

Musicians play the instruments of the tuned percussion (*gamelan*) orchestra, which consists of metallophones, xylophones, and drums.

Female singers perform lyrics during and between scenes to enhance the emotional impact of the performance.

Banana logs are placed one on each side of the central space where the puppet master performs to hold rows of puppets. Puppet characters are separated into opposing forces of "good" and "bad" and placed accordingly. While so-called protagonists are placed to the dalang's right and antagonists to his left, the characters have complex personalities and struggle with their moral choices. As many as forty-five out of ninety puppets may be used during a single performance.



The puppet master (*dalang*) is the consummate storyteller. He delivers dialogue using voices specific to each character, manipulates all of the puppets, sings mood songs, and cues the gamelan orchestra. Dalang are revered in Indonesia for their puppetry skills and their knowledge of Hindu epics, Muslim legends, and Javanese historical tales.

The puppet chest is a large wooden box in which the puppets are stored.

Asep and his troupe before a performance at Ancol, a recreation center in North Jakarta, from *Voices of the Puppet Masters: The Wayang Golek Theater of Indonesia* by Mimi Herbert (2002). Photograph by Maria Farr. Reproduced by permission.