

# Switzerland enjoys excellent ties with RI

In connection with the celebration of Swiss National Day on Aug.1 in Jakarta, The Jakarta Post, in cooperation with the Embassy of Switzerland in Indonesia, is publishing a two-page supplement on Wednesday. In an effort to know more about the fast growing strategic ties between Indonesia and Switzerland, the Post's supplement desk editor Veeramalla Anjaiah interviewed Swiss Ambassador to Indonesia Yvonne Baumann. The following are excerpts of the interview.

**Q: Indonesia and Switzerland have enjoyed excellent relations for many decades. What is the present state of the two countries' relationship?**

**A:** Already in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, distance did not hinder the first Swiss merchants and researchers from exploring this fascinating archipelago. Since the beginning of our diplomatic relations in 1952, the ties grew closer and became more diverse, particularly in recent years, through cooperation in many fields and frequent official visits.

Starting in the 1970s, Switzerland supported the establishment of many vocational education schools in Indonesia. Last year, together with the Indonesian government, we launched a new four-year cooperation program and agreed to reintroduce this focus, helping to establish new polytechnic schools in various industrial sectors as well as a hospitality school in Lombok [West Nusa Tenggara]. The development of sustainable tourism and the support for local farmers to improve their production and secure better market access remain key sectors of our cooperative partnership.

Cooperation in trade, investment and economic development is the backbone of our relations, growing stronger constantly. In recent years, projects in the field of environmental protection, intellectual property and human security have become more relevant. Tourism, in both directions, shows the highest numbers ever, and today, Swiss tourists visit not only Bali, but also Indonesian destinations like Sumatra, Sulawesi or Sumba.

There is also a potential for greater cooperation in science and education between universities and research institutions on top of the interesting projects already going on, for example in the field of agriculture or vaccine production.

Both countries attach importance to the promotion of peace and democratic values, and in the United Nations as well as other international bodies, we have a good cooperation on environmental and further issues. Indeed, relations [between Indonesia and Switzerland] are excellent.

**How does democratic Indonesia – which has the world's largest Muslim population and is the largest economy in Southeast Asia – play a part in Switzerland's foreign policy?**

Indonesia is an important partner for Switzerland, and it has a significant role to play in the region and the world – particularly as the country with the largest Muslim population and a well-functioning democracy.

We are pleased that Indonesia is again a member of the UN Security Council, and we are looking forward to working with Indonesia in promoting peace and security. We see the strategic importance of Indonesia as the third-biggest democracy in the world, the largest country within ASEAN, located in a geostrategic position between the Pacific and the Indian Ocean, and being an emerging market on its way to becoming a regional production hub.

Indonesia has an important soft power potential that can reach far beyond the region. As the country with the world's largest Muslim population, where a



JP/Arief Suhardiman

moderate Islam is being practiced and several religions are officially recognized, Indonesia can play an important role as a model in other parts of the world and act as a facilitator. Switzerland, as one of the oldest democracies in the world, and Indonesia, as one of the largest, show both a deep appreciation of core democratic values and principles, like transparency in elections, accountability to the public and freedom of expression.

**Though the two nations' economic ties are growing from year to year, their bilateral trade value was at US\$2.05 billion in 2017. What measures are to be taken to boost economic ties?**

Despite its relatively small size, Switzerland is among the largest investors in Indonesia, number three among European countries.

Over the last four years, Indonesian exports to Switzerland increased significantly on average, resulting in a trade surplus for Indonesia. The outlook is overwhelmingly positive since lifestyle products like design furniture, home accessories, garments, as well as agricultural products or processed foods can find customers in Switzerland. However, Swiss exports could

still do better, particularly if we compare with other countries in the region.

The most important measure to boost trade and investment would be to conclude the negotiations on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between Indonesia and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) states (Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein). In addition, a new Bilateral Investment Treaty that is currently being negotiated would be helpful as well.

Other measures are being taken, too. Last year we opened a "Swiss Business Hub" in our Embassy to promote trade and investment relations. It has established new links between the business community of the two countries and it brings business missions to Indonesia. And [...] the establishment of a brand new Swiss Indonesia Chamber of Commerce, called SwissCham Indonesia, is imminent. This is definitely good news!

**Do you think that the present investment climate is sufficient to attract more Swiss investors to Indonesia?**

As mentioned, Switzerland is the third-largest investor in Indonesia among European economies and, in 2017, ranked 12<sup>th</sup> on the list of the Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM). There was an increase of 78 percent in Swiss investment in 2017. Continued economic growth, an increasing middle class, political stability and achieving the status of "investment grade" from the international rating agencies make Indonesia an attractive investment destination.

The Indonesian government has adopted 16 economic reform packages in order to further improve the investment climate, open up certain sectors and make the life of investors easier. We commend and acknowledge these reform efforts. At the same time, I think that Indonesia could benefit from further opening up its economy, including the conclusion of the CEPA.

**Switzerland is a small country but it has always exceeded boundaries. What is the secret of Switzerland's success?**

This is a very favorable assessment, thank you. I am not sure whether there is a secret to reveal, but I think when it comes to the Swiss economic performance, it is a mix of factors. Switzerland is regularly top-ranking in innovation and competitiveness, but that did not happen overnight. To overcome poverty in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, we had to develop a manufacturing industry that produces a high added value.

The key factor was and still is education. Switzerland has no natural resources, except for water, and is land-locked. And since our domestic market is limited, we have to find markets all over the world for our highly specialized products with high-quality standards. Even small and medium Swiss enterprises venture onto the world stage, sometimes taking risks, but gaining early access to upcoming markets. In order to stay competitive, the companies – big and small – need to innovate constantly. For this you need a very well trained workforce – this is crucial.

Leading economists therefore link the economic achievement of Switzerland to our vocational education and training system as the "decisive historic success factor". Our so-called dual education system combines vocational schooling with on-the-job training in companies. This approach enables young people to enter the labor market as qualified workers with the requested skills. Equally important is the close cooperation between our universities and research institutions – which are also top-class – with the private sector. This is key for innovation and competitiveness.

A highly developed infrastructure is another factor for economic success. And certainly, our political system with well-functioning institutions is another success.

**Could you tell us about the progress of EFTA negotiations with Indonesia?**

The last round of negotiations in April was actually the most

successful one ever. The delegations agreed on the majority of chapters of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). Follow-up work on the remaining few issues has been agreed, with a view to hopefully conclude negotiations soon.

**Your Excellency has been in Indonesia for four years. What is your impression of Indonesia and its people?**

Indonesia is a country of great natural beauty and cultural richness, full of wonders and secrets due to its diversity and ancient traditions. [It is] incredibly fascinating. The greatest asset of Indonesia is its people.

Wherever my husband and I went, whatever we did, people have been so overwhelmingly friendly and welcoming to us.

Sadly, it is now time for us to leave, but I am grateful to look back on four extraordinarily enriching years. We leave behind many friends, but we take with us all the beautiful memories of the genuine friendliness, hospitality and helpfulness of the Indonesian people, as well as of all of our exciting trips, from Aceh to Papua and from Ambon to Sumba.

Regrettably, we could not reach all the 17,000 islands, as much as we tried, but we will always remember the magic of those we visited; the orangutan in the lush rainforests, Borobudur [in Yogyakarta] and the other amazing heritage sites, the traditional architecture of the Batak [in North Sumatra], the colorful fabrics in the Sikka region [in East Nusa Tenggara], the dances of the Minangkabau [of West Sumatra] or the tribe's mock battles at the Baliem valley festival in Papua.

**Last but not least, how do you visualize the development of Indonesia-Swiss relations over the next five years?**

I hope that Switzerland and Indonesia will continue to grow closer together, based on common values such as democratic governance, pluralism, tolerance and celebrating diversity as an asset.



## SwissCham Indonesia would especially thank our

Founding Members

CLARIANT

Givaudan



Corporate Gold Members



## New chamber of commerce seeks to boost economic ties

The newly established Swiss Indonesia Chamber of Commerce (SwissCham Indonesia) provides a platform for Swiss companies in Indonesia and Indonesian companies that are doing business with Switzerland to boost their economic ties.

The chamber of commerce will be officially inaugurated on Aug. 1 during the Swiss National Day reception in Jakarta.

According to SwissCham Indonesia chairman Luthfi Mardiansyah, the new association is a platform for Swiss businesspeople in Indonesia to establish a firm network with the local business society, while bridging the interests of both countries to create a sustainable and mutually beneficial cooperation.

Luthfi himself has extensive experience in the healthcare sector, having worked for Swiss pharmaceutical company Novartis. Upon retirement, he is now the chairman of the Center for Healthcare Policy and Reform Studies, a non-profit organization providing consultations on public health issues such as malnutrition and vaccination.

Currently, around 120-130 Swiss companies are operating in Indonesia. The SwissCham itself was founded by five companies: food and beverage company Nestlé, fragrance brand Givaudan, cigarette manufacturer PT Sampoerna (owned by American company Philip Morris International with a headquarters in Switzerland), insurance company Zurich Topaz Life and chemicals company Clariant. As per July 30, it has 47 Swiss and Indonesian companies and individual businesspeople as members.

According to 2017 data from the Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM), Switzerland ranked 12<sup>th</sup> in a list of countries with the biggest foreign direct investment (FDI) in Indonesia, with US\$615.5 million in investment for 227 projects.

The chamber is finally established after bilateral relations between Indonesia and Switzerland have been in place since 1952. Previously, Swiss businesspeople in Indonesia gathered through the Swiss Business Forum (SBF). The SBF is now integrated with the SwissCham Indonesia.



JP/Arief Suhardiman

Around October 2017, Swiss Ambassador to Indonesia Yvonne Baumann hosted a meeting with the Swiss business community in Indonesia, who needed to establish a chamber of commerce to facilitate advocacy related to business and trade with the Indonesian government.

According to Luthfi, the chamber of commerce will help both countries leverage various untapped trade and investment potentials to boost both countries' welfare.

"Instead of just importing commodities from Indonesia, Swiss businesspeople could invest in Indonesia and provide capacity building for Indonesian small-to-medium enterprises in the fields of mechanical engineering, for instance," he said.

"Indonesia can benefit from exporting high quality spare parts to supply Switzerland's thriving mechanical engineering industry. Although Switzerland has a small population, it has a big industry that has a huge demand for high quality goods like spare parts," he added.

He explained that Switzerland – known for the high quality of its vocational education – could train Indonesians to boost the latter's manufacturing quality, so that Switzerland's demand for these high quality spare parts from Indonesia will continue.

Indonesia can also learn how Switzerland's constant innovation allows the country to enjoy a sustainable economic progress.

According to Luthfi, by creating jobs and boosting the quality of the local workforce, Switzerland can create a sustainable business partnership with Indonesia.

A sustainable business partnership follows a full circle: by creating lots of jobs with highly competent human resources, who will manufacture high quality items, which will please investors, who will then continue their investment in Indonesia, resulting in an increase of exports from Indonesia.

# Switzerland scales new heights with innovation

Veeramalla Anjaiah  
THE JAKARTA POST/JAKARTA

Switzerland, a small, mountainous, landlocked country in central Europe, has once again retained its top spot in the recent Global Innovation Index (GII), for the eighth year in a row. With the highest score of 68.40, it became the most innovative country on the planet out of 126 economies surveyed. These 126 countries or economies cover 90.8 percent of the global population and 96.3 percent of global gross domestic product (GDP).

Indonesia, the world's fourth-most populous nation, ranked 85<sup>th</sup> with a score of 29.80 in the 2018 GI, a slight improvement from 87<sup>th</sup> in 2017.

Switzerland is a superpower when it comes to knowledge creation. Innovation is the main driver for economic growth and development of any country. How did Switzerland achieve this?

"Switzerland is regularly ranked top in innovation and competitiveness. But that did not happen overnight. The key factor was and still is education," Swiss Ambassador to Indonesia Yvonne Baumann told *The Jakarta Post* recently.

According to Ambassador Baumann, Switzerland has no natural resources and Swiss companies must be constantly innovative in order to make their products highly competitive in the global market. For that, Switzerland needs a highly trained work force. The Swiss education system, which combines vocational schooling with on-the-job training, is one of the best in the world.

"Equally important is the close cooperation between our universities and research institutions — which are also top class — with the private sector. This is key for innovation and competitiveness," she said.

The Alpine country every year spends 3 percent of its GDP on research and development.

There are only 12 universities in Switzerland, but they produce excellent results in the areas of medicine, food, agriculture, engineering, watches, machines and



Courtesy of Switzerland Tourism/Jan Geerk



Courtesy of Switzerland Tourism/Roberto Moila



Courtesy of Switzerland Tourism/Roberto Moila

chemistry. Switzerland has so far won 25 Nobel prizes — mainly in medicine, chemistry, physics, peace and literature — in the 117-year history of the international award. Indonesia, in its 73 years since independence, has yet to win its first Nobel prize.

As a result of high-quality education and a skilled work force, Switzerland has a very strong service sector. Around 74 percent of

Switzerland's GDP is currently generated by its service sector, and another 25 percent comes from its industries or manufacturing.

No wonder, with a total area of just 41,285 square kilometers and 8.54 million people, Switzerland has a GDP of US\$679 billion in 2017 — the 20<sup>th</sup>-biggest economy in the world — and a per capita GDP of \$80,189, one of the highest

in the world.

With its \$1.01 trillion GDP (2017) and a GDP per capita income of \$3,846, Indonesia is currently the 16<sup>th</sup>-largest economy.

Switzerland, which espouses neutrality in global politics, has a highly transparent legal system, the best banking sector, excellent infrastructure, the lowest unemployment rate (3.3 percent), the lowest inflation, an efficient capi-

tal market and low corporate and value-added taxes. Besides the modern market economy, Switzerland's main strengths are political and economic stability and democracy.

Switzerland's banking sector, which manages around \$3 trillion, is perhaps the best in the world. Such a small country has some of the world's biggest banks. For example, Union Bank of Swit-

zerland (UBS) — the biggest bank in the country and the 27<sup>th</sup>-biggest bank in the world — has a market capitalization of almost \$1 trillion.

With a market capitalization of \$909 billion, Credit Suisse is another Swiss bank, which is the 29<sup>th</sup>-biggest bank in the world.

Switzerland is also well known for its innovation in the pharmaceutical industry. Its top companies, like Novartis (the world's second-biggest pharmaceutical company after American Pfizer), Hoffman-La Roche (third-biggest in the world) and Merck Serono, produce some of the best and highest-quality medicine. Last year alone, Switzerland exported \$70 billion worth of medicine, or 23 percent of its total exports of \$300 billion.

Switzerland's biggest companies like Glencore, a commodity trading and a mining company; Nestlé, the world's largest food company; and many others will add more shine to Switzerland's fame.

Switzerland is also well known for its high-quality watches, jewelry and chocolates. It is also a global player in the hospitality industry.

With Alpine mountains, beautiful nature and lakes, Switzerland is also a beautiful country. According to Swiss government data, around 10.4 million foreign tourists visited Switzerland in 2016. Overall, tourism contributed around \$61 billion — both directly and indirectly — to Switzerland's GDP.

Indonesia can learn a lot from Switzerland about innovation in education, research and development, the services sector and manufacturing areas.

Indonesia's President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo is very much impressed with small Switzerland's many achievements. He is very keen to seek help from Switzerland in developing vocational education in Indonesia, which will be vital for the country's industrialization and job creation. The good news is that the Swiss government is very happy to expand all possible cooperation in developing the vocational education system in Indonesia.

## Indonesia's Swiss alumni excel in many fields

Prasiddha Gustanto  
THE JAKARTA POST/JAKARTA

Ever since it was officially formed in November 2010, the Swiss Alumni Association (IAS) has been an organization dedicated to giving Indonesians who have lived in Switzerland a means to network with each other.

"We are trying to become a 'home' for any Indonesians who have ever stayed in Switzerland and are already back in Indonesia, and also to become a reliable partner for other Swiss communities [cultural, business and social] that want to come and expand their activities in Indonesia," said IAS chairman Tommy Pratomo.

Indonesia's Swiss alumni have excelled in many fields as they received very high quality education and training in Switzerland.

The IAS began its journey in the mid-2000s as an informal means for relaxed gatherings among Indonesian alumni of Swiss schools and has since evolved into an organization officially recognized by the Swiss Embassy as a place for anyone, not just former students, who has worked, been stationed at or lived in Switzerland to socialize, exchange information, network and meet up.

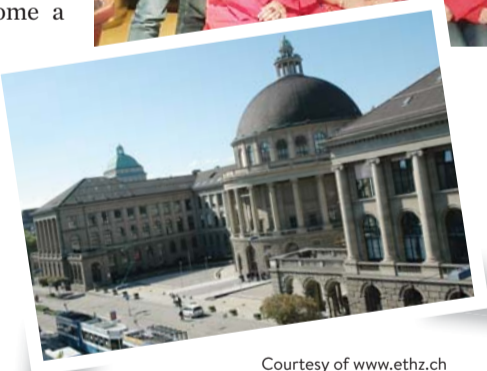
The organization, headquartered in Jakarta with chapters in Bandung, West Java, and Bali, currently has around 200 registered members. There's plenty of potential for it to grow much larger, according to Marina, IAS's public relations representative.

"There is currently no precise data on how many Indonesians in total have lived for extended periods in Switzerland. We estimate that the total number may be in the thousands. We are currently in the process of gathering data to make an alumni database system and reach out to more Swiss alumni in Indonesia," said Marina, who studied hospitality at the International Hotel Management Institute in Luzern, Switzerland.

Marina's chosen field of study in Switzerland mirrors that of many other Indonesian Swiss alumni, including IAS's former chairman, Tommy Saroso, who



Courtesy of Swiss Alumni Association (IAS)



Courtesy of www.ethz.ch

10<sup>th</sup> spot and four other Swiss universities in its top 130.

Beyond its technical expertise in a wide range of fields, Swiss education carries a special appeal for facilitating networking among students in a highly multicultural environment.

"During my time in Switzerland, I found friends [students] from countries like Russia, South Korea, Japan, China, as well as local Swiss students. Being there allowed me to meet international students and learn about other cultures," Marina said.

IAS is a place for people who have fond memories such as these and allows them to share them with other people who have also experienced living in Switzerland.

It has historically held events such as *bersilaturahmi* (get-togethers), *nonton bareng* (group movie screenings), *buka bersama* (breaking-of-the-fast together) and small group activities for its members. It also organizes more ambitious gatherings.

"We are actually preparing to host a seminar/forum group discussion which will invite representatives from the private sector, government, Swiss entrepreneurs, the Swiss Embassy and Swiss investors to discuss the possibility of partnerships and future investment," Pratomo, who studied financial management at the Institute fur Finanzplanung, said.

The requirements for joining IAS itself are simple, Pratomo said. "If you are someone who has ever stayed in Switzerland for more than six months, and would like to contribute in whatever way you are good at, join us, and together we can make a small change. Because small changes can make a big difference."

ABB

## ABB commits to support Indonesia's digital economy

Today, the energy revolution and the fourth industrial revolution are going on at the same time. The fourth industrial revolution or industry 4.0 brings industrial transformation through automation, Big Data, the Internet of Things (IoT) and Artificial Intelligence. The energy revolution prepares the power grid to face new demands of industry and changing generation mix. ABB is at the forefront of these major shifts and will continue to support Indonesia on deploying digital technologies across the country. **The Jakarta Post** talks to Massimo Danieli, Head of ABB's Grid Automation Business, within the company's Power Grids division. Following is the excerpt from the interview.



**Massimo Danieli**  
Head of ABB's Grid Automation Business, a part of the company's Power Grids division

### ABB is eager to introduce enterprise software to Indonesia. Why?

Digital transformation is a journey that every organization is preparing to face, and is exploring what this means in terms of new business models, and how this can enable deeper engagement with end customers. As we stand on the brink of a technological revolution that will fundamentally alter the way we live, work, and relate to one another, this is a really exciting time for the power industry, for the consumer markets, and also for industry. This same message is reinforced by President Joko Widodo, who has a vision to transform Indonesia's economy and bring it into the new digital era. Several initiatives such as the industry roadmap, "Making Indonesia 4.0" aimed at boosting competitiveness of manufacturing industry and the plan to encourage 1,000 startups by 2020 are in place. This push on manufacturing and innovation is supported by infrastructure development including mass urban transport such as the light rail transit (LRT) and mass rapid transit (MRT), and increasing power generation by 35,000 megawatts (MW). All this indicates that the factors are right for digitalization by way of economic development, availability of technology and

maturity of the general user population. Digital technologies offer significant opportunities not only for the consumer market, but also in the area of power management and the industrial sector. Many of our customers in Indonesia in utility and mining already have a long-term digitalization vision and are executing on their strategy to bridge the gap on Operation Technologies (OT) and Information Technologies (IT) using condition monitoring tools and systems such as ABB Ability™ Ellipse®. With deep domain knowledge, and especially being the pioneer of many physical technologies, ABB is well positioned to facilitate integration between OT and IT, and enable customers to realize the benefits of digitalization, including asset optimization and data driven services.

### What is ABB's offering as a leading global enterprise software player?

ABB Ability™ is a comprehensive set of industry digital solutions that enable customers to take full advantage of ABB's decades of expertise in insights, science, and domain-specific know-how. ABB Ability™ represents our complete portfolio of digital solutions. This includes our installed base of more than 70 million connected devices, 70,000 digital control systems and 6,000 enterprise software solutions. In addition to our portfolio of existing digital

solutions, we are developing the ABB Ability™ platform which is a set of common enabling technologies that are used to build devices, systems, and applications. Furthermore, in 2010-2011, ABB acquired two leading enterprise software solution providers, Mincom Pty and Ventyx, part of our strategy to continuously broaden our software offering and position ABB as a key player in the digital market. By acquiring these two companies, ABB has combined both expertise and resources to address the range of ever-changing demand for software solutions for power utilities.

### Could you tell us the competitive edge ABB offers, which allows it to be the right partner of choice?

As mentioned before ABB has a legacy of 130 years as the largest technology provider for the power grid, from products and solutions to systems, services and software. This has culminated in a vast amount of domain expertise, pioneering technological developments, many world firsts and a very large installed base of assets. Our range products and services span the entire value chain of power from sensors in the field to control centers and finally to the boardroom.

## MUSIC

# Swiss musicians' love affair with gamelan

A Swiss classical music ensemble's interpretation of gamelan breathes new life into the traditional Indonesian music form



JP/Arief Suhardiman

Sebastian Partogi

THE JAKARTA POST/JAKARTA

Three classical musicians from Switzerland — cellist Domitille Coppey, pianist Jessie Vergères and violinist Timothée Coppey — were about to perform the concluding piece of their recital on the evening of July 18 at The Dharmawangsa in South Jakarta.

Instead of sitting down to play their piano, violin and cello, however, the three musicians left the three instruments behind, then stood up and walked toward the front of the stage. Then, while standing up, they started to tap their hands and legs in a synchronized rhythm before starting something unique: they bent down to pick three individual gamelan plates placed on the floor and three hammers.

The musicians — each holding a bronze gamelan plate in one hand and a hammer in the other — started to beat the plates with their hammers, resulting in a melodious composition. The audience started to nod their heads to the rhythm.

Who would have thought that just three gamelan plates, hit by three musicians in certain rhythms and tunes, could be just as melodic and harmonious as the whole gamelan set?

They played Domitille's three-minute composition called "Creation with Gamelan", which completely reimagines just what gamelan music can do.

The three musicians had come from Switzerland to perform the concert in Jakarta.

Domitille, born in 1989, has been playing music since she was little, taught by her mother Nicole Coppey, who established an educational and musical arts school called Un, Deux, Trois, Musiques... in Sion, Switzerland. Vergères and Timothée also studied music under Nicole at the same school. They have all been traveling the world — traversing Europe, the United States and Asia — to play their music before diverse audiences. They are trained mainly in European classical and contemporary music.

Gamelan is a traditional Indonesian percussive ensemble music form originating so far away from where the three musicians were born.

Coming from Indonesia, gamelan is played by people across Java, Bali and Lombok in West Nusa Tenggara. People from each region have subtle variations in the way they play gamelan. To literally define gamelan as a musical form, its name is rooted in the Javanese word *gamel*, which means "beating".

The essence that defines gamelan amid the variations in which Indonesians from different regions play it lies in its instruments. Gamelan ensembles comprise metalphones, as well as local percussion instruments *gambang* and *gendang*, as well as a big gong.

Domitille said she discovered gamelan in 2008, when she was around 18. Her mother took her traveling away from home — although not far enough to visit Indonesia — to the Cité de la Musique philharmonic concert hall in Paris, where they had a gamelan center.

According to Indonesian classical composer and pianist Ananda Sukarlan, gamelan already had a "Paris connection" for quite a long time.

"[French composer] Claude Debussy saw and heard a gamelan orchestra for the first time during the 1889 Exposition Universelle world fair in Paris," Ananda, also in the audience for the Swiss ensemble's concert, told *The Jakarta Post*.

According to a paper by Missouri Western State College assistant professor of piano Brent Hugh, gamelan music's trademark style — with its pentatonic scale as opposed to the diatonic scale used in classical European music — created quite a "sensation" among Europeans at that time.

The fascination that Europeans — particularly the French — have with gamelan lingers on, embodied by a gamelan course center in the iconic Paris philharmonic hall.

"My mother took me there to discover gamelan," Domitille recalled. "I joined a small group of stu-

**Eclectic musician:** Swiss cellist and gamelan player Domitille Coppey breathes new life into the traditional gamelan sound through her composition "Creation with Gamelan".

dents in that center to study gamelan for a week," she said.

Little did Domitille realize when she started, that her one-week experience with gamelan in Paris would lead her to a love affair that would last for so many years to come.

"My experience of learning gamelan in Paris was so great that I actually wanted to keep practicing gamelan at home [in Switzerland]. Since then, I have found gamelan to be a marvelous, beautiful musical tradition. I felt somehow that I fell in love with the tradition when I discovered it in Paris," she said.

"So my mother eventually bought me a gamelan set so I could continue practicing at home," she added.

Vergères is equally enthusiastic about playing gamelan.

"I enjoy the collective positive feeling we have when we play music together to create a common sound, be it classical music or gamelan," she said.

According to Domitille, she had to open her mind to a whole new way of thinking while learning to play gamelan.

"I have to change the way my brain thinks about music completely. It is a mistake to use your classical music expertise as a template to study gamelan. You should create a whole separate template in your brain for gamelan, which uses a pentatonic scale very different [from the diatonic scale used in European classical music] and basically learn from scratch again," she explained.

Domitille said that, eventually, as she practiced both music forms simultaneously, the two different musical templates started to run parallel and actually influence one another, imprinting in her an eclectic musical composition style.

"As time goes by, I feel I've become more adept at joining both aspects of my musical life, comprising European classical tradition and gamelan. You can feel how they join in the ["Creation with Gamelan"] piece we just played," Domitille, who practices both classical and gamelan music every day for six to eight hours, said.

Upon seeing and listening to the trio perform "Creation with Gamelan", Ananda said he was very impressed with the new life the three musicians had breathed into the gamelan music form.

"They interpret gamelan very differently from how the Javanese and Balinese do, because it doesn't come from their tradition. Thanks to their unique interpretation as a result of their [cultural and musical education] background, they are able to present gamelan music in a new way, which the Javanese and Balinese would never have come up with," Ananda said.

Ananda himself is known for composing classical piano pieces based on variations of Indonesian folk songs in a composition series called *Rapsodia Nusantara* (The Rhapsody of The Archipelago). He has also frequently incorporated the gamelan's distinctive pentatonic scale into his classical piano compositions.

"What they have done is similar to what I do. Because of my background, I can approach [classical piano music] differently and offer a fresh interpretation of it, because it doesn't come from my tradition," he said.

Domitille said that in order to successfully come up with an eclectic interpretation of a particular music form, first you had to truly internalize the music into your being, in order to really comprehend it in a genuine way and allow it to interact seamlessly with the different musical tradition that you had originally been immersed in.

"It has to be a part of you, it takes patience and time to really internalize a way of living expressed in a different musical form that is not from your tradition. There's a difference be-



Courtesy of 123musiques

**Learning by doing:** Swiss pianist and gamelan player Jessie Vergères instructs a young boy to play the traditional Indonesian instrument.



Courtesy of 123musiques

**Gamelan, reimagined:** Swiss pianist Jessie Vergères (left), violinist Timothée Coppey (center) and cellist Domitille Coppey interpret the gamelan tradition with a fresh approach through Domitille's composition "Creation with Gamelan". The composition requires players to beat gamelan plates with hammers, alternated with percussive sounds from their own clapping hands, instead of playing the whole gamelan set.



Courtesy of 123musiques

**Passing the music on:** Swiss cellist, gamelan player and composer Domitille Coppey (right, sitting down) teaches children in Switzerland to play the gamelan in a traditional Indonesian orchestra.



Courtesy of 123musiques

**United by music:** A multiethnic children's ensemble performs in Switzerland.

tween showcasing a culture and being a culture," she said.

"Once you have internalized and comprehended the different musical tradition, though, you can start creating a truly genuine eclectic musical expression," she added.

According to Domitille, if people tried too hard to mix different musical cultures without spending enough time to truly internalize the different way of being that they entailed, the result would not convey genuine emotions that would touch the audience.

"It will become obvious [to the audience] when you try too hard to mix things," she said.



JP/Arief Suhardiman

**A musical ride:** The Swiss classical music trio of violinist Timothée Coppey (left), pianist Jessie Vergères (center) and cellist Domitille Coppey (right) take the audience on a musical journey to explore all facets of the human experience through their repertoire presented at a recent Jakarta gig.

## Classical music tour de force

A classical music trio from Switzerland comprising cellist Domitille Coppey, pianist Jessie Vergères and violinist Timothée Coppey thrilled the audience during a recital on July 18 at The Dharmawangsa in South Jakarta with a strongly built set list.

The trio started the program with a song cycle titled "Trio in A Major" from Russian composer Vissarion Shebalin, who lived between 1902 and 1963.

The different tempos of the song cycle — moderate, allegro assai and largo — evoked in listeners a life-affirming sentiment. The three players showcased their full strength here, presenting a song cycle that, in a synesthetic perception, created an image of a train going up and down a hill in one beautiful journey through its changing tempos.

The composition itself is brilliant, full of joy and optimistic despite the composer's tragic life. "During the Soviet regime, he fell victim to the 1943 Soviet Union purge and had fallen into obscurity since then," Domitille explained.

Then the hall became melancholic with a piece called "Prayer" from Ernest Bloch, a Swiss Jewish composer who lived during the baroque period of 1880 to 1959. The composition's predominant motif is played in the lower registers of the cello, which makes the piece even more haunting and chilling.

Domitille played the somber melody — which sometimes transitions into a prayer-like solemnity evoking devotion.

In this piece, the late composer seems to

evoke a sense of both dread and faith — two elements that are salient and interlocked in the Jewish collective memory, as persecution has been a major part of Jewish history.

Having lived through the Holocaust, which occurred in the 1930s and 1940s, overlapping with World War II, Bloch truly understood the horrors of the systematic genocide of Jews across Europe by Nazi Germany and how faith had become their sole key to survival during a time of great brutality, evoking his comprehension in one powerful musical piece.

Whereas through "Prayer", Bloch seemed to want to go into the light of life but had not quite reached his destination yet, the piece that followed his composition, "Le Grand Tango" by Argentinean composer Astor Piazzolla, who lived from 1921 to 1992, once again reminded us of the light that would eventually appear at the end of a long dark tunnel.

True to the spirit of tango itself, the piece truly celebrates human life and the vitality that animates it — no matter what trials one has to go through in one's life — with upbeat music. The audience nodding their heads and moving their hands and feet rhythmically along to the music was a reminder at the end of a long day that life, after all is said and done, is worth living.

Like all successful classical performers in the world, that evening the Swiss trio succeeded in taking its audience to emotional highs and lows — celebrating all facets of the human experience — in one powerful recital. (JP/Sebastian Partogi)