

# **TEROMPONG BERUK BANGKOK 2015**



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FAKULTAS SENI PERTUNJUKAN

INSTITUT SENI INDONESIA

DENPASAR

2015

# Agriculture as a Source for Artistic Creativity

## *Terompong Beruk Bangkok 2015*

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Agriculture is a source of artistic creativity. Various types and forms of art have been created from the inspiration of agriculture, such as performing arts, visual arts, literary arts, and other arts. In Balinese arts some of the examples are Tani Dance composed by I Wayan Beratha, a painting titled Rice Harvest by I Wayan Rapet (collection of Damping Gallery, Ubud), the relief on the house of I Gusti Bagus Puniatmaja in Gelogor Carik, Denpasar representing agriculture ranging from planting rice, harvest, and moving them to the barn. Similarly are the works of sculpture, music (vocals), and photography.

In this presentation, I will give an explanation about an artwork entitled *Terompong Beruk Bangkok 2015*. This artwork was originally composed in 1982 and presented at the Young Composers Week at Taman Ismail Marzuki (TIM), Jakarta, but this time the artwork has been developed further in accordance with current inspirations.

*Terompong Beruk* is a name of an instrument that can be found in Bali. The instrument is similar to the metalophone, with the blades made from bamboo and the resonators made from coconut shells (in Balinese: *beruk*). *Terompong Beruk* uses *slendro* or *pelog* tuning system, with the playing technique similar to the Terompong of the Gong Gede or Gong Kebyar ensemble.

As a single instrument, *Terompong Beruk* is usually played by a farmer in the loom. A *Terompong Beruk* player, who spends most of its time in the rice fields, usually plays this instrument when resting, or while guarding the rice crops from pests. It often happens that other farmers also come into play or sing happily. It is this atmosphere in the rice fields that gave me inspiration to work on a piece of contemporary performing arts with the title *Terompong Beruk Bangkok 2015* (TBB 2015). This piece is composed based on Balinese local wisdom with the hope it can

add an internal values of the composition. Therefore, I hope that TBB 2015 will offer aesthetic values, both in "form and meanings".

### **The Creative Process**

The creative process of TBB 2015 is done in four phases, which are idea, *miasen*, pouring the idea, and grand rehearsal/ performance (Srinatih, 2014 : 79 – 94).

### **Idea of the Composition**

As mentioned above, *Terompong Beruk* was originally composed 33 years ago (1982). In this second composition, I give the name *Terompong Beruk* Bangkok 2015. The idea is still the same with the first composition which is inspired by a single instrument named *terompong beruk*. Inspired by this instrument, the idea grows into the desire to express Balinese agriculture culture into a contemporary composition. This contemporary composition is based on the composer's point of view, is highly subjective, often instantaneous change, and is based on the composer's background. In other words, the composition is a reflection of the composer.

To realize this contemporary composition, it is then appeared some advanced ideas such the urge to express the atmosphere in the paddy fields with its activities, express the beautiful sounds of nature, utilizing stone, plastic, bamboo, and other objects that were found around rice fields as a musical instrument. Because this composition was inspired by the atmosphere of the village and paddy fields in the village of Magetelu, East Bali, then came the idea to incorporate elements of folk art that is very popular, especially in eastern Bali named *Genjek*.

Thus the idea continues to grow in accordance with the place, time and circumstances. The ideas that have been obtained are arranged into a form of one paragraph synopsis, equipped with the plan for the form and structure of the composition as a guidance to be observed and internalized by composition supporters. It's worth noting that in the "odyssey" development of this idea, the first step I did was to pray alone to invoke the instructions and guidance of the Almighty



After getting the idea for the composition, then in accordance with the Balinese tradition in art, will be followed by a ceremony called *Nuasen*, a selected day to start art activities. For the composition TBB 2015 *nuasen* ceremony was conducted at the temple of ISI Denpasar through the dedication of offerings, prayers with the composition's supporters to appeal to Ida Hyang Widi Wasa (God Almighty) that the creation process runs smoothly and the composition has "taksu" (inner power). After the completion of the prayers, the composition supporters are given an explanation about the idea and the form of the composition to be created so that all the supporters have the same perception about what I want. Furthermore, the supporters are given some examples such as dance movements, music, improvisation, and interpretation to mark the beginning of pouring the idea.

### **Pouring the Idea**

In pouring this idea, the first step is to give an explanation about the idea to reinforce the composition and its implementation into the artwork. The composition supporters are given tasks according to their respective capacities. Pouring the idea is done gradually and sectoral, and then conducted a joint exercise involving all the components in the composition. The duration for a practice is two to three hours and conducted at the village of Angantaka and in the campus of ISI Denpasar located at Jalan Nusa Indah Denpasar. Until recently the TBB 2015 practice had been done six times, the last joint practice conducted on Thursday, April 30th, 2015, from 3 PM until 6 PM located at the Natya Mandala building of ISI Denpasar.

### **Performance**

In accordance with the concept of the *desa, kala, patra*, (space, time, and situation) then the form of the composition TBB 2015 will only be known with certainty at the time of the scheduled performances by the committee on May 12, 2015 held at the Asok Montri Performing Arts Hall 14th floor. However, the structure of the Balinese based contemporary composition can be described as follows.

## The Form and Structure

TBB 2015 is a contemporary performing art which consists of three parts: *Ngedes lemah* (early morning) – the beginning, *Uma Sadina* (daily activities in the rice field) – the main body of the piece, and *Lelakut Ngigel* (scarecrow dancing) - the last part. Its structure is based on a local wisdom concept known as *tri angga*. *Tri angga* consists of two words, “tri” and “angga”. Tri means three, *angga* means body (which is made up of the head, the body, and the feet). According to my teacher, the late I Gusti Putu Made Geria, the structure of human body is used as a basic inspiration in creating the structure of Balinese performing arts. This is one of the “logic” behind the aesthetic concept of Balinese performing arts.

I. *Ngedes Lemah* (early morning) – the head.

- Sounds of *genta* and vocals
- (recorded illustration of early morning)
- Dewi Sri on Ranggon (improvisation)
- Lighting focuses on Ranggon with early morning scene
- supporter of the composition is in praying position, worshiping Dewi Sri

===== transition (lighting 30 sec) =====

II. *Uma Sadina* (daily activities in the ricefield) – the main body.

- *Kroncongan* (cow bells - call and respond)
- Voices of farmers: male and female
- Singing: Pupuh Ginada Linggar Petak accompanied by *rindik*, stones, *genjek*, and other instruments.
- Dance improvisations: rice, ducks, and frogs accompanied by bamboo instrument called *enggung*.

### III. *Lelakut Ngigel* (scarecrow dancing) – the feet, last part.

- Male scarecrow dancing
- Female scarecrow, improvisation movement
- Tempo increasing gradually
- Hurricane and chaos
- Scarecrow and all dancers fall down
- ENDING: Dewi Sri, accompanied by *genta* and vocals

### Local Wisdom in Form and Meanings

Some local wisdom concept has been used as a foundation in TBB 2015, including *tri angga*, *rwa bhineda*, *menyama braya*, *desa-kala-patra*, and *tri hita karana*. The concept of *tri angga* consisting of head, body, and legs is reflected in the structure of the composition *Ngedes Lemah*, *Uma Sadina*, and *Lelakut Ngigel*. *Rwa bhineda* concept (dualism) for example can be found with the participants of male-female, male-female scarecrow, *kotekan* (interlocking figurations) consisting of *polos* (on beat) and *sangsih* (off beat), tranquility and noise. *Menyama braya* concept as a reflection of mutual cooperation culture is reflected in the picture of the togetherness of every individual in the composition as well as the freedom of individual interpretation as a representation of the democratic culture in the lives of the people of Bali with referring to the *uger-uger* (rules in composing) as a symbol of obedience to follow the rules of composition that has been previously agreed. The concept of *desa-kala-patra* (space, time, and situation) has been taken into consideration for the performance. The concept of Tri Hita Karana which emphasizes harmony between Man and God, Man and fellow Man, and Man with the Environment is portrayed from the message of totality of the performance which stresses that harmony is the foundation and essence of life.



## Conclusion

The richness and cultural diversity of agriculture in Southeast Asia is a source of inspiration for artworks that is never dry. Various types and forms of artwork have been created since the long ago until now, one of which is *terompong beruk*. This composition is a contemporary composition based on tradition. As a contemporary composition, TBB 2015 tries to bring the beauty through the "form and content" with the local wisdom foundation in Bali such *tri angga*, *rwa bhineda*, *menyama braya*, *desa-kala-patra*, and *tri hita karana*. With the foundation of local wisdom in Bali, then ritual elements, singing, and dancing is packaged, integrated from the beginning until the end of the composition in accordance with the point of view of its composer.

P.S.

It is important to mention that through this event, under the theme Spiritual Dimensions of Rice Culture in Southeast Asia (Seminar, Ritual and Performances), we have actually been doing cultural preservation and actualization by practice. "The preservation activities, individually or in group, can make the preservation become alive and their activity's sustainability can come down to the next generation. On the other side, through the performances or exhibitions, those artists can bring in actualization to the existence of the art and are able to invite the public's appreciation for the conservation sake as well (Rai S., 2003).

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