

Program

Flinders Asia Centre and Gamelan Sekar Laras

Present

A Shadow Puppet Performance of
"Bima Bungkus" (the Birth of Bima)

5 May 2012



Welcome to this shadow puppet performance!

We especially welcome HE Primo Alui Joelianto, the Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia and Dr Aris Junaidi, the Education and Cultural Attaché, who have flown from Canberra to attend this performance. We welcome Professor Phyllis Tharenou, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Social and Behavioral Studies. Staff, current and past students of Flinders University, Indonesian post-graduate students and their families, other international students, and all friends of the Gamelan Sekar Laras are also especially warmly welcomed.

Tonight's performance commemorates the 21st birthday of Gamelan Sekar Laras and we are proud and happy to perform a shadow puppet play featuring our own puppeteer Ki Aji Prasetya Wibawa (from East Java) who is currently studying and living in Adelaide. The music and songs that you hear tonight have all been chosen by him.

Order of events

Welcome: Professor Malcolm Cook, Dean of the School of International Studies.

Performance of ‘The Birth of Bima’

There are six scenes in the performance, all accompanied by traditional pieces played in the East Javanese style.

Closing words: HE Primo Alui Joelianto (the Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia) and Professor Phyllis Tharenou (Executive Dean, Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences).

The shadow play will last about one hour. Please feel free to move around between scenes; perhaps find a different spot from which to watch the next part of the performance. A shadow play looks quite different depending on whether you sit on the puppet side or the shadow side of the screen.

*Small children are not required to sit still or be especially quiet.

*Refreshments will be served after the performance, please stay and enjoy.

Synopsis

Once upon a time, Prabu Pandu Dewanata (the King of Hastina) and his wife, Dewi Kunti, were in sorrow because their second child had just been born wrapped up in a package. The King asked Sengkuni (his Chief Advisor) to take care of the package and find a way to open it.

Sengkuni is not a good man, however. Instead of doing the king’s bidding, he calls the Kurawas (enemies of the Kingdom of Hastina) and tells them to break open the package and to destroy everything inside it. The Kurawas try with all their might to do this, but they fail. The noise that they make disturbs the meditation of the elephant Sena, who becomes very angry. Sena charges at Sengkuni and the Kurawas and they flee in fear of their lives.

Semar (the leader of the clowns) then appears and entertains the angry Sena by singing to him. When Sena has calmed down, Semar asks him to break open the package. In this way, he says, the elephant’s dream of becoming human will be fulfilled. The elephant breaks open the package with his trunk and a baby emerges, crying loudly because he has been woken from sleep. Sena disappears as spirit enters the baby. Semar gives the baby boy the name Bratasena to commemorate the kindness of the elephant Sena who helped the

baby be born. Then Semar takes Bratasena to meet his parents in the Kingdom of Hastina.

On the way to Hastina, Bratasena becomes caught up a fight between soldiers from the Kingdom of Tasik Madu and a group of large demons; Kala Dahana (fire) and his brothers Kala Maruta (wind), Kala Bantala (earth) and Kala Ranu (water). Bratasena helps King Tasik Madu by defeating the demons and continues on his way to the Kingdom of Hastina. When he finally arrives, Bratasena meets his parents and is given new names, including Bima (strong), Gandawastratmaja (a child of Pandu), Bayunindha (student of Dewa Bayu) and Jayalaga (always wins in war).

Puppeteer

Ki Aji Prasetya Wibawa

Gamelan Sekar Laras players are:

Anton Lucas	Saron barung
Ardianto	Singer
Brett Calliss	Peking
Budiharto	Kendang and Gong kempul
Candice Rodgers	Slenthem
Deetje Tunstill	Gambang
Dodi Darmadi	Kendang
Dwi Ardi W	Singer
Pregiwati Pusporini	Singer
Hannah Tunstill	Bonang barung
Hari Prasetyo	Kendang and Gong kempul
Julian Tunstill	Saron Barung
Kadar Lucas	Saron demung
Leah Marrone	Saron demung
Margret Eusope	Bonang panerus
Neil Turner	Saron Barung
Priyambudi Sulistiyanto	Gender
Santhy Hawanti	Singer
Wahyu Widyatmaka	Kethuk Kenong

Flinders Asia Centre and Gamelan Sekar Laras

Gamelan has been taught at Flinders University since 1986, by a succession of accomplished Adelaide-based musicians that has included Robert Lloyd, the late Heather Stark, Kate Hancock, Guy Tunstill, David Kotlowy, Hannah Tunstill and Julian Tunstill. Currently gamelan is taught in the topic “Indonesian Musical Cultures and Identities” (ASST 2006) which is offered in second semester each year. Gamelan is also taught each year to hundreds of primary and secondary school students who are brought to this campus to experience the unique ambience of the Flinders University Pendopo, and the satisfaction of learning to play simple gamelan pieces together. Visiting the Pendopo helps students to connect in a concrete and meaningful way with their studies of Indonesia and Asia more generally. The Flinders Asia Centre offers a range of workshops to schools through our School Outreach Program; among these, gamelan workshops are unarguably the most popular.

The teaching and learning of gamelan at Flinders University over the past twenty six years has been a means of creating relationships between the University and the community at large. Students (at all levels of education), teachers, Flinders staff, international post-graduate students, families and friends have learned about and celebrated Australia’s ongoing and vital relationship with Indonesia through workshops, concerts and other events in the Pendopo. Tonight’s shadow puppet performance marks another significant moment in this engagement.

Acknowledgments

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