

Gamelan Son of Lion and The Downtown Ensemble

present

EXPERIMENTAL COMPOSERS FROM INDONESIA

New music by

Rahayu Supanggah and I Wayan Sadra

Renee Weiler Hall

New York City

November 20, 1991

program

Mimpinya Salju / Snow's Own Dream

W. Sadra

Paragraph

R. Supanggah

Terus dan Terus

W. Sadra



By Accident

R. Supanggah

Daily

W. Sadra

Subway

R. Supanggah

About the project

This concert marks the culmination of the five week residency of Mr. Supanggah in New York City and of Mr. Sadra in Hanover, N.H. The two composers came to America on tour with the "New Music Indonesia" group sponsored by Festival of Indonesia. They were able to stay on to work with specific American ensembles thanks to a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts International Activities program, under the sponsorship of Festival of Indonesia and the American Gamelan Institute.

Mr. Supanggah worked with musicians of Gamelan Son of Lion and the Downtown Ensemble to develop the three new pieces presented tonight, using a combination of Javanese gamelan instruments, western instruments and "found sound" sources. The pieces draw upon elements of traditional gamelan compositional structure as well as organized improvisation.

In his residency at Dartmouth, Mr. Sadra composed at the Bregman Electronic Studio, directed by Jon Appleton and Larry Polansky, where "Mimpinya Salju/Snow's Own Dream" was realized. He also worked with the Dartmouth Gamelan Orchestra, which presented this and several other of Sadra's works on a program November 17th.

We in the ensembles who have been fortunate to share the musical development process and the personal experience of working with both these composers thank them greatly for their warm sharing and patient teaching. Our thanks also to Jody Diamond, Bill Hellerman and the organizations who made this program possible.

About the composers

Rahayu Supanggah is among the first generation of composers to pioneer and champion contemporary or "New Music" in Indonesia. He is currently the Assistant Director of STSI Surakarta, a major arts conservatory in central Java. He is also a graduate of that school and holds an M.A. from the Sorbonne in Paris.

Supanggah was born into a family of reknowned dhalang (shadow puppet masters), and established his reputation as a master musician of traditional Javanese gamelan music. He has composed over a hundred works, toured 28 countries on five continents as musician, composer and scholar. He has collaborated with choreographers, directors and playwrights within and outside Indonesia, including Peter Brook, Sardono W. Kusumo and Walter Kaegi.

I Wayan Sadra was born in Denpasar, Bali. After graduating from Bali's performing arts high school (KOKAR) in 1972, he toured Europe with Sardono Kusumo, a modern Javanese choreographer. He studied painting and taught Balinese gamelan at IKJ, Jakarta Institute of the Arts. He now teaches Balinese music, music criticism and composition at STSI Surakarta.

In addition to his musical activities, Sadra remains active as a visual artist as well, and often works in multimedia forms. He was a guest composer at "Composer to Composer" 1990 and is the recipient of the New Horizons Award for artistic innovation from the International Society for Arts, Sciences and Technology in Berkeley, Ca.

About the pieces

Mimpinya Salju/Snow's Own Dream

"... depicts my feelings during a completely new experience: my first encounter with electronic music instruments. In the beginning something alien suddenly became part of my spirit - crossing the distance between myself and the spirit of the equipment that I did not at all comprehend - as if the snow itself were dreaming, and then I became aware of my own dream about snow. This piece was based on sounds of a balinese suling (bamboo flute) that were then designed and developed on the Synclavier. (W.S.)

Paragraph

"This piece represents a part of my experience working with American gamelan players, just as a paragraph is a portion of a larger essay. The music is also a section of a larger work to be developed in the future. In the Indonesian compositional process I usually work with musicians who are familiar to me. This however is a new experience for both composer and musicians. As a way of sharing with these new musicians, I have used some fundamental Javanese techniques in this piece, as well as some new ones." (R.S.)

Terus dan Terus (On and on)

This piece for "two drums and anything else anyway at all" was created and recorded in Java in 1989 when Sadra was one of seven Indonesian composers commissioned by the American Gamelan Institute and Frog Peak Music. It was premiered in New York by Gamelan Son of Lion in spring 1991, and we are now pleased to present it once again with the composer performing and guiding us. The score is visual and appears on the cover of this program.

By Accident

"Music is not sound alone, but a part of life. It appears in dance, in children's games, in the soundscape of daily human activity. This improvisational piece uses unexpected sound sources in interlocking rhythms to represent the musical juxtapositions of non-musical activity." (R.S.)

Daily

...is a visual theatre piece. "Although it means to evoke images of ordinary daily life, it sometimes reveals the most private aspects of life, such as the search for one's essential self." (W.S.) Tonight's performance is part of a larger work that was premiered at Composer to Composer Festival 1990 in Telluride, Colorado. It also is recorded on the cassette of Sadra's works entitled Karya. The poem by Lawu Arta translates:

The luminous rays of the sun and moon descend.
Telling mother earth that pure love swells the bosome that
embraces the heartsong.
The wind leaves endless footprints in the cove of the heart.
Fluttering fingers move in an ancient dance for the gods.
Create a restrained life that is genuine
It is time to dissolve into the highest consciousness.
Entrust your soul to nature everlasting.

Subway

"Being on the New York subway is one way of comprehending the city. So many things are going on: people talking, people arguing, the sound of the train on the tracks. The rhythm of the subway was an interesting element to use in composition, and the challenge of depicting simultaneous events." (R.S.)

In Java there are special "exit pieces" - what you might call recessionals - in which the musicians show respect for the audience by providing music for their departure. Feel free to leave during this piece so that the sounds of "Subway" may follow you home.

About the ensembles

Tonight's performance is realized by the combined players from two of New York's ensembles which specialize in presenting contemporary chamber music.

Gamelan Son of Lion is dedicated to commissioning, developing, performing, recording and publishing pieces written specifically for the instruments of the Javanese gamelan. It has been presenting new works, primarily by American composers, in New York City since 1976. Special programs have featured process music for gamelan and pieces for electronics and gamelan. Most recently we have begun to present new music from the Indonesian side, hence this program.

The Downtown Ensemble uses traditional western instruments in various combinations to present the "minimalist classics" as well as to premier new repertoire in a variety of contemporary styles, structured, improvisational and multimedia.

...performers...

Rahayu Supanggah, I Wayan Sadra,

Barbara Benary, Philip Corner, David Demnitz,
Jody Diamond, Karen Gilbert, Daniel Goode,
Tomoko Hayashi, Alan Katz,
Christopher Pashoukos,
Adam Weiner