

**The second movement**, *This Life*, is a true musical hybrid, incorporating modern jazz improvisation with music inspired by that of West Java (Sunda). Sundanese music is quite different from that of Central Java. It is more transparent, more soloistic and more strongly reflects the influence of highly melismatic musics of North Africa which probably found their way to Indonesia via Muslim traders dating back as early as the thirteenth century. I was particularly struck by a popular musical form called Jaipongan. Its two main vocal exponents at that time were Dedeh Winingsih and Idjah Hadidjah. Virtually unknown outside of Indonesia, they were two of the greatest singers I'd ever heard. The drumming reminds one of the complexity, intensity and melodic content of Afro-Cuban drumming (a fascinating case of parallel evolution!) and the vocal ornamentation is as sensual as it is virtuosic. The written melody in the opening section of *This Life* is itself a hybrid constructed completely from the two distinct tuning systems in Javanese music: slendro and pelog. (In *This Life*, the scale equivalent of slendro is Bb-C-Eb-F-G, the pelog equivalent is B-C-E-F-G). These systems exist side by side in traditional gamelan, but are never employed simultaneously. A composition is either in slendro or pelog. But this is one of a number of liberties I took toward an aesthetic end that suited my eclectic orientation to things in general.

Sandwiched in between the second and third movements is an interlude similar to a Javanese form called patetan, a short, structured improvisation played by a small portion of the gamelan, usually the rebab (a bowed 2-stringed spike fiddle), gender (a metallophone with bars suspended over tin resonators) and gambang (a marimbaphone). In this, as in the final two movements, the piano and marimba parts are modeled after gender and gambang improvisations respectively. The patetan sets the mood and mode of the piece that follows and also often serves as a coda at the end of a piece.

**The third movement**, *Jalan Jiwa*, literally translated, means "Spirit Road". It has a short, buoyant gong cycle that oscillates between major and minor (much like life itself). The joy of simply walking on that path is what I was after. Its sensibility is not unlike the transitional "walking" music that occurs at numerous points in the all-night Javanese shadow puppet performance known as Wayang.

The last movement, *Gendhing*, is the most purely Javanese of the lot, but also is infused with western harmonic movement. *Gendhing* is a general term used to describe pieces in the gamelan repertoire but also refers to the longest form in terms of gong cycle and overall length in that musical tradition. I try to maintain the hovering sense that one gets from the Javanese approach to harmony. It never quite feels resolved (at least to this western ear), and yet it never feels unresolved (which is perhaps a nice metaphor for the dialectical differences between eastern and western thought). The slow section is written in a western equivalent of pelog, and the harmony holds true to that, but the fast section cuts loose from that "constraint" and ventures first into slendro and then decisively into diatonic western harmony and melody.

Here, technology served as a real creative facilitator. The Javanese gamelan typically has one or, less frequently, two large gongs, possibly because of the belief that the "soul" of the gamelan lives in the large gong (better not to confuse things), and also the musical reality that, although there are different modes with their own central tones of emphasis, there really isn't a sense of different roots that would require different bass tones. In *Gendhing*, there is harmonic modulation which is not possible (nor desirable, I imagine) in traditional gamelan. Typically, the feeling created by most western harmonic movement is that of a sense of a "home" (a tonic, in musical parlance), a wandering away from it, and a return to it. In *Gendhing*, this concept is inverted. The music wanders to a tonic (the D minor section) but ultimately returns to a more unresolved place. Because of sampling technology, I was able to employ gongs representing a wider range of pitches than is available in