

PROFILE

National Institute of the Arts, Taiwan

by Han Kuo-Huang

At my suggestion, in the Fall of 1985 the first gamelan in the history of Taiwan was established in the Department of Music, National Institute of the Arts in Taiwan. It is a *gamelan angklung* made in 1985 by I Made Gableran of the village of Blahbatuh, Bali. However, the *gong ageng* substitute was made locally by the Lin Wu Iron Factory.

Since there was not a gamelan teacher locally I was invited as a visiting professor of world music to teach several academic courses and the gamelan ensemble. Nineteen students from the Department of Music signed up for the year-long course. These students were divided into two groups, each meeting for a two-hour class weekly. By the end of the year, the two groups were combined for two additional hours each week in preparation for a series of concerts.

Since the gamelan was considered the first "exotic" ensemble in the country, it attracted a great deal of attention in the news media. Reports and photos of the gamelan and its members appeared constantly in the newspaper throughout the year. There were also eight radio reports and interviews with me and members of the ensemble. The gamelan group appeared twice on television; the first time in a variety show on China TV (May 24, 1986) and the second, as part of a program similar to "60 minutes" on Taiwan TV (June 2, 1986). The group also performed for my lecture, "The gong chime culture of Southeast Asia" in the Taipei City Arts Festival Lecture Series on October 14, 1985 as well as at the Second International Seminar on Chinese Ethnic Music in April 1986. The culmination of the year-long study was a series of four concerts given at the Shih-Chien Hall in Taipei (May 31), Tunghai University in Taichung (June 2), the Culture Center in Kaohsiung (June 3), and Tainan Junior College of Home Economics in Tainan (June 4) 1986. Four dancers from the Department of Dance at the National Institute performed *Pendet* in the series. They were trained by Nuniek Mokoginta, an Indonesian student studying Chinese language in Taiwan at that time. In order to perform an old style piece including angklung, four bamboo angklung made in Bandung were used for the concerts.

The gamelan course did not continue after my



Performance by students of the Dance and Music Departments, National Institute of the Arts, Taiwan.

departure in the summer of 1986. The only activity in the 1986-1987 academic year was one teach-in session for 200 children organized by members of the first gamelan class and sponsored by the Minsheng Daily on October 26, 1986. However, since the Fall of 1987, Ms. Lee Chien-hui, who is a member of the staff of the National Institute, has continued as instructor of the gamelan. There are sixteen students in the class for the 1987-1988 academic year. I assisted them with several sessions when in December 1987 I revisited the island. They appeared once on television. Mantle Hood of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County was also invited to give instruction when he attends the Third International Seminar on Chinese Ethnic Music in May of 1988. The Department of Music is also considering the purchase of a Javanese gamelan in the future.

Visitors in Taiwan who wish to see the instruments, attend rehearsals, or who have further interest in the gamelan should contact the Department of Music, National Institute of Arts, 172 Chung-cheng Road, Luchou, Taipei County, Taiwan, R. O. C. ▀

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