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## PERFORMING *KECAK*: A BALINESE DANCE TRADITION BETWEEN DAILY ROUTINE AND CREATIVE ART

by Kendra Stepputat

*Kecak* is one of the most popular dramatic dance performances to be found on Bali. If tourists to the island have an interest in local performances—not to mention those with an explicit enthusiasm for Balinese arts—it is likely that they will see an evening *kecak* performance, if nothing else. To meet tourist demand, about twenty *kecak* troupes perform *kecak* or *kecak ramayana* on a regular basis. Abroad, *kecak* is often taught by both Balinese and Western artists/teachers as part of world-music classes or workshops to students of all ages. In teaching contexts, the dance is considered an easy introduction to Balinese performing arts. For interested laymen, *kecak* represents Balinese culture and arts in a very impressive and idealized way. Yet what is rarely brought to the attention of tourists or students is the fact that *kecak* is a relatively young genre, developed cooperatively by Balinese artists and Western expatriates living on Bali in the 1930s, with the explicit purpose of meeting the tastes and expectations of Western audiences. The *kecak* that is performed for tourists on Bali, or by Balinese troupes on tour outside of Bali,<sup>1</sup> does not appeal to a Balinese audience; it is an example of a “tourist genre” at its best.

I was led to this observation while writing my doctoral thesis on *kecak* (Stepputat 2010) and asked myself what might have caused it to become a tourist genre, and why Balinese today find little pleasure in *kecak* performances.<sup>2</sup> Could it be that the genre’s musical and dance elements lack any aesthetic appeal for Balinese audiences? Or is it that *kecak* is “marked” as a tourist genre and therefore not thought of as genuinely “Balinese”? If this is the case, why do other prominent tourist genres such as the *barong* and *rangda*<sup>3</sup> dance have a sibling performance, the *calonarang* play (Picard 1996:147), which is performed in ritual and social contexts for Balinese audiences, but not *kecak*? This article attempts to provide responses to these questions. Since they are to be found in the genesis and early development of *kecak*, I will devote considerable attention to that period, the 1920s to 1930s. Here I will address some common misconceptions regarding the people involved and the reasons for their developing *kecak*, on the basis of unpublished primary sources

1. One typical example is a tour to Thailand by a group of Institut Seni Indonesia (ISI) Denpasar associates in 2009, see <http://www.isi-dps.ac.id/berita/kecak-kontemporer-isi-denpasar-akan-tampil-di-thailand> (accessed December 2011).

2. I would like to thank my supervisors, David Harnish and Gerd Grupe, for their ongoing support and guidance, Andreas Hemming for his help with language issues, Michael Bakan for valuable comments on an earlier draft of this article, Kati Szego and Don Niles for being the wonderful editors they are, and, of course, my many Indonesian friends and colleagues, who were essential in completing this work, in particular: Ida Bagus Nyoman Mas, I Wayan Dibia, I Made Sidia, I Komang Karyawan, and Rudi Samapati.

3. *Barong* and *rangda* are two mystic figures, who symbolize the eternal fight between good and evil.

to date.<sup>4</sup> Analysis of the structure and status of *kecak* groups on Bali today also provides insights into why *kecak* groups perform for tourists and not a Balinese audience. Finally, I will focus on an alternative and even younger *kecak* genre, the *kecak kreasi* or contemporary *kecak*. *Kecak kreasi* is rooted in the contemporary Balinese performing arts scene and appeals primarily to a Balinese audience. By contrasting the tourist *kecak ramayana* and *kecak kreasi*, I attempt to explain what the *kecak* can or could be in a local Balinese performance context.

### Early history and development of *kecak* into a tourist genre

The most agreed-upon point in explaining *kecak* as an independent genre is its genesis in the ritual trance dance *sanghyang dedari*.<sup>5</sup> But there is still some dispute over the question of who was involved in the creative process of developing the new genre. The question is burdened by a rivalry between two villages, Bona and Bedulu, both of which claim to be the home of the first *kecak* performance. An additional dimension emerges in the question of who was primarily responsible for creating the *kecak*—Balinese locals or Western-trained expatriate artists living on Bali. Of course the agenda behind this question is whether a genre created by a German or American artist can actually be called “Balinese.” Without engaging issues of authenticity in this paper, I clarify the involvement of specific individuals in designing *kecak* before elaborating on issues that might derive from these historical facts.<sup>6</sup>

Archival material reveals that in the early 1930s, Balinese dancer I Wayan Limbak from the village of Bedulu started experimenting with the *sanghyang dedari*. The expatriates mentioned in connection with *kecak*'s genesis are most often Walter Spies and Katharine Mereson. Mereson was an American dancer and choreographer, and an acquaintance of Spies (Vickers 1996:141). Although several sources mention her as having possibly played a role in this story (e.g., Dibia 2000:7–8), I have found no evidence to confirm this claim.<sup>7</sup> Walter Spies on the

4. These include, among other sources, the letters in the Leo-und-Walter-Spies Archiv in Berlin, the Walter Spies collection held at Leiden University, film material from the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV) in Leiden, phonograph material from the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv, photographic material from the Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen (KIT) in Amsterdam, and the Jaap Kunst collection held by the University of Amsterdam.

5. The term *sanghyang* stands for several different trance dances on Bali (Bandem and deBoer 1981:12; see also Belo 1960:180–81, 201–3), while *dedari* is the specification of the type of *sanghyang* that is relevant to this paper. I will sometimes use the abbreviated form, *sanghyang*, which always refers to the *sanghyang dedari*.

6. Questions of “authenticity” and “reality” play a major role in all publications that deal critically with performing arts in the tourism context and have been raised for the Balinese context by Picard (1996), Vickers (1989), and Hitchcock and Putra (2007). For some general remarks about performing arts in tourism see Schouten (2007) and Nunez (1977).

7. Katharine Edson Mereson was an American-born ballroom and ballet dancer who lived in Bali from 1929 to 1939. See the collection “Katharine Edson Mereson papers” at the Newberry Library, Chicago: <http://mms.newberry.org/html/Mereson.html> (accessed December 2011).

other hand was verifiably fascinated by *sanghyang dedari* from his first visit to Bali in 1924, as is revealed in the correspondence between him and Jaap Kunst from 1924 and 1925.<sup>8</sup> Spies and Kunst had an intense, musicological exchange about *sanghyang dedari* over several months, with Spies encouraging Kunst to make phonograph recordings of it.<sup>9</sup> Fortunately, these recordings have been preserved and can be found in the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv.<sup>10</sup> In his second publication on Balinese music, Kunst dedicated a whole chapter to *sanghyang* melodies and included a transcription and thorough description of a *sanghyang dedari* ritual authored by Spies (Kunst 1925:392–93, 454–59).

The *sanghyang dedari* ritual, with all its elements, was documented thoroughly in several early descriptions (e.g., Soekawati 1925), film material from 1926 (figure 1),<sup>11</sup> and some even more detailed, analytical depictions from later years (i.e., Covarrubias 1937:335–39; Spies and de Zoete 1938:67–74; Bandem and deBoer 1981:12–17). Based on these descriptions, I limit my analysis of the genre to some major elements that highlight the connections and differences between the *sanghyang dedari* as it was carried out in the 1920s and 1930s, and the early *kecak* of the 1930s.<sup>12</sup>

The *sanghyang dedari* is a purification rite with some exorcist elements (Bandem and deBoer 1981:12). It used to be carried out on an irregular basis whenever a village was struck by a plague or misfortunes of any kind. It was believed that a *sanghyang dedari* ritual could drive out the evil supernatural forces which were the cause of such misfortunes (Spies and de Zoete 1973:70). In *sanghyang dedari*, two pre-adolescent girls fall into trance and are possessed by two heavenly nymphs (Covarrubias 1937:335). The ritual takes place in the inner and outer courtyard of the *pura dalem*, the death temple housed in every Balinese village (ibid.:338). The music that accompanies the ritual consists of two or three parts. In the first part of the ritual, where the dancers are brought into trance by inhaling the smoke of burnt incense, a women's choir sings a *gending pengedoesan*<sup>13</sup> (smoking melody). The women sing in unison at a very slow tempo, increasing it as the girls go into trance (Spies and de Zoete 1973:70). A splendid example of this is a phonograph recording of female *sanghyang dedari* singing recorded by ethnographer Odo Deodatus Tauern in 1911 (cylinder no. 5), together with a description of the *sanghyang*

8. Kunst and Spies knew each other from their years on Java and continued their friendship through visits and correspondence after Spies moved to Bali.

9. See letter from Spies to Kunst from 10 July 1925 and Kunst's answer from the same month. Both letters are held in the Stichting Walter Spies collection at the Leiden University library.

10. Sammlung Kunst 1925, including fifteen wax cylinders recorded on Bali, held in the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv (Ziegler 2006:178).

11. Documentary film *Sanghijang- und Ketjaqtanz* filmed in 1926 on Bali by Willy Mullens.

12. Every village and region has had slight or significant differences in the ritual's procedure. Yet by comparing descriptions by Spies and de Zoete (1973), Bandem and deBoer (1981), and Covarrubias (1937), some patterns can be discerned and are described here.

13. *Pengedoesan*, in Indonesian orthography before the 1972 writing reform, is now spelled *pengedusan*.



**Figure 1.** Still photograph of the *sanghyang dedari* ritual filmed by Mullens in 1926.

*dedari* ritual by zoologist Erwin Stresemann (2004).<sup>14</sup> Both were members of the Freiburger Molukken-Expedition, which arrived on Bali on 12 January 1911 and stayed at least a month.<sup>15</sup> This recording and the appended description are the oldest known sources of a *sanghyang dedari*, and they show that little had changed in the rite between 1911 and the 1930s.

The second part of the ritual starts when the two dancers are in trance and ready to begin the dance. According to several descriptions, the dancers' movement style resembles that of a *legong* dancer,<sup>16</sup> but with many more improvisational elements. The ritual is not choreographed, due to the dancers' state of mind, called *kerawuhan* (Bandem 1996:19) or *kerauhan* (Spies and de Zoete 1973:86). For this part of the ritual, cylinders four, five, and six of the 1925 Kunst collection are of most significance.<sup>17</sup> They feature recordings of a *gamelan mulut* (mouth or voice gamelan) as Streseman called it, which today is known as the male *cak* chorus, *pengecak-pengecak*<sup>18</sup> or simply *cak*. In the Kunst recordings, the structure of the

14. In 2002 I was able to conduct a re-study of wax cylinder collections that include recordings from Bali. The study was sponsored by the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv, where three such collections (Tauern 1912, Kunst 1924, Dalsheim 1932) are kept. On Bali I was able to work on this project with specialists I Kadek Widnyana (SST), Ni Ketut Suryatini (SSKar), I Gusti Ngurah Padang (SSKar), I Ketut Gde Asnawa (MA), and I Gusti Lanang Ardika (SSKar).

15. Parts of Stresemann (2004) are published online (without page numbers) at: [http://www.tauern.li/tauern/stories/erwin\\_stresemann.htm](http://www.tauern.li/tauern/stories/erwin_stresemann.htm) (accessed December 2011).

16. The *legong* is considered the most sophisticated and challenging of all Balinese female dances.

17. For information about the collection Kunst 1925 at the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv, see Ziegler (2006:178).

18. *Pengecak-pengecak* is the plural of the term *pengecak*, which can be translated as



male *cak* chorus that accompanies the dancers is as follows: after an introductory part (*pengalang*) in which a soloist and the choir sing antiphonally (with lyrics probably taken from the Ramayana),<sup>19</sup> a basic melody (*lagu pokok*), consisting of two to three notes, is sung by one or several singers. Above the repeating *lagu pokok*, the rest of the group vocalizes on the syllable *cak* in a complex interlocking structure also called *pola cak* (also see the appendix).<sup>20</sup> This *pola cak* structure continues while the dancers are in trance, with possible breaks. In addition to the male *cak* chorus, a *gamelan* plays at this point of the ritual: "During the dance, the male and female choirs take turns in singing. Whenever the singers are tired, they will be replaced by the gamelan. Usually the semar pegulingan is used for this"<sup>21</sup> (Soekawati 1925:324). Descriptions after the 1930s do not mention a gamelan in the *sanghyang dedari*; it seems that this element was abandoned and only the more essential male and female choirs were kept. The whole ceremony can last up to three hours, after which the dancers are taken out of trance by the *pemangku*, the local priest, supported by *gending sanghyang* sung by the women's choir (Covarrubias 1937:339) (figure 1).

As mentioned, Spies, Limbak, and the performers of Bedulu village were the main actors in the development of *kecak* out of *sanghyang*. Spies's own publications and his correspondence from the relevant years make his role in the creative process of the early 1930s relatively clear. Spies and de Zoete write:

It is true, that the creative effort which produced the astonishing ensemble we have attempted to describe [the *kecak* of northern Bedulu] was partly inspired by certain Europeans who felt Limbak's great gifts as a dancer had not found their full expression in *Baris*, and urged him to make something splendid out of the *Ketjak* group of his own village. But the *Ketjak* was of purely Balinese inspiration. (Spies and de Zoete 1973:83)

It is likely that Spies, by using the expression, "certain Europeans," did not want to include his own name, but nevertheless felt the need to clarify his personal involvement. He ascribes himself the role of director, who cautiously led Limbak towards creating *kecak*. At the same time, Spies emphasizes that the *kecak* must be regarded as something pristinely Balinese, highlighting Limbak's role in it. He might have phrased it this way in order to maintain the image of the "traditional" dance *kecak*, possibly in expectation of criticism of his involvement and obvious influence in changing certain Balinese artistic traditions.

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"someone who does the *cak*."

19. The old Indian epic Ramayana is one of the most prominent sources for dramatic performances on Java and Bali. See, for example, Saran and Khanna (2004).

20. *Pola* is Indonesian for "pattern," which is a term commonly used for music or dance patterns on Bali. When mentioning more than one *pola cak*, I will use the correct Indonesian plural, *pola-pola cak*.

21. "Bij het dansen wordt door vrouwen en mannen om de beurt gezongen. Wanneer de zangeressen en zaangers moe zijn dan vervang men de zang soms door gamelanspel. Gewoonlijk gebruikt men voor dit doel de semarpegoelingan."

On the other hand we have comments by Limbak, who, when interviewed for a newspaper article in 2002, is reported to have said: “The final form of the *kecak* was the result of a collaboration between Spies and village elders, with Spies determining the theme of the dance and the timing” (Yuliandini 2002). If this is true, Limbak would have had no role at all, having been a young dancer and definitely not one of the “village elders.” It is likely that Limbak did not want to emphasize his own role and instead tried to answer humbly by downplaying his own contribution. Many other sources credit Limbak as having had a much more active and important part in the creation process (e.g., Picard 1996:150). Neither Spies nor Limbak alone can be credited as “the creator” of *kecak*. Both certainly inspired each other, and it is likely that both humbly attributed the lead role in creating the new genre to the other.

It would be wrong to state that *kecak* replaced *sanghyang dedari* or that, with the development of *kecak*, a sacred genre has been profaned, as a newspaper article entitled “Cak Dance—from Temple Down to Hotel” might suggest (Siregar, Fajar, and Wirata 1993). The *kecak* is based on musical and some choreographic elements of the *sanghyang dedari*, but it is an entirely newly developed genre. One has not supplanted the other; instead both genres continue to co-exist in unrelated performance contexts until today.<sup>22</sup> It is often said that the reason why *sanghyang dedari* evolved into *kecak* was the filming of *Insel der Dämonen*, a motion picture filmed by German director Viktor von Plessen in 1931 (Plessen et al. 1932). However, there is no *kecak* in *Insel der Dämonen*. Instead, at the very climax of the film a great exorcism rite, which includes a *sanghyang dedari*, takes place. Spies—involved in the filming process as artistic consultant, choreographer, and ethnographic adviser (Eisner 1933)—was responsible for choosing the music and dances for the film. For the final climatic scene, he chose pictures of a *barong* and a *rangda* figure, which are mixed with short scenes and a voice track of a *pemangku* in trance,<sup>23</sup> but most parts are taken from a *sanghyang dedari* ritual, which is not surprising considering Spies’s fascination with the genre. Of the *sanghyang*, we see the male and the female choirs, elements of the preparations of the dancers, and the dancing in the temple courtyard. It is the presentation of a complete ritual, albeit in shortened and brushed-up form, suitable for the filming process, where, for example, the dancers dance in a clear choreography and are not in trance. While this is the first time that the *sanghyang dedari* was taken out of a ritual context and displayed as an art form, it is still a representation of that very ritual.

According to Limbak, the storyline, “The death of Kumbakarna” (*Karebut Kumbakarna*), from the Ramayana epic was the first plot to be performed as a

22. While it is said that the *sanghyang dedari* still exists and is carried out in present day Bali, I have not been able to witness one nor have I been able to talk to people who have recently seen it performed. According to Ballinger and Dibia (2004:59), there are some villages that still carry out *sanghyang dedari*, but it is not as widespread as it was eighty years ago.

23. It is likely that the person filmed as a *pemangku* here was not in a real trance, but the way he speaks is very close to what the verbal utterances of someone in trance on Bali would sound like.

*kecak*; and this story was developed for the film *Insel der Dämonen*, where Limbak played one of the lead roles (Dibia 2000:8).<sup>24</sup> However, since there is no such performance in the film, one must conclude that Limbak's memory of the events in the early 1930s was incorrect, an understandable lapse considering that he was very old in the 1990s when Dibia interviewed him (also see Anon. 2003). It is also possible that dramatic elements from the Ramayana story were shot but not included in the final cut. This would explain experimentation with the genre in connection with the film, as well as Limbak's statement that a *kecak* was actually performed for the film. What is certain in any case is that at this time (1931), people had begun to experiment with the *cak* and began to develop it as an art form, independent of the ritual (see also Grader 1964:595).

When comparing existing sources from the 1920s with early recordings of the *kecak* from the 1930s it becomes apparent that they are much more similar than one might think, yet these similarities occur only in some elements. In general, what has been adopted from the *sanghyang dedari* and transferred into the *kecak* is the *cak* chorus alone, including the *pengecak* movements and the *pola-pola cak*. No trace of the female choir, the dancers and the stages of the ritual can be found in the *kecak*. As for the *cak* music, structures similar to those on Kunst's 1925 *sanghyang* recordings can be found in *kecak* even today. These structures—like *pengalang*, *lagu pokok* and *pola cak*—have been enhanced; further roles for *pengecak-pengecak*, like the beat keeper *juru klempung*, have been added and formalized. (For an overview of music elements in *kecak*, see the transcription of *pola-pola cak* in combination with *juru klempung* and *juru gending* in the appendix).

In terms of movement vocabulary and repertoire, the most valuable source for identifying which elements from the *sanghyang* male choir have been adapted for *kecak* is a documentary film entitled *Bali*, made by Vicky Baum in 1935 (figure 2). The film features a *kecak* performance as it was usually carried out for tourists, except that Baum arranged for it to be filmed in daylight.<sup>25</sup> First of all, the basic seated position of the up to 150 *pengecak-pengecak*, organized in several concentric circles has been kept. In addition, watching members of the *cak* chorus move; it is obvious that several movements associated with the *sanghyang* choir have been adapted for *kecak*.<sup>26</sup> The *ngoyog*, for example, is the most basic movement of the *pengecak-pengecak* portion today. It is a fast, upper-body motion, with side-to-side and bouncing up-and-down movements while the lower body remains still. This element can be seen in rudimentary form carried out by most of the *cak* members in the 1926 Mullens documentary (figure 1). In Baum's film we see all *pengecak-pengecak* carrying out this movement in a much more intense and consistent man-

24. Limbak was a very influential person for Dibia, and much of the historical knowledge Dibia gathered on the *kecak* was taken from Limbak's memories of events (I Wayan Dibia, pers. comm., 16 April 2001).

25. A lively description of a rehearsal for a *kecak* night-time performance can be found in a letter from Vicky Baum to her husband, Hans Richard Lert (Bali, 11 April 1935). The letter is part of the Vicky Baum collection kept at the Akademie der Künste in Berlin.

26. For some more *kecak* movements, also see Dibia (2000:21–22). Additional information has been gathered through collaboration and numerous formal and informal interviews with Ida Bagus Nyoman Mas in 2000–2001 and I Made Sidia in 2009.



**Figure 2.** Still photograph of a *kecak* performance from the documentary, *Bali* (Baum 1935).

ner. The same goes for the second most obvious movement, the *ngelayak*; *ngelayak* is the same as *ngoyog*, but adds straightened arms, raised above the head, and hands with fingers spread, turned by rotating the wrist. As with the body in *ngoyog*, this turning movement is carried out so quickly that the hands look as if they are shaking. Many other group movements, as well as elaborations of basic, individual movements, have been included in the *kecak* choreographies of Baum's film. Finally, replacing the female dancers of the *sanghyang*, a few solo dancers, not visually identifiable from the rest of the *pengecak-pengecak* while seated, rise from within the group and depict elements from the Ramayana storyline. The movements of the solo dancers resemble those of a *baris*<sup>27</sup> dancer; together they turned the *kecak* into a dramatic dance performance.

Continuing along the timeline of the *kecak*'s early development, shortly after *kecak* performance in Bedulu was established, the people of Bona, under the guidance of organizer and businessman I Nengah Mudarya (Siregar, Fajar and Wirata 1993:60), founded their own *kecak* troupe and promoted it heavily with the help of tourist agents.<sup>28</sup> The troupe from Bona added some significant artistic features—for

27. *Baris* is a male dance form that derived from a group dance *baris gede* and has developed into a challenging and sophisticated male solo dance, equally high in importance as the *legong* for female dancers (Bandem and deBoer 1981:93).

28. I Made Sidia of Bona mentions Mudarya in connection with the development of *kecak* in Bona, both on an artistic and an organizational level: "[the *kecak*] in Bona was fostered by Bapak Nengah Mudarya, who was the first to have contacts with tourists and started to develop the *kecak* on the level of composition and choreography" (I Made Sidia, pers. comm., 19 October 2009). ("Di Bona yang di motori oleh Bapak Nengah Mudarya, yang pertama punya kenalan Touris baru mulai Tari Kecak dikembangkan dengan komposisi, Koreografinya.")

example, costuming of the lead characters<sup>29</sup>—and was key in establishing *kecak* as a tourist attraction. Therefore, while Limbak, Spies, and the people of Bedulu must be credited with developing the *kecak* as a performance, I Nengah Mudarya and the villagers of Bona developed this basic performance further, adapting the *kecak* even more to Western tastes and promoting it professionally for the tourist industry (see, e.g., Dibia 2000:9).

By 1934 the *kecak* as independent dance performance was already established, as revealed in a text by Spies from the same year, where he writes about performance genres in the Gianyar region: “The ketjak, the male gesticulating choir that functions as accompaniment to the *sanghyang* dances ... has in the village of Bedoeloe ... been developed into an independent, secular play, mostly presenting short episodes from the Ramayana” (Spies 1934).<sup>30</sup> Since Spies still uses the term *sanghyang* when talking about the *cak* elements of the film *Insel der Dämonen* in a letter to his brother Leo Spies in 1932,<sup>31</sup> it can be concluded that in the period between 1932 and 1934, *kecak* had not only developed into an independent genre, but had also been given its name.

From the outset, and right after its separation from ritual and the addition of a storyline, *kecak* seems to have been performed for a Western audience only. It is possible that *kecak* was performed for a Balinese audience early on, but there is not yet any evidence. All descriptions, photographs, and films of the period show either tourist audiences or none at all. If there are Balinese spectators to be seen in historical visual documents, they are gathered in the distant background, mostly standing, as if watching a rehearsal from the sidelines.

The establishment of several *kecak* groups generated competition almost immediately; even in Bedulu, two rival groups performed different plots soon after *kecak*’s genesis (Spies and de Zoete 1938:83). Competition between groups and villages, and early forms of advertising and cooperation with Balinese tour organizers in the late 1930s, made *kecak* a must-see for tourists visiting the island. Spies himself writes that *kecak*, “under the nickname of the ‘monkey dance,’” was regularly performed for tourists as an “independent aesthetic form” (ibid.) as early as 1938. Accordingly, descriptions of *kecak* performances of that period can be found in published travel diaries. One example is Freiherr Veltheim-Ostrau’s vivid description of a *kecak* from 1938 (Veltheim-Ostrau 1943:73); another is a portrayal by Bruce Lockhart, who was on Bali in 1935–36 and who witnessed a *kecak* performance in Bedulu (Lockhart 1936:345). That the *kecak* was performed for tourists and visitors to the island did not change in the course of the following thirty

29. Which can be seen on a picture that shows the *kecak* of Bona around 1935. The photograph is stored under image code 5848 at the KIT Amsterdam.

30. “De ketjak, het gesticulerende mannenkoor, dat als begeleiding bij sanghijangdansen fungeert (Tjeloe, Katéwél, Soekawati, Bone, Bedoeloe) heeft zich in het dorp Bedoeloe, ... zeer fascinerend, wereldlijk spel ontwikkeld, meestal korte episoden uit het Ramayana voorstellend.”

31. Letter from Walter Spies to Leo Spies with no date, but dateable as August 1932 by means of secondary sources studied and assembled by David Sandberg, Leo Spies’s grandson and head of the Leo-und-Walter-Spies Archiv in Berlin (David Sandberg, pers. comm., 28 February 2004).

years, however politically and socially turbulent life on Bali came to be. In the late 1960s, however, a great innovation took place that led to the currently known *kecak ramayana*.

### ***Kecak ramayana* standardizations**

In the 1960s Indonesia's political situation was fragile, with rival forces becoming increasingly violent. Although Sukarno, the first president of the Republic of Indonesia, began promoting Bali as a visitor destination, tourism did not prosper (Picard 1996:42–43). Indonesian tensions culminated in a military coup d'état in 1965 and General Suharto's rise to the presidency. In the years following, many people were imprisoned or killed, most of them suspected members of the communist party.<sup>32</sup> On Bali alone, the number of people killed is estimated at 40,000 to 100,000 (Robinson 1995:273). Tourists are unlikely to visit regions in such social and political turmoil, and performances dwindled.<sup>33</sup> However, when the sociopolitical situation stabilized in the late 1960s, tourism began to prosper again and an increasing number of cultural performances were provided for those visiting Bali. *Kecak* was rediscovered as a potentially successful tourist performance in 1969, the same year that Denpasar opened its international airport. The spark that caused a surge in the development of *kecak* was the merging of *kecak* and *sendratari ramayana*<sup>34</sup> into a new, more attractive performance for tourists. Bandem and deBoer describe the process of integrating *sendratari ramayana* with *kecak*:

In 1969 students returning to Singapadu from Denpasar at the conclusion of their studies<sup>35</sup> made great changes to the local Cak performance which were widely imitated. At that time the single Ramayana episode was lengthened to represent the whole epic tale, from the banishment of Rama to the death of Rawana. The Sendratari

32. On the political events that led to the military coup d'état and the following propaganda that for many years accused the Indonesian communist party of attempting to overthrow the Sukarno government, see Cribb (1990); for the situation on Bali, see Robinson (1995:181–217).

33. Some recordings that have been published internationally from that time period show that not all *kecak* groups disseminated and that *kecak* as an art form probably continued to be performed on a small scale (see discography in Bakan 2009:106). Yet, that a significant cut in performance practice must have taken place is shown by the fact that none of the twenty groups I worked with in 2001 existed before the 1960s. This means that most, if not all groups that existed before the late 1960s—as for example the group from Bona which was recorded by Joachim Ernst Berendt in 1962 for the LP published by Philips, *The Music from Bali*—stopped performing.

34. *Sendratari* is an acronym composed of the words *seni* (art), *drama* (drama), and *tari* (dance). Its first form was developed in 1961 on Java and combined several dance and dramatic performances into one new genre. This Javanese form of *sendratari* was then adapted to Balinese dance forms in 1962. The Balinese version of the *sendratari* that is based on the Ramayana plot (*sendratari ramayana*) developed in 1965 (Bandem and deBoer 1981:86).

35. Although it is not stated explicitly, the students mentioned were most likely alumni from the ISI Denpasar.





**Figure 3.** Standard *kecak ramayana* performance by Sekaha Cak Taman Kaja in 2010 (photo by: Kendra Stepputat).

costumes were brought into use, and a great deal of new music from the Sendratari repertoire was adapted for the huge chorus. (Bandem and deBoer 1981:147)

From 1970 onwards the *kecak ramayana* was not only popularized, but standardized—the ever increasing numbers of performance groups eliminating all significant differences in storyline, choreography, music, costume design, and even length of performance (figure 3).<sup>36</sup> There are two reasons for the establishment of a standard *kecak* version. First, most groups founded in the 1960s and 1970s were taught by teachers from Bona and had learned the same performance elements (Dibia 2000:9). Second, and more importantly, travel agents continued to have a great deal of influence on those performing arts connected to tourism. According to Bandem and deBoer, travel agents forced the new *kecak ramayana* choreography on the groups by successfully playing them off against each other: “These innovations were adopted almost everywhere within a few months under pressure from the travel agents, who threatened to halt the buses to villages refusing to adapt their play to the newer style” (Bandem and deBoer 1981:147). In an interview, I Ketut Sandhi, *ketua sekaha* (head) of the Sekaha Cak Trene Jenggala, explained how his group was indirectly forced into performing the “Kepandung Sita” (Abduction of Sita) plot. When asked if the group ever changed the plot, he answered: “Yes, it was changed. In the beginning we had the traditional *kecak*, without any costumes ...

36. Several groups have started to use new plots. Some groups, in order to stand out from other, rival groups, will occasionally include new elements of music or choreography. These minor additions are usually copied quickly by other groups, resulting in minimal developments that do not disturb the general conformity among *kecak* groups.

We once had a storyline from the Mahabharata, the topic “Arjuna Wiwaha,” which focuses on the time when Arjuna approached Mount Indrakila” (I Ketut Sandhi, pers. comm., 21 July 2001).<sup>37</sup> Explaining why they stopped performing “Arjuna Wiwaha,” he stated: “We didn’t continue because all other *sekaha cak* were already performing the Ramayana! No one performed the Mahabharata any more. We were not courageous enough to perform that.”<sup>38</sup>

### Performance and performers: Kependung Sita

*Kecak ramayana* performances are staged by around twenty groups on Bali, most based in southern Bali in either Gianyar or Badung district. In 2001, sixteen of the twenty groups I filmed and interviewed performed “Kependung Sita,” an abbreviated version of the entire Ramayana epic, one to seven times a week, with an average of three performances a week per group.<sup>39</sup>

Most of these groups are organized as *sekaha cak*.<sup>40</sup> *Sekaha* (also *seka* or *sekehe*) can best be translated as “association” (Hobart, Ramsayer, and Leeman 2001:93), “corporate group” (Geertz 1980:158), or “club or organization ... for which membership is voluntary” (Tenzer 2000:454). The second most important form of organization for a *kecak* group is the *banjar*. A *banjar* is a subdivision of a village, consisting of fifty to five hundred families living in the same neighbourhood (Eiseman 1995:73). Every family must be part of a *banjar*, and while all members of a *banjar* have certain duties to the community, they also profit from the mutual help of fellow members.<sup>41</sup> In general, the majority of both *sekaha* and *banjar kecak* groups are not professionally trained in music or dance. Group members usually represent a variety of professions and educational levels, and have diverse levels of music and dance skill. The general goal of most groups and their members is to raise money, either for every member of the group individually or, more commonly, for the community, and to do so on a collective basis. Participation in *kecak*

37. “Pernah berubah sekali. Kami pertama memang, kan, kecak tradisional itu tanpa pakai costume ... pernah kami mengangkat polanya untuk anoh, Mahabharata, yang temanya ada Arjuna Wiwaha, pada waktu Arjuna itu bertapa di gunung Indrakila.”

38. “Tidak dilanjutkan karena semua kecak-kecak itu sudah mengambil epos Ramayana! Nggak lagi mengambil Mahabarata! Sehingga sekaha kami juga belum berani mementaskan seperti itu.”

39. I conducted my main field research in 2000–2001, being back to Bali for shorter periods in 2002, 2003, 2006, 2007, and 2010. In this ten-year period, some of the groups with which I worked and conducted interviews have stopped performing regularly (e.g., the Sekaha Cak Puspita Jaya), other groups have emerged (e.g., Desa Adat Taman Kaja) and in rare cases, existing groups have learned new choreographies (e.g., the Krama Desa Adat Ubud Kaja). In general, the number of groups has stayed the same and the majority of these groups to date perform the Kependung Sita plot.

40. In 2000–2001 I conducted an interview with one member in authority (most often the leader or the person responsible for public relations) from each of the twenty *kecak* groups. The following section is based on data and information from these interviews.

41. For further detailed explanation of a *banjar* see, e.g., Hobart, Ramsayer, and Leeman (2001:85–93).



groups is also a means to stimulate a sense of community and is valued by some as a cultural leisure activity.

A lack of music and dance experience among many *kecak* group members can lead to a lack of professionalism, which is often so extreme that tourists begin to avoid performances, or tour guides and agencies stop cooperating with the group; both scenarios can be fatal because groups rely mostly on personal recommendations and collaboration with tourist agencies and guides.<sup>42</sup> Some *kecak* groups, especially those located in the central Ubud area, have the great advantage of having many music and dance professionals among their members. Groups located in more remote areas will at best have been trained by a well-known teacher invited to the village to set up the whole performance. Quite often the group will be hard pressed to meet the teacher's demands and, even then, any initial skill or quality in the performance will quickly evaporate with the lack of sustained musical or choreographic guidance. I Made Suada, *sekretaris* (secretary) of Sekaha Cak Eka Bhakti Budaya pointed out: "In this group we are, how to say, a little slow, but that is because we are no artists ... What we have been taught ... I would say, experienced a little adjustment, although we did not intentionally lower the quality we have been given" (I Made Suada, pers. comm., 8 September 2001).<sup>43</sup> The constant flux of membership can also lead to diminished standards. In other cases, a good, local *kecak* teacher who provides ongoing support can compensate for a lack of musical and dance experience. Leader of Sekaha Cak Puspita Jaya, Ida Bagus Nyoman Mas, explained that "without rehearsals the *sekaha* would forget what I taught them in the beginning, [instead of] holding on [to what they had been taught]—it gets simple, for a high quality performance, we have to continually correct" (Ida Bagus Nyoman Mas, pers. comm., 10 May 2001).<sup>44</sup> Yet another reason contributing to a general lack of quality is performance frequency; if a group performs the exact same thing more than three times a week over several years, they are likely to get bored with the act of performing.

*Kecak ramayana* is the *kecak* that most people both in and outside of Bali know. Considering developments after the Second World War and the standardization process that took place in the late 1960s, one might get the impression that *kecak* is a static performing art, stuck in fulfilling the expectations of a non-Balinese audience that comes to see what others before them have seen or, alternatively, stuck in what Balinese *kecak* groups think are tourists' expectations.<sup>45</sup>

42. Having watched innumerable *kecak* performances over the years, and having talked about quality issues with *kecak* professionals and entrepreneurs alike, as well as learning Balinese *legong* dance, *gamelan gong kebyar*, *gamelan beleganjur*, and *pola-pola cak*, I consider myself qualified to judge the quality of a *kecak* performance in terms of effort, commitment of performers, diversity of musical elements, musical precision, and dancing.

43. "Kita ini agak, kalau bilang lambat, tapi kita kan bukan orang seni. ... Jadi yang dulu diajarkan ... kurang lebih, saya pastikan, mengalami sedikit nilai pergeserannya, walaupun tidak ada maksud tertentu untuk mengurangi nilainya yang diberikan."

44. "Karena tanpa ada latihan sekaha itu nanti lupa dia apa yang saya berikan pada awalnya dia lupa, mempertahankan—jadi simpel, untuk kualitas pertunjukan bagus perlu kita koreksi terus."

45. For a more detailed analysis of the connection between tourism and *kecak* and tourists'

### The other *kecak*: *Kecak kreasi*

But there is the “other” *kecak* that actually appeals to a Balinese audience, where artists use *kecak* basics creatively. Developed around the same time that classical *kecak* became the standardized *kecak ramayana*—that is, the 1970s—this alternative form of *kecak* has only recently been given a name: *kecak kreasi* or *kecak kontemporer*.<sup>46</sup> In contrast to *kecak ramayana*, *kecak kreasi* is generally aimed toward a Balinese audience, though it draws tourists or expatriates as well. As far as I have seen, *kecak kreasi* is not bound to any ritual or religious performance contexts. It is instead staged for pure entertainment and attracts mostly people of varying origin and social background, who are interested in Balinese contemporary arts. In order to show both the diversity of and similarity between *kecak kreasi* approaches, I will present three different choreographers and their *kecak* works.

The first person to compose and choreograph a *kecak kreasi* was the famous Javanese dancer, choreographer, and film-maker Sardono W. Kusumo.<sup>47</sup> In 1970, Kusumo worked on Bali with a *kecak* group from Teges village (*banjar* Teges Kanginan). Drawing upon his experience with several types of modern dance and combining them with *kecak* movements, he developed a new form of *kecak*,<sup>48</sup> based on improvisational elements and less restricted movement repertoire and costumes. Kusumo’s adapted plot focuses on the fight between the two monkey brothers, Subali and Sugriwa, in one episode of the Ramayana epic. The *kecak* group of that time, Teges Kanginan (Cak Teges), is now known as Cak Rina and is named after its present leader and one of its main protagonists, I Ketut Rina, who became a member of the group as a boy (I Ketut Rina, pers. comm., 18 August 2001). Cak Rina performs the Subali and Sugriwa plot today on the ARMA stage in Ubud, twice a month, most astonishingly for an audience consisting mostly of tourists.

Since the 1970s, several other Balinese choreographers have followed Kusumo’s approach, among them I Wayan Dibia, teacher and former rector of the Institut Seni Indonesia (ISI) Denpasar. Dibia has choreographed a vast number of *kecak kreasi* since the mid-1970s (Dibia 2000:58–62). Like Kusumo, he has broadened the movement repertoire, but most of his choreographies do not focus on improvisational parts. Instead, Dibia combines *kecak* with other genres, working out new approaches to *kecak* basics every time he creates a new *kecak*. In an interview, he described his influences and approaches, stating that he was inspired by the freedom the choreographer has to use the body of the *pengecak-pengecak* flexibly, having them move around the stage, rather than being seated all the time. In addition, Dibia said that many of the movements he uses are an “imitation of

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expectations when watching *kecak* performances, see Steputat (2011).

46. It is unclear when these two interchangeable terms appeared and in what context. In any case, both terms are frequently used synonymously among Balinese performing artists.

47. For biographical notes see “Pengantar Penerbit” by Sidharta (Kusumo 2004:viii–ix) and Sardono Waluyo Kusumo on the Prince Claus Fund for Cultural Development’s website; Kusumo received the Prince Claus Award in 1997: <http://www.princeclausfund.org/en/programmes/awards> (accessed December 2011).

48. See a thorough, personal description of the process in Kusumo (2004:33–38).

nature,” and described his approach as using “very contemporary kind of concepts” in dance (I Wayan Dibia, pers. comm., 16 April 2001).<sup>49</sup> In 2001, for example, he staged a production entitled “Sunda and Upasunda—An Evening of Legend and Dance.” The performance was given by students and staff of the ISI Denpasar and performed in Nusa Dua on 27 April.<sup>50</sup> The performance included elements of *kecak*, *legong*, *jauk*, and the *barong* and *rangda* play. Although this approach is far from a standard Kependung Sita performance, it is still based on basic *kecak* principles and stands within the Balinese dance tradition. Dibia has also worked with *kecak* outside the tradition, for example in an international production entitled “Body Tjak,” where he worked closely with the American body percussionist Keith Terry.<sup>51</sup> This collaboration focuses on *cak* music and some basic, mostly percussive *cak* movements; far removed from the story-driven *kecak* that speaks to tourists, “Body Tjak” addresses a culturally interested international audience.

The third example is a *kecak kreasi* choreographed by I Made Sidia. Sidia is currently one of the most well-known and sought-after choreographers on Bali, head of the theatre department at the ISI (I Made Sidia, pers. comm., June 2010). For the annual Bali Arts Festival<sup>52</sup> in 2010, Sidia created a *kecak kreasi* entitled *Kecak Kreasi Rebat* based on an episode from the Mahabharata where the two demon brothers, Sunda and Upasunda, kill one another in a fight over a woman (figure 4). Sidia makes use of the *kecak* movement repertoire and adds contemporary dance elements—very expressive and extroverted movements compared to the restricted forms in classical Balinese dances such as the *legong*. He also incorporates a group of female *pengecak-pengecak*, which not only adds to the visual impression, but also alters the acoustic impact of the performance.

Each of these choreographers utilizes a variety of elements and has different approaches to *kecak kreasi*. Nevertheless, there are continuities that allow for a comparison of *kecak ramayana* and *kecak kreasi*, and can, in turn, be related to classical 1930s *kecak*. In terms of plot, *kecak kreasi* often makes use of elements and short episodes from either the Ramayana or Mahabharata, while *kecak ramayana* mostly depicts the whole Ramayana story in an abbreviated manner. The focus is often more on individual character studies or conflicts between individuals, which some may interpret as being a more profound approach to the plot than merely depicting a series of events, as in *kecak ramayana*. It is interesting to note that in 1930s *kecak*—that is, before standardization—episodes of the Mahabharata or Ramayana were used in the same manner as they are in *kecak kreasi* today.

49. The interview was conducted in English.

50. Exclusive performance for the “IBM Global Golden Circle.” I was allowed to document several rehearsals and the performance.

51. See the website of Crosspulse, the company that produced “Body Tjak”: <http://www.crosspulse.com/html/bodytjak.html> (accessed December 2011). See also a video of a later performance, recorded 22–24 October 1999 in the Theatre Artaud, San Francisco, published by Crosspulse as *Body Tjak: The Celebration* (Dibia and Terry 2001).

52. The Pesta Kesenian Bali (PKB) was established in 1979, primarily to attract a Balinese audience and thereby raise the standards and value of local Balinese performing arts (Kagami 2003:70).



**Figure 4.** *Kecak Kreasi Rebat* by I Made Sidia in 2010 (photo by: Kendra Steputat).

In most *kecak kreasi* performances, no elaborate costumes are used and solo dancers are not differentiated from the *cak* chorus. All performers wear simple loincloths; in the case of female protagonists a shirt is added. This is in opposition to the *kecak ramayana*, where a clear distinction between soloists and *cak* chorus is made—the solo dancers wearing complete costumes, while the *cak* group members wear loincloths. Again, by virtue of the simplification of costumes, *kecak kreasi* comes closer to 1930s *kecak*, where, in terms of dress, the solo dancers were not distinguishable from other *pengecak-pengecak*.

Concerning movement repertoire and choreography, we have a clear and linear development: in the 1930s *kecak*, a very limited movement repertoire and few group choreographies were used. In *kecak ramayana* performances, the *cak* chorus is generally used as living scenery for the solo elements, including a variety of more elaborate group choreographies. The solo dancers in turn perform in the refined but set and standardized movement repertoire of the *sendratari*. By contrast, the *kecak kreasi* movement repertoire includes contemporary dance movements and often strong improvisational elements for all performers.

All three previously mentioned choreographers (Kusumo, Dibia, and Sidia) describe their approach as using “natural movements,” depicting the movements of animals, plants, etc., as well as movements that are rooted in the motions of daily routine, in opposition to the very abstract and restricted classical Balinese dance movement repertoire (I Wayan Dibia, pers. comm., 16 April 2001; I Made Sidia, pers. comm., June 2010; Kusumo 2004:34). Even group choreography is generally more ambitious and based on a strong interaction between soloist and *cak* choir.

Musical accompaniment follows the same shift towards complexity as does dance. Where the 1930s *kecak* made use of a few unison parts and was still strongly related to the *sanghyang dedari*, the *kecak ramayana* includes more elaborate musical elements, many taken from other Balinese musical genres. In *kecak kreasi* performances, more and diverse musical elements are included, some improvised as well, but based mostly on newly composed and further-developed *cak* material.

The pre-eminent disparity between *kecak ramayana* and *kecak kreasi* lies in the nature of the performing groups. Groups performing *kecak kreasi* today are mostly professional dancers and musicians brought together for that one performance. *Kecak ramayana* groups, on the other hand, are invariably comprised of members of a village community, many of them with little or no music or dance education. While the tendency is clear, exceptions do exist.<sup>53</sup> A good and charismatic group leader with a dedicated group can still present a *kecak ramayana* full of energy and intensity, comparable to that of any professional group, as can be seen in 1930s *kecak*, where Bedulu village members formed a skilled and artistically convincing group under the leadership of I Wayan Limbak.

The *kecak kreasi* or *kecak kontemporer* can hardly be considered a “genre”; it is still a minor element in the vast canon of Balinese performing arts and much less prominent than the *kecak ramayana*. Too few artists utilize this form, their approaches being based on urban, academically informed concepts, inspired by Western ideas of a contemporary, aesthetic, and context-free use of existing performing arts material. Though similarities can be found, the approaches differ too much to give *kecak kreasi* a distinct outward appearance as an independent dance form. In addition, the most prominent choreographers in *kecak kreasi* do not communicate and relate to one another. They are individuals working with *kecak* material, each of them in his own time, own manner, and own frame of reference. Yet they all utilize a back-to-the-roots approach, returning to elements of 1930s *kecak* in terms of costume and plot, combining these with prevailing Western ideas of improvisation and modern dance theatre and adapting them to the principles of Balinese dance and music traditions. As diverse as they are, these examples nevertheless show that *kecak* appeals to artists whose claim it is to create something new,

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53. For example, the Cak Rina as well as the Sekaha Cak Puspita Jaya. These groups have other approaches and higher standards due to their able leaders and the commitment they received from every member, which has explicitly been stated by both Ida Bagus Nyoman Mas (pers. comm., 10 May 2001) and I Ketut Rina (pers. comm., 18 August 2001). The Sekaha Cak Puspita Jaya, under the guidance of Ida Bagus Nyoman Mas, unfortunately stopped performing after the 2002 and 2005 terrorist bombings on Bali led to a sharp, short-term drop in tourist arrivals (Stepputat 2007:279–82). Until then the group performed regularly for a tourist audience at the Uma Dewi stage in Kesiman, Denpasar, and also collaborated with contemporary artists, e.g., the highly controversial performing arts event “Sikat Gigi,” organized by I Nyoman Erawan in 2001 (see Darmawan 2001). Ida Bagus Nyoman Mas is a teacher at the ISI Denpasar and one more important artist choreographing *kecak kontemporer*. His latest work, *Karya Cak Lubdhaka*, was performed by a group of ISI students and staff in April 2010. For a description of the work, see Gus Mas on the ISI website: <http://jurnal.isi-dps.ac.id/index.php/artikel/article/view/300/409> (accessed December 2011).



highly valued, and perhaps even provocative, and to do so for a mainly Balinese audience.

### Conclusion: *Kecak* for tourists—and for Balinese

The *kecak* is a dramatic dance performance initially developed and staged for a tourist audience that emerged as a significant factor in Bali's tourist economy. It is quite likely that Spies and his companions did not plan on developing it as such, and instead were focused on the artistic and aesthetic qualities of performance. Nevertheless, *kecak* turned into a source of income for Balinese villagers and was standardized as *kecak ramayana* in the 1970s; it continues to be performed in that manner today—as a static, easy-to-sell tourist show.

An outgrowth of *kecak*, the *kecak kreasi* or *kecak kontemporer*, developed contemporaneously with *kecak ramayana* in the 1970s and continues to be performed as well, increasingly so, but for a primarily Balinese audience. I opened this paper with the question of why *kecak* is not attractive to Balinese audiences. Considering the parallel developments of *kecak* over the last forty years, the question must be re-phrased: Why is *kecak ramayana* not attractive to a Balinese audience? The answer to this modified question is relatively simple. The *kecak ramayana* does not attract Balinese audiences because it is seen as something that one performs for tourists in order to raise money for the community—it is work. The *kecak ramayana* is by definition—in the eyes of Balinese *kecak* performers and other locals alike—a genre that is *traditionally* staged for tourists and has always been such, in opposition to other genres such as the *barong* and *rangda* dance. The *kecak ramayana* is not considered a performing arts genre that is interesting to watch, let alone worthy of paying the relatively high entrance fee demanded of tourists. It is very understandable that what one does for income several times a week is not very desirable as leisure consumption.

*Kecak* in its *kontemporer* form, however, is appreciated by a Balinese audience. Examples from forty years of *kecak kreasi* performance show that if *kecak* is used in a creative, sometimes provocative, but always innovative manner, it is able to attract a Balinese audience, just like any other contemporary Balinese genre. Thanks to the work of several professional, capable, and daring local choreographers, *kecak*, through *kecak kreasi*, has been reintegrated into a local performance context. It nevertheless remains to be seen if the *kecak kreasi*—which up till now has been marginal—will gain more influence in contemporary Balinese performing arts, and if this lively art form might one day even influence the static *kecak ramayana* and stimulate developments there as well.

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### Abstract in Indonesian

Kecak adalah salah satu bentuk drama tari yang paling populer yang dipertunjukkan kepada para turis di Bali. Kecak dikembangkan secara bersama oleh seniman-seniman Bali dan pendatang-pendatang dari Barat, yang paling menonjol adalah Walter Spies dan I Wayan Limbak, yang menetap di Bali di tahun 1930an, yang dengan tujuan utama memenuhi minat dan harapan dari penonton dari Barat. Sejak akhir 1960-an, Kecak sudah distandarisasikan ke *Kecak Ramayana* seperti yang dikenal saat ini, didorong oleh pertimbangan-pertimbangan ekonomi. *Kecak Ramayana* tidak menarik bagi orang Bali dalam arti artistik, melainkan dianggap sebagai cara tradisional untuk menghasilkan pendapatan bagi masyarakat. Sebaliknya, *Kecak Kreasi* atau *Kecak Kontemporer* telah dikembangkan oleh koreografer lokal di "luar" dari kecak tradisional sejak 1970-an. Dengan penggunaan kecak baik dalam unsur tradisional pra-1960an dan tari kontemporer barat, Kecak berakar dalam adegan pertunjukan kontemporer kesenian Bali. *Kecak Kreasi* terutama menarik bagi masyarakat Bali, yang mana menunjukkan bahwa kecak adalah suatu genre yang dapat menambah pendapatan di sektor pariwisata; dalam bentuk kontemporer, kecak dihargai oleh semua penonton berdasarkan nilai seninya.

(translated by Rudi Samapati)

**Appendix.** Transcription of *kecak* patterns in relation to the basic *kecak* melody and beat.

The melody (*lagu cak*, noted in Balinese *grantangan* notation at the bottom) is sung by the *juru gending*. The melody repeats over eight measures, voiced by the *juru klempong* (top line), starting at the most prominent beat in the cycle, the eighth. The six different *cak* patterns noted here are voiced simultaneously and are named after the number of *cak* calls (e.g., *telu*, Balinese for “three”) each part voices within one repetition of its structure (indicated with a grey box). Each *cak* part consists of two or three parts (*polos*, *sangsih*, plus *sanglot*) that together form the interlocking (*kotekan*) structure of the resulting *cak* pattern.

**Pola-pola Cak**

The score is organized into columns numbered 1 through 8. The parts include:

- juru klempong**: pung (on every eighth measure)
- cak besik**: polos, sangsih
- cak telu**: polos, sanglot, sangsih
- cak lima**: polos, sangsih
- cak nem**: polos, sanglot, sangsih
- cak pitu**: polos
- cak lesung**: polos, sanglot, sangsih
- juru gending**: sirr, yang, ngir, yang, ngur, yang, nger, yang

Grey boxes indicate the structure of the cak patterns, showing how they are repeated and interlocked.