

# DIRECTORY

## Gamelan Groups in Canada

compiled by Laurent Bellemare

This directory gives the following information for each group (with a few exceptions). No ending date indicates a group that was still active as of 2024.

### PROVINCE

#### City

1. name of group
2. years of operation
3. instruments
4. repertoire
5. affiliation (institutional or independent)
6. contact (person or website)
7. narrative

### ALBERTA

#### Calgary

##### Balinese Gender Wayang Ensemble of Calgary

1999–

Balinese Gender Wayang  
Traditional (Sukawati, Bali)  
University of Calgary

This group was developed by Brita Renée Heimarck for the World Music Ensemble course at the University of Calgary that she taught from 1999 to 2005. Since her departure, former student and percussionist Rod Squance has been teaching Balinese gender as part of that same course.

### BRITISH COLUMBIA

#### Vancouver

##### Gamelan Madu Sari/Vancouver Community Gamelan (Kyai Madu Sari, The Venerable Essence of Honey)

1986–

Central Javanese  
Traditional and new works  
Simon Fraser University  
[gamelanmadusari.com](http://gamelanmadusari.com)

Initially led by the late Martin Bartlett, The Vancouver Community Gamelan is the group formed after Expo '86, when Simon Fraser University received the event's Javanese gamelan. Using those instruments, the group often performed as Gamelan Madu Sari and released two CDs under that name. In the 80s and 90s, a *gender batel* group was formed out of the collective, using Kenneth Newby

and Lorraine Thompson's gender wayang quartet. Kyai Madu Sari has continued to be used to teach Javanese music courses at Simon Fraser University, its longest-term teacher being Sutrisno Hartana.

##### Gamelan Alligator Joy

(Vancouver Community Gamelan)

1991–

Javanese *gadhon* [chamber ensemble]

New works

Western Front

Gamelan Alligator Joy is an extension of the Vancouver Community Gamelan. Performing on a Javanese gamelan *gadhon* purchased by Martin Bartlett in 1990, the group has pursued activities independently of Simon Fraser University where Kyai Madu Sari is housed. For a long time the gamelan was housed at the Western Front.

##### Cymbali

1987–1989

Balinese gender wayang, electronics  
Traditional and new works  
Independent

Kenneth Newby

Cymbali was founded by Kenneth Newby, Michael O'Neill, Lorraine Thompson, Trish Halsey and Andreas Kahre. In addition to performing traditional gender wayang repertoire, the group also created new works including other instruments, such as three home-made MIDI instruments called "Flying Bonangs."

##### Sekaha Gong Gita Asmara

1996–

Balinese Semaradanar  
Traditional and new works  
University of British Columbia  
[music.ubc.ca/balinese-gamelan](http://music.ubc.ca/balinese-gamelan)

Gita Asmara is a student and community group formed by Michael Tenzer in 1996 after he had moved to Vancouver. Based at the University of British Columbia, the group performs traditional and contemporary Balinese repertoires, and toured Bali in 2013.

### **Gamelan Si Pawit**

1999–

Sundanese Degung (*Si Pawit*)

New works

Vancouver Community College

[jonsiddall.com](http://jonsiddall.com)

Gamelan Si Pawit is the name of the degung instruments bought by Jon Siddall in 1983 for Evergreen Club Gamelan, his former ensemble. In 1999 he had the gamelan shipped to Vancouver to use for a studio music course at Vancouver Community College. His student groups have performed several new works, including those by Siddall.

### **Gamelan Bike-Bike**

2013–

Balinese-inspired instruments built in Canada

New works

Independent

**Contact:** [publiksecrets.com/gamelanbikebike/](http://publiksecrets.com/gamelanbikebike/)

Gamelan Bike-Bike was founded by George Rahi, who built the instruments from recycled materials such as scrap bicycle parts and canisters, adding Balinese gongs and drums. The ensemble is heavily indebted to Balinese gamelan and features mostly current and previous Gita Asmara members.

### **Beledrone**

2011–

Javanese pencon, Balinese ceng-ceng, kendang, gongs, bagpipes, various other instruments

New works

Independent

Beledrone is an eclectic ensemble formed by Michael O'Neill that combines two different kinds of loud processional musics: Balinese beleganjur and Scottish bagpipes. In his compositions for the ensemble, O'Neill has also included other instruments such as voice and viola.

### **Turtle Bliss**

2018–

Gender wayang

New works

Independent

Turtle Bliss is a quartet performing on Michael O'Neill's pelog-tuned gender wayang instruments, whose design and repertoire is based on the wayang tantri style developed by I Wayan Wija and his musicians, and have been used for various projects over the years. With Turtle Bliss, Michael O'Neill has produced mostly new works.

### *Victoria*

#### **Busy Island Gamelan**

(The Victoria B.I.G. Band)

2009–2017

Javanese slendro gamelan

Traditional

University of Victoria

[gamelan.tumblr.com](http://gamelan.tumblr.com)

Busy Island Gamelan was founded by Sutrisno Hartana during his doctoral studies at the University of Victoria, when he borrowed a gamelan from the Indonesian Consulate. The group performed several times in Vancouver Island and Vancouver City. Activities stopped with Hartana's graduation in 2017.

### **MANITOBA**

#### *Winnipeg*

#### **Maja Gender**

1994–

Gender wayang

Traditional Balinese and new works

Independent

Jim Hiscott

Jim Hiscott and Andrea Ratuski have been playing Balinese gender wayang together since their first trip to Bali in 1991. When working with Vancouver-based musicians Michael O'Neill and Ann Hepper, the duo becomes the Maja Gender quartet, performing traditional pieces as well as new works.

#### **Mini-kebyar**

2018–

Gong kebyar style built in Canada

Traditional Balinese

Canadian Mennonite University

Dustin D. Wiebe

In 2018, Dustin D. Wiebe built a small set of gong kebyar instruments in collaboration with the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Manitoba. Later that year, he invited 8 artists from Bali to perform on these instruments. The *ad hoc* group notably presented the rare repertoire of Balinese Protestant music.

## NEWFOUNDLAND

*Saint John's*

### **Gamelan Sagara Asih**

2013–

Sundanese Degung (modeled on Evergreen Club)

Traditional and new works

Memorial University

Bill Brennan

The group consists of students in classes taught by Bill Brennan, a former member of the Evergreen Club Contemporary Gamelan, who ordered a gamelan degung from Tentrem Sarwanto in 2013.

## NOVA SCOTIA

*Wolfville*

### **Acadia Gamelan Ensemble**

2009–

Sundanese Degung (*Puspa Galih*)

Traditional and new works

University of Acadia

kenshorley.com

In 2009, Ken Shorley began teaching an introductory course in gamelan degung at Acadia University. With Jeff Hennessy, he also formed the Acadia Gamelan Ensemble, a community group performing on the same instruments. Shorley's degung was roughly modeled after the instruments of the Evergreen Club Contemporary Gamelan.

## OMBAK

2021–

Sundanese Degung (*Puspa Galih*)

Traditional and new works

Independent

[ombakgamelan.com](http://ombakgamelan.com)

Ken Shorley launched a professional degung group in 2021, using the same set of instruments as those at Acadia. Ombak functions independent of the university.

## ONTARIO

*Ottawa*

### **Gamelan Semara Winangun**

2002–

Balinese Semar Pegulingan (pelegongan, Teges replica)

Traditional pieces from Teges and Binoh

Embassy of Indonesia in Ottawa

[ottawagamelan.org](http://ottawagamelan.org)

Gamelan Semara Winangun was formed in 2002 by Éric Da Silva when he found permanent housing for his semar pegulingan/pelegongan at the Embassy of Indonesia in Ottawa. His instruments are replicas of the famous gamelan of Teges, Peliatan. Da Silva left in 2005, after which the gamelan was collectively purchased by the ensemble.

*Toronto*

### **Evergreen Club Contemporary Gamelan**

(previously Evergreen Club Gamelan)

1983–

Sundanese Degung

Traditional and new works

Independent

[evergreenclubgamelan.ca](http://evergreenclubgamelan.ca)

Evergreen Club Contemporary Gamelan is Canada's first active gamelan. From its inception, the ensemble adopted the model of a professional contemporary music ensemble. It has commissioned hundreds of works, toured internationally, and produced a dozen recordings. Although the ensemble does arrange and perform traditional Sundanese music, Evergreen Club's focus has always been the performance of new music.

### **Gamelan York**

(*Nyai Mirah Kencana*, Lady Brilliant Vermilion)

2000–2005

Central Javanese slendro gamelan

Traditional and new works

York University

[Andrew Timar](http://AndrewTimar.com)

In 2000, Andrew Timar inaugurated a Javanese gamelan course at York University, with a leased set of instruments owned by the Consulate General of Indonesia in Toronto. New parts and instruments were purchased by Timar to restore the gamelan. After Timar, the course was briefly taught by Nur Intan Murtadza until the mid-2000s. York University no longer offers gamelan classes.

### **Gamelan Gong Sabrang**

2001–2018

Central Javanese gamelan (pelog and slendro)

Traditional and new works

Consulate General of Indonesia in Toronto (KJRI)

[www.kemlu.go.id/toronto](http://www.kemlu.go.id/toronto)

Gamelan Gong Sabrang was a community group that rehearsed and performed on the instruments at the Indonesian Consulate. Like other groups using those instruments, its teachers have been musicians employed by the Consulate, such as Wiryawan Padmonojoati.

### **Gamelan Toronto (GamTor)**

1995–2007

Central Javanese gamelan

Traditional

Consulate General of Indonesia in Toronto (KJRI)

Independent

Gamelan Toronto was a community group founded by Andrew Timar that used the Javanese gamelan at the Consulate. During its existence, the group was taught by Ono Eko Priyanto and Wiryawan Padmonojoati, musicians employed by the Consulate.

### **Gamelan Gedhong Maple**

2007–2018

Central Javanese gamelan (pelog and slendro)

Traditional

Consulate General of Indonesia in Toronto (KJRI)

Gamelan Gedhong Maple was formed by KJRI staff members who rehearsed weekly under the guidance of Wiryawan Padmonojati.

### **Gamelan Dharma Santi**

1993–2018

Balinese Semar Pegulingan

Traditional and new works

University of Toronto

Annette Sanger

This group was formed for classes in Balinese music taught by ethnomusicologist Annette Sanger. Pieces from the repertoires of angklung, gambuh, semar pegulingan, and Java were also taught and performed.

### **Nada Rasa**

1997, 2002

Various

New works

Independent

Andrew Timar

Nada Rasa was founded by musicians Trichy Sankaran, Andrew Timar, Mark Duggan, Ernie Tollar, and Ravi Naimpally. Its first iteration performed at Gamelan Summit '97 in Toronto, presenting new works combining influences from Indian, Indonesian and Western musics, using gamelan instruments like kendhang, gong, suling, kecap and gender. Nada Rasa's 2002 group featured a different line-up of musicians, still including Timar and Sankaran.

### **Toronto District School Board**

#### **Gamelan Venerable Son of the Rising Mist**

2000–

Central Javanese gamelan

Traditional

Toronto District School Board (TDSB)

[tdsb.on.ca](http://tdsb.on.ca)

A gamelan program offered throughout Toronto's public schools and inaugurated by Andrew Timar, who designed and ordered large sets of Javanese instruments from Javanese artist Suhirdjan which have been in rotation in schools around the region. Timar taught these courses until 2007, when puppeteer David Powell took over. Powell's own gamelan set, which he built during the 80s and 90s, was used for the TDSB program, including its pilot project.

### **Sekat Rat Nati**

2007–

Balinese gender wayang

Traditional

Independent

Annette Sanger

Sekat Rat Nati is a gender wayang quartet formed in 2007 by Annette Sanger, her husband Jim Kippen, and musicians John Carnes and Albert Wong. They perform Balinese music in Toronto.

### **Kayonan Gamelan**

2011–

Gong Kebyar

Traditional

Independent

Keiko Ninomiya

Professional dancer Keiko Ninomiya, who had previously collaborated with Gamelan Toronto and Gamelan Dharma Santi, established her own studio in Toronto in 2011. Using a gong kebyar she bought in Bali, she invites people to gather and "eat, dance and play gamelan".

*London*

### **Aeolian Hall Gamelan**

2010–2012

Central Javanese

Traditional

Western University

Nur Intan Murtadza

A short-lived community group led by musician Nur Intan Murtadza during her PhD studies at Western University.

*Waterloo*

### **Warga Santi, University of Waterloo Balinese Gamelan**

#### **Ensemble/Grebel Community Gamelan**

2013–

Balinese semara dana

University of Waterloo; Conrad Grebel University College  
[uwaterloo.ca/music/community-engagement/community-gamelan](http://uwaterloo.ca/music/community-engagement/community-gamelan)

The gamelan housed at University of Waterloo's Conrad Grebel building is used by a student group and a community group, both led by musicians Maisie Sum and I Made Dewa Suparta.

## QUÉBEC

Montréal

### **L'Atelier de gamelan (student group)**

1987–

Balinese gong kebyar, angklung

Traditional and new works

Université de Montréal

[musique.umontreal.ca/etudier/ensembles-facultaires/atelier-de-gamelan/](http://musique.umontreal.ca/etudier/ensembles-facultaires/atelier-de-gamelan/)

Founded by professor José Evangelista in the fall of 1987, the *Atelier de gamelan* is an introductory course for students to learn various Balinese music repertoires. The course was first developed through eight consecutive years of instruction by Balinese guest teachers, and later taught by later taught by Sylvain Mathieu, Éric Vandal, I Dewa Made Suparta, Alexandre David and Putu Arya Deva Suryanegara, among others. It is currently taught by Laurent Bellemare.

### **Giri Kedaton**

(previously Sekar Giri Kedaton)

1995–

Balinese gong kebyar, angklung, gender wayang, selonding, gambuh, gambang

Traditional and new works

Université de Montréal

[girikedaton.com/sitetemp](http://girikedaton.com/sitetemp)

Giri Kedaton is a community group developed by the *Atelier de gamelan's* most diligent students. By 1995 it became a distinct entity and obtained its Ensemble-in-Residence status in 2002. The group performs various Balinese repertoires and new works.

### **Montreal Semar Pegulingan Ensemble**

1993–2002

Balinese semar pegulingan (pelegongan, Teges replica)

Traditional

Independent

The Montreal Semar Pegulingan Ensemble existed for a few years on an ad hoc basis, occasionally performing or producing events. It was founded by Éric Da Silva, who had purchased a semar pegulingan/pelegongan replica of the one in Teges, Peliatan. Lacking a permanent space for the instruments in Montreal, Da Silva moved them to the Indonesian Embassy in Ottawa and founded Gamelan Semara Winangun. Despite its short history, the MSPE participated in the Gamelan Summit 1997 in Toronto and in 1995 produced a North American tour featuring dalang I Wayan Wija, musician Sandra Wong, and musicians from Sukawati.

### **Sanggar Larasati**

2002–

Central Javanese gamelan

Independent

Traditional

John Gilbert

Sanggar Larasati was founded by John Gilbert, who owns a partial Javanese gamelan. He has been recruiting members and teaching them Javanese music since 2002. Although the line-up of musicians has often changed over the years, Sanggar Larasati has performed many times around and outside of Montreal.

### **Daun Getar**

2016–2017

Javanese gamelan, Balinese gender wayang, angklung

Traditional and new works

Independent

Daun Getar was a short lived collective founded by Pierre Emmanuel-Lévesque and John Gilbert. In April of 2017, they presented a joint concert with Gamelan Giri Kedaton and Atelier de gamelan, performing a Javanese piece and an angklung arrangement of Steve Reich's "Music for Pieces of Wood."