

Peni Candra Rini



Peni Candra Rini, PhD (b. 1983) is a renowned Javanese singer, educator, and composer fusing Javanese sufi poetry with contemporary composition for Indonesian and Western instruments.

The Kronos Quartet has described her as “one of the world’s greatest singers.” She is a master of several traditional forms (primarily gamelan) and is regarded as one of Indonesia’s most daring young composers, one of only a handful of female composers in the majority Muslim nation. She has performed extensively internationally, including several world tours as the featured singer for Robert Wilson’s *I La Galigo*. She is a recipient of grants from the [Asian Cultural Council](#), is a two-time grantee of the US State Department’s [One Beat](#) and Fulbright programs, and in 2022 was named an [Aga Khan Foundation](#) laureate of the arts. In 2023 she became the first woman to be commissioned to compose a work for the Mangkunegaran court of Central Java and in 2024 was bestowed the court name Raden Nganten Tumenggung, the highest honor offered by the Raja. In 2024 she completed a suite for string quartet commissioned by the Kronos Quartet and Carnegie Hall. Entitled *Segara Gunung*, the hourlong work concerns the impacts of climate change on the Indonesian archipelago is currently being performed by Kronos on major stages throughout the US and Europe. She has published albums and Eps on the [New Amsterdam](#) and Out of Your Head labels, in collaboration with Shahzad Ismaily, Andy McGraw, and members of Deerhoof, featuring her improvisations, and experimental compositions for Javanese and Western ensembles.

In October 2026 Kronos will release an album of her string quartets on the Phenotypic label, some of which they have performed on NPR’s Tiny Desk series. She has received composition commissions from Carnegie Hall, the Asia Society, the Gaudeamus Foundation, and National Geographic, among other organizations. Most recently, her trio with Ismaily and McGraw has performed at the Edinburgh International Festival, Roulette, Big Ears, the Adelaide Festival, the Gaudeamus Festival, the Monheim Triennale, as well as numerous venues in the US and Europe.

Current Performance Projects:

- **The Wheel:** \$++. An hourlong chamber ensemble work commissioned by the Javanese court (Mangkunegaran) and the Gaudeamus Foundation (Utrecht) (viola, violin, cello, clarinet, oboe, bassoon, 2 percussion and fixed media). The Wheel is a reimagination of the traditional Javanese *macapat* cycle, a series of 11 poems in liturgical Javanese depicting the phases of the human life. Rini is the first woman to be commissioned by the court to create a new text (*serat*) for these poems, which address—in the Javanese sufi tradition—the moral challenges and obligations of contemporary life. (Available for performance January 2027).
- **Traditional and Contemporary Gamelan Works.** \$+++. A concert of traditional Javanese gamelan works alongside Rini's contemporary compositions for the ensemble. Rini performs with a team of 6-10 Indonesian musicians coming from the USA and Java. Collaboration with local community and collegiate players possible.
- **Rara: Allegories of the Southern Sea.** \$++. An hourlong experimental work for Western and Indonesian musicians, featuring experimental shadow theater and film. Commissioned by the Asia Society (NYC), the Monheim Triennale (Germany), and the Modlin Center for the Arts (Virginia). This work responds to environmental catastrophes in Indonesia resulting from resource extraction and climate change. Rini looks to ancient Javanese legends about female guardian spirits to imagine an indigenous response to these challenges. Personnel can range from 3-8 performers depending on budget. (Montage from workshop performance in Germany: https://youtu.be/9_mmSdN-KWo?si=4IfTKqjcCRk-zJEE)
- **Segara Gunung String Quartets.** \$\$. Rini's hourlong cycle of six string quartets, commissioned by the Kronos Quartet and Carnegie Hall, can be performed by local performers with Rini. These works are accessible to proficient undergraduate performers and can be combined with a percussionist playing gamelan, where available. These works will be published by Kronos in October 2026 on the Phenotypic label. Scores available upon request. (Montage of performance with Kronos Quartet: <https://youtu.be/z0tsZ6LmP20>)
- **Garin Nugroho's Setan Jawa.** \$\$. In 2025 Rini was commissioned by the Smithsonian Institute and the Asia Society to create a new score for the silent, black and white film *Setan Jawa* (2016), by Indonesia's leading filmmaker Garin Nugroho. The work can be performed by Rini and one additional musician and can accommodate (with one rehearsal day) additional local improvisers. (Montage from Asia Society Performance: https://youtu.be/rMY7SQO_S_4)
- **Rini duet / trio.** \$. Rini has performed her original compositions for experimental duet and trio with Andy McGraw and Shahzad Ismaily at the Edinburgh Festival,

Roulette, Big Ears and multiple mid-sized and experimental venues in the US and Europe. Recent performances also include experimental, interactive video inspired by Indonesian shadow theater. (Asia Society montage: <https://youtu.be/lfHqmTLRfyk>)

Social Media / Web:

- www.penicandrarini.com
- <https://www.youtube.com/@penicandrarini>
- <https://www.instagram.com/penicandrarini/>
- penicandrarini@gmail.com

Recent Images:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/18uFYo2kwizJ4mHSFyQpvn6aiMgsMKU5L?usp=share_link

Recent Reviews:

- Songlines Peni Candra Rini Edinburgh Festival Review:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bb5AuYsDU5TqNa6psxP_NP_evDuEcQw4/view?usp=share_link
- Songlines Peni Candra Rini Wulansih Album Review:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bb5AuYsDU5TqNa6psxP_NP_evDuEcQw4/view?usp=share_link
- San Francisco Voice. Peni Candra Rini and Kronos String Quartet, March 2024.
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AEZ20kTYaOMvvP4DvBhffRkgZuNjf-10/view?usp=sharing>

Recent (unlisted) Video Clips:

- *Kemuda Djawa* (Ritual composition for the court of Java)
<https://youtu.be/ViFvAf6Bdw0>
- *Wangi* (Peni Candra Rini instrumental trio, Asia Society NYC)
<https://youtu.be/jv9fGu62UM4>
- *Rara* (excerpt from Monheim Triennale) <https://youtu.be/DUW0W5Hy3KU>
- Setan Jawa (Film score excerpt): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rMY7SQO_S_4

Recent high-quality audio:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/17sd31SFVedIOZbKahCKV_cZJny1pA68?usp=share_link