

THE 66<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SPRING FESTIVAL OF WORLD MUSIC

**Shadow Puppetry & Javanese Gamelan Music**  
Featuring :Woro Mustiko Siwi, Kasuryan Gamelan & Music of Java Students

MAY 30, 2026

**BECOMING BIMO**

**Synopsis**

*Becoming Bimo* (*Bimo Suci* in Javanese) tells the story of a devoted student's journey toward self-knowledge, independence, and spiritual understanding. Rooted in Javanese philosophy, the narrative explores the idea that recognizing one's true identity leads to a deeper understanding of humanity's place within the universe. This awareness guides individuals toward living in harmony with the natural and spiritual worlds, a concept known as *Manunggaling Kawula lan Gusti*—the unification of the individual soul with the divine.

The story of *Bimo Suci* is based on writings by Yasadipura I of Surakarta, a prominent court poet who lived during the reigns of Pakubuwono III (1749–1788) and Pakubuwono IV (1788–1820) in Central Java. Widely regarded as one of the final great poets of the Surakarta court tradition, Yasadipura I played a significant role in shaping classical Javanese literature and philosophy.

**ACT I**

**Scene 1**

Brotoseno reflects on the fate of his father, King Pandu, a respected ruler who, despite his virtue, is believed to reside in *Kawah Candradimuka*, a realm associated with suffering and spiritual trial after death. Seeking answers about life and human existence, Brotoseno turns to his teacher, Durno, who promises to reveal *Ngilmu Kasampurnaning Dumadi*—the ultimate knowledge of life—if he can find *Kayu Gung Susuhing Angin*, the mythical “great tree where the wind resides. Meanwhile, Sengkuni, the prime minister of the Kurawa kingdom, secretly urges Durno to bring about Brotoseno's downfall.

**Scene 2**

The Kurawa troops set out to follow and monitor Brotoseno's journey. As he travels through the forest in search of the sacred tree, he encounters the giant ogres Rukmuka and Rukmakala, who challenge him along the way.

**Scene 3**

After returning to Durno, Brotoseno reports that he has successfully found *Kayu Gung Susuhing Angin* and requests to receive the promised ultimate knowledge of life. Durno, however, tells him that one final task remains: he must seek *Tirta Prawitasari*, the sacred essence of holy water believed to lie at the bottom of the Minangkabau Ocean.

#### **Scene 4**

Hanoman intervenes and attempts to prevent Brotoseno from continuing to seek spiritual knowledge from Durno.

### **ACT II**

#### **Scene 5**

Brotoseno asks permission from his family before undertaking a perilous journey into the depths of the ocean to search for *Tirta Prawitasari*, the sacred holy water believed to contain the essence of ultimate spiritual knowledge.

#### **Scene 6**

Brotoseno descends into the ocean, where he confronts the giant serpent Nogo Rojo. During his journey beneath the sea, he encounters the divine figure Dewa Ruci, who grants him *Tirta Prawitasari*, the sacred holy water symbolizing spiritual enlightenment and ultimate self-knowledge.

#### **Scene 7**

Harjuno confronts Durno and demands that he fulfill his promise regarding Brotoseno's safe return after completing the spiritual quest.

#### **Scene 8**

The Kurawa request the return of their teacher, Durno.

#### **Scene 9**

Bimo encounters the troubled King Kalung Kolo, whose unhappiness reflects the broader themes of inner struggle and the search for wisdom explored throughout the story. The story concludes with Bimo reuniting with his family, followed by *Tancep Kayon*, the traditional closing scene in Javanese wayang kulit signifying the restoration of balance and the end of the performance.

### **Notes on the Musical Accompaniment**

The musical accompaniment in this performance consists primarily of traditional repertoire commonly used in Indonesian shadow puppet theatre of Central Java. In addition, two American pieces—*Wondrous Love* and *Shady Grove*—have been specially arranged for the gamelan ensemble and incorporated into the performance. It is customary for any *wayang kulit* performance to begin with an overture (an instrumental piece that sets the tone for the storyline), and in order to adhere to time constraints, the overture will begin after the official start of the concert and during the reception.

All musical selections are carefully chosen and adapted to reflect the character of the puppets, the emotional tone, and the dramatic context of each scene. The music flows continuously throughout the performance, with musicians closely attuned to rhythmic cues and signals from the dalang (puppeteer). In this way, music and puppetry operate as an integrated and interdependent artistic system, shaping a unified performance experience.

### **About Wayang Kulit**

Wayang kulit is a traditional form of shadow puppetry originating in the Javanese and Balinese cultures of Indonesia. In a wayang kulit performance, intricately carved leather puppets are rear-projected onto a taut white linen screen using a light source, traditionally an oil lamp and now often electric lighting. The dalang (puppeteer, narrator, and artistic director) manipulates the figures between the light and the screen, bringing the shadows to life through movement, voice, and storytelling. The narratives frequently explore enduring moral and spiritual themes, most commonly the struggle between good and evil.

Wayang kulit is one of many forms of wayang theatre in Indonesia, which also include wayang golek (three-dimensional wooden puppets), wayang klitik (flat wooden puppets), wayang beber (scroll-based storytelling), wayang topeng (masked dance-drama), and wayang wong (human dance-drama). Among these traditions, wayang kulit is perhaps the most widely recognized, combining elements of ritual practice, moral instruction, and entertainment.

Wayang shadow plays are most often drawn from the great Hindu epics, the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. While grounded in these classical narratives, the dalang continually contextualizes and adapts the stories, making them relevant to contemporary community, national, and global issues.

On November 7, 2003, UNESCO designated wayang—including wayang kulit (flat leather shadow puppetry), wayang klitik (flat wooden puppetry), and wayang golek (three-dimensional wooden puppetry)—as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. This recognition affirms the cultural significance of the tradition and underscores the importance of its continued preservation and transmission.

### **About the UCLA Javanese Gamelan Ensemble:**

The word *gamelan* refers to a set of musical instruments, from the islands of Java and Bali in Indonesia, made of tuned gongs, gong chimes (racks of small gongs), and metal-keyed instruments of various sizes. A performing gamelan ensemble will also include drums, xylophones, fiddles, flutes, and zithers, as well as singing (both solo and chorus). Similar ensembles exist throughout Southeast Asia, such as *piphat* in Thailand or *kulintang* in the Philippines, but none are as large as the gamelan ensembles of Java and Bali. Gamelan has been one of the main and most important expressions of Javanese society since 404 AD. Gamelan instruments serve one of three musical functions: those that provide the time structure, those that state the melody, and those that elaborate upon the melody. A gamelan varies from eight to over twenty-five instruments and players, depending on the occasion and setting. The chiming, bell-like sound texture is like no other, and is notably identifiable with Indonesia. Some repertoire played by today's groups is traditional, but gamelan is not a museum tradition; contemporary composers continually supply new repertoire, integrating influences from sources worldwide.

A complete gamelan is made up of instruments of two distinct tuning systems, *laras pelog* and *laras slendro*, with at least one common tone. The UCLA Javanese Gamelan set is called "Venerable Dark Cloud" or "Kyai Mendung". This internationally renowned set was acquired in 1958 by ethnomusicologist Mantle Hood and is considered by some to be the finest Javanese gamelan outside of Java itself. Tonight, we are using only the slendro set of instruments. By maintaining, preserving, developing, and studying gamelan music, our hope is that it will

become a means of connecting individuals within our larger community. Our goal is for students and members to discover and strengthen their own identity, and that we all can play a role in creating *hamemayu hayuning bawono*, peace and harmony in this world.

The UCLA Javanese Gamelan Ensemble (91H/161H Music of Java) is offered during the Fall, Winter, and Spring quarters as a course in the Department of Ethnomusicology, meeting on Thursdays from 11:00 am 01:40 pm. The course is open to all students, faculty, staff, and community members, and no prior experience is required. All questions and inquiries should be directed to Joko Sutrisno (joko.gamelan@gmail.com).

### **About the Artist: Woro Mustiko Siwi**

**Woro Mustiko Siwi**, who will preside as dhalang (puppet master) for this evening's performance, is a highly accomplished Indonesian musician, dancer, and wayang kulit puppeteer. Recognized in her home country as a prominent cultural figure, she has received several prestigious awards, including the 2014 Anugerah Musik Indonesia (Indonesian Music Award) and the 2017 Anugerah Kebudayaan (Cultural Award) from the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture for her mastery of traditional Javanese puppetry. Woro was born into a distinguished family of artists in Surakarta, Indonesia. Her great-grandmother, Kenyo Carito, was the first female puppeteer at the Kasunanan Surakarta Palace, and her grandfather, Joko Raharjo, was a respected puppet master. Woro began studying puppetry under her grandfather and continued her formal training at Sarotama, a renowned arts center in Surakarta. She is currently pursuing a degree in puppetry at the Indonesian Institute of the Arts, Surakarta. Woro has performed internationally, collaborating in events such as the Noah Road to Kuala Lumpur concert (2017), Erwin Gutawa's Ethnocestra concert in Eltorf, Germany (2019), the Harmonature concert at the Ancient Theatre of Philippopolis, Bulgaria (2023), the Senandung Nusantara concert at KLCC Plenary Hall, Malaysia, and the Alun-alun Nusantara performance in Los Angeles, USA (2024).

### **About the director: Joko Sutrisno**

**Joko Sutrisno**, an accomplished Javanese gamelan performer, composer, and educator, graduated from the Indonesian Institute of Arts, Surakarta-Java, in 1987. Prior to moving to the U.S. in 1995, he directed the gamelan ensemble at Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand, for 8 years. Currently he is the artistic director of Sumunar Gamelan and Dance Ensemble of Minnesota, with whom he has conducted a wide variety of gamelan classes, workshops, and residencies for both youth and adult students. He is also consulting director for gamelan ensembles at Saint Thomas University, The University of South Dakota, Concordia College (Moorhead), and Hamilton College (New York). He was recently appointed as the gamelan instructor at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music as well as at UC Riverside. Joko has received numerous local and national awards, most recently: Creative Individuals from Minnesota State Arts Board 2022 and 2024; Creative Individuals from Minnesota State Arts Board 2022 and 2023; Arts Impact for Individuals from Metropolitan Regional Arts Center, St. Paul 2022 and 2023; Arts Initiative from Minnesota State Arts Boards (2018); the 2018 Outstanding Alumni Award from his alma mater, the Indonesian Institute of Arts in Surakarta; a 2016 McKnight Composer Fellowship; and a Twin Cities Ivey Award for musical design and direction for a 2014 Green T theatre production.

### **About Kasuryan Gamelan Ensemble**

**Kasuryan Gamelan Ensemble**, Founded in 2025, Kasuryan is a community-based Javanese gamelan and dance ensemble based in Los Angeles. We offer community classes, performances and workshops. Whether you're enjoying a concert or taking a gamelan or dance class, our goal is to share the rich sounds, stories and traditions of Indonesia in an open and relaxed environment.

Rooted in the Javanese word surya (sun) meaning glowing and radiant light, we strive to create music that warms the soul, illuminates the heart, and uplifts the spirit. Our work is guided by the philosophy of “hamemayu hayuning bawono” the Javanese ideal of nurturing harmony and beauty in the world. We believe in the power of music and art, and the meaningful ways they heal and connect people, communities, cultures, and our inner selves.

### **Kasuryan Gamelan Musicians**

Amirah Ali  
Geoff Dent  
Laurel Grinnell\*  
Alice Hunt  
Stephanie Kao  
Micah Zvi Keren  
Mel Liu  
Julian Lozos  
Edmundo Luna\*  
Tri Martodikromo  
Onny Marwayana  
Mindarti McClean  
Gregory McCourt  
Samantha Reavis  
Cailyn Schmidt  
Jilian Risigari-Gai  
Joko Sutrisno

### **UCLA Gamelan Ensemble**

Madison E Bottenberg  
Madeline Bramwell  
Luna A Brenes  
Alexandra Brookes  
Esther A Choi  
Robert M Darling  
Ronan D Ereneta  
Onny N Marwayana  
Stanley Nightcap  
Katerina Press  
Samantha B Reavis  
Nisha G Reddy  
Athena Rem  
Jillian M Risigari Gai Lopez  
Noah A Ross

Cailyn M Schmidt  
Alina Tszyan  
Tsam Wa A Wu  
Brady T Ward

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