

Lots of work, but quite a successful production. All the concerts were sell-outs, and this one grant was the stepping stone to the A2SO getting back into the NEA's funding graces.

The main stage was also recorded and put together very nicely into a production by WGTE, Public Radio in Toledo, Ohio, so it reached a bunch of folks, and was broadcast both in April, and then again on July 4, 2000, including interviews with Gabriel, Sam Wong, and I believe, Steve Shipp.

This was the first (and I think still only) production of Gabriel Gould's piece.

Gabriel did write the piece with the need to adjust it for the different tunings of different gamelans in mind, but any of you out there with programming abilities might very much consider bringing it to your communities, and the educational materials could be licensed from the Ann Arbor Symphony if desired.

The playing time is 15:00.

The piece received its world premiere in two concerts, essentially. The full piece was played in a Saturday evening concert, conducted by Sam Wong. The Concert began with both the gamelan and orchestra players seated on stage "playing for each other." The orchestra played "Appalachian Spring" and I must confess I forget what the gamelan played, but it was quite well done and was aided by the presence of a number of visiting Javanese artists. Then came the premiere of Lokananta. The second half of the concert was Brahms, the Fourth Symphony I believe, but the audience was dismissed from the hall by the gamelan with a bubaran, Hudan Mas.

Sections of the piece, however, were premiered in the two previous days, as part of the Symphony's Youth Concerts, conducted by current A2SO Music Director Arie Lipsky. This was his "audition" concert in a job search — talk about putting someone on the hot seat — but it clearly worked, because he got the job.

The Youth Concerts that year were entitled "Re-Orienting the Classics" and they examined how western music had imagined the "Orient" to be musically, and then offered up an example of some real "oriental" music, before proposing the new conversation of Lokananta.

The program was:

1. Copeland, *Fanfare for the Common Man*
2. Mozart, *Violin Concerto No. 5 "Turkish"* (final movement, with a youth soloist from Bulgaria but studying in Ann Arbor with concertmaster Steve Shipps)
3. Beethoven, Finale from *The Creatures of Prometheus* (an example of clearly "European" music)
4. Rimsky-Korsakov, *Scheherazade: The Sea and Sinbad's Ship* (excerpt), and the educational materials making and backing up a claim that the solo violin line so well known is a direct copy of the Muslim call to prayer. (Really, go listen, and then play it together with a recording of call to prayer -- amazing!)
5. Tchaikovsky, *Nutcracker: Coffee and Tea variations* (also known as Arab and Chinese to the dancers out there)
6. Ravel, *The Empress of the Pagodas* from *Mother Goose Suite*.

And then, small version of the evening concert:

1. Copeland, an excerpt from *Appalachian Spring*
2. Music by the gamelan
3. and an excerpt from Gabriel's piece.
4. Finally, the students were dismissed with *Bubaran Hudan Mas*.

There was a full accompanying curriculum for teachers, including sections on the music with Humanities Tie-Ins, as well as special sections on the gamelan and a special curriculum on Indonesia.

The Ladrang is initially played by the gamelan alone, but is soon "doubled" by the orchestra, creating some great tonal play back and forth.

The playing order is AABABCAABA, going to suwukan in the final A section, which then leads us to:

3. Cascades

a section that is an orchestral section going from "pelog" tuning to D-flat Lydian, then switching to "slendro" and back to "pelog", all in the orchestra. This flows smoothly into

4. Sandi Asma / Concealed name

A section for gamelan and orchestra, that begins with pathetan in rebab, then gambang, gender and suling. The improvisation by Javanese players is echoed in soft instruments and solo lines from the orchestra. This is the introduction to an entire "soft" section, including pesindhen (Susan Walton in the premiere) singing a "Concealed Name" poem in Javanese by Martopangrawit on how to approach playing gamelan. I don't have the Javanese handy, but the translation is:

Strive to understand the wisdom contained in the music
be diligent in feeling its texture
its development and treatment;
feel the essence of the melody,
know where lies the origin of its mood
seek there the meaning of the melody,
feel it until your soul
is made clear, bright, and your view is unclouded --
a clarity that penetrates the universe.

This is a truly beautiful section, and the emotional center of the piece, truly gorgeously blending the gamelan and orchestra. As it ends, there is a total break, followed by:

5. Agitation and Volatility

A loud and jangling section, based both on ideas from Stravinsky and Prokofiev (think Firebird in its most rhythmic) and Balinese bamboo gamelan. Insistent, powerful, but, eventually and gradually tapering of into:

6. Return / Kepulangan

the piece returns and thins out to the three gongs, and then, finally, simply, one last gong.

On Gabriel Gould's "Lokananta" for Javanese Gamelan and orchestra

by Charley Sullivan

Education Coordinator for the Ann Arbor Symphony who put together the concept and grant proposal that occasioned the commission and premiere on March 2000.

[slightly edited by Jody Diamond July 1, 2004]

The commission was for a piece for gamelan and orchestra in which each ensemble would "speak its own language" while having a joint conversation. And Gabriel's piece does this gorgeously, I think. The orchestral scoring is:

*2*2*2*2 4331 T+2 hp pf+cel 14 10 8 8 6

so it's a fairly big work.

In writing the work and in his public lectures as part of the world premiere, Gabriel explicitly spoke of it as a "concerto" in the sense that he had the gamelan function essentially as one large instrument, although he hasn't labeled the piece as such formally.

The piece is structured in six sections, thusly:

1. Creation/De Profundis

Based on three gong-pitches from gong and kempul, the piece arises out of silence into an increasingly complex three-tone rhythm. This sets up the name of the work, based on a creation myth for gamelan as a method of communication among the gods and of the need for three differently pitched gongs to allow the gods to keep all the messages clear. The pitches are picked up by demung, saron and peking all pounding out pitch 5 increasingly loudly, also picked up by the orchestra in an increasingly insistent ostinato.

2. Ladrang Sang Hyang Batara Guru:

Gabriel composed a Ladrang that actually works quite well, which bursts out of the first section full throated.

There are three sections:

| A | B | C |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 565. 565 [∧] 3 | 756. 567 [∧] 3 | 6532 ..1 [∧] 3 |
| 353. 353 [∧] 2 | 3765 653 [∧] 2 | 5675 .65 [∧] 3 |
| 565. 565 [∧] 3 | 756. 567 [∧] 3 | ..23 532 [∧] 3 |
| 5625 623(1) | 5323 212(1) | 56.. 532(1) |