

**Asia Society
Presents**

Music and Dance of Yogyakarta



**Sunday, November 11, 2018
7:00 P.M.**

**Asia Society
725 Park Avenue at 70th Street
New York City**



This program is approximately ninety minutes with no intermission

In conjunction with a visit from Hamengkubuwono X, the Sultan of Yogyakarta in Indonesia, Asia Society hosts a performance by the court dancers and musicians of Yogyakarta.

The Palace of Karaton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat is the cultural heart of the city. From generation to generation, the Sultans of Yogyakarta are the traditional governors of the city and responsible for passing on art and culture heritage. The entire royal family is involved in preserving these art forms, and the troupe must perform with a member of the royal family present. The dances from Yogyakarta will be accompanied by *gamelan* music native to Java.

Program

Golek Menak Umarmaya Umarmadi Dance

Masked Dance Fragment (*Wayang Wong*)
“Klana Sewandana Gandrung”

Bedhaya Sang Amurwabhumi

About the forms:

Golek Menak

The *golek menak* is a contemporary example of the seminal influence exerted by the puppet theater on other Javanese performing arts. This dance was inspired by the stick-puppet theater (*wayang golek*), popular in the rural area of Yogyakarta. Using the three dimensional rod-puppets, it portrays episodes from a series of stories known as *menak*. Unlike the high-art *wayang kulit* (shadow puppets), it is a village entertainment, and it did not flourish at the court.

As a dance drama, *golek menak* focuses on imitating this rod-puppet theater with amazing faithfulness. Human dancers realistically imitate the smallest details of puppet movement, right down to the stylized breathing of the puppets. The result of the choreographic *tour de force* is a virtuosic dance form that has become a favorite with the Javanese audiences.

The *golek* dance was the inspiration on Sultan Hamenkubuwono IX, first created in 1943 and further developed in 1987. The current Sultan, Hamengkubuwono X has continued to develop the form within his court dances.

Wayang Wong

The first *wayang wong* was created in 1750 by Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono I, whose names means “preserver of the world.” Originally a large scale three-day spectacle of the court of Yogyakarta with each day’s performance lasting from dawn to dusk, it was a ritual affirmation of the power of the court. Traditionally, this form that would have included upwards of fifty dancers and exemplifies the prestige of the court.

Bedhaya

The *bedhaya* dances of the Court of Yogyakarta are the epitome of Javanese dance. Performed by nine identically dressed dancers, their presentation was once the exclusive prerogative of the court. The earliest *bedhaya* dates from the 17th century. The dancers, traditionally selected from the relatives of the sultan, belonged to the innermost ceremonial circle of the court. It was only in the beginning of the 20th century that the *bedhaya* was allowed to be taken out of the court.

Classical Javanese court female dance is not so much a vehicle for the expression of individual feelings as a discipline devoted to an idea of human grace and energy. “The court dance movement is valued for itself and for its instrumental power to produce effect in the social world...and provide an example of the intricate metaphorical relationship of the body, cosmology and power.....with nine dancers, a number with sacral connotations for both Hindu-Buddhism and for Islam, include the number of Islamic saints (*Wali Songo*) who are said to have brought Islam to Java” (Felicia Hughes-Freeland, *Embodied Communities: Dance Traditions and Changes in Java*, 2008).

The dance is laden with symbolism and can be interpreted on multiple levels. The use of nine dancers is said by some to represent the nine human desires or the nine openings of the body. The first formation of the dances represents the human being, with two leading characters embodying the conflict between flesh and spirit.

	7	6	
2	3	4	5
8	9		

The second section represents perfect unity, where all have attained one.

1	2	6
7	3	5
8	4	9

About Javanese Gamelan

Gamelan is a Javanese/Indonesian word for ensemble or orchestra, while *karawitan* refers to the classical music played on a *gamelan* set. Traditionally, the Javanese *gamelan* was the basis of all Javanese performing arts: the music was essential to dance and theater everywhere, from the humblest village to the imposing, marble-floored pavilions of the royal courts. Most of the instruments are made from cast bronze, and are either metallophones or hanging gongs (gong, *kempul*) and racked gongs (*bonang*, *kenong*), which look like small gongs lying on their backs. Although Western-style popular music and pop versions of *gamelan* are encroaching substantially, traditional *gamelan* can still be heard at wedding ceremonies, circumcisions, village cleansings, and accompanying the all-night shadow play (*wayang*). *Gamelan* music exists in many regional styles; the music presented in the performance on November 11, 2018 at Asia Society is in the style of the court of Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwana X, in the Central Javanese city of Yogyakarta.

Gamelan music is an ensemble music, and the players and singers, despite their varied musical roles, must be sensitive to each other. There is no visible conductor, but the drum (*kendhang*) and bowed lute (*rebab*) lead the ensemble with subtle aural cues. The complete *gamelan* set has instruments tuned in both the five-tone *sléndro* and the seven-tone *pélog* scales, or *laras*. For the November 11th performance, only the *pélog* scale was used. In distinguishing the two scales, *laras pélog* has some intervals that are nearly as small as half-steps, while *sléndro* has larger intervals. The section dominated by the metallophones plays the “skeletal” melody of the composition, in unison (*saron*, *demung*, *slenthem*). The hanging tuned gongs (*kempul*) punctuate this melody, as do the large kettle gongs—the *kenong*. The largest gong (gong *ageng*) produces the deepest sound in the orchestra. The “elaborating” instruments, whose players are free to express their personal interpretations of the composition in their ornate melodies, include a metallophone (*gendèr*), a xylophone (*gambang*), the *rebab*, a bamboo flute (*suling*), and female singers.

Unlike much Western music, the female vocal soloists blend in with the other instruments and do not dominate. Vocal texts are primarily in old Javanese, from ancient poetic forms, whose meaning does not necessarily relate to the specific musical composition in which they are sung.

The compositions are cyclic, often composed of several different cycles, each of which is repeated several times, determined by the *rebab* or *kendhang* player. Each cycle begins and ends with the stroke of the biggest gong. The length of individual cycles can be as short as five seconds or as long as twenty minutes. As most pieces are composed of several different cycles, each played several times, the duration of pieces can range from a few minutes to more than an hour.

—Carla Scheele, with thanks to Sarah Weiss and Marc Perlman

About Javanese Dance

Javanese dance is rich in variety, expression, and function. There are three basic categories of classical Javanese dance, the forms developed in the courts of Central Java: *putri* (female), *alus* (refined male), and *gagah* (strong male). In the female style, the dancer's feet remain close the ground, moving in small articulated steps or sliding, while the lower arms and hands, and the neck and the head, perform intricate movements, creating a smooth, flowing movement. Similarly, the *alus* style is very fluid and intricate, and the feet stay close to the ground, though the stance is wide. It is not unusual for women to perform *alus* male roles. In contrast, the *gagah* style is characterized by forceful movements, very wide stance, and large, emphatic steps and arm movements. The intricate articulation of the hands, arms, neck and head of the refined styles is exaggerated in the *gagah* style.

About tonight's performance:

MASK DANCE FRAGMENT (*Wayang Wong*) "KLANA SEWANDANA GANDRUNG"

In the Bantar Angin Kingdom, the beloved servant of King Prabu Klana Sewandana, Sembunglangu, was having fun. Soon, the Prabu arrived. He was worried as he waited for Dewi Sekartaji, whom he loved. The Prabu had sent his trusted knight to kidnap Dewi Sekartaji, but she never came. Prabu Klana Sewanda loved her so truly that he went insane, to the extent that to him his servant, Sembunglangu, began to look like Dewi Sekartaji. Finally, the Prabu regained consciousness and sent Sembunglangu to go after his knight to the kingdom of Kediri.

It was told that Dewi Sekartaji managed to run from her kidnapers, who were Prabu Klana Sewandana's people. In the forest, her heart mourned after parting with her lover, Raden Panji Inu Kertapati. She instead met Prabu Klana Sewandana. Prabu Sewandana persuaded her to be his wife and queen at Bantar Angin Kingdom, but Dewi Sekartaji managed to run away.

When it was discovered that Dewi Sekartaji disappeared from the Kediri kingdom's garden, Raden Panji Inu Kertapati searched for her. Because they had such a strong emotional bond, Raden Panji arrived at the forest where Dewi Sekartaji was being seduced by Prabu Klana Sewandana. A clash between Raden Panji and Prabu Klana Sewandana took place. Both were equally strong. However, in the evening, Prabu Klana Sewandana was defeated. Evil was once again defeated. The power of true love reunited and brought eternal happiness.

Dancers: RA Putria Retna Pudyastuti; RJ Widadasilamataya; RRY Surya Amiluhur; RJ Alisasmintaprabamataya

GOLEK MENAK UMARMAYA UMARMADI DANCE

Golek Menak Umarmaya Umarmadi is a dance created by Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwana IX. It depicts the story of Adipati Umarmaya's encounter with Prabu Umarmadi, who wants to fight Tiyang Agung Jayengrana. Eventually, Umarmadi bows to Jayengrana and becomes his ally.

Dancers: KRT. Condrowasesa; KMT. Suryawasesa

BEDHAYA SANG AMURWABHUMI

Bedhaya dance is a group form that is generally performed by nine female dancers. *Bedhaya* dance is replete with Javanese symbols and philosophies.

Bedhaya Sang Amurwabhumi is the first creation of Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono X as the king of the Palace of Yogyakarta, crowned on March 7th, 1989. It was created in 1990 and was performed for the first time on November 18th, 1990 at Bangsal Kencana (Kencana Hall). This dance marks the arrival of a new king, and a love dedication to his father, the previous Sultan. The dance was performed to commemorate the title of national hero received by Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX, as well as the celebrating the coronation/Tingalan Dalem Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono X.

As successor to the throne, Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono X expresses the will of a king in the dance called *Bedhaya Sang Amurwabhumi*. The idea for the dance is inspired by *Serat Pararaton* with the central theme of the marriage of Amurwabhumi (Ken Arok) and Prajnaparamita (Ken Dedes). The marriage releases the famous ten leadership teachings called *dasa paramita*, which are:

1. *Dhana* – generosity
2. *Sila* – main act
3. *Ksanti* – tranquility and patience
4. *Virya* – courage
5. *Dhyana* – hermitage
6. *Prajnya* – vigilance
7. *Upayakausalya* – efforts or means
8. *Pranidhana* – determination
9. *Bala* – authority
10. *Juana* – knowledge.

These all bear the meaning of using the throne to *memayu hayuningrat* (bring about the harmony of the world), for the welfare of the people and the country.

Dancers: Tri Indriastuti; Satwika Rahapsar; GKR. Mangkubumi; GKR. Hayu; Raras Lukitaningrum; Keshari Adiarastri Piloessulka; Nyi RW. Artyandariretnamataya; Nyi MJ. Rahmayanilalitamataya; Nyi RJ. Widyadinghyaumataya

About Gamelan Kusuma Laras (“Flowering Harmony”)

Formed in 1983 at the Indonesian Consulate with instruments built especially for the Indonesia Pavilion at the World’s Fair of 1964-65 in Flushing, New York, Gamelan Kusuma Laras has captivated audiences in New York City, the U.S., and Indonesia, with its authentic performances of music from the classical repertoire of the courts of Central Java. The ensemble has been a treasure of the New York City cultural scene since its inception, with its first performance in a Tribeca loft as part of a week-long festival of traditional and contemporary arts, **Artists Inspired By Asia**, produced by one of GKL’s founders, the scholar, dancer, and ethnographer, Deena Burton (1948-2005). The group was also co-founded by Marc Perlman and Anne Stebinger.

Since then, the ensemble has been presented at a wide variety of venues, including Roulette; the American Museum of Natural History; the Metropolitan Museum of Art; the Whitney Museum; Symphony Space; Brooklyn Academy of Music; Bard College; Vassar College; Wesleyan University; Princeton University; Hartwick College; Bank Street College of Education; the Cathedral of St. John the Divine; Texas A&M University; Riverside Church; Cooper Hewitt Museum; Lincoln Center Out-of-Doors Festival; the Jogjakarta International Gamelan Festival; and the Lincoln Center White Light Festival.

Gamelan Kusuma Laras is in residence at the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia and would like to extend special thanks to the Honorable Abdul Kadir Jailani, Consul General, Mr. Winanto Adi, Minister Counselor/ Consul for Economic Affairs, and Mr. Yohannes J. H. Prasetyo, Consul for Information, Social and Cultural Affairs, for their support. GKL also gratefully acknowledges the support of the entire Consulate staff, without whom our study, performances, and workshops would not be possible.

I.M. Harjito, Artistic Director
Jon Rea, Co-Director
Anne Stebinger, Co-Director

Performers: Nick Colvin, Brian Fairley, Wayne Forrest, Stuart Frankel, Barry Frier, David Haiman, Denni Harjito, Uci Haryono, Robin Kimball, Lutfi Kurniawan, Aaron Paige, Leslie Rudden, Dave Ruder, Yenny Sakirman, Carla Scheele, Sri Sularti, Miranda von Dornum, Dylan Widjiono, Antonius Wiriadjaja, Hanny Zainuddin. With Susie Ibarra on snare drum and Chris Melito on trumpet.

GKL also gratefully acknowledges our teacher and Artistic Director, I.M. Harjito.

Huge thank you to Oki Wiriadjaja for organizing the participation of Gamelan Kusuma Laras in this performance.

About Performing Arts at Asia Society

Asia Society's Performing Arts Program is an intrinsic component of Asia Society's commitment to sharing vital aspects of Asian culture by placing creative expression at the center of a more comprehensive understanding of culture. Whether it is experimental artists exploring new territory or traditional artists bringing to life the voices of a great legacy, the Performing Arts Program has created a powerful platform for connecting and engaging with Asian culture within a deeper cultural context. We have presented extraordinary artists from renowned names such as Lang Lang, Tan Dun, Abida Parveen, Shen Wei, David Henry Hwang, Sardono and Malavika Sarukkai, to the latest emerging voices. Beginning in 1957, with New York's first performance by Indian maestro Ravi Shankar, the Performing Arts Program has since presented over a thousand performances, including original commissioned work from Asian and Asian-American artists, as well as American artists influenced by Asia, such as Phillip Glass, DJ Spooky and Vijay Iyer. From Indonesian hip-hop to electronica from Shanghai; experimental dance to the deeply moving traditions of India's *Kuttiyatam*, Burmese *Zat Pwe*, we foster artistic exchange and provide creative opportunities for artists. For more information, please visit AsiaSociety.org

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