

The Cambridge Gamelan

by Bill and Sandra Martin

As the university year 1987-88 progresses, the Cambridge Gamelan Society looks forward to the anniversary of the arrival of gamelan *Duta Laras* at the Music School early in 1983, and the founding of the Society later that year. Gamelan *Duta Laras* is a complete Javanese court-style gamelan, with both *slendro* and *pelog* tunings.

This has been an enriching time for the Society members, both musically and otherwise. Gamelan playing has become an addiction for many of us and our musical understanding and awareness have been enhanced. At the same time strong friendships have been made, and culinary skills have been widened and deepened, thanks to the strong and continuing opportunism of members in having as many parties (self-catered) as occasions offer!

Each year the Society has started with a membership of some thirty players, which has usually dwindled down to a core of around twenty active members. Even so, when performances need augmenting, the Society can call on past members and other friends to join them.

Musical direction

The Cambridge Gamelan has been particularly fortunate with its tutors and music direction. Dave Posnett got the Society off to a very strong start in its first year. When he went to Durham to continue his musical studies, we were most fortunate to have available Dave Hughes, a much travelled scholar and musician, to carry us through for a further year, before Alec Roth took over as the Society's music director during 1985.



Under Alec's guidance the Society extended its repertoire and began to use voices as well as hands and minds in the accompanying *sindhenan*. Although based in London, Alec managed to come to many of the Friday evening playing sessions and led several successful weekend and week-long workshops. The very welcome appearance of Joko Purwanto in 1985 gave us additional experience in learning to play music from the heart as much as from the brain. We have all greatly appreciated and enjoyed his musicianship and talent, as well as his humor and welcome good company.

Repertoire and concerts

The repertoire of the Society has remained firmly traditional, although there are some gentle murmurs from members on the possibility of playing, or at least investigating, Western gamelan compositions. Staple elements in the musical diet have included *Ladrang Wilujeng* and *Ladrang Mugirahayu*, *Gendhing Gambirsawit*, *Lancaran Tropong Bang* and *Kebogiro*, and the suites *Kinanthi/Kembang Pepé* and *Golek Surung Dayung*.

Since the inaugural concert in June 1984, when Sri Hastanto was the principal guest musician, the Society has put on a public concert each year. A less formal concert in the form of "A Taste of Indonesia" event was staged in 1985. The event ran throughout an afternoon and evening and included Indonesian food and a show of photographs, puppets, masks, and other artifacts as well as gamelan music.

As part of the Cambridge Dance Festival in 1986, the Society arranged a programme of music and dance with three Indonesian dancers, Tuty Suhadi, Uky Isfandiari and Kunta Wibisana, who performed the two dance suites *Golek Surung Dayung* and *Gathutkaca Gandrung*.

In February of 1987, there was a second music and dance concert that produced a near capacity audience of over 450 people in the Cambridge Music School Concert Hall. In May we had our London debut—a Sunday lunchtime foyer concert at the Royal Festival Hall. Playing conditions were, as Nikhil our present secretary put it, "authentically Javanese, as the sounds of the audience rang in our ears!" A July summer school culminated in a highly successful *wayang kulit* performance, with *dalang* Ben Arps from the Netherlands providing an enthusiastic Cambridge audience with its first taste of shadow puppetry, the story of *Karta Wiyoga Maling*.

People and organization

Despite appearances to the contrary, gamelan playing requires a lot of organization and Cambridge has been fortunate, in its short history, to have people who have effectively taken on the administrative responsibilities. The first secretaries were Lindsay Dodsworth and Andrea Nixon. They were followed by Cecile Hales. In 1985, Cecile became president of the Society, with Peter Lillington and Anthony Milton jointly taking over responsibility for the growing archive of music and records. Steve Johnson ably mastered our financial strategies for several years, as well as making sure that all dues were paid. Nikhil Dally as secretary and Paul Higgs as treasurer continued the trend of high competence and dedication.

In 1985, Cecile Hales won a travel scholarship for the Society from a Cambridge travel agency. This enabled her, Peter Lillington, and Anthony Milton, to spend time in Surakarta, Central Java, developing skills and their playing knowledge, from which the Society has greatly benefited. Cecile's winning essay was on the problems of too few mallets. From a seeming problem has developed a whole cornucopia of musical riches!

Oxford University

by Glenn Black

Oxford is the youngest of the Javanese gamelan groups in Britain. On the May 17, 1985, Oxford University was presented with the Gamelan *Kyai Mas Laras* (Venerable Sweet Harmony) as a gift to the Faculty of Music from the Indonesian Minister of Forestry, H. E. Sudjarwo. It's a fine set of high-quality bronze instruments, comprising a full gamelan in both slendro and pelog, made in the early years of this century. It came to us from Klaten, a small town near Surakarta in Central Java, and is possibly the finest gamelan now in playing condition in Britain.

Since its arrival we have formed an Oxford Gamelan Society (under the auspices of Oxford University) and set about learning how to play. Fortunately for us, Nick Gray was back in Oxford from Cambridge, where he had played in the Cambridge gamelan under Alec Roth's guidance. Nick started us off learning our way around the instruments, before Alec was able to take us too under his guidance. It is Alec who has made us what we are; he has travelled down weekly from London to look after a heterogeneous group of people who wished to learn but

Dr. Glenn Black is a Fellow and Tutor at Oriel College Oxford, and a Lecturer in English Literature at Oxford University. He acts as senior member for the Oxford Gamelan Society.

A new phase ahead

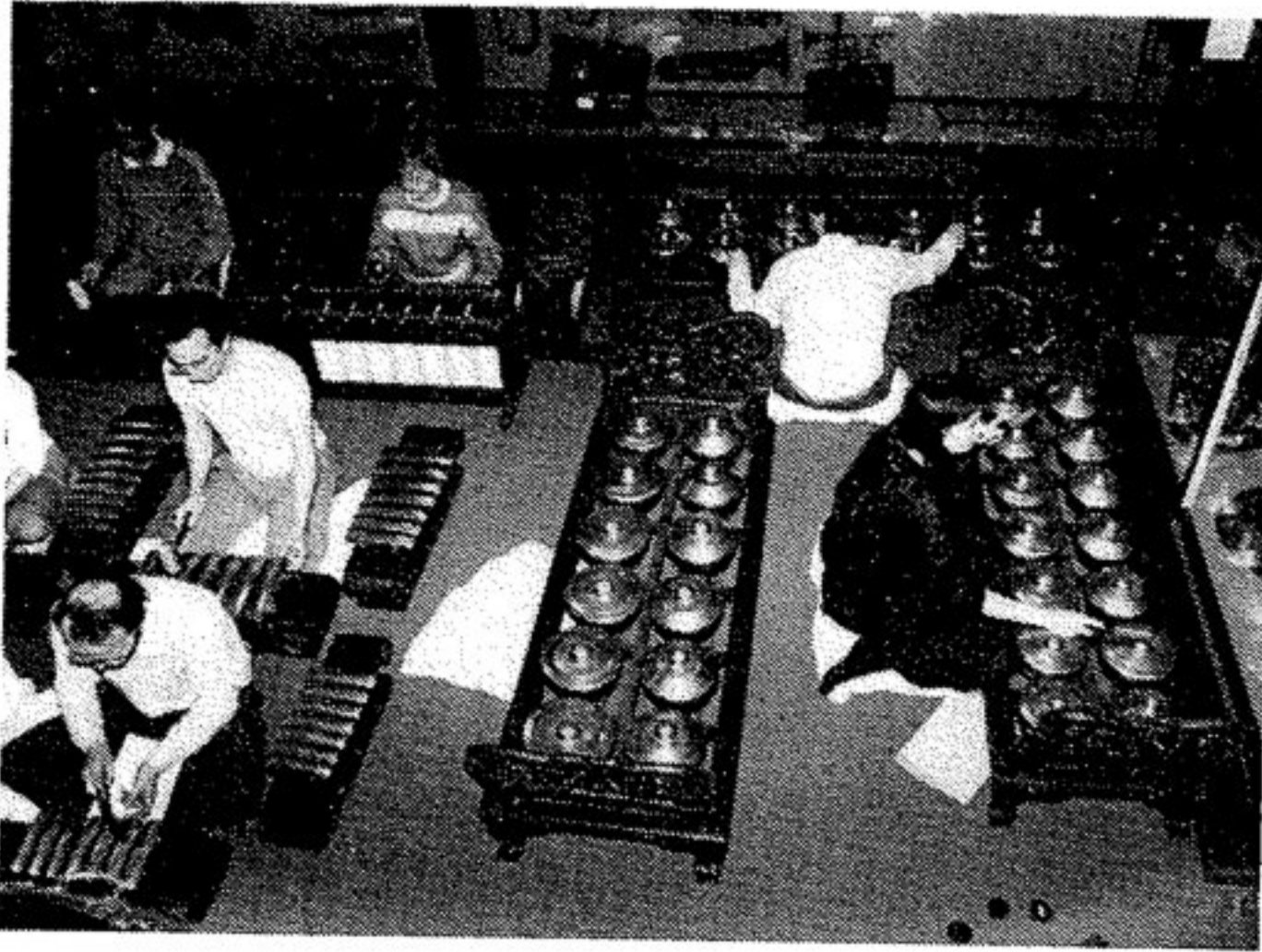
Apart from regular playing sessions and concerts (and parties), new developments for the Society could include setting up gamelan workshops with local schools. Several enquiries have already been received and, if time and money permit, this would help to bring gamelan to a wider audience, as well as securing a regular supply of new members to the Society.

Since 1984 the Society has published a newsletter three times a year called *PELOG* (for Players, Ethnomusicologists and Lovers of Gamelan). This has contained articles from members on music and travel, reviews of concerts, gamelan events and other articles of interest. Subscription is available to non-members, at a modest cost-covering rate, currently £2.50 per year (US \$4.00, cash only please); For further information about *PELOG* or the Cambridge Gamelan Society please contact: Bill and Sandra Martin, Lint Growis, Foxearth, Sudbury, Suffolk, UK. Tel: 0787-75777.

knew very little, and has patiently taught us the instruments, the techniques, and the repertoire.

We've been fortunate too in three other respects. The Indonesian Embassy in London has been very supportive, and the present Ambassador, H. E. Suhartoyo has been a valued friend and patron of the society by lending us, from time to time, the services of Joko Purwanto, who has taught us all a good deal. The University's Faculty of Music has supported us financially from the beginning, and their grant secured the services of Alec as our regular weekly teacher. Jeremy Montagu, Curator of the Bate Collection of Historical Instruments (where the gamelan is at present housed) has been tireless in his help and support, arranging tuition, organizing weekends and summer schools, and easing our case through the Music Faculty. We have started with many advantages, and ought to be able to develop into a lively and dedicated group capable of bringing to Oxford audiences some of the many delights of gamelan.

The enthusiasm is there already. Our fledgling group has a number of regulars who have been playing for the past two years, and a steady stream of interested newcomers keep turning up. We think we can boast some of the youngest players in Britain, with a twelve-year-old



veteran regular and keen novices aged six and eight. We meet once a week, with a beginner's group first, followed by a more experienced group.

On the first anniversary of the gamelan's presentation we celebrated by playing three pieces (*Ladrang Wilujeng*, *Lagu Dolanan Menthog Menthog* and the suite *Iringan Tari Gambiranom*) in front of the Indonesian Ambassador and his party, who then returned us the compliment by playing and singing for us. In the summer of 1986 we performed in a marquee one rainy Sunday in one of Oxford's public parks as part of a day of multicultural activities. We had to share part of our marquee with a team of Middle Eastern folk dancers, and faced some stiff competition from an amplified Jamaican steel band at the other side of the park, but, under Dave Posnett's expert guidance, we felt that we managed to hold our own, and were able to hear for the first time the subtle penetrating quality of the instruments in the open air as the music rippled out across the lake. They may just have been escaping from the rain, but a good number of people found their way to our marquee and many of them, of all ages, had a go at banging out the balungan for *Lancaran Singa Nebah*.

Our real debut came, however, on March 8, 1987, when we gave our first full public concert in the gracious eighteenth century Holywell Music Room and managed to attract an audience of about a hundred. We played eight pieces, adding to the three we played for the first anniversary: *Gangsaran-Ladrang Roning Tawang* and R. L. Martopangrawit's *Ladrang Enggar-Enggar*; using *Lancaran Tropongbang* as a simple demonstration piece and ending with the *Bubaran Udan Mas*. The most ambitious piece was *Gendhing Gambirsawit*, played by a *gadhon* of our best players. The excuse for the concert was that we were playing in aid of *Projet Kelelawar*, an Oxford University Expedition to study bats and other cave life in the Togian Islands in Eastern Indonesia, but it gave us a timely opportunity to test the response of an Oxford audience to traditional Indonesian music. We were very pleased with the result and gratified by the interest we aroused. A

professional recording was made, and cassettes are available from Jeremy Montagu at the Bate Collection.

We are now working on building up our repertoire so that we are in a position to do one or two regular concerts a year. We need to become self-sufficient, to earn enough from concerts and subscriptions to establish Alec Roth as our regular teacher and musical director on a permanent basis. We also need to build up our expertise, and encourage our more experienced players to graduate on to the more difficult instruments. As yet only one or two of us can make a stab at the *gendèr* or *rebab* and none of us is far enough advanced on the *gambang* or *suling* for a public performance. As is often the case with a university group, there is quite a quick turnover of people and we have already lost some of our better players who have moved on elsewhere. We draw our members from both town and gown, and from both music students and non-music students; before long we hope to have enough permanent players to provide continuity while still leaving room for others to join us for three or four years. One of the advantages of Alec Roth's links with both the Cambridge and London gamelan groups is that we have been able to lure several more skilled and specialized players to join us on important occasions, and we shall no doubt want to continue to do so for some years yet.

The world of British gamelan is still small enough for a real spirit of cooperation to exist between the different groups. We have much in common with the Cambridge gamelan group and already have a reciprocal arrangement of sorts with them. Most of the Oxford players would agree that we have learned a great deal from the gamelan weekends and summer schools held each year in Oxford and in Cambridge; one can get so much more out of even a short intensive course that brings together players of all standards and a good number of teachers. Some of us can be learning the *rebab* or *kendhang* while others are rehearsing new pieces or starting off from scratch. It's good too to play all day and then go off together to sample the delights of Oxford's own Indonesian restaurant. The Oxford summer school last year brought together players from most of the British groups, under the guidance of Neil Sorrell, Alec Roth, David Posnett and Joko Purwanto.

What we would like, eventually, in Oxford is some kind of a hall in which we could keep and play the gamelan. We are rather cramped in our present home (which is part of a small museum), and any public performance means a good deal of carrying and rearranging the instruments, or ferrying them by vans through the intricacies of Oxford's one-way traffic system. The Holywell Music Room (England's earliest custom-built music room) is an agreeable place to play in and easily available through the offices of the Music Faculty, but it is rather a squeeze fitting a whole gamelan into it.

It seems to us as if we are poised at the start of an exciting new era for gamelan music in Britain. The foundations laid here are, we hope, sound; our links with

London and Cambridge and the other British gamelan groups are firm and growing; Oxford is twinned with the city of Leiden in the Netherlands, and we have established links with Ben and Djumilla Arps from the Leiden gamelan. With their help and tuition we look forward to the day when we can have a full-scale *wayang* performance in Oxford, with Ben as dalang and Djumilla leading a singing group. We hope too that having the gamelan linked with the Music Faculty in Oxford will encourage an academic

interest in Indonesian music here, and encourage our more advanced students to follow in the footsteps of Nick Gray and apply for grants that will take them to Indonesia and then bring them back here to pass on to us what they have learned. For further information about the Oxford Gamelan Society contact: Jeremy Montagu, Curator of the Bate Collection, Faculty of Music, St. Aldate's, Oxford OX1 1BD, or Glenn Black, Oriel College, Oxford OX1 4EW.

Javanese Gamelan in Durham

by David Posnett

Musical connections between Durham and Java go back to the late 1970s when the then Head of the Music Department, Professor Eric Taylor, visited the *Akademi Seni Karawitan Indonesia* (ASKI) in Surakarta and negotiated for a group of gamelan players and dancers to visit England. The result was a spectacular performance at the second Durham Oriental Music Festival of 1979 followed by an enthusiastically received appearance at the Henry Wood Promenade Concerts in London. The group returned again in 1982 to further acclaim.

Developments in Durham soon followed. A set of gamelan instruments was purchased. Alec Roth undertook research into contemporary Javanese music and Sri Hastanto arrived from ASKI to study in Durham for three years on a British Council scholarship—his dissertation now ranks as one of the foremost studies of *pathet* in Central Javanese music. Both were supervised by Robert C. Provine, a specialist in Korean farmers' music, who has taught ethnomusicology at Durham since 1978. In 1982, Pak Hastanto began teaching gamelan to interested students and it soon became a special option in the second year of the music course.

The story of the instruments is an interesting one. The Durham Gamelan (as yet not bestowed with a Javanese name) is a near-complete gamelan *sléndro* lacking only a *gendèr panerus*, but it was not originally thought of as a full, integrated set. Most of the instruments were made in 1981-82 by Resowiguno at Bekonang near Surakarta and arrived at Durham during the summer of 1982. At first the gong was a *gong kemodhong*—the *gambang*, *kethuk/kempyang* and *gong agung* arrived in 1984. However, even this gong agung is in one sense not original. The first idea was to have a brand new gong, which was duly commissioned and made, but apparently it was then swapped with another gong from ASKI which, we are told, had already been "beaten in." The *gambang* and *kethuk/kempyang* are also the work of Resowiguno as was the new gong, but the

origins of the "acquired" gong are less certain. Resowiguno was also the maker of the *gendèr barung* which, although privately owned, has the same tuning as the rest of the ensemble, so there has never been any problem in using it as part of the set.

When I first came to Durham in the autumn of 1984, the gamelan was temporarily housed in the Philosophy Department, and interest among the students—with the exception of a few faithfuls to whom I shall always feel deeply grateful—was tentative. However, after the long-awaited move to the Old Library (complete with views of the river and Durham Cathedral), things began to improve. More people began to take part, the instruments seemed less homesick, and a performance was given in June of 1985, the programme being shared between the gamelan and an exhilarating demonstration of Korean drumming by Robert C. Provine. Workshops and slide talks had preceded the main event with the result that a much higher level of interest was maintained into the following year. With half a dozen two-hour rehearsals per term supplemented by individual tuition when necessary, I was able to plan more ambitiously, and this culminated in a full-length concert programme, given in the Durham Exhibition Hall, Palace Green, in June 1986. It included *Ketawang Rajaswala* and *Ladrang Pangkur sléndro sanga*, *Ladrang Dirada Meta sléndro nem* and the *Iringan Tari Gambiranom sléndro nem* together with a very long version of *Gendhing Ketut Manggung Minggah Ladrangan sléndro manyura*. I was very grateful for the assistance of Alec Roth, Neil Sorrell, and the ASKI musician Joko Purwanto on that occasion.

After I left Durham for Java in February of 1987, the group continued to work with some of the basic repertoire I had introduced. Regular rehearsals led to a lunchtime performance in June 1987, that was preceded by a workshop in which members of the audience were invited to learn and play the first section of *Lancaran Masa Liwung*. The occasion was enhanced by the presence of Neil Sorrell,

who in addition to playing *gendèr* and *rebab*, gave a talk with slides about his visit to Java to witness the making of the York University gamelan. Shortly afterwards, in July 1987, the gamelan was tuned during the visit of Sutikno and Panggiyo from ASKI. Apparently they complained about the quality of the gong agung.

Since my departure, the Durham Gamelan has worked under the inimitable directorship of Simon Steptoe, a post-graduate composition student whose initiative at this point saved the group from possibly having to disband. He began with three general aims: to extend the repertoire to include some simpler pieces for educational purposes; to attempt to learn new pieces entirely by rote, and to increase the group's theoretical knowledge. More specific aims included a visit to York for the experience of playing in *pélog* (at last) and several workshops for other students, enthusiasts, and children in the Durham area. After a successful performance at the end of the academic year 1987-88, several of the 'newer' pieces were kept in the repertoire for the following term. Thus new members could be absorbed quickly into the group through the teaching and example of existing ones. By now, not all new members were music students—a most welcome development in view of the declared aim of spreading the word beyond the confines of the University music course. Also, Simon Steptoe and another composition student, Robert Champion, both paid visits to Java during the course of the year. Robert stayed for four

months and was able to gain experience as a *gendèr* player and make a start on the *rebab*. Simon worked on *kendhang ciblon* and made several recordings.

The Durham Gamelan has also kept the direct Javanese contact going—albeit fitfully—in the person of Joko Purwanto, who, after working and teaching in London for a few years, is spending the current year (1988-89) as a graduate student at York University. His assistance will be very much appreciated when this year's activities come to a climax, particularly as we are attempting some new items, including *Ladrang Siyem sléndro nem* and *Gendhing Bondhet sléndro sanga*.

Nevertheless, as I write, the future of the Durham Gamelan is uncertain, despite solid support from the Music Department and the promise of additional instruments in the near future. The problem lies in the flow of expertise—the supply of gamelan research students has dried up. We are a long way from the regular nourishment now available in London and, as with all University activities, important people leave at the end of their courses. Still, over the last two or three years, the group has not only survived, but has made considerable progress on the strength of expertise generated within the group itself, and if this can continue there may yet be no cause to mourn. Information about the Durham Gamelan may be obtained from the Music Department, Palace Green, Durham DH1 3RL, United Kingdom.

Gamelan Sekar Enggal

by Simon Cook

Our set of iron and brass instruments was made by Suhirdjan of Yogyakarta in 1987. It comprises both *slendro* and *pelog* tunings. The saron are made from *pir mobil* [car springs]. This material, exquisitely tempered on the Javanese roads, is much harder to work than *plat* [sheet iron], as it must be filed as well as beaten, but it sounds better. There are four saron in each tuning, including a *saron sanga* [a saron with nine keys] in *slendro*. The two gong *suwukan*, six *kempul* and four *bonang* are of riveted iron, with brass bosses. The metal is lacquered, not painted, so the brass parts stand out handsomely against the grey iron. The large brass gong *kemodhong* has a single pot resonator. The brass *kenong* are not of the usual large pots, but *kenong rèntèng*, a set of keys with knobs.

Simon Cook is currently enrolled in the Ph.D. programme at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. He will return to Java this year for a period of research into Sundanese music.

Suhirdjan's painstaking workmanship is most evident in the brass instruments. The *gender* in particular sound better than many of the bronze instruments that have found their way to the United Kingdom. The *gambang* and *kendhang* also sound beautiful.

The frames and stands are of polished teak, with a simple flower motif, from which the gamelan takes its name. The saron cases are of box-like design with two upright end-pieces. As a way to economize on volume for shipment, these were originally only screwed together, not glued and nailed, so that they could be taken apart and packed compactly. The *bonang* racks were taken apart in the same way. Financial constraints delayed the purchase of the two short gong stands and three of the *bonang* racks. These should be arriving in London in early April 1989, to replace the homemade ones in use until now.

When the gamelan first arrived in 1987, it was housed at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London

University. Unfortunately, conditions at SOAS were somewhat cramped, and the building was closed in the evenings and on weekends. In July 1988 the gamelan was moved to Morley College, an institute of adult education in central London. There the gamelan had a room of its own, not used for other purposes, to which there was always easy access. SOAS now has the use of Ben Arps' iron gamelan slendro, which is a better size for the space available.

The gamelan has been used for beginning courses at SOAS and Morley College. This pays the rent, as it were. There are also weekly rehearsals for more experienced players. These jam sessions are very relaxed, with plenty of refreshments and chatter. They are both an opportunity for players to let their hair down after the somewhat formal classes and rehearsals at the South Bank, and also a chance

to try out interesting (and occasionally over-ambitious) pieces, without having to worry about what needs to be rehearsed for the next concert. Joko Purwanto and Sriyanto from ASKI have contributed much towards making these sessions both lively and challenging.

The gamelan is rather easier to move than a heavy, expensive, bronze one would be. It has been played at several concerts, workshops, parties, receptions, and at one gamelan player's wedding. The gamelan will, for the first time, be played complete with its new gong and bonang stands in a concert at the Museum of Mankind in London on April 29, on which occasion it will be given the name *Sekar Enggal*.

Anyone coming to London and interested in seeing the gamelan, or joining a rehearsal, is welcome to contact Jenny Heaton at (01) 249-0165.

The York gamelan *Sekar Petak*

by Neil Sorrell

Since I arrived in York in 1973 I had argued the case for including the study of gamelan in the University and at last, in 1981, the funds were made available to purchase a complete Central Javanese gamelan. I used a research term in the autumn of that year to go to Java and buy the instruments and also to continue my studies in performance. After an exploratory period, I decided to have a set specially manufactured, and one advantage of this was that it enabled me to observe the whole process of making a gamelan. This set, bearing the appropriate name of gamelan *Sekar Petak* (White Flower) arrived in York at Easter 1982 and was the first complete Javanese gamelan to be used in a British teaching institution.

The Javanese inauguration of gamelan *Sekar Petak* took place in Surakarta, Central Java at the home of the maker, Tentrem Sarwanto, on St. Cecilia's Day, November 22, 1981. This was followed on April 30, 1982 by the English inauguration in the form of a lecture/concert performance in the Lyons Concert Hall in the York University Music Department. The performers were the English Gamelan Orchestra led by Sri Hastanto, who was at this time carrying out his doctoral research at the University of Durham. Since then, the gamelan has not only formed an integral part of the music course at York (nearly all the players are music students) with regular rehearsals throughout the term, but has also proved to be of great educational value outside the University. We have conducted several workshops for school children, other University music departments and adult *ad hoc* groups

(including some psychiatric patients from Leeds). This educational aspect to our work has included some broadcasts as well, most notably the BBC's "Music Time" and TV's "No. 73" programme. Just recently (January 1989) we were filmed by Tyne Tees TV, providing a doorbell chime for a forthcoming series of "The Muppet Show."

Generally speaking, we have always tried to keep alive the old English Gamelan Orchestra tradition of mixing Javanese traditional music with modern Western compositions, partly because of the creative convictions held at York and partly because, without continuous expert Javanese artists in residence (and York is so much further from the Indonesian Embassy than is either Cambridge or Oxford!), our endeavors in the traditional repertoire must remain rather limited. Still, what we may lack in traditional expertise we have tried to compensate for with variety.

Regular performances with the York Gamelan really began in 1984. Several concerts were given in universities up and down the country culminating in a particularly extravagant multimedia event (with music by Mick Wilson) given just before Christmas of 1984 in Manchester Cathedral. That same year also saw a trip to Italy to participate in the Autumn Festival at Como and to give a concert and workshops at Lecco. Back home, we have performed at a number of other festivals including the International Festival at Cheltenham and the Commonwealth Arts Festival at Edinburgh, both in the summer of 1986. In June of 1987, we were able to broaden our traditional horizons somewhat in a performance of

wayang kulit with guest *dalang*, His Excellency, the Indonesian Ambassador Suhartoyo, and guest musicians Joko Purwanto, Sutikno, and Panggiyo. This proved a valuable experience and a year later we were able to accompany further wayang performances (this time with Ben Arps as guest *dalang* and Joko Purwanto as guest musical director) at the Henley Festival of Music and the Arts and at the York Festival and Mystery Plays. Other prestigious events have included concerts and workshops at the Commonwealth Institute in London, a concert at the Drumcruon Arts Centre, Wigan (in conjunction with an exhibition of paintings by Colin Rose) and one at the Huddersfield Contemporary Festival in November of 1988.

Mention of Huddersfield brings me back finally to Western gamelan compositions, since our performance there included the UK premiere of Lou Harrison's *Concerto*

for Piano and Gamelan. The York Gamelan in fact have a particular association with Lou Harrison, having collaborated with him on a number of occasions, most notably the Cheltenham Festival of 1986 where part of his *Double Concerto* for violin, cello and gamelan was also given its UK premiere. Other composers featured by the York gamelan include Adrian Lee (whose *Alice Songs* was also performed in Huddersfield), Clive Wilkinson, Michael Parsons, Michael Nyman, and Anthony Clare, whose *Ngesti* for E-flat clarinet and gamelan was a highlight of our performances of three summers ago.

All inquiries concerning the works of these composers and the activities of the York Gamelan should be made to Dr. Neil Sorrell, Music Department, University of York, Hestington, York 401 5DD.

From Bali to Belfast: the Queen's University gamelan

by Annette Sanger

Although to some it may seem a most unlikely place to find a gamelan, Belfast in fact has the unique distinction of possessing the only complete Balinese *gong kebyar* ensemble in the United Kingdom. To a large extent we owe this good fortune to John Blacking, professor of Social Anthropology and Ethnomusicology, who worked hard over a period of several years to gain financial backing from the University.

Our gamelan *gong kebyar* at Queen's has been named *Widia Santi*, Knowledge and Peace, a particularly apt name which was chosen by my teacher, I Wayan Sinti (interviewed in *Balungan* 1(5)), who gave many hours of his time in helping me to choose the ensemble. It comprises twenty-six instruments set in elaborately carved jackwood cases depicting scenes from the marriage of Arjuna. The gamelan was made in 1978 in the village of Tihingan (in the province of Klungkung), where many of Bali's gamelan are manufactured, and the carvings were worked in Sukawati (Gianyar Province).

The original owner of the ensemble was I Wayan Suweca from Kayumas, Denpasar, a musician probably known to many of *Balungan's* readers since he taught gamelan in America for several years. He had the instruments custom-made, the tuning being taken from Anak Agung Mandera's gamelan in Peliatan. Rather

untypically for Bali, this gamelan was purchased and owned by an individual for private use in his family compound. However, a few years later, at the time I was looking for an ensemble for Queen's, Suweca needed a considerable sum of money to carry out extensive repairs and improvements in the family compound, so he decided to sell his gamelan to us. Following the long, slow journey by sea to first London and then Belfast, the instruments finally reached the University in December 1984. In addition we received several boxes of dance costumes and traditional ceremonial outfits for musicians to wear at gamelan concerts in the future.

There were two main ideas behind the purchase of the gamelan: to use it in teaching university students, and to employ it in music-making activities in the Belfast community at large, particularly with children. It was felt that gamelan, and other musics from different parts of the world outside Ireland, would give an opportunity for all sections of Belfast's divided community to experience together music with no sectarian connotations.

Gamelan classes have now become an integral part of our undergraduate and post-graduate Ethnomusicology courses at Queen's University, and we have given one or two concerts during each academic year. Last year's was undoubtedly the best yet, billed as an "Indonesian Evening" and performed at a local primary school. We were able to decorate the school hall with Indonesian *kain* pictures, maps, and two large and colourful Balinese ceremonial "umbrellas," and the delicious *sate* and rice served after the concert added the final touches of Indonesian flavour to the

Annette Sanger is a lecturer in Ethnomusicology at the Queen's University of Belfast, Northern Ireland. Her Ph.D. thesis, "The Role of Music and Dance in the Social and Cultural Life of Two Balinese Villages," was based on two years of fieldwork in Singapadu and Pejeng as well as tuition in gamelan with I Wayan Sinti.

evening. The musicians, all wearing traditional Balinese dress, were led by I Wayan Aryasa, a tutor from the KOKAR Conservatory in Denpasar, who was a post-graduate Ethnomusicology student at Queen's.

I have to admit that there have been many problems surrounding the gamelan project at Queen's and possibly our greatest setback lies in the fact that the university has so far been unable to provide us with a suitable room in which to store and rehearse on the instruments. The loudness and sheer weight of a complete gong kebyar make it necessary to have both a large and permanent home so that the instruments do not have to be moved for each practice session. To date we have only been offered rooms which are too small, and/or only available for rehearsals at unsociable hours when other university activities have ceased. Unfortunately this ongoing problem, over which I have virtually no control, has hampered efforts to establish gamelan classes to the extent we had hoped.

Aside from work with university students, we have had great success in teaching physically handicapped adults and children. This started as an experiment in July 1985 when the gamelan was integrated with a summer music course for the physically handicapped in Lisnaskea, County Fermanagh. The gamelan proved to be particularly suitable and adaptable in music-making for people of differing physical and/or musical abilities. Although we stuck as closely as possible to traditional Balinese methods of teaching, instrumental techniques and musical repertoire, certain adaptations were made: *pemade* and *kantilan* were raised on small platforms making them an ideal height for those seated in wheelchairs; instead of standing, the hanging gongs were struck by players sitting in chairs and wheelchairs, the *ceng-ceng* were played on the lap instead of on the floor, and the skills of two players were sometimes combined on one metallophone with one striking and the other damping.

Participants enjoyed the fact that they were playing on a homogeneous group of instruments and not just jumbled percussion. Since the gamelan was unfamiliar to most of them they were far less inhibited in learning and playing than with a musical tradition for which they perceived particular standards of excellence. The exotic, strange, and beautiful aspects of the music and the instruments added further to their pleasure. From a social standpoint as well, the gamelan seemed to open up new channels of communication between those who were unable to make verbal exchanges, either because they spoke different languages or because they suffered from severe speech impediments or aphasia.

This initial success led its organizer, a neurologist by profession, to invite us back for a similar course in the summer of 1987. In addition, in Belfast we have worked and performed with physically handicapped children from a local special school. Perhaps our most unusual concert was in Belfast City Hall where we entertained, surprised, and attracted serious interest in our work from an audience of



one hundred and fifty British neurologists at the final dinner of their annual conference.

Looking towards the future, we hope to find a permanent home for the instruments and then extend our work both at the University and with different groups in the wider community. It would be nice to think also that our work with Balinese gamelan in Belfast may have a role in fostering deeper and wider cultural links between Indonesia and Ireland. For further details of our work with the physically handicapped see the article "Applied Ethnomusicology: The Use of Balinese Gamelan in Recreational and Educational Musical Therapy" by Annette Sanger and James Kippen in *The British Journal of Music Education* 4(1): 5-16, 1987. ▀