

THE ROLE OF THE *GENDER BARUNG* IN CREATING THE AESTHETIC OF SURAKARTA STYLE JAVANESE KARAWITAN

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Abstract

The *gender barung* is one of the instruments found in a traditional gamelan Ageng ensemble which plays Surakarta style *karawitan*. This instrument is required to interpret both *pathet* and *garap* in its performance. One of the roles or functions of this instrument is to embellish the melody with a variety of different *cengkok* and *wiled*. To meet the aesthetical requirements for playing the *gender barung*, it is necessary to have a good command of its basic playing technique.

In order to discuss the subject of this article, a qualitative research method is used with an approach which includes a literature study and participant observation to analyze the process through which the *gender barung* creates the aesthetics of *karawitan*. Every *gender* artist has a different strength of expression which conceptually can be observed through the artist's technique, *cengkok*, and *wiled* used in performance.

From the results of the discussion, it can be concluded that it is important to have a good command of the basic playing technique of the *gender barung* since this enables the musician to build the aesthetics of *karawitan*. *Embat* is also an important element of gamelan tuning since the harmonization that appears in the playing of the *gender barung* is a powerful structure for creating the aesthetics of *karawitan*. The character of a *gender* artist can

be identified from the way he or she plays. The involvement of the *gender barung* in a performance allows the character of the *gendhing* to emerge or come to light.

Keywords: Technique, *cengkok*.

1. Introduction

The *gender barung* is a Javanese gamelan instrument that is found in a Surakarta style gamelan *ageng* ensemble. In addition to the *gender barung*, a gamelan *ageng* ensemble also includes a *gender penerus*. The *gender* is also used in Balinese gamelan ensembles, although there are a number of physical differences between the Javanese *gender* and Balinese *gender*. In a Balinese gamelan ensemble, the *gender* is more exclusive as it is used only for performances of Balinese *wayang kulit*, known as *gender wayang*. In terms of its physical appearance, the *gender barung* used in Surakarta style Javanese gamelan generally consists of a number of components or elements, including: the *bilah*, *bumbungan*, *grobogan*, *pluntur*, *sanggan*, *sindik*, *bremara*, and *tapak dara*. The *bilah* is the main element which acts as the sound source of the *gender*; the *bumbungan* functions as a resonator to increase the volume of the sound created by the *bilah*; the function of the *rancangan* or *grobogan* is to integrate all the different components of the *gender barung*. The *pluntur* joins together the *bilah* to keep them in the correct order so that they can be played; the *sanggan* has the function of supporting the *bilah* on top of the resonators; the *sindik* connects the *bilah* with the *pluntur*; the *bremara* holds the *pluntur* in place at each end of the instrument; and the *tapak dara* is the base which holds the instrument upright and keeps it steady. This is a brief and general description of the *gender barung* instrument. In a gamelan *ageng* ensemble, other instruments belonging to the *bilah* family include the *gen-*

der penerus and *slenthem*. All three have the same elements but the size of the *bilah* on each of the three instruments is different.

From the time of its first appearance up to the present day, the *gender barung* has undergone a number of changes or additions, both in terms of its physical appearance and also its number of *bilah*. Hood states that the appearance of the *gender barung* today is a modification of its former appearance which was relatively taller and as such, required a special seat for the player to sit on in order to play the instrument. Its current appearance was adapted to suit the ethics of the royal palace, or Keraton, where the musicians were prohibited from sitting at a higher level than the king, and for this reason, all of the gamelan players had to be seated on the floor (Kunst, 1949:173).

It has been established that in its early days, the *gender barung* had 10 *bilah*. Nowadays, this kind of *gender* is very uncommon. In the royal palace of Surakarta (the Keraton Kasunanan) there is still a *gender barung* with 10 *bilah* which is used in the ceremonial gamelan *pakurmatan* ensemble known as *Kodok Ngorèk*. It is, however, no longer used in a gamelan *ageng* ensemble. There is very little evidence remaining about the existence of a *gender barung* with 11 *bilah*. In the Keraton Kasunanan, almost all the different gamelan ensembles have *gender barung* with 12 *bilah* (*pethit* 2̣). This is also the case with what is believed to be the oldest gamelan ensemble, namely gamelan Lokananta (PB II), which also has 12 *bilah*. There are two gamelan ensembles in the keraton that have *gender barung* with 13 *bilah* (*pethit* 3̣), namely the ensembles Mangun Harjo Harjo Winangun and Gora Arum. (Joko Daryanto, interview 10 December 2013.) It would seem that the gamelan Lokananta from the collection of PBII, with its 12-*bilah gender barung*, became the reference for future gamelan sets. Ensembles which included a *gender barung* with

13 *bilah*, meanwhile, were used for art activities outside the keraton.

It is estimated that in order to reach the number of *bilah* commonly used today (14 *bilah*), there must have been a logical or chronological progression from a *gender barung* with 11, then 12, 13, and finally 14 *bilah*. In reality today, we more frequently come across *gender barung* with 14 *bilah*, and only see a small number with 13 *bilah*. Martopangrawit states that 14 *bilah* are more than sufficient to accommodate the variety of *cengkok* played on the *gender barung* (Martopangrawit, 1976:30). In fact, 13 *bilah* are enough to play all the *cengkok* that have evolved on the *gender barung*, and the use of 14 *bilah* is for no other reason than to make the physical appearance more attractive since it is more symmetrical. The reason why it appears more symmetrical is that between every two *bilah* there is a *sanggan*, and if the number of *bilah* is only 13, at one place there will be only a single *bilah* between the *sanggan*, making the appearance unsymmetrical.

The pitches on *gender barung* instruments with 14 *bilah* vary from one place to another. On some instruments, the highest note (*pethit*) is pitch $\dot{3}$ (*dada*), while in another place the highest note (*pethit*) is pitch $\dot{5}$ (*lima*). There is no explanation why the highest *bilah* (*pethit*) is tuned to pitch $\dot{5}$ (*lima*), because as far as I am aware, in practice, in Surakarta style karawitan, there are no existing *cengkok* that use *pethit* pitch $\dot{5}$ (*lima*). To be more clear, the most common arrangement of pitches on the *gender barung* is as follows: $\dot{6}$ $\dot{1}$ $\dot{2}$ $\dot{3}$ $\dot{5}$ $\dot{6}$ $\dot{1}$ $\dot{2}$ $\dot{3}$ $\dot{5}$ $\dot{6}$ $\dot{1}$ $\dot{2}$ $\dot{3}$

On a *gender* with *pethit* pitch $\dot{5}$ (*lima*), the lowest note is \dot{q} , in order to keep the number of *bilah* at 14. The way of writing the notation used above is known as *kepatihan* notation. In accordance with the layout of the *bilah* on the *gender*, higher notes are indicated by the use of a dot above the note and lower notes

with a dot below the note. For notes in the middle range, no dots are used either above or below the notes.

The *gender barung* is played with two mallets (*tabuh*), one held in each hand. The mallets consist of flat, round, wooden discs with a short stick protruding from the center of each that is held in the player's hand. The outer edges of the wooden discs are covered with cloth so that when the instrument is struck it produces a soft sound rather than a hard, brittle tone.

The player holds each of the two mallets with a different grip. The left hand holds the mallet between the forefinger and the middle finger, with the fourth and fifth fingers following the curve of the middle finger. The forefinger presses down slightly on the handle of the mallet and the thumb is bent over the forefinger. The fourth and fifth fingers and the outer side of the hand are used to damp the *bilah* after they have been struck. The palm of the left hand faces sideways. In principle, the right-hand grip of the mallet is almost the same as the left, but the hand position is different, in that the palm of the hand faces downwards, unlike the left hand. The thumb and fifth finger are used to damp the *bilah* that have just been struck. For a clearer picture, the position and grip of the right and left hands is shown in the picture below.

There are several different ways of holding and using the mallets for the *gender barung* because there are no hard and fast rules about this. However, in my experience as a teacher of the *gender barung* for many years, I have always used the technique described above. The reason for this is that anatomically this technique causes no pain and allows freedom of movement for the left hand to play various techniques such as *sampanan*, *sarungan*, or *ukel*. The playing technique for the *gender barung* requires a wider range of movement in the left hand than the right hand due to the demands of the *cengkok* played by this instrument.

The notation above is copied from the book *Titilaras Cengkok-Cengkok Genderan Dengan Wiledannya Jidil II*, 1976: 62. Note: The top row is played by the right hand and the bottom row by the left hand. Both hands play their own individual parts at the same time.

2. Technique for playing the *gender barung*

The playing technique used for the *gender barung* is closely related to the techniques used for playing the different kinds of *cengkok* and also the actual technique for playing the instrument. The techniques related to *cengkok* are known as *kembang tiba*, *ukel pancaran*, *rangkep*, *lamba*, *laku 1, 2, 4, 8, and 16* (Martopangrawit 1972:67); (Kunst 1949: 1975). The actual technique for playing the *gender barung* instrument involves the use of both hands (left and right), which do not always play the same notes as each other. A simple way of describing this technique is that the right hand plays a series of notes one after the other, either moving in step or in leaps, while the thumb and fifth finger are used to damp the notes after they have been played, also in turn. The same is true for the left hand, which plays a series of notes, either moving in step or in leaps, damping the notes in a similar manner with the fourth and fifth fingers and the side of the hand. In general, the function of the right hand is more rhythmic in nature while the function of the left hand is non-rhythmic, creating or ornamenting a melody, while the overall function of the *gender barung* is to create an ornamental melody based on the main or core melody (*lagu balungan*) (Matopangrawit 1972:3-4). The two hands work together to play a variety of different techniques, applying the wide range of *cengkok* that exist in the Surakarta style repertoire. These *cengkok* cannot be played properly without a good command of technique. The various

techniques that a *gender barung* player should be able to apply include *gembyang* technique, *gembyung* technique, *mipil* technique, *samparan* technique, *sarugan* technique, *pêthêtan* technique, *genukan* technique, and *ukelan* technique. Below is a basic explanation of the techniques that are used to play the *gender barung*. In the examples below, it is important to pay attention to the technique for damping the *bilah* of the *gender*. In practice, the player endeavors to produce a smooth, unbroken sound, which I often describe as damping in the style of “flowing water” or *mbanyu mili* (Kunst, 1949:187).

Gembyang technique, or *gembyangan*, is a playing technique in which both hands play the same note at the same time but in a different register, or with an interval of four *bilah* between the notes. For example, the left hand plays note 6̣ (nem) in the lower register and the right hand plays note 6̣ (nem) in the middle register. Below is an example of notation which applies the technique of *gembyang*. Suwardi refers to this technique as *mbalung* technique (2000:37).

3̣ 5̣ 6̣ 1̣ 5̣ 6̣ 1̣ 2̣ Notes played by the right hand.

3̣ 5̣ 6̣ 1̣ 5̣ 6̣ 1̣ 2̣ Notes played by the left hand.

Mipil technique is a playing technique in which the two hands play the *bilah* of the *gender* in turn. In this technique, special attention must be paid to damping the *bilah*, as explained above, so that there is no gap between the sounding of one note and the next, or the notes are joined together smoothly (*mbanyu milih*). See also Suwardi (2000:28). Below is an example of notation using *mipil* technique.

5̣	.	1̣	.	6̣	.	6̣	1̣	.	.	6̣	.	6̣	.	1̣	2̣
.	3̣	.	1̣	.	2̣	.	3̣	3̣	5̣	.	5̣	.	2̣	3̣	5̣

In this technique, good coordination between the two hands is needed to produce a smooth and continuous sound.

Samparan technique is a technique in which the left hand plays three consecutive notes in descending order and the right hand plays a single note, whether *gembyang*, *kempyung*, or any other note, to coincide with the last of the three notes played by the left hand. Kunst refers to this technique using the term *nyaruk*, which is a metrical figure consisting of three consecutive notes that are played in descending order (Kunst, 1949: 188). This statement is somewhat different to current practice, and what Kunst is referring to is now known as *samparan* technique.

In this technique, attention should be given to damping the notes played by the left hand, with the first two notes being damped together after the third note is played. See also Suwardi (2000:28). Below is an example of notation which applies the technique of *samparan*.

. . . <u>1</u>	. . . <u>6</u>	. . . <u>5</u>	. . . <u>3</u>
. . 321	. . 216	. . 165	. . 653

Notes 3 and 2 are damped at the same time, after note 1 has been played.

Sarugan technique is essentially the opposite of *samparan* technique, in that the left hand plays three consecutive notes in succession, only this time in ascending order, and the right hand plays a single note, whether *gembyang*, *kempyung*, or another note, to coincide with the third note of the left hand. Kunst refers to this technique as *ngrachik* or *ngranchak*, which is a metrical figure consisting of three consecutive notes played in ascending order (Kunst. 1949:188).

In this technique, attention should be given to the damping technique of the left hand, with the first two notes being

damped together after the third note has been played. See also Suwardi (2000:28). *Sarugan* technique in principal is the opposite of *samparan* technique.

$\begin{array}{cccc} \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \dot{6} \\ \hline \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \dot{3} \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{cccc} \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \dot{1} \\ \hline \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \dot{5} \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{cccc} \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \dot{2} \\ \hline \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \dot{6} \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{cccc} \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \dot{3} \\ \hline \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \dot{1} \end{array}$
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Genukan technique is a technique in which the left hand damps one note before playing the next note, producing a broken or disjointed effect. The right hand continues to play and damp the notes in the usual way to produce a continuous sound. Hence, the playing and damping techniques of the right and left hands are not the same.

Example:

$\begin{array}{cccc} 5 & \dot{1} & 5 & 3 \\ \hline 5 & \dot{3} & \dot{3} & \dot{3} \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{cccc} 6 & 5 & 6 & \dot{1} \\ \hline \cdot & 12 & \cdot 23 \end{array}$
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Note: note $\dot{3}$ (lu besar) is played three times in a row and damped each time after it is played before the right hand plays note $\dot{1}$ followed by note 5 and then note 3. In other words, note $\dot{3}$ in the lower register is damped first before it is played again. See also Suwardi (2000:39)

Gembyungan technique is a playing technique used by both hands at the same time, which may play any note or *bilah* of the *gender*. Often the left hand uses either *samparan* or *sarugan* technique while the right hand plays certain notes in accordance with the required *cengkok* or *wiled*, with an additional rhythmic function. An example of this kind of interplay between the right and left hands is shown below.

$\begin{array}{cccc} \dot{1} & \dot{2} & \dot{1} & 6 \\ \hline \end{array}$
 $\begin{array}{cccc} 3 & 6 & 3 & 2 \\ \hline \end{array}$
 $\begin{array}{cccc} 5 & 6 & \overline{\dot{1}} & \overline{6} \\ \hline \end{array}$
 $\begin{array}{cccc} 5 & 6 & 5 & 3 \\ \hline \end{array}$
 $\begin{array}{cccc} & & & \\ 2 & 3 & \overline{5} & 3 & 2 \\ \hline \end{array}$
 $\begin{array}{cccc} 6 & \overline{3} & \overline{5} & 6 & 5 \\ \hline \end{array}$
 $\begin{array}{cccc} . & \dot{2} & \dot{1} & \dot{2} \\ \hline \end{array}$
 $\begin{array}{ccc} 3 & 5 & \overline{6} & 5 & 3 \\ \hline \end{array}$

Pêthêtan technique is a playing technique similar to *mipil* but uses a different damping technique, in which each note is damped before the next note is sounded, both in the right and left hands, thus creating a disjointed effect, not a continuous sound (*mbanyu mili*).

The example below is taken from Suwardi (2000:42).

$\begin{array}{cccc} . & \emptyset & \dot{1} & 6 \\ \hline \end{array}$
 $\begin{array}{cccc} . & \emptyset & \emptyset & 5 \\ \hline \end{array}$
 $\begin{array}{cccc} . & \emptyset & \emptyset & 3 \\ \hline \end{array}$
 $\begin{array}{cccc} . & \emptyset & \emptyset & 2 \\ \hline \end{array}$
 $\begin{array}{cccc} . & \emptyset & \emptyset & 2 \\ 1 & \emptyset & \emptyset & 1 \\ \hline \end{array}$
 $\begin{array}{cccc} 6 & \emptyset & \emptyset & 6 \\ \hline \end{array}$
 $\begin{array}{cccc} 5 & \emptyset & \emptyset & 5 \\ \hline \end{array}$

Ukelan technique is a technique used in the left hand, which combines *samparan* technique with *sarugan* technique, producing a sound that circles around one particular note. The right hand, meanwhile, plays other notes, hence creating a rhythmic melody, while using the *mbanyu mili* damping technique.

Example:

$\begin{array}{cccc} . & 6 & . & \dot{1} \\ \hline \end{array}$
 $\begin{array}{cccc} . & \dot{2} & . & \dot{1} \\ \hline \end{array}$
 $\begin{array}{cccc} . & 5 & . & 6 \\ \hline \end{array}$
 $\begin{array}{cccc} . & \dot{1} & . & 6 \\ \hline \end{array}$
 $\begin{array}{cccc} . & 2 & 1 & 6 & 1 & 2 & 1 & 6 \\ \hline \end{array}$
 $\begin{array}{cccc} 1 & 2 & 1 & 6 & 1 & 2 & 1 & \\ \hline \end{array}$
 $\begin{array}{cccc} . & 5 & 6 & 1 & 6 & 5 & 6 & 1 \\ \hline \end{array}$
 $\begin{array}{cccc} 6 & 5 & 6 & 1 & 6 & 5 & 6 & \\ \hline \end{array}$

In *samparan* technique, the left hand moves outwards. On the contrary, in *sarugan* technique, the left hand moves inwards.

All of the techniques for playing the *gender barung* described above are vital for a player to learn in order to present an

aesthetical performance on the *gender barung*. It is the combination of these various techniques that represents the feel (*rasa*) or expression of a *gender* player. A *gender* player must have a good command of all these different techniques. Without this, it is not possible to present a pleasing aesthetical performance. Therefore, the aesthetic in the performance of the *gender barung* is largely determined by the command of the techniques described above.

3. Aesthetic of the *Gender barung*

The musical function of a gamelan *ageng* ensemble can broadly speaking be divided into 3 large categories (see Supanggah, Martopangrawit, Richard Pickvance), namely the structural instrument, the melody instruments, and the *garap* or embellishing instruments. These three categories can be explained simply as follows: The structural instruments consist of the *gong*, *kempul*, *kenong*, *kethuk*, *kempyang*, *kecer*, and *kemanak*, and have the function of reinforcing or providing emphasis to a melodic form at regular intervals, in accordance with their own individual function and the playing characteristics of each instrument. The melody instruments consist of the *slenthem*, *demung*, *saron*, and *saron penerus*, and broadly speaking, these instruments play the melody of a *gendhing* in accordance with the function and characteristic playing style of each instrument. The *garap* instruments include the *rebab*, *kendhang*, *gender barung*, *gender penerus*, *bonang barung*, *bonang penerus*, *gambang*, *siter*, *suling*, and vocalists, and these instruments require certain tools and *cengkok* in accordance with the characteristics and playing technique of each instrument, which are based on the melody of the *gendhing*. In other words, in a performance, the *garap* instruments require the player to interpret the melody through the use of *cengkok* and certain norms and principles in accordance with the characteristics and nature

of each instrument. The technique for playing the *gender barung* is different from that of the *rebab*, and for this reason, it requires a different interpretation and the use of difference *cengkok* and *wiled*. In general, the playing techniques of all the different instruments in a gamelan *ageng* ensemble are not interchangeable. The unique characteristics and nature of each individual instrument mean that the player requires a good command of the playing technique in order to achieve the desired aesthetic.

The *gender barung*, using the technique with which it is played (as described above) can be played independently. In this sense, it is very different from any of the other instruments in a gamelan *ageng* ensemble. When playing it as a solo instrument, a *gender barung* player is able to present a performance that can be enjoyed aesthetically. The *gender barung* is one of few instruments that sounds pleasant when played by itself without any other accompanying instruments. The function of the *gender barung* is as follows.

1. to embellish the melody with its variety of *cengkok* and *wiled*
2. to play an introduction or *buka* for *gendhing gender*
3. to provide guidance (*thinthingan*) for the vocalist who sings a *batwa* or *buka celuk*
4. to accompany the singing of a puppet master (*dhalang*) in the performance of *suluk/pathetan*, *sendhon*, *ada-ada*, and so on
5. to create a particular mood for scenes in a shadow puppet performance

In the first function of the *gender barung* mentioned above, the *gender* plays metrically, while in the third, fourth, and fifth functions, its playing style is non-metric. All of these functions are carried out in accordance with the norms, ethics, and principles of *gender* playing. In creating the aesthetic of the perfor-

mance, in addition to adhering to the norms of playing *cengkok*, the most important aspect is the emotions, feelings, or mood of the *gender* player, since this is exposed or reflected in the performance. In addition, the aesthetic of the *gender barung* is not only determined by the player but is also related to the tuning of the instrument. Furthermore, the aesthetic of karawitan cannot be separated from the overall tuning of the gamelan instruments. The character of each individual gamelan ensemble is reflected by the tuning.

Since every gamelan ensemble has a different tuning, this means that the tuning of each *gender barung* is also different. Thus, the character and aesthetic of each *gender* will also differ. It should be noted that in the system used to tune a set of gamelan instruments, the *gender barung* is usually used as the *babon* or the basic reference for tuning all the other instruments in a gamelan *ageng* ensemble. This is confirmed by Sri Hastanto, who writes "...if they are asked to determine the *embat* of the tuning, this means that the musical characteristic of the tuning is entirely in their hands and the tuning process begins by tuning the *gender barung* instrument" (2012: 34). The reason for this is that the pitch range of the *gender barung* encompasses the pitches of all the other instruments, such as the *kempul*, *kenong*, *kethuk*, *slenthem*, *demung*, *saron*, *bonang barung*, and so on. Therefore, it follows on logically that the *embat* of every gamelan ensemble can be seen in or traced back to the *gender barung*. Sri Hastanto also writes: "*embat* is a musical concept in Javanese gamelan" (2012: 38). It is *embat* that forms the character of each Javanese gamelan ensemble. *Embat* also determines whether a *gendhing* feels pleasant, strong, bright, calm, and so on, when it is played. In the Javanese tuning system, the tuning of the instruments is not precise, as in the diatonic tuning of western musical instruments. Usually, the gamelan

tuner will intentionally create a slight different in the tuning to produce an undulating or wave effect when the same pitches are played. Sri Hastanto writes further: "...it is their habit to try and tune the pitches of a *gembyangan* so that they are not exactly the same (*pleng*) but tuned very slightly apart without ignoring the tolerance of how high or low the pitch is" (2012: 34). This difference in pitch may mean that the note is either above or below the pitch of the basic pitch (the *babon*). These slight differences in pitch created by the gamelan tuner produce a richness of sound that makes every single gamelan ensemble unique. This is a special skill that gamelan tuners possess and is also one of the treasures of the Javanese culture.

The aesthetic in a *gender barung* performance of an individual musician is determined to a large extent by the command of technique, *cengkok*, and *wiled*, and the experience of the player. In addition, the emotions, feelings, and mood of the player can strengthen the aesthetic of the performance when they correspond to the characteristics of the *gendhing* being performed. In other words, the aesthetic of the performance will be more apparent if the interpretation of the *gendhing* matches the mood of the player. On the contrary, it will be less apparent when a player who is feeling happy or joyful plays a *gendhing* with a sad, calm, or austere nature since the player's current mood does not match the character of the *gendhing* being performed. This is not easy to learn because it concerns the interpretation of the *gendhing*, the character of the *gendhing*, the choice of treatment for the performance of a *gendhing*, the situation and conditions at the time of the performance, and so on. In addition, it is difficult to know the personal situation and condition of a *gender* player when he is playing. However, for musicians with experience in karawitan, it is possible to identify these matters.

The aesthetic that emerges from a *gender* player's performance is also affected by the tuning or character of the gamelan ensemble, since every gamelan has its own individual character or feel (*rasa*). One ensemble may feel grander, more kingly, heroic, or commanding when it play a *gendhing* in *pathet sanga*, while these characteristics may not be apparent when another ensemble plays a *gendhing* in the same *pathet*. This is all influenced by the tuning of each gamelan ensemble or what is known in karawitan as *embat*. *Embat* plays an important role in creating the aesthetic of karawitan. *Embat* is determined by the intervals or distance between the different pitches in a gamelan ensemble. It is one of the aesthetical treasures that is found in gamelan ensembles throughout the world. *Embat*, therefore, is one of the reasons why gamelan is not tuned using the same system as diatonic music. On the subject of *embat*, Sri Hastanto writes: "...gamelan maestros say that certain ensembles have a bright feel while others have a calmer feel" (2012: 38). The different feel of different ensembles is what creates the aesthetic of karawitan that is produced by the musicians in a performance. The different feel of an ensemble is created by the distance or intervals between the notes, which is known as *jangkah* (Sri Hastanto, 2012:39).

The *gender barung* can produce or create the aesthetic in a karawitan performance through the *cengkok* that are used. In Bausastra, *cengkok* is defined as (1) *pratingkah sing digawe-gawe murih katon becik* (behaviour that is contrived so as to appear good); (2) *elak-eluking swara ing lelagon tembang lan lsp* (the rise and fall of a pitch in a vocal piece, etc.) The meaning of the word *cengkok* has a very close connection with the part played by the *gender barung*. A player manipulates or plays a particular *cengkok* by moving his right and left hands to play the notes that charac-

terize a certain *cengkok* so as to create a pleasant sound. The aesthetical effect is not created simply by playing certain notes. In order to facilitate the identification and learning of different *cengkok*, and to distinguish one *cengkok* from another, the *cengkok* played on the *gender barung* are given names. These names include: *Gendhuk Kuning Gembyang* (*Kutuk Kuning Gembyang* or *KKG*), *Gendhuk Kuning Kempyung*, *Ayu Kuning*, *Tumurun*, *Jarit Kawung*, *Puthut gelut*, *Puthut semedi*, *Kacaryan*, *Ela-elo*, *Duduk*, and so on. According to Martopangrawit (*Titilaras Cengkok-cengkok Genderan*, 1973), there are a number of *gender cengkok* that are based on or built upon a fixed melody (*lagu mati*) in *irama dados* with considerations of *padang* or *ulihan* or *padang-ulihan*. In addition, there are many more *cengkok* without names (Martopangrawit, 1972: 70).

The function of the *gender barung* in terms of its contribution to create the aesthetic of karawitan is very important. As well as being the *babon* in the system of tuning the pitches of a gamelan ensemble, the *gender barung* also plays an important role in its performance as one of the individual instruments of a gamelan ensemble. Through the artist, the *gender barung* helps build the aesthetic of karawitan with the use of all its different techniques as well as the rules, norms, and principles that it must adhere to in the choice of *cengkok* and *wiled*. The harmonization created by playing different notes at the same time or in sequence, the jumping, clashing, or chasing between different notes, in the *cengkok* of the *gender barung*, is a strong structure for building the aesthetic of *karawitan*. The involvement of the *gender barung* in a performance enables the character of a *gendhing* to emerge or be constructed. Through the music played on the *gender barung*, the character of a person can also emerge or be identified. Therefore, it is not surprising that artists such as Sabdo Suwarno, Ngasinah, Sardiman, Martopangrawit, Ibu Pringgo, and others

have each developed their own character (*cak*) of *cengkok* and *wiled*, which allows their personality to be identified.

The contribution of the *gender barung* also plays a part in determining the interpretation of the *pathet*. Furthermore, Martopangrawit writes: "...so we will explain that *pathet* is "*garap*", changing *pathet* means changing *garap* (1972: 28). Hence, *pathet* helps to determine the feel or aesthetic of *karawitan*. Meanwhile, the *gender* is an instrument that interprets a melody through its treatment of *cengkok*. As mentioned above, the *cengkok* of the *gender* have names, and these names are used in all *pathet* and also in both the *slendro* and *pelog* tuning systems. To give an illustration of this, the *cengkok kutuk kuning kempyung* can be played in *pathet sanga*, or by moving all the notes up by a single pitch, it can also be played in *pathet manyura*. Physically (literally), this is the same *cengkok*. It has the same name and plays the same pattern, the only difference being it is a step higher. However, by doing this it creates a very different feel. The reason for this is the difference in the intervals (*jangkah*) between different notes on the *gender* itself. Despite the fact that the same *cengkok* is being played, the difference in *jangkah* between one note and another produces a different feel. This does not include the matter of the *wiled* or *cak* of every *gender* player, which also plays an important part in conveying a particular aesthetic in *karawitan*. Changing the *cengkok kutuk kuning kempyung* from *pathet slendro sanga* to *pathet slendro manyura* is just a single example. There are many other examples of the same *cengkok* being used in a different *pathet* and *laras*. This wealth of different *cengkok*, *laras*, and *gendhing* will of course produce a wide variety of different feelings or aesthetics. In addition, the wealth of different *wiled* and *cak* of each *gender* player also add to the richness of the aesthetic in *karawitan*.

The aesthetic of a *gendhing* is not only created by the *gender barung*; all the different instruments, including the vocalists, play an intrinsic role in creating the aesthetic of karawitan. Nevertheless, the *gender barung* plays a prominent role in developing the character of the aesthetic of *pathet* in a *gendhing*. This is because the *gender barung* has the ability to play or demonstrate the boundaries of a particular *pathet*, which in turn determines the aesthetic of the performance of a *gendhing*.

4. Closing

The *gender barung* is one of the instruments in a gamelan *ageng* ensemble. Gamelan *ageng* is a cultural product of the ethnic Javanese which has become deeply rooted in the culture and has been used for a variety of different functions by its supporting community for centuries. A deep-rooted culture gives rise to a tradition which is subsequently passed down from one generation to another. As such, culture plays an important role in determining a person's response to the music (in this case *karawitan*) that originates from the person's own art and cultural background (Johan 2010: 129). Therefore, the idioms of performance of the *gender barung* can only be understood, digested, and accepted by the community to which the culture belongs or those who have a special interest in Javanese karawitan.

Whatever the function of gamelan (*karawitan*) in the performing arts, whether primary or secondary, if the *gender barung* is included in the performance, it will create the best possible aesthetic. In general, a *gender* player will not take into consideration the function of the performance at the actual time, whether it is purely as concert music or part of another art performance. There may be a slight difference if the *gender* player knows that the performance is purely for the enjoyment of the audience, in which

case he will play more carefully. In order to develop the correct aesthetic, one of the most important aspects is to have a good command of technique. This will enable or guide the player to the best possible aesthetic. Many learners ignore the importance of a good technique of playing or damping the *gender*, and as a result they are unable to achieve the best aesthetic.

In order to play well, a *gender* player must first master the necessary interpretation of *pathet*, *garap*, and idioms of Javanese karawitan that are commonly used in the performing arts, and primarily in karawitan. Equally important is a good command of *gendhing* repertoire and *gender* repertoire, including a good knowledge and variety of *cengkok* and *wiled*. A performance will be more meaningful if the *gender* player can interact with the other instruments or musicians. In this case, the interpretation of a *gendhing* by all the other musicians is extremely important for the *gender* player in determining his choice of *cengkok* and *wiled*. The aesthetic of a karawitan performance is built upon the momentary musical communication between the musicians. In addition, the aspects of *laras* and *jangkah* also contribute to the aesthetic that is created by the *gender* itself.

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