

Performing Arts and the Royal Courts of Southeast Asia, Volume One

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Performing Arts and the Royal Courts of Southeast Asia, Volume One

Pusaka as Documented Heritage

Edited by

Mayco A. Santaella



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Preface

When looking for gong-row (*kakula*) instrument players in Parigi, a small district in Central Sulawesi province, Indonesia, that faces the Gulf of Tomini, I was led to a village called Parigi Mpu'u. In this village I documented a performance of *pajoge maradika*, a dance historically performed by young noblewomen, related to the *pajoge* among the Bugis and *pajaga* in the Luwu kingdom of South Sulawesi. I was then introduced to the king (*magau*) of Parigi and discussed various issues, including the history and viability of this kingdom that still maintains its traditional governance structure with appointed individuals for each position. The visit of Yogyakarta's Sultan Hamengkubuwono x (who has also served as governor since 1998) to Parigi in 2012 resulted in a contemporary celebration of royal heritage, status and traditional performing arts within the district, province and Indonesia as a whole. Following this meeting, that year I worked closely with culture bearers, the *magau* and the local government to bring a delegation representing the Parigi kingdom to the Festival Keraton Nusantara VIII (Nusantara Palace Festival) in Baubau, Southeast Sulawesi. The process of revitalising traditions, organising an official visit, and participating in this national festival attended by royalty and nobility from various kingdoms in Indonesia as well as neighbouring countries was a multifaceted eye-opener. This event honoured royal courts, heirlooms (*pusaka*) and traditional performing arts in the twenty-first century.

Given the significant role of royal courts in Southeast Asia at the local and national levels, generally upheld through the performing arts, I decided to explore the possibility of developing a publishing project that would capture the condition of these living and remembered traditions. The performing arts of the royal courts serve as the bequests, intangible cultural heritage and patrimony of kingdoms, both those that are active and those recalled in the collective memory of their communities. Indonesia has numerous kingdoms, from the well-researched courts of Java to smaller kingdoms in neighbouring islands. The royal courts of the southern Philippines are still celebrated through lineage, historical residences and performances. Sultanates in peninsular Malaysia have largely determined the boundaries of those present-day states governed by sultans and, since independence in 1957, have appointed a king – Yang di-Pertuan Agong – who serves as head of state for five years. Thailand is a kingdom ruled by the Chakri dynasty that is still celebrated and honoured, while regional historical kingdoms are also remembered through the performing arts and heritage that serve as identity signifiers. For its part,

Cambodia is officially an elective monarchy that acts as a symbol of national unity and continuity.

Ethnomusicologists have long researched and published on Southeast Asian traditions in relation to royal courts, but the topic has never been addressed in a cohesive and regional manner. In light of this omission, I worked with Lawrence N. Ross as convenors of a symposium that addressed these issues. The call for papers, developed with the support of Raja Iskandar Bin Raja Halid and Made Mantle Hood, emphasised the role of courts as sites for the creation, exchange, maintenance and development of myriad forms of performing arts. As *pusaka*, the performing arts of royal courts have figured prominently in traditional displays of dominion, and in many cases they are transferred between courts through marriage, conquest, diplomatic exchanges, trade and tributary relations. Within kingdoms, the performing arts have circulated between royal courts and the public, providing vibrant mediums for civic discourse, education, and articulations of spirituality and shared identity. As such, the symposium addressed three distinctive but related areas of discussion and their attendant questions. First, inter-court relations: how have court-to-court relations shaped the development of Southeast Asia's performing arts? What do the performing arts tell us about power relations between polities in the past? Second, intra-kingdom circulations: how have palace–village exchanges contributed to developments, refinements and standardised practices in the performing arts? How do the performing arts reflect the institutions, ideologies and constellations of power produced and reproduced under state sponsorship? And third, contemporary implications: what roles do courts or court legacies play in the production and development of the performing arts in the twenty-first century? How have the performing arts figured in the transformations of Southeast Asia's hereditary polities into modern states? How have recent generations of royal descendants transformed their patronage of the arts as politicians, activists and entrepreneurs?

The Performing Arts and the Royal Courts of Southeast Asia (PARCSEA) symposium was held on 12–13 July 2018 at Sunway University, Malaysia, and was supported by Universiti Malaya and Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat (Royal Palace of Yogyakarta). The occasion featured four keynote addresses by Barbara Watson Andaya, Leonard Y. Andaya, Mohd Anis Md Nor and Ricardo D. Trimillos, as well as presentations by scholars from Southeast Asia, Japan, the United States and Australia, most of which are reproduced in revised form in these volumes. The symposium was blessed with an evening of performances: a *Gunungsari* mask dance from Java, performed by Urip Sri Maeny; an *asyik* royal court dance from Patani and Kelantan, performed by Pertubuhan Warisan Seni Tari dan Muzik Melayu (Malay Dance and Music Heritage Organisation); a *joget gamelan* court dance from Pahang and Terengganu, performed by Akademi

Seni Budaya dan Warisan Kebangsaan (National Arts, Culture and Heritage Academy); and a special performance of the *bedhaya Banjaransari* court dance from Yogyakarta in the presence of Her Majesty Gusti Kanjeng Bendara Raden Ayu Adipati Paku Alam. The symposium concluded with reflections on royal courts and present-day cultural institutions by Her Majesty, Marion D'Cruz and the four keynote speakers.

After the symposium, all the speakers were invited to develop their papers as chapters for this book. The submissions considered methodological approaches, historical perspectives and contemporary issues. In some cases, chapters are somewhat encyclopaedic in nature, unsurprisingly given the dearth of publications on the topic or the national nature of the study. Other authors offer a historical perspective or problematise their field of study by considering different cases from Southeast Asia and beyond. The majority of the chapters discuss a specific court or tradition and provide a critical reflection. Part of the challenge has been the consideration of myriad types of relationships between royal courts and the performing arts in Southeast Asia. As such, the symposium provided a strong foundation to discuss such issues for selected case studies while keeping in mind Southeast Asian rationales.

Acknowledging inevitable overlaps, the project is divided into two volumes. The first volume, *Pusaka as Documented Heritage*, consists of historical case studies, contexts and developments of royal court traditions, particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The second volume, *Pusaka as Performed Heritage*, comprises chapters that problematise royal court traditions in the present century with case studies that examine the viability, adaptability and contemporary contexts for coexisting administrative structures.

The contributors are drawn from both established and early career researchers working on traditional performing arts in Southeast Asia. The volumes exhibit a conscious effort to include contributions by Southeast Asian scholars living and working in the region as well as academics from outside the region; a gender balance; contributions by artist-scholars or scholars who actively perform; contributions by ethnomusicologists and ethnochoreologists as well as historians; and contributions covering both mainland and insular or maritime Southeast Asia. There is also a clear link of many of the contributors to the International Council for Traditional Music as an academic organisation and the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, with current and retired professors, alumni and the extended *'ohana*.



The process of making this publication a reality since the symposium in 2018 took several years given the comprehensive review process, adversities of the

global Covid-19 pandemic in 2020–2021, and the necessary publishing procedures and protocols. I would like to thank everyone involved in the symposium for their support. I am grateful to the reviewers of individual chapters who provided insightful comments. Additionally, two anonymous reviewers appointed by Brill contributed impressive evaluations of specific chapters and the book as a whole. I am thankful to Gareth Richards, Eryn Tan and Elsa Waeldin of Impress Creative and Editorial in Penang who copy-edited the entire manuscript and created the glossary and index with admirable devotion. Funding for the symposium and copy-editing was provided by Sunway University. Last but not least, I am indebted to Brill for supporting this project specifically and Southeast Asian studies more broadly. Thanks to Chunyan Shu, Iulia Ivana, Dove Morissette and the series editors for their support and professionalism throughout the review and production processes. This book was written and edited during the Covid-19 pandemic while taking care of children, online classes and adaptations to lockdowns in Malaysia, and I would like to thank everyone for their support and patience during this difficult time.

On 6 May 2020, only days after finalising the contents of Sal Murgiyanto and Hermien Kusmayati's chapter in the *Pusaka as Performed Heritage* volume, I received the sad news in an email from her daughter Maria Satya Rani that Hermien Kusmayati had passed away. Ibu Hermien played a crucial role in the revitalisation of court dances in Yogyakarta. Thanks to her daughter's efforts and Brill's endorsement, an Indonesian version of her chapter and last text will be published by Yogyakarta's Institut Seni Indonesia (Indonesian Institute of the Arts) where Ibu Hermien taught dance at the Faculty of Performing Arts. This book is dedicated to Hermien Kusmayati and to all academics and practitioners who devote their lives to documenting, revitalising and sustaining the performing arts of royal courts in Southeast Asia.

Mayco A. Santaella

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 17 June 2023

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

BCE	before common era
CE	common era
IKIP	Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan (Institute for Teacher Training and Education)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VOC	Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (Dutch East India Company)

Contributors

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is Professor of Asian Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, USA, where she was also Director of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies. She was a former president of the Association for Asian Studies (2005–2006). In 2000 she received a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, and in 2010 she was awarded the University of Hawai'i Regents' Medal for Excellence in Research. Her specific area of expertise is the western Malay-Indonesian Archipelago, on which she has published widely, while she maintains an active teaching and research interest across all of Southeast Asia. Her single-authored books include *Perak, the Abode of Grace: A Study of an Eighteenth-century Malay State* (1979), *To Live as Brothers: Southeast Sumatra in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (1993) and *The Flaming Womb: Repositioning Women in Early Modern Southeast Asia* (2006). Her most recent books, in collaboration with Leonard Y. Andaya, are *A History of Early Modern Southeast Asia, 1400–1830* (2015) and a third edition of *A History of Malaysia* (2017). She is the general editor of the new *Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, and is also completing a book on gender and sexuality in Southeast Asia from early times to the present.

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