Çudamani: Gamelan and Dance of Bali

20th Anniversary Tour

WHEN: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2018 7:30 PM

VENUE: BING CONCERT HALL
Program

Bhumi: Mother Earth
There is the Divine, the Universe, and Humanity

Artistic Directors:
I Dewa Putu Berata, I Nyoman Cerita, I Dewa Putu Rai, Emiko Saraswati Susilo

Produced by:
Judy Mitoma and The Foundation for World Arts


Costume Design:
Dewa Putu Berata, Nyoman Cerita, Emiko Saraswati Susilo, Putu Wibi Wicaksana

Tour administration:
Anuradha Ganpati Kishore, Monica Favand Campagna, Marcia Argolo

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the Western States Arts Federation and the National Endowment for the Arts

Balinese Hinduism and the Artist Path
Hinduism is deeply and gently interwoven with Bali’s sacred connection to the elements of the Earth and nature, resulting in a belief system that is uniquely Balinese Hinduism. Through the arts we maintain balance and harmony in our connection to the Divine, the Universe and each other. Our arts are an offering of gratitude and love to the world around us and are an essential part of Balinese culture.

Bhumi — Mother Earth has a life cycle like all living beings. The Earth is made of the same elements as we are, thus we are part of the Earth. The signs of Mother Earth are easily ignored in today’s world, but gamelan, dance, ceremonies and offerings are one way we connect with and honor Mother Earth.

SAMSARA — Cycles of Change
The Earth, like all things, has cycles. Positive and negative, light and dark, all are in a constant search for balance. Balinese ceremonies and Balinese music and dance reflect the cycles of the seasons, of life and death — repeating and circling with nuanced variations. Having too much is not an advantage, greed can create imbalance and the Earth, just like a human, can become ill when balance...
is lost. With natural disasters, both the positive and negative is born. As we write these notes, Gunung Agung erupts, bringing both destruction and renewal. Even "disaster" can be seen in a positive light. People across the island are opening their doors and hearts to help others. In welcoming those in need, we seek to balance the all powerful force of Bhumi.

Our humble gifts of movement and sound unite us with the animals and plants around us and in this creative space remind us to be protectors and guardians of the Earth. Each time we begin and end a performance, regardless of how small or large, we ask for forgiveness for our shortcomings, and pray that our efforts will connect us to BHUMI, that we may nurture her, protect her, and she in turn, will protect us.

Program Notes

Rangrang
Composer: I Dewa Putu Rai
The word rangrang refers to that which is intertwined or knit together, just as we are interwoven with one another and the universe around us. Balinese gamelan often starts with a section called a peng-rangrang, a flowing abstraction of the core melody, the benang merah or 'red thread' that weaves through the fabric of the composition. The piece is inspired by and a tribute to master composers of our ancestors, such as Kak Lotring, and the belief that each sound, each note has a sacred resonance, each pattern an intrinsic beauty. Beauty and inspiration is brought together in a way that is rooted in those heirlooms of artistry that we have inherited and is joyfully relevant to the young generations of today.

Tari Amurwa Bhumi (Dalem) — Wise Leader of the World
Choreographer: I Nyoman Cerita
Musical Arrangement: I Dewa Putu Berata
Every aspect of a true leader's life is bound by the laws of nature and the universe, and a leader’s influence in the world has consequences. Characterized by strong, controlled, thoughtful and refined technique—every movement, every step, of Dalem expresses clarity, nobility, balance and harmony, qualities that we expect in our wise leaders. The cascading melodic lines flow fluidly, following structures laid down for countless generations.

Tari Legong Pertiwi
Legong for Mother Earth
Choreographer: I Nyoman Cerita
Composer: I Dewa Putu Rai
Pertiwi is the goddess of the Earth, the womb of the origins of life, who contains and maintains all that we need to live as humans. She is life, and to the extent that life is cherished and revered, she is cherished and revered. Legong Pertiwi is an homage to Mother Earth, Ibu Bhumi, the Universe and all that exists within. Remembering that her destruction would be our destruction, we offer our energy, focus, and work to care for and honor Her. The music is gamelan selonding, an ancient form of iron gamelan, deeply rooted in the rituals of Balinese Hinduism.

Tari Baris Cecanangan An Offering of the Guardians
Choreographer: I Nyoman Cerita
Composer: I Dewa Putu Rai
An offering of music and dance founded on the concepts of Shiwam, Satyam and Sundaram, are an expression of our hope for enlightenment, truth and harmonious life with the Divine, Natural and Human worlds. The movements of this new work
evoke the ancient Baris Gede that Balinese men have offered in temples since the time of our ancestors, an impressive realization of the male energy’s guardian power. The dance and music illustrate the ever evolving cycles of life and delve deeply into the mystical life in Bali. The use of palawakya recitation and musical techniques of gong gede create an awareness other universes, and remind us of our responsibility to the ancient power of community and the mystical radiance that resides all around us.

—Intermission—

**Tari Kebyar Duduk** Seated Kebyar 
*Creator: Bapa Mario*

One of the most technically challenging dances of the Balinese repertoire, the movements are inspired by nature and connect the dancer to the Earth. Imbued with elements of great refinement, precision and strength, the dance is a reflection of our own human path seeking a balance between masculine/feminine; strength/softness; bravery/caution. The ability of the solo dancer to match and augment the powerful music of the full gamelan is one of the most demanding and impressive aspects of this dance.

**Tari Tamulilingan Ngisep Sari** Bee in Search of Nectar 
*Creator: Bapa Mario*

The interdependence of life inspires this dance where the beauty of the flower attracts the bee to collect
nectar and in return pollinate the flowers. The relationship is completely symbiotic each nurturing the other in a gentle cycle filled with love and care. This rarely performed version has its home in the Peliatan region of Bali. Taught to Çudamani in 2015 by the original dancer of the piece Ni Gusti Ayu Raka Rasmin who, in her 70s, is still a stunning performer and dedicated teacher.

**Sekar Sandat** “The Ylang Ylang Flower, *even when it is wilted, remains fragrant.*” This much loved song, uses the metaphor of flowers to talk about our lives as humans. The Sandat flower, is famously not beautiful for a tropical flower. However, it is fragrant even after it is wilted and is an essential part of Balinese ceremonies and life. The lesson being that our true beauty lies not on the surface, but in our hearts. If we work to make the world a better place, then even when we have passed away, our name and our work will remain ‘fragrant’ in the memories of those who have known us.

**Tabuh Kebyar Perak — Silver Explosion**

*Taught and Arranged by: Bapak I Wayan Gandra*

Kebyar means explosion or light, and perak is silver which has a white color. Like the sacred light that emanates from the Earth and from each of us, the sounds of the different instruments in this gong kebyar masterpiece evoke the dynamic rhythms of life — cycles
of seasons, night and day, changing eras. When these sounds are intertwined, there is a balance that brings profound joy.

**Cak Sato — Animal kecak**
Directed by Dewa Putu Berata and created with the entire company.
Freedom and harmony — this new cak is inspired by sato, or animals. We want to pay homage to animals as well as our own animal nature. Like humans, to survive animals must seek balance and find peace in their world. Cak Sato draws upon the rich vocal chanting traditions of Bali. The fast, playful and sometimes humorous version that Çudamani has created here, reflects the dynamic musical landscape of Bali, with many elements of the piece created by the performers themselves in their shared expression of their loving and joyful connection to one another.

Tourism has had a powerful impact on the arts in Bali — particularly so in Ubud, the famous tourist town north of Pengosekan. By the 1990s most of the musicians of Ubud were playing for tourists in lieu supplanting of the needs of the community. The youth of Pengosekan often found themselves working in this system — experiencing the financial benefits of tourism while keenly aware of the artistic and cultural dangers of this arrangement. In September 1997, Director Dewa Putu Berata, Artistic Director Dewa Ketut Alit, and others from Pengosekan called together a number of talented and promising young people from different areas in Bali to form Sanggar Çudamani.

For twenty years Çudamani has maintained the highest standards of excellence and performs primarily as a spiritual offering for temples and for the activities of their village community. The group is activist and responds to the philosophical, practical and problematic issues that face Balinese life today. They invite master artists to teach rarely performed repertoire, and members are well known for the creation of new work. As a way to disseminate their message and offer their members a chance for international travel, the senior company has toured since 2002 in USA, Canada, Italy, Greece, Netherlands, and Japan. Many master musicians, scholars and ethnomusicologists from around the world turn to Çudamani for creative collaborators.

In their village, Çudamani offers free music and dance instruction for different age groups. These youth offer their music and dance as a form of prayer in temple ceremonies and village events. Their contribution is both a benefit and point of pride in the village. Of special importance is the serious training of their girls gamelan group. Many say they have set a high bar of excellence for other groups in Bali. Çudamani youth groups have been invited to the prestigious Bali
Arts Festival where the children perform before audiences of 3000 with technical precision, artistic excellence, and incredible spirit and cohesion. As with the senior company, the children of Çudamani have a island wide reputation. Indeed, many of these children find their way to the senior company.

**ARTISTIC DIRECTION**

**I Dewa Putu Berata, Director**
Born and raised in the village of Pengosekan, son of a great drummer, Berata was immersed in Balinese performing arts from birth. He is renowned for his compositional skills in both traditional and innovative styles and a rare ability to communicate a diverse knowledge of Balinese arts to both Balinese and international artists. He is the founder and director of Çudamani, and has lead Çudamani, on tours to venues including The Jazz at Lincoln Center (NY), the World Festival of Sacred Music- (LA), the Cultural Olympiad (Greece), EXPO (Japan) and the Tong Tong Festival (Holland) among others. As a result of Berata’s vision, Çudamani, has become an important artistic center in Bali where the study and preservation of classic forms is nurtured alongside the creative energies of young artists in Bali. He frequently serves as the Guest Musical Director of Berkeley based Gamelan Sekar Jaya. He is a graduate of STSI, Denpasar (Bali’s National Academy of the Arts).

**I Nyoman Cerita, Dance Director**
One of Bali’s most influential choreographers and teachers, Cerita hails from the village of Singapadu, renowned for its vibrant dance traditions. He has been Çudamani’s Senior Dance Advisor since the group’s inception and is in demand all over Bali as a choreographer and teacher. His works range from large scale dance dramas to new works for youth and children. He has trained some of Bali’s finest award winning dancers and always remains dedicated to the teaching of Balinese children. He received his BA from ASTI, his S1 from STSI and his MFA from UCLA. He has served as the Head of the Dance Department at ISI Denpasar (Institut Seni Indonesia) and recently completed his PhD at Udayana University.
Emiko Saraswati Susilo, Assistant Director

Susilo was raised in a family rich with the arts. She began her study of Balinese dance with Ibu Ni Made Wiratini and her study of Javanese dance with late Master Rama Sasminta Mardawa, teacher of the Court of Yogyakarta. She is a gamelan/vocal student of Bp. Tri Haryanto and Ki Midiyanto. Susilo is a founding member of Çudamani, and has been a core leader since the group’s inception. She works closely with Çudamani’s groundbreaking girls gamelan program. Susilo has a deep love of bringing together traditional and contemporary forms and ideas across the disciplines of dance, music, voice and visual arts. For six years she served as Director of the Berkeley based, Gamelan Sekar Jaya. She received her BA from UC Berkeley and her MA from the University of Hawai’i.

Dewa Putu Rai, Music Director

One of Çudamani’s core founding members, Dewa Rai is one of the most in-demand composers on the island of Bali. Known for both his instrumental and dance music, Rai’s aesthetic blends creative innovation with traditional sensibilities. His compositional skills and breathtaking drumming are complemented by his deep understanding of dance and his dedication to teach and mentor some of Bali’s most vibrant young musicians.