which are shaped over time (the time of history, musicians' development over lifetimes, and the time of individual performances) by a predilection to seek diversity and proliferation of possibilities within a system governed by simple constraints. This performance of *Ladrang Pangkur* illustrates a Javanese response to this imperative. And although some young Javanese musicians now engage in radical new forms of composition and playing techniques, the approach to performance we have encountered here—flexing what is at core a binary, symmetrical frame—continues to be the measure of good musicianship and a source of deep aesthetic delight.

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