

Creating Bhumi for Sanggar Cudamani, Bali

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Submission date: 28-Dec-2020 07:26PM (UTC+1030)

Submission ID: 1481636333

File name: 04_ASIAN_THEATRE_JOURNAL_Creating_Bhumi.pdf (978.6K)

Word count: 6595

Character count: 34850

Creating *Bhumi* for Sanggar Cudamani, Bali

I Nyoman Cerita, edited by Kathy Foley

*Bhumi: Mother Earth was a production by Sanggar Cudamani (Cudamani Studio) created for the group's American tour in 2018. Earth as theme was inspired by Bali's social and cultural life, as well as present environmental issues, including exploitation, pollution, and threats posed by humans to our biosphere. Interviews with collaborators, as well as the author's testimony as choreographer, are shared. *Bhumi* was based on the Balinese philosophy of Tri Hitakarana (Three Causes of Well Being) presenting its ideas accessibly in music, dance, and choreography for local, national, and international audiences.*

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Introduction

Bhumi produced by Sanggar Cudamani (Cudamani Studio), a Balinese company based in Gianyar, was created for the group's tour in the United States from 13 February 2018 to 6 March 2018 through a lengthy collaborative process.¹ It was performed at Royce Hall (UCLA), Broad Stage (Santa Monica College), Pomona College, UC Santa Barbara, Mondavi Center (UC Davis), Stanford University, and Hertz Hall (UC Berkeley), gaining strong reviews in the *Los Angeles Times* and other media (see for example, Swed 2018 and Slayton 2018).

Cudamani was founded in 1997 in Pengosekan village on the outskirts of Ubud, a region where the arts flourished in the royal courts of the past, but where tourist performance income was by the 1990s

probably the major driver in attracting youth toward the arts. Performers were often dependent on tour companies for economic opportunity and it was such entrepreneurs who controlled artistic choices. The composer Dewa Putu Berata and his wife, Emiko Saraswati Susilo, along with myself as dance director, hoped to counterbalance touristic demands that seemed to result in short, simple, and quick performances that left performers feeling dissatisfied. Our Cudamani website notes our mission:

¹ Cudamani maintains that the vitality of Balinese arts relies on the connection of performance to spiritual and social life and on the balance between strong roots and brave innovation. The group is in many ways an activist community that responds to the philosophical, practical and problematic issues that face Balinese artists today. The group invites master artists to Pengosekan to teach rarely performed repertoire, and members of the group also create new work.²

We established this organization in Pengosekan since that was the home of Dew a Berata and Susilo and we hoped to train the children of that community to have deep understanding of the arts, because this is crucial for their understanding of Balinese heritage and religion. With the help of a Ford Foundation grant in the early years, we began the project and delved deeply into the "classics," bringing the great artists-then old and sometimes retired from teaching-to work with our youth. We, as leaders, were of course learning from these masters alongside our students, and we would use such experiences to help us as contemporary artists create new music and dance.

Of course we needed to give our young artists performing opportunities. Beyond local temple festivals and competitions sponsored by the Balinese Culture Department, we were contemplating overseas tours and took our first one in 2002. In addition to training local youth, we also established an annual summer program for international students. Susilo was the American daughter of Javanese gamelan master Hardjo Susilo, who had taught at the University of Hawaii, and her mother was Judy Mitoma, who helped found the UCLA Dance Ethnology and World Arts programs. Some of Susilo's connections helped us create deep links to the U. S. world music movement. Before coming to Bali, Susilo was part of the noted Bay area Balinese Gamelan Sekar Jaya founded in 1979 by Rachel Cooper (now of the Asia Society Performing Arts Program), Michael Tenzer (now a Professor of Music at the University of British Columbia), and I Wayan Suweca. Putu Berata had been a guest artist with Sekar Jaya before marrying Susilo. In 2011, Susilo became the artistic director of Sekar Jaya, living part of the year in San Francisco and part in Bali.

Hence, from its inception, Cudarnani has fostered international connections with artists and scholars of Balinese performance both in Bali and internationally. Training in Pengosekan has developed a group of excellent artists with international connections who are well known in the wider world.

Cudamani has toured the United States eight times. In four of these tours, U. S. Debut Tour (2002), *Odalan Bali: An Offering of Music and Dance* (2005), *From Bamboo to Bronze* (2010), and *Bhumi* (2018), I served as choreographer, dancer, and coach, creating new dances related to pre-existing repertoire to develop the program's chosen theme (offering dances in the temple, temple festival, relationship of bamboo and bronze instrumentation, and the environment, respectively). The program achieved successful U. S. receptions, which I attribute to the dedication of our team: producer Judy Mitoma (who collaborated on themes as well as attending to myriad tour details); Dewa Putu Berata (who serves as the group's artistic director and composer with cocomposer Dewa Putu Rai); and Emiko Saraswati Susilo (who oversees the productions and was choreographer with me). Additionally, Cudamani dancers, musicians, and the entire community of *banjar* (subdistrict) Pengosekan (Mas Village, Ubud District, Gianyar Regency) contributed. Sponsors and cultural officials in Bali and beyond (especially Foundation for World Arts and the World Festival of Sacred Music) contributed to the program.³

Participation in these works has been a process of both technical and spiritual maturation for me and other members of Cudamani. The

artistic activities have meaning not only for us as Balinese but also for the national and international communities who view our work. As part of the development process, *Bhumiwas* presented in Bali during temple ceremonies, for tourists, and at formal government events, including the annual Bali Art Festival.⁴

Process of Creating *Bhumi*

Bhumi's production team-consisting of Judy Mitoma, Dewa Putu Berata, Emiko Saraswati Susilo, Dewa Putu Rai and myself-collaborated with trust built during twenty years of working together. My first awareness of the plan for a tour came when Mitoma, Susilo, and Dewa Berata visited me on 20 July 2017 with a plan to tour. In the meeting, I asked: What could we do to improve our level of performance? How would we choose and treat the dancers and musicians professionally while motivating the artists, writers, and religious leaders involved with our group to produce high quality work? I wondered, since Cudamani's mission has been exploration, preservation, and development of Balinese arts and culture, how we

could make work that is not only based on Balinese heritage and values but also would accommodate the demand of "show business" and meet positive reception by those with no previous knowledge of Bali.

Susilo notes too the challenge built into our touring, of

creating a piece that maintained Cudamani's artistic integrity, expanded into a new area of making commentary on a contemporary global situation, and also was communicative to an American audience some of whom would be seeing Balinese performance for the first time and some of whom have written books, led internationally renowned gamelan ensembles, and composed traditionally Balinese gamelan works. (Susilo 2019)

We agreed that twenty-five dancers and musicians would be selected based on their competencies and the central dances would be "Oleg Tamulilingan" (Bumble Bee Dance), "Kebyar Duduk" (a seated male dance to *kebyar* ["lightening"] orchestra), and "Murwa Bhumi-Topeng Dalem" (Blessing the Earth-Refined Prince Mask Dance). To these well-known dances of our ongoing repertoire, we would add new pieces growing from Balinese culture, but focusing on the contemporary situation in Bali. Thus, we had our core pieces, but not a narrative "through line" to the program.⁵

When we tour internationally, we of course hope we come home with more money than when we left, but money is not the major aim, and we always perform for free in our local community. Even in an international playhouse, we feel we perform in honor of our ancestors and divinities. Nonetheless, our international tours are important to us, since this opportunity keeps youths-who might otherwise be overseduced by smart phones and rock bands-engaged and continuing to develop the music-dance of our heritage.

Theme

On 23 and 27 July 2017, we continued meeting. At the second gathering, Mitoma and Susilo suggested the theme of *bhumi*, 6 earth and its sustainability. While *bhumi* may have a particular meaning in Balinese culture, this theme is also timely in an era of climate change. No matter what culture, humans must respect the land on which they and all creatures codepend. Today, we see many performances around the world that emphasize the need to care for our environment. Mitoma herself in 2011 had produced an important program that toured the United States with island dancers/musicians of Kiribati, Tokulau, and Tuvalu-islands threatened by rising sea levels-to draw attention to the plight of Pacific Islanders (see Svoboda 2011; UCTV 2011), so environmentalism has been part of her focus. At Cudamani, too, we

resolved to contribute to that dialogue of sustaining our earth through our art.

To Balinese, of course, the volcanic island we inhabit has specific meaning. Earth is the manifestation of Dewi Pertiwi (Earth Goddess). She is seen as a noble-hearted mother who protects, nurtures, and guides. A mother is central to Balinese thinking: one saying is, "Heaven is on the soles of Mother's feet." Mother Earth is what we depend on for life and she must be loved and preserved. Of course, we also have a second idea of divinity as male and associated with the heaven, linked with the image of the *ar:intaya* (male personification of Siwa [Shiva]) in *wayang* (shadow puppetry). Yet the heavens cannot be dissociated from earth-they are two halves of one whole. *Bhumi*, the realm of Ibu Pertiwi, is where we spend our days. This theme would unify our performance-we sought to create a Balinese statement about positive development and care of the planet in the global era. The topic would make each of us as artist conscious of our part in honoring the earth. The theme had relevance for the social life of our community.

The theme of *Bhumi* was linked to the Balinese philosophy called Tri Hitakarana-the Balinese "Three Causes of Well-Being": divinity, humanity, and environment. In Balinese thinking, God (Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa), human beings, and nature must all live in harmony. This idea is inherited from our ancestors and should be the guideline for everyday life. But in reality, the gap between the concept of Tri Hitakarana and its implementation in contemporary Bali is wide. The environmental problems in Bali, as elsewhere, have yet to be solved. Rapid development and information technology have spurred hedonism and materialism. Natural resources are often consumed for private interests, rather than for the welfare of others (Atmaja 2018: 55).

Balinese philosophical *values-siwam* (spirituality), *sat yam* (honesty), and *sundaram* (harmony)-are, theoretically, the strong pillars in the life of Balinese. But neither in formal institutions (religion, education) nor in the *banjar* (local neighborhoods) are these concepts fully lived. Our performance could remind people about guarding nature. When I later interviewed Mitoma on why she suggested this theme, she noted that Earth is a source of life-if the land is polluted, humans and animals will suffer. She recognized our contemporary Balinese anxiety is shared around the world (Mitoma 2018).

One of Balinese' philosophies is *wyapi-wyapaka*, which means the divine is everywhere and gives grace through ritual ceremonies (Mantra 1989: 3). Balinese believe in *sekala* (the visible world) and *niskala* (the unseen world) as the two sides of the cosmos. Everything on earth (*sekala*) has corresponding spirits and gods (*niskala*) that give it

life. For the performers and viewers, who exist in *sekala*, music and dance can bridge toward the unseen world (*niskala*) as an offering. In Hinduism, this is called *yadnya*. Our offering would be music and dance and go along with the flowers and gifts to the spirits we always prepare as offerings for each presentation at home or abroad. "Offering" would be the animating spirit of *Bhumi*. Inspired by our Balinese Hinduism, our performance would seek to blend older elements with contemporary culture.

It would be a long process that would be challenging, especially in the final months when Pak Dewa Berata was in the United States and collaboration meant being available on a 24-hour schedule; Susilo remembers this time difference for "getting together" to collaborate using Skype made us all tired and, in addition to the geographical separation, was the "vexing habit of creative inspiration to come at three in the morning when you are not sure if you are asleep or awake" (Susilo 2019).

Our group also always tried to gather input from teachers, culture leaders, other artists, and of course producer Judy Mitoma. Some of these comments were easy to implement; however others, which were important to make the piece stronger, could be daunting. As Susilo (2019) notes: "You don't know HOW to create the change that you know is needed."

Major Musical Numbers

Music played a very important role in *Bhumi*. Balinese dance and theatre exist on the firm foundation of music-with movement making visible of the possibilities already inherent in the composition. We started from our musical core, in the able hands of Dewa Putu Berata and Dewa Putu Rai.

We opened the performance with a new creation by Rai, "Rangrang" (Weaver, a type of large ant). Rai is an emerging composer from Pengosekan and a founding member of our group. "Rangrang" used only a small number of instruments from the *semarandana* gamelan in multiple modes (*tetekep selisir, sundaren, slendro ageng, slendro alit, and lebeng*).⁷ Ants are social insects, with thousands living in one colony. Rangrang ants "weave" their nest with leaves in a beautiful way (Rai 2018). Rai's intent was to highlight positive characteristics of this species that works collaboratively with peers. The weaving idea also fits the capability of gamelan, where one instrument interlocks neatly with the next to make an intricate whole.

"Kebyar Perak" (Silver Explosion), by I Wayan Gandra from Banjar Kalah, Peliatan, Ubud was placed later in the program by Dewa

Berata and this piece allowed the group to share a twentieth century masterwork (Figs. 1 and 2).⁸ Etymologically meaning a sudden, loud sound, *kebyar* as a style of music has flourished in Bali since the early twentieth century. *Perak* (silver) is a precious metal—a natural object in the earth, sparkling when it comes to light. "Kebyar Perak" used the large, complete gamelan *gong kebyar*. The piece represented the idea of metal, which of course comes from beneath the ground. From a religious perspective, silver and metal are also important in Balinese Hindu ceremonies, which requires *pancadatu* (five precious metals), in which gold, silver, copper, bronze, and zinc are included (Berata 2018). It is even said that in the eighth century, Rsi Markandeya, one of the individuals who laid the foundation of Balinese culture as we recognize it today, buried these five metals at the place which then became the foundation of Pura Bekasih, the most important temple in Bali, which stands on the slopes of Mt. Gunung Agung (his act is considered to be the beginning of Hindu-Balinese culture on the island). I Ketut Sudra, a silver expert, feels that silver represents moon and ea tides and therefore flexibility, sensitivity, and mystery; it is also believed to be a mirror of the soul—it helps us see ourselves from the eyes of others (Sudra 2018). This musical piece represented such ideas about metal in the program, and the bright and implosive playing encouraged our



FIGURE 1. Cudamani Director I Dewa Putu Berata playing *ugal* (Photo:Jorge Vismara [2018])



FIGURE 2. Gamelan musicians I Dewa Putu Berata, Ida Bagus Mandhara Giri, and I Kadek Yogi Satwika. (Photo: Jorge Vismara [2018])

musicians to recognize the link to one of Bali's great musical masters, Gandra.

"Cak Sato" (Animal Kecak), by Dewa Putu Berata, was a tribute to the creatures with which we share the planet such as frogs, monkeys, and bees. While we began rehearsing with just sound, we added song and dance to this piece, which became our closing number. Dewa Berata drew on the vocal interlocks that are characteristic of *kecak* (also *cak*), a genre which developed in the early twentieth century from the old vocal patterns used in *sanghyang dedari* (trance dance of prepubescent girls). Dewa Berata developed his *kecak* with reference to the *bhumi* theme, thinking of natural creatures heard near Cudamani's home, which is surrounded by fields-snakes, songbirds, geckos, and frogs sound. At night rehearsals, frogs sometimes fell from the ceiling of the practice pavilion, causing screams and laughter.

"Kecak Sato" came as the climax of a four-part action. First came the dance depiction of the beauty of the environment with a pair of bees that were in love. Next, three female dancers led by Emiko Saraswati Susilo appeared and sang of the openness and beauty of nature. Then came that fall of a frog that caused screams of surprise. Finally, the atmosphere was filled with the chatter of monkeys, frogs, and geckos. This finale honored the dynamic majesty of the earth and all its living creatures. One reviewer wrote of this last section: "At the end, men of the gamelan removed their jackets and hilariously leaped up from their instruments to hop and croak like virtuoso frogs who then evolve up the species ladder into a raucous community of brotherhood. There is nothing like this" (Swed 2018).

Dance

Dance in Bali makes the music visible. Cudarnani has built up from the youth of Pengosekan a formidable group of dancers. The dance pieces were the internal core of the show. The three masterworks discussed earlier ("Topeng Dalam," "Kebyar Duduk," and "Oleg Tamulilingan") come from the traditional repertoire. To them, we added new pieces modeled on pre-existing genres.

"Amurwa Bhumi" (Blessing the Earth) depicted a wise king who is like the sun, eliminating darkness. Dewa Berata used the *pelogseven-tone*



FIGURE 3. Dewa Ayu Eka Putri and Dewa Ayu Swandewi perform "Legong Pertiwi" dance. (Photo: Jorge Vismara [2018])

gamelan *semarandana* for this mask dance, which I performed. We used the customary melody and structure for Arsawijaya or Topeng Dalem, but borrowed notes from another tuning system which gives the sound a unique feel-this is the dance of refined king that appears in the opening of a traditional *topeng* mask dance performance. The dance, with its elaborate and colorful costume, reflects the heroic king's virtue through his controlled movement amidst complex rhythms. Conceptually, for us, this represented the sun and the sky above.

"Legong Pertiwi" (Legong of the Earth Goddess) was a new dance in the female palace genre of *legong* (Fig. 3). The music was by Dewa Putu Rai and the choreographers were Emiko Saraswati Susilo, Dewa Ayu Eka, and myself. The work demanded what we call the "4-W": *wirasa*, *wiraga*, *wirama*, and *wirupa*. *Wirasa* is the good feeling needed in every performance. *Wiraga* is physical strength. *Wirama* is rhythmic fusion of music and movement. *Wirupa* is the complete harmony of the two dancers.

This dance of two expert female dancers, the sisters Dewa Ayu Eka Putri and Dewa Ayu Kadek Swandewi, illustrated the elegance, wisdom, and majesty of Dewi Pertiwi, goddess of fertility and prosperity who provides a happy life. During the first presentation of this dance in Bali, Dewa Rai, Dewa Berata, and I had envisioned a very quiet entrance for the two with large swathes of brown cloths (i.e., earth) surrounding the dancers. However, this changed shortly before we left for the United States. Susilo remembers the tensions that rose when our advisors felt that the forty-five-second meditative opening would not work for the American audience, which, unlike a Balinese group, is bound to silence. It seemed too slow. A rehearsal demanding changes ended in silence and frustration for all.

But early the next morning after a sleepless night, the dancers-my students since childhood-as Susilo remembers, "worked quietly, but had a palpable sense of urgency . . . creating about 80%" of the new opening themselves and then

when dancers and musicians tried the new entrance for the first time it was flawless. I think, Balinese artistic perfection in the technique and execution, yes but mostly in musicians, gurus, Balinese community members, producer, presenter, audience. It wasn't about what any individual wanted, it was about finding something that everyone could connect to. (Susilo 2019)

In performance, this moment went by in a flash for the American viewers. But it was a moment that for our group would remain special as

an affirmation of our commitment to one another, to our arts, to connecting with something larger than the individual ego or desires

our trust in one another's wisdom and artistry, even when we disagree ... It's kind of divine, the first time a piece of music or dance is performed, where does it come from anyway? ... They had never done it before and yet it was beautiful and perfect, like a dew drop that appears mysteriously overnight. (Susilo 2019)

From this beginning the piece built to a climax as we showed the wrath of Dewi Pertiwi. Dancers moved to thundering music and the pounding of the *kentangan* (a traditional drum used in the village to sound alarm). Movement and music fused as if this was a horrifying massive earthquake. The dance pays homage to the power and the glory of Dewi Pertiwi. Conceptually, this dance represented the power of the earth beneath us.

“Baris Canang” dance was a new creation about making offerings to Dewi Pertiwi. The two Symbols used were the gong, the symbolic representation of the majesty of the Earth Goddess, and *Canang sari*, an offering to colourful fragrant flowers symbolizing holiness. This dance was created in the spirit of *yadnya*—a sacred offering to the divine in its manifestation as the Earth Goddess.

“Kebyar Duduk: (Seated Kebyar) was dance created by I Ketut Mario (c. 1897-1968) in 1925 and was inspired by the gamelan *gong kebyar's* virtuosic playing. Interestingly, prior to the beginning of serious study of the piece, the musicians and soloist of Çudamani sought directions and blessings from master teacher of Peliatan, Anak Agung Gede Bagoes Mandera Erawan, and the late I Wayan Gandra. It is a solo male piece, and movement is performed while in a dynamic and gave as energetic joy to please Goddess Pertiwi, a source of all life. Performer I Putu Wibi Wicaksana was a recent winner in the *kebyar duduk* dance competition in Bali.

“Oleh Tamulilingan” (Figs 4 and 5) bumblebee dance was also created by I Ketut Mario in 1952 for an international tour of dancers from Peliatan. It shows a pair of bees, male and female, falling in love and playing among flowers. The dance was choreographed at the request of John Coast, the English producer for showing in the United States and Europe. Coast inspired Mario by showing him a photo book of classical ballet with a duet of Princess Aurora and Prince Charming from *Sleeping Beauty* (Arini 2011:49). Based on such images, this new, romantic couple dance was born in classical Balinese style.

“Oleh Tamulilingan” bee dance fits the theme of harmony in/of nature. The challenging piece requires high technique. Dancers must give their soul to this work and understand the themes to succeed. Dewa Ayu Larasanti and I Putu Wibi Wicaksana, who danced, were awardees from Balinese dance competitions and both met the mark. For this



FIGURE 4 AND 5. “Oleg Tambulilingan” dance with Dewa Ayu Larasanti (above) and I Putu Wibi Wicaksana. (Photos: Jorge Vismara [2018])

traditional piece, as well, dancers and musicians sought the blessings of master teachers, especially the late Gusti Ayu Raka Rasmi from the village of Peliatan.

Susilo sang "Bunga Sandat" (Ylang Ylang Flower), a traditional *sekar madya* recitation/text that was developed into a song. It describes the beauty of nature, which provides life for all things. The lyrics praise the dew sparkling in rays of the morning sun like diamonds fallen from the garments of *bidadari* (heavenly goddesses) wandering in the sky. "Bunga Sandat" then admonishes young people to behave and make themselves and their world safe and secure. The song ended with the depiction of a young couple wearing Balinese traditional dress, accompanied by their parents and family. We intended for this to communicate respect for the past and harmony between generations: something that we work for in Cudamani. Our effort as artists is to prepare the next generation to lead with the arts when we are gone.

Conclusion

Bhumi looked at human life with attention to divinity, humanity, and the natural environment using Balinese-Hindu philosophy of Tri Hitakarana, which calls for maintaining a harmonious relationship between humans and the divine, among all human beings, and between humans and the natural world including insects, animals, and the volcanic earth. Our program began with the weaving ants of "Rangrangan." It referenced our need of the sun above ("Amurwa Bhumi") and the volcanic earth below ("Legong Pertiwi"). It got dancers down on the ground ("Kebyar Duduk") and showed bees in a duet of becoming ("Oleg Tamulilingan"). It pointed out that age and youth must live in mutual respect ("Sekar Sandat") and that metal ("Kebyar Perak") and animals ("Cak Sato") are part of our whole. Reviewer Swed found the performance achieved "stunning immediacy simply by being astonishingly good" and continued:

2
The care applied to every aspect of Cudamani's presentation-be it the spectacular details of costumes, make-up, masks or application of color (visual, musical or light)-produced an equal devotion in the viewing and listening experience ... each number being in some way related to the idea of healing the Earth. And the only way we can do that is by listening to and watching our planet with utter attention. (Swed 2018)

Our aim as creators was to emphasize the Three Causes both for those who created the work-Balinese artists, our Pengosekan community, and American collaborators-and for those who received our performance-Balinese and American viewers. *Bhumi* prioritized the spiritual. We felt that the new grew organically from the old. I

believe we achieved balances: between content and form, beauty and philosophy, and Balinese heritage and contemporary culture.

As artists, we became more self-conscious and we hope our art helped others in Bali and abroad to join the environmental movement, protest, make protection laws, write, and debate. We touched on religious magic with "Legong Pertiwi" and "Baris Cacancangan." We explored rhythm and with "Kebyar Perak" and "Kebyar Duduk," we modeled health and unity with "Oleg Tamulilingan," "Sekar Sandat," and "Cak Sato." We did some of our best work.

The philosophical power of *Bhumistays* with me. Susilo too notes that while challenging, this project was successful. Of the preparation she notes:

One thing that was tremendously moving for me during the preparation was seeing the members, who are responsible for animating these changes once the artistic leadership has made its decisions, ... support and feed positivity to those who bore the weight of making difficult decision and creating artistic change When the standing ovations came over and over, they were overwhelming because they never felt like they were about any individual. They felt like an affirmation of that we CAN create work together when we are all committed to a common positive intention ... [and that work can be] powerful, meaningful, beautiful both to Balinese artists and American audiences. That if we work hard enough and work together, we CAN find a common ground That gives me hope for our future. We need to take that energy, that steely resolution and apply it to the issues we are now facing globally. (Susilo 2019)

Working in a group, we tried to understand and better our relations with the divine, our fellow humans, our natural world. This has broadened me as an artist and as a person.

As choreographer I noted that dance was more highlighted in *Bhumi* than our two large touring pieces. *Odalan* was more focused on narrative (a day in the life of a temple festival). Music was the clear center of our *Bronze to Bamboo*. For *Bhumi*, movement was more foregrounded-dances that depict nature. Creating it forced me deeper into traditional choreographic models from the early twentieth century. This is a direction that I continued as a guest artist in San Francisco with Camelan Sekar Jaya for a June 2019 performance. This kind of reworking of early twentieth century dance is something I hope to continue, resurrecting the dances by important artists such as I Mario from Tabanan, I Nyoman Rindi (1917-1976), and I Nyoman Kaler (1892-198?) of Denpasar, and I Cede Manik (1912-1984) from Buleleng, near Singaraja. Many of their dances have lost popularity. *Bhumi* made me want to bring back these old works, not as museum pieces, but as the basis for contemporary innovation.

What was even more important is that in *Bhumi* I saw that our intentions in 1997 of creating new material out of heritage and passing tradition as resource to the next generation were succeeding. Ethnomusicologist Sarah Weiss, discussing one of our earlier productions, puzzled over whether what we do is "authentic" (given our firm emphasis on creativity rather than simple preservation). She suggested that "authenticity in their [Cudamani's] new work comes from the ways in which the new pieces intersect with ideas, sounds, and gestures from traditional works as interpreted through the bodies and minds of the individual creators, performers, and their audiences" (2013: 300).

Yes, the idea-being true to tradition by being creative-works for us.

Harnish (2013), discussing our programs, found us posing between the modern and postmodern since rather than producing independent dances/music pieces for these international tours, we forge things into a thematic whole. We create a "narrative" that shares our personal analyses of/for Balinese culture.

Yes-as we create for international audiences-we work hard, as in *Bhumi*, to make the whole linked. No, we did not go the route of realism-talking about or showing the plastic bags blowing in the wind or complaining about the many hotels. We do not create programs that are nitty gritty in cultural critique. That is not the mission we choose. Our vision is based in Tri Hitakarana: show the beauty inherent in traditional understanding of nature and then take that vision from art and implement it in life.

Harnish (2013: 17-18) also felt we were postmodern because we work more hierarchically than other groups. Indeed, our themes may be defined by leaders, but the actual results are increasingly collaborative as our young performers have come of age. For this production, the actual new work was not just emerging from Dewa Berata or myself in creative dialogues with works of the past. Students who we have trained from childhood, in the *legong* and other pieces, were co-creating and, for example, solving our entrance problem. They and the musicians were preparing to surpass us. They were working as we have: absorbing classics but then using them to make the new. This extension of the Balinese heritage of creativity into the future was the dream we dreamed in the 1997. Our students are now starting to lead us.

Taksu is a concept in Balinese performance that is sometimes translated as charisma, but I feel *taksu* does not really come from the artist him/herself-we get it from being inside and understanding concepts woven into our arts practice. The opportunity to work on this production has illuminated my soul because it is based on the norms of Hindu and Balinese culture. Preserving and sharing *Bhumi*, first

in the music and dance and now in this written report, helps me understand what artists can and must do in the present era. It is what I saw my dancers doing each night we performed, witnessing Mother Earth.

NOTES

1. See <https://cudamani.org/about/> for statements on the history, philosophy, and mission of the group, accessed 8 May 2019.

2. For other information on the group see Azmi 2008, Corona et al. 2015, Foley 2008,2011,2016, Harnish 2013, Humphreys 2001, Holt 2005: 146–149, McGraw 2009, Downing 2008,2010, Vitale 2002, Tenzer 2005, and Weiss 2013. For a film which documents Canadian-Balinese collaboration see *Bali by Heart* (2006, dir. Sylvie Peltier)https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-mo_u5bOcMo, accessed 8 May 2019. For selected reviews of international tours see Renouf 2005, Segal 2005, Slayton 2018, Sutton 2010, Swed 2018, and Vartey 2007.

3. <https://cudamani.org/about/>.

4. These latter two groups, led by Mitoma, served as tour sponsors (see <http://www.festivalofsacredmusic.org/about-us/>). Jorge Vismara's photos also are important to Cudamani's documentation in California (see for example, <http://jorgevismara.net/ce/2010/1103best/> and pictures in this piece).

5. The Bali Arts Festival takes place each June-July in Denpasar and is a major site for sharing work with national and international visitors as well as Balinese from all over the island. See Foley and Sumandhi (1994) for more on this major event in its early years.

6. Our programs are thematic, for example for the second tour we had taken the idea of *odalan* (temple festival) with its many activities and showed how worship, art, gambling, and other activities intermix yet bind community and the cosmos into one. We tried to communicate in that work our belief that celebratory art is *ngayah*, a religious offering to the divine. In our third tour program, we showed comparisons and contrasts between two major materials that are used to make music: bamboo is inexpensive and readily available material at the village level, while bronze requires resources and is more associated with elite court and contemporary urban arts.

7. My 2018 interview with Mitoma helped remind me of the original sequence of events.

8. This included various instruments: two *tunggu gender rambats* with fourteen keys, two *tunggu calungs*, and two *tunggu jegogans*.

9. I Wayang Gandra (1938-2002) was the only son of I Made Lebah, musician, dancer, and painter. He learned *kebyar* in Buleleng, with I Gede Manik and I Ketut Mario (the creator of "Kebyar Duduk" dance). Gandra toured internationally with John Coast's Peliatan group in 1952 (see Coast 2004) and taught at UCLA in the early 1960s (see Tenzer 2005 for more on his work).

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