

FREER|SACKLER

Freer Gallery of Art
Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Auditorium
freersackler.si.edu/events

Dance from Indonesia

Classical and Modern

Saturday, May 12, 2018, 7:30 pm



Upcoming

Workshop: Learn Javanese Dance

Sunday, May 13, 1–4 pm

Sackler, ImaginAsia Studio

Learn the postures, gestures, and movements of classical Javanese dance from two masters, Urip Sri Maeny and Pamardi Tjiptopradonggo. Open to ages 16 and older. Register through freersackler.si.edu/events.

Silkroad Ensemble*

Friday, May 18, 7:30 pm

Freer, Meyer Auditorium

Hear the world premiere of a new composition written by members of the Grammy Award-winning Silkroad Ensemble and inspired by works on view in the Freer|Sackler.

Music and Dance from Central Asia: Shashmaqam

Saturday and Sunday, June 9 and 10, 1 and 4 pm

Sackler, level B1 lobby

Enjoy music and dance from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan with prominent artists from New York's Central Asian Jewish community. Presented in conjunction with *To Dye For: Ikats from Central Asia*.

Musical Gems of Arab Cinema: Simon Shaheen and Qantara*

Thursday, June 21, 7:30 pm

Freer, Meyer Auditorium

Enjoy classic film music from the golden age of Arab cinema from the 1930s to 1960s. Virtuoso and composer Simon Shaheen performs on the 'ud (Arab lute) and violin. Joining him are Syrian vocalist Nadia Raies and an ensemble playing Arab and Western instruments typical of the era.

*Tickets are \$6 in advance through freersackler.si.edu/performances.

Tickets are free at the door.

Cover: Pamardi Tjiptopradonggo

Program

Dance from Indonesia: Classical and Modern

Urip Sri Maeny, *dancer*

Pamardi Tjiptopradonggo, *dancer*

Muryanto and Sumarsam, *music directors*

Javanese Masked Dance: Story of Gunungsari and Klana

Traditional *wayang topeng*

Urip Sri Maeny, dance

Pamardi Tjiptopradonggo, dance

Gamelan directed by Muryanto and Sumarsam

Projected image: Panji teaching music to Sekartaji. East Java, 15th century.

Musical interlude

Ketawang Subakastawa Pelog Nem

Gamelan directed by Muryanto and Sumarsam

Amuck (2013)

Pamardi Tjiptopradonggo, choreography, dance, and vocals

Music (*macapet*): Song of Ferocity (*Durma*)

Gamelan directed by Muryanto and Sumarsam

This program is presented in collaboration with the Embassy of Indonesia.

Notes

Javanese Classical Dance

Javanese court dance can be divided into female and male styles. The female style is performed with great restraint and in a closed position. While always in a plié posture, the dancer lifts her feet only slightly from the floor. She focuses instead on the movements of the lower arms and hands. Male dancers perform in either the *alus* (refined) or *gagah* (strong) style. The refined male dance is somewhat closer to the female style. The strong male character dances in an open position, lifting his arms and legs higher, taking wider steps, and having a robust quality in his movements.

An indispensable aspect of Javanese dance is the effective use of a *sampur* (a long scarf tied at the waist) to accentuate movement or to ornament a particular position. The dancer's highly controlled, physical discipline requires a kind of concentration that can be related to the practice of Javanese yoga. Even if the dancer represents a story character from a dance drama, most movements, postures, and gestures do not depict literal actions or express emotions. Instead, their main function is to reveal the inner character of a dramatic hero or villain.

The Panji Tales

The stories of Javanese classical masked-dance drama (*wayang topeng*) are based on the Panji tales indigenous to Southeast Asia. (Other theatrical genres in Indonesia are derived from the Indian epics of the Ramayana and Mahabharata.) The Panji tales, portrayed in both dance and puppet plays (*wayang*), feature the adventures of the legendary prince Panji as he searches for his elusive bride Sekartaji. These romances follow the wandering prince in pursuit of a wandering princess; the stories are full of mysterious disguises, disappearances, resurrections, and transformations. Panji's confrontations with his rivals, including a villain king, are a significant part of the plot.

Tonight's performance features characters from the masked dance drama telling the stories of Klana and Gunungsari. King Klana, a strong, rash, and violent ruler, is Panji's principal adversary for the heart of Sekartaji. The Klana dance represents the king's various moods, from heroic to romantic. Gunungsari, a refined character, is Panji's brother. In assisting Panji in his search for his bride, Gunungsari confronts King Klana.

Amuck

Choreographed by Pamardi Tjiptopradonggo, Amuck is an emotional journey into the experience of uncontrolled anger borne of various inconsistencies. The dancer spirals and hangs, oscillates between quick and sustained movements, coils inward, and emerges again. Pamardi began work on this choreography about four years ago. The piece was staged at the SMKI Pendapa in the city of Surakarta in 2016, where Pamardi performed together with a female dancer and no accompanying music. Tonight's work is the premier of Amuck as a solo piece with gamelan accompaniment.

The atmosphere of Amuck is enhanced by a classical Javanese poetic song (*macapat*) titled Song of Ferocity (*Durma*), which the dancer sings.

The Song of Ferocity
Disturbances break up, tumultuous is the world
Warning sign of military forces
Thunderous sound of gong and gamelan
Beating them to breaking point
Relentless neigh of horses
Crashing sounds
Flags torn off, signifying death.

—Anonymous traditional verse, translated by Sumarsam

Modern Dance in Indonesia

“A dancer has to train himself so that his soul can receive and absorb all impulses from outside which are related to his role in dance, so that his soul can fill the expression of the movements with those impulses. The impulses are brought about by the sounds of gamelan music, the narration, the melody, the dialogue and the story.”

—Suryobrongto Brakel-Papenhuyzen, *Classical Javanese Dance* (Leiden, 1995)

According to the Serat Wedhataya, a twentieth-century sacred treatise on the art of dancing, dance in Indonesia is a technique for both the body and the mind. More than just a series of expertly designed postures and movements, classical Indonesian dance enters the realm of the spiritual. At the same time,

Indonesia has played a formative role in the history of dance well beyond the borders of its own tradition. In the early twentieth century, pioneers of American modern dance turned both eastward in space and backward in time for new influences. Choreographers Ruth St. Denis and Martha Graham were drawn as much to South and Southeast Asia as to the ancient Western world. Graham found a deep resonance with Javanese dance's connection to the earth, its slow and steady movements, and the long skirts and tight bodices of traditional costuming. Today, choreographers from the Graham lineage, such as Jacqueline Buglisi, continue to turn to Indonesian dance as a source of inspiration for their contemporary works. Likewise, Indonesian dancers who are trained in classical forms also look outward to other dance histories. Dance in Indonesia remains a vibrant art form that celebrates innovative forms and techniques, while it reflects the history of its tradition.

Javanese Gamelan

The gamelan orchestra, with its various combinations of instruments, is traditionally an essential accompaniment to puppet shows, dances, feasts, and ceremonies. Most of the gamelan instruments are gongs, gong-chimes, and xylophones made from bronze or iron. Also included are double-headed drums (*kendang*), a two-stringed fiddle (*rebab*), and a wooden xylophone (*gambang*). In a full Javanese gamelan ensemble, the instruments are in double sets, one based on a five-toned tuning system (*slendro*) and the other on a seven-toned tuning system (*pelog*). A chamber-sized *pelog* gamelan is used in tonight's concert.

Functional harmony and melodic development in the style of Western classical music are not heard in traditional gamelan music. Instead, a vocally inspired polyphony, highly melodic in character, is an important feature. Every piece is composed according to a certain form defined by the cycle played on the largest hanging gong. This cyclic principle allows for tremendous flexibility in the creation of pieces with widely varying moods. Even within each piece, subtle transitions in feeling occur as a cycle slows down or speeds up.

—Notes on Javanese classical dance, the Panji tales, and gamelan are by Sumarsam

—Notes on Amuck and modern dance in Indonesia are by Emma Stein, F|S curatorial fellow for Southeast Asian art

Performers

Urip Sri Maeny, *dance*, has taught Javanese dance at Wesleyan University in Connecticut for forty years. She has performed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; Lincoln Center; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Oxford University; Burg Herzberg Festival; and for Indonesian consulates in Hong Kong, Australia, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Kuwait, and Iraq.

Pamardi Tjiptopradonggo, *dance and choreography*, is trained in both classical and contemporary Javanese forms. He is on the faculty of the Institute of the Arts in Surakarta and has taught, performed, and choreographed dances in Japan, Korea, the Philippines, China, India, Europe, and the United States. During the spring 2018 semester, he has served as visiting artist in residence at Wesleyan University.

Sumarsam, *music director*, is the Winslow-Kaplan Professor of Music at Wesleyan University. In addition to teaching Javanese gamelan music, he is an accomplished puppeteer (*dhalang*) of shadow-puppet plays (*wayang kulit*). His research on gamelan, *wayang*, and Indonesian-Western encounters has resulted in two books: *Gamelan: Cultural Interaction and Musical Development in Central Java* and *Javanese Gamelan and the West*. He performed during the FJS Performing Indonesia festivals in 2013 and 2016, which were jointly produced with the Embassy of Indonesia.

Muryanto, *music director*, has long served as the music director at the Embassy of Indonesia here in Washington. He leads the central Javanese court gamelan ensemble and teaches Indonesian music to students of all ages from many backgrounds. His East Javanese music and dance ensemble performed during the FJS Performing Indonesia festival in 2013. The group has participated for many years in the Fourth of July parade held in Takoma Park, Maryland.

Connections



Kneeling male deity. Indonesia, Java, 9th century. Bronze. Promised gift of Ann and Gilbert Kinney, LTS2015.3.9 On view in gallery 26.

On top of the lotus, a marker of the divine, sits a figure in a crouching position—but does he really sit? His posture is active, with one knee raised and one hip lifted, as if he is ready to stand. Although he appears frequently in Southeast Asian art, this deity's identity remains a mystery. His energetic pose and what may be the ends of reins in his hands suggest he represents a charioteer. The figure's position is typical in Javanese dance, which emphasizes the body's inner vitality through slow, steady movements. Javanese dancers keep their feet firmly planted and their centers of gravity held low. Through their connection to the earth, dancers bridge human and divine worlds.

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