

Bloed' or the 'Wilhelmus' performed on this type of instrument, while any boy singing these songs will elicit more enjoyment than these players?"⁶⁴

Paris Exposition: Rethinking Gamelan and Debussy

The 1889 Paris exposition and the 1893 Chicago exposition both had as their theme human evolution and social progress. Regarding cultural performances from the Dutch East Indies, the two exhibitions shared the same configuration: a gamelan and a dance troupe from the same plantation in western Java, with the addition of a few dancers from the court of Surakarta. Here I will focus on the 1889 Paris exposition, mentioning the 1893 Chicago exposition whenever comparison is necessary.

Taking place in the center of the city on the banks of the Seine, the Paris Exposition Universelle was an event held to coincide with the centennial of the French Revolution, a fact which made the Dutch government and other European nations (those that were controlled by the French as a result of the French Revolution) reluctant to participate. The eventual Dutch participation was largely backed by private institutions. At any rate, the ethnographic display of the Dutch East Indies was a success. The Dutch organizers built a pavilion and a kampong (East Indies village), which proved to be a tremendous attraction. The admission, five times more costly than the nearby Annamitic (Vietnamese) theatre, did not prevent 875,000 visitors entering the kampong over the six-month duration of the fair.⁶⁵ An average of four to five thousand visitors attended daily, closer to ten thousand on Sundays.⁶⁶

Not unlike the 1883 Amsterdam exhibition, the theme of human evolution was part of the planning of the exposition. This was the era when the evolutionary theory proposed by Darwin was debated not only for its explanation of the natural world but also the human one, especially as regards religion and other aspects of culture.⁶⁷ There is no question that racism was the norm in the nineteenth-century European worldview, and music served to illustrate this. The exclamation of the journalist for *La Vie parisienne* about Arabic music accompanying the Egyptian belly dancers that he saw at the Paris Exposition is one of the best examples of this perspective:

Hey! Is this the dance of the Egyptian? Could it be such rude spectacles that the potentates of the crescent-moon relish in the secrecy of their harem? . . . How far from the smallest oriental ballet in the Opera, how vulgar, how unlike the descriptions of writers or the striking images of the painters are these obscene calls of girls moving rhythmically to a barbaric motive, the precise opposite of those accents that our Western musical language applies to express the infinite voluptuousness of the flesh.⁶⁸

The notion of the evolutionary process had influenced the planning of the 1878 Paris exposition and was fully realized at the 1889 event,⁶⁹ with the 1883 Amsterdam exhibition as an intermediate step. In the case of the 1889 Exposition Universelle, organizers gathered anthropologists, ethnographers, archeologists, and scholars in the field of prehistory to assist in the planning.⁷⁰ “They helped, in special thematic and retrospective expositions, to chart existing knowledge regarding human nature and the age of humanity, and regarding humanity’s physical features and states of civilization, as these had developed over time in a variety of circumstances, according to prevailing ideas, and as allegedly still visible among the earth’s diverse ethnic groups.”⁷¹ But in what way did this conception influence the choice of performing arts to be presented?

I should remind the readers that economic interests remained an important aim of World’s Fairs. This was especially true with respect to the participation of the Dutch, since private interests largely financed the Dutch pavilion and kampong. Another important aim of the exhibition was showing the culture and civilization of the colony. Taking the two themes into consideration, it must have been a challenge for the organizers to find the most appropriate performing arts to be presented at the exhibition. As a way to display economic interest, they decisively chose performing arts from areas where trading interests were located, namely the village plantation. However, knowing that their colony also produced well known performing arts created by the “high culture” of Javanese courts, they felt compelled to add the attraction with Javanese court dances. The Paris exposition followed this format—the format that was also carried out at the Amsterdam exhibition, as I discussed earlier. The kampong at the Paris exposition thus featured village life and the performing ensemble of the Parakan Salak plantation, but four dancers from the court of Mangkunegaran in Surakarta also joined the performing group.

It is safe to say that the contemporary European public did not fully realize that there are two distinct forms of gamelan music in Java: (1) Javanese gamelan, from the court cities of central Java and their vicinities, and (2) Sundanese gamelan, from west Java.⁷² Both Javanese and Sundanese music (also Balinese, for that matter) are governed by four functional layers: (1) colotomic foundation in which the stroke of different gongs define cyclical structure of the music; (2) abstracted melody or melodic skeleton played by a group of instruments; (3) elaborate melodic form, and (4) drum patterns that reinforce the cyclical structure, regulate temporal flow, and synchronize its patterns with dance movements.

The most noticeable difference between Javanese and Sundanese gamelan is the drumming. Using three drums (a large drum and two small drums), with the manipulation of the sound of the large head of the large drum (by pressing it with the drummer’s heel), the Sundanese drummer produces dynamic and lively drum patterns, more lively than the Javanese drummer.

In Javanese gamelan, the music is rather clearly defined: one group of instruments plays the melodic skeleton of the piece, while the other instruments elaborate or make reference to that skeleton to express their melodies. In Sundanese music, the boundary between melodic skeleton and melodic elaboration is not as clear as in Javanese gamelan. In fact, in Sundanese music “all melodic instruments (except kenong) involve some kind of elaboration upon the piece’s core melody. Core melody is an especially abstract concept in Sundanese music,”⁷³ more abstract than the core melody in Javanese music.

Gendèr, one of the leading instruments in Javanese gamelan, is absent from Sundanese gamelan. Singing and rebab stand out musically and texturally in Sundanese gamelan, more so than in Javanese gamelan. Larger than the Javanese rebab, the Sundanese rebab produces a louder sound. It plays in a freer rhythm than the Javanese rebab does. The practice of the rebab and singer to superimpose an alternative, pélog-like tuning system to the sléndro gamelan tuning is another distinctive feature of Sundanese music; this practice also occurs in Javanese gamelan, but only incidentally. All in all, when Javanese musicians are asked to play Sundanese gamelan, or vice versa, they have to learn a new concept of the melodic structure and new playing techniques for many of the instruments.

Which gamelan and what type of gamelan and dance repertoire were presented in the kampong? Obviously, Sundanese music, dance, and *wayang golèk* would be the main repertoire, since the musicians and dancers were Sundanese from the Parakan Salak plantation. In addition, a Sundanese professional *angklung*, an ensemble of instruments made of bamboo, took part in the exhibition: its function was to call visitors’ attention to the performance, accompanying them while entering and exiting the performance space. But the presence of four court dancers from Java, named Wakiem, Seriem, Taminah, and Soekia, raises a series of questions: how could Sundanese musicians accompany Javanese dances? What dances did the four court dancers perform? Did the gamelan group also perform Javanese gamelan repertoire? In other words, what did the visitors to the exposition actually hear and see in the kampong? These are questions that many music scholars have tried to answer, due to the prevailing opinion that gamelan at the exposition influenced the work of Claude Debussy.

Establishing which gamelan was used in the exposition has been one of the challenges for scholars. No photographs of the gamelan can be found, and there are only a few drawings showing some of the instruments on stage. Drawings of bonang, gongs and their stand, rebab, and kendhang were posted in the Dutch pavilion (not the kampong where the gamelan performance was held), juxtaposing them with other objects. In this drawing, the gongs and their stand and the bonang were clearly modeled after the gamelan in the possession of the Paris Conservatoire, a gamelan set from Cirebon donated by East

Indies Minister of the Interior J. M. van Vleuten in 1887. Given the evidence she was able to gather, Rachel Thompson concludes that the Conservatoire gamelan must have been the one used at the exposition.⁷⁴ However, based on various evidence, including drawings of the instruments, an archival document from the Mangkunegaran, and photographs of the dancers, Jean-Pierre Chazal concludes that in fact a Sundanese sléndro gamelan from Bandung was used at the exposition.⁷⁵ According to a document from the Mangkunegaran archive, the gamelan was provided by a certain M. Bernard of Bandung.⁷⁶ Apparently Bernard had lived in Java for seventeen years, and was the manager of the kampung at the exposition.⁷⁷

Chazal provides the following list of instruments: bonang (probably two), gambang, gendèr, gong, kempul, *jengglong*, kendhang, rebab, saron, and *tarum-pet*. The listed instruments, sometimes with a specific description indicating their Sundanese type, conform to a typical Sundanese gamelan set, except the gendèr. Chazal acknowledges that evidence for the presence of gendèr is very weak. In a message to me, Chazal mentions that “gender” is mentioned in three texts, but (respectively) in a confusing context, a fanciful story, and in the context of a general description of Javanese music.⁷⁸ He is convinced that gendèr was not part of this Sundanese gamelan at the exposition.

Contemporaneous accounts inform us that the dance performances were famous, but there is no solid evidence indicating what repertoire was actually performed. These accounts also offer a tantalizing, but often confusing, glimpse of dance performances. For example, bedhaya, serimpi, and tandhak are terms used interchangeably to describe dance performances in the kampung. Bedhaya refers to a genre of female ceremonial dances in the courts of central Java: considered to be the most exalted (even sacred) dance, it is performed by seven or nine dancers. Performed by four dancers, serimpi is a less exalted female court dance, but its status is close to that of bedhaya. As mentioned above, tandhak or ronggèng refers to female dancers hired for male dance parties in which the men present take turns dancing with them; often the dancers are also prostitutes. These distinctions were not reflected in documents about the dances at the exposition: for example, some documents indicate that both bedhaya and tandhak were court dancers or dances. Even if these two dances were under the care of the court, bedhaya had a higher status than tandhak.⁷⁹ There must have been much miscommunication between the authors and their Javanese informants, given that three languages were used: Malay, Dutch, and French.

From examining the costumes and postures of the dancers from engravings, I notice that a preference was given to dances other than bedhaya and serimpi. This is strengthened by the fact that, as Chazal shows us, the costumes for bedhaya or serimpi dancers were not listed in the archival document from the Mangkunegaran. The Mangkunegaran document lists mostly dance costumes for the characters of three different wayang dance dramas. The list

mentions five costumes for dancers of wayang wong, with a specific mention of costumes for Baladéwa and Karna (characters from the Mahabharata story); two costumes for a *ksatriya* or knight dancer; one costume for a female dancer; three costumes for the dancers of *wayang gedhog*, with two specific mentions of costumes for the Panji and Bugis dancers; two costumes for Ménakjingga and Damarwulan (the main characters of Damarwulan story); and one costume for Bondabaya, a dance portraying a military drill. Ten masks and forty-seven wayang puppets were also on the list. Given that ten masks were listed, it is possible that mask dances were performed in the kampong; similarly, wayang kulit performances might also have been staged.

After matching the dance costumes listed above with the costumes in the engravings, I learned that many of the dancers represented characters from the story of Panji and Damarwulan. However, the headdresses of Damarwulan and Menakjingga in the 1889 performance are different than in today's representations of these characters. Both dancers wore *tekes*, a large headdress in a semicircular shape, topped with black fur (see fig. 4.2). I have consulted a Mangkunegaran dancer, Bambang Suryono, who after checking archival documents at the Mangkunegaran court, confirmed that the engraving represents (see fig. 4.2, from left to right): Ménakjingga, Princess Wahita, Princess Puyengan (the two captive princesses), and Damarwulan.⁸⁰

From contemporary dance practice we know that these headdresses in a semicircular (from left to right) are worn only by characters from the Panji story: nowadays Damarwulan wears a similar headdress, but the circular shape is from front to back. Ménakjingga wears a headdress of a different shape, called *pogogan*. I suggest that there has been a change of headdress design from one era to another. Researching Javanese performing arts in the 1950s, Claire Holt includes a photograph of these two characters in her book; they wore headdresses that differ from both today's and nineteenth-century costumes.⁸¹ Pigeaud reports that, inspired by Bima figures drawn on the wall of the Candhi Suku temple, Mangkunegara V, monarch during the 1889 Paris exposition, ordered artists to design new headdresses for wayang wong dancers: the Bima figures wear a circular hairstyle, which presumably inspired the *tekes* headdress.⁸²

If the Damarwulan story was staged at the Paris exposition, it might well have been in langendriyan style. If they indeed performed langendriyan, how were the Sundanese musicians able to accompany this Javanese dance opera? Unfortunately, no firm answer can be found. As I mentioned earlier, there are significant differences between Javanese and Sundanese gamelan; and langendriyan requires a rather elaborate musical accompaniment, which I explain below. Annegret Fauser suggests that there had been a cultural (and musical) exchange through marriages and trade between central Javanese and Sundanese, making it likely that the Sundanese musicians could play Javanese



Figure 4.2. The four Mangkunegaran dancers at the 1889 Paris Exposition, representing the characters of (from left to right) Damarwulan, Waita, Menakjingga, and Puyengan. B.H.V.P., Dossier photographique *Divers XXI*, 364.

music with some modifications. However, Fauser does not provide us with any examples of such marriage or trade diplomacy. The only evidence she offers us is Ernst Heins's speculation: "In those days Sundanese gamelan players could, with some modifications, meaningfully perform Javanese music (and sing Javanese *tembang macapat*)."⁸³ But Heins doesn't provide any evidence either.⁸⁴ Following Chazal's assertion, Fauser maintains, however, that music for *langendriyan* must have been performed in the *kampung*.⁸⁵ Based on contemporaneous written accounts, she presents evidence of the staging of the story of Damarwulan by four dancers, summarizing the accounts as follows:

On the small stage, Wakiem, Seriem, Taminah, and Soekia were already seated in front of a row of marionettes (used in separate performances of Sundanese marionette theater). The four dancers, aged between thirteen and seventeen, ignited the fantasies of the Parisian audiences: they were perceived as nubile courtesans from the "harem of a sultan," the Solonese prince Mangkunegara VII [V].⁸⁶ As the gamelan began the first piece, the four *tandak* [dancers] rose slowly and began the courtly dance. Their dance

represented an episode of the Javanese epic *Damarwulan*, in which the hero tries to rescue two captive princesses from his enemy, Menakjingga. The dance from the princely court of Surakarta was performed in the characteristic formation of four *tandak* to the accompaniment of the Sundanese gamelan, including a singer.⁸⁷

In what way the four dancers reenacted the story of *Damarwulan* is not known, and the accounts do not mention whether the dancers were singing while dancing, as in *langendriyan*, but the evidence points to the probable presentation of the genre.

As mentioned in chapter 3, *langendriyan* songs are sung interactively by two or more dancers, representing a dialogue. *Langendriyan* dancers must thus be able to simultaneously dance well and sing from memory. In addition, dancers portraying primary characters must perform the character's special introductory dance, and the performers also have to dance in a battle scene. Because of the challenging task of combining singing, dancing, and choreography, a *langendriyan* dancer is greatly admired for her artistic accomplishment. Because of its appeal, the operatic *langendriyan* singing style is often incorporated into some scenes of *wayang wong panggalan* and *kethoprak*.

The search for aspects of gamelan that supposedly inspired French composers has been an important subject in musicology. Fauser has investigated the gamelan sources for Benedictus's transcription for piano entitled *Danse javanaise*. Predating and prompting Fauser's treatment is Mueller's essay, in which he links a gamelan piece called *Vani-Vani* (Javanese, *Wani-Wani*) with Debussy's *Fantaisie* for piano and Benedictus's *Danse javanaise*.⁸⁸

One of the pivotal points of Mueller's argument is that the ostinato theme of the final movement in the *Fantaisie* is a realization of Debussy's remembrance of a repeated section of melodic skeleton (*balungan*) of *Wani-Wani*.⁸⁹ The clue that has led to his proposition lies in passages written by an author and friend of Debussy, Julien Tiersot: "There is one dance, however, that, from the point of view of music as much as of choreography, seems to enjoy the special favor of the Javanese, for it is the one they mention more often and play more willingly as a typical example of their music. It has the name *vani-vani*. . . . Its principal theme . . . represents one of the more characteristic forms of the music proper to the gamelan."⁹⁰ After establishing that, though written in 1889–90, the "Fantaisie" was performed in public for the first time only in 1919, and was published by Fromont in 1920, Mueller explains that "the peculiar fate of the *Fantaisie* has previously been believed to be the result of Debussy's dissatisfaction with its orchestration and its conventional form."⁹¹ However, his article argues that "the cyclic theme of the *Fantaisie* is based on a Javanese melody and that Debussy withdrew the work more because he was not content with its assimilation of Javanese influences."⁹²

But which *Wani-Wani* did Tiersot transcribe and Debussy hear? Beside Tiersot's transcription of an excerpt of *Vani-Vani*, Mueller uses the transcription

of the melodic skeleton of Wani-Wani from the court of Yogyakarta, quoted from the work of Groneman and Hood.⁹³ Citing Edward Lockspeiser's *Debussy: His Life and Mind*,⁹⁴ Mueller is wrongly convinced that the music played at the Exposition Universelle came from the court of Yogyakarta. As I have discussed earlier, the gamelan and Sundanese musicians and dancers at the Paris Exposition, in fact, came from west Java, with four additional dancers from the minor court of Mangkunegaran joining the group. But there is no evidence to show that the Sundanese musicians performed Vani-Vani to accompany Javanese dance. The only evidence at hand is Jean Kernea's and Julien Tiersot's transcription (the later is only an excerpt of the piece). Closer examination reveals that Tiersot's transcriptions represent Sundanese, rather than Javanese, music. The melodic identity of Jean Kernea's transcription is very hard to decipher, however.

Henry Spiller (whose study focuses on Sundanese music and dance) says that Sundanese musicians consider Wani-Wani as one of the archaic or "large songs" (*lagu gede*), which is rarely, if ever, performed nowadays.⁹⁵ Spiller mentions that he found only one teacher, Otong Rasta, who took pride in preserving these older songs and includes them in his gamelan teaching. This makes it difficult to find information about lagu gede. The only notation of lagu gede pieces available to me is in a booklet written by Sundanese gamelan scholar Koesoemadinata entitle *Lagu-Lagu Gede Sunda*, containing 33 songs.⁹⁶ As can be seen in example 4.1 below, Tiersot's transcription of Vani-Vani resembles Koesoemadinata's Wani-Wani. It is most likely, therefore, that Wani-Wani performed at the Paris Exposition was a Sundanese, not a Yogyakarta piece. This finding does not necessarily negate Mueller's proposition, however, since his main argument is to prove that certain characteristics of Debussy's *Fantaisie* were inspired by the cyclic theme and pitch structure of gamelan composition. But he arrives at a conclusion by using certain pitch structures of Yogyakarta Wani-Wani (which Debussy never heard), although he also makes brief reference to Tiersot's Vani-Vani.⁹⁷

Fauser criticizes Mueller for neglecting to mention a version of Vani-Vani from the program of the performance.⁹⁸ Fauser also suggests that there is no basis for Mueller to assert that the Benedictus piece is a version of Vani-Vani. In contrast, she argues: "Benedictus is offering a version of the first dance from the langendriyan."⁹⁹ She cites Jurgen Arndt's *Der Einfluß der javanischen Gamelan-Musik auf Kompositionen von Claude Debussy*, which "to a certain extent," supports her proposition.

Fauser speculates that one of Tiersot's untitled transcriptions is music for this Javanese dance opera. However, a thorough examination of the transcriptions reveals Sundanese music: the transcription that Fauser identifies as "Beginning of the piece, melody played by rebab" is typical of the introductory melody of a Sundanese piece. The second example, which she identifies as "Beginning of melody line (sung?), starting slowly," is actually a saron part for

Example 4.1. Comparison of Julien Tiersot's transcription of Vani-Vani and Koesoemadinata's Wani-Wani. Reproduced from Julien Tiersot, *Musiques pittoresques: promenades musicales à l'Exposition de 1889*, and R. M. A Koesoemadinata, *Lagu-Lagu Gede Sunda*.

The image displays four staves of musical notation in treble clef with a common time signature (C). The first staff is labeled 'Tiersot's transcription of Vani-Vani' and contains a sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff is labeled 'Koesoemadinata's transcription of Wani-Wani' and begins with a first-measure rest followed by a similar rhythmic pattern. The third staff, starting at measure 5, is labeled 'Tiersot's transcription of Vani-Vani' and shows a continuation of the melodic line. The fourth staff, also starting at measure 5, is labeled 'Koesoemadinata's transcription of Wani-Wani' and shows a different rhythmic and melodic approach to the same piece.

a Sundanese piece called *Bendrong*.¹⁰⁰ The identity of the music she represents as “Melodic fragment played by rebab, and bonang-ageng, with saron-barong, low bonang and gongs” is not as clear, but not in the style of Javanese music.¹⁰¹

Regarding Benedictus's transcription, the whole piece is a repeated variation of a melodic passage that consists of D, E, F#, A, B in upper octaves (right hand) and lower octave (left hand), with occasional temporal and textural changes and special endings.¹⁰² As has been noted earlier, the main presentation of music for langendriyan is the singing of the dancer and highly interactive activities of the dancers and the musicians. In what way does this music reflect music of the langendriyan? Obviously, it is not a reflection of the music for langendriyan which I have described above and in chapter 3; if anything, it might be a reflection of a particular gamelan piece composed in a compact structure. The difficulty of finding the answer is compounded by the fact that we do not know what kind of langendriyan was performed in the exposition; this is a topic I will return to later.

In spite of this issue, Fauser's study succinctly synthesizes thirty years of discourse on the topic of gamelan and its influence on Debussy. Fauser notes that scholars have focused on Debussy's works for piano and orchestra that have commonly been labeled as being influenced by gamelan: *Pagodes* (from *Estampes*), the prime instance of such work; the *Nocturnes* and *La Mer*, which have been described as a “stylized gamelan,”¹⁰³ and others. She expands the discussion of Debussy beyond the influence of gamelan, asserting that other non-Western music had an impact on his work. In particular, she calls attention to the impact

of the music of the *Theatre Annamite* from French Indochina (now Vietnam) on some of Debussy's works. Her point is that "Debussy did not transcribe the music he heard at the Exposition Coloniale into an immediate referential piece—not even in the case of the 1890 *Fantaisie*. Rather, he appropriated structural concepts and compositional procedures from his exposure to the gamelan that became amalgamated with other influences in the 1880s, such as the music of Mussorgsky and Wagner, both of which he also heard in 1889."¹⁰⁴

It goes without saying that Debussy's musical background prior to hearing gamelan and other music at the 1889 Paris Exposition was essential to his works. In her reexamination of the relationship between gamelan and Debussy, Thompson points to the importance of the collection of memories as a source of his artistic expression.¹⁰⁵ "In any of Debussy's supposedly 'Javanese' influenced works, it seems that the composer was not seeking to faithfully incorporate what he heard in the *kampung* at the 1889 *Exposition Universelle*; rather, such compositions could be viewed as exhibiting Debussy's indulgence in his own aesthetic fantasies which involve a filtering and creative assemblage of various memories and dreams."¹⁰⁶

But Thompson approaches the subject differently from most of the previous studies. She moves away from the theory of "exotic" influence on Debussy, and instead addresses "the idea of a shared aesthetic purpose between Debussy and the music of the 'Javanese' gamelan."¹⁰⁷ She proposes that Debussy's perception of Javanese music is in parallel with his conception of "arabesque" melody, a conception that coincided with certain themes in Debussy's overall aesthetic outlook, especially its link to the Art Nouveau movement, "whose proponents based their conception of the ornamental on the organic curvature of floral lines found in nature."¹⁰⁸

Thompson begins her discussion by laying out chronologically the positions scholars have taken on gamelan. In the beginning, the balungan or melodic skeleton was considered the overarching determinant of melody for the whole ensemble. Later studies recognized the importance of *gatra*, the constituent four-note units of balungan, as a formulaic ingredient from which a *gendhing* is composed. Subsequent studies have advanced the notion that there is a melody in the minds of the musicians, called inner or implicit melody, from which other instruments are inspired in expressing their melodies.¹⁰⁹ Thompson is correct in stating that Western studies have situated elaboration or embellishment as a fundamental concept in understanding gamelan; it is the very life and substance of Javanese music.

Thompson conveys Debussy's thoughts on music by quoting the composer's own words, written twenty-four years after hearing gamelan at the Paris exposition.

And if we look at the works of J. S. Bach . . . on each new page of his innumerable works we discover things we thought were born only yesterday—from

delightful arabesque to an overflowing of religious feeling greater than anything we have since discovered. And in his works we will search in vain for anything the least lacking in “good taste.”

Portia¹¹⁰ in *The Merchant of Venice* speaks of a music that everyone has within them: “The man that hath no music in himself . . . let no such man be trusted.” Those people who are only preoccupied with the formula that will yield them the best results, without ever having listened to the still small voice of music within themselves, would do well to think on these words. And so would those who most ingeniously juggle around with bars, as if they were no more than pathetic little squares of paper. . . . We should distrust the writing of music: it is as an occupation for moles, and it ends up by reducing the vibrant beauty of sound itself to a dreadful system where two and two make four.¹¹¹

As Thompson observes, Debussy’s discussion of “a music that everyone has within them” can be seen as an allegory for the development of theories of gamelan. The notion of one’s preoccupation with the formula and juggling around with bars could refer to the idea of the creation of gendhing as a process of rearranging gatra; the “small voice” of music within ourselves is the inner melody in the mind of the musicians; and the reduction of “vibrant beauty” of musical sound can be seen as the misinterpretation of balungan as the “core melody,” from which other parts are derived, an idea that appeared partly as a result of the introduction of notation for gamelan.

It seems apparent that Debussy’s criticism of certain European composers came about as a consequence of his listening to gamelan. Debussy expresses his admiration of Javanese music, mockingly comparing it to European music.

There used to be—indeed, despite the troubles that civilization has brought, there still are—some wonderful peoples who learn music as easily as one learns to breathe. Their school consists of the eternal rhythm of the sea, the wind in the leaves, and a thousand other tiny noises, which they listen to with great care, without ever having consulted any of those dubious treatises. Their traditions are preserved only in ancient songs, sometimes involving dance, to which each individual adds his own contribution century by century. Thus Javanese music obeys laws of counterpoint which make Palestrina seem like child’s play. And if one listens to it without being prejudiced by one’s European ears, one will find a percussive charm that forces one to admit that our own music is not much more than a barbarous kind of noise more fit for a traveling circus.¹¹²

Javanese music was only one part of the gamelan repertoire at the Paris exposition. The other part, perhaps even the majority, was Sundanese. This does not negate Thompson’s argument, however, since Sundanese music embodies a concept closely related to central Javanese gamelan. Even if Sundanese music gives more weight to “essential pillar pitches,”¹¹³

elaboration or embellishment is also a key concept in the music. In fact, almost all instrument types in Sundanese gamelan (more so than in central Javanese gamelan) involve some kind of elaboration of the core of the melody.¹¹⁴ Moreover, the Sundanese repertoire is not limited to music solely defined by essential pillar pitches. There is a genre of longer pieces called *lagu gede* (large tune) or *sekar ageng* (large song) that use set melodies as a basis from which all the musicians play simultaneous variations.¹¹⁵ As I mentioned earlier, Vani-Vani falls into this category.

In both Javanese and Sundanese gamelan, rebab plays a leading role. Iconographic evidence of the rebab in the Paris exposition ensemble shows that it is Sundanese. Did the Sundanese musicians play rebab in the style of Javanese music? There is no answer. However, in the case of the gamelan performance at the 1893 Columbian exhibition, we know from Gilman's wax-cylinder recording that rebab was played in a Javanese *lancaran* piece, although in Javanese gamelan practice rebab is not played in a *lancaran* piece performed in the first level of *irama*.¹¹⁶

Sundanese rebab plays a more important role than Javanese rebab. As I mentioned earlier, one of the features of Sundanese rebab is the player's ability, when playing a *sléndro* piece, to perform with ease a scale that deviates from the *sléndro*. This brings about musical passages juxtaposing a *pélog*-like tuning of the rebab melody with the *sléndro* tuning of the gamelan. This practice is also common in Javanese gamelan, but the extent to which it occurs is far more prevalent in Sundanese music. In fact, a Sundanese rebab player might play the entire *sléndro* piece with this altered tuning.

At the Exposition Universelle, there was deep admiration of the dancers. As reported by Fauser, some eleven years later Judith Gautier recalled that the dancers danced with their "splendid costumes and jewels, the careful makeup, the controlled poses both before and during the dances, together with the young age and exotic beauty of the dancers, created a spectacle which kept the audience spellbound, while 'the foam of the beer withered and the sorbet melted under distracted spoons.'"¹¹⁷ Judith Gautier's estranged husband was inspired to capture the dancing "in a *rondel* that used most of the images derived from nature and mythology that were associated with the *tandak* [dancers]"; painters used the dancers as models for their works, while musicians were fascinated by the unfamiliar sound of the gamelan.¹¹⁸ These exotic people provided the audience with an experience of the imagined timelessness of the Far East,¹¹⁹ and its "penetrating and unknown sensations," allowing them "to breathe a new air impregnated with exotic perfume."¹²⁰

What was the music which Wakiem, Seriem, Taminah, and Soekia danced to? Did they dance *langendriyan* to music performed by Sundanese musicians? Although the accounts summarized by Fauser mention a reenactment of the story of Damarwulan, there are no accounts of the dancers singing while dancing—the defining feature of *langendriyan*.

Four years later, we find evidence that a fragment of langendriyan was possibly performed at the 1893 Chicago Columbian exhibition. Since the Columbian exhibition had the same concept as the Paris exposition and employed performers from the same plantation, this evidence deserves close inspection. We have access to a set of wax cylinder recordings of the gamelan from the exhibition, intriguing not only because of their content, but also for their implications concerning the issue of langendriyan that we have discussed so far.

The planning committee of the Chicago fair sent two prominent anthropologists to Paris in order to seek guidance.¹²¹ Like the Paris exposition, the Columbian fair displayed a west Javanese kampong and its people, likely meant to represent a lower level in the hierarchy of human races and dwellings according to the social Darwinism of the period. As Robert Rydell writes, drawing on the writings of Edward McDowell in 1893, “Javanese men were described as industrious workers, the women as untiring in their domestic duties. Described as cute and frisky, mild and inoffensive, but childlike above all else, the Javanese seemingly could be accommodated in America’s commercial empire as long as they remained in their evolutionary niche.”¹²²

The performances of gamelan, wayang, and dance were some of the most popular attractions in Chicago. Four dancers from the court city of Surakarta joined the performing group. Instead of creating a native environment, performances were held in a specially built European-style proscenium stage, with backdrop scenery of mountains and trees. At the rear of the stage, the gamelan instruments were placed on a raised platform in three graded levels, while the front of the stage was reserved for dance or wayang performance.

The first wax-cylinder recording devices came on the market at this time. Benjamin Gilman, sponsored by the Harvard Peabody museum, recorded musical performances at the exhibition. He made 101 cylinder wax recordings of the Samoan Exhibit, Java Village, and Kwakiutl or Vancouver Island Indians.¹²³ Forty-three of the recordings are from the “Java Village,” and from them we learn much.

Among the ten different performances, cylinders 26–33 are titled by Gilman as a genre of “Javanese wayang,” but he also refers to the dancers as “*serimpi*.” Here are Gilman’s notes of the order of the dance.¹²⁴

- #26. End of Soendanese Wayang
Beginning of Javanese wayang.
Entry of first Serimpi
- #27. Posturing of first Serimpi
- #28. This is the voice of the first dancer (if audible)
Entry of second Serimpi
- #29. Dialogue between first and second dancers
Dispute between first and second dancers
- #30. One dancer draws a dagger

- #31. Fight: the two dancers arm themselves, one with a stick, the other with a sword; the one with sword is wounded.
- #32. Third and second dancers (the wounded one) have a colloquy seated. They go out and reenter.
- #33. The fourth dancer sings.
End of the native performance.
Now American airs.

It is most likely that Gilman used the term *serimpi* as a generic word for female dancers or dance, a very common use of the term outside of the court tradition. From a close listening of the recordings, I think that Gilman described a fragment of dance drama involving four dancers, consisting of singing or dialogue and a fight with weapons. Was this *langendriyan*? The order of the appearance of the dancers seems to follow a story line of a fragment of *langendriyan*. The first dancer entering the stage was the villain king *Ménakjingga*, and the second was the protagonist *Damarwulan*. They fought, *Damarwulan* arming himself with a stick (probably a club), *Ménakjingga* using a sword (the same weapon used by this character in contemporary *langendriyan*). The one with the sword, *Ménakjingga*, was wounded. The identity of the third and fourth dancers appearing in cylinders #32 and #33 is not clear to me, but knowing that the third dancer had a discussion with the wounded one (*Ménakjingga*), she might be one of *Ménakjingga*'s captive princesses, *Wahita*. The fourth dancer could thus possibly have been his second captive princess, *Puyengan*.

This dance and its story remind us of Fauser's summary of the 1889 Paris exposition. The dance had the same storyline and the same number of dancers: *Damarwulan*, *Ménakjingga*, and two captive princesses (*Wahita* and *Puyengan*). However, in the description of the Paris performance there is no mention of speech or singing by the dancers. This could be a matter of carelessness on the part of the authors who wrote about performances at the Paris Exposition. The possibility of the performances at the Paris Exposition and the Chicago World's Fair being the same cannot be ruled out, since the musicians and dancers in both exhibitions came from the same places: the musicians from *Parakan Salak* plantation in west Java, joined by dancers from the court city of *Surakarta*.

As mentioned earlier, the music of *langendriyan* is quite elaborate, involving gamelan accompaniment to poetic dialogues sung by the dancers. The feature of musical accompaniments and the changing of the temporal and density flow (*irama*) of the music convey the dynamic of the dramatic action. However, in the piece performed at the Columbian exhibition, as Gilman's recordings show, the accompaniment consisted of only a single piece composed in a short *gongan* structure, *lancaran*. Consisting of five *gongan* cycles, the *lancaran* *Kembang Jeruk* in *pélog* is repeated many times. Occasionally, the *irama* of the piece changes momentarily to the second level of *irama* in *sirepan* or soft-playing style. At this point, the dancer sings a few phrases (*sirepan* followed by the

poetic singing of the dancers is a feature of langendriyan). As far as what can be heard clearly in cylinder #32, the singing is in sléndro.¹²⁵ The two recordings do not contain more than a few phrases of singing, which ends abruptly due to the two-minute limit of the wax cylinders. I suggest that what we are hearing is a fragment of langendriyan with a simplified musical accompaniment—a single piece performed repeatedly. The piece was in pélog barang, but the singer sang in sléndro. The simplified langendriyan at the Chicago Columbian Exposition was mounted using whatever resources were available to the performing group.

Did Debussy and others hear the same simplified fragment of langendriyan in Paris? Given the many shared characteristics of the performances at these two exhibitions, the possibility cannot be ruled out. If this was the case, it is worth noting that this confusing musical mixture of heavily simplified dances of the langendriyan have had such a great impact on the works of Parisian writers, painters, and composers. The implication is that the gamelan presented at the World's Fairs reflected an intriguing mixture of various elements, reflecting the nature of the exhibitions themselves: a mixture of various interests—trade, national image, ethnographic show, colonialism, human evolution, and so forth. In other words, the music of langendriyan in the World's Fairs is an allegory of the fairs themselves.

Visitors to the exhibition did not necessarily see the performing arts as arising from the evolution of civilizations. But “a number of the kampong visitors, in spite of—or because of—their anthropological and racist prejudices, were impressed by the beauty and refinement of these [colonized] people, by the fact that they possessed nobility, by the products they made, and by their music and dancing.”¹²⁶ Listening to and watching the exotic others, in whatever form, is not so much meant to imagine and construct Orientalism as it is “a way of escaping from the rigid conceptual frameworks of evolutionism and colonial domination.”¹²⁷ In the next section, I will discuss a new context for gamelan that emerged in the mid-twentieth century: Western academia.

From Orientalism to Interculturalism: The 1931 Colonial Exposition, “White” Gamelan Clubs, and Gamelan Study in the United States

The Exposition was extraordinary. People from the East were being introduced to the bourgeoisie of the Western world in order to disclose their civilization. But they were displayed in such a manner that in the eyes of Western people they nonetheless looked like savages without manners, except in one or two cases. The Indo-Chinese received a lot of attention because of their dancing and music, as did the musicians and . . . dancers from . . . Bali, from whose sounds Western musicians profited greatly.¹²⁸

The quotation is from an Indonesian novel written by Matu Mona: a story about a leader of the Indonesian Communist Party, Tan Malaka, who is exiled for decades by the Dutch government. His comrade, searching for him, travels to Paris, where Malaka lives with a leader of the French Communist Party at the time of the 1931 International Colonial Exposition, held in the Bois de Vincennes.

In the eyes of this novelist, the exposition was no more than a form of colonial exploitation.¹²⁹ The exposition was indeed a celebration of colonial power, but the backdrop to the exhibition became more complicated than at previous fairs. In the first place, the exhibition coincided with the Indonesian national awakening, a movement backed by those Dutch who supported the Ethical Policy.¹³⁰ The Dutch colonial government also granted more voice and promised better education to the Indonesians, which brought about the founding of Indonesian nationalist organizations such as Budi Utomo and Sarekat Islam. More progressive, anticolonial organizations also appeared, including the Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia) and Indonesian Youth Organization (Pemuda Indonesia). In this context, it was necessary for Indonesian voices to be heard in the planning of the display at the exposition. Two Indonesians involved in the initial planning in 1927 were the regent of Serang, Djajadiningrat, and the son of the ruler of the Surakarta court, Hadiwidjojo. They wanted the Indonesian display to be the responsibility of Indonesians.¹³¹ Their suggestion was ineffective, however.

After the exposition was postponed to 1931, in 1929, an Indonesian committee was reinstated, working in collaboration with the Dutch committee in the Netherlands. In spite of this supposedly collaborative effort, however, Dutch consciousness dominated the conception of the exhibition, which sparked opposition from the Indonesian members of the committee. Prince Hadiwidjojo asked to be discharged from the committee, and the courts of Surakarta and Yogyakarta withdrew their pledge to dispatch their dancers and gamelan musicians to the Exposition.¹³²

The idea of presenting court music and dance at the Exposition was also contested by members of the Dutch community. One wrote anonymously to the editor of the Javanese newspaper *Het Soerabajasch Handelsblad*: “Would such a finely tuned soul [referring to court dancers] feel merely embarrassed or truly humiliated [to dance] in front of an endless stream of ‘tourists, who saunter from one spectacle to the next, alternating the sounds of African drums with the sights of voluptuous belly dancers and self-lacerating fakirs?’”¹³³ Another author, who had memories of colonized people being paraded in European cities, worried that Europeans would see them as animals in a zoo, and would consider the performance of court dancers and music to be a shameful sideshow.¹³⁴

Amidst the controversy, the committee dispatched Balinese musicians and dancers to the exposition in the place of Javanese. It seems that the popular

image of Bali in the West, and the robust development of Balinese arts in this period, made it the obvious choice: the Dutch government had popularized the island through the promotion of tourism.¹³⁵ Consequently, Balinese artists designed performances especially for tourists. An hour-and-a-half-long program consisting of an assortment of dances with musical interludes was a common program offered to Western tourists who stayed in the Bali Hotel in Denpasar. Picard says that the performance at the exposition was similar in design to the tourist shows in Bali hotels.¹³⁶ Aside from dances such as *kebliar*, *janger*, *legong*, and a shortened version of a dance drama telling the story of the wedding of Arjuna, the troupe also performed a condensed version of *Calonarang*.¹³⁷

Balinese music and dance at the Exposition were received with amazement by the spectators. As Blombergen observes, this was the first Balinese performing group “to perform in Europe, and the huge audiences too were entirely new to them. Journalists and photographers jostled feverishly in their efforts to immortalize the gamelan orchestra . . . , which became renowned overnight . . . The house was sold out every evening, and the musicians and dancers were invariably regaled with the applause and cries of Bravo!”¹³⁸

The well-known composer Olivier Messiaen was also fascinated by the Balinese music he heard at the exposition, so much so that he incorporated his recollection of it in sections of his *Turungalila Symphony*.¹³⁹ Similarly, the dramatist Antonin Artaud’s intuitive observation of Balinese dance and theater at the exposition led him to deeply appreciate it, calling it a form of “pure theater” that embodies a highly metaphysical dimension.¹⁴⁰

In the mid-twentieth century the world of academia began to look at gamelan. One proponent of this study was Jaap Kunst, one of two Dutch scholar-officials whose interest in and study of Indonesian music had a significant impact on the development of the field of non-Western music studies as a whole.¹⁴¹ Kunst arrived in Indonesia in 1919 as a violinist, playing light music throughout the archipelago with his trio.¹⁴² When he arrived in Java, he was immediately fascinated by gamelan music: his pianist and singer returned to Holland, but Kunst stayed in Indonesia for fifteen years, studying music and working as an official of the Dutch colonial government. Although he wrote various essays and monographs on music from a number of other Indonesian islands, the focus of Kunst’s work was on Java. His book *De Toonkunst van Java* (Music in Java), published soon after his return to the Netherlands, became a milestone in the study of Javanese music.

Kunst discussed music with learned Javanese elites and leading court artist-intellectuals, including Mangkunegara VII (r. 1916–44), the well-known Javanologist Purbacaraka and his brother Raden Kodrat, and Raden Mas Jayadipura. He consulted the works of Ki Hadjar Dewantara, Raden Bagoes Soelardi of Mangkunegaran, and an early Yogyakarta kraton gamelan manuscript, *Serat Pakem Wirama*. He also occasionally referred to the great nineteenth-century Javanese encyclopedic work, *Serat Centhini*.

The social structure of colonial Java made it easy for European men of Kunst's status to have a close relationship with Javanese aristocrats, but his relationship with musicians was less intimate. As one of his closest students, Ernst Heins, observes, "Jaap Kunst never touched [or played] a gamelan instrument except for measuring purposes. . . . Because of the colonial situation it was unthinkable for a European to play in a *gamelan* and thus become one of a group of Javanese musicians, or even to take private lessons with a tutor. The mutual social barrier . . . were insurmountable, no Dutchman or other foreigner would or could dream of entering the tightly-closed unit of a *gamelan*-group in those days."¹⁴³ Kunst's return to the Netherlands had an impact beyond gamelan scholarship. He is known as one of the founders of the academic discipline he named "ethnomusicology," replacing an existing sub-discipline of musicology called comparative musicology. He proposed that the study object of ethnomusicology "is the *traditional* music and musical instruments of all cultural strata of mankind, from the so-called primitive peoples to the civilized nations."¹⁴⁴

Since the mid-nineteenth century a number of gamelan sets had been brought to Europe by the Dutch colonial government and by individuals. A number of gamelan enthusiasts in Europe formed groups to perform gamelan music, including accompanying dances or excerpts of wayang performance. As has been noted, in 1857 Delft Royal Academy students formed an ad hoc gamelan group to perform processional music. In the early twentieth century, other gamelan groups appeared whose players were either Javanese sailors or Javanese students studying in the Netherlands.¹⁴⁵ There was also the case of Jodjana, a Javanese student turned dancer, whose gamelan musicians consisted of his Indonesian and Dutch friends, his Dutch wife, and their children.¹⁴⁶

However, the first "white" gamelan group was founded in 1946 by Bernard Ijzeraat Jr., a war orphan whom Jaap Kunst cared for. He became fascinated with gamelan after listening to a performance at the Tropen Museum, a gamelan program that had been started by Kunst, and joined the group. Subsequently, he formed his own group, called "Babar Laya," whose members were Dutch teenagers.¹⁴⁷ The group performed regularly at the museum and toured throughout Europe until ceasing to exist in 1950. In 1954 Ijzeraat left for Indonesia, where he was eventually naturalized as an Indonesian citizen, changing his name to Surya Brata: he became one of the most influential scholars in Indonesian music. In 1960s, gamelan activity in Holland resurfaced under the guidance of Ernst Heins, another student and assistant of Kunst.

Mantle Hood, who had moved from the United States in 1952 to Amsterdam to study with Kunst, joined the Babar Laya group, returning in 1954 to UCLA to teach ethnomusicology. In 1956 Hood went to Java for two years to conduct further research. He studied and learned to play gamelan with prominent musicians in Surakarta and Yogyakarta. Returning to UCLA in 1958, he brought with him a complete set of Javanese gamelan from Surakarta named

Kyai Mendhung (The venerable dark cloud).¹⁴⁸ As a founder of the Institute of Ethnomusicology at UCLA, he organized what were called “performance-study groups” of non-Western music ensembles. This experience led him to articulate an important concept in 1960 called “bi-musicality.”¹⁴⁹ The concept is that Western students should acquire some practical experience of the music being studied. The participation of one or more native musicians or teachers was an important ingredient in the performance-study group. They served not only as a teacher or teaching assistant for the ensemble but also as a resource for research, and in return, they were given the opportunity to enroll as students. Hardjo Susilo is the earliest example of this endeavor, starting his career at UCLA in the late 1950s. The author of this book and a number of his Indonesian colleagues have had the same experience as Susilo, teaching and studying either in American or European universities.

Most of the graduates of the UCLA ethnomusicology program promoted the concept of bi-musicality, which was the root of gamelan activity in the United States. In fact, there is no gamelan group in the United States made up exclusively of Indonesians.¹⁵⁰

Non-Western music performance is a relative newcomer to academia. Classical Western music composed between roughly 1720 and 1930 has long been the “central repertory” at American music schools and university music departments, but:

Outside the central repertory, special designations are needed because there are courses on “jazz,” “folk music,” “popular music,” and “ethnic music.” The terms *early music* and *contemporary music* are used to separate the “normal” music from others in the art music sphere. It is implied that “normal music” (even in North America) means European music, whereas other kinds of music, both in the college and the library catalogs, are labeled by nation or area: “American music,” “music—India,” and “Indians of North America—music,” for example. . . . The various musics that are not “central” have had to struggle over a period of decades for entry into the music school. They usually gained admission via the back door of musicology because faculty and administrators felt, on first application, that one should not teach them as fields of performance, but that it might be all right to teach “about” them because they could be helpful in fostering an understanding of the evolution of the central repertory or of the cultures of early, recent, contemporary, foreign, or rural peoples.¹⁵¹

In the 1960s, some universities began to recognize non-Western music performance as an academic pursuit. The introduction of ethnomusicology in universities in the same decade provided for a poly-musical experience. In the 1980s, this diversification of musical experience was considered part of the multicultural movement then in vogue. Originally, multiculturalism developed in response to the growing need to pay attention to minority groups and their cultures. The initial response to this development was specific programs,

such as Afro-American Studies, Women's Studies, Asian-American Studies, and American Indian Studies. Thus, although gamelan programs seem to be a perfect fit with multiculturalism, it predates the multicultural movement of the 1980s and has a different aim: the study of music (especially non-Western music) in its cultural context, paying special attention to the notion of music as a communicative device.¹⁵²

Despite this long history, questions about the appropriateness of performance as an academic course still linger. The recent book *Performing Ethnomusicology: Teaching and Representation in World Music Ensembles* provides an invaluable study of this topic.¹⁵³ Most authors are forthright in spelling out the dilemma that faces them as ethnomusicologists and instructors of a non-Western performing ensemble: "how do we represent the rich cultures we revere while we acknowledge and deal with the culture distance between us and our students, and between both of us and these cultures?"¹⁵⁴

As public performance became routine, the boundary between "performance-study" group (Mantle Hood's original term) and performance group became blurred. But how is it possible, in just one semester, or one year, for a group to learn the music well enough for public performance? This practice would never happen with a symphony orchestra or jazz ensemble, for example.

Because of its conspicuous presence among academic non-Western music ensembles (not to mention its great appeal due to its size, appearance, and compelling sound), gamelan has become an icon of non-Western performing ensembles. Ricardo Trimillos lightheartedly says that "the acquisition of a gamelan as part of a 'proper' ethnomusicology program in the United States appears as iconic as the establishment of a national airline in a 'proper' nation!"¹⁵⁵ But gamelan performance on campus does not necessarily engender musical expectation on the same level as the university's orchestra, whose players have had many years of training before joining. As Keith Howard puts it:

While our [non-Western] ensembles are typically classed as equivalents to orchestras and choirs, we readily accept students without audition, with no pre-requirements. While a violinist in a student orchestra will have taken lessons for many years, passing those indoctrinating and standardizing grade exams that Blacking famously critiqued, and probably competing for a place in the orchestra, the student in a world music ensemble is not expected to have any previous training. Yet, at the end of the semester or the end of the year, our ensemble are expected to perform in much the same way as every choir or orchestra performs. They give a performance before an audience. It is, then, not surprising that both ethnomusicologist and audience will engage in soul searching as they evaluate what has been achieved.¹⁵⁶

The criticism does not take into account the different musical practices of gamelan and Western orchestras. While playing orchestral instruments

requires a student to take lessons for many years, some gamelan instruments offer relative technical simplicity, allowing students who have never played any instrument at all to play quickly. The student might then go on to learn instruments which, like violin or piano, will take many years to master.

This does not mean that the problems of public performances by beginning gamelan groups go away. I would say that the original, less presentational model of performance-study groups is still valued. As an instructor of gamelan myself, I always mention this idea to my beginning students; in addition, I inform them that the gamelan class is not goal-oriented, but rather process-oriented learning. That is, the emphasis is on the experience in music-making during class, not the recital at the end of the semester. Solis's term "experience ensemble" describes this group well: the students "embrace a second (cultural) childhood, akin to the sort of entirely new musical experience most musicians underwent as children with their first piano lessons or sixth-grade band."¹⁵⁷ This differs from the "realization ensemble," or in Vetter's term "canonical ensemble," of Western orchestra, concert band, jazz band, and choral groups, whose student performers have already had years of experience in vocal production or instrumental technique, whose "rehearsal time is dedicated to musical matters; any cultural contextualization of the works is typically relegated to printed program notes. A high standard of musical presentation in public performance and the honing of the performers' technical skill and expressive potential are the primary goals of most canonical ensemble organizations in the academy."¹⁵⁸

At any rate, a non-Western music ensemble, like any other ensemble on campus, is expected to perform publicly, a practice encouraged by the university's desire for good public relations. In the 1980s, incorporating non-Western music into the curriculum reflected universities' commitments to multicultural perspectives, and continued to apply when multicultural studies evolved into international or intercultural studies. Whether university administrations wholeheartedly support the presence of non-Western music on their campuses is a different story, however. Bruno Nettl observes that the administration "usually makes clear its allegiance to the central music. It is unusual, for example, for administrators to have musical roots that are not in the central music. Some do come from fields such as ethnomusicology or composition (viewed with some suspicion by performing faculty), but in each case, some kind of loyalty, in terms of early training or avocation, to the 'real' music is characteristic in the administrator."¹⁵⁹ Nettl goes on to say: "In choosing events to attend, deans or heads usually prefer central-repertory performances over performances of peripheral music or nonmusical events such as lectures." There is no follow-up study to show if this perspective persists.

Against the marginal but important position held by their ensemble, ethnomusicologists and gamelan instructors search for ways that their ensembles can fit the academic program. For example, Gage Averill observes that "the current praxis of many world music ensembles is based on the aesthetic imitation (mimesis) or,

in its most extreme form, musical transvestism.”¹⁶⁰ He goes on to say that ethnomusicologists involved in non-Western ensembles “unwittingly indulge our student participants and our audience in a form of concert tourism . . . without challenging preconceived notions of acknowledging the noisy clash of cultures, politics, and musics in contemporary world.”¹⁶¹ Averill is intensely critical of teaching and performing non-Western music, but he also offers a solution:

To replace mimesis [the aesthetic of imitation] with a self-conscious distanciation; to involve student ensembles in the discourse about cultural representation; to use our rehearsals and performances as platforms for raising questions; to reimagine our musical performance as spaces of dialogic encounter; to problematize the very nature and existence of these ensembles; and to use ensembles to provoke, disrupt and challenge complacency. In this way, we can make the ensemble encounter a part of a student’s intellectual, personal, aesthetic, and *ethical* transformation. Such a transformation in the grounding of world music ensembles would require an embrace of the problematics of performance studies, performance/conceptual art, and cultural studies more broadly.¹⁶²

Averill challenges instructors of non-Western music ensembles to come up with a suitable pedagogical requirement that leads students to discuss the larger context of the music that they study, including issues of cultural representation, dialogue about cultural encounters, and so forth. Averill is quick to suggest, however, that playing the music should not be less fun or thrilling. This fun aspect might culminate at the end of semester when the ensemble launches a public performance. During the semester, gamelan teachers must devote much of their time to preparing their group for this end-of-semester performance; this includes lessons for players of lead instruments, and additional rehearsal.

For the performance, the group might also invite “ringers” to strengthen the ensemble. In some university gamelan groups, the teacher organizes a group whose core members might not be students, but employees of the university, members of the community who happen to have experience playing gamelan during their college years, or alumni of a nearby university. Together with advanced students, this group is responsible for giving public performances. With the increased number of gamelan on campuses, the number of former students with gamelan experience has increased. This has sometimes resulted in a new kind of gamelan performance group, namely a nonprofit community group independent from the university program. A few have been able to maintain their presence in the community, notably the Balinese gamelan Sekar Jaya in the Bay area.

To recapitulate: in the context either of World’s Fairs or academia, heterogeneity marks the reception of gamelan. Following Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, audience experiences can be grouped into two categories: those audiences who acquire authentic aesthetic experiences, and those who obtain



Figure 4.3. Professor Mantle Hood and his American and international students. *From left to right: Hardja Susilo, Max Harrell, Viswanathan, Mantle Hood, Hormoz Farhat, Willem Adraansz, and Donald Sur.* © 1973 the Regents of the University of California. Courtesy of the UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive.

ethnographically mediated experiences.¹⁶³ The first category is based on a notion that the audience does not acquire rational understanding of the art they experienced: such a condition will prevent them from receiving authentic aesthetic pleasure. The second category follows the notion of performance as an ethnographic show. That is, the audience's experience is mediated by information about ethnographic signifiers of what they saw. Commonly, visitors to World's Fairs were given all sorts of brochures about the fair in general, and specific information on cultural performances.

Ethnomusicology, through which the presence of gamelan has been expanded in Western universities, required students to be informed about the cultural context of non-Western music. This has gradually brought about cross-cultural perspectives in gamelan discourse. A search for homology between music and socio-cosmological order entered into ethnomusicological discourses, and metaphoric or iconic readings of gamelan, the topic of the next chapter, become one of the most important issues in the study of gamelan.