

Robert Browning Associates
celebrating 41 years of presenting world music in NYC
presents

MUSIC & DANCE OF JAVA

GAMELAN KUSUMA LARAS
of the New York Indonesian Consulate

Directed by **I.M. HARJITO**

guest musicians **MIDIYANTO,**
DARSONO HADIRAHARJO & HENI SAVITRI
guest dancer **ANANG TOTOK DWIANTORO**

Gamelan: Anne Stebinger (Co-Director), Nick Colvin, Brian Fairley,
Stuart Frankel, Barry Frier, Marvin Goldman, David Haiman, Denni Harjito,
Uci Haryono, Robin Kimball, Lutfi Kurniawan, Jon Rea, Matthew Rosenthal,
Leslie Rudden, Josh Saal, Carla Scheele, Don Shewey, Sri Sularti,
Miranda von Dornum, Dylan Widjiono, Hanny Zainuddin
Guest artists: Wayne Forrest, Maho Ishiguro, Jessika Kenney, Chris Miller

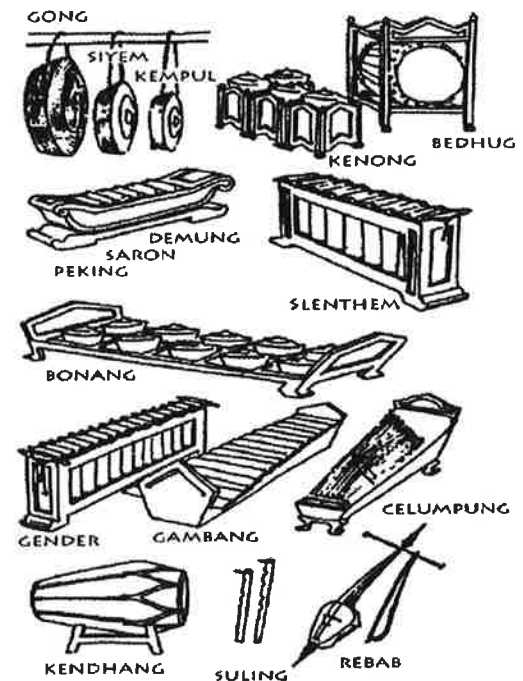
Saturday, December 2, 2017 at 8 pm

Roulette,
509 Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn, New York

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legislature.



instruments



Javanese Music and Dance

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: its 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 on its domain, traditional *gamelan* can still be heard at wedding ceremonies, circumcisions, village cleansings, and accompanying the all-night shadow play. *Gamelan* music exists in many regional styles; the music presented today is in the style of the Central Javanese court city, Solo (Surakarta).

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*. 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 don't 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. The longest piece in this concert is about 25 minutes.

(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 to 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. The dance performed this evening is *Klana*, in the coarse male *gagah* style.

Program

(Note: The titles of the compositions are in bold. When identifying a composition, the first word in the title (e.g., *Ladrang*, *Gendhing*) indicates the type of musical form. The word *laras* is translated as tuning system, and the word *pathet* is analogous to mode.)

1. Minggah Gendhing ***Kinanthi Juru Demung***, laras sléndro pathet manyura
Kinanthi Juru Demung is a beloved melody that is usually a section of a very long, very popular suite. It is a very old melody, composed during the reign of Ingkung Sinuhun Bagus Paku Buwânâ IV (1788-1820). The piece begins with a *pathetan*, a free-rhythm interlude in which the elaborating instruments, *gendèr*, *gambang*, and *suling*, led by the *rebab*, cavort around the most important tones in the mode of the piece, providing the pitches for the introduction sung by a female vocalist (*bukâ celuk*).
2. Gendhing ***Lanjar Ngirim*** kethuk 4 awis minggah 8, laras pélog pathet lima
Gendhing *Lanjar Ngirim* was composed by Demang Lebda Pradanggâ, a musician of the Prime Minister of Kanjeng Susuhunan Paku Buwânâ IX in Surakarta who reigned from 1861 to 1893. This majestic piece features a Sekaten-style interlocking part between two *demungs* and the *slenthem*, which elaborates on the basic melody to create a new, denser melody produced by one *demung* playing on the beat and the other playing the offbeats. Gamelan Sekaten, from which this rhythmic pattern derives, refers to a large ceremonial *gamelan* ensemble that performs annually during Mawlid celebrations (in honor of the birthday of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad) in Java, Indonesia. This rarely played composition is in the somber and meditative mode of *pelog lima*. The slow and stately first section features the “front-line,” or elaborating instruments, *rebab*, *gendèr*, *suling* and *gambang* and the female vocalist (*sindhen*). At a cue from the drummer, the tempo increases, and the players transition to the second section, which, with every repetition of the gong cycle, becomes faster and louder. This is the section in which the aforementioned interlocking pattern is played. The piece ends with a *pathetan*.
3. Suite: Ladrang ***Peksi Kuwung*** kalajengaken Ayak-ayakan ***Anjang Mas***,
Srepegan, Palaran ***Gambuh***, Palaran ***Pucung***, laras sléndro pathet nem
The suite begins with Ladrang *Peksi Kuwung*, composed by Ingkung Sinwun Bagus Paku Buwânâ IV who reigned from 1788 to 1820 in Surakarta. The piece features a vocal part, sung by both male and female singers, by Ki Nartosabdho (1925-1985), one of Indonesia’s foremost composers, and a popularizer of Javanese classical *gamelan*. At a signal from the drummer, the ensemble transitions to a piece sometimes used in shadow theater (*wayang kulit*), Ayak-ayakan *Anjang Mas*, considered one of the most difficult compositions in the repertoire, owing partly to the many special, little melodies that are played by *rebab*, *gendèr*, *gambang* and *sindhen*. During the quiet section of *Anjang Mas*, these instruments come to the fore, while the metallophones drop out—in *wayang kulit*, this music is background for a

lengthy, serious commentary on the part of the puppet master (*dhalang*). At a signal from the drummer, the entire ensemble comes back in for *Ayak-ayakan nem*, and then transitions to *Srepegan*. From there, the drum signals a loud transitional phrase to *Palaran Gambuh*. Palaran is a musical interlude during which most instruments drop out except various gongs, drums, and some of the soft-playing instruments, and features a female solo vocalist. Another loud, short melodic phrase signals the transition to *Palaran Pucung*. The whole ensemble returns, at a drum signal, to conclude the suite in *Srepegan Nem*. The piece ends with a *pathetan*.

Intermission

4. Gendhing ***Budheng-Budheng*** kethuk 2 awis minggah 4 kalajengaken Ladrang ***Sarayuda***, laras pélog pathet nem

Gendhing *Budheng-Budheng* was composed by Kanjeng Pangeran Mangkubumi II of Surakarta, under the Ingkang Sinuwun Bagus Paku Buwânâ IV (1788 to 1820). Ladrang *Sârâyudâ* was composed by Ingkang Sinuwun Wicaksânâ Paku Buwânâ X in Surakarta who reigned from 1893 to 1939. The first section begins in the classical manner (multi-textured, slow, soft, refined). The drummer slowly increases the tempo during the second gong cycle, and the ensemble transitions to the second, lively *ciblon* section (*ciblon* is the medium-sized drum). This section, which begins in the moderate tempo of *wilet*, features a famous, unusually long *andhegan*, a free-rhythm, unaccompanied melodic interlude sung by a female vocalist. The *andhegan* includes a musical joke (which Javanese players are fond of playing): upon the singer making a comment about her boyfriend, the players drop their mallets and make other unexpected non-musical noises. After the *andhegan*, the drummer decreases the tempo to the slowest tempo, *rangkep*, in which the skeletal melody played by the *balungan* instruments becomes very slow (16 beats between each note), while the elaborating instruments go into tempo overdrive—many notes per beat. The drummer then speeds up, going from *rangkep* to *wilet* to *dadi* to *tanggung*, the fastest tempo, in less than a minute to transition to *Ladrang Sarayudo*, a traditional piece with a relatively new vocal part by Ki Nartosabdho. The piece ends with a *pathetan*.

5. Dance: ***Klana***, performed by Anang Totok Dwiantoro
Lancaran ***Bendrong***, Gangsaran ***Liwung***, Ladrang ***Pucung Rubuh***, Lancaran ***Bendrong***, Ladrang ***Eling-eling***, ***Sampak***, laras pélog pathet lima
Klana, a dance from *wayang topeng*, the mask theater, is also the name of a mythological character depicted as an aggressive and vain overseas king, not Javanese. *Klana* is the rival of the virtuous Prince Panji and desires Princess Candra Kirana of Kediri, who is the object of Panji's affection. The dance, from the traditional Javanese repertoire, shows *Klana* overcome with desire for Candra Kirana to the point of madness. *Klana* dances, grooms himself for an anticipated assignation with his beloved, sometimes sings, and tries to embrace phantasms of Candra Kirana.

The Artists

I.M. Harjito, artistic director of Gamelan Kusuma Laras, is one of the finest Javanese musicians practicing today. He is a graduate of Indonesia's state conservatory for the traditional performing arts in Surakarta, Central Java, where he worked closely with one of the major figures of 20th-century Javanese music, R. Ng. Martopangrawit. Harjito has directed *gamelan* ensembles in Indonesia, the United States, and Canada. He is also a composer of traditional and innovative works for *gamelan* and other instruments. For the past 33 years he has been a faculty member at Wesleyan University. Besides acting as artistic director of Gamelan Kusuma Laras of the New York Indonesian Consulate, he also directs the Javanese *gamelan* ensemble at Brown University, and is a featured guest at concerts of Boston's Gamelan Laras Tentrem. Although he is a master of all the Javanese *gamelan* instruments, he is most famous for his superb *rebab* and *gendèr* playing.

Midiyanto is a musician and puppet master (*dhalang*) from Wonogiri, Central Java, coming from a family of performing artists. Over the last 30 years he has taught and performed extensively in Java, the US, Singapore, New Zealand, Australia, and Canada, including ten years in Portland, Oregon, as the *gamelan* director at Lewis & Clark College. He has been featured in several documentary films and directed the *gamelan* on the CD *Shadow Music of Java*, recorded at the Smithsonian. He has taught and directed *gamelan* at the University of California, Berkeley, since 2004, after an earlier stint at that institution, from 1988 to 1992.

Darsono Hadiraharjo comes from a prominent family of music and theatre traditions in Central Java. He studied *karawitan*, the classical genre of *gamelan* music, and learned the revered art of shadow puppetry primarily from his father and other relatives. He continued his studies at Indonesia's state conservatory for the traditional performing arts in Surakarta, Central Java, graduating in 2002 with a Bachelor of Performing Arts. Today, he is one of the most prominent musicians inside and outside of Surakarta. He first performed abroad with the original troupe for Robert Wilson's *I La Galigo*, a musical theatre production based on a Sulawesi myth which premiered in Singapore in 2004. In the US, he has been artist-in-residence at Wesleyan University, Smith College, Tufts University and Bates College, and has performed widely with these ensembles as well as community groups. He is proud to watch the traditional arts of his culture—the trade of his family for generations—become a bridge that allows him to travel far, experience various cultures and interact with people from all over the world.

Heni Savitri began to study *sindhènan* (Javanese singing with *gamelan*) in 2002. In 2003 she won the competition for best singer in her native district of Wonogiri, Central Java. She entered Indonesia's state conservatory for the traditional performing arts in Surakarta, Central Java in 2004, and began representing the institution in competitions the following year as well as performing in shadow plays. She was selected as the singer for many recordings of new faculty compositions and

traditional works, representing the academy in the 2008 international vocal competition in Jakarta.

Anang Totok Dwiantoro graduated from STSI, Indonesia's state conservatory for the traditional performing arts in Surakarta. He is known for his mastery of the strong male style of Central Javanese court dance. He lives in Washington, DC, where he is director and founder of a dance troupe. He has performed all over the US, both with his troupe and solo.

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 around the Northeast and other regions of the United States, and in 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, starting 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). Since then, the ensemble has been presented at a wide variety of venues, including the Asia Society, Lincoln Center, 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, Bank Street College of Education, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Texas A&M University, Cooper Hewitt Museum, and the Yogyakarta International Gamelan Festival, and tonight returns to Roulette for its second engagement at this performance space.

Special thanks to the Honorable Abdul Kadir Jailani, Consul General of the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia, for his support. We also gratefully acknowledge the help and support of members of the Consulate staff, Mr. Yohannes Jatmiko Heru Prasetyo, Consul for Information and Social & Cultural Affairs, Mr. Winanto Adi, Ms. Tary Supit, and Mr. Muhammad Rifkiaansyah.

The Consulate provides *gamelan* instruments, rehearsal space, funding, and great enthusiasm for our study and presentations of Indonesian music and dance. Our rehearsals and performances would not be possible without the help and support of our great friends at the Consulate, Mr. Agus, Ms. Mimi Loeis, Mr. Anton Hadi, Mr. M. Haryono, Ms. Mirna Husnalia, Mr. A. Loebis, Mr. I Nyoman Saptanyana, Mr. Acup Setia, and Mr. Wagiman.

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We wish to thank Don Shewey and Anne Stebinger for organizing this concert.

Gamelan Kusuma Laras is a non-profit cultural and educational organization for Javanese traditional performing arts. For information and bookings, or if you would like to attend a rehearsal or learn more about Javanese music and dance activities in New York, please contact Anne Stebinger at astebinger@gmail.com.

To receive our concert announcements by email, please contact Stuart Frankel at gecko@dustyfeet.com or visit the contact tab on our website to be added to our mailing list. Visit us at our website at <http://www.kusumalaras.org>. We thank you for your support which makes our performances and study possible.

-----Program notes by Carla Scheele

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Robert Browning, called “the entrepreneur who almost single-handedly created and filled New Yorkers’ passion for world music” in the *New York Times*, celebrates 41 years of presenting world music. From his years at the Alternative Center for International Arts / Alternative Museum to his 26-year tenure at World Music Institute (which he co-founded and directed from 1985 – 2011) and his past four seasons as the director of Robert Browning Associates, he has presented more than 1,800 concerts of world music and dance from internationally renowned figures and emerging artists from over 100 regions.

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*****Upcoming RBA Events at Roulette*****

Sat Mar 3 – Flamenco! JOSE ANTONIO RODRIGUEZ, guitar

Fri Mar 16 – Flamenco Eñe: ANGELITA MONTOYA

Versos olvidados (Forgotten Verses): A Tribute to Women Poets

Sat Mar 17 - SIMON SHAHEEN & QANTARA with guest group

QANTARA BERKLEE ENS: Musical Gems of the Arab Cinema

Thurs Mar 22 - OMAR SOSA & SECKOU KEITA

Fri Apr 27 – Sun Apr 29 A WORLD IN TRANCE FESTIVAL

Apr 27 - HOMAYOUN SAKHI: Afghanistan

Apr 28 – USTAD SHAHID PARVEZ: India

Apr 29 – HOSSEIN OMOUMI: Persia

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