

The Creative Process in the Creation of Tabuh Lelambatan Kreasi Works by I Ketut Gede Asnawa

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Abstract: Traditional music is experiencing rapid development from various aspects, including the creative process of making original works and the psychological expression of the artist in the creation process. This research examines the creative process in working on lelabatan music by I Ketut Gede Asnawa, with the aim of analyzing the stages of creation and exploring the knowledge contained in the work. The method used is qualitative with an ethnomusicology approach, which emphasizes direct involvement in the cultural context. The research location was determined purposively, while data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and in-depth documentation. The results showed that the creativity process includes three main modalities: imagination, skill, and sensitivity. In addition, "The Four P's of Creativity" approach (person, process, press, and product) plays an important role in the dynamics of creation. The resulting works are widely appreciated for demonstrating artistic integrity, depth of process, and high sincerity in realizing monumental works of art.

Keywords: creativity process, creaton, tabuh lelabatan, I Ketut Gede Asnawa

History Article: Submitted 11 February 2025 | Revised 18 May 2025 | Accepted 7 September 2025

How to Cite: Manik, I. M. D. R., Yudarta, I. G., & Ardini, N. W. (2025). The Creative Process in the Creation of Tabuh Lelambatan Kreasi Works by I Ketut Gede Asnawa. *Journal of Aesthetics, Creativity and Art Management*, 4(2), 124-131. <https://doi.org/10.59997/jacam.v4i2.6068>.

Introduction

Balinese gamelan is an integral part of Balinese life—social, religious, economic, educational, and artistic—passed down from generation to generation (Kartawan, 2022: 1). In terms of (1) social aspects, this can be seen from the relationship between artists, both in performance activities and in forming communities or gamelan artist organizations, where all of these things constitute social interaction; (2) the religious aspect, where Balinese gamelan plays an important role in Hindu religious rituals in Bali, such as Dewa Yadnya, Pitra Yadnya, Rsi Yadnya, Bhuta Yadnya, and Manusa Yadnya; (3) the economic aspect, where gamelan can be used to support the community's economy, either as musicians, composers, or gamelan product makers.

This is also supported by Bali's position as one of the world's tourist destinations, where performing arts, including traditional music, are often included in tour packages; (4) in terms of education, learning Balinese gamelan can shape the character, mentality, and integrity of learners to develop optimally; and (5) in terms of art, traditional music is an expression of art and a form of creativity for artists. Various aspects greatly influence development, one of which is traditional Balinese music.

This has undergone a transformation in terms of varied creation methods, aesthetic processing (in accordance with the needs of the work), and the expression of the artist's soul to embody the creative values contained within a work. The works of art created by artists not only reflect originality, but also reveal psychological dynamics (moving the soul) in the creative process. Artists position themselves as

creative agents who respond to their environment and experiences, which become sources of new ideas that are realized in the form of collective artistic creativity. As stated by Bandem & deBoer (1995), Balinese gamelan functions as a collective expression that is closely related to Balinese ceremonies and cultural identity.

Creativity in art does not come instantly, but is the result of a long process involving practice, thought, physical effort, time, and encouragement from an environment that supports the process being undertaken. An artist is born into the world to carry out a life process that is given in an educational (special) context and has been honed since an early age in a supportive environment, such as teaching by parents (devotion). They are then guided towards a preferred role, and as they enter adolescence, they are directed towards more specific levels through art education institutions or through direct interaction with the cultural environment. As stated by Agus Sachari (2002: 150), creativity is human intelligence in solving problems through aesthetic and innovative approaches that are reflected in their daily routines. Therefore, the creativity of artists cannot be separated from the social and cultural life that surrounds them. A cultural environment with authentic treasures provides fertile ground for the growth of creative ideas, which are then expressed in various forms of art. In this context, the role of social institutions is very important in providing a space for artists to express their art through performance media. This is one concrete way to introduce and develop artistic creativity through regional and national events.

The Balinese government and cultural institutions have played an important role in the development of cultural preservation by organizing various artistic events such as festivals, art parades, and cultural exhibitions. One of the most prestigious events is the Gong Kebyar Festival (FGK/Festival Ging Kebyar), which has been held since 1970. In this case, FGK is a competition between regencies that presents performances of karawitan, dance, and puppetry. FGK plays a significant role in stimulating the creativity of Balinese artists to produce new works that are distinctive in terms of structure and musical ornamentation. The FGK has produced various inspiring works that combine various aspects of tradition with a modern touch. It realizes compositions that maintain cultural norms and roots while responding to the increasingly developing movements of the times. Therefore, the FGK has become a strategic place for artists to express their aesthetic power and develop musical innovations into traditional Balinese compositions, namely Tabuh Lelambatan creations. One of the artists in this context is I Ketut Gede Asnawa.

In this case, Tabuh Lelambatan's works created by Asnawa—Windu Segara (1987), Berare (1988), Semare Metu (1992), Wari Drawa (1995), Batur Sari (1997), Kalingga (2001), Tapuk Manggis (2014), Gita Semara (2016), and Pusering Ding Ro (2023)—demonstrate a deep understanding of traditional musical structures and the courage to explore new forms and ornamentation. In these compositions, Asnawa remains steadfast in his creative process—pakem, uger-uger, and jajar pageh—while incorporating contemporary approaches and reflections. Based on this, Asnawa presents this genre of slow creation not as a musical work, but rather as a reconstruction of a culture rich in intuition, experience, and values. Tenzer (2000) states that Balinese gamelan is an expressive medium that is always open to transformation and reinterpretation, as long as it remains grounded in collectively recognized musical idioms. In this context, Asnawa's work in FGK has become a source of inspiration for young artists on how traditional creativity can be a means of cultural

reflection, as well as an opportunity for scientific research on the creative process experienced by artist I Ketut Gede Asnawa.

Asnawa's works have been performed in various art events such as gong kebyar parades between villages, cities, and regencies in the Bali Arts Festival. To date, there have not been many academic studies that specifically discuss Asnawa's works, so that these works demonstrate a wealth of musicality and innovation that warrants in-depth study. This study aims to identify the creative process behind Asnawa's Tabuh Lelambatan Kreasi. Creativity is not merely a result but rather a process, through which problems are recorded and defined, experiences, knowledge, and related concepts are developed, and new things are processed and realized (Herlangga *et al.*, 2021). Rhodes (1961) in Fatmawijayanti (2018: 3) states that there are four dimensions of creativity called "The Four P's of Creativity" (4P) that influence one another. First, person (people) concerns matters such as personality (background); Second, process is an idea that arises from the absorption of things around us, such as difficulties, problems, gaps, experiences, knowledge, and concepts; Third, press (pressure) is an internal drive or initiative gained from various knowledge about the object of thought and field experience; Fourth, product (product) is the result of thinking in the form of work.

The focus of this topic was chosen because the author had previously conducted research on lelambatan. The author found studies that only discussed the history of the Gong Gede gamelan, local musical styles, and lacked in-depth explanations of the creative process behind lelambatan, which is so popular today. However, the author found a problem in previous research in that no one had studied the creative process of one of the famous artists, and the discussion was still very limited. There is potential to scientifically examine the creative process and musical principles used by Asnawa to create the Tabuh Lelambatan Kreasi composition. In fact, Asnawa expressed his pride and appreciation for the efforts to examine his works, which contribute to the development of scientific studies on Balinese music in general.

Methodology

This study basically uses qualitative research based on in-depth interviews and reviews assumptions based on scientific art theory. The author uses Surdawan Danim's thinking as the basis for this study. Surdawan Danim (2002: 51) states that qualitative research is descriptive in nature, meaning that the data collected is in the form of words and images rather than numbers. Even if there are numbers, they are only supporting data. The data obtained includes interview transcripts, field notes, photographs, personal documentation, and so on. Danim adds that qualitative research also emphasizes meaning, namely that the focus of the study is directly related to human life issues. In simple terms, qualitative research reveals data in an abstract manner and understands the meaning behind the visible data.

The next step is to collect data in depth, so as to find hypotheses in the form of symptoms experienced based on the collected data. Several limitations in the use of a qualitative approach are certainly in line with the objectives of this study, especially to reveal the creative process in the creation of Tabuh Lelambatan Kreasi. The advantage of this approach is that it can show consistency in the estimation of thoughts about the research object and assist the author in collecting data to be identified narratively and in detail from one object and its variables.

Furthermore, in-depth interviews in this study were conducted orally and prepared several questions specifically related to the research object to determine the creative process in the creation of Tabuh Lelambatan Kreasi. Asnawa was the main informant, along with several other artists who were credible in understanding traditional music concepts.

Results and discussion

Analysis of the Creative Process of Tabuh Lelambatan by I Ketut Gede Asnawa

Based on observations and interviews regarding the creative process in the creation of Tabuh Lelambatan by Asnawa, it offers a variety of creative processes that are greatly appreciated by the community. The creative process is very intensive in the creation of Tabuh Lelambatan. His work remains rooted in classical lelambatan, but also incorporates innovations in musicality and aesthetics, which ultimately produce a valuable work and serve as a concrete example of the dynamic evolution of Balinese karawitan. Therefore, Asnawa adds a modern touch to his work to bring novelty and a new flavor to classical lelambatan, transforming it into creative lelambatan. This creative effort aims to attract public interest in the art of lelambatan.

As discussed earlier, Rhodes (1961) in Fatmawijayanti (2018) said that there are four dimensions of creativity, namely person, process, press, and product. Creativity is not only the result of a product, but also a multidimensional process that involves interaction between individuals, the environment, and a complex cultural context (Runco & Jaeger, 2012). In this concept, the creative process in the creation of Tabuh Lelambatan Kreasi Karya Asnawa can be analyzed through these four dimensions, which are relevant to the movement as a whole.

Person

I Ketut Gede Asnawa, often known as Asnawa, is a composer and gamelan artist born on December 26, 1955, in Banjar Kaliungu Kaja. When Asnawa was eight years old, he became interested in playing Balinese gamelan. Although he initially only played gamelan to fill his spare time, Asnawa always listened to the melodies played on the gamelan, which were arranged according to existing aesthetic tastes. This attracted the attention of his uncle, I Nyoman Gebyuh, a gamelan craftsman and leader of the Kaliungu Kaja gamelan group, who invited Asnawa and his older brother, I Komang Astita, to join the Sekaa Gong Kalingga Jaya Banjar Kaliungu Kaja as young musicians in the penglingsir gong group. Asnawa became the youngest member and was entrusted with playing the terompong instrument, which is generally played by experienced musicians (Bakan, 1999: 196-198). After gaining experience after experience, Asnawa finally completed his junior high school education and continued his studies at KOKAR Bali (Karawitan Conservatory), where he was very fortunate to be taught by teachers who were experts in the field of karawitan, such as I Wayan Bertha, I Nyoman Rembang, I Wayan Sinti, and others. After studying at KOKAR Bali, Asnawa continued to a higher level of education at ASTI Denpasar (Indonesian Dance Academy Denpasar) in 1974 and obtained his S.Skar degree in 1981.



[Source: Rustika Manik]

Figure 1. Profile of I Ketut Gede Asnawa)

In the 1980s, Asnawa often participated in overseas art missions on behalf of private institutions/governments, traveling to countries in Asia, Europe, and America. Unexpectedly, Asnawa was given the opportunity to study and teach gamelan at the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC), USA, where he earned a Master of Arts degree in ethnomusicology. During his studies in the USA, Asnawa founded one of the gamelan groups, "Genta Semara," at the University of Maryland Baltimore County. Currently, Asnawa serves as an arts consultant at the Denpasar City Cultural Office. Furthermore, Asnawa has a strong background in the creative process and works earnestly in the realm of art, which is steeped in tradition and rich in cultural value. Asnawa's personality as an artist who is serious, meticulous, persistent, and dedicated in his work reflects his character, resulting in valuable and meaningful works.

Process

Asnawa's creative process is not instantaneous, but involves several phases that need to be carefully considered in order to achieve maximum results in the creation of his work. Through a long process that reflects integration, inner experience, aesthetic understanding, musical structure, and intuition, a brilliant idea is born. The creative process used by Asnawa to realize his work is a method developed by his teacher, I Wayan Beratha. The process of creating *tabuh lelabatan* such as *Wari Drawa*, *Batur Sari*, and other works. Asnawa involves various methods in the process of creation: *Nguping* (analyzing and listening); *Menahin* (perfecting); and *Ngelesin* (refining) (Senen, 2002: 45). In (Mawan *et al.*, 2023), it is stated that Asnawa, a skilled composer in Balinese *karawitan* who is also a student of I Wayan Beratha, adds the process of *Ngungkab Rasa* (expressing artistic feelings). In his creative process, Asnawa does not rely solely on technical knowledge, but also takes into account his intuition and deep musical experience, reflecting both intellectual and instinctive (innate) aspects in the creation of traditional music. Asnawa produces original and valuable works and has a wealth of traditional music through innovation rooted in tradition.

Press (Pressure/Encouragement)

Asnawa's social and cultural environment closely follows the dynamics of life that are lived well. Asnawa participates in cultural activities organized by the provincial government of Bali, namely the Gong Kebyar Festival, which is a significant space for honing creativity. Interview with Asnawa, September 5, 2024, regarding FGK: At that time, there was a principle of how to explore, preserve, and revive existing gendings, because kebyar had a revolutionary influence in 1960. (Asnawa's intention as the main program in FGK events was to make it compulsory material), so that the *gending* would be preserved and enjoyed by the community without becoming too monotonous. Therefore, Asnawa created a *gending/mepayas*, and the first creative composition Asnawa heard was *Tabuh Nem Kreasi*. When Banjar Belaluan Sadmerta represented Badung Regency in 1968, which was mentored by I Wayan Beratha, Asnawa was still a child and *Tabuh Nem Kreasi* had already been worked on. Therefore, FGK is a creative event that has stimulated the creativity of artists to create new compositions with typical concepts (Adi, 2020).

Product

The final result of Asnawa's creative process is a *Tabuh Lelambatan* composition that has authentic aesthetic value, weight, and musicality. Works such as *Wari drawa* and *Batur sari* display a distinctive musical style, while remaining rooted in tradition, *pakem*, *uger-uger*, and *jajar pageh* conventions. Asnawa's works have not only been positively received by the public, but also serve as a reference for young artists in developing and preserving traditional musical compositions in Balinese gamelan. According to Asnawa, the enjoyment of being a composer is that, on the one hand, we are faced with the power of *shanti* (peace) that we must maintain and never stray from, and on the other hand, we are faced with how to make the original new without changing the existing structure. Ultimately, our predecessors (ancestors) created the classic *pegongan* compositions, and what is important in creativity is our sensitivity, how we use our imagination, and then our skills and experience in music will produce good work (interview with Asnawa, September 5, 2025). The resulting product demonstrates not only personal creativity but also a tangible contribution to the enrichment of the musical heritage in a significant way. Artistic works are always the result of a collective network—creative individuals and the social systems that support them—so that the final outcome is a fusion of the individual and the culture (Becker, 1982).

Conclusion

Balinese gamelan, especially in the genre of *lelambatan kreasi*, is an integral part of Balinese society, which continues to grow rapidly through the creative processes of artists such as I Ketut Gede Asnawa. The creative process involved in the creation of *Lelambatan Kreasi* reflects not only musical technique, but also a deep intervention with the cultural environment, artistic experience, and support for preserving traditional values while introducing contextual innovations. Asnawa is consistent in creating works that not only entertain but also convey moral messages steeped in culture through the exploration of aesthetics, musical structure, and spiritual nuances rooted in Balinese *karawitan* philosophy.

Through the "Four P's of Creativity" approach, namely person, process, press, and product, it is evident that Asnawa's works are the result of a long process involving artistic experience, intuition, and reflection on socio-cultural dynamics. The Gong Kebyar Festival is an important aspect for the actualization of creativity, providing stimulus for artists to continue creating. Asnawa's work has multiple functions, such as individual expression, a source of reference for other artists, the sustainable development of traditional music, and opening up space for academics to study Asnawa's work in greater depth in terms of the process of creating art based on tradition.

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