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IRINGAN GARAP
A NEW VOCABULARY FOR WAYANG ACCOMPANIMENT

It is 8:00 PM on Friday, 28 November 2014, the evening before Purbo Asmoro is to perform for the 809th founding anniversary of Tulungagung, a major regency of East Java. This annual event is a coveted invitation for dhalang each year. Some six thousand wayang fans will gather in the huge public town square to enjoy local arts troupes, witness fireworks, wait patiently through speeches, and finally revel in the all-night performance featuring a dhalang of superstar status. Not only will the wayang be broadcast live on numerous radio stations, but it will also be video-documented by at least two studios, relayed live on local television, and, more and more frequently, live-streamed internationally over the internet. This type of mass celebration in vast, outdoor spaces across East or Central Java and Jakarta is typical of some 50 percent of Purbo Asmoro’s performances. ¹

¹ According to my own records, about half of Purbo Asmoro’s performances from 2004 to 2015 were sponsored by regencies, principalities, governmental departments, ministries, public companies, private businesses or factories in massive public squares. About another 35 percent were for weddings or other milestone events at private homes or small neighborhood gathering places, and about 15 percent were for academic or arts institutions on campuses or school grounds.
The committee in charge of the wayang, in consultation with the Bupati of Tulungagung, has requested the lakon *Kresna Duta* (*Kresna as Emissary*) and they informed the dhalang of their choice about one month earlier. This lakon is a basic requirement of any dhalang’s repertory—although not frequently performed and not particularly auspicious, given that the failure of Kresna’s negotiations marks the beginning of the Baratayuda War. Purbo Asmoro would have seen it a number of times throughout his youth, and reports having practically memorized the celebrated Nartosabdo recording of it from the late 1970s. He performs parts of the lakon a few times a year in one context or another, but usually only snippets of it or references to it woven into other episodes. It has been five years since Purbo Asmoro has performed a full, all-night *garapan* version. Since receiving news of the story choice, thoughts about specific points of interpretation will have inevitably been swimming around in his mind amidst his other performance engagements, his teaching load, the final exam responsibilities at ISI, and various artistic events he has attended this month.² He only sits down to officially prepare, however, on this, the eve of the performance.

It so happens that the *klenèngan* group of elderly Solonese masters known as Pujangga Laras has scheduled their monthly get-together in the *pendhapa* of Purbo Asmoro’s private home this same evening. A loosely-knit group of some 50 musicians will be playing relatively long, classical pieces with very few breaks, from 8:00 PM to 2:00 AM. On the one hand, this monopolizes the dhalang’s evening just when he needs to work. However, on the other hand, it gives him a built-in excuse and mental space, free from other distractions and responsibilities, to plan tomorrow night’s performance. Over the six hours, he alternates between jotting notes while sitting by himself against one of the elaborately carved pillars in the back, and entering the private quarters of his home to continue to work when he needs to consult references.

² Purbo Asmoro is often viewed as an introvert. Over the years, I have become convinced that what can appear as brooding is actually his internalizing of the discussion and general affect in the moment, making note of human behavior and character in his midst, or ruminating over current events or personal interactions, all for use later as material. I believe that he is always, in some way or another, preparing for his upcoming wayang performances through his keen observation skills.
He passionately describes the process as I wander over to his pillar to disturb him for a few minutes just before midnight:3

I know that I want to start with the dilemma in Kresna’s mind as to his role in the negotiations. I need to focus on Kresna, his character, and the issues he is weighing. Drupada has tried his hand as an emissary and failed; Kunthi has tried hers and failed. Kresna is the last chance to negotiate a truce, but he is unsure as to whether he will take on the role. Drupada [Purbo makes a motion in the air from the left to show that Drupada will appear as a vision, half-covered by a kayon] will make his plea, then Kunthi [the same motion from above-right] with her plea. The iringan [gamelan accompaniment] is already in my head. I don’t have the narrations or dialogue yet. The iringan comes first, after the scene configuration. We’ll see how it goes during the rehearsal. For now this is what I have [he shows me his scribbled notes, not yet the rewritten version shown in Figure 5-1].

3 Over the past 12 years that I have been following Purbo Asmoro’s artistic development, I have had the privilege of being privy to the whole process literally hundreds of times (as of this writing having attended 563 performances of his): the frequently convoluted story behind the invitation from the sponsor, Purbo Asmoro’s artistic preparation, Mayangkara’s rehearsal, the resulting performance, audience and sponsor reactions, and Purbo’s post-performance reflections. He knows that I am always in the midst of some sort of project, and that the thoughts he shares will inevitably make it onto paper somewhere, so he tends to be explicit about his process.
The next day his troupe gathers for another familiar 22-hour adventure: a two-hour rehearsal, five-hour road trip to Tulungagung, three-hour preparation on the site, seven-hour performance, and five-hour return trip. Purbo Asmoro has completed the schema of pieces for the performance. The two interludes (*Limbukan* and *Gara-gara*), which have nothing to do with the lakon itself, are not included in either the schema nor important to the rehearsal. During the rehearsal, changes are made. During the performances even more spontaneous alterations happen. Suyatmi, a *pesindhèn* in Purbo Asmoro’s group for over 25 years, commented in an interview in 2008:

> You really have to be on your toes to perform with Pak Purbo. Although there is a rehearsal or two for each *garapan* performance, there are always changes at the last minute. You have to be able to follow the story. You have to be concentrating on what is happening on the screen. You have to know what section he may have skipped, added or decided to change, or when suddenly he will want to use a vocal introduction for something that wasn’t planned.

A relaxed spontaneity is the norm in classical performances, but to be spontaneous in a fast-paced *garapan* wayang is extremely demanding for gamelan musicians, as they cannot rely on traditional scene structures, certain signaling systems, or classical repertory. Even so, Purbo Asmoro has rehearsed *Mayangkara* less and less frequently over the 12 years that I have been following his process. In an informal interview (May 2010) he described why:

> I don’t like to over-rehearse *Mayangkara*. In the old days, we might have had as many as three or four half-day rehearsals to prepare for an all-night *garapan* version of a lakon. And for *padat* performances at ISI with ISI studio musicians? They might rehearse some 30 times for a 45-minute performance. But I am not out to create *komposisi*, or a set packet of gamelan accompaniment resembling a film score. What I am hoping, is for *Mayangkara* to eventually work fluently within a new vocabulary of accompaniment repertory and techniques. I want them, over time, to learn to predict, interpret and even second-guess my intentions in a way similar to how classical accompaniment works. The gamelan accompaniment needs to cater to the new needs of the new dramatic structures, but still be fluid and spontaneous in its own way. It should be intimately connected to the drama on the screen, but subordinate and flexible. It’s new, but a new system, not new, individual scores for each lakon. *Mayangkara* has been working some 20 years now within this new system and has been able to get by with fewer and fewer rehearsals, since the understanding is ever more in place.
Of all the elements rethought when creating an all-night *garapan* performance, the resulting newly-crafted gamelan accompaniment is probably the most striking, obvious, and, to some fans of tradition, the most jolting. While it may take more extensive background knowledge to detect innovation in other areas, the new gamelan accompaniment is a first and easy entry point to innovation. Although, particularly for Purbo Asmoro, all six of the elements to be *garaped* (interpretive details, characterization, scene structure, narration, movement, and accompaniment) are of equal weight in the success of the final product, the area of *iringan* requires special examination as there are extensive new techniques and terminology. Purbo Asmoro considers *iringan garap* to reflect a flexible new musical vocabulary rather than a just file of individual lakon scores and he often starts with bits of accompaniment ideas when planning. For these reasons, we need to explore this new system at the start of our examination of his all-night *garapan* style.

Educated observers have had varying perspectives on the nature of Purbo Asmoro’s gamelan accompaniment. “It’s like a film score, with everything chosen or created to fit the moment at hand,” praised Sarah Weiss, ethnomusicologist with over 30 years of experience in wayang, after her first experience watching an all-night performance by Purbo Asmoro. “But I miss the classical pieces, and there is so little I can latch on to,” added an equally knowledgeable Western gamelan player, in an informal critique session after a 1996 performance of *Sumantri Ngèngèr* (*Sumantri Apprentices*) in Eromoko, Wonogiri. Sugeng Nugroho, on the other hand, classifies Purbo Asmoro’s *iringan* as “innovation within a completely classical vein,” (2012, 453) while Rahayu Supanggah estimated off the top of his head, “Oh, some 90 percent of the gamelan music in his performances is directly from Nartosabdo,” (Balai Soedjatmoko seminar, 2013). As we examine the repertory and techniques used by Purbo Asmoro in his all-night *garapan* style it will become clear that all four of these impressions, commonly voiced by other observers, are both justified and misleading at the same time, and herein lies the complexity of Purbo Asmoro’s new system of *iringan*. We will first survey his repertory of material, then examine the musical techniques he uses to sculpt this material for a particular scene. Finally, we will look at how Purbo Asmoro prepares and interacts with his own troupe,
Mayangkara, and other random troupes he may find himself performing with out of circumstance.

**Purbo Asmoro’s *Irigan* Repertory**

Purbo Asmoro arranges the gamelan accompaniment for his performances exclusively on his own, having no dedicated score arranger, as most modern wayang troupes do, and not even an informal head of karawitan like many wayang troupes historically had. From a very young age, Purbo Asmoro was a proficient musician in the village of his birth, Dersana, Pacitan in East Java. He immediately gravitated toward the study of *gendèr*, which in wayang supports the dhalang all night from directly behind, playing not only with the gamelan but also playing *grimingan*. To this day, when the Solonese superstar dhalang community organizes their annual fasting month performances, in which they serve as musicians for each other, Purbo Asmoro is consistently chosen as the *gendèr* player. Once he reached SMKI he learned to play *rebab* and *kendhang* as well, through listening and example, without any direct lessons. Both as a studio instructor at ISI (see Figure 5-2) and as the director of Mayangkara, he often takes the helm at the *kendhang* to illustrate a tricky transition.

![Figure 5-2: Purbo Asmoro plays *gendèr* and *kendhang* during his courses at ISI, 2015 (photo by Kartoka Nugroho).](image)

Purbo Asmoro has a keen ear and is renowned for his ability to remember something he heard only once, perhaps decades ago. He frequently corrects his musicians during a performance by subtly readjusting the singer’s starting pitch for

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4*Grimingan* refers to the *gendèr* player’s continuous musical and dramatic backdrop during dialogue and narrative sections, in which he or she weaves together a fabric of snippets and short melodies to reflect the emotional and dramatic content of the moment. See p. xxi for a photo of the *gendèr* and a *gendèr* player.
the correct mode, or cleverly covering up a drummer’s mistaken transition. I have seen him create entire accompaniment schemata off the top of his head at a rehearsal, complete with rare texts and unusual vocals, yet with no reference to notation. Although his musicians are some of the most talented in the wayang world, he is steadfast in his belief that only the dhalang himself can arrange the gamelan accompaniment effectively.

The gamelan accompaniment in the two all-night garapan performances being used as examples for this work: Makutharama (Pacitan, October 2007) and Sesaji Raja Suya, (Pacitan, November 2007), both typical and representative of Purbo Asmoro’s garapan practice, present four categories of source material:

- traditional Solonese wayang material (19%)
- material by Nartosabdo (23%)
- material from regions of Java outside the greater Solo area (11%)
- ASKI/padat style-inspired material (47%)

This is quite different from the two parallel classical performances of Makutharama (Benawa, October 2008) and Sesaji Raja Suya (ISI Solo, March 2008). For Lontar’s palace-classical recording of Makutharama, Purbo Asmoro employed 100 percent traditional Solonese wayang material, while for the village-classical performance of Sesaji Raja Suya, he added in a bit of Nartosabdo and regional variety, making the total, combined percentages of these two recordings:

- classical, traditional Solo-palace wayang material (87%)
- material by Nartosabdo (8%)
- regional material, but within the greater Solo area: Klaten, Sragen (5%)

Below is a brief examination of how Purbo Asmoro utilizes each of the four categories of repertory in his all-night garapan performances.

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5 A clear example of this can be heard during a transition in The Grand Offering of the Kings [SRS-CInt 1, 1:25:40] when Purbo Asmoro alerts the singers that they started the passage an entire step too low by singing the correct pitch over them immediately after they start. This is an impressive moment, in that it shows how the tonal orientation is ever present in his ears, even more than in the singers’ ears, whose sole job this is, although he has nothing to ground him here but the grimingan.

6 The “greater Solo area” is culturally thought of as the city of Solo together with the regencies of Sukoharjo and Wonogiri to the south and southeast, Klaten to the southwest, and Boyolali, Karanganyar, and Sragen fanning out across some 50 kilometers to the northeast and northwest. Material outside this area could come from Yogyakarta, Cirebon, Banyumas, East Java, West Java, “Pesisir” (Central Java northern coastal areas), and even as far flung as Bali (see Figure 0-9, Map of Java, p. xxv).
Traditional Solonese Wayang Material

Purbo Asmoro in no way abandons traditional Solonese wayang material played in conventional ways during his all-night garapan performances. Nineteen percent of the material in the two representative recordings falls in this category. Most of the pieces he chooses to retain from traditional Solonese wayang performance-practice are the gendhing lampah (generic, functional pieces that serve as the basic building blocks for all wayang accompaniment): ayak-ayak, srepeg, and sampak in each mode. He also uses a few sorrowful (tlutur) versions of these forms, a srepeg from Klaten, a srepeg from Sragen, and a gangsaran. These pieces serve throughout the seven-hour performances as familiar, neutral, functional adhesive; used to get characters from A to B when the dramatic tension is at its lowest, or to initiate battle scenes that have not yet approached a climax. Of the total 117 distinct musical selections in the two all-night garapan recordings, 15 are traditional Solonese wayang gendhing lampah. However, they are repeated frequently throughout the performance, totaling 126 instances of the 15 pieces. Since, for the most part, the other 102 of 117 distinct musical selections are only used once each, the traditional ayak-srepeg-sampak repertory stands out prominently in its role as adhesive. Because this repertory is ubiquitous throughout every scene, some observers, such as Sugeng Nugroho, mentioned above, reasonably come to the conclusion that the overall feel of Purbo Asmoro’s gamelan accompaniment is “innovation within a completely classical vein.”

Nartosabdo Material

Purbo Asmoro often replaces the longer, more subtle, classical Solonese pieces used for main scenes in kingdoms and hermitages with shorter ketawang and ladrang composed by Nartosabdo. Or, he may use the repertoire of ketawang, ladrang, or gendhing originally from Solo, to which Nartosabdo simply added vocal chorus parts. Either way, the selections Purbo Asmoro chooses are not generally among Nartosabdo’s most widely known pieces and do not usually come from the group of pieces that became integrated into Solonese klenèngan (concert music) practice back
in the mid-1980s. Hence when these selections appear, there is a distinct Condhong Raos feel to the moment.⁷

Purbo Asmoro cites a number of reasons for his use of these pieces for court and hermitage scenes (interview, April 2014). First of all, they are simply shorter than the traditional choices, hence the narration spoken over them can be abridged and the dhalaŋ can get straight to the dialogue, debate, and point of the matter at hand. A concept more difficult to pinpoint, relates to rasa.⁸ In general, when asked about his gamelan accompaniment choices, Purbo Asmoro repeatedly uses two terms to explain his decisions: rasa and instinkt. Most of Nartosabdo’s compositions feature a fixed, unique chorus melody with a set text, rather than the more classical, sindhèn-gérong (female soloist-male chorus) realization of a melody with a free choice of text within limitations of form. For the most part, Nartosabdo created his pieces for programmatic purposes to be used in wayang, and occasionally in wedding or dance sequences. Hence, while some Solonese musicians may despair that there is little left to the interpretive mind when playing his compositions,⁹ this is in fact the point for a dhalaŋ wanting to use them for a specific dramatic purpose. A dhalaŋ does not employ this repertory with an interest in the potential breadth of rebab, gendèr, or vocal interpretation, but rather for the rasa of the composed choral melody and the meaning behind the text.

One example is Ketawang Citramengeng, describing the beauty of a hermitage and the meditative power of its priest-leader in a regal chorus melody. This is used in Rama’s Crown for the scene in which Wibisana decides to remove himself from the worldly realm [MK-CLnt 3, 38:02]. Ketawang Kasimpar, in calm sléndro sanga patterns, with its text depicting a fresh garden in the afternoon and the interaction between bees and flowers, is used in The Grand Offering of the Kings to introduce King

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⁷ Condhong Raos was Nartosabdo’s performing troupe, made up of mostly musicians from the Boyolali and Klaten areas but based, during Nartosabdo’s career, in Semarang on the north coast. It has a legendary reputation as one of the best wayang accompaniment troupes in history, with a style distinct from classical Solonese troupes. This style is characterized by their alternative repertory, choice of tempos, methods of navigating musical transitions, and the stylistic idiosyncrasies of certain individual star performers in the group (such as Sri Moro on kendhang, Mujoko on rebab, gérong singer Suparno, and pesindhèn Tantinah, Ngatirah, and Suyatmi).

⁸ Marc Benamou (2010, xiv), in his detailed examination of rasa, supplies the following English words which, combined, help to give an approximation of the meaning of this complicated concept: affect, mood, feeling, intuition.

⁹ For an example of this, readers can refer to the comments from Supanggah cited by Marc Benamou (2010, 162), which have commonly been echoed by others in the Solo klenèngan community over the years.
Brihadrata and his two beautiful wives [SRS-CInt 1, 15:32]. *Ketawang Pangkur Kawedhar,* full of references to philosophy and featuring an awkward and eerie chorus, is perfect for the scene in *Rama’s Crown* in which Semar meets up with Arjuna to give him advice [MK-CInt 1, 11:50]. Purbo Asmoro describes picturing the scene in his head when planning, and these pieces automatically occurring to him as the appropriate choices, from his mental library of some hundreds of *ketawang,* *ladrang,* and *gendhing* (interview, December 2014).

Again, *rasa* and instinct. Maybe it’s because they were composed specifically for wayang, but often the Nartosabdo pieces just feel right for certain scenes. The length, the vocal texts, the shimmery and bright feel of the choruses just fit the atmosphere and support the drama. Also, so many of the key musicians in Mayangkara played with the late Nartosabdo or with the late Mujoko, who also used a lot of this material and was one of his musicians, so a number of them are at their best with this repertory. Also, the court scenes in my performances do not occur at the very beginning of the wayang, but after a prologue lasting some 45 minutes to an hour. The energy would really drop if I were to use traditional Solo court scene pieces at this point in the wayang. That’s why I often segue from the end of the prologue into a vocal chorus like *Udan Soré* or *Logondhang* for the entrance of the court. Even when we used *Téjanata* for the court scene in *Sesaji Raja Suya,* although that happened to be a true Solo *bedhayan* version, it was chosen in the same spirit as when we use Nartosabdo choral text pieces in scenes like that—used for the sense of grandeur, fullness, and bustle it lends the scene, coming after the prologue.

The Nartosabdo repertory is often placed during the important, plot-heavy court or hermitage scenes, hence the impression among some observers (such as Supanggah’s 90% off-the-cuff estimate, even though the accurate figure here is 23%) is that Purbo Asmoro’s gamelan accompaniment is primarily from Nartosabdo. But this impression dismisses all of the connecting, default, adhesive material (traditional Solonese) and, most importantly, the ASKI-inspired material used for climatic and particularly poignant moments.

**ASKI-Inspired Material**

While 43% of the pieces used in these two performances is either from traditional Solonese repertory (generic movement of wayang figures from one place to another and low level battle scenes) or Nartosabdo repertory (court and hermitage scenes), a significant 46% emerges directly from the influence of the *padat* movement at ASKI
in the 1980s. *Padat* practitioners by the mid-1980s, when Purbo Asmoro was exposed to the movement, used very little completely traditional, unmodified Solonese wayang material and virtually no material by Nartosabdo. Characteristic ASKI *padat* trademark material falls into these five categories:

1. **Klenèngan (concert music) repertory, not traditional to wayang**

   The entire range of Solonese *klenèngan* repertory was opened up to the *garapan* practitioner as a result of the principles of the *padat* movement,\(^{10}\) which encouraged the priority of dramatic needs over traditional rules or boundaries determining gamelan accompaniment. This includes pieces not normally associated with wayang, such as illustrative, light *jineman, dolanan, andhegan,* and various elaborated *ayak-ayak* in stretched-out densities such as *Ayak-ayak Gadhung Mlathi* or *Ayak-ayak Mijil Larasati.*

   In *The Grand Offering of the Kings,* Purbo Asmoro uses the *andhegan* (vocal solo) in *Ktw Brangta Mentul,* and later on the song *Jineman Klambi Lurik,* to illustrate the love and devotion of Brihadrata’s two wives [SRS-CInt 1, 17:36]. He uses the vocal solo of *Gd Gandrung Manis* to enhance the atmosphere of the love scene between Rantamsari and Arjuna [SRS-CInt 4, 42:57]. The lullaby *Lédhung-lédhung* is played when the forest ogress Nyai Jara comforts the baby Jarasandha [SRS-CInt 1, 44:47]. Although not included in the two sample recordings, Purbo Asmoro frequently shapes narration and dialogue around the use of an abridged *Ayak-ayak Sanga Rangkep.* Characters enter to the initial *Ayak-ayak Sanga,* and the gamelan is signaled to *sirep* (play quietly) after going into *rangkep* (a stretched-out density) so that a narration can be recited or a dialogue started between the characters. The gamelan stops at for the vocal solo just as an important point or question is being posed in the dialogue or narration. During the musical silence before the vocal solo starts, the answer or opinion is expressed, after which the gamelan comes back up to full volume.

   Purbo Asmoro has expanded this entire concert music category to include *klenèngan* repertory from Nartosabdo as well. For example, he uses the vocal solo to *Gonjang-ganjing Lik ‘Tho* to underscore Semar’s advisory role toward Anoman [MK-CInt 5 10:30] and Nartosabdo’s song *Dhayohé Teka* to enliven the scene when

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\(^{10}\) See Subono’s comment, p. 85.
Dursasana is chiding Karna for losing hold of his special heirloom weapon [MK-CInt 3 34:40]. About 11% of the ASKI-inspired material represented in the two performances being analyzed comes from concert music repertory, brought into Purbo Asmoro’s wayang practice as a result of his padat training. Although these pieces are from the traditional Solonese or Nartosabdo concert music repertory, their placement and their use is clearly ASKI-padat treatment inspired, and the moments in question feel far from classical in nature. These pearls of garap (special interpretive treatment) add weight to poignant interactions in a way that classical treatment does not have a vocabulary for.

2. Ceremonial repertory from the palaces

Ceremonial repertory from the palaces of Solo, useful in supporting dramatic moments, is fully integrated into Purbo Asmoro’s wayang repertory, as it was among padat practitioners in the 1980s. This includes bedhayan, gendhing kemanak, Monggang, Kodhok Ngorek, and Sekatén. Bedhayan are pieces dominated by vocal choruses, used to accompany sacred court dances. Gendhing kemanak are bedhayan choruses accompanied only by a pair of kemanak—banana-shaped bronze bells with slits, tuned closely together—drum, kenong, and gong. The terms monggang and kodhok ngorek refer to ancient gamelan sets that play ceremonial pieces made up of short, repetitive, drone-like patterns. Sekatén repertory is played on the special, large-scale gamelan belonging to Kraton Solo and only used in the austere, religious month of Mulud for ceremonial purposes. All these ceremonial forms, once relegated to palace use only, are now considered available to the garap practitioner.

Purbo Asmoro illustrates the final ceremonial gathering of priests and kings in The Grand Offering of the Kings with Anglir Mendhung in kemanak style, starting with a lengthy sekaténan introduction on the bonang [SRS-CInt 5 1:22:10]. Although not represented in these recordings, he often uses Kodhok Ngorek for marriage scenes, as it is traditional in Javanese weddings, or for a final battle scene (a practice started by Supanggah in the 1970s dance dramas). Purbo underscores the ancient, timeless authority of Semar by using Monggang [MK-CInt 1 10:25]. While traditionally there was a strict, and in some cases superstitious, divide between wayang and ceremonial palace material, padat practitioners of the 1980s broke down those barriers. About
20% of the ASKI-inspired material represented in the two performances by Purbo Asmoro comes from this category.

3. Solonese klenèngan or wayang repertory, modified

The two categories above dealt with repertory being used without substantial modification, aside from simple abbreviation. From the padat days, Purbo Asmoro has continued the practice of also using Solonese pieces with modifications to fit the dramatic needs. About 12% of the ASKI-inspired material represented in the two performances being analyzed falls in this category. Pieces typically in gendhing form may show up as shorter ladrang (Ldr Bang-bang Wétan) or as more lively lancaran (Lnc Bondhèt); pieces strongly associated with one scale may appear in a different scale (Lnc Trepongbang in sléndro sanga), and pieces associated with certain speeds or densities may be altered, for example Ayak-ayak Anjangmas at breakneck speed, with none of the typical transitions, and used in a variety of settings.

It was characteristic during the height of padat development in the 1980s to abbreviate traditional Solonese pieces in order to fit the more truncated scenes. Only a few lines might be used of substantial, classical pieces such as Laler Mengeng (Puthut Gunawan’s padat script, Durgandini 1984), Ela-ela Kalibeber (Suyanto’s padat script, Rama Tundhung 1986) before they were cut off to move on to something else. Sometimes musicians would be instructed to start the piece from the second line rather than from the beginning, or to start right at the inggah instead of from the mérong (Bambang Suwarno’s padat script, Ciptaning 1979, inggah Malarsih). This truncating or presenting only a segment of a classical piece is the one modification that Purbo Asmoro stays away from as much as possible. The padat movement was highly criticized for the practice and Purbo Asmoro, frankly, being a more accomplished musician than the original Gendhon pedhalangan apprentices, considers it a personal challenge to find an alternative to this approach (interview, Feb 2010).

If I know that I only need a few kenongan of something, why not choose a piece or compose a snippet that is the appropriate length, instead of using only a segment of a longer piece? If I decide to use a piece like Ela-ela Kalibeber, I’m going to respect the authority of the piece, and use it purposefully—use it for a reason,
which means taking advantage of its garap in full. Now, I may use a snippet of a classical piece, on purpose, because I want to encourage a quick, almost subconscious association between the meaning of that piece and the scene. And I always reserve the right to cut off a piece because the drama in the moment suddenly requires it. But that’s different. Why plan, consciously and ahead of time, on using just the inggah of Gendhing Malarsih? What’s so special about the inggah of Gendhing Malarsih that something else couldn’t have been chosen? Sometimes I think it’s all a private joke and a challenge to the audience to guess the ways in which the arranger has cut up, altered, and sewn back together familiar pieces at a breakneck speed. To me, this is not the purpose of the accompaniment—to cleverly disguise material in order to quiz your audience, or to use it in what could be called flippant ways simply for the flippancy.

4. Stock ASKI material from the early days of garapan

There are a number of benchmark works that, in their day, made a profound influence on gamelan accompaniment practices across ASKI, in both the dance and the wayang departments. The now standard Sampak Galong Solo (6666 5555 3333 2222) is attributed to Martopangrawit, and was first used in his dance drama Bangun Majapahit (late 1970s). Sampak Kebumèn (6666 6662) was brought into the repertory after Subono heard it at a festival in Tegal in 1979 (Asmoro, Gamelan Scores, 394). The practice of interrupting phrases of a palaran with insertions of a sampak or other balungan-focused compositions [MK-CInt 1, 20:50] was first used by Supanggah in Ranggalawé Gugur, as was Srepeg Grandhèl. These are all standard building blocks of Purbo Asmoro’s repertory.

Purbo Asmoro also has a number of elements in his repertory that were created by Sukardi in his milestone padat script from 1986, Kunthi Pilih. One common

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11 In July 2014, Purbo Asmoro did just that. He crafted an entire scene around the garap of Ela-ela Kalibeber, in his debut of the lakon Drupadi. In perhaps the most essential scene of the lakon, Drupadi meets with Semar in the forest and receives some advice. The mérong goes into sirep for a lengthy but meaningful narration composed by Purbo Asmoro, and the gamelan is signaled to come back to full volume when entering the inggah. After a short while the inggah goes into sirep for some essential dialogue between Semar and Drupadi, with the playful, characteristic gendèr patterns of the inggah forming a duet to reflect Semar’s utterances. The gamelan comes back up in volume precisely at the complicated transition at the end, supporting a rise in the tension of the scene as Drupadi prepares to make a decision.

12 Ayak Hong, by Blacius Subono, is the one major example from the early ASKI days that does not appear in these two recordings. This elaborate suite of pieces is used for the opening court scene in any kingdom as a replacement for the palace-classical options: Ayak-ayak→Ktw Gd Kawit, Ayak-ayak→Ktw Gd Kabor, or Ayak-ayak→Ktw Gd Krawitan. It has become so popular that it is thought of as standard at this point. Once when he was performing in Balikpapan, Kalimantan, I heard Purbo Asmoro leave it up to the musicians as to how to start the performance. The drummer in the group (in his 50s) said, “Oh let’s just do the whole thing classical style. Let’s use Ayak Hong.”
example is a transition he regularly uses to move from *Pathet Sanga* into *Pathet Manyura* or into pélog barang:

from *Ayak-ayak Sanga, irama lancar*:

\[ .21 .21 .32 .65 \]
\[ i656 5356 5356 3565 \]
\[ 3235 3235 i656 5321 \]
\[ 2321 2321 3212 56i6 \rightarrow \text{(transition phrase)} \]
\[ 2626 3216 356i 6532 \rightarrow Ayak-ayak manyura \]
\[ \rightarrow \text{(transition phrase)} 2626 3276 3567 6532 \rightarrow Ayak-ayak pl barang \]

Purbo Asmoro also uses a few snippets or entire pieces from Blacius Subono and Dedek Wahyudi. Altogether, about 16% of the resulting gamelan accompaniment in these two performance examples, again, quite representative of Purbo’s practice in general, comes from this category of ASKI-based compositions from the early *padat* days.

5. Material composed during Mayangkara rehearsals

Characteristic of Blacius Subono and Dedek Wahyudi’s work at ASKI in the 1980s, and carried on by Purbo Asmoro, is the practice of composing new material on the spot during a rehearsal. Dedek Wahyudi, an internationally recognized composer who works mostly in the Dance Department at ISI Solo but who also worked for many years with Mayangkara, expressed the same frustration as Purbo Asmoro with arrangers who chop up and modify classical Solonese compositions to create accompaniment for *padat* performances. He finds the alternative entirely lies in composition (interview, May 2009). Blacius Subono, a composer, dhalang, and senior instructor in the Pedalangan Department at ISI Solo, has focused his career on creating through-composed accompaniment scores, resembling film scores but developed in the moment, during rehearsals.

Purbo Asmoro borrows a practice from both of these innovators that he calls *garap balungan*. These are *balungan*-focused melodies, often with irregular *kenong*, *kempul*, gong, and *bonang* parts, used as an alternative to *sampak* to support certain dramatic and climactic moments. Many *iringan garap* experts (Subono, Dedek, Purbo Asmoro) compose these spontaneously during a rehearsal, either for wayang or for dance. They are created somewhat collectively but with an identifiable leader
providing the kernel of thought. Often they catch on and are used in subsequent performances, but sometimes they fall into disuse after one performance. Subono, one of the most longstanding and prolific iringan garap craftsmen in wayang, has never formally collected his own dramatic kernels of garap balungan into a book of notation. He does not give them specific names and assumes they will never be used again after a performance. In fact however, over time, his groups do develop a repertoire and reuse these kernels, as do Dedek Wahyudi’s and Purbo Asmoro’s groups, collectively retrieving existing kernels by memory during a rehearsal, or creating new ones when a particular dramatic need arises.

Since garap balungan typically have no titles, Purbo Asmoro often refers to these in his performance preparation notes simply as garap balungan or sometimes balungan, and then quotes the first few notes to remind himself and the musicians which one to use. In order to identify them in the recordings, they have been numbered: Garap Balungan I, Garap Balungan II, and so on. In the four recordings for this project using iringan garap (the two all-night and the two padat performances), there are a total of 20 different garap balungan:13 13 which have no specific name and thus number up through Garap Balungan XIII, and seven which are referred to by the nickname they have managed to garner from the musicians over time (Gegilak, Sampak Pi-Ma). A hefty 35% of the ASKI-inspired material represented in the two all-night garapan performances was composed either by Purbo Asmoro or members of Mayangkara during rehearsals. Earlier we saw where Sugeng Nugroho and others may have developed the impression that Purbo Asmoro’s accompaniment is entirely grounded in the classical, and how Supanggah could make the estimate it was primarily from Nartosabdo repertory. Now it becomes clear how, for the two Western observers mentioned earlier who had not lived in Java since the early 1990s, Purbo Asmoro’s iringan seemed not only unfamiliar but also tightly scored.

Regional Material
About 11% of the material Purbo Asmoro uses in the two all-night garapan performances documented for this work, comes from regions outside of the greater

13 See Gamelan Scores (Asmoro 2013) for notation and background to every garap balungan fragment in the Lontar project recordings.
Surakarta area. This practice was first popularized by Nartosabdo, who integrated various *gendhing lampah* (*ayak-ayak, srepeg, sampak*) from Yogyakarta and Banyumas into his performances, apparently only in the name of variety. The practice was continued at ASKI during the years of *padat* development. Pedalangan Department students from Purbo Asmoro’s time to the present have been required to take courses in Yogyanese (“Mataraman”) and *wayang golèk* Kebumen styles. They also have courses available to them in various Sundanese, East Javanese, and Balinese practices as well, all taught by instructors from those regions. Many of the techniques and material from these classes were brought into the creative process of developing gamelan accompaniment for *padat* wayang, and Purbo Asmoro has continued this for his all-night *garapan* performances. His use of these selections is examined later in this chapter. In summary, Figures 5-3 and 5-4 provide two tables summarizing the breakdown of Purbo Asmoro’s gamelan accompaniment repertory, and which forms tend to be represented more in which style.

**Figure 5-3: Purbo Asmoro’s repertory for all-night *garapan* performances:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Solo wayang tradition</th>
<th>Nartosabdo</th>
<th>regional</th>
<th>ASKI <em>padat</em> style-inspired material</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 percent</td>
<td>23 percent</td>
<td>11 percent</td>
<td>46 percent:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 35% composed by Mayangkara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 20% Solo ceremonial snippets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 16% compositions from ASKI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 12% modified Solo repertory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 11% concert music snippets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 6% modified regional material</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 5-4: Purbo Asmoro’s repertory, broken down to the form level:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gendhing kt 4 kr</th>
<th>4 pieces</th>
<th>0 pieces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gendhing kt 2 kr, no bedhayan</td>
<td>8 pieces</td>
<td>0 pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gendhing kt 2 kr, bedhayan</td>
<td>0 pieces</td>
<td>4 pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladrang</td>
<td>6 pieces</td>
<td>13 pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ketawang</td>
<td>1 piece</td>
<td>13 pieces</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

158
Ch 5: A New Vocabulary for Musical Accompaniment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lancaran</th>
<th>4 pieces</th>
<th>10 pieces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ayak-ayak</td>
<td>6 types</td>
<td>11 types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(nem, sanga, manyura, Anjangmas, Tlutur, Pamungkas)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Srepeg</td>
<td>6 types</td>
<td>15 types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(nem, sanga, manyura, Martana, Kedhung Banthengan, Klatenan)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sampak</td>
<td>4 types</td>
<td>19 types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(nem, sanga, manyura, Klatenan)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jineman/dolanan/andhegan</td>
<td>0 pieces</td>
<td>10 pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New compositions, free form</td>
<td>0 pieces</td>
<td>17 pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Kemuda, Gangsaran, Monggang</td>
<td>0 pieces</td>
<td>5 pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS:</strong></td>
<td>39 distinct pieces</td>
<td>117 distinct pieces</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tracing Garapan Repertory**

In the endnotes to *Gamelan Scores* (Asmoro, 2013), I make an attempt to trace the origin of the elements of gamelan accompaniment found in the Lontar all-night *garapan* and *padat* performances, item by item. The reader should reference there for more details on any of the selections mentioned in this chapter or found in any of those recordings. In short, however, this sort of tracing is extremely difficult. Solo is a relatively small town, but the richness of the exchanges, influences and cross-collaboration among sectors of the artistic community from the 1970s to the present with regard to *iringan garap* is mind-boggling. Innovations in the Dance Department at ASKI in the 1970s spilled over into the Pedalangan Department and vice versa, with many of the same musicians accompanying exams and performances in both departments. Elements of ASKI *padat*-inspired gamelan accompaniment are generally not notated, and collaborative revisions during rehearsals are the norm. This combined with a general culture of not attributing authorship to creative works makes unraveling the origin of the various key elements tricky, even though it is only a 30-year-old tradition and almost all of the main artistic figures are still alive.

A dizzying array of influences have melded together to form the repertory for *garapan* practitioners: Dedek Wahyudi’s compositions in the Dance Department at
ISI; Blacius Subono’s compositions in the Pedalangan Department at ISI; regional pieces brought into the repertory by the Cirebonese, East Javanese, Balinese, Sundanese, Banyumasan and Yogyanese practitioners at ISI; ceremonial forms from the palaces in Solo which were brought to the Karawitan Department at ISI by Mloyowidodo and others a few decades ago; village traditions, from Klaten in particular; the repertory of wayang sandosa, mostly by Blacius Subono; dance drama accompaniment from the late 1970s by Martopangrawit and Supanggah; innovations by Sukardi (an influence specific to Purbo Asmoro); and, in the 2005–2015 decade, compositions by Lumbini in the Dance Department and Setyaji in the Pedalangan Department.

Purbo Asmoro has been in the middle of this cauldron of artistic development almost since its inception. As a student at the High School of Performing Arts (1977–1982), then at ASKI/STSI (1982–1986), and subsequently a studio instructor in the Pedalangan Department at STSI/ISI, he experienced the development of garapan accompaniment from its inception. For over 25 years now, he has been present on campus each day, teaching students, administering examinations, organizing performances, planning artistic debuts, observing rehearsals, taking part in curriculum planning, and collaborating with the Dance and Karawitan departments. While many of Mayangkara’s older members are former CondHong Raos performers, a large percentage of the younger ones are studio musicians at ISI and they bring this wide experience to each rehearsal; hence the collaboration is never static.

These influences, mixed with a good dose of his classical upbringing as the descendant of generations of dhalang from Pacitan, East Java, his great admiration for the traditions of dhalang from Klaten, his own innovative talents, and his emphasis on spontaneity, combine to form Purbo’s characteristic repertory of iringan garap. In the end, the observer is left with a grand quilt of influences, performance “happenings,” and historical artistic interactions not easy to trace precisely, even after consultation with Purbo Asmoro himself.

An exchange with Dedek Wahyudi when, on the third occasion I interviewed him regarding fragments, I finally pressed him on the origin of some of the
composed snippets in Purbo Asmoro’s performances, sums this phenomenon up well (interview, March 2011):

**Kathryn Emerson**: This garap balungan is a mysterious one, and none of my sources agree. Some say it was written by you. Others have been certain it is by Pak Bono. He says it’s not his, although it is similar to many things he has written. Some say it is not new at all, but originally from Kebumên tradition. [I then play the recording for Dedek to listen to.]

**Dedek Wahyudi** [after listening intently to the recording]: Well, it’s certainly not mine. But why can’t it be in a way from all three, and yet at the same time from none? We have all created this together. And good luck to anyone trying to figure it all out in a linear way.

**How Purbo Asmoro Shapes the Iringan Material**

Purbo Asmoro arranges the gamelan accompaniment for his all-night *garapan* performances while balancing four main considerations: affect, contrast, timing, and meaning. These are not his categories explicitly, but I have placed his comments over the years into these four main groups.

1. **Affect**: The material must fit the feeling and mood of each scene. Purbo Asmoro chooses material based on his own instinct, intuition, and experience rather than traditional rules guiding gamelan accompaniment for wayang, as discussed in the above section. The entire gamelan repertory is available to him, including not only wayang but also concert music, dance, and ceremonial selections, as well as new compositions.

2. **Contrast**: This relatively simple principle, challenging to apply, is often behind Purbo Asmoro’s gamelan accompaniment choices. He tries to avoid what he refers to as a feeling of “monotone.” The seven-hour performance should be full of contrast: in tempos, dynamics, vocal and instrumental timbres, orchestration, regional styles, performance styles. There should be a contrast with pieces used in the same venue previously, contrast with how the lakon was treated in the past, and contrast with how the lakon is typically treated now, by other dhalang.
3. **Timing**: The material must be tailor-made: molded and chiseled so that it fits the timing of the dramatic action as precisely as possible, even if this alters traditional treatment of the material.

4. **Meaning**: The material should, as much as possible and particularly in key places, support the meaning held in the scene, either through the text or the connotations, associations, and contexts of the pieces chosen.

While the concept of affect was covered in detail in the examination of Purbo’s repertory choices and the concept of contrast is fairly straightforward, the treatments of timing and meaning require further detail.

**Timing**

*Padat* practice consciously avoids lengthy musical selections during which nothing is happening on the screen. Purbo Asmoro continues to follow this practice in his all-night *garapan* performances, for the same reasons regarding dramatic tension as in condensed practice. Aside from avoiding such static moments simply by choosing pieces whose length better matches the scene, the *garapan* practitioner also further sculpts the material to the desired length. In classical practice, a gamelan piece is usually played through to its natural end, even if this means that the action on the screen is dormant for an extended period of time, but this is not the case in a *garapan* performance. A number of new techniques are applied to achieve this, described below.

**Ditabrak—Crashed Into**

This technique was developed at ASKI in the 1970s, in order to do away with stagnant moments on the screen. Traditional transitions and ending patterns are avoided, and pieces or songs may be cut off at any moment necessary rather than waiting for the appropriate moment. *Tabrak* is Javanese meaning “to run into something suddenly.” *Ditabrak* is the passive form, meaning that something has been crashed into. So for example, *Ktw Mijil ditabrak Sampak* would mean that there is no traditional transition from the *ketawang* to *sampak*, but rather the *ketawang* is crashed into or cut off suddenly, with no concern for the standard places or the standard
signals in such a transition. *Iringan garap* practitioners affirm that this technique is not used in the interest of saving a few minutes here or there. The *ditabrak* technique is used for dramatic power.

Another example is found in court scenes. Once the narration is finished the dhalang can simply give the signal to stop with one knock on the wooden box. The music stops in its tracks and the dhalang begins his *sulukan*. A clear instance can be found in *Rama’s Crown*, when the narration describing Arjuna’s despair is “crashed into” by Semar’s sudden entrance, to the accompaniment of *Monggang* [MK-CInt 1, vocal starts at 08:45, *ditabrak Monggang* at 10:25]. This is not a lack of care on the part of Purbo Asmoro, who would have no trouble extending his narration to fit the length of the previous *Ktw Durma Rangsang*. Rather this is a dramatic technique that places priority on highlighting Semar’s sudden entrance rather than a musically proper ending to *Ktw Durma Rangsang*.

Although the *ditabrak* technique seems to go against traditional practice, it has existed in at least two instances for a long time. The *Gapuran* scene, in which the king admires the beauty of the gateway on his way out of the Audience Hall and into the Queen’s Quarters, is sometimes accompanied by *Ayak-ayak Anjangmas*. The basic *Ayak-ayak* moves into a special elaboration melody known as *Anjangmas* as the gateway is being described. Although there is a somewhat prescribed place and manner to make the transition from *Anjangmas* back to regular *Ayak-ayak*, which might be used in concert music, it is expected that a dhalang will end his narration at any point, and with a simple signal on the box cut straight back to *Ayak-ayak*. In other words, the *Anjangmas* melody, whether it has come to completion or not, is *ditabrak* by *Ayak-ayak*. This is an example of something being *ditabrak* that existed more than 50 years before the creation of *iringan padat* techniques. Bambang Suwarno also cites a common practice in classical wayang during *Pathet Manyura* in which any piece can be cut off with a sudden entrance of a character: “*Piyak, piyak!*” (“Make way, make way!”), using knocks of the *cempala* to signal an immediate *sampak*.

**Irama Nyeklèk—Abrupt Transition**

*Irama nyeklèk* (from the base word *ceklèk* meaning “to break something off”) is a *padat* technique in which the tempo suddenly cuts from *irama tanggung* to *irama dadi*...
without any sort of gradual bridge. Dedek Wahyudi says he specifically remembers Humardani wanting his team to create some sort of transition which would feel like “a city bus suddenly stopping just anywhere to pick up a passenger.” The actual creator of this transition and the drum signal for it was Supanggah (interviews with Dedek, 2009, and Supanggah, 2014). Subono comments that this type of sudden transition already exists in Balinese music. Again, doing away with a gradual transition is not in the interest of saving time, which in this case would only be a few seconds, but rather for dramatic intensity. An example of irama nyeklèk can be heard in Ldr Wirangrong [MK-CInt 2, 1:17:20].

Suwuk Mronggol—Sudden Halt

Mronggol in Javanese means “to break something off very suddenly,” while suwuk is “ending.” While tabrakan and irama nyeklèk were developed in the Humardani days and appear in the earliest padat scripts, suwuk mronggol is a technique developed more recently. A piece is simply broken off and stopped in its tracks, with none of the traditional types of ending preparations and signals, and with no regard for the traditional places a piece might end. Unlike the ditabrak technique, nothing else follows it; just dead silence. This practice is used for the most intense of dramatic effects. When Jarasandha finally encounters the father he has desperately been searching for, the accompanying piece comes to a sudden halt, resulting in a shocked silence on the screen as the two stare at each other [SRS-CInt 1, 52:23]. When Dursasana is chiding Karna for being so foolish as to have lost his weapon to Anoman, Karna whips around in fury to swear at him and Dursasana’s dancing to comes to a sudden halt, again, with piercing silence on the screen until Karna yells, “You bastard!” [MK-CInt 3, 35:15].

So, the shape and timing of tight-fitting gamelan accompaniment is thus achieved by choosing an appropriately shaped piece of appropriate length, and then further whittling it into shape using these techniques: ditabrak, irama nyeklèk, and suwuk mronggol.
Meaning

Avoiding Generic Function

A basic tenet of *iringan garap* is to prefer specific pieces rather than generic pieces and to emphasize meaning rather than tradition. In traditional, classical wayang, aside from full-fledged scenes, most of the action is held together with the previously referenced *gendhing lampah*: ayak-ayak, srepeg and sampak in each mode. When the gamelan follows the principles of *iringan garap*, there are many more varieties of ayak-ayak, srepeg, and sampak, depending on the content of the scene, and they become less generic in nature. Instead of the three classical Solonese ayak-ayak (one for each *pathet*), the recordings in this project present 12 different types: Ayak-ayak Mijil Layu for moments of despair, Ayak-ayak Anjangmas for any expanding any narration, Ayak-ayak Sinom for love scenes, Ayak-ayak Rangu-rangu for slightly cocky moments of victory, and so on. The recordings present 15 different types of srepeg, the classical three with the addition of: Tlutur, Kalatidha, Banyumas, Klatèn, Madiun, Galong Semarang, Manyuri, Grandhèl, Durma, Pinjalan, Galong Yogya and Aprèsiasi. There are 13 types of sampak in the recordings, the classical three and 10 others: Galongan, Tlutur, Gosongan, Mataraman, Kebumènan, Jèkdongan, Cekak, Orèk-orèk, Pi-Ma and Manyuri, which reflect varying degrees of tension, humor, sadness, foreignness, victory, or eeriness.

These choices are all based on instinct and *rasa*. In Purbo Asmoro’s 2014 debut of *Drupadi*, he searched his mind and heart for just the right selection to accompany the fateful dice game between the Pandhawa and Kurawa. As the devious Sangkuni rolls the dice each round, and the audience awaits the winner—well-aware of the heavy bets on both sides—he needed a piece with a suspenseful and yet tentative and mischievous feel. He settled on Srepeg Pinjalan in sléndro nem, with its syncopated rhythms. This has no connection to the way this piece is used in classical repertory, as a court dispersal piece. While most dhalang would simply use Srepeg, sléndro nem in between each bet, Purbo Asmoro searched for something that would support the moment musically, yet through a meaning that he himself infused the piece with, applying his own *rasa* (observation during *Drupadi* rehearsal, July 2014).
Regional Repertory Infused With Meaning
The iringan garap practitioner, following the lead of Nartosabdo decades ago, is also free to borrow from all regional repertory: Semarang, Banyumas, Kebumen, East Java, Yogyakarta, Bali—as long as these are explicitly referred to as imitations: Sampak Kebumènan, Srepeg Banyumasan, chorus Semarangan. The –an denotes “in the style of,” and is a caveat already existing but formalized by Rahayu Supanggah at ASKI a few decades ago, to acknowledge the approximation on the part of the musicians. Purbo Asmoro speaks very deliberately about his use of regional repertory and can always justify it. Mataram variants are used to accompany Kresna’s shenanigans as they have a mischievous, slightly humorous feel to him. “It always feels a little tongue-in-cheek to me” (interview 2010), while East Javanese pieces and sulukan might used for characters further flung geographically, such as Supala, Sangkuni, Jarasandha, and Jayatséna.

Meaning Via Historical Connotations
Purbo Asmoro creates meaning by taking advantage of the strong connotations some pieces have in the classical tradition. For example, Kabor is traditionally used to accompany the opening Astina Kingdom court scene. Dhalang debate whether Kabor is connected to Astina Kingdom in general, or to the reign of Duryudana specifically. However, the majority of dhalang in Solo today associate Kabor with Duryudana only, and use a different piece when Astina is ruled by Pandhu, Dhestarata, or Parikesit. Hence the connection between Duryudana and Kabor is strong. In Brubuh Astina (The Fall of Astina), Purbo Asmoro brings out a desperate Duryudana, livid about the death of his son Lesmana in the Baratayuda War, and at the end of his rope as to what strategy to try next. Many in the audience know that this is the last court scene (actually in a tent on the battlefield) ever to be conducted by Duryudana, as he will die later in the lakon. A strange yet familiar lancaran accompanies Duryudana’s fretful and uncontrolled emotion as he paces. Some in the audience may sing it to themselves, trying to figure out what it is. Perhaps 10 percent are visibly moved as, one by one, they realize it is Kabor, but set to a pulsating lancaran form, at breakneck speed, and full volume. The effect is powerful beyond description, due to the historical connotation of this piece.
A similar example is found in Purbo Asmoro’s 2014 version of *Kresna Duta* for the Tulungagung performance described in the beginning of this chapter. Early on in the prologue Kresna appears on the screen, followed by Semar, to the melody of a familiar, large-form *gendhing*, yet using an unfamiliar vocal chorus melody. Since 90 percent of pieces used for such interactions in prologues are short *ketawang*, this is unusual. As Semar’s advice to Kresna proceeds, some audience members may start to recognize the piece as *Ktw Gd Krawitan*, traditionally used for any court audience scene not set in the Pandhawa, Kurawa, or heavenly kingdoms. Of all the possibilities for kingdoms set to *Krawitan*, Kresna’s Dwarawati is by far the most common. As with the *Kabor* example, Purbo Asmoro is using the historical connotation of the piece to move audience members and underscore the connotation of the piece. Kresna’s final decision as king of Dwarawati will be whether or not to go forward as an ambassador, so a final rendering of *Krawitan*, as unusual as its use is in a prologue, and altered through the addition of a vocal chorus, infuses the scene with meaning.

In Purbo Asmoro’s 2013 fully *garaped* performance of the *madya* lakon *Sudarsana Kethok* (*Sudarsana Amputated*) Sudarsana’s father tries to inspire his son in his moment of need by taking him to a temple of their Pandhawa ancestors. While at the temple, Sudarsana’s father explains the philosophical basis of the Pandhawa’s leadership. The entire scene progresses to the accompaniment of *Kawit* in *pélog nem*. As with the above examples, it may take audience members a few minutes to make the connection since *Kawit* is usually in *sléndro*. But this is another potentially striking moment, with the weight of the Pandhawa ancestorship supported by the use of the Pandhawa signature piece, *Kawit*.

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14 *Wayang madya* is a type of *wayang kulit* developed by Mangkunegara IV in the late 1800s, which fictitiously connects the Pandawa lineage to the tales of Javanese kings up through about 1100. Almost completely extinct, *wayang madya* lakon were done in *sléndro* at the Mangkunegaran, and then imitated later in *pélog* at the Kraton Solo. A related form, *wayang gedhog*, was created earlier, by Pakubuwana III in the late 1700s, developed at the Kraton Solo, and entirely in *pélog*. *Wayang gedhog* lakon tell of the famed Prince Panji of East Java (interview with Bambang Suwarno, April 2009).

15 In fact, *Ktw Gd Kawit in pélog nem* is from the traditional accompaniment to *gedhog* and *madya* stories for the *Sabrangan Alus* scene, according to Purbo Asmoro, which was another reason for his choice (interview, June 2013). However, whether interpreted by audience members as traditional *madya* material, or *purwa* material altered in scale, the use of the piece to accompany a trip to the Pandhawa temple in this lakon is original to Purbo Asmoro.
Dedek Wahyudi tells of his visceral reaction to hearing *Lnc Troponbang* in new contexts during Purbo Asmoro’s performances, and how use of the piece somehow strengthens the significance of the moment solely due to the connotations it conjures up in the listeners’ ears from the classical context. Used in traditional troop departure scenes, Purbo Asmoro often chooses this *lancaran* for moments when there is an attack on a hero, but one that leads to the betterment of the character, such as in *Rama’s Crown* when the *garudha* bird tests Arjuna’s worth as a vessel of the boon [MK-CInt 5, 02:25]. Dedek observes that “we associate *Troponbang pélog* with danger and impending violence, yet it has a more cheery countenance when in *sléndro*. We could not write something new that would so quickly engender the same heroic associations for wayang-goers” (interview, 2007).

In Purbo Asmoro’s contemporary-interpretive version of *The Grand Offering of the Kings* the imposing antagonist Jarasandha enters his court in *Pathet Manyura* with a lively *kiprah* dance, full of arrogant show. For discriminating audience members there is an added dimension to the arrogance, if they recognize the accompaniment. The refined *mérong* (the A section, or opening) to *Gd Bang-bang Wétan* accompanies Jarasandha’s arrival, yet he appears to be oblivious to all etiquette, with the melody played in a breakneck speed, *kébar*, and never slowing down to its traditional tempo structure [SRS-CInt 4, 49:50]. This is yet another moment during which, for some of the viewers, an added layer of meaning enriches the scene, through historical connotations tied to the accompaniment. Purbo could have chosen any piece from any repertory for this moment. He chose the one piece commonly used for the final *Adegan Manyura*, which this scene is, yet in disguise—in *kébar* to mirror the arrogance and impetuousness of Jarasandha.

**Meaning Through Hierarchy and Poignancy**

When Purbo Asmoro crafts a performance with *iringan garap*, he considers which moments are particularly poignant or crucial and need special musical treatment. Thus the music supports a dramatic hierarchy in a manner unlike that of a classical performance. For example, in a classical wayang many repetitions of *sampak* will be capped off simply with one more *sampak* at the climactic moment, but Purbo Asmoro, while still using *sampak* for the many repetitions, will devise something
special for the climactic moment. This is different yet again from other *iringan garap* practitioners, who have so many newly composed elements, all rather fast and pulsating, that there is often no clear hierarchy (see Chapter 9). Purbo Asmoro creates this hierarchy by deliberately juxtaposing the classical with the new in a highly selective manner. In his performances, many small, poignant moments which would largely go unaccompanied in classical performances are supported with musical selections. Adding a musical element to a small moment enriches the emotional content of a scene and lends weight to the interaction. Both constructing hierarchy and enhancing poignancy are explored in more detail in Chapter 7, as these are defining concepts of Purbo Asmoro’s all-night *garapan* style across every element, not just the *iringan*.

*Sulukan in Garapan Performances*

The role, orchestration, and repertory of *sulukan* in all-night *garapan* performances by Purbo Asmoro differ considerably from classical treatment, and resemble *padat* performance practice. There are three types of *sulukan*: *pathetan*, *ada-ada* and *sendhon*. *Pathetan* are in general calm and stately melodies, and are accompanied by *gendèr*, *rebab*, *gambang* and *suling*. *Sendhon* are similar to *pathetan*, but are pensive, nostalgic and somewhat melancholy. They are accompanied by *gendèr*, *gambang* and *suling*. The absence of the *rebab*, along with an optional, kind of pulsating, fluttery *gendèr* technique known as *pipilan*, lends a lonely and sparse feeling to them. *Ada-ada* have more energy and tension and, with the exception of the very first *ada-ada* in a classical performance, are used in moments of anger, confusion and tumult. They are accompanied only by *gendèr*.

In all-night *garapan* performances, the factors of affect (*rasa*), timing, meaning, and contrast all come into play in the construction of *sulukan* for a performance. Borrowing from *padat* tradition, *sulukan* can be sung not only by the dhalang but also by either a single *gérong* singer, a *pesindhén*, or a *gérong* chorus. In the two *garapan* recordings being examined for this work, there are 43 distinct *sulukan* in total, using the following orchestration:
Ch 5: A New Vocabulary for Musical Accompaniment

- 28 *sulukan* sung by the dhalang (some of these are repeated a number of times)
- 14 *sulukan* sung by a gérong chorus (each a single incidence)
- 1 sung by a pesindhèn

Sometimes the decision of who will sing the *sulukan* is made on the basis of meaning (a pesindhèn because the story context is a woman speaking, for example), sometimes on the basis of affect and rasa (the male chorus singing the *sulukan* in rhythm fits a loud, furiously active section of the wayang), sometimes out of practicality (the dhalang wants the *sulukan* to be sung over an active battle scene but both his hands are busy and this affects his breath supply), and sometimes simply for contrast. One new technique from the 1970s is when the gérong chorus actually shouts out the final line of a *sulukan* for dramatic impact, such as the line from *Ada-ada Palaran, sléndro sanga*: “Her call as loud as a roaring lion!” used to illustrate Nyai Jara’s emotional intensity as she melds Brihadrata’s deformed babies together (SRS-CInt, 1 44:25).

The timing of the *sulukan* is also different from that in classical wayang. There tend to be fewer extended *pathetan* in particular, and the *sulukan* are in general shortened. While traditional practice included long (*ageng*), medium (*wantah*) and short (*jugag*) versions of many *pathetan*, garapan practitioners use mostly extra-short (*cekak*) versions. *Sulukan* can be *ditabrak* (either crashed into or crashed out of) at any moment.

In traditional practice, *sulukan* are mostly from *sekar ageng* or *macapat* poems from a relatively limited number of texts.16 Garapan practitioners take the texts of the *sulukan* from a wider variety of sources than in classical practice, such as the ones found in these recordings from *sekar ageng Kilayunedheng, sekar ageng Nagabanda*, or Ranggawarsita’s *Sekar Kalut*. Programmatic meaning is more important in *sulukan* and vocal texts than it was in classical practice, particularly at key dramatic moments. Purbo Asmoro composed a number of the texts for these recordings, and they support crucial moments in the dramatic structure (Purbo Asmoro, interview, October 2007):

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Choosing to latch on to meaning more directly in the *sulukan* adds weight and focus, and helps to squeeze the dramatic potential out of every moment. That’s what it’s all about in more contemporary performances. But traditionally this was not the purpose of the *sulukan*. I enjoy working in both realities.

Purbo Asmoro also employs a number of regional *sulukan* not used in classical practice, such as selections from Kebumèn, Banyumas, East Javanese Jèkdongan tradition, or Yogyanese *sulukan* that are lesser known in the Solo area.

**Ditumpangi—Riding Atop Of**

One new technique used in *padat* performances and developed at ASKI in the 1970s, is to add a vocal melody or *sulukan* (solo or chorus, male or female) over a piece of music, as a new way of supporting a chaotic, eerie mood. *Tumpang* is Javanese meaning “to put something on top of something else; to ride something.” *Ditumpangi* is the passive, meaning “to be topped with.” So, *Srepeg ditumpangi vokal Pangkur* would mean that *Srepeg* is being played with a *Pangkur* text overlaying it, two separate pieces occurring at the same time. In this practice, the piece of music and the text act as two separate entities that do not go together but are happening simultaneously. For example, when Arjuna views the destruction of natural disasters before him, *Sampak Tlutur* is played, with a *Pangkur Macapat* vocal text sung atop it, not in rhythm with it, and not matching it in pitch [MK-CInt 1, 08:00]. This reflects the aura of chaos happening on the screen, while at the same time the text holds a meaning important to the scene. Or in a death scene, a chant might be sung atop: not a matching vocal part but a separate one.

In summary, there is nothing simple about *iringan garap*. A wide range of repertory is chosen by *rasa* and instinct and with high regard for affect, dramatic need, and contrast. Then timing of the material is molded through new techniques, including techniques that apply to *sulukan*. Creating a kind of film score of this compilation, rehearsing it intensely, and then repeating it each time the same lakon is performed, would be relatively easy. Purbo Asmoro, however, prefers to remain spontaneous and insists that Mayangkara use everything they know about the new repertory and the lakon to, in the end, follow his lead, making each performance of the same lakon different.
Rehearsal and Communication

Rehearsal for Classical Style Performances
When Purbo Asmoro performs in classical style, he does not rehearse his gamelan troupe, Mayangkara. Rather, his musicians rely on their collective experience of classical wayang tradition, and spontaneously follow the dhalang’s various traditional, standard cues. Even when performing in classical style with a group of musicians other than Mayangkara, Purbo Asmoro does not hold rehearsals. Often he can be seen simply passing a scrap of paper to the rebab, kendhang and gendèr players (who in turn pass it to the vocalists) some 30 minutes before the performance, with scribbled notes alerting them to the major pieces he might use. More often than not, even this attempt at a plan changes at the last minute.

Most dhalang in the past did not hold rehearsals for a specific performance. They often supported a routine weekly or monthly rehearsal for their troupe, which the musicians would use to keep up their repertory, at times adding new elements to what they were collectively capable of under the direction of a revered musician among the group. The dhalang was usually not even present at these rehearsals, or was in and out, attending to other matters. Rehearsals for specific performances were unnecessary due to the elaborate cueing system and standard repertory. Setting the musical schema was in fact not particularly desirable anyway, as the spontaneity and inspiration of the dhalang was paramount. It was an important part of the dhalang’s mystique not to be too explicit. Also, it was often not even possible to hold rehearsals for specific performances, as the story was frequently decided upon between dhalang and sponsor, hours or even minutes before the performance.

Some current-day gamelan troupes will hold rehearsals for a specific classical performance coming up for a number of reasons: most musicians are more out of practice than in the past, it is less common to hold routine weekly rehearsals due to people’s time constraints, and usually the story is determined well in advance of the performance. Also, since strictly classical performances are somewhat rare now, celebrated troupes such as those of Anom Soeroto (ABDI), Manteb Soedharsono (Sanggar Bima), and Purbo Asmoro (Mayangkara) will often prepare diligently in order to showcase an all-out classical (klasik “deles”) performance. Similarly, the
performances of *Rama’s Crown* (palace-classical style) and *The Grand Offering of the Kings* (village-classical style) were rehearsed, even though Mayangkara does not generally do this, simply to ensure the best recordings possible for the purposes of documentation. Yet still, no notes or summary sheets of any kind were prepared by Purbo Asmoro for the musicians.

**Rehearsal for All-Night Garapan Performances**

Unlike classical wayang, *garapan* performances almost always require some sort of rehearsal. Whenever Purbo Asmoro develops an all-night *garapan* version of a particular lakon for the first time, he prepares a summary sheet for himself and the musicians to follow during the performance. He also holds at least one large-scale rehearsal. As mentioned in the opening of this chapter, the summary sheets start as handwritten notes (see Figures 5-5 and 5-6 on following page). During rehearsals the musicians collaborate among themselves and with the dhalang, changes and additions are made, and then the notes are rewritten, or sometimes typed up, to reflect the more-or-less final musical sequences.

For future performances of the same lakon (months, years or even decades later) Purbo Asmoro will pull out the original summary sheet from his well-organized records, and plan an abbreviated rehearsal to review and, inevitably, revise the musical treatment. Changes might be made to improve the original plan for variety, or because the performance venue or sponsor presents unique requirements.
Figure 5-5: Purbo Asmoro’s hand-written summary sheet for The Grand Offering of the Kings, all-night garapan style, version 1.

Figure 5-6: Purbo Asmoro’s final summary sheets, Rama’s Crown and The Grand Offering of the Kings.
Subtly Evolving Signaling Systems

With the development of a new vocabulary of gamelan accompaniment for all-night garapan performances, conventional signaling systems in wayang are evolving, although only subtly and to a limited extent. There are five traditional methods of communication from a dhalang to his musicians:

1. spoken literary riddles known as sasmita
2. rhythms the dhalang executes with a wooden hand-knocker (cempala) against a large wooden box to his left
3. percussive signals from a set of metal plates (keprak) played with the dhalang’s right foot against the wooden box
4. kombangan or other sung cues from the dhalang
5. the positioning or movement of wayang figures to signal certain intentions

Sasmita

Sasmita are short phrases, ranging from relatively direct requests to obscure riddles cloaked in poetic language. These are used to communicate what piece should be played to accompany a major court or hermitage scene. For example, kaya pandam kentir ing warih is a standard phrase used to signal the introduction to Gd Damarkeli kt 4 kr mg 8 [MK-Class 1, 1:08:05]. Pandam matches damar, being synonyms for an oil lantern, while kentir parallels keli as synonyms for something swept away by the current or in a flood.

In the two classical-style recordings documented in this work, there are a total of 16 instances of sasmita: six in The Grand Offering of the Kings and 10 in the more strictly palace-classical Rama’s Crown. This includes every court, hermitage or forest scene that was set to a gendhing.
In all-night garapan performances, Purbo Asmoro still believes in employing sasmita even though the pieces, for the most part, have been set and everyone is following the summary sheets (interview, May 2009).

I like to retain the technique of a literary invitation from the dhalang to the musicians for these scenes, when I can. I still need to signal the rebab, gendèr, or bonang player as to exactly when my narration is finished and I am ready for the piece to start. So why not keep the aesthetic of the literary riddle instead of just dhog-dhog dhog from the cempala? And, don’t forget, the sasmita is a way of confirming where we are in the summary sheet. Confirming that I haven’t changed my plan. And lastly, what if I have in fact changed my mind? So I like that my musicians still follow sasmita.

That being his ideal position on the subject, there are, in fact, no sasmita signals in the all-night garapan performances of either Rama’s Crown or The Grand Offering of the Kings. Every court, forest, or hermitage scene piece is part of a string of preset consecutive pieces, or uses a sung snippet from the vocal section or the dhalang himself as the introduction. However, I have witnessed Purbo Asmoro’s frequent use of sasmita in other garapan performances over the years, depending on how set the accompaniment is. Nevertheless, of the five traditional signaling systems, sasmita is definitely the one that falls into the most disuse in all-night garapan style, if for no other reason than so many of the transitions into court and hermitage scenes are musical segues and do not begin with a narrative passage.

Cempala and Keprak

Signals from the cempala alert the musicians, and most importantly the drummer, when to start, stop, speed up, slow down, and play softer (sirep) or return to a normal volume (udhar). A variety of short rhythmic signals from the cempala also serve as the buka to each gendhing lampah: ayak-ayak, srepeg, sampak, or kemuda. For other forms, a series of dhog-s from the cempala delineates the end of a sasmita and notifies the players that it is time for the introduction. A single dhog precedes a sulukan. Cadences in narrative passages are shaped with cempala punctuation, and the dhalang also communicates to the gendèr player how energetic the grimingan patterns should be via the density and volume of cempala taps during a narration.
Ch 5: A New Vocabulary for Musical Accompaniment

The *keprak* is arguably the most important and most idiomatic of the dhalang’s signaling equipment. With both hands quite often in use, as well as dialogue, narration, and *sulukan* to execute, a fully expressive cueing system from the foot is obviously the most practical. Every function of the *cempala* can be played from the *keprak* if the dhalang’s hands are busy. Signals from this set of plates also demarcate battle patterns, letting the drummer know how to support weighty moments and important moves. Hints from patterns on the *keprak* can also signal to the drummer the type of movement that will be used next, so that he can execute characteristic patterns accompanying the gestures and gait of characters.

The *cempala* and *keprak* are central to a dhalang’s craft (see Figure 5-7). Even with the advent of a new system of gamelan accompaniment, I have seen no changes in Purbo Asmoro’s *cempala-keprak* signals, and have never heard a commentator speak of a reduced role in this complex and fully embedded system as a result of the new *iringan* systems.

**Kombangan and Sung Cues**

Dhalang also use sung cues to signal transitions. *Kombangan* are single pitches or short phrases the dhalang sings while the gamelan is playing, which serve as an added dimension to the various melodic lines going on, with text taken from snippets of *sulukan* texts. Most of the time the *kombangan* simply embellish and enhance the melodic lines. But at key points, a *kombangan* can be used to signal the gamelan to move to a different section of a piece, such as the *ngelik*, or into a different piece, such as the characteristic *kombangan* that signal transition into an
ayak-ayak form. Although there is less use of decorative kombangan in garapan performances, due to the decrease in extended musical filler, the use of signaling kombangan has remained the same. The dhalang’s use of vocal introductions to ketawang, ladrang, and gendhing choruses has dramatically increased due to the increasing use of these forms. In a garapan performance where musicians are following a summary sheet, the pesindhèn, gérong section, or single male vocalist will normally sing these openings, but if they neglect to, the dhalang will step in and sing the introduction in order to retain the dramatic rhythm.

Signals From Wayang Figures
A final method of signaling is the use of the wayang figures themselves. During a battle, departure, or comic scene, characters appear on the screen with a purposeful posturing of the arms in a way that communicates to an experienced drummer exactly what accompanying pattern is desired. This type of signal has become even more prevalent in garapan performances. Purbo Asmoro’s musicians know that he will use repetitions of sampak for the initial battles in a final match-up but that for the final blows there will be something special. As the last battle approaches, the dhalang pauses for a moment and poises characters in a way that sends his drummer a visual cue. Another example of this is Purbo Asmoro’s preference for regional pieces as accompaniment for characters from more exotic origins than the Pandhawa and Kurawa. He will often position these characters in a deliberate way so as to communicate to his musicians, for example, “chose something regional,” and his experienced players will know the intent.

Mayangkara is expected to follow the story during a performance. Vocalists, as reflected in Suyatmi’s comment at the beginning of this chapter, cannot function professionally in garapan performances by simply following the summary sheet or they will miss crucial introductions and be late coming in to choruses. They need to follow key places where Purbo Asmoro has crafted special poignant moments and expects sustained dramatic tension without empty moments caused by confused singers. Pesindhèn, except for those invited only as attractions during the interludes, must know when a solo vocal introduction is approaching, as well as which one to choose. The gérong section is responsible for coming in at key moments with a wide
variety of choral *sulukan*. Purbo Asmoro rarely appears frustrated on stage, but it is when the singers come in late, miss a vocal introduction entirely, allow the dramatic thread to be dropped because of delay, or shuffle through their notation to no avail, that he has been known to give an exasperated look to his right.

Not only the singers but also *balungan* players have more responsibility in *garapan* performances than in classical. Aside from the regional selections mentioned, when they see the story approaching a particular compelling moment, they need to find non-verbal ways to communicate which *garap balungan* from the Mayangkara repertory could be used. Sometimes this is determined by the summary sheet. If not, one lead *balungan* player will either make a directional motion with his mallet indicating the topography of a characteristic snippet, hover over a determining opening pitch, play the first phrase alone, or, least successful of all, mouth a title or clue to the other musicians. The originating signal, in any case, will come from Purbo Asmoro positioning a key character in a purposeful way on the screen, a sort of metaphorical winking of his eye. Obviously this requires tremendous knowledge, experience, and flexibility on the part of the *balungan* section who, in classical style, do not have such a role. As in the *sasmita* to a *gendhing*, the choice might not have been what the dhalang had in mind, but everyone works with it. This situation only presents itself about once a performance, and only in performances where Mayangkara has not been highly rehearsed, but it occurs in the most climatic and dramatic of moments and is a crucial responsibility (see Figure 5-8).

In summary, the traditional signaling system has actually changed very little in Mayangkara’s *garapan* performances. Purbo Asmoro does not want his gamelan accompaniment to function as a through-composed film score. He retains *sasmita* as
much as he can, out of both aesthetic principle and also a desire to retain the potential spontaneity of the performance. The keprak and cempala signaling system is in place as it always has been. Kombangan functioning as signals are retained, and vocal-snippet introductions are far more prevalent in garapan performances. The greatest difference in signaling systems between classical and garapan performances is the high level of responsibility the senior vocalists, both male and female, have to follow the story, and the amount of both responsibility and authority a lead balungan player has to choose how the most dramatic of moments will be shaped musically. Ultimately, the path gamelan accompaniment takes is shaped by these signals, not the summary sheets.

Performances Without Mayangkara
When performing with musicians other than Mayangkara, Purbo Asmoro never presents complete iringan garap, but rather what he calls iringan setengah garap (halfway garaped) That’s not to say, however, that his performances as a whole in these cases are not considered all-night garapan style. The elements that depend entirely on his own abilities, and not those of the musicians, may very well be entirely garaped (recrafted scene structure, characterization, lakon interpretation, movement and narrative techniques). But they may rely on traditional repertory and treatment for the gamelan accompaniment. In this case, he need only scribble some notes to the gendèr, kendhang, or rebab player in order to get them started, and from there cue primarily traditional selections.

For example, he may ask them to start the performance with the gendèr introduction to Ldr Éling-éling. This is a classical piece in any gamelan musician’s repertory, but not one musicians would expect to use to begin a wayang. It can be used to craft a prologue. Or he may quickly teach the group a very simple and repetitive garap balungan (1613 1216 is one often used, from Subono’s Ayak Hong) to use as a backdrop to his opening. Depending on the group and how much he knows about their background and abilities, he may add some non-classical selections to the scribbled note, but he does not stray far from traditional repertory. Purbo Asmoro is well respected for his ability to be flexible in this way. He performs with beginners’ gamelan groups from Kalimantan to Sumatra to Seattle to the accompaniment of only ayak-ayak, srepeg, sampak and one or two traditional ladrang

180
and lancaran. Yet he will continue to employ entirely new concepts in the areas of lakon interpretation, scene structure, movement, characterization, and literary techniques.

An example can be seen on a scrap of paper where Purbo Asmoro scrawled a plan for a local gamelan troupe in Sragen to follow, when performing without any rehearsal in 2009 (see Figure 5-9). The musicians were an elderly, experienced, semi-professional group. He jotted these ideas down at 8:45 PM for a 9:00 PM start. The abbreviated language on the paper tells the group to start with Ldr Éling-éling in sléndro, which will be followed by repeated srepeg and sampak. It is unclear from the paper whether the gendhing lampah will be in manyura or nem in this opening, and it could go either way cued by the dhalang’s kombangan. Then the plan shows a moves to the pélog scale, an important red flashing light for the gendèr player—hence prominent on the plan with the word “pélog”—who should be the first one to switch, in order to cue the other musicians. Later, the group will need to be ready to play Ldr Diradameta in pélog (the rebab or gendèr player will probably want to mentally prepare for the introduction), followed by many repetitions of sampak (repetitions signaled by the use of the colon, as with Western score notation).

We can see that Purbo Asmoro’s original plan was to use Gd Udan Soré in sléndro for the opening court scene (jejer), but he decided against it, noting Ldr Gonjang Sèrèt instead. Gonjang Sèrèt is a much more popularly known piece than Gd Udan Soré, and also much shorter. Did Purbo Asmoro change his plans because he wasn’t sure if the musicians could handle Udan Soré with no notation and no rehearsal, especially the vocalists, since this would have been done with vocal
chorus, Nartosabdo style? Or did he just want a shorter selection? Or was there was something in the vocal text or dramatic feel of Gonjang Sèrèt that made it more appropriate? It turns out it was none of the above (interview, May 2009), but rather it was because of the nature of his preferred transition from sampak in pélog to Udan Soré in sléndro, which is complex and needs rehearsal and coordination. Gonjang Sèrèt would simply involve sampak ending in pélog, and then Purbo Asmoro singing a sléndro vocal introduction to Gonjang Sèrèt, putting the responsibility on him for the transition. The word jejer though, is the most telling word on the entire paper, as from that the musicians immediately knew that Purbo Asmoro would be performing a prologue, and not starting with a court audience scene.

Musicians could infer, from conventional practice, that “Balabak” (Ldr Balabak in pélog by Nartosabdo) would be used for dispersal of the court, and Ldr Nusantara, pélog, would open the Limbukan scene. “Lc Gambuh” refers to a troop departure piece, Lancaran Gambuh in pélog, which would follow Limbukan. Evidently at this point, which would be about 12:45 AM, Purbo Asmoro planned to use simple, common pieces, needing no more special notes.

**Padat Performances**

*Padat* performances require intense rehearsal. In fact, *padat* performances theoretically require the most rehearsal of all, since all dramatic elements are densely packed, no time is “wasted,” and transitions are fast-paced and tight with cueing systems pared down to a bare minimum. When musicians at ISI Surakarta are preparing a *padat* performance, they hold some 20-30 rehearsals for a 45-minute performance. Again, Purbo Asmoro avoids too many rehearsals when preparing for all-night performances, but has often commented that *padat* performances do need to be tightly orchestrated and require the most rehearsal of anything. From the summary sheets for the two *padat* performances in this documentation (see Figure 5-10), we can see that the number of special pieces is basically the same in these two-hour performances as in the all-night performances.
Ch 5: A New Vocabulary for Musical Accompaniment

Despite spending so many pages on the new vocabulary of gamelan accompaniment before examining other elements, and despite the fact that Purbo Asmoro himself designs the gamelan accompaniment early in the process of planning a performance, this element is not in fact the determining factor for him, in defining a performance as garapan. As described above, Purbo Asmoro has executed what he would refer to as garapan performances with groups from Balikpapan to Seattle with the accompaniment of barely more than the most basic of gendhing lampah. As long as the story has been consciously crafted to focus on a theme or conflict, and as long as scene structure, narration, movement techniques and characterization have been rethought beyond the constraints of traditional interpretation, rethinking of the

Iringan Not the Determining Factor

Figure 5-10: Purbo Asmoro’s summary sheets for the Lontar project padat performances of Rama’s Crown (left) on 1 June 2008, and The Grand Offering of the Kings (right) on 31 May 2008, at Dharmawangsa Hotel in Jakarta.
accompaniment can be compromised or sacrificed if the gamelan troupe is of limited ability. Purbo Asmoro still refers to these performances as garapan.

However, non-traditional gamelan accompaniment seems to be the deciding factor in what is considered garapan by much of the public and many beginning dhalang. Although the initial padat scripts employed mostly traditional accompaniment, the opposite seems to be more prevalent in current practice, with a general consensus that the term garapan, first and foremost, relates to the gamelan accompaniment. In fact, many observers judge a performance as garapan solely on the basis of unusual gamelan accompaniment, even if the dhalang has not reworked any of the other elements. As we have seen in this chapter, and will see in Chapters 6–8, Purbo Asmoro has different standards for himself (interview, 2009):

It’s not a garapan performance just because it opens with something other than a classical gendhing and is full of startling, new accompaniment choices. What is important is that every single dramatic element of the performance has been conceptualized anew by the dhalang, based on the idea of focusing in on theme, character and message. Conceptualization and special crafting of every element is the key. And that can be done to the accompaniment of Ayak-ayak frankly, although of course ideally the iringan has to be conceptualized anew as well.