

DANCE STYLE LOCATOR

## Balinese Dance



Bali is a small island in Southeast Asia, with sparkling oceans and volcanic mountains, rural rice fields and bustling urban centers. Malay people are the vast majority in Bali, and a local form of Hinduism predominates, shaping Balinese life and art since long before the island became part of Indonesia.

Balinese music and dance is many centuries old, but continues to develop as a living tradition. In Bali, dance is always closely allied to music, not only in the fact that many gamelan (gong-chime orchestra or ensemble) performances include dance as a major component, but also because the details of choreography and dance gesture are tightly synchronized with the music's accents and textures. The traditions evolved primarily in the context of the highly ornate, multi-faceted ceremonies of Balinese Hindu culture. In these dances, the performance is seen as an offering to the Hindu deities, who are invited down from the heavens to visit the temples during temple anniversaries and other auspicious ritual occasions.

### **Drama Tari: Classical Dance Drama**

New art forms are constantly added to the classical repertoire of Balinese dances. In Bali, the word "traditional" does not carry the same significance as here, because almost all new work is based on older work, which is then re-arranged and modified according to modern tastes and interpretations. There is thus a smooth continuum between old and new in the accepted creation of new traditions by artists of the current generation.

Several newly created dances are also very popular, such as the **Tari Kijang Kencana** ("the Golden Deer Dance") and **Tari Manuk Rawa** ("Long Legged Bird Dance"), both created within the last 30 years.

*In People Like Me 2005*, dancer I Made Moja will perform a *drama tari* piece based on the Hindu mythology of The Ramayana -- a classic tale of good vs. evil. For the past two thousand years the Ramayana has been among the most important literary and oral texts of South Asia. This epic poem provides insights into many aspects of Hindu culture and continues to influence the politics, religion and art of Hindu societies. The excerpt presented centers on the preparation for battle between the monkey king, Sugriwa (played by I Made Moja), and Kumokarna, the brother of the evil King Rawana. Sugriwa rallies the monkey army and they chant to raise their spirits and mobilize their power. The instrumentation includes a small Gamelan ensemble (metallaphone, drum, gong, cymbal, flute) and chanting (*kecak*).