

Jokasta: transnational performance by Balinese artists

Jokasta is a new creation (*kreasi baru*) by the Balinese choreographer and dancer Ni Madé Pujawati and the Balinese composer I Nengah Susila. It was performed by the London-based Gamelan Lila Cita and Lila Bhawa Dancers in October and November 2012. This article by **Margaret Coldiron** is part of an ongoing study of the transnational and transcultural work of these Southeast Asian artists.



Ni Madé Pujawati in *Oleg Tamulilingan*
(photograph: Mark Hobart)

The *dramatari* *Jokasta* dance drama is based on the ancient Greek tragedy of *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the story of a Theban king who unwittingly killed his father and married his mother. This new interpretation, however, initiates the story from the point of view of Oedipus' wife, Jokasta.

Without question, the myth of Oedipus has had a global impact, not just as a result of Freud's psychological theories, but because its tropes of broken taboos and implacable fate resonate across cultures. However, it may be worth asking whether the drama really has a "universal" appeal, or if the use of such a potent myth from European civilisation is just a clever sales gimmick for today's globalised performance market? Does transcultural and transnational work of this sort strengthen or dilute the elements that are brought together in this way? Can artists from outside a culture bring something to the interpretation of such a potent narrative that can make an old story new, even for the 'parent' culture? Finally, how do diasporic and cosmopolitan artists find accommodation between their own traditions and those of cultures they inhabit, and what adjustments must be made with work presented in different cultural environments?



Ni Madé Pujawati as *Candra Kirana*
(photograph: Catherine Diamond)

Background

Traveling to London since 2003, the Balinese composer I Nengah Susila has been creating new work in collaboration with the British musicians of Gamelan Lila Cita and the London-based Balinese dancer and choreographer Ni Madé Pujawati. The fruits of their collaborations include the story dances *Jayaprana*¹ (2003) and *Candra Kirana*² (2006) which have been performed in a variety of contexts in Britain, the United States, and Indonesia (Bali). Their third collaboration, *Jokasta*, had its premiere at the Indonesia Kontemporar Festival in London in

October 2012 accompanied by the *gambelan*³ *semar pegulingan saih pitu*, and was performed again in November 2012 at the London Symphony Orchestra's Jerwood concert hall accompanied by the *gambelan semaradana*.⁴ Whereas previous works created by Susila and Pujawati

¹ Based on an important Balinese legend of the orphan Jayaprana, who is adopted by the king of Kalianget and brought up at court. He is a loyal servant of the king but when his benefactor sees the beautiful village girl with whom Jayaprana has fallen in love (Layon Sari), he is inflamed with desire and arranges to have Jayaprana killed. When the deed is done, all nature cries out in protest and Layon Sari, prisoner of the court, feels the loss of Jayaprana. When the king tries to take his "prize", she takes his kris and commits suicide.

² The story is taken from the adventures of Panji, legendary prince of East Java, and there are a number of variations. In this one, Candra Kirana, princess of Daha, is engaged to be married to Panji, but on their wedding day she learns that he plans to marry someone else. Broken-hearted, she feels at first that she cannot go on, but she musters her strength and decides to dress as a man to follow Panji. She presents herself at the court of Panji's new love, and makes an extraordinary impression. This rival princess falls in love with Candra Kirana in her male garb, and the piece finishes with Candra Kirana haughtily rejecting the princess's advances.

³ Spelling of gamelan in the Balinese lanaguage. The gamelan is a traditional instrumental ensemble of Indonesia.

⁴ This gamelan, named *Semara Wertih* (meaning 'pure, sincere desire') was commissioned by the London Symphony Orchestra in 2003, and created by the well-known Balinese gamelan maker I Madé Gabeleran of Blahbatuh, Gianyar, Bali. It is currently the only *gamelan semaradana* in London, and is used as part of the education and community programme for 'LSO Discovery' based at the St. Luke's Music Education Centre.

were based on well-known stories in the Balinese repertoire, *Jokasta* is the first collaboration of these artists using a European story.

The Creators

I Nengah Susila comes from a family of musicians in the village of Batubulan in south Bali. The composer was primarily trained in the traditional pattern, learning by imitation together with members of his family and the gamelan groups of his *banjar*.⁵ He initially trained as a school teacher, and only after that did he study music formally at the Institute of Indonesian Arts⁶ in Denpasar, but by this time he was already an experienced and accomplished professional musician. In 2003, he was brought to London under the auspices of an Arts and Humanities Research Board project on cross-cultural music and dance, and was commissioned to write a traditional piece for *gamelan semar pegulingan* to be choreographed by Ni Madé Pujawati. It was his first visit to Europe, and he had never studied Western music or notation.

Ni Madé Pujawati was born in the Balinese village of Tegallalang, just north of the so-called ‘arts centre’ of Ubud, and learned to dance in the traditional manner from childhood. She later studied more formally, first at the high school for performing arts (KOKAR), and later at the Institute of Indonesian Arts, focusing on training for *arja* (sometimes referred to as “Balinese Opera”). Pujawati first visited London in 2000, and worked with Gamelan Lila Cita, and in 2001 she settled in the UK permanently. She is artistic director of Lila Bhawa Balinese Dance Troupe and dancer-in-residence at Gamelan Lila Cita. Since settling in Britain, she has spent a few weeks each year studying Javanese dance in Jogjakarta. Apart

⁵The *banjar* is a local neighbourhood association that deals with the practicalities of activities, including music and dance performances for civic and religious events. Interestingly, Susila lives in the banjar Pagoetan, where Beryl de Zoete and Walter Spies did much of their ground-breaking research on Balinese dance and drama in the 1930s.

⁶It was then known as STSI, *Sekola Tinggi Seni Indonesia*.

from her regular performances of Balinese dance for Lila Cita, she also performs with Javanese gamelans throughout the UK and Europe. Since 2007, Pujawati has been working with the London-born Singaporean choreographer Hi Ching as well as the Foundation for Indian Performing Arts, performing in contemporary pieces with a range of other Asian dancers and in a number of dance styles.

Gamelan Lila Cita is the UK's most significant Balinese gamelan ensemble, which began playing Balinese *gambelan angklung* called *Kembang Kirang*⁷ in 1992, and changed its name when it acquired a *gambelan gong kebyar* in 1999. This ensemble of musicians has grown and developed over the past twenty years, drawing new members from the gamelan music courses at the School of Oriental and African Studies, City University, and from the Community Gamelan group at the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO)'s St. Luke's education and outreach centre. The group performs regularly on four different gamelans: the eponymous 5-tone *gong kebyar*, the 4-tone *angklung*, the LSO's 7-tone *semaradana*, the traditional and courtly *semar pegulingan saih pitu*, for which the pieces discussed here were initially composed. In 2006, the group was invited to perform at the Bali Arts Festival, and presented a programme that included the first two collaborations between Susila and Pujawati (*Jayaprana* and *Candra Kirana*).

At the beginning, only a few members of Lila Cita had ever been to Bali, and most were musicians entirely rooted in Western music and notation. However, since collaborations with Susila began in 2003, several Lila Cita members have gone to study gamelan music in Bali either on *dharmasiswa* scholarships (non-degree programmes) sponsored by the Indonesian government, or on postgraduate field research. The group's repertoire is wide-ranging, from traditional 'classics' of court and temple music and *gong kebyar* to new creations,

⁷ The name means, literally, missing flower, since this traditional Balinese *angklung* has only four tones, rather than the five tones of the standard *slendro* scale.

both by Susila and by British composers⁸ as well as arrangements of contemporary Western music, notably John Adams' *A Short Ride in a Fast Machine*.

So, although *Jokasta* was created by two Balinese artists, both were working outside Bali in a European milieu, and their aim was to create something that would deal with a classic story accessible to a non-Balinese audience. Yet *Jokasta* is not, strictly speaking, an 'intercultural work, if we understand 'intercultural' by Patrice Pavis' (1996) definition as "hybrid forms drawing upon a more or less conscious and voluntary mixing of performance traditions traceable to distinct cultural areas," which usually constitute the adaptation or appropriation of non-Western forms by mostly western artists for Western audiences.⁹ The author suggests instead that this piece falls more naturally under the category of the *transcultural*, which, by Pavis' definition, "transcends particular cultures on behalf of a universality of the human condition" (Pavis 1996, p. 6). The piece is, without question, cast in a thoroughly Balinese style but has at its heart a human story that is comprehensible across cultures.



Ni Madé Pujawati and Melanie Knowles in Jayaprana at the Bali Arts Festival (Pesta Kesenian Bali) 2006 (photograph: Catherine Diamond)

⁸ The composer Nye Parry has been commissioned to create two pieces: *Suara Lila Cita*, which has been performed in the UK and at the Bali Arts Festival, and *On Bunhill Row*, for gamelan and Western instruments (harp, flute and viola, inspired by the Debussy Trio). Andy Channing, leader of the group, arranged his piece "Pig in the Kraton" for both *gong kebyar* and *semar pegulingan*, and it proves a perennial favourite.

⁹ Pavis' examples include works by Julie Taylor and John Emigh, that adapt the Balinese traditions in interpreting Western stories for American audiences (Pavis 1996: 8).

Development

Jokasta took a long time in development. Susila and Pujawati first began discussing a collaboration on the subject of the Oedipus story after they had both taken part in *Prabu Adipusengara*, an adaptation of the Oedipus story in the style of Balinese *arja* (a local genre of dance



Oedipus blinds himself
(photograph: Margaret Coldiron)

drama) by the dancer and choreographer I Wayan Dibia¹⁰ that toured northeastern United States in 2006, and was subsequently performed in Bali in 2007. Susila's new piece on the subject was composed during his London residency in early 2008, but the choreography only emerged in the autumn of 2012, for reasons that will be discussed below. Since neither Pujawati nor Susila knew *Oedipus* from the Greek original, their initial conceptualisation of the story was derived almost entirely from Professor Dibia's adaptation. Dibia, on the other hand, was very familiar with Sophocles' tragedy, which he first encountered while a student at UCLA in the early 1980s in an undergraduate survey

course he took to help him to become familiar with the Western theatre repertoire.¹¹ A comparison of Sophocles' play and Dibia's adaptation may help to explain the interpretive choices taken in the development of *Jokasta*.

Oedipus and Adipusengara

Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* is a seminal text in European dramatic literature. In it, the tyrant Oedipus, who has saved Thebes from the curse of the Sphinx, consults an oracle to find the cause of the plague that is devastating the city. The oracle reports that the plague can be stopped

¹⁰ Professor Dibia is a former rector and currently senior professor of performing arts at Institute Seni Indonesia in Denpasar.

¹¹ Dibia 2012, p. 479.

only if the murderer of the former king, Laius, is revealed. Oedipus vows to expose the culprit, but through the course of the play discovers that he, himself, is the murderer.¹² Just as was predicted by an oracle at his birth, he has unwittingly murdered his father and married his mother. Jokasta, his wife, realises the truth before Oedipus does and hangs herself. When Oedipus at last understands that he has not escaped his fate, he blinds himself and departs into exile.

In *Prabu Adipusengara*, Dibia has made a number of changes in the way the story is told in order to make it fit the traditional *arja* style, but he also departs from traditional *arja* by leaving out some characters that are usually considered central to the form.¹³ Names of characters and locations were also changed to make them seem more familiar to Balinese audiences¹⁴ and the structure of the scenario followed the pattern of Balinese *arja*, rather than Greek tragedy. Thus, whereas Sophocles' play concentrates on the protagonist, Oedipus, the construction of traditional *arja* required that the first scene feature the *galuh* (refined princess) in conversation with the *condong*, her lady-in-waiting. So the *condong* appears first expressing her concern about her mistress's distress. Jokasta, here

¹² The story of Oedipus' past is revealed by two messengers, the second a shepherd. The first messenger comes from Corinth to report that Oedipus has become king of that land upon the death of Polybus, whom Oedipus believed was his father. However, the messenger says that Oedipus was not the natural son of Polybus but was instead found on the mountainside with his ankles pierced and adopted by the king. The shepherd, who is the second messenger, reveals that he was given that child by Laius and Jokasta to expose on Mount Kithairon, but took pity on him and gave him to his colleague from Corinth. Thus Oedipus comes to realise that the oracle he and his real parents tried to avoid has come to pass. He murdered King Laius on the road to Thebes and, on winning the throne and the queen, married his own mother.

¹³ "There are only nine characters as opposed to the traditional twelve. I omitted the Mother Queen, her servant, and her daughter the ugly princess. There are many jokes associated with these characters and by cutting them [out] I hoped to intensify the tragedy." (Dibia quoted in Kremer 2007, p. 11).

¹⁴ The city of Thebes is called Tibuwana in this version; the seer Tiresias becomes Brahmana Tulusarsa; and Kreon, brother of Jokasta, is called Patih Kriyangga. (Kremer, 2007 pp. 6-8)

called Diah Yadnyawati,¹⁵ appears lamenting “the changes that have taken place in the kingdom and in the palace, where the king seems transformed from his former calm and wise self and has taken to being suspicious” (Kremer 2007, p. 6). This sombre opening is unusual for *arja*, but Dibia wanted to create the atmosphere of tragedy from the outset. Traditionally, the *galuh* sings in *kawi*, a form of Javanised Sanskrit not widely comprehensible to ordinary Balinese, and her words are translated/paraphrased for the audience by the *condong*. On the American tour, however, Pujawati sang an English translation of the *galuh*’s song, making the drama (and the character) more comprehensible to the local audience (Pujawati 2012).

When the *galuh* and *condong* exit, the following scene brings on Penasar Kelihan and Penasar Cenikan, two palace servants (acting as storytellers in Balinese traditional dance drama), who are “fulfilling the role of the chorus from Sophocles” (Kremer 2007, p. 7). They sing of the relationship between the king, Prabu Adipusengara, and his wife:

“King Adhipusengara and Queen Yadhyawati are entering their bedroom to show their affection for each other. They are like the gods Ratih and Semara. [...] The queen is smiling at the king and her slim body is shaking. Her soft glances are like a light cloud waiting for the moon to strike its heart” (Kremer 2007, pp. 6-7).

After the two palace servants, *Penasars*, have discussed the problems facing Thebes, the *mantri buduh*, Prabu Adipusengara¹⁶ enters. In traditional *arja*, this character is something of a figure of fun, but this would not be appropriate to a tragedy, as Dibia explained:

¹⁵ “Dibia chose the name Diah Yadnyawati as it means a woman who likes to make sacrifices, and has the ability to see problems in life. Her name also indicates that she is interested in the occult.” (Kremer, 2007, p. 6) The word *yadnya* refers to life-cycle rituals in Balinese Hindu Buddhist religious practice.

¹⁶ The name, like that of Diah Yadnyawati, gives an indication of the character and his place in the story: “Prabu means king, Adhi means great, and Pusengara means chaotic life.” (Kremer 2007, p. 7) Dibia sought to make the names meaningful for a Balinese audience but recognisable for an international audience as well. (Kremer 2007, p. 10)

“Traditionally the king is crazy and coarse but that would not serve the text in *Adhipusengara*. So, the *Penasars* were not able to make fools of the king but needed to treat him with more dignity” (quoted in Kremer 2007, p. 11).

Thus Prabu Adipusengara is given an interpretation more in keeping with a Greek tragic figure, but audiences unfamiliar with the conventions of *arja* would be surprised to see that the role is taken by a woman, which is a significant departure from the conventional staging of Greek tragedy.

Dibia preserves the role of Tiresias, the seer, whose part is pivotal in Sophocles’ play, but in Dibia’s version he has many comic moments related to his blindness, very much in keeping with traditional *arja*, but unusual in Greek tragedy.¹⁷ The role of Kreon, brother of Jokasta, whom Oedipus accuses of trying to de-stabilise his rule, is given to the *mantri manis* (literally ‘sweet prince’ and also played by a woman). However, rather than being in opposition to the *mantri buduh* (as would be the case in a standard *arja* performance) here the character functions as *Patih* or Prime Minister and advisor to the king. The roles of the messengers and shepherds are combined into a single character but apart from these deviations in character types and order of events, the plot of *Prabu Adipusengara* follows that of the Greek original.

Interestingly, Dibia’s decision to adapt Sophocles’ play was not taken to appeal to an American audience with a classic Western text (and it must be admitted that Greek tragedy is rarely a crowd-puller). Dibia’s interest in the play had to do with its larger issues, beyond the taboos of incest and patricide, focusing instead on the protagonist’s pursuit of truth and justice, which he hoped would prove meaningful for his Balinese audience.

“There are many themes in the Greek drama, such as the power of the gods and man’s ability to consult them, karma, fate, oracles, going to a healer and plague that are recognizable to Balinese audiences as they

¹⁷ “Cokorda Raka Tisnu plays Tuluarsa with some comic moments related to his blindness. He falls over one *Penasar*, and nearly trips over the other until the *Penasar* points him toward the curtain for his exit.” (Kremer 2007, p. 8)

appear in Balinese stories. This familiarity made it an easy choice to adapt *Oedipus* to Balinese opera as I was fairly certain the play would resonate with the audience. I also see *Oedipus* as a play about discovery and truth. These are crucial topics of concern that Indonesia is grappling with today. People speak about truth but are hiding something under a nice exterior. Politicians hide facts and yet blame others for not doing the right job. Oedipus proclaims he will make the person who is responsible for the plague pay. When he discovers his own guilt he has no choice but to punish himself and take his eyeballs out. It is rare in modern life that someone chooses to pay for his mistakes or the wrong doing that endangers his country. I was compelled to share this story with our constituency to point out corruption. I hoped the story would function as a therapy for social life. I was also intrigued to make a new story for the traditional classical form of *arja*.” (Quoted in Kremer 2007, p. 10)

The political dimensions of this interpretation are unlikely to have been apparent to its American audience, especially since it was marketed primarily as a rare opportunity to encounter Balinese *arja* performance, rather than as an intercultural theatrical event. For the American tour of *Prabu Adipusengara*, Ni Madé Pujawati played Diah Yadnyawati/Jokasta, and Susila took the role of Penasar Cenikan. The re-ordering of events in Dibia’s version with its initial emphasis on the Queen’s distress may account for the shift in focus from Oedipus to Jokasta in the work by Susila and Pujawati. Although they did not share Dibia’s sense of the contemporary political resonances of the story, both connected with the human tragedy of well-meaning individuals who become victims of fate.

Developing *Jokasta*

When Susila arrived in London in January 2008, he wanted to create a new dance piece for Lila Cita and Lila Bhawa that would be different from the usual *semar pegulingan* repertoire yet would still adhere to classical principles (Coldiron and Jimenez 2008, p. 8). He was interested in trying his hand at Western drama and settled on *Oedipus* as a suitable subject. The story of the original Greek drama was outlined to him, and he set to

work. During much of this period, Pujawati was visiting her family in Bali, so the two discussed aspects of the construction of the piece via e-mail. Since Pujawati was not in a position to hear the music as the composition began to unfold, she was unable to exercise any artistic or editorial direction regarding the final product, as she had done in previous collaborations with Susila. As a result, the musical composition presented certain choreographic challenges that could not be immediately resolved. The difficulty was finding a choreographic mode for the piece that would be appropriate for the character of Jokasta, “an older, but still young-looking woman” (Pujawati 2012). Moreover, at the time the Lila Bhawa troupe had no male dancers and, although it is typical for young men to be played by cross-dressing female dancers, Pujawati felt strongly that the nature of the story required an attractive young man to play the role of Oedipus. After a great deal of experimentation, she determined that



Oedipus (I Ketut Asmara) sees Jokasta (Ni Madé Pujawati)
(photograph: Margaret Coldiron)

the movement vocabulary of *oleg tamulilingan*¹⁸ would fit best: “because Jokasta is a ‘sexy woman’ and *oleg* movements are sexy in the movements of hips and torso.” Once the problem of finding the right movement vocabulary and a dancer to play Oedipus had been overcome, the rest of the choreography developed quickly.¹⁹

The Music and the Story

Traditional Balinese music generally follows a tripartite structure:

“The classical three-movement form of a musical composition is likened to the human body: its opening section (*kawitan*) is considered to be the head, its middle section (*pangawak*) the torso or ‘main body,’ and the final section (*pangacet*) the feet” (Gold 2005, p. 126).

In this form, the opening section is short and quick; the main body of the piece, *pangawak*, is slower, metrically regular and may develop melodies and themes; the final section is usually fast, with increasing speed as it moves to the climax and ends (Gold 2005, p. 127). However, in *kreasi baru* the structure can “become expanded to four or five sections. Each section has become extended [...] with extensive transitional passages” (Gold 2005, p. 141), which is the case with Susila’s *Jokasta*. The first section follows a fairly conventional pattern for *kawitan* in dance pieces, and as the piece develops, the conventional structure gives way to some startling innovations that heighten the drama. There are five clear sections, and the final movement, after Oedipus is blinded, is slow and dream-like.

¹⁸ Oleg Tamulilingan is a rare duet for a male and a female dancer, and was conceived entirely to appeal to Western audiences. It was created for a 1952 tour of Balinese musicians and dancers to Britain and the US. See Bandem and de Boer 1995, p. 79 and Coast 1953 pp. 100-110.

¹⁹ The role of Jokasta was originally danced by Melanie Montcrieff, a trained dancer in her early 40s, who has studied Balinese and Javanese dance since the early 1990s, and Oedipus was danced by Pujawati’s brother, I Ketut Asmara who is in his early 30s. This balance of ages seemed appropriate to Pujawati, though she felt that Oedipus should look very obviously younger, perhaps in his late teens. Further biographical details are available at <http://www.lilacita.com/2005/09/member-profiles.html>

Pujawati's experience in the role of Jokasta/Diah Yadnyawati undoubtedly influenced the way she approached the story when she choreographed the piece (Pujawati 2012). She, like Dibia, felt that "it was necessary that Queen Jocasta move and look like a woman who can dominate or manipulate a king. She needed to appear older or at least the same age as the king." (Dibia, quoted in Kremer 2007, p. 11). However, *Prabu Adipusengara* was not the only story to influence Pujawati's interpretation. She was also struck by the similarity of the story to the Indonesian film *Sangkuriang*, based on a Sundanese legend. Here is how Pujawati described the plot to the author:



Romance between Oedipus (I Ketut Asmara) and Jokasta (Ni Madé Pujawati)
(photograph: Margaret Coldiron)

"It's a mother and son story. She is a princess, pregnant by 'orang biasa' [a commoner]. Her father, the king, exiles her to the forest and curses her lover to transform into a dog. The woman and dog live happily together and the child, when born, doesn't know that the dog is his father. When out hunting wild boar one day, the boy aimed at the boar but accidentally killed the dog. The boy brings the dog's heart home and the mother becomes angry, hits him on the head and cuts him. The boy runs away. Because she eats no meat, the mother remains very young-looking. Eventually a man comes into the forest, meets her and they are attracted to one another. One day, when he is asleep in her lap, she is stroking his hair [and] she finds the scar on his head. She asks him where it came from and he explains that his mother hit him, so she realizes this is her son. She doesn't reveal her secret but tells him that she will marry him only if he is able to build a boat between sunset and sunrise. She secretly observes him and is alarmed to see that he has nearly completed the boat before dawn so she sets the grass on fire and this somehow upsets his building and he is unable to finish. The boat

becomes Tangkuban Perahu – a mountain with what looks like an overturned boat at the top” (Pujawati 2012).²⁰

This essential element of recognition, which utterly transforms the relationship, was central to Pujawati’s vision of the piece. She conceived of the dance as a simple duet, omitting all the other characters besides Jokasta and Oedipus, and focusing only on their relationship. Oedipus as king or tyrant, his *hubris*, and any political or social issues that Sophocles’ text might touch upon are set aside; *Jokasta* became a story of love and loss. However, this narrow focus left some gaps in the storytelling. These might not present difficulties for a Balinese audience, who are accustomed to sudden jumps of time and place in traditional dance-dramas because the general outline of traditional stories are already very familiar; however, for a European audience, to tell the story of Oedipus and Jokasta without any additional characters requires finding some physical sign by which Jokasta could recognise her son. The scar that Oedipus bears from his exposure on the mountain (Oedipus literally means ‘pierced foot’) served this purpose perfectly in this dance-drama. In Pujawati’s interpretation, Jokasta has a disturbing dream about her lost child, and when she wakes she rather idly looks for a distinguishing mark on the body of her husband, but when she sees it she is horrified. She realises in an instant that this is her son, and the enormity of her unwitting sin drives her to suicide.

Structure of the Dance Drama

The contour of the story is determined by the structure of the music, and this piece falls into five clearly-defined sections:

1. *Papeson*: After a brief bright and quick *kawitan*, the tempo slows slightly and follows a steady rhythm. This section establishes the dance style. In classical *legong* (a popular form of Balinese dance characterized by intricate finger movements, complicated footwork,

²⁰ Pujawati’s description is at odds with both the film and the legend, but her own remembered version of the story is important because it is this – however inaccurate – that influenced the development of *Jokasta*. The film is viewable on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1b2WadOzHuY>.

and expressive gestures and facial expressions), the first section is pure dance with no relationship to the plot, but in this piece it is used to establish Jokasta's character and begins her story: she is a beautiful and refined woman waiting for her husband's return. At the end of this section, Jokasta receives word that her husband (Liaus) has been killed on the road home, and there is a transition to a slower tempo.

2. *Pangawak* (slow movement): Jokasta grieves for her husband. Oedipus enters and observes Jokasta for a time before there is a transition to a brighter, faster tempo.
3. *Pangacet* ('romance'): Oedipus woos Jokasta. At first, she rejects his advances, but is gradually won over. This section has a bright, quick tempo.
4. This is a section in a *kreasi baru* where material can be added to suit the story, and there is some freedom for both composition and choreography. In this piece, the material moves through several moods in succession.
 - Jokasta and Oedipus are asleep, the music is slow, calm, and steady but shortly, Jokasta awakes from a disturbing dream, and rises.
 - She looks at Oedipus' feet, sees the marks where his feet were bound, and remembers her first child, sent to be exposed on the mountain. She realises that this is her child, now grown. At first, she tries to deny what she has seen but looks again and knows it to be true.
 - She becomes agitated as the tempo of the music increases. She writes a suicide note, and then stabs herself. The music breaks and resumes at a slow, but rapidly accelerating tempo.
 - Oedipus wakes and looks for his wife. He rises, finds the suicide note, and is distraught. The music accelerates to a very quick pace as he pulls out his *kris* (dagger associated with cultural symbols), and uses it to slash his eyes. The music builds to a climax.

5. Conclusion: The mood breaks, the tempo of the music slows dramatically with a quiet, gentle, and steady theme as Oedipus rises, becomes aware of his blindness, finds a stick to help guide him as he slowly exits.

The final section presents the greatest departure from standard Balinese dance compositions. Normally, the last section of a dance piece accelerates to a very brisk tempo for a spectacular and startling finale, but here the music actually slows down; there is a delicate melody but the mood is somber, and the piece finishes with a *ritardando* (gradual slowing of tempo) and a quiet gong stroke. When the piece was being composed, it was suggested that some narration might be inserted at this point, to be taken from the final chorus of the play:

There goes Oedipus–
he was the man who was able
to answer the riddle proposed by the Sphinx.
Mighty Oedipus–
he was an object of envy
to all for his fortune and fame.
There goes Oedipus–
proof that none of us mortals
can truly be thought of as happy
until he is granted deliverance from life,
until he is dead
and must suffer no more (Berkowitz and Brunner 1970, p. 33)

Once the choreography had been completed, however, this was felt to be unnecessary and intrusive. The poignancy of Oedipus' slow and halting exit with the quiet accompaniment of the *semar pegulingan* was sufficiently moving that the addition of text seemed superfluous.

The piece was costumed in a fashion that is intended to indicate *Bali kuno* (old/ancient Bali) so that Jokasta wears an elaborate *kain* (clothe) with a train that is in the style of Javanese *bedaya* dancers. There is no attempt to create a sense of ancient Greece – the tragedy has become a Balinese love story.

Transcultural Performance

The author contends that these re-interpretations of the Oedipus story do not diminish the original, but stand on their own as works of art in their own right. American audiences for *Prabu Adipusengara* were somewhat surprised by the comic elements that emerged when Greek tragedy was reconfigured as *arja*. The Balinese performers also had to make adjustments to working with slightly altered character behaviours, and limiting their improvisation, which is usually an important element of *arja* performance. Dibia changed elements of the performance to suit the different audiences encountered in the US and in Bali, and did not regard this as an artistic compromise, but rather as a creative challenge (Kremer 2007, p. 5). Pujawati's piece was accepted by both Indonesian and British audiences (at Indonesia Kontemporar and St. Luke's respectively) as a Balinese story dance. Those familiar with the Sophocles' play were interested in the shift of focus from Oedipus to Jokasta, and appreciated seeing the story in a new light. The story itself appeared to have equivalent appeal for both Balinese and western audiences.

Since the realm of "intercultural performance" has become such contested territory, the author prefers to characterise these two interpretations of this ancient Greek story as "transcultural" works. Richard Slimbach asserts that "transculturalism is rooted in the quest to define shared interests and common values across cultural and national borders" (Slimbach 2005, p. 206), and while both *Prabu Adipusengara* and *Jokasta* are cast in definitively Balinese modes of performance, they are inspired by and draw on themes in the Greek original that these two very different cultures share. The creators of these works and those who performed in them, whatever their nationality or cultural roots, were able to engage with these projects unhindered by confusion or prejudice in spite of the mix of cultural materials. Even a superficial examination of the history of performance will reveal that cultural borrowing and exchange have always been part of the artist's toolbox, so perhaps the time has come to acknowledge that transculturalism and transnationalism are not exceptional, but an increasingly natural mode for today's increasingly globalised world.

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