Maguru Maya: Teaching Balinese Gamelan at a Distance

by Otto Stuparitz

For many gamelan students, the switch to online learning occurred around mid-March 2020 with most groups in the midst of preparing for an end-of-the-year performance. That's when I began a temporary position as an assistant online gamelan teacher at U.C.L.A. for I Nyoman Wenten (Balinese gamelan gong kebyar) and Pak Djoko Walujo (Central Javanese gamelan), with returning students, new students, and no instruments. We gave historical and cultural lectures, guided group listening, and tried some vocal performance exercises for our scattered online students. Each week was a bit of an experiment.

We tried to blend performance aspects into the class, like demonstrating the *angsel* [syncopated breaks] cues for the "Topeng Tua" dance, but found it challenging to interact musically with students in real time. Our most successful performance efforts involved prerecorded videos made a few years ago of pieces with one part removed for the students to fill in vocally; in the limited time to prepare for online teaching, we could not make more of these. Most of our classes became guided listening sessions and discussions of specific gamelan topics.

Near the end of our term, I started to notice that some gamelan groups had end-of-the-year performance projects online. Wondering how others had met the challenge of remote teaching, I decided to interview gamelan teachers in the United States. I wanted to balance the Nusantara Arts series focused on Javanese gamelan, so I chose five teachers leading Balinese gamelan ensembles via Zoom for their university and community groups: I Ketut Gede Asnawa (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign), I Dewa Putu Berata (U.C. Berkeley), Hirotaka Inuzuka (University of San Diego and Loyola Marymount University), I Nyoman Wenten (CalArts and U.C.L.A.), and Elizabeth Clendinning (Wake Forest University). I conducted the interviews on Zoom in early June 2020, primarily in English with some sections translated from Indonesian.

In our in-depth discussions, each teacher conveyed the difficulties of communicating with their students, and described how they overcame the obstacle of the absence of instruments, which generally remained locked in university classrooms. While most teachers did not have access to the school instruments, they each had some instruments at home, which were used to create videos, often with the assistance of family members.

Without instruments for their students, teachers turned to vocal styles and music requiring few instruments— like kecak, *baleganjur* [marching gamelan], and new, non-traditional compositions—to create track-by-track performances that could be edited together. Students would download the videos, and sometimes cipher notation, via email or a school website, and then be assigned to make their own recordings of one of the parts.

Many teachers and students noted that while the results of successful projects were similar, the feelings and experiences were different. The process of learning and performing interlocking kotekan by recording at home with a fixed track differed from learning kotekan with a live partner, who might vary tempos and dynamics (even when not desirable).

Prior to each interview I sent each teacher a list of possible topics: the gamelan groups they had been teaching online, advantages and disadvantages of online technologies, issues of instrument access, ideas that may continue into in-person teaching, and other considerations such as latency, notation, feeling, community, isolation, process, finished products, and comparing the experiences of new and advanced students. Each teacher spoke at length about these topics; these conversations were edited and condensed to highlight each teacher's distinct ideas about their experience and methods of online instruction.

I began each interview with by asking the same question: how have you been teaching gamelan since the pandemic started?

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I Ketut Gede Asnawa

Ketut Gede Asnawa: Fortunately, I was just teaching one class at the time. We used to have a community gamelan and student ensembles, but we decided to open the class only for the student ensemble, because it's hard to coordinate with the community members, who range in age from seven to sixty. We already had a plan for our final concert: one kebyar or semara dana style, and a baleganjur piece, with the community gamelan playing gamelan angklung. We would have had three different kinds of ensembles performing at the concert. Before we went online, the students already had a bit of experience playing together. That was a good thing; when we switched to online, they already knew basic things about gamelan, although it was hard for everyone to get used to using the technology together.

My family helped me make recordings for the students. I played reyong, the four kettles, by myself, my daughter Yoni played ceng-ceng, my wife Mardiani kept the beat. I added the drum at the end, and we used editing software for the final result.

I was already thinking that baleganjur would be perfect for long distance learning, because everyone has just one note that's played over and over. You have to learn that one note, but then you synchronize it with others to make a whole. In terms of the transmission of knowledge, it's a little bit easier.

I also added notation that matched the recording as something to be complementary and helpful. I notated every section of the piece in order from beginning to end—*kawitan*, *pengadeng*, *penyelah*, *penyalit*, *gilak*, and *penyewud*—part by part, with ceng-ceng, *ponggang* [melodic ostinato in baleganjur] and gongs. Everything, I notated. Everything! I made a recording first, then the notation, and then sent them to the students, who each selected which part they wanted to work on.

My idea is that you can use your eyes to look at the notation and your ears for the recording. Three different ways at the same time; eyes, ears, and hands. Three-in-one I call it. Here [eyes], here [ears] and then here [hand moving as if playing]—all conducted by the brain. That's the idea.

I call this format *maguru maya* [learning through an illusion]. Maya is the software. You can feel it, but you can't actually see it. We need time to get used to the process. In reality, it used to be *maguru panggul* [learning through the mallet]; we are used to being physically with the object. When we are far apart, we may have a real instrument but no direct guidance from the teacher. That's why everything in this method is maya.

Maya can be found in any context. It's like *sekala/niskala* [the seen and the unseen]. Maya is niskala. The gods are maya. But different than a rock you can see—"Wahhhh" [pretending to hold a heavy rock]—maya is deeper inside. Maya is also connected to the virtual. The non-reality. It is a different world. The technology is a different world.

Stuparitz: That is a very nice way to talk about it. Now that you've had some success doing this project, do you think you will continue with anything like this?

Asnawa: Actually, I hope that it's not going to happen anymore. I'm not satisfied teaching or learning gamelan through the maya. It's not natural for gamelan. We must be physically there. We miss the interaction as a community. We miss making music together. But this is a good start for me, a new style for teaching music. That's why I came up with the pedagogical approach which I explained in a video made at my school. To share the idea. It is one of the many things you can do with virtual learning for the gamelan. This was our concept at the end. Everybody can sort of feel what we were doing.

But your question, will I be using that kind of technique in my teaching? I think I'm going to maintain some of it. First, I recommend using notation. Notation is just a tool, it's not for performance. But in the process of learning and making music, we need to visualize the music, and with notation, you can see how the notes go together. It can give you an additional perspective about the composition of music itself. And second is listening, listening to the recording. This I recommend even when we are together. We discussed this a lot in the class. Listening is more important. I think you might agree. Third, I think we can use what ethnomusicology does, looking at the communication of music and about music. That's what I'm going to try to do. But maybe those would be ten percent or less, and then the rest will be practice. I don't want it to be the opposite. Too much talking and then doing nothing—that doesn't make sense for me.

Sometimes students complain about the way maguru panggul works. Because everyone has a different ability. I'm trying to push them to understand that the process of learning music is from the global to the specific. Pak Made Lasmawan had a theory about *air mengalir* [flowing water], water that goes from the top of the mountain down to the

land. Allow them to keep going and keep doing it. Then when we stop, we discuss problems. We can slow down until everybody learns it. But I'm not very patient. Sometimes I'm thinking about the advanced students, and want to move faster to accommodate them. Sometimes I forget them for a while, and help everyone who has a problem. I say, "Sorry, I was too fast for you. Let's back up now."

It's like what I call *nyegare gunung* technique. *Nyegare* means ocean and *gunung* is the mountain. If you look at our ecosystem, everything is based on the ocean. The water is there. The life is there. The resources are there. When the water evaporates, it becomes fog, and goes to the top of the mountain to become rain. Rain falls on the top of the mountain and flows down. And then back again. It's like a circle. We call it convergence theory. Nyegare gunung, up and down. Which one is first? Where do you start? Either in the water or on the mountain. It's the same thing. Same as air mengalir. Keep things going more naturally.

Stuparitz: Oh, wow. Thank you. If you have to keep teaching online, will you try anything new?

Asnawa: It depends. In the future, we might consider distance learning as a kind of a new teaching style for gamelan ensemble. In order to do that, I think we need to create some innovative software and work on programming it. The problem is that we cannot access the real gamelan.

Nature has given us a mouth and we have a body. We can start there with kecak. It is easier. And we can see each other when I am facing the students in a Zoom meeting. Everyone can see what we are doing, like you and I are talking to each other right now. You can hold your body like that, move your head like this. I can see how the students sing. I saw another group do kecak online. It's very visible. Will I do the same thing? I might do something similar, although with a little bit of a modified technique.

I Dewa Putu Berata

Berata with his daughter, Dewa Ayu Dewi Larassanti.

Dewa Berata: I'm teaching a lot. I love teaching in the Bay Area, as Gamelan Sekar Jaya's music director, and in some online workshops with Pak Henry [Spiller] at U.C. Davis. At U.C.Berkeley, I teach two classes. For one class I taught two pieces, one traditional piece from Calonarang and one I composed to give the students a challenge.

When we could not meet in person, I continued to teach with Zoom. I brought instruments back to my house, and recorded all the parts track by track. I played the main melody on jublag, then used a gangsa for the kotekan and the reyong part. I taught kecak and wrote notation for the many patterns. My kids Ayu, Dodé, and also my wife Emiko helped me record the three interlocking parts: one polos, one sangsih, one sanglot.

When I teach kecak in person I do not normally use notation, but online I want them to have it so the students can see the shape of their part. I don't like it but it helps them memorize. When I teach kecak, I always ask students to feel who is next to you, to feel the lock between the parts. We are not locked in Zoom. It's hard to feel the energy.

The students said they liked these online projects, I think because we all miss being in class together. We always joke in class and are always laughing. The online projects bring them to a place to imagine interacting. When we are able to see and talk to each other with Zoom, it treats the longing and we can still feel a sense of community.

For the other class, we did a baleganjur project. I recorded all the parts one by one because we cannot play all together. The students followed the recording with whatever instrument they had at home. They liked it as a final project, but they needed to be pushed to listen more carefully. I cannot correct them directly, like in class, I can just ask them to listen again. I think they are listening better now than they did in the class. They have to be sure which part they are following. I think more students actually have a better understanding of polos and sangsih, because I used to teach them by practice, but now I have to explain it.

Stuparitz: What lessons did you have with Sekar Jaya musicians? They are all pretty advanced, right?

Berata: Yeah, but some of them are new and sometimes they are struggling. I don't feel good when I correct someone. I think it sounds *menggurui* [patronizing], because some of the students are already very experienced. They have been to Bali, some since the '70s. They already know a lot, so talking about the basics feels weird. But Emiko pushed me to do that, because some people don't know the basics. When we talked about philosophy, many good questions did come up. In Sekar Jaya, we had time to watch many videos on YouTube and discuss the details.

I was thinking about how to create a feeling that we are always close—*jauh di mata dekat di hati* [far from the eyes but close to the heart]. I think these gatherings are positive because we always feel connected even though we are far apart. Before this incident, we rarely met like that. Now we meet, even though everyone is in a different place. Sekar Jaya has a movie night where we play shows from Sekar Jaya's early years or other interesting films. The whole group is invited and anyone can watch. I think it's good to get a little personal too. Someone can introduce their house

and their dog. Or we learn that someone plays the violin a little; it's good that we know.

I have started to think about the teaching time, about how to compress time and deepen understanding. But in the U.S., to be honest, time is the most difficult problem in gamelan. If we are in Bali, there is a lot of time. One week is what we need to make something new. We can practice five to six hours every day. In the afternoon, we have a break to eat and at night we do it again. It is not a problem for a lot of young people. There is time. It is not possible here. A one-hour class is one hour, and there is no time for talking. Maybe this online method can increase the productive time. I can give them a recording with an explanation ahead of time so we need less practice. Class time can be more efficient. In Zoom I see an advantage when people are asking about kendang or gong. If someone asks a question, everyone can hear. For in-person practice, I can control myself so I don't explain too much or joke too much. We just use the time to practice.

For the future, I don't know yet. The main thing that interests me is making a recording before we practice. Circulating it first so that there is already a feeling for the music when entering rehearsal. Maybe there can be an explanation about the meaning. Even though it can be done in direct practice, it would take a lot of time. I could also make a recording in Bali with my group, then the students will listen to it here. That's my plan.

Hirotaka Inuzuka

Hirotaka Inuzuka: I teach gamelan angklung at the University of San Diego. I'm the artistic director there and David Harnish is the co-director. I also teach gamelan angklung at Loyola Marymount University (L.M.U.); Paul Humphreys is the director and I am the gamelan coach. I have a community gamelan gong kebyar called Merdu Kumala, in Tujunga, California, that went online, mostly for meetings and discussion. No playing. Those are the three things I have kept going.

In San Diego, most of the students and the community members live close to the school, so they could take instruments home. David Harnish is the chair of the music department, and has more flexibility with lending the instruments. We had one week to plan after the campus closing was announced. We decided that if we distributed instruments, we could teach online. We only let out gangsa.

I thought about what to teach online, since it is an ensemble class of performance skills. You can't really learn performance skills online. I was going to teach only one part of the song. I arranged a single part based mostly on polos but adding material from ugal and reyong during breaks. They would all learn the same part and then each student would take a turn being the focus; basically, I gave one-on-one lessons. During each class meeting online, everybody would have an instrument in front of their cameras, ready to play [moves his hand like preparing to play gangsa]. I'd have about five students on the screen at a time. I would start with one student. I would play something; the student would listen and then try to play it back. We even tried to play together. I would play and the students would mute their microphones and play along.

The other method was to have one of the students play back on their own. Everybody else would follow, if they could. Then I could see if they could play by themselves. That was the ideal, but we have a pretty mixed bag of levels. It was a lot easier to teach advanced students.

Stuparitz: Did you ever try a lesson where the sound was on for two people at once?

Inuzaka: Not really, because it doesn't really work. The latency was just too long and distracting. It never worked over Zoom. Zoom has a recording feature so students could record a class for themselves if they needed to watch later.

I chose to teach the on-beat polos part because it's easier to identify without having people playing the other parts, even if there is no kempli to keep the beat. When a student would play back, I would listen really carefully, and focus mostly on the spacing between the notes.

Students had some in-person practice before the pandemic on two songs, "Margapati" and "Sekar Gendot," so they had already had a little bit of experience with the instruments. Online, we changed into the one-on-one group session. One student said, "Wow, I never get this much individual attention in class!" We were working on learning only individual parts. They first had access to the original recording to get an idea of how it sounds, but we weren't referencing the recordings too much. I wanted to keep it, as much as possible, how we would usually rehearse. I was trying to keep the feeling where I would sit in front of the student and play and the student would play back. I wanted to simulate that as much as we could. I would play with my camera focused on my playing and my face, because I respond with my face when I play. I had to raise my gangsa up so it could fit in the camera frame; although the way I had to play was a little bit painful [motions being scrunched tightly].

The students said they liked the individual attention. They liked to be able to work out the details more directly.

That has been the good side of teaching online. You know that the students are working out the details and the small nuances. You can really never practice those types of things during an in-person group rehearsal. It has been a tradeoff. But I had to teach just one particular part of the whole piece. We never did put the pieces together because we thought it would take too long, as there were only a few weeks of classes. We needed a lot of time to learn how to make a recording with new technology to make an end product.

I chose to just keep learning music, thinking about when we will return. Some of the U.S.D. musicians are community members who will come back. Thinking of the fall semester, I thought "We can play this song again and then they'll be ready to play it." I was looking for supplemental things that we could do, so I focused on individual attention and working out details. This semester, the only option for playing together would be to digitally edit together videos recorded by the students. But I didn't see that as important as just spending time with one-on-one learning. I think that's still the essence of the Balinese gamelan, just the communication.

I Nyoman Wenten

Nyoman Wenten: I've been teaching over half of the semester online at CalArts, U.C.L.A. and Pomona College. Our community group, Burat Wangi, stopped when the pandemic happened. Now I record myself, for example, playing Hujan Mas or the accompaniment to Oleg. I record the ugal and the calung parts for the beginning gamelan class. The students do not have instruments.

To make the videos, I went to school because I still have access. I made a recording and played it in a Zoom meeting. I also showed the beginning students what the instruments look like, so they will know what I'm talking about: "Pemade? Oh, yeah." I asked the intermediate group, "What is the tuning of your instruments?" I taught things about tuning like *pengumbang* and *pengisep* [low and high tones in a paired tuning].

In the regular class, we usually don't have much time to explain. People just come in and play "Bapang Selisir." But in the online meeting I can explain that "Bapang Selisir" comes from older pieces and borrows from *pegambuhan* structure. I can explain the form and the gong pattern. Online, we are able to discuss things a bit deeper, and break down the segments.

In order to really play, you have to touch the instruments. You cannot just see the instruments. I tried using a gangsa app with the students. They learned things melodically but not practically. The students learned the melody of "Bapang Selisir," but have never played it on a gamelan, only in the app.

I showed them how to make a kotekan using three or four keys. This is the positive part of this method. People understand more about gong kebyar, instead of just playing. They understand things like the *saih pitu* tuning system with the modes, *saih selisir*, *tembung*, or *sunaren*. The students even tried to transcribe what I played into western notation. I sent them the tuning of the CalArts gamelan and they tried to put it into a diatonic scale. Of course, the negative thing is that they cannot really become good players if they don't practice. You cannot just listen on YouTube or watch a video. The only way is to touch an instrument and practice.

Stuparitz: I heard you taught "Kebyar Duduk" online for the Burat Wangi dancers. How did that go?

Wenten: It was hard for them because they cannot really see me when I am sitting down. I go up and down, right? I cannot see them in order to correct them. Even with a good camera setup, you cannot really make progress if you don't touch them to correct them [which is the traditional Balinese approach to dance instruction]. I tried my best to explain, "Okay, *ngayog kanan* is when you are on the floor and move your body to the right and then put your right foot in front, cross-legged, kneeling down." I try to explain it the best I can. I would teach them all at the same time, like I normally do, about twelve dancers.

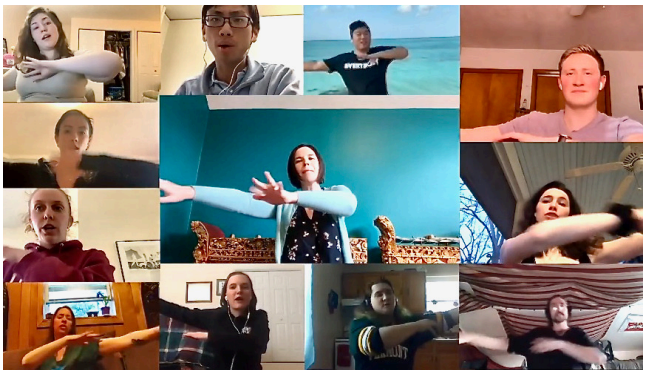
Stuparitz: Twelve at once! Will you continue to do anything online if we go back to meeting in-person?

Wenten: The two methods should be combined. I prefer practicing in-person, but maybe every two weeks, we can have a class on Zoom. We can be a bit more comprehensive and clear about terms. We are hoping to have in-person classes next fall at CalArts, but it requires distancing six feet apart. Dancers will be different, and I also need to consider wind instruments and singers. We have a big room; we will be able to accommodate maybe 20 people. I asked for assistive technology. I requested a wide-angle camera with an HD cable and TV monitor to project my playing, because the players will still be too far away from each other in the room. If I am close to the mirror, on one side of the room, the player back by the wall cannot see me. But if I have a camera on me, I can project my playing or the notation onto the TV monitor. It might be good for them to have headphones too. I don't know how it would work in practice, but this is what I propose. The school will try to accommodate it. It will be a new experiment. I will start there and see where it goes. This is my plan.

Tempo and dynamics cannot be learned online, even with recordings. To teach dynamics, you need everybody together—for the sound as well as the motions of the body. You need to show them how to move peacefully. We also need to learn more patience than we have in ordinary circumstances. This is the type of thing you cannot rush. You cannot be impatient about learning. You have to understand the difficulty.

Students cannot really learn practically online. They have to learn how to play and how to be together. In Burat Wangi, the better players help each other become a community. We never learn online but by real playing—then you never forget it. We help each other not only in the good times but also in the hard times. It reflects in your playing. You teach each other, you help each other. You don't feel like this on Zoom. It's gone, because you learn individually.

Elizabeth Clendinning



Elizabeth Clendinning: The main gamelan course I was teaching in the spring was the Wake Forest-based gamelan ensemble. I also have students from North Carolina School of the Arts, which is a public, college-level arts conservatory. There are also members of the community. It's always a very diverse group, which is both its strength and difficulty. There are a lot of people interacting from different backgrounds and different places in life. We were in the middle of the Indonesia unit for my world music class when the pandemic started. Where we and the gamelan group were at the time was kind of an unfortunate place; well, it's always an unfortunate place to switch modality.

The announcement that everything was closing came over spring break. We were going to have some guests and do a mini performance for them as "openers," and then we would have had two and a half more weeks before a big performance. We were left with less than half of the group members living in town, where any instruments would be accessible. Everyone else was scattered all over. Because of lockdowns, the guest artist couldn't come, but they had given us a video of what they had planned to perform, so we started by watching that.

I think it was very positive, especially for the students and the community members who've been studying longer, to really dig in. You asked me about what I would do again teaching gamelan online—I absolutely would recommend virtual guest artist visits prior to an in-person visit. Although coordinating across time zones can be hard, and there are technical issues.

Online communication can be a jump start for a guest who's coming later. If you're planning to study someone's piece, and you are in contact with them, you can spend time getting to know them; this sometimes gets lost in an introductory-level class targeted towards undergrads. Well, yeah, we're here to play. And that's of course important, but you know, cultural connection is important too.

In the spring, there were some committed community members who just said, "I'm not going to do a class online." That was one of the driving forces that made me decide we weren't going to try to directly replicate rehearsals or keep working on pieces. The community members, most of whom are retirees or long-term local residents, will probably come back when we can play in person. Enrolled students also had access issues. For example, one student was in the Bahamas and his internet didn't work very well. I'd had them video themselves doing kecak; he had a hard time logging in. Some students were having a hard time just sort of managing their time and mental health issues.

Another consideration for teaching online, just to be very Balinese-oriented about it, is that the whole "place, time, situation," of each group is different. This group has some community members, and I also have a substantial core of students, about half of whom are planning to come back. The other half, either this was the first semester or they're graduating seniors going somewhere potentially without gamelan. It's a group where the needs were highly divergent. I tried to keep the continuing players doing something useful, and to give people in their last planned experience with gamelan something to take with them.

We thought about doing kecak, which was the one thing that I had done with my world music kids with just four weekly meetings. Both the world music students and the gamelan students ended up studying and recording fixed kecak parts, with no improvisational leader-follower dynamic. The gamelan students edited their videos into a short production. I also put together a playlist of videos of different genres—not only gamelan, but different genres of music that one might encounter in Bali.

The students who've been studying longer were able to engage more substantially with musical structure. I gave them a video of an ISI Denpasar angklung recital with these twenty-year-old Balinese playing mostly traditional pieces. My students really connected to that—"Oh, they're our age. And this is what they're doing. And this is how they're being together. And, I really like this piece." It was a piece I happened to know, so we could play it later. That was useful.

For beginning students, it's sort of odd as a modality to start a gamelan class without instruments. I could see some value to that if what you're doing is framed as pursuing a general cultural and musical study with some hands-on projects that simulates a direct experience rather than being a tangible one. If everybody

had instruments, that'd be a different story, but that rarely happens.

I think, depending on the group, it's important and productive to use online meetings as a way to continue the social elements, the topical focus, the listening, and maybe provide guidance for students who do have instruments to maintain some technical ability. If we're still planning to go to Bali for a study abroad program in Summer 2021, I could see focusing primarily on reading and listening.

[In August 2020,] the situation is that our continuing gamelan members are scattered in at least four different cities, and there are significant limitations on what we can do on WFU campus. It's a closed campus, with no outside visitors allowed. Our rehearsal space now has a tiny capacity of six or seven people, and no live public performances are allowed. I proposed several options to continuing members; their preference was a semester of targeted reading, watching, analysis, and listening. We may do some virtual music-making and have a workshop on campus if we can, and perhaps a virtual guest visit. It will likely be a slightly smaller group than normal, probably no more than 12 people, but a good mix of returning students, new students, and community members.

Though it feels odd to have an "ensemble" class where we're not playing regularly, my students and my colleagues are very positive about this format for this fall. We'll have the ability to do the in-depth listening, discussing, and exploring that we can't do in a usual ensemble setting. I still feel like students and community members are getting a special and unique experience, and one that importantly should not be impacted if we have to shelter in place again. Finally, it should maintain a sense of continuity and community.

The Desa-Kala-Patra of Online Gamelan

Desa-kala-patra is a Balinese cosmological concept that considers the place, time, and context of daily life in Bali. Several teachers mentioned this when describing how they thought about creating an online ensemble. They discussed the changing social qualities of online pedagogy, and theorized possibilities for maintaining Balinese philosophical values in an online modality. These concerns demonstrate that teaching gamelan online is not only a practical issue, but also necessitates philosophical and social considerations.

I Ketut Gede Asnawa reimagined the traditional maguru panggul pedagogy as a new concept he calls maguru maya. The multifaceted term maya can refer to features or devices that do not physically exist, such as virtual reproductions. Maya references the Balinese sekala/niskala—the seen/unseen world with tangible/intangible elements. Asnawa's digitally edited project demonstrates his belief that the mutuality of gamelan, whether imagined or simulated, can still be present in the unseen domain.

I Dewa Putu Berata noted how Zoom can extend meeting time, potentially allowing for more efficient rehearsals. Berata made "back to basics" videos so his ensembles could learn the details of drum signals. These videos benefited even advanced players who knew how to respond to these cues but perhaps had never focused on the specific patterns. Berata highlighted how coming together via online social gatherings can actually develop social connections between musicians who previously might have tended to focus on playing.

Hirotaka Inuzuka developed a new method to teach the same material to each student by blending elements of the polos, ugal, and reyong parts. During the online class, each student takes a turn as the leader, while other students follow along with their microphones muted. While this method is meant to simulate the ensemble's normal rehearsal style, there were still practical issues of getting instruments to the students and being able to maintain a comfortable camera setup.

I Nyoman Wenten taught gamelan as well as Balinese dance online. He emphasized that even with a good setup, dancers cannot make much progress if the teacher cannot correct them in the traditional manner. He is already considering how to manage the challenges of teaching when students can return to the classroom but need to remain six feet apart. He has proposed a classroom setup with headphones for every student and a camera focused on the teacher that projects onto a monitor. With this method, students separated from each other would be able to synchronize with the teacher, instead of bearing through an unwieldy game of gamelan telephone.

Finally, Elizabeth Clendinning was aware of how the place, time, and situation of each group is different. She observed that mixed level groups have varying needs, which become even more difficult to address online. She determined that online teaching maintains the potential for more guest artists, as musicians and educators become comfortable with online modalities. Guests artists could jumpstart their visits with sharing materials beforehand, virtual sessions, or providing access to tools to prepare students for new styles and concepts.

The place, time, and context for each musician, teacher, and student during this pandemic is challenging and different, in ways never before encountered by the gamelan community. As the pandemic proceeds, each of these teachers will undoubtedly continue to develop pedagogical possibilities for online as well as in-person teaching. While the gamelan community is spread out, in some ways we have never been as connected. Someday, this pandemic will pass, and we can again play together the music we love, taking with us some of the ideas and lessons learned from this desa-kala-patra.◗

Further Reading

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2018 "Meguru Panggul and Meguru Kuping; The Method of Learning and Teaching Balinese Gamelan." In *Lekesan: Interdisciplinary Journal of Asia Pacific Arts* (1), 39–44.

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2014 "Dwelling as Dharma: A Hindu–Balinese Experience of Building and Living in Modernity." In *Perspectives on Traditional Settlements and Communities*, 69–89. Singapore: Springer.

Videos

These are also posted on YouTube.

Ketut Asnawa

Maguru Maya: Online Classroom Showcase
Explanation of the step-by-step process of teaching Balinese gamelan online at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, including details of the editing process, weekly course format, Asnawa's comments on distance learning, comments from students evaluating the process, and the performance of "Ombak Segara."

Dewa Berata

"CalCak Kecak 2020" (on YouTube)
A final project of kecak performed by the students of Lisa Gold and I Dewa Putu Berata at U.C. Berkeley.

"Music 139 UC Berkeley Student Balaganjur- social distancing Project" [sic]. (on YouTube)
As the final project for the "Music and Theater of Bali" workshop at U.C. Berkeley, these students composed a piece based on baleganjur, using clapping and instruments they had at home.

Elizabeth Clendenning

"Social Distancing Kecak by Wake Forest's Gamelan Ensemble" (on YouTube)