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[See table of contents](#)

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Article abstract

The Lingsar temple pujawali, a primarily religious festival on the island of Lombok in Indonesia, conjoins Hindu Balinese migrants and local Muslim Sasak to worship together for rain and spring water, fertility, bountiful harvests, and cures and boons. This article explores the narrative elements of the presented music at the festival, and posits that performances, which structure and frame the event and its internal rites, are embodied narratives linked to myths, fertility, and moral orders. The performing arts at Lingsar also erect ethnicity and unify together the respective groups of Balinese and Sasak. This union, referred to as “like king and queen,” is generated through music and dance performance in conjunction with the rites of priests and the collective actions of participants.

“LIKE KING AND QUEEN, LIKE BALINESE AND SASAK” Musical Narratives at the Lingsar Temple Festival in Lombok, Indonesia

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The *preret* [wooden oboe] player, Amaq Sari, takes his seat in the pavilion next to the altar where the postmenopausal women are preparing the materials needed for the offerings. Upon a signal from the priest, Sanusi, Sari begins “Turun Daun” [“Gently Descend”], the piece that invites deities to come down to earth. The music is shrill, penetrating, inescapable. The women then gather the materials — fruits, Chinese coins, flowers, seeds — and slowly create the *kebon odeq*, the two offerings which, according to Sanusi, unify dualities “like king and queen, male and female, and Balinese and Sasak.” Amaq Sari’s *preret* performance frames this event (see photo 1). He begins playing before any work on the offerings and must continue until the offerings are complete.

When the women are finished, the eldest presents the two large *kebon odeq* to Sanusi. Participants will compete to carry these offerings, which are placed at the front of almost all processions, to receive blessings through physical contact. In between processions, the *kebon odeq* will be “seated” in the shrine beside the sacred spring-fed pool which is “guarded” by large eels.

Amaq Sari watches the last actions to complete the offerings. He then stops playing, folds his *preret* into some cloth, nods to Sanusi for permission to leave, and goes into the outer courtyard to chew betelnut. For the moment, his job is done. But a series of processions will soon start, and he will then walk beside the *kebon odeq* to various sacred places within the environs of Lingsar, the village of the temple festival that sustains and invokes rainwater and fertility, and unites migrant Hindu Balinese with traditional Muslim Sasak on the island of Lombok in Indonesia.

The Lingsar festival is considered a sacred [*sakral*], religious [*agama*] and cultural (*budaya*) affair in Lombok. However, the sacred tends to attract the profane and many festival activities are relatively secular and fun. The sacred also lures politics and commercialism. The local government has played an increasing role in securing and monitoring the festival and often seeks credit for its success, and vendors line all entrances to the temple. Lingsar hosts an “indigenous” festival, native to the land and peoples of Lombok; all participants believe it was initiated hundreds of years ago. While the festival was once a state ceremony necessary to sustain pre-colonial courts and their hierarchy and moral order, it is today a complex series of rituals with diffuse and contested meanings. The festival retains its agrarian function, linked to religion and politics, and it has become a pageant for encountering the divine, for rediscovering one’s culture, and for reexperiencing and debating history.

The roles of the performing arts, and particularly music, are sometimes ignored in the literature on festivals. Music is often called the soundscape or soundtrack of a festival (Falassi 1987), but I believe that it is often much more than background. Music creates community, permits special behavior, allows or directs transformations, and provides structures for meaningful actions. Kapferer (1983), for example, states that music controls the stages of events, signals transitions, and enacts and orders shared experience. Music performance spiritually unites participants through crystallizing group sentiments, and it extends the possibility of undergoing together the “one experience,” where participants “commune” in the “same vivid and continuous present” (Kapferer 1986: 190).

In many cultures, such as Lombok and its neighbor island of Bali, music is considered a sort of science [*ilmu*] with efficacious qualities, and dance and music are not divided but rather integrated into a whole. Dance and music in such places permeate festival, pace the activities, and “key the emotions of participants” (Stoeltje 1992: 265). At Lingsar, they encapsulate and express sentiments, myths, values, and overall religious experiences for the participants, and create a unique community while providing a series of structures for symbolic behaviors and meanings to unfold. The performing arts in such a supercharged environment — with festival preparations, expectations, and spiritual energy abounding — have an affective power to transform time, space, and the participants themselves.



1. Amaq Sari plays *preret* while the women behind him prepare the *kebon odeq* offerings.

The observations that opened this essay were made at the 1988 festival. I "discovered" this festival by accident in 1983 while researching the music of the Balinese migrants. Many told me that I had to witness the Lingsar festival to find the heart of Balinese legend and music on Lombok. At the same time, many in the Sasak community and local government stated that I must see the festival to discover extraordinary Sasak music and ritual. Though I had visited many festivals in Bali and several in Lombok, I was still a bit underprepared for and overwhelmed by this one. With upwards of 10,000 participating then, and far more these days, the Lingsar festival is the largest musical and socioreligious event on Lombok.

I have now been researching the festival off and on for eighteen years and will never fully comprehend it. The event is too complex, its meanings profound but diffuse, its participants extremely diverse. Many of the main figures in the 1983 festival have died, their roles assumed by others or discontinued. A number of changes have been instituted in the rituals and in the physical structure of the temple itself, and the government now plays a more active role. Somehow a dialectic of change and preservation allows the festival to move forward, adapt to the times, and retain its integrity. However construed, the Lingsar

temple and festival are institutions for constructing ritual behavior, organizing beliefs, forming sociocultural identity, and reliving or reinterpreting history.

This article explores the narrative dimensions of the music performed at Lingsar and how these dimensions mark stages and structure the festival, articulate myth, promote fertility, and erect and unite ethnicities. Due to its broad and meaningful functions, participants have mentioned that the festival would not and could not be held without the music. Music is central to the festival experience, and it penetrates and/or coordinates every major rite within the event. Understanding music's various roles and narratives is absolutely essential in grasping the festival's significance.

Public Meanings, Players, and Competing Myths

Many meanings of the Lingsar festival are public and obvious. The fertile rice-growing land around the temple contains numerous water springs used to irrigate the rice fields throughout west Lombok, the most productive farmlands on the island, and the temple and its festival have traditionally functioned to systematize the rice cycle. There is thus an immediate correlation between farming, rice, and water, and symbols representing these qualities are abundant at the festival. The whole area has become linked with concepts of fertility and is considered the center of fecundity and "power" on the island.

With such importance given to land, water springs, and rice fields, and so much at stake agriculturally each year, mythic accounts become deep and meaningful statements. Myths tell how power and water springs manifested, and how these are connected with ancestors and human interaction. I have held formal and informal interviews with festival officials — the Balinese and Sasak musicians, the Sasak priest, the Balinese priests, and the heads of the temple organization — as well as with farmers, urban participants, government officials, and nonparticipants over the years. To each, history was of paramount importance. All wanted to discuss the founding of the temple, the discovery of the water springs, and how their ethnic group related to the other one. Two distinct mythic accounts emerge: one Balinese (which favors the Balinese in discovery) and one Sasak (which similarly favors the Sasak).

The Lingsar festival must accommodate two different ethnic groups with distinctive religious beliefs, histories, identities, dress, food, performing arts, and so forth. As in other multiethnic festivals, one of the major goals at Lingsar as stated by all interviewees is to physically and spiritually unify Balinese and

Sasak. In this respect, the antistructural element so common in major festivals worldwide — when social order is inverted or subverted — at Lingsar serves the purpose of unification, working to disrupt the ethnic tensions, suspicions and divisions in common and public intercourse.¹ The festival mediates the relationship of Balinese and Sasak.

Both Balinese and Sasak at the festival are minorities in contemporary Lombok. The Balinese are Hindu and number about 100,000, less than 2% of Lombok's population. Most are descendents from the period of Balinese colonization (1739-1894) or from earlier settlements in west Lombok (see van der Kraan 1980 and Gerdin 1982) who traversed the 110 kilometers between the islands (see fig. 1). Most Sasak participating in the festival are "traditional" or "nominal" Muslims often called *Waktu Telu* [Three Times/Stages], who mix indigenous and ancestral beliefs with one or two of the Five Pillars of Islam. Hundreds of years ago, perhaps all Sasak followed a similar faith. However, the vast majority today (over 2,000,000) have converted to a reformist version of Islam and become orthodox (Sunni) Muslims. The *Waktu Telu* have consequently become an even smaller minority than the Balinese. Both groups have faced persecution and hostility from the majority. Their co-existences as minorities have often provided a greater unity, though some Sasak have recently worked to Islamify the festival and to make it more acceptable to contemporary Sasak society. These efforts, however, have led to renewed friction with the Balinese Hindus who feel threatened by any efforts to alter the festival's religious meanings.

The concept of festival looms large among the participants. For the Balinese, temple festivals (anniversaries of a temple's initial consecration) are the major forum of public worship; these are generally meant to connect participants with ancestors, gods, or God, and/or to bestow magical health upon a village, community, or family. Every Balinese attends festivals at many temples every year, each with a set of unique meanings and congregants, which

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1. Lombok, once promoted for tourism as an idyllic and peaceful substitute to overly-developed Bali, is currently an island of unrest, largely due to destabilizing factors nationally (failing economy, recession, government-military struggles, new leaders and ideas of democracy, etc.). In early 2000, roving bands of Sasak youth torched churches, intimidated Christians (who fled to Bali), and destroyed businesses owned by Christians, supposedly in reaction to Christian-Muslim clashes in the Indonesian Maluku islands. These bands reportedly rose in response to local religious leaders who wanted to support their Islamic brethren in the Malukus.



Figure 1: Bali and Lombok

together foster a socioreligious identity. Due to the polycultural reality and the potential for conflict in Lombok, Balinese culture is far more restricted and there are far fewer temples than on Bali. The Lingsar temple, called *pura Lingsar*, thus becomes even more important and is the public temple that unites virtually all Balinese migrants together as one people. Nearly each family either participates directly or sends a representative. *Pura Lingsar* is the mother temple. With its foundational narrative history (abbreviated later), it represents the center of Balinese culture in Lombok.

The regional government's Department of Religion [*Kantor Agama*] concluded in the 1960s that the Lingsar festival is not an Islamic event. Consequently, the participating Sasak — who are held to be ostensibly Muslim — were pressured not to attend. Such government policies, backed by orthodox Islamic religious leaders, have intimidated the *Waktu Telu* traditional Muslims. Ironically, other government departments, particularly Education and Culture [*Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan*] and Tourism [*Keparawisataan*], have asserted that the Lingsar festival is a cultural, not a religious event, and that such participation should be allowed.² Since most *Waktu Telu* shrines were destroyed during the twentieth century drive to establish orthodox Islam, the Lingsar temple has become crucial to most remaining traditional Muslims. In 1983, virtually all Sasak at the festival were from areas near Lingsar (though few from the village itself, which is strongly Islamic). In the 1990s Sasak came from as far away as central and north Lombok, giving testament to the growing status and influence of the temple and festival. The reasons for participation are varied: some come to worship culture heroes, others to pray for cures and boons, and most all come to request rain or spring water. Many Balinese and Sasak participants are farmers and depend upon the Lingsar festival to increase the capacity of the earth, obtain sufficient irrigation water, and secure a plentiful harvest.

The Debates of Myths

Scholars such as Abrahams (1987) and Eliade (1959) comment on how festival restates the natural and social order of the world, often recalling the time before order and the chaos before culture, and then celebrating how

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2. Both departments have something at stake in the festival: Education and Culture is actively trying to preserve traditional Sasak culture and Tourism has used the temple and festival to lure tourists to Lombok.

culture emerged from that chaos. Through a process of first discarding culture and reentering chaos (Turner's liminal state), festival then recreates and ultimately renews that culture. This process is accomplished by reenacting a mythic event and reconnecting the community with the primordial divine; the cultural order established is often linked directly to the actions of gods or a divine being and reconfirmed as "natural" (Harnish 1995). At festivals in agrarian societies, such as Bali and Lombok, there is often an uniting of male and female principles in offerings, music and drama, and the divine is frequently represented as androgynous with both female and male sexual attributes. This coupling of sexual imagery promotes fertility at Lingsar both for agriculture and the human community.³

Although Balinese colonization of Lombok was terminated long ago in 1894 by Dutch forces, the collective Sasak memory still recoils at the idea of Hindu Balinese control. Many Sasak believe that the Balinese, who own the deeds to the Lingsar temple area, appropriated the lands and water springs during colonization, and they would like to see these lands, with their fertile rice fields, returned to Sasak authority. The Balinese initially entered Lombok in the late seventeenth century, and by the early nineteenth century had established seven courts to dominate the island. The colonialists rationalized their hegemony by invoking the mythic Majapahit empire, the fourteenth-sixteenth century East Javanese Hindu court held to be a bastion of moral righteousness. Balinese believed that the mandate to rule Lombok was shifted from corrupt Sasak nobles to their own purer Balinese nobles as bearers of the Majapahit tradition (Harnish 1997). Lingsar is a symbol of that colonization and of the initial interaction of Balinese and Sasak in Lombok; thus, its history is strongly contested.

The basic Balinese myth (as described in Harnish [1991, 1997], Agung [1991] and interviews with Balinese officials on both Lombok and Bali), holds that the Balinese were divinely led to Lombok by deities on both islands, and that they brought Majapahit's moral righteousness with them. The local deity called the Balinese to Lingsar by creating a gushing water spring, and then provided a spirit army that allowed the Balinese to defeat the unjust Sasak kings. The deity also explained that the Balinese would rule Lombok for seven

3. Many women have reportedly participated at the festival (or visited the temple at other times) in the hopes of becoming pregnant. Some have made vows that if they become pregnant they will reward the temple with a gift.

generations. The Balinese then constructed a temple in his honor and invited Sasak to live and work in the area and to participate in the annual festival. This story legitimizes their colonization, answers the origins of the water spring and hence, fertility, and explains the connection and importance of Lingsar to Balinese residents. It also asserts that the Balinese had no intention of controlling the island — it was the deities who willed it so — and places the Sasak well behind in the development of the temple and festival.

The Sasak, naturally, do not agree with much of the Balinese myth. Their hero is a Sasak prince, sent by sainted Islamic Javanese evangelists, who ruled and loved his land and people. Various versions of this myth exist but core elements are consistent. In synopsis (as described in Harnish [1991, 1997], Proyek Inventarisasi [1984], Syrani [1986] and extensive interviews with Sasak officials), this hero, Datu Wali Milir, ruled the Lingsar area. Through extensive prayers to Allah throughout an evening, he created the water spring. When meditating, he disappeared into the spring and then sickness raged through the land. He later reappeared and brought his followers together and then disappeared again into the spring, but this time he left his essence to perpetuate within it. His followers threw offerings into the spring in celebration, thus beginning the rite known as *perang topat* [war of the rice squares], then they erected a shrine in Milir's honor. The Balinese arrived many years later and were directed by spirits to the shrine. The Sasak agree that the Lingsar deity allowed the Balinese to colonize the island, but hold that while the Balinese call this deity Batara Gede Lingsar, it actually is Datu Wali Milir. The story demonstrates that the *Waktu Telu* Sasak worship a deity connected to Islam, that they are related to Java through Islam, that they remember Datu Wali Milir's sacrifice at the festival, and that the Balinese came later. To some extent, Sasak worship at Lingsar follows traditional patterns of honoring and commemorating deified ancestors (see Telle 2000). The narrative, however, also explains and legitimizes core parts of their cultural beliefs. Such rhetoric is necessary in contemporary Lombok where the *Waktu Telu* must frequently rationalize their ritual actions to the reformist Muslim majority.

The most stressed areas of both myths are the discovery of the water springs (who, why), and the depiction of the other ethnic group. The discovery of the springs indicates who has claim to the temple and its lands; the depiction of ethnic groups shows how one views the other. Not surprisingly, each group claims the discovery of the water springs (and by extension its lands) for themselves, indicates that their religious beliefs are superior, and paints the other as peripheral to the history of Lingsar. In the Balinese version, they are

divinely called to the area and the deity attracts them by gushing forth as water. They build a temple and later invite Sasak to live in the area and participate in the festival. In the Sasak version, a direct representative from the Islamic saints in Java becomes a Sasak and creates the water spring for his people through devotion and mystical power. The Sasak build a shrine to remember him, and the Balinese arrive much later on their own divine mission; the Balinese, however, bestow a less genuine identity to the deity. These myths do not simply provide windows to the past, they are oriented for — and must evolve with — the present and suggest action in the future. Despite the importance of history for all the participants, no storytelling traditions exist at the festival. The stories are instead encoded within and interpreted from the performing arts.

The Festival and its Music

Religious festivals carve a special sacred time out of everyday time, and celebrate a particular moment that is then revisited via the event. This moment at Lingsar is the anniversary of the initial consecration of the temple, marked as the same date by both Balinese and Sasak calendars.⁴ The festival, called *pujawali* [worship return], lasts for five days and is held around the full moon of November or December. Each day is named and features specific rites (see Harnish 1991). Three primary days (opening, main, closing) attract many thousands, particularly the main day (the full moon day); two days following the main day are “empty” with only several hundred attending to the temple, and the closing day again attracts many thousands. The performing arts are held on the primary days; they define or play an integral part of most rites, and are always structuring agents. However, their roles are not restricted to structuring as they also alter time and space, affect participants, and allow meaningful behaviors and transformations to occur.

People's lives are also structured around festival time. Farmers and members of the temple association come to clear brush and clean out the temple sanctuaries one to two weeks before the festival. Some participants report that they abstain from eating certain meats and try to prevent accidents which would lead to bleeding, an impurity precluded by temple sanctions. For the

4. The calendars, however, mark this date in differing months. It falls within the sixth month of the Balinese *Saka* calendar, and within the seventh month of the Sasak *Wariga* calendar. See Harnish (1991) for a discussion of these calendars.

same reason, menstruating women do not come to the temple. Ironically, nine rounds of cockfights occur on the day *before* the opening day. These bloodletting rites satiate mischievous underground spirits, who then depart for the duration of the festival. Self-purification, particularly for the Balinese, is of great importance. Participants will bathe and perfume themselves before coming, and will dress in their finest ceremonial clothing. Even the farmers, some of whom have but one set of ceremonial attire, have mentioned that physical purity and clean appearance are necessary to achieve spiritual purity.

Apart from musical performances (discussed later), the opening day features few activities until thousands of mostly Balinese come with their offerings and a number of processions and prayer periods begin in the afternoon. By this time, many Balinese commoner priests (of lower caste) are preparing or handling participant offerings, placing them on this or that altar within the exclusive Balinese sanctuary of the temple, the *gaduh* (see fig. 2). Several Balinese high priests (of Brahmin caste) begin to conduct their own rites on specific pavilions within the *gaduh* and in the lower adjacent courtyard, the *kemaliq*, the sanctuary containing the sacred pond overseen by a Sasak priest and shared by Sasak and Balinese. The Sasak priest and the informal organization formed around him are busy hanging out ceremonial cloth, erecting makeshift altars, and preparing the *kemaliq* shrine and dressing the many stones within it.

Within the Sasak priest's home compound is the courtyard for making *kebon odeq* and other Sasak offerings. Once the offerings have been completed, the women and the priest prepare the *momot*, a glass bottle that is sealed empty on this day and then opened on the closing day to reveal the miraculous water that has formed while the bottle was sealed.

A large, musical procession forms to walk to distant temples to obtain spring water. The participants, almost all Balinese, then gather at the crossroads (see fig. 2) to worship together and “marry” the waters from the other temples with those of Lingsar, symbolically uniting Bali and Lombok.⁵ Upon its conclusion, another musical procession leads the *kebon odeq* offerings from the Sasak priest's courtyard to the *kemaliq*, and then another conjoins Balinese and Sasak together as they encircle the entire temple three times with a buffalo

5. A Sasak friend mentioned that few Sasak participate because the procession, prayer, and meaning of the event (uniting Bali and Lombok as islands) legitimize the Balinese colonization. In earlier decades, more Sasak participated, but the Sasak attitude toward this colonial period has recently grown more negative.

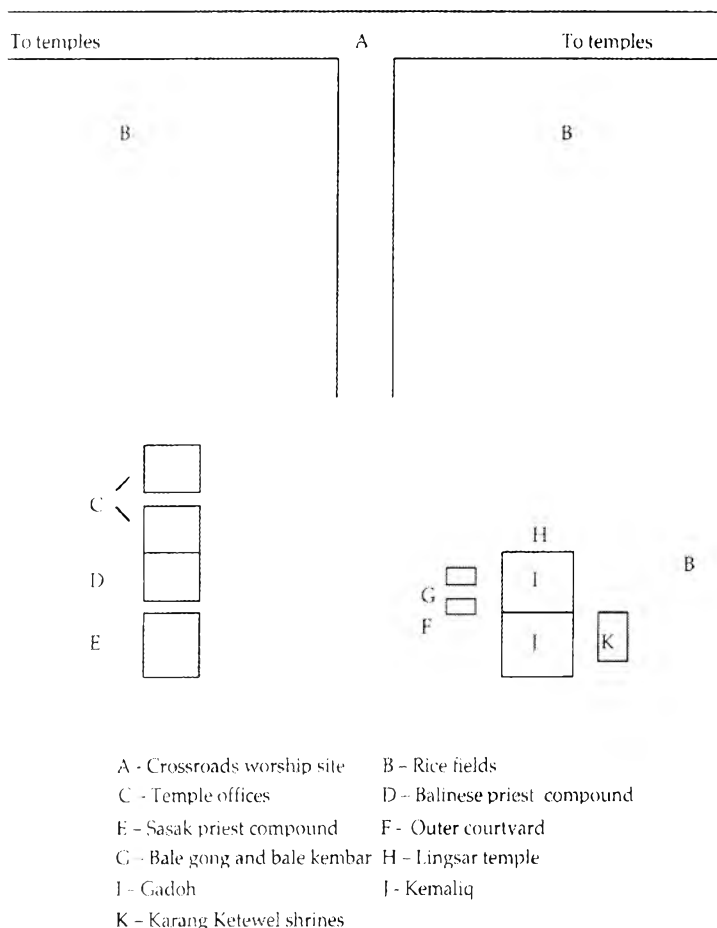


Figure 2: The Lingsar Temple Area.

(later slaughtered and consumed in feast). Afterwards, respective circumambulating processions are held within the *gadoh* and *kemaliq*, followed by prayer periods. By now, it is evening and Sasak break for the Islamic *magrib* prayer, though sometimes the rites do not finish in time. This neither bothers the Hindu Balinese nor the less-Islamic among the *Waktu Telu*, but my interviews indicate that it does disturb some reformist Muslims and government officials who feel that *magrib* should supercede any traditional rite.

The main day includes similar rites, though there are more prayer periods, more priests in the courtyards, and far more participants. The culminating rite is the *perang topat*, the war of the rice squares. Farmers bring many hundreds of cooked, hardened rice squares [*topat*] wrapped in banana leaves. The *topat* are first consecrated with the sacred water in the *kemaliq* pond, then are placed in the outer courtyard (see fig. 2) and the participants start hurling them at each other. In this antistructural moment, Balinese throw at Sasak and vice-versa, but also throw at each other; farmers throw at nobles, women at men, old at young. As my welts testify, foreign scholars and tourists are also targeted. Many participants from urban areas come specifically for the *perang topat*, and a few come from as far away as Bali. After this fun, the farmers collect the *topat* and place them in their fields as these are now considered blessed offerings.

Two relatively “empty” days follow. The closing day is again full of processions and worship periods which request deities to return to their own world. The closing rite is a huge Balinese and Sasak procession with offerings, processional music and dances which proceeds to a nearby river where the offerings are discarded and flow to the sea. This act concludes the festival for everyone except for some farmers who return to the Sasak priest’s home to request holy water. The *momot* bottle, sealed empty at the beginning of the festival and placed within the *kemaliq* sanctuary during the five days, is opened by the Sasak priest. The mysterious and sacred water present is considered bestowed directly by the deity, and, to a special concluding piece played on the *preret* oboe, the priest passes out this water to the farmers.

Music and Dance Narratives

Abrahams (1982) declares that festivals should start with a “bang” to demarcate festival time from normal time. At Lingsar this happens with the performance of a Balinese gamelan *gong kuna* between four and five am on the opening day. This is a loud, large, and ceremonial gamelan of about 25 instruments mostly consisting of bronze percussion (metallophones, gong-chimes, gongs) and drums (see photo 2). The repertoire, called *lelambatan* [slow pieces], is performed throughout each of the primary days. The group performs on the *bale gong*, a cement pavilion outside the main entrance into the *gaduh* (see fig. 2). Since it is an honor to play at Lingsar, a different group comes each year. The musicians play for 10-12 hours each day, and look rather haggard by the end of the festival. Another gamelan *gong kuna* plays throughout the festival in the Karang Ketewel shrine area (see fig. 2). Long ago, villagers



2. The Balinese gamelan *gong kuna* opens the festival and performs for the duration.

from Karang Ketewel in Lombok worked on the temple, and later were allowed to build their own set of shrines as a reward for their services.

The music does not have a limited temporal context, and instead functions to provide the overarching experience for the festival. Some scholars (Becker 1979, DeVale and Dibia 1991) hold that the forms and structures of gamelan music are homologous with that of cosmology; that an isomorphic mapping process connects the music to the placement of deities, the designs of calendars, and so forth. Many Balinese at the festival see such a connection, and use the music to help purify themselves before prayer. Some suggest that the music implants a cosmological order upon the festival. The music, however, also allows the festival to take place and sonically surrounds each event as it circumscribes the festival space. Most believe that the music calls divine and human participants together and retains that connection for the festival's duration.

The gamelans used in all Balinese processions are the gamelan *gong gilak*, a set of gongs, cymbals, gong-chimes, and drums. Three such gamelans perform. The music, considered martial and powerful, scares away underworld

spirits that might wish to do procession participants harm.⁶ Both gamelans mark and/or protect space; the *gong kuna* opens each festival day and draws human and divine participants to the temple, and the *gong gilak* spearheads processions beyond the temple and clears and protects their paths.

Balinese dances are *topeng* and *canang sari*; both occur only on the main day. *Topeng* is a masked dance featuring several performers accompanied by the gamelan *gong kuna* and held outside the temple by the *bale gong*. The performance presents many stock characters (nobles, clowns, etc.) and expresses through abstract narrative, characterization, and movement the coming of the Balinese to Lombok and their divine mission, essentially reenacting the Balinese myth of Lingsar (see photo 3). Immediately following within the *gadhoh* is the offering dance, *canang sari*, in which five men are selected to “dance” offerings containing weavings symbolizing the rice goddess, accompanied by a special ritual piece on the gamelan *gong kuna*. Though the dance is light-hearted, the dancing of the males with these goddess symbols helps activate fertility.

Sasak music performances consist of *preret* wooden oboes and the gamelan *baris*. The *preret* oboes (normally two players/instruments) frame the production of the Sasak offerings. The players also perform beside the offerings in processions and play during worship periods in front of the offerings in the *kemaliq* shrine, thus *preret* are linked directly to the offerings. The main piece, “Turun Daun” [“Gently Descend”], accompanies the production of the offerings and may also be played in processions and within the shrine. It is believed to entice and escort deities down into the temple and to maintain connection to the divine world. In this sense the music’s function is similar to that of the *gong kuna*, and both musics make otherworldly contact before other ritual action takes place. Some have mentioned that *preret* music is like a sacred chant. The music, however, also allows offerings to be made, circumscribes their production, and performs for them as it creates and sustains a bridge between human and divine worlds.

The gamelan *baris* performs in three separate contexts: seated in the *kemaliq*, in processions accompanying dancers, and seated on the *bale kembar* (see fig. 2) performing purely instrumental pieces. The instruments of the gamelan *baris* include a large drum and gong, a fiddle, a bamboo flute, two

6. For information on the related gamelan *beleganjur* and its function on Bali, see Bakan (1999).



3. The Balinese *topeng* dance implants moral righteousness and order. Photo courtesy of Lisa Ho.

smaller drums, cymbals, and small percussion. The large drum and gong are considered sacred and "owned" by the *kemaliq* shrine. When these instruments are revealed at the festival, the moment is similar to what Falassi (1987) calls a rite of conspicuous display, where the sacred is manifested for all to witness. The fiddle and flute represent male and female and have associations with



4. The gamelan *baris*, featuring flute and fiddle, links the Sasak with Java. Photo courtesy of Michelle Chin.

East Javanese courtly life and characters from the Panji cycle of tales (see photo 4).⁷ These associations are related to the dances.

Sasak dances include *telek* and *batek baris*. The *telek* dance features four women dressed as male characters from the Panji stories, a cross-dressing that

7. These stories about the prince and king Panji, the great lover and hero, are well known in Bali and Lombok. At Lingsar, they take on a charged meaning. According to legend, wherever Panji traveled became part of his territory; thus, many believe that the Sasak presentation of Panji is meant to claim the Lingsar lands for the Sasak.

unifies sexes for fertility purposes. One of the dancers dresses as the East Javanese King Panji. The Sasak priest Sanusi clarified that Panji also symbolically represents the Sasak culture hero, Datu Wali Milir, who creates (with the help of Allah) the water springs in the Sasak myth (see photo 5). The *batek baris* dance features a commander with a sword and eight soldiers with rifles all dressed in Dutch military uniforms. These dancers become the entourage of the king/culture hero and the performance becomes a dramatization of his coming, thus asserting the Sasak myth and uniting the Sasak with Java — the origin of the culture hero Milir and of Islam for the Sasak (see photo 6). The gamelan *baris* accompanies these dances, and the flute and fiddle have come to reference Panji and Java when played together (also to unify male and female). Many Sasak state that the Sasak myth is implied whenever the gamelan *baris* performs, whether or not it accompanies dance. These dances are held on each primary day, most frequently within processions but also in front of the *kemaliq* shrine.

	First Day	Main Day	Last Day
Balinese			
Music:	Gong Kuna (2 gamelans) Gong Gilak (3 gamelans)	Gong Kuna (2 gamelans) Gong Gilak (3 gamelans)	Gong Kuna (2 gamelans) Gong Gilak (3 gamelans)
Dance:		Topeng Canang Sari	
Sasak			
Music:	Preret Gamelan Baris	Preret Gamelan Baris	Preret Gamelan Baris
Dance:	Batek Baris Telek	Batek Baris Telek	Batek Baris Telek

Figure 3: Performing arts on the three primary days of the festival.

For the three primary days of the festival, Balinese and Sasak performing arts initiate and conclude the festival, and also structure the rites (i.e. processions, offering productions) within it (see fig. 3). Music and dance express the stories of Lingsar and establish a variety of contexts for other ritual and transformative things to happen, such as worship, giving up the offerings to deities, and creating holy water (Harnish 1991).

Cornell (2000) explores how ethnicity can be a collective narrative that captures central understandings vital to a group. The festival is one occasion in which Balinese and *Waktu Telu* Sasak minorities can safely assert their ethnicities, within which exist complexes of narratives. The mythic narratives found within the Lingsar musics and dances embody central understandings for all participants. The Balinese masked *topeng* performance, for example, reasserts the period of moral righteousness and implants it into the coming of the Balinese to Lombok, thus justifying the eventual Balinese colonization of the island and explaining how and why Balinese people live here. The Sasak *telek* dance and gamelan *baris* juxtapose the Javanese figure Panji with the Sasak hero, Datu Wali Milir, indicating the continuum of Javanese moral order in Lombok and reenacting, through Milir's connection to sainted evangelists, the coming of Islam to Lombok. These performing arts, as well as others, organize collective Balinese and Sasak narratives. Another narrative, the mixing of gender symbolically in music and physically in dances and characterizations, is “natural” in this context where fertility is so crucial.⁸

Like Balinese and Sasak

Music formulates ethnicity and identity. Stokes (1994: 5) argues that music performance provides “the means by which ethnicities and identities are constructed and mobilized,” as music articulates the cultural Self and distinguishes it from the Other. Music may be an especially important vehicle for oppressed minority groups to assert their cultural values and traditions. I suggest that music is one of the “shared institutions” that people within an ethnic group use to organize themselves, practice their culture, and maintain their group identity (Spickard and Burroughs 2000: 10). Thus at Lingsar, performance would seem to erect and maintain boundaries of social identity,

8. See further Harnish (1991 and 1997) for discussion on gender in gamelan instruments and in the fertility dance, *gandrung*, which brings male congregants together to dance with the Lingsar *gandrung* dancer, who symbolically represents the rice goddess.

and to establish Sasak and Balinese ethnicities in opposition. However, the music also transcends this delimited role. While music performance on a social level realizes respective cultural selves in opposition to one another, on a religious level it forges a spiritual unity between Balinese and Sasak — a unity which both groups sense and recognize as essential for festival success. The concept of success here is largely linked to the coupling of complimentary duality, another act related to fertility.

Binary opposites — within offerings (for example the *kebon odeq*), décor, weavings, and performing arts — are represented and unified throughout the festival. Balinese and Sasak, conflated as male and female, are similarly unified. Most participants refer to this unification with the Indonesian word, *mempersatukan* [to make one], a term with a strong emotional force. The Sasak priest Sanusi frequently spoke of the Balinese as male counterparts to a Sasak female entity. This language placed the Sasak at the center of the festival. In the dyad of traditional Sasak beliefs, the female is considered the elder and charged with fertility (see Pepplinkhuizen 1991), and safeguarding fertility is perhaps *the* most important function of the festival. In this way, Sanusi indicated that though the Sasak needed the Balinese, it was the Sasak who really owned the festival and transacted the major efficacious rituals. Most Balinese would, of course, contest this idea, though they acknowledge the reflection of Balinese and Sasak in the two *kebon odeq* offerings.

Participants attest to the union by their words about the music of the other group. Sanusi and other Sasak confirmed the role of the Balinese gamelans on several occasions. One Sasak musician called the Balinese gamelan music “an umbrella within which everything evolves,” acknowledging that the festival cannot take place until the Balinese gamelan performs on the opening day, and the audience for the Balinese masked dance has equal numbers of both groups. Similarly, every Balinese cited a desire to hear Sasak music at the festival, and all look forward to the Sasak dances. These arts, though performed by respective Balinese and Sasak artists, are not exclusive and are shared history. Both groups have a stake in all the music because it couples together to form the unity that is necessary for fertility. The traditional role of the festival — to invoke rainwater, increase the yield, and create abundance — is ultimately based on unification of male/female and of Balinese/Sasak, enacted largely through music and dance performance in tandem with the various rites.



5. The female Sasak *telek* dancers in procession. The "general" is sandwiched between "warriors" and behind them is the "king" conflated as Datu Wali Milir.



6. The commander (centre) leads soldiers in the processional Sasak *batek baris* dance. Photo courtesy of Lisa Ho.

Conclusion

Narratives within music frame the festival and its rites, and organize participant behavior. Music and dance realize structures throughout the event, and allow for transformations to occur: internally, as in the case of spiritually affecting participants before prayer; externally, in connection to acts of priests and those making offerings; and metaphysically, as in bridging human and divine worlds and escorting deities to the festival. In addition, the performing arts intermix male and female principles and generate fertility, and they express myths — the collective narratives or narratives of origin — and thus reinstate the contestation of history.

Balinese music binds the Balinese together, realizes their history, constructs their present, and explains the festival, just as Sasak music does for the Sasak. However, the Lingsar festival itself is a shared institution for all participants, and it incorporates all performing arts — what Turner (1982) would call the “properties” of the festival — as shared experience. Thus, the performing arts ultimately transcend the dyad of Balinese and Sasak, just as the *kebon odeq* offerings merge male/female and king/queen. As Balinese priest Saka stated, “Two must merge into one for the festival to be successful.” This is the antistructural reasoning of the festival, to return to harmonious interethnic relations. Unified collective action, communal worship before the divine, the ritual transformations of priests, and, perhaps most importantly, the performance of music and dance all make this happen. Music circumscribes festival experience just as *preret* oboe performance frames the making of the *kebon odeq* offerings, and, through presentations of cosmological, mythic and courtly moral orders, music extends the possibility of the union of Self and Other. When the musics intermingle together in the air for everyone’s benefit, they offer participants Kapferer’s (1986: 190) “one experience,” where all can “commune” in the “same vivid and continuous present.”

The festival participants are numerous and diverse. Though many are farmers and connected somehow to West Lombok, they come from every social class and from every corner of the island. The festival, which celebrates Balinese and *Waktu Telu* Sasak ethnicities in addition to securing rainwater and fertility, is necessary to continue these groups’ cultures. As in other festivals, the Lingsar event focuses attention on the past yet is conducted in the present for the needs of the present, and both camps, marginalized in contemporary Lombok, seem refreshed by the experience. The festival addresses core elements of ethnic identity; for example, it answers how and why Balinese are on Lombok

and how Sasak are linked to Java and Islam. The various roles of music and dance grant the festival its existence and permit these understandings to perpetuate and/or change as needed. Some of the performing arts are unique to Lingsar and do not exist elsewhere. As such, they are icons for everything the temple and its festival represent.

Although this is a unique festival with a special history and heterogeneous participants, music has similar importance in such events worldwide and has been overlooked as structuring and narrative agent in the literature. The performing arts often have precise temporal and spatial contexts that link them with various rites/activities and allow a number of behaviors to take place. Music makes statements whenever and wherever performed in festival and galvanizes histories, ideas, and stories. At Lingsar, as at other major festivals, it is possible to view the entire event through the lens of the narratives embodied within the music.

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