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# Balinese Shadow Theater: The Tale of Candra Bhairawa

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# Beyond Exoticism

**TUCKER-BOATWRIGHT FESTIVAL** 2018-19  
OF LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

The Department of Music  
and the 2018-19 Tucker-Boatwright Festival of Literature and the Arts  
present

## **Balinese Shadow Theater (Wayang Kulit) The Tale of Candra Bhairawa**

Featuring Shadow Master I Gusti Putu Sudarta

Saturday, January 26, 2019

7:30 p.m.

Perkinson Hall

**AS.RICHMOND.EDU/TUCKER-BOATWRIGHT**

*Wayang* ('shadow') *Kulit* ('skin') are flat leather puppets made from carved and painted rawhide. The *wayang kulit* form as it is performed on the islands of Java and Bali in Indonesia is at least 1000 years old and may have historical connections to shadow puppet forms known in India. The stories are primarily drawn from the Hindu *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* epics but also include local legends (*babad*) and tales such as the *Tantri* stories, from which many of Aesop's fables are drawn. *Wayang Kulit* is a sacred genre, performed for special ceremonies and in the inner courtyards of Balinese temples. However, it is also mass entertainment and besides philosophical and religious instruction, *wayang* also includes a healthy dose of bawdy humor and manic fight scenes.

In Balinese contexts audiences wander informally around the performance, occasionally viewing from the front to watch the shadows, occasionally sitting behind the screen with the musicians to watch the puppeteer.

Balinese shadow plays include an extensive overture of instrumental music, mantram, and dances by the *kayonan*, the abstract "tree-of-life" that creates the universe of the shadow play through its motions. The story proper begins approximately 15 minutes after the music starts.

Total performance time will be roughly 1.5 hours.

## Synopsis for tonight's play:

In the Hindu kingdom of Astina Pura, the king Yudistira and his (divine) advisor Kresna are engaged in a discussion of religious and spiritual principles. Are the subordinate kingdoms adhering to the religious rituals, in accordance to the Shiwa Paksa teaching? Yudistira dispatches his younger brothers, Arjuna and Bhima, to investigate ritual practice in the countryside. Bhima returns to report that the king Candra Bhairawa, in the Dewantara kingdom, is practicing a different set of rites. He has not erected a temple to the gods or idols in their form. What, Candra Bhairawa asks, is the point of practicing expensive, elaborate rituals, which only the ignorant believe have efficacy? According to Candra Bhairawa, the only deity worthy of worship is the One who resides simultaneously in our soul and in the sanctuary of the *Padma* (lotus) of Pure Consciousness. Spiritual yoga and meditation are, according to Candra Bhairawa, the true forms of worship (*Yogya Sanyasa*). He and all in his kingdom follow the teaching of Bajrayana Dharani from Budha Paksa, rejecting the division of society into castes.

Yudistira argues that the religious practices adopted by Candra Bhairawa are dangerous if conveyed to a populace ignorant of spiritual philosophy and unready to adopt the highly advanced (and secret) teachings of the *Yoga Sanyasa*. Kresna becomes angry upon hearing Bhima's report and prepares to make war on Candra Bhairawa and punish him for his religious transgressions.

Here begins the history of religious conflict that has continued to the present day...

*Continued ...*

*Please silence all electronic devices before the performance begins.  
Recording of any kind and photography are strictly prohibited.*

*Dalang* (shadow master) **I Gusti Putu Sudarta** was born into a family of artists in Bedulu village and has been performing music, dance, and shadow theater since he was six years old. He is a permanent faculty member in the theater department at Indonesian Institute of the Arts (Bali) and holds a masters degree in theater from the National Institute of Arts in Solo, Java. He regularly performs various forms of traditional Balinese music, mask dance, and *wayang kulit* (shadow theater) in ceremonial contexts and has taken part in several international tours and inter-cultural experimental music and theater collaborations. He has performed and taught extensively in Europe, Asia, and North America.

Sudarta is assisted this evening by Chen Yi Ma.

**Gamelan Raga Kusuma** is a community gamelan founded in 2007 by Andy McGraw and Gusti Putu Sudarta and in residence at the University of Richmond. Sudarta bestowed the name “Raga Kusuma,” which means “intense togetherness,” to the group in 2008. The ensemble has appeared in performances in Bali, the Smithsonian Institution, the Indonesian Embassy, and in several venues along the East Coast. Our Balinese gamelan ensemble was made in 2006 by Pande Sukerta, Bali’s foremost gongsmith. Our Javanese gamelan was made in the 1980s outside of Solo, Central Java, and is on loan from the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, Washington DC.

Membership in Gamelan Raga Kusuma is free and open to the public. See [www.ragakusuma.org](http://www.ragakusuma.org), our Facebook page, or email [amcgraw@richmond.edu](mailto:amcgraw@richmond.edu) for more information. Rehearsals are held Sunday and Thursday evenings 6-8 p.m. at the Global Music Studio in North Court.

**Gamelan Raga Kusuma, Gender Wayang Ensemble, Andy McGraw director:** Emily Bradford, Taylor Burton, Zack Cain, Robin Dennehy, Kyle Dosier, Brian Larson, Dan Smither, Dan Wingo.

## **Upcoming Events:**

**Traditional Balinese and Javanese Music and Dance.** Sunday, January 27, at 7 p.m., James Black Center, VCU. Free and open to the public. A full program of traditional Javanese and Balinese music and dance, featuring mask dancing by Gusti Sudarta and Javanese stringband music by Orkes Keroncong Rumput (rumputband.com).

**Free Workshops in Balinese Music and Dance.** Sunday, February 3, from 3-4:30 p.m., University of Richmond, North Court. Join Gamelan Raga Kusuma for this free, all-ages workshop. Gusti Sudarta will lead a dance workshop in the North Court Choir Room while Andy McGraw and members of Gamelan Raga Kusuma lead a music workshop in the North Court Global Music Studio. No previous music or dance experience necessary.

*Continued ...*

## 2018-2019 Tucker-Boatwright Festival of Literature and the Arts: Beyond Exoticism

Global history reveals the many ways that nations have viewed cultures different from their own as exciting or exotic, often adopting pieces of those cultures into their own. This history is particularly evident in the arts: music, film, theater, and visual arts have all drawn inspiration from creations viewed as unique or different — in a word, as “other.” As artists and scholars have long argued, this practice is socially and politically complex, with motivations ranging from the reinforcement and validation of nationhood to more individualized attempts to bolster cultural capital. So, at what point does admiration and inspiration become appropriation and misunderstanding?

*Beyond Exoticism*, this year’s Tucker-Boatwright Festival presented by the Department of Music, investigates expression across difference and recognizes the ethical ambiguity and aesthetic complexity this entails. Musical performances, public panels, film screenings, and a cross-disciplinary academic conference will highlight the dynamic and cosmopolitan histories of the many global cultures with which Western orientalist were once enamored, while also expanding its geographic scope beyond those cultures to examine the ways that contemporary artists maintain, resist, reject, and critique the impulse to exoticize others, or lend cultural legitimacy to themselves.

The Department of Music is proud to partner with many campus and community organizations to present the festival. Our on-campus partners include Modlin Center for the Arts; University Museums; Chaplaincy; Department of Religious Studies; Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; International Film Series; and International Education. Our community partners include Richmond Symphony Orchestra, Sound Arts Richmond Festival (co-sponsored by the Virginia Tourism Board), and the Hindu Cultural Center.



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