



# MAKING the DAMBUS LUTE (Bangka - Belitung)

Version	Date	On line	Updates	
V1.0	Aug. 2016	yes	Creation	dHerouville P.
V3.0	Sept 2016		Incl. PAKSU from Muntok (W. Bangka)	dHerouville P.
V5.0	Nov 2016		Incl. KUSYADI from Desa Namang (Bangka)	dHerouville P.
V7.0	Jan. 2018		New format + video views (ZAROTTI, KUSYADI)	dHerouville P.

The **Gambus** designation nowadays took an unexplicit acception in the Indonesian archipelago, since the word became synonymous of “middle east-like lute” there. If the word is certainly rooted in the Yemeni name “Qanbus”, according to the homonymous lute of the Sana’an plateau, for sure, every current Indonesian avatars now embody various designs.

Three main categories of **Gambus** coexist Malaysia and Indonesia:

1. - **Gambus Hijaz**, a monoxyle, long necked lute.
- 2 - **Gambus Hadramawt**, a.k.a. « **Gambus Johor** », an **oud**-like lute. Feat a soundbox generally of made bowed ribs.
- 3- **Bruneian monoxyle Gambus Seludang** is a local crossover design family in Brunei and Sabah.

Now on the way to extinction in many places, the **Dambus** lute is still (seldom) accompanying **Dincak**, a vague relative of the **Zapin / Jepen** dance (Ar. **Zafin**, a dance genre from Hadhramawt, still widespread in **Sawt**-like sessions in the Gulf countries) . According Usni MARIOSHA, the **dambus** was used among rice croppers in the past, which let assume a previous **gambus** music for the lute, such as the Segele genre of the rice croppers in Bima ( NTB).

#### THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE DAMBUS LUTES

Based on the original **Gambus Hijaz**, the production of the **dambus** lute (Bangka Isl, Belitung Isl) reached a significant profusion from the 1990's. The **Dambus** is likely the subject of a folklorization process. In this regard, the imagination of the natives of Bangka & Belitung is peaking afterwards, leading then to a restricted variety of design.

- The animal-head shaped Peghead, introduced lately, in order to celebrate the local deer as a folkloric totem. Having said that the exercise proved to have some variants, such as: fox head, deerlet head, or even bird head.
- The typical features ( skin cover, arab-style peghead & rose) being less and less followed  
The progressive *substitution of the skin-made “soundboard” with wood-made* one lead first to a dramatic down-scaling of the whole instrument, balancing a booming trend for amplified use & microphone. This caused such a *miniaturization*. The skin cover still exist, and does proemine among the Kutai ( East Kalimantan).
- The echoing properties of *the hollowed body subsequently lost any functional attractivity* for the various ethnics in south Kalimantan, as the wood- made cover to retain a properly acoustic rendering indeed.
- The state of the art makers – namely: Zuwaiyd KUSUKENI, Usni MARIOSHA, ZAROTTI and Pendi Koera-Koera a.k.a. “PAKSU” - now on rivalry for innovations and artwork.

The late success of the instrument allowed than alternate, less significant, trends such as :

- Some few XXL sized Items by ZAROTTI
- Art lutery by Pak Usni MARIOSHA (Belitung)
- Wide boodied lutes by KUSYADI (Desa Namang, central Bangka)

Having said that, the available technologies anticipated a shut of the hollowed bodies, with a distinctive defiance vs the monoxyle design of the Arabs. The aesthetical evocation of the Arabic way of life seem nowadays more tied here with imagination than with any realistic imitation. Facing a recent boom for the instrument , maker ZAROTTI standardized his production with twm main types & sizes .

For the makers ZAROTTI & KUSUKENI, the deer head-like peghead is the main artwork, and requires a lot of technical cares. MARIOSHA's case in Belitung being a exception, when we consider his work as totally unorthodox among every Indonesian lute makers. By implementing non figurative pegheads, Usni MARIOSHA envisions clearly the carving artwork as a pretext for a one-of-a-kind plastic investigation.

This document summarizes endemic construction techniques for every types of **Dambus** lutes in Bangka Isl & Belitung Isl. About wood-boarded **Gambus** lute making, see alternate file

[http://inthegapbetween.free.fr/pierre/process\\_malay\\_gambus\\_seludang\\_wooden\\_v8.pdf](http://inthegapbetween.free.fr/pierre/process_malay_gambus_seludang_wooden_v8.pdf)  
[http://inthegapbetween.free.fr/pierre/process\\_panting\\_kalimantan.pdf](http://inthegapbetween.free.fr/pierre/process_panting_kalimantan.pdf)

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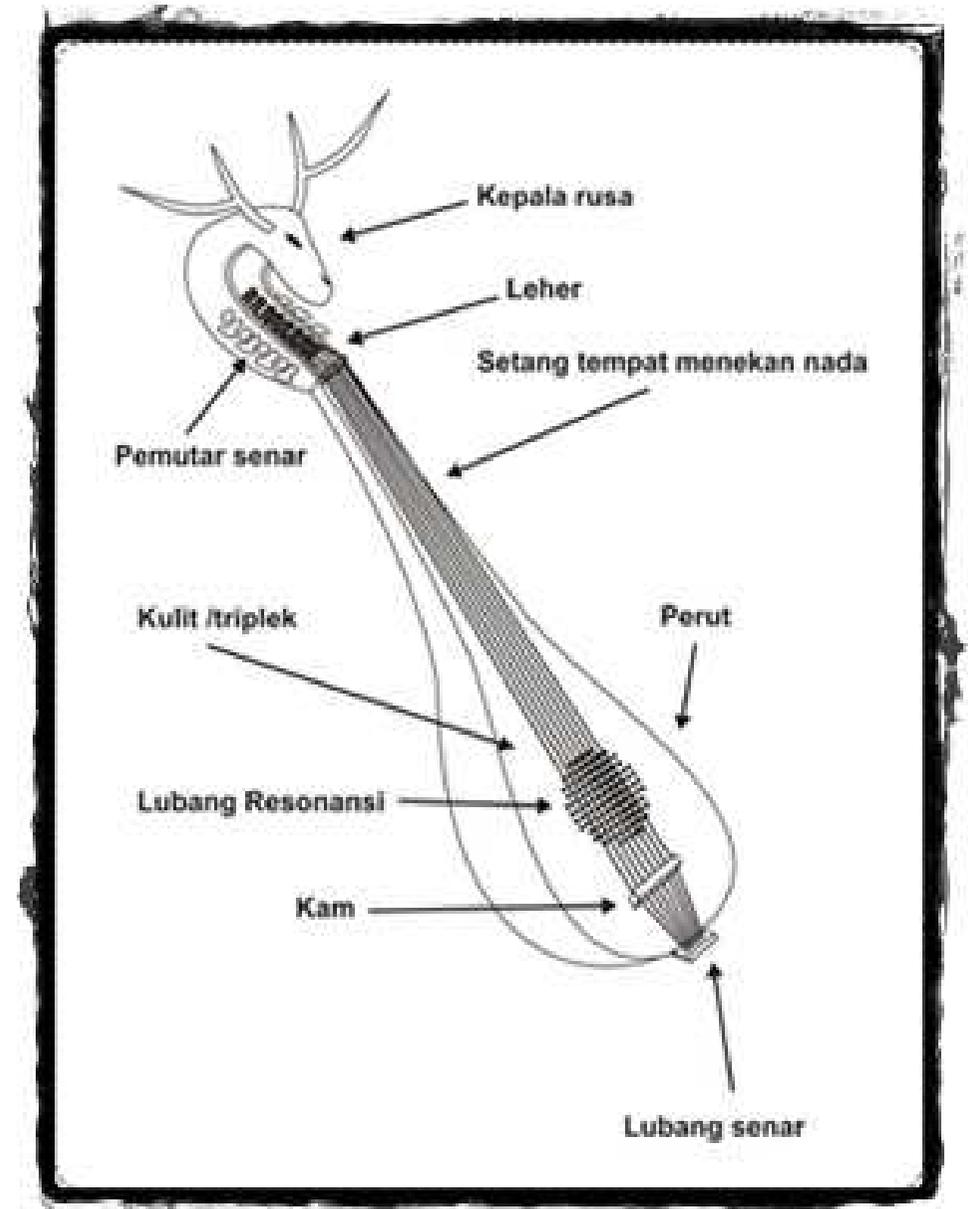
DAMBUS- MONOXYLE LUTES, BANGKA ISL



Player Pak ARIF, Bangka isl



*Dambus* lute in Bangka



Endemic names of the components of the *Dambus* lute, according to maker KUSUKENI.



Usni MARIOSHA (Belitung Isl) while carving the body

Workshop of KUSYIADI (Bangka Isl)



Workshop of Usni MARIOSHA (Belitung Isl)



Workshop of Usni MARIOSHA (Belitung Isl)

DAMBUS (PANGKALPINANG, BANGKA ISL) – CARVING THE SOUNDBOX



The maker KUSYADI (Desa Namang, central Bangka) while carving the soundbox of a **Dambus** . Note the 2 parts box. (photo web press)



The maker KUSYADI (Desa Namang, central Bangka) while polishing the soundbox of a **Dambus** . (photo web)

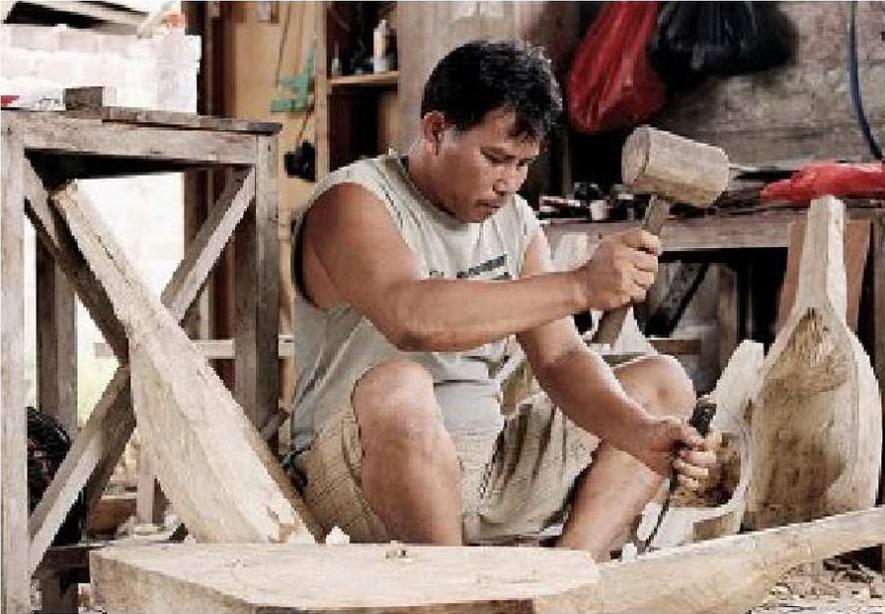


The maker KUSYADI (Desa Namang, central Bangka) while carving a **Dambus** box. (photo web)



The composite / wide bodied soundbox by maker KUSYADI in Desa Namang, central Bangka. (photo web)

DAMBUS (PANGKALPINANG, BANGKA ISL) – CARVING THE SOUNDBOX



The maker KUSYADI (Desa Namang, central Bangka) while carving the soundbox of a **Dambus** . Note the 2 parts box. (photo web press)



The maker KUSYADI (Desa Namang, central Bangka) while polishing the soundbox of a **Dambus** . (photo web)



The maker KUSYADI (Desa Namang, central Bangka) while carving a **Dambus** box. (photo Youtube)



The maker KUSYADI (Desa Namang, central Bangka) while carving a **Dambus** box. (photo Youtube)



Pendi Koera-Koera a.k.a. "PAKSU" (Muntok, West Bangka) - picture by Guzairy LINGGARDJATI

DAMBUS (BELITUNG ISL) – HOLLOWING THE SOUNDBOX



Pak ZAROTTI (Bangka) , while hollowing the soundbox.



Pak ZAROTTI (Bangka) , while hollowing the neck.



Pak ZAROTTI (Bangka) , while hollowing the neck.



Pak ZAROTTI (Bangka) ; toy - variant with coconut shell-made box.

DAMBUS (BELITUNG ISL) – FOLLOWING THE SOUNDBOX



Usni MARIOSHA (Belitung) , while shaping the body.



Usni MARIOSHA (Belitung) , while shaping a guitar-like body



Pak ZAROTTI (Pangkalpinang) while carving the soundbox



Usni MARIOSHA (Belitung) , while hollowing the neck.

DAMBUS- FINISHINGS, BANGKA ISL



Ready boxes of a **Dambus** by maker Pak ZAROTI, Pangkalpinang. The neck is generally hollowed out. (photo <http://madingpgri.blogspot.fr/>)



Rough boxes by maker Pak ZAROTTI (Bangka)



Ready boxes of a **Dambus** by maker PAKSU, Muntok (Bangka Isl).

DAMBUS (PANGKALPINANG, BANGKA ISL) – CARVING THE SOUNDBOX



The maker KUSYADI (Desa Namang, central Bangka) while carving the soundbox of a **Dambus**. Note the 2 parts box. (photo Youtube)



A **Dambus** box by KUSYADI (Desa Namang, Bangka)



KUSYADI while assembling the neck of a **Dambus**. (Desa Namang, Bangka). (photo Youtube)



KUSYADI while carving the peghead. (photo Youtube)

DAMBUS- FINISHINGS, BANGKA ISL



Deer "horn" of a *Dambus* by maker KUSYIADI, Pangkalpinang (Bangka Isl).



*Dambus* pegbox by Pak ZAROTI (Pangkalpinang). (photo Youtube)



Pegbox carving

DAMBUS (BELITUNG ISL) – FINISHINGS



Usni MARIOSHA (Belitung) , while polishing the fingerboard.



**Dambus** finishings by maker KUSYADI (Desa Namang, central Bangka)



**Dambus** workshop of the maker Pak ZAROTI, Pangkalpinang (Bangka Isl).

DAMBUS (BELITUNG ISL) – STRINGHOLDERS



Stringholder by maker KOERA-KOERA "PAKSU" (Bangka Isl)



Old style Stringholder (Bangka Isl)



Stringholder by maker KUSUKENI (Bangka Isl)



Stringholder by maker ZAROTTI (Bangka Isl)

DAMBUS (PANGKALPINANG, BANGKA ISL) – CARVING THE SOUNDBOX



ZAROTTI (Pangkalpinang) while polishing the pegbox. (photo youtube)



KUSYADI (Desa Namang) while polishing the soundbox. (photo Youtube)



ZAROTTI (Pangkalpinang) while polishing the pegbox. (photo youtube)



KUSYADI (Desa Namang) while polishing the soundbox. (photo Youtube)

DAMBUS (BELITUNG ISL) – NOTICEABLE MAKERS



Pak Usni MARIOSHA (Belitung Isl)

maker KUSUKENI (Bangka Isl)



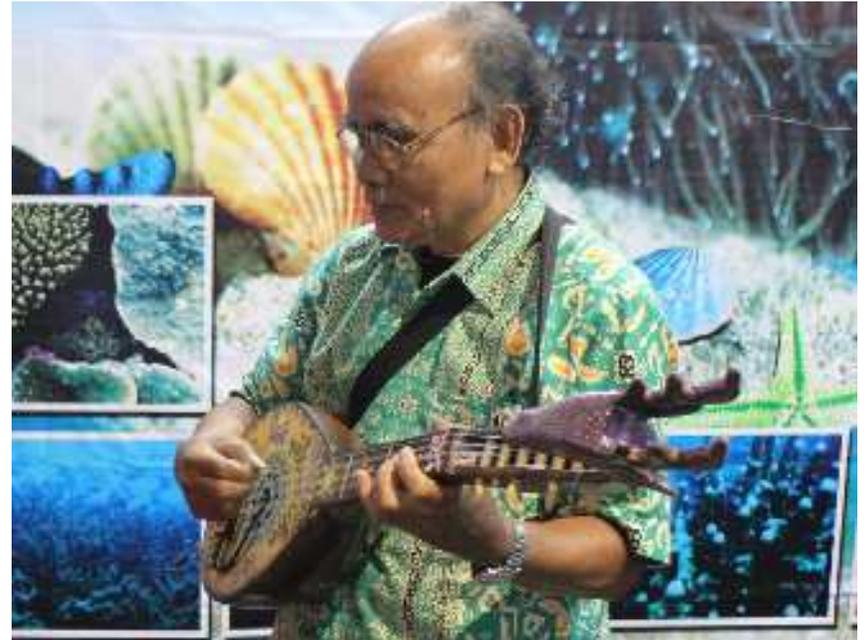
Pak Usni MARIOSHA (Belitung Isl)

maker KOERA-KOERA "PAKSU" (Muntok, Bangka Isl)

DAMBUS (BELITUNG ISL) – NOTICEABLE MAKERS



Pak ZAROTTI (Bangka Isl)



maker Ziwaid KUSUKENI (Bangka Isl)



Maker KUSYIADI (Bangka Isl)



maker KOERA-KOERA "PAKSU" (Muntok, Bangka Isl)