CHAPTER TEN

INDONESIAN PERFORMING ARTS IN THE NETHERLANDS, 1913–1944

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The history of Indonesian music in the Netherlands is sometimes assumed to begin with Babar Lajar (Javanese for ‘Setting Sail’), a youth gamelan founded in Haarlem in 1941 and active through the mid-1950s (Mendonça 2002: 115–150). This so-called ‘white gamelan orchestra’ (*blanke gamelan-orkest*) was avidly supported by ethnomusicologist Jaap Kunst (1891–1960) and often performed on Dutch media, giving radio concerts, accompanying classical Javanese dance in the dance documentary *Danskunst in Indonesië* (1947) and modern Javanese dance in *God Shiva* (1955), and providing music for the Philips LP record of Jaap Kunst’s children’s book *Begdja the gamelan boy: A story from the isle of Java* (1953). Babar Lajar offered an important precedent for other gamelan played by (mostly) non-Indonesians outside of Southeast Asia. The group’s influence was due, in no small part, to the talents of the ensemble’s leader, Bernard IJzerdraat (1926–86), a musician who later took the Javanese name Suryabrata and founded the influential *sanggar* (arts studio) Bakti Budaya (‘Servant of Culture’) in Jakarta in 1956. IJzerdraat offered practical gamelan instruction to American musicologist Mantle Hood while Hood worked on a PhD on musical modes in Javanese gamelan under Kunst’s supervision in the early 1950s. This experience directly contributed to Hood founding the first American university gamelan programme at UCLA in the 1950s. IJzerdraat later facilitated the research and practical studies of many foreign visitors to Indonesia. However, Babar Lajar’s legitimacy as a representative of Javanese culture was questioned by Indonesians living in the Netherlands; modern Javanese dancer Raden Mas Jodjana (1893–1972) notably expressed consternation at its monopolization of Dutch media time in the 1940s (Cohen 2010: 137). It is not my purpose to debate Babar Lajar’s significance in the history of gamelan’s internationalization. But, I would like to suggest that the attention given to it occludes an earlier history of Indonesian performing arts in the Netherlands, a lively art world, which involved professional and amateur artists of Indonesian, European and mixed race descent; multi-art collaborations (including music, dance,

drama, puppetry and film); scholarly and popular publications and recordings; and public performances of various scales and purposes.

This essay surveys the Indonesian performing arts 'scene' in the Netherlands during the late colonial period through the end of World War Two, looking particularly at Javanese dance and music associations, Indies drama, *kroncong* clubs, touring professionals and pan-Indonesian student groups.¹ The performing arts were initially inward looking. The first gamelan concert by Javanese students was organized to illustrate a lecture on music addressed to an academic audience. Indies dramas (*Indische toneel*) produced at the same time fastidiously avoided issues of Otherness in order to affirm the Dutchness of the Dutch Indies. However, with the first *Indische Kunstavond* (Indies Art Evening) in 1916, the performing arts were used by Indonesian students studying in Holland to make a political statement to the Dutch public. The refined arts were presented as a justification for a model of colonial relations in which indigenous and Dutch cultures were *associated*, rather than unified or assimilated (see Van Niel 1984: 36–38). The integrity of Javanese culture was to be esteemed for the sake of interracial tolerance and respect. Political advancement was conditioned upon cultural exchange on even terms.

With the exceptions of composer Fred Belloni (1891–1969) and playwright Jan Fabricius (1871–1964), artists did not journey from the Dutch Indies to the Netherlands anticipating making a living from art. Yet, Europe allowed new possibilities for some Indonesian dancers and other artists, starting with business student turned professional performer Raden Mas Jodjana. Increasingly, cultural organisations were interested in demonstrating pan-Indonesian unity through performance. One can see them as workshops for the formation of Indonesian national culture, enshrined in the constitutional mandate for the government to promote 'the peaks of culture' of the nation's constitutive ethnic groups. These Indonesian associations were not generally exclusive; they incorporated Dutch as well as Eurasian members. As such, they modelled inclusivity and presented alternatives to the ethnic segregation that came to dominate Indonesian culture in the 20th century. Yet, as shall be demonstrated, the progressive political agenda of early Indies art evenings was not sustained over the decades to follow, as Indonesian performances on Dutch stages came to confirm colonial stereotypes for Dutch audiences.

¹ Sections of this chapter have been published in slightly different forms in Cohen 2010.

Indies Drama

European drama in the Indies had a long history before the 20th century, mostly undistinguished (Van den Berg 1881). The Netherlands fielded few international theatrical companies, and language barriers stood in the way of touring English or French dramatic ‘straight drama’ companies – though opera and musical theatre were appreciated. The large proscenium theatres, or *schouwburgen*, of Batavia, Surabaya and Semarang, and the smaller stages of European clubhouses occasionally hosted local amateur drama companies, which performed for their own enjoyment and the entertainment of European urbanites. There was also military drama – largely all-male affairs. Farce and light comedy dominated over serious drama. A list of a hundred play scripts available for purchase in a Batavia general store in 1892 includes one play by Henrik Ibsen and one by Molière. The rest is mostly Dutch-language comedies, some translated from French originals. Only a sprinkling of the scripts, such as Arie Ruysch’s (1797–1871) comedy *De oom uit Oost-Indie* (The East Indies uncle, 1865), appear to have Indies-related themes (Tooneelstukken 1892).²

The success of Hans van de Wall’s (1869–1948) production of W.G. van Nouhuys’ three-act play *Eerloos* (Dishonourable, 1892), about a government tax collector who is robbed by his son, in the Batavia *schouwburg* in 1900, revealed an audience for serious drama in the Dutch language. This encouraged European tours by professional companies and encouraged Indies-based writers, including van de Wall, to write and produce serious plays drawing on their own experience of life in the Indies. The years 1900–1925 have been described as a period of blossoming of the *Indische toneel*, Dutch-language realist drama set in the Indies (Baay 1998). The Indies drama was the correlate of the Indies novel (*Indische roman*), a popular literary genre in the colony and the Netherlands at the time. Playwrights who were born or lived in the Indies penned numerous social dramas dealing with issues confronting Europeans in the Dutch Indies,

² ‘Tooneelstukken voor dames en heeren’, *Java Bode*, 8 October 1892, p. 7. This advertisement targeted dramatic companies, listing the number of acts, parts (male and female), genre (for example: farce, comedy, drama) as well as price. An advertisement from 1891 in the same paper promotes 50 playscripts ‘without roles for women’. Among the very small number of published Dutch-language plays about the Indies written before 1900 is Onno Zwier van Haren’s five-act *Agon, Sulthan van Bantam* (1769). The tragedy is noteworthy for its critique of corruption in the Dutch East India Company and sympathetic portrayal of Banten’s sultan.

such as class strife, prejudice towards men of mixed race, the *nyai* or unofficial wife of a European man, unfettered capitalism, social isolation and generational conflict. Many of the Dutch-language plays written in the Indies were highly ephemeral and of strictly local interest. Rob Nieuwenhuys (1978), in his survey of colonial literature, identifies three playwrights of enduring interest: Jan Fabricius (1871–1964), Henri van Wermeskerken (1882–1937) and Hans van de Wall, who wrote and directed under the *nom-de-stage* Victor Ido. The work of all three was popular in the Indies, and performed internationally as well. Here, I will focus on Fabricius.

Fabricius was born in the small town of Assen, in the north of Holland, the son of a printing press foreman and proof-reader of the town paper.³ He received only an elementary education before going to work as a printer. He went to the Indies in 1892 as a printing press foreman, worked himself up to reporter and by 1898 was editor-in-chief of a newspaper in Bandung. Fabricius returned to the Netherlands in 1902. His first sign of involvement in theatre was in 1905, when Dutch actor-manager Frits Bouwmeester (1885–1959) commissioned Fabricius to write a play for him on an Indies theme for his company's tour to the Indies in 1905–6. While Fabricius was unable to complete the play before the troupe's departure, he continued to work on the script and published the play, titled *Met den handschoen getrouwd* (Married by proxy) in 1907, along with another Indies drama and an historical romance commissioned to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the municipal charter of Assen. Fabricius returned to the Indies in 1910 and wrote plays for local drama groups while working as a newspaper editor.

After four additional years in the Indies, Fabricius decided he would attempt to make a living as a playwright. He travelled to Paris in 1914 to observe the latest theatrical trends and then moved to the Netherlands. By 1915 his plays were being produced professionally in Amsterdam and other cities around the Netherlands and within a short time were being translated into German, French, English and other European languages. Fabricius' 1910 play *De rechte lijn*, a drama about an ambitious self-educated businessman who sacrifices marital happiness to conform to his rigid moral code, was published in an English version (as *Straight out!*) in 1915. His Indies drama *Lasmi* (1924) was translated into English and produced in 1929 by the Bandbox Repertory Theater, an innovative California company that performed in environmental settings such as drawing rooms, clubs and hotels.

³ On Fabricius' life and Indies dramas, see Van den Berg (2000).

Fabricius' 1916 play *Dolle Hans*, about a Eurasian military officer whose career and love are hampered by prejudice, was translated into English as *Insult* and produced in 1930 in London's West End and on Broadway in New York.⁴ It is probably the most significant Indies drama to be produced in Europe, lauded by Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw and other theatre luminaries. A brief summary will provide a taste of the genre.

Major de Weert is on leave and visiting his son Does, a district controller in a remote province of the Indies. Does has recently married a strikingly beautiful and independently minded Dutch woman named Jolanthe. Jolanthe still has the glow of 'cream and roses' in her complexion, but has evidently taken a liking to the Indies. As the curtain opens, she plays *kroncong* guitar (a low-class hybrid cultural signifier), and addresses her servant in bazaar Malay. Jolanthe has asked Does to prevent the execution of a native soldier but he has not done as she requested, losing her respect. The Major flirts with Jolanthe and suggests that he would have liked to have married her if he was younger. Does' closest friend, Hans Hartman, served under Major de Weert and had an altercation with him – which resulted in the Major not getting promoted. Hans has a 'native' grandmother – and is prone to losing his temper – and the Major has a virulent dislike of 'half-castes'. 'If I had my way I'd have every Sienjo in the land with his back to the wall in front of a firing squad and I'd count it the best day's work I'd done to see that not a man of them was left!'⁵ Hans tries to avoid meeting the Major again – as he is afraid the Major will provoke him and he'll lose his temper, and do something he might regret. But Hans has something important to discuss with Does. He meets privately with Does and advises him not to follow a central command to strip the four ruling sultans of their power. Four of the sultans are corrupt rogues, but Indra Djali, the Sultan of Poeloe Manik, is loyal to the Dutch and also well-liked by the populace and removing him would create dissent and possibly lead to insurrection. Jolanthe also advises Does to disobey orders. But Does docilely obeys his superiors, completely losing Jolanthe's respect for him as a man. She concludes that she fell in love with his uniform, not the man inside it.

⁴ Translators J.E. Harold Terry and Harry Tighe originally titled their translation 'Son of a—' but this suggestion of vulgarity was prevented by the Lord Chamberlain's office; each instance of 'son of a bitch' is crossed out in the script. See Fabricius (1930).

⁵ *Sienjo*, from the Portuguese *senhor* (Lord, Sir, Mister), was a neutral term for Caucasian and Eurasian young men in bazaar Malay through the late 19th century, but is deployed here as a derogatory term for Eurasian men.

Act II begins five days later. A thunder storm rages, affecting Hans 'atavistically', raising his temper and fear. Indra Djali has thrown in his lot with the other sultans and they are raiding border villages. Does receives a telegraph from the Assistant Resident that authorizes him to retaliate. Hans reveals to Does that he has always loved Jolanthe – since he first met her in Holland. But he has never told her of his love as he is ashamed of his mixed race background. Does lets it slip to his father, the Major, that Hans loves Jolanthe and the Major forces Does to tell Jolanthe about his friend's romantic interest. An order from headquarters arrives that Hans will be transferred to Rawah – a punitive transfer instigated by the Major. The Major abuses Hans, calling him a *Sienjo* and a 'son of a bitch'. Hans tries to throttle the Major and is placed under arrest. Jolanthe goes to say goodbye to Hans – admitting her love for him. Does becomes so angry at his father for causing him to lose his wife and friend that he picks up a revolver to shoot him, but is unable to do so.

Act III is set a month later. Hans is imprisoned in the guard room of the barracks under sentence of death. A reprieve from the Governor-General is expected for him – many have petitioned. Does has died during the military expedition against the sultans. The sultans are again granted independence – though now Indra Djali is a sworn enemy of the Dutch. The Major petitions Hans not to meet the widowed Jolanthe as it will soil her reputation to go directly from her husband's funeral to her lover. A native sergeant loyal to Hans plans an escape, but Hans is a dutiful officer to the end and refuses his help. A cable arrives stating that the execution will go through as planned. Hans reconciles with the Major, who vows to mend his ways. Jolanthe arrives and Jolanthe and Hans look at each other in silence as military drums play outside the cell.

Fabricius was one of the most celebrated Dutch playwrights of the interwar years: in one year there were reportedly sixteen productions of his plays produced in Amsterdam alone. His melodramatic problem plays had an uneven reception internationally. The plays were sometimes ill-served by translators. During a thunderstorm in *Insult*, the 'half caste' officer Hans Hartman vows 'the gods are angry tonight; they demand a sacrifice. [...] My native blood is strong within me – something is threatening'. *Time* magazine quipped that with lines like these, 'from the standpoint of audience-intelligence, the play is neatly titled'.⁶ Lee Schubert

⁶ 'New plays in Manhattan', *Time*, 29 September 1930, www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,740426-2,00.html (accessed 28 October 2008).

imported the play to New York City with a raft of other plays running in London in the hope of reviving the depressed Broadway theatre industry. The production closed after 24 performances in New York. Fabricius' plays, and many other Indies dramas, indulge in racist stereotypes. There are few indigenous or Chinese characters in his plays, and even fewer with any psychological depth. One critic has described the Indo (mixed-race) character in *Totok en Indo* as 'good at heart, ludicrous, sentimental, responsible for all the laughs on stage, especially through the mixed prattle used by him and his friend Cornelis' (February 1991: 56). When performed in Surabaya, the play was protested by Eurasians for Fabricius' demeaning stereotypes.

While Victor Ido's plays demonstrate limited appreciation of the dynamics of Javanese society, the work of Fabricius, like the bulk of Indies dramas, is testament to Dutch colonial insularity. These period dramas do not look outwards to the ethnic diversity of the Indies and the archipelago's connections to the wider world, but focus inwards on domestic concerns, psychological conflicts, personal and career angst. Though set in Java and other islands of the archipelago, the plays are not fully embedded in the cultural landscape. The Otherness of the Indies is fastidiously avoided in order to affirm the Dutchness of the Dutch Indies.

*Indies Arts Evenings: Traditional and Modern Indonesian Performance
in Holland*

Production of Dutch-language drama in the Indies was largely limited to European and Eurasian performers and spectators, sealed off from the bulk of the population by the imposing walls of the *schouwburgen* and European clubs (*sociëteit*) where they were staged. A small number of plays, including Victor Ido's *Karina Adinda*, were adapted into Malay, and there are signs of influence of Indies drama on the development of naturalist drama in Malay, Javanese and other Indonesian languages.⁷ However, the pluralist structure of colonial society placed Indies drama at a severe remove from the worlds of indigenous theatre, dance and music. The situation was quite different in the Netherlands, where a single programme in the 1930s might feature a one-act comical Indies drama, a Javanese or Balinese dance, *kroncong* music, a martial arts demonstration and a

⁷ For a recent discussion of *Karina Adinda* and its revival in postcolonial Indonesia, see Winet (2010).

Image 10.1 Group photo of participants in an *Indische Kunstavond* (Indies Art Evening) circa 1918 in the Netherlands (KITLV 34438).

silent film of the Indies accompanied by live gamelan. Such programmes, known generically as ‘Indies arts evenings’ (*Indische kunstavond*), encapsulated the cultural diversity of the Indies.

Gamelan and dance were performed by Javanese working in colonial exhibition contexts starting in the 19th century, but these performers were very temporary residents, isolated from Dutch society and made to serve strictly colonial agendas (see particularly Bloembergen 2006). There were also haphazard efforts by Dutch students and enthusiasts to stage their versions of Javanese arts – such as a parade staged by the Delft Student Union in 1857. Costumes, *topeng* masks and gamelan instruments were borrowed from the Delft Royal Academy of Linguistics, Geography and Ethnology, and the parade’s musical director reportedly based the music on gamelan melodies (Terwen 2003: 35ff). The most renowned Dutch performer of Java is certainly Mata Hari, born Margaretha Geertruida Zelle (1876–1917), who came to fame as an exotic dancer in Paris in the first decade of the 20th century. Zelle had lived in the Indies as the wife of an army officer, but had no formal background in dance. Her staged ‘temple dances’ were Orientalist, in the sense proposed by Edward Said (1979), collapsing the Dutch Indies and British India into a hypostatic and erotic

impression of the East. Her fame survives on her daring exposure of flesh on stage and her reputation as a spy during World War One (Cohen 2010: 23–35).

The emergence of an Indonesian student community in the Netherlands with the founding of the Indies Association (*Indische Vereeniging*) created new possibilities for performance. The Indies Association was established in 1908 as ‘a support group’, ‘a means to provide’ Indonesian students with ‘solidarity, mutual assistance and news from home as they eked out their existence in the cobbled, often cold, grey and bleak cities of Leiden, Amsterdam and Rotterdam’ (Elson 2008: 21). Under the leadership of the poet and law student Raden Mas Noto Soeroto (1888–1951), who promoted Rabindranath Tagore’s concept of a synthesis of East and West, the Indies Association evolved into a forum for discussion about the Dutch Indies and relations between the Indies and Europe.

In December 1913, a group of Javanese students gave a performance of gamelan to illustrate a talk given to the Indies Association by budding musicologist Raden Mas Soemitro about Javanese gamelan. The gamelan was borrowed from the private collection of banker and musicologist Daniel François Scheurleer (1855–1927) – a set now in the collection of The Hague Municipal Museum – and played by eight students under the direction of Raden Soerjowinoto, a student of hydraulic and road engineering at the technical school in Delft. Most of Soerjowinoto’s musicians were likewise Javanese men of noble descent studying law, business and engineering, not humanistic subjects. The evening was deemed a success and repeated in March 1914 in Leiden (Poeze 1986: 107, 109; Mak van Dijk 2003).

A much more public event was staged two years later. On 15 and 17 March 1916, fourteen students from the islands of Java, Sulawesi and Sumatra, joined by a few Dutch sympathizers, enacted the Netherlands’ first major *‘Indische Kunstavond’* or Indies Art Evening. The students from the Dutch Indies played gamelan, sung, danced, staged a tableau, recounted stories and myths and displayed traditional costumes. Their stage was the Koninklijke Schouwburg theatre in The Hague, and the student amateurs’ audience included the Queen and the Minister of the Colonies. Israeli sociologist S.N. Eisenstadt (2000: 15) has argued that the introduction of modernity in Asian societies involved the incorporation of selected aspects of ‘Western universalistic elements of modernity in the construction of [...] new collective identities, without necessarily giving up specific components of [...] traditional identities’. Being modern in Asia entailed negotiation with tradition, not abandonment of it. Modernity brought

about new modes for the social organization, invention, appreciation and representation of old performing arts. It also brought new purpose. The *raison d'être* of arts in premodern Asia was to buttress status, venerate ancestors, ward off evil, refine moral values and generate communal solidarity – as well as to entertain. The 1916 Indies Art Evening introduced a modern function for Indonesia's traditional arts. Performance became a means of sharing culture to nations of the world.

In contrast to the low-key gamelan lecture-demonstration by Soemitro and friends, which focused solely on the gamelan tradition of central Java, the gala Indies Arts Evening at the stately Koninklijke Schouwburg theatre offered an overview of the entire archipelago. It consisted of a melange of simple gamelan pieces (including *Ricik-Ricik*), sung *tembang* poetry in Javanese, Javanese dance, *kroncong* music, the recounting of a Hindu myth, so-called Eastern songs by Madame Sorga (a friend of Mata Hari), a tableau representing the cultural evolution of the Indies and presentations of the traditional costumes of the Dayak, Acehnese, Buginese and other ethnic groups. The event also featured the public debut of Raden Mas Jodjana, who was to become one of the most famous Asian dancers in Europe, in *Kelono*, a *kiprah* or solo dance that showcases a dancer's virtuosity.⁸

The Evening overall aimed to show the sophistication of Java's arts from an intellectual Javanese point of view. Dutch reviewers were astounded to hear Soorjo Poetro, a brother of the Paku Alam and engineering student in Delft, dressed in impeccable Yogyakarta costume, speaking in polished Dutch about rhythmic characteristics of Javanese music and dance, and the expression of spirituality through art. Technical support was received from a number of parties – including the Dutch batik artist Chris Lebeau – but in contrast to prior public displays of Javanese dance and music in Europe, the Indies Evening was essentially an autonomous initiative adhering to Javanese aesthetics rather than catering to European expectations. The musicians, for example, did not conform to European preferences for uniformity in costume: each musician wore the traditional garb of his own place of origin. The gamelan did not play a Dutch royal anthem but the ceremonial *gendhing* (musical piece) *Monggang* upon the Queen's entrance. In an article published in the aftermath of

⁸ 'A good rendering of *Klono* or *kiprah* is thought to be one of the highest accomplishments a dancer can achieve' (Holt 1967: 165).

the performances, *Hindia Poetra*, the organ of the Indies Association, addressed the people of Java collectively:

Take stock of your most sacred spiritual properties. Preserve the beauty and style of your *adat* (custom), the beauty of rhythm, gesture and symbols, and do not neglect your art. Do not allow it to be diminished by so-called Europeanization. Seek out more contact with the elite of Dutch artists who can appreciate spiritual beauty [...] and give performances of the best of Javanese theatre, Javanese music and Javanese dance, and teach Javanese poetry [...] with fitting pride. There will then emerge a spiritual connection between Java and Holland that is stronger than all political and economic connections (*Hindia Poetra* quoted in Borel 1916: 124–125).

Hindia Poetra saw the Indies Arts Evening as justification for a model of colonial relations in which, to use contemporary parlance, indigenous and Dutch cultures were *associated*, rather than unified or assimilated (Van Niel 1984: 36ff). The integrity of Javanese culture was to be esteemed for the sake of inter-racial tolerance and respect. Political advancement was conditioned upon cultural exchange on even terms.

Soorjo Poetro, in his discourse, made it clear that he and his colleagues were amateur performers, not professional artists, but also noted that the lines between professional and amateur were not the same as in Europe. The students were perhaps emboldened to appear in public by the disruption in communication and transportation caused by the war. Artists in war-torn Europe and elsewhere were thrown back on immediate resources, working in unusual constellations to create novel artistic forms. A famous example of this is the avant-garde ballet *Parade* (1917) created by Picasso, the Ballet Russes, Satie and Cocteau. A contrasting example might be the London theatre work of Hazrat Inayat Khan. Khan's world tour to promote Sufism via Indian music was halted by the war, leading to an enforced long-term residency in London, where he taught music and mysticism. Khan's corpus of plays was intended for the spiritual edification of devotees, and staged as parlour drama. In terms of quality of performance, the first Indies Art Evening was certainly closer to Khan's community theatre than *Parade*. But who else would represent the Indies if not for the student performers of the Indies Association? Regardless of aesthetic quality, this Evening was consequential politically, as well as artistically.

Events on the Indies Arts Evening model would be enacted regularly for the next quarter century in cities around the Netherlands in theatres, hotels, galleries, fairs and zoos. Boeatan, the shop and gallery in The Hague selling and displaying Indonesian arts and crafts, was a particularly

frequent sponsor. Among those who played gamelan, wrote music, recited poetry and danced were some of the most important intellectuals and political leaders of the early nationalist movement. Noto Soeroto was a particularly enthusiastic organizer, and used his journal *Oedaya* and personal connections to Mangkunegara VII to advantage. Another organizer was political exile Soewardi Soerjaningrat, who later took on the name Ki Hadjar Dewantara (1889–1959). Ki Hadjar Dewantara is best known as the founder of Taman Siswa, an educational movement influenced by Montessori and Tagore, and was the first minister of education under President Sukarno. It was likely Soewardi's experience of performing in the Netherlands, and his exposure to Tagore's ideas via Noto Soeroto, that resulted in Taman Siswa emphasizing education in traditional arts.

A number of organizations emerged in the next years to facilitate artistic activities and discussions. Mudato (an abbreviation formed from the Dutch words for music, dance and theatre) was founded in 1918 by D.F. Scheurleer, whose gamelan saw much use by Javanese students. Mudato also published a journal that focused mainly on Javanese arts.⁹ Langen-Driyo, founded in 1919, aimed to further the 'practice and promote Indonesian music and dramatic arts'. Langen-Driyo literally translates as heartfelt entertainment, and refers to a genre of Javanese language dance drama with sung dialogue and gamelan accompaniment. It was associated with the royal courts, and considered a marker of high culture on a par with opera. The Langen-Driyo association called itself as an Indonesian art circle (*Indonesischen kunstkring*) and excluded Dutch and Eurasian members on principle, in line with the anti-association politics increasingly prevalent at the time. This principle seems to have been overlooked for performances. Langen-Driyo events commonly involved European artists like singer Madame Sorga and the pianist Jo Meyer, Noto Soeroto's wife.

Performers and organizers associated with Mudato, Langen-Driyo and other organizations that emerged in the years ahead worked to establish equivalences between the cultures of Indonesia and the Netherlands. In lectures, performances and publications, they showed that Java and other islands of Indonesia possessed distinctive artistic traditions that differed from Europe, but were as sophisticated as European high arts. This often involved acts of translation, theoretical as well as practical. Thus, Soorjo

⁹ *Mudato: Tijdschrift der Vereeniging tot Bestudeering van de Muziek, de Dans- en Tooneelkunst van Oost- en West-Indië* was published from 1919 to 1922. It was the first journal with an explicit remit to study Indonesian or Caribbean performing arts.

Poetro devised various systems for notating gamelan and argued for an equivalence between the *balungan* or nuclear melody of gamelan and the cantus firmus of medieval European music. He also created a new form of *rebab* with Dutch violinmaker G.J. van Leeuwen, which Ki Hadjar Dewantara called a *viol Djawa* (Javanese violin). Soorjo Poetro wrote music for a quartet of these modified *rebab* in emulation of the classical string quartet.

An exemplary work of translation is Soewardi Soerjaningrat's 'Javanese romance' *Kinanthie Sandoong*, based on the classical *gendhing* of this name (see also the contribution by Notosudirdjo in this volume). This short work for voice and piano premiered at the Colonial Education Congress held in The Hague in 1916 and was published the same year in The Hague and Semarang. The text was Noto Soeroto's free translation of three *tembang* verses from the *Serat Manuhara* by Mangkunegara IV (1809–1881). Indonesian ethnomusicologist and composer Franki Notosudirdjo (2003: 40) has emphasized the musical innovation of the piece.

First, the piece was written for soprano and piano, a musical form and instrumentation unknown to the gamelan tradition. Second, the piano transcription was based on the *gender* part, a metallaphone gamelan instrument that functions in a quasi-improvisatory way and bears a somewhat personal expression. Third, Ki Hadjar [Soewardi] employed triadic harmony and a bass line, features unknown in gamelan music, transforming *Kinanthie Sandoong* from a traditional *gending* into a model of Western-oriented composition.

European composers, such as Dirk Schäfer (1873–1931) in his *Rhapsodie Javanaise* (1904), had previously reworked gamelan melodies and themes into art music, but they lacked Soewardi's practical gamelan knowledge. Soewardi did not simply transcribe someone playing the *gender*, he worked out how to play the idiomatic syncopations and figurations of *gender* playing on the piano. The piece is experimental; while the piano part presents no technical difficulties, the vocal part calls on the singer to know how to embellish the melody with traditional *cengkok* (ornaments), requiring in effect 'a bi-musical singer, i.e. a singer who had mastered both Western classical and traditional Javanese music' (Notosudirdjo 2003: 40).¹⁰

¹⁰ It was intended that Noto Soeroto's friend, the singer, poet and painter Rient van Santen, would sing *Kinanthie Sandoong* on tour. It is not known whether van Santen actually did perform the song, though another piece with a Noto Soeroto text, Bernard van den Sigtenhorst Meyer's *Fluisteringen: Drie liederen voor zang en piano* (opus 5, 1917), was part of her repertoire.

Noto Soeroto's translation of Mangkunegara's verse also operates bi-culturally. The text, sung in the first person, tells of someone who wanders the earth and discovers that nobody can equal the beauty of his beloved. The Javanese original has spiritual connotations – the beloved is a symbol of God, and wandering (*lelana*) is the path of the mystic. This interpretation is diminished in translation as wandering (*zwervend*) in Dutch lacks clear spiritual significance. In its place, romantic nationalism emerges. In Noto Soeroto's translation, the wanderer beholds the 'riches of my land' (*rijkdom van mijn land*), transforming the text into a paean to a land of sea, mountain peaks, mighty forests and deep ravines: Java.

Staging Java in Germany

The loosely-organized Javanese arts performing groups, made up largely of amateur students, began to attract attention from neighbouring European countries by the mid-1920s. In November 1925, a Javanese group from the Netherlands offered a week-long exhibition and series of lecture-demonstrations of song, dance, puppetry and gamelan music at the Künstlerhaus in central Berlin, organized by German painter-botanist Max Fleischer (1861–1930) and German publisher and Asian art connoisseur Richard Oertmann (1868–1926) under the auspices of the German-Dutch Fellowship (*Deutsch-Niederländischen Gesellschaft*). Noto Soeroto spoke in German about Javanese aesthetics and sang poetry. Javanese philologist Raden Ngabei Poerbatjaraka (1884–1964), who was a PhD student in Javanese language and literature at Leiden University between 1921 and 1926, sung Javanese poetry and performed an abbreviated *wayang kulit* play, *Arjuna Wiwaha* (Arjuna's Wedding). This canonical story-episode (also known as *Ciptoning*) of Java's shadow puppet theatre repertoire tells of the harsh devotions of the warrior Arjuna, his fight against the demon king Nirwata Kawaca in defence of the gods and Arjuna's marriage to the heavenly nymph Supraba. The play presents puppeteers with much scope for expositing Javanese ascetic practices, and there is a rich exegetical tradition attached to it. The play was linked to Poerbatjaraka's PhD research at Leiden: he published a Dutch translation of the Old Javanese *kakawin* version of the tale in 1926 (Poerbatjaraka 1926). Poerbatjaraka was unable to perform *wayang kulit* in German, so Fleischer, who had been a researcher at the botanical institute in Buitenzorg for five years and travelled widely in the archipelago, provided simultaneous interpretation

for him.¹¹ Jodjana performed solo dance – *Kelono*, *Tjantrik* (The Young Hermit) and *Wishnu*. Poerbatjaraka also performed classical dances and a woman dancing under the name of Siti Soendari performed *srimpi* and a warrior dance with a bow and arrow.

Siti Soendari was the stage name for a Dutch woman named Gieneke Weber, a eurhythmics-trained dancer who studied Javanese dance for two months before the Berlin engagement. Weber's dancing was sufficient for German audiences – one commentator said she was so Javanese that a theosophist would take her for the incarnation of a Javanese princess. She continued to perform Javanese dance over the next two years with gamelan in the Netherlands and accompanied by the music of Debussy and Ravel in France. Later, publicity said she trained at the Krido Bekso Wiromo in Yogyakarta, but this is doubtful. A series of photographs taken in 1927 show her closely approximating Javanese court dance though to the trained eye her fingers are unable to flex back fully, her toes not sufficiently lifted, her posture not fully Javanese (Aubel and Aubel 1928: 100–104).

Weber was one of a number of Dutch women performing approximations of Javanese court dance in the 1920s, compensating for the paucity of Javanese female students to partner with Javanese male dancers. A girl named Van Bemmelen, possibly the daughter of geologist Willem van Bemmelen, learned the *Kelono* dance from musicologist Raden Mas Moekiman Soerjowinoto when he was studying law in the Netherlands. Van Bemmelen gave at least one performance at a 1922 Indies evening organized by the Dansinstituut Sternfeld, a school for exhibition and ballroom dancing in The Hague. (Sternfeld's assistant, a Polish dancer named Kitty Lakatos, did a sort of Balinese dance on the same programme.) A woman named Leonie van Noorden, who studied court-style dance with the renowned Batavia dance instructor and musician Raden Kodrat, occasionally performed Javanese dance and Indische songs at Indies evenings in The Hague. A Eurasian woman named Peppink performed the dances of Java, Sumatra and Bali in the Netherlands, France and possibly elsewhere in Europe under the stage name Ghanda Soewasti. Her statuesque dances were significant enough to merit serious discussion in two major French surveys of world dance (Levinson 1929: 290–293; Divoire 1935: 305, 320–323).

¹¹ For a brief bio of Max Fleischer, see www.nationaalherbarium.nl/fmcollectors/F/FleischerM.htm (accessed 27 April 2011).

Photographs show her in non-Javanese dance postures clothed in very fine Javanese dance costumes.¹²

The quality of the performances at the 1925 Berlin exhibition is dubious – Siti Soendari was a newcomer to Javanese dance and Poerbatjaraka did not have formal training in puppetry. But the event was significant in the eyes of Javanese participants, Dutch observers and German critics. German journalists heralded the Berlin exhibition as a rapprochement between Germany and the Netherlands, and interpreted it as a sign that the Weimar Republic was no longer culturally isolated from the world. German spectators and critics enthused about the rare performances and the accompanying display of *wayang* puppets, metal work, wood carving and textiles from Java, Aceh and Bali. Some journalists found the gamelan music monotonous, but Austrian-born musicologist Erich Moritz von Hornbostel (1877–1935) told Noto Soeroto he had never heard music that brought such joy (*Pertoendjoekkan tandak* 1926). The dream-like atmosphere of *wayang* evoked much commentary. The *Stuttgarter Allgemeine Zeitung* described *wayang* puppets as ‘one of the most beautiful artefacts the world of art has ever created’. The Berlin daily *Vossische Zeitung* reported how despite *wayang*’s stylization, ‘the astounding richness of movement and expression spoke to us. These grotesquely contorted figures with their elongated necks, their fantastical disfigurements, animal heads and overlong articulated arms were inspirational’.

Jodjana also came up for particular praise. The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* stated that

Prince Jodjana is a tall, beautiful man with sharp facial features. His dances breathe deep calm, with a constant flow of confident gestures. His body is festooned in colourful veils as if he was celebrating a feast, beautiful but not ostentatious. His marching is festive and calculated. The movements of his arms and legs are tightly coordinated. [...] His gestures synthesize ceremo-

¹² More expert Javanese female dancers emerged in Europe in the 1930s. These included Indies-born Carolina-Jeanne de Souza (1904–88), trained in both Dalcroze-based modern dance and classical Javanese dance at the Anggana Raras studio in Batavia, who danced professionally under the names Retna Moerindia and Ratna Mohini (Kunang Helmi 1997, 2002), and Russian-born Hélène Leibmann (1912–2002), who studied at the dance school Kridho Bekso Wiromo in Yogyakarta for eight months in 1932–3 and returned to Europe to dance under the stage name Sri Woelan (Malaud 2003). De Souza was married to the photographer Henri Cartier and lived in Paris starting in the late 1930s, and while she occasionally collaborated with Javanese dancers based in the Netherlands, such as Raden Mas Waloejo, she rarely danced on Dutch stages. In contrast, Leibmann, who had lived in Belgium from childhood, frequently collaborated with Netherlands-based Javanese artists and performed often in the Netherlands.

nial calm and mimetic concision. Movements are natural, organically pure, growing like plants. [...] And those lively slim hands – how they can laugh, how they can be childishly vain, how they can close up like a flower and open up again. Even his feet are part of this nature-like articulated language of gestures.

Most of the newspapers pointedly refused to make direct comparisons between German and Javanese performance. But Dutch-born journalist Henri Blanche Koelensmid wrote in the *Berliner Tageblatt* that the exhibition proved that Javanese culture ‘does not take second place to ours. Indeed it surpasses ours in its austerity’.

Performances of Javanese music and dance, mostly by Javanese living in the Netherlands, were held with some frequency in Germany, with some in the decade thereafter, and became the norm for judging all other Asian performance. Jodjana, especially, performed frequently in Berlin and other cities in Germany and Austria, and he taught and lectured at a number of schools and museums in Germany into the 1930s. Another delegation of Javanese dancers and gamelan musicians performed under the auspices of the *Nederlandsch Indonesisch Verbond* at the *Internationalen Musikausstellung* (International Music Festival) in Frankfurt in 1927.¹³ Featured dancers were Raden Mas Soeripto, Raden Soekamto, Raden Mas Soebanto – all of whom were students in the Netherlands – along with Siti Soendari (Gieneke Weber) and Raden Mas Jodjana. The gamelan was borrowed from Boeatan, and directed by Jodjana’s wife, the Dutch musician Elisabeth Pop (1888–1981). German audiences were becoming savvy of the diacritics of Javanese performance. Programme notes and reviews attend to the differences between the more powerful (*gagah*) performance style of Yogyakarta practiced by Soeripto and Soekamto, the more refined (*alus*) Solo style of Soebanto, and the modern Javanese-based dances of Jodjana. Photographs of the dancers were widely reproduced in German books and periodicals.

¹³ The *Nederlandsch Indonesisch Verbond* (also known as *Nederlandsch Indonesisch Verbond van Jongeren Organisaties* or ‘Dutch Indonesian Association of Youth Organisations’) was founded in 1926 as an umbrella organization for seven associations concerned with the Indies (including student clubs, a missionary association, Leiden’s Indology association and the arts association Boeatan) and the remit to promote better understanding between The Netherlands and Indonesia.

Cultural Diversity in the Arts

While the cultural events in 1920s Germany focused solely on Java, cultural events in the Netherlands became increasingly diverse with the rise of Indonesian nationalist sentiment among students from the Indies. Indies' arts evenings called upon students from different parts of Java and the islands of the Indonesian archipelago to collaborate in displaying their homeland's cultural riches in a new collective identity. That is to say, the evenings functioned to embody the ethnic diversity of Indonesian students in the Netherlands and visualise the archipelago as a whole. Presenters were challenged to encapsulate representative elements of their cultures in ways that would be comprehensible to Europeans, while maintaining the dignity and integrity of source cultures. The student performers did not offer exoticist escape, or present themselves as ethnological specimens. They spoke to the Dutch audience in Dutch, and aimed to establish what French Lithuanian philosopher Emmanuel Levinas describes as the ethical relation of the face to face.

The artistic standard of early arts evenings was surely modest as none of the student performers arrived in the Netherlands to pursue a career in the arts, but productions became more complex and sophisticated as years went by. One of the most important results of the early Indies arts evening was to encourage the career of Raden Mas Jodjana, the only truly professional Javanese dancer to reside in Europe before World War Two (Cohen 2010: 106–139). There is no strong evidence that Jodjana was active in the arts before coming to Europe: he came to the Netherlands to study business in Rotterdam and seems to have discovered his artistic talents through participation in Indonesian student performances. While Jodjana drew on traditional costumes, typical movements and characters derived from Javanese myth (such as Klana and Shiva), his dances were essentially his own personal creations rather than attempts at recreating Javanese tradition. Jodjana identified himself as a modern Javanese artist, resulting in polemics with conservative Dutch gatekeepers whether it was possible to be both 'Javanese' and 'modern'.

Jodjana's first performances as a professional solo dance artist were accompanied by Western instruments. One of his piano accompanists was Elisabeth Pop, who had studied Indian classical music with Sufi guru Hazrat Inayat Khan (1882–1927). After Jodjana married Pop in 1923, she took the name Raden Ayou Jodjana. Through their tours around Europe, the couple soon saved enough to acquire a small *gamelan pelog*, which they used in all performances.

The Jodjanas' set of instruments had formerly belonged to *Vereeniging Eurasia* (Eurasia Society; also known as Eurazia). Eurasia was founded in 1927 as an artistic wing of the Indische Club (an association composed primarily of students of mixed Javanese–Dutch descent) to perform Indies drama and music and dance from the Indies in the Netherlands and elsewhere in Europe. Eurasia's gamelan had been shipped from Yogyakarta to Holland in 1927 free of charge by the *Stoomvaart Maatschappij Nederland* (Netherlands Steamship Company). From available photographs, most of the dozen or so musicians who played gamelan in Eurasia appear to be of Dutch or mixed Javanese–Dutch descent, though they were joined occasionally at concerts by Javanese students. Eurasia's gamelan musicians typically dressed in Javanese costume for performances, an arrangement that is still characteristic of many gamelan groups outside Indonesia. A reporter for the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* pointed out, à propos a 1928 Eurasia gamelan concert, that while it was 'impossible' for Europeans to play gamelan in the Indies, the 'otherworldly' sound of Eurasia's gamelan was nonetheless a good substitute for an actual Javanese ensemble, conveying something of the meaning of gamelan as played in the context of a village celebration in Java.¹⁴

Like Eurasia, the gamelan musicians in the Jodjana troupe were mostly Europeans, including Raden Ayou Jodjana's sisters. In the 1930s, the Jodjanas' children, Raden Bagus Bhimo (1924–1944) and Raden Roro Parvati (1926–), also played in the gamelan. Jodjana's troupe developed a strong reputation in Europe and internationally. Composers including Henry Cowell (1897–1965) and Percy Grainger (1882–1961) studied gamelan and *angklung* music with Jodjana and Jodjana's disciple Romahlaiselan (1902–90), who was born in eastern Indonesia and grew up in Bali. Jodjana headed a summer school in France in the 1930s, which attracted dancers and other artists from around Europe, and featured outdoor performances, including performances of dance and gamelan as well as Western classical musical and modern dance.

The Indonesian arts scene in the Netherlands became more diverse and sophisticated in the 1930s. There were presentations of fragments of *langendriya* dance-theatre, and by the 1930s extracts of traditional dance from Bali and Sumatra as well as *pencak silat* (martial arts) were common.

¹⁴ 'De gamelan op de ITA', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, 13 July 1928 (evening edition), p. D1. Contrary to the reporter's assertion, it was possible for Europeans in the Indies to play but practical involvement was very rare by the 1930s, and after independence little gamelan was played by non-Indonesians in Indonesia until the 1970s.

Concertbur. De Haan & Co.
DILIGENTIA
Zaterdag 5 Nov., 'sav. 8 uur
INDISCHE AVOND
 door de Vereeniging „Eurasia”
 ten bate van het Studiefonds.
De kostbare Sproke
 Boegineesch Tooneelspel in 1
 bedr. van Mevr. van Zeggelen.
KRONTJONG MUZIEK
EN ZANG
 14 personen.
VOORDRACHTEN
 door Mr. K. VERBOEKET.
LEVENS LIEDJES
 door WILLEM NIESTADT.
Javaansche Dansen
 door Dewi Soehita Urdayana,
 Leerlinge van de Mangkoenan-
 garan van Solo,
 met begeleiding van
GROOTE GAMALAN.
 Entréeprijs f 2.50, f 2.—, f 1.50,
 f 1.— plus rechten.
 Plaatsbespr. van af heden aan
 Diligentia.

Image 10.2 Advertisement in *Het Vaderland* (29 October 1927) for an Indies Evening produced by Eurasia featuring a one-act Buginesese play, kroncong, speeches, gamelan music and Javanese dance by Dewi Soehita Urdayana.

Image 10.3 Gamelan and dance performed by Vereeniging Eurasia at the Indische Tentoonstelling te Arnhem in 1928 (KITLV 1401928).

Romahlaiselan supplemented Jodjana's Javanese-based 'dance plays' with creations of his own based on Balinese and Moluccan themes. Films from the Indies were projected. The Youth Pledge (*Sumpah Pemuda*) of 1928 and its affirmation of the primacy of Indonesia over Javanese or other ethnolinguistic affiliations questioned the relevancy of Jodjana's project to develop modern Javanese dance. Modernizers in the Indies and the Netherlands alike were focused on developing Indonesian, as opposed to Javanese, art. The art worlds of Java, Sumatra, Bali and other parts of the archipelago were merging and combining in complex ways.

There were still Javanese faithfully reproducing Javanese court arts in the Netherlands through the 1930s. One of the most active was the actor and puppeteer Raden S. Hardjodirenggo, the leader of the Javanese arts group Ardjoeno. Hardjodirenggo was born in central Java and was an avid fan of *wayang kulit* from age six. Like many Javanese children, he sat next to the puppet chest during performances, carefully observing puppeteers, and reproducing the plays he observed on a set of cardboard *wayang* at home. By age twelve, he was performing short *wayang* plays at family gatherings (Hardjodirenggo 1922). Hardjodirenggo arrived in Amsterdam in 1920 to study economics, but soon dropped out and worked as a cleaner, waiter, writer and assistant bookkeeper. He gave private language lessons in Javanese and Malay, and performed in dance concerts, Indies dramas, revues and film (Poeze 1986: 183). Hardjodirenggo got his start as a European *dhalang* when he performed *wayang*-style narration in a play based on Eduard Douwes Dekker's love story, 'Saidjah en Adinda'. His good reviews encouraged him to pursue puppetry. As the only Javanese shadow puppeteer based permanently in Europe, Hardjodirenggo was in some demand for lecture-demonstrations and exhibitions. He typically enacted a *perang kembang* or flower battle, a set piece in central Javanese puppetry in which a refined knight such as Arjuna fights a gang of forest ogres, with comic relief from the knight's clown servants (*punakawan*). Hardjodirenggo toured with Ardjoeno to Holland, Germany and Belgium between 1928 and 1932. In 1932, he founded the more professional Javanese Artist Trio (*Javaansch Kunstenaarstrio*) with Raden Iskandar and Raden Mas Waloejo. The trio performed excerpts of *wayang wong* dance-drama, *topeng* mask-dance and *wayang kulit* around Europe.¹⁵

¹⁵ Waloejo was the King of Surakarta's nephew who came originally in 1923 to the Netherlands to study in secondary school (HBS). When he dropped out of his law studies, funds from home were stopped. He stayed in Holland but was forced to find work. Iskandar, also known as Raden Soemardi, was the ex-chair of *Perhimpunan Indonesia*, a nationalist student society.

More noteworthy, however, are the *kroncong* ensembles that emerged in Holland starting around 1920. *Kroncong* had been gentrified in 1910s Java as a result of competitions and festivals, the recording industry and the adoption of this urban folk music by white collar societies and clubs (Keppy 2008). *Kroncong* was no longer a music of the streets, it was a sentimental music of social affiliation. The change was aesthetic as well as ideological. Ensembles were larger and harmonies tighter. Jazz elements were incorporated into *kroncong* in the 1920s, and it became common for *kroncong* ensembles to perform Hawaiian and Ambonese music from eastern Indonesia as well. In Holland during the 1920s and 30s, *kroncong* accompanied Indies dramas, played at Indies evenings and Indies-themed exhibitions, was broadcast on the radio, accompanied Indies documentary films and was performed at social gatherings, cabarets and concerts. Numerous albums of *kroncong* songs arranged for piano and guitar were published by Dutch firms. *Kroncong* artists in Java during the late colonial period were crooners. Some male and female singers were operatically inspired, and used lilting phrasing and vibrato. Accompanying ensembles were small but diverse, with piano, strings and brass, and often subtle instrumentation. In contrast, the all-male *kroncong* bands of Holland were usually made up of only string instruments. Solo and choral singing was not polished but enthusiastic in the manner of collegiate glee clubs.

The two most active Dutch *kroncong* bands of this time, Indische Club Amsterdam (established c. 1924) and Eurasia (established 1927), were both associated with the Indische Club.¹⁶ The recordings that the Indische Club Amsterdam made with Columbia Records in 1928 were so popular that they were reissued on 45 EP records in the 1950s. Eurasia recorded with Edison Bell in London in 1928 and played the *Exposition Coloniale Internationale* in Paris in 1931. Eurasia also had a seven-toned *pelog* gamelan from Yogyakarta, shipped to Holland in 1927 free of charge by the *Stoomvaart Maatschappij Nederland* (Netherlands Steamship Company), which they used for concerts and to accompany dance and Indies dramas.¹⁷ Though less active, there were also Javanese *kroncong* bands, including *Tjahja Timoer* (Eastern Light) and *Bintang Mas* (Golden Star). The Indonesian youth society *Slamat Hindia* fielded an arts division under the leadership

¹⁶ A number of titles recorded by both Krontjongband Indische Club Amsterdam and Krontjong Orchest Eurasia have been released on CD and on the Internet over the last decade. For three tracks by Eurasia, see *Kroncong* (2006).

¹⁷ Among the dancers who performed with Eurasia in its first years were Dewi Soehita Urdayana (in 1927, publicized as a 'student of the Mangkunagaran court') and Dewi Sekar Kedaton (in 1928, possibly a stage name for a Dutch woman).

of the indefatigable Hardjodirenggo that performed *kroncong*, as well as *wayang kulit*, *wayang wong* and Indies drama.

Cultural offerings from the Indies were quite diverse by the second half of the 1920s. The 1928 celebration of the 25th anniversary of Boeatan, for example, featured films of the Indies by Willy Mullens showing life in the Javanese countryside, native crafts, the palace of Yogyakarta, the Bromo volcano and Bali; gamelan, *kroncong*, *angklung* and Hawaiian music; Indies songs; Javanese and Balinese dance; and a comical Indies drama, *Tjang. Koetjita*, a cabaret association active in the 1930s under the leadership of A.E. Heynnemann, involved both Javanese as well as Europeans performing Javanese dance, *kroncong* and other Indonesian arts. When *Koetjita* played in Monte Carlo in 1936, they also performed Hawaiian music and dance. A group of thirteen student performers from Leiden University's *Studentenvereniging ter Bevordering van Indonesische Kunst* (Student Association for the Advancement of Indonesian Art) came to London in 1939 and enacted courtly Javanese dance from Yogyakarta and Surakarta (*Hanggada-Bugis*, *Gatotkaca Gandrung*, *Saksadewa-Anggada*, *Cantrik*); *randai* (a circular folk dance with chanting from West Sumatra); *pencak* (martial arts); Balinese *janger*; and *kroncong*. The group gave three public performances for charity, and appeared on television. London critics were thrilled by the dangerous energy of *randai*, *pencak* and *janger* and impressed by the skill and grace of the Javanese dances, but cringed at *kroncong*'s naïve harmonies and melodies.

Dutch reporters, in contrast, demonstrated an easy familiarity with presentations of arts of 'our' Indies. The 1916 Indies Arts Evening staged by students associated with the Indies Association might have had a radical political intention. But Dutch audiences and critics were rarely challenged by offerings of the 1920s and 30s. The music of Sumatra-born composer and orchestra director Fred Belloni, who lived in The Hague in 1933–1939 (and returned there after the war), was redolent with imagery of the *Mooi Indië* (Beautiful Indies) school of painting. A review of Belloni's gamelan-inflected orchestral composition *Langs Java's stranden* (Along Java's Shores, 1926) describes how its jaunty rhythms 'immediately call to mind the friendly tones of the *angklung* carried by the wind over laughing rice fields'.¹⁸ There were real bodies performing Belloni's music in the hall of the Hague's De Twee Steden hotel, including the young dancer Fee Saueressig, but the

¹⁸ 'Indo-Europeesch Verbond: Afscheidsavond P.H. de Hoog', *Het Vaderland*, 31 December 1933 (morning edition), p. B2.

reporter could only see stereotypes of the colonies.¹⁹ A charity event put on by Eurasia, one of the club's first outings, which featured *kroncong* and Hawaiian music, modern dance and an Indies drama, reportedly easily drew a large public, as one would expect in the 'Dutch-Indies city of the Hague [...] There was an affable mood, and what more could one possibly wish? To dance? Of course, to dance! There was a social dance afterwards. We would sign up for more such evenings, as much as to support a good cause as for sociability itself' (Feestavond Eurasia 1927).²⁰ The 'serious' proponents of Indonesian-based performance, the dancers who troubled colonial stereotypes of tradition, based themselves outside of colonialist Netherlands. After 1920, Jodjana lived mostly in France and Berlin, while Eurasian dancer and choreographer Fred Coolemans taught in Dresden.²¹ Outside Holland, they were received as artists, not simply as living emblems of tradition.

Occupation and Decolonization

Indonesian performance activity continued in the Netherlands under Nazi occupation. The Colonial Museum was a hive of activity, with frequent performances by a gamelan group made up mostly of sailors from East Java and Babar Lajar, directed by the teenage Bernard IJzerdraat (Kunst 1945). At the instigation of museum curator Jaap Kunst, the Colonial Museum's gamelan was put on display in the museum's Lichthal and played for the public on Sundays starting in 1940 between 2 and 4pm by a group of sailors from the Netherlands Steamship Company. The style of playing was east Javanese, reflecting the sailors' origin. IJzerdraat, a war orphan informally adopted by Kunst, joined the sailor's group in 1941 and shortly developed sufficient competence to establish and direct the youth gamelan group Babar Lajar, made up of young Europeans. This group was founded initially as a 'study group', but, as previously noted, came to occupy

¹⁹ For a portrait of Belloni, see Van Dijk (2003: 284–292). An excerpt of a recording of *Langs Java's stranden* is included in the accompanying CD. Sauersteeg was a student of Elsa Dankmeyer who specialized in exotic and interpretive dances (Arabian dance, a puppet dance, Indies dance).

²⁰ 'Feestavond Eurasia', *Het Vaderland*, 24 April 1927 (morning edition), p. A1.

²¹ Fred Coolemans (aka Frederik Willem Cohen, c. 1903–35) was a Jewish dancer of part Dutch and part Javanese descent who gave his solo debut performing *plastische dans* at the Pulchri Studio in The Hague in 1925 and toured Europe with Else Makarof, a member of Harald Kreutzberg's dance group. For more information on Cooleman refer to Cohen (2010: 246, n27).

Indra Kamadjojo

Image 10.4 Indra Kamadjojo. Postcard in collection of author (photographer unknown).

a preeminent position in the Indonesian arts scene until it disbanded in 1956, following IJzerdraat's emigration to Indonesia two years earlier.

There were war-time dramatic productions as well, including a spectacular staging of the Sundanese legend of *Tangkuban Prah* (Upturned boat) at Amsterdam's Stadsschouwburg in August 1943 under the direction of Jaap Kunst and his associates at the Colonial Institute (Wormser 1943). The production had live gamelan music, a *dalang*-narrator as in *wayang wong*, meticulously authentic scenery, sumptuous costumes and a large cast of Indonesian dancers and actors. No Indonesian performance had previously been staged in the Netherlands with such elaboration. New performers came into prominence during the Nazi occupation, including the Banyumas-born dancer, actor and storyteller Indra Kamadjojo, the stage name for Jan Leonard Broekveldt (1906–92). Broekveldt, who had studied Javanese dance as a child in Jombang and modern dance and ballet in Europe, presented idiosyncratic theatricalized interpretations of

traditional dances from Java and Bali, as well as what he called ‘popular dances’ from Ambon and Sumatra, such as *pencak* and *tari piring*. He mostly used gramophone records for musical accompaniment. Kamadjojo’s wartime performances had nostalgic appeal in Holland, particularly to the large ‘colony’ of ex-colonials in The Hague.²² In all this activity, there were few signs of recognition that Indonesia was under Japanese occupation, and would not return willingly to Holland’s colonial embrace after Japan’s defeat.

The forced migration of mixed race European-Indonesians after Indonesian independence brought a new group of performers to the Netherlands. Few of the migrants had experience in the traditional arts of Indonesia (though many were expert in jazz, *kroncong* and other popular forms), but in the Netherlands they took avidly to representing Indonesian (or more properly Indisch, that is to say pre-independence Indonesian) culture on stage, starting with a series of Indies cabaret evenings in 1956–8 (Cohen 2006: 358–368). Separated from Indonesia by diplomatic barriers and distance, the Indo migrants developed their own idiosyncratic style of representing tradition. A new, postcolonial era of Indonesian art in the Netherlands had begun.

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²² See ‘s-Gravesande 1944; *Kunst van twee* 1961. Indra Kamadjojo had a long career after the war. He performed at the American Museum of Natural History’s Around the World with Dance and Song programme in 1952 and frequently appeared on Dutch television. His most famous television role was as the Regent of Ngadjiwa in the 1974 mini-series *De Stille Kracht*, based on the famous Indische novel. Kamadjojo also danced on *The Late, Late Lien Show*, a nostalgic Eurasian television show aired in the 1970s.

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