

אל הַמָּא (AL HET)
(for the peoples of Nicaragua)

by
Larry Polansky

KAR 5k Al het (for the people of Nicaragua)

Introduction and performance notes

for Jody Diamond and Gino Forlin

Al het is scored for two performers, singer and percussionist. The singer (male or female voice) also claps or plays some simple non-pitched percussion. The percussionist plays Central Javanese style pelog gambang and slendro gender. It is possible, though exceedingly difficult, for the piece to be played by one player, who could sing, play, and perform the non-pitched percussion part with their feet (in the style of a dalang!).

The two instruments used are a pelog barang gambang (2, 3, 5, 6, 7) and a slendro gender (1, 2, 3, 5, 6) with tumbuk 6 (denoted as pitch "B" in the score). The particular tuning of the two instruments is not specified — any two that match the above criteria may be used.

The notation is illustrated in the modal chart at the end of the score, but briefly it is:

Gambang: E F G B C (2,3,5,6,7)
Gender: D E[^] F# A B (1,2,3,5,6)

Both B's should be the same pitch, but there is no other requirement about the intervallic sizes or relationships of the tunings. Any slendro/pelog pair may be used. For example, even though the score uses the conventional order:

A — B — C — D — E — E[^] — F — F# — G

The pitch of E[^] may or may not be higher than E, F# than F, G than F#, and so on. In fact, in the premier performances, using Javanese style instruments from Gamelan Si Darius and Si Madeleine (built by Lou Harrison and Bill Colvig for Mills College), the slendro A(S5) was considerably lower than the pelog G (P5) (in many Central Javanese style tunings this will be case). The singer's pitches should be the same as those of the instruments used, and as such, the direction of many of the melodies may be altered (up or down) by the choice of instruments!

Accents should occur only at the beginning of measures, and where indicated. Accented rests are implied accents, and are used to *emphasize* the unaccented following beat.

Ornamentation is free for the singer throughout, even though the difficulty of the work is such that elaborate ornamentation may be precluded. Ornamentation should be in a musical style comfortable for the singer, and may be derived from any musical culture (or hybrid musical culture). When possible, consideration should be given to the pitch mode indicated at the beginning of each measure. These are described in detail in the chart following the score. The "larger" modes (S3, P7, P5, S1, etc. for sections I-IV) are given in this chart, with their subordinate modes of 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, and 9 pitches. In ornamentation, these modes may be adhered to or enlarged upon, but should be taken as a jumping off point. Likely places for trills and other ornaments are indicated in the vocal part by ~.

Mallets for the percussion part should be selected which sound equally well on the gender and gambang, or more than two mallets may be used. A suggested setup is to place the gender between the player and the gambang, and raise the gambang. In the first performance, Gino Forlin built a small wooden stand to raise the gambang so that its keys were approximately the same height as the gender. Damping on the gender should be used throughout (wherever possible!), except where a tie indicates "let ring". The notation + above a note indicates that the pitch should be deadened, or damped as quickly as possible — sooner than the usual damping at the time of the next pitch. Unusual damping techniques may be required for this

piece, such as the use of other parts of the hand and arm than are conventionally used with Central Javanese gender playing.

The singer and percussionist might find it helpful to pencil in some version of the Javanese pitch numbers for the pitches in their parts (e.g., E = S2; G = P5, etc.). These have been left out of this edition since they would make the score quite crowded.

The 8th note pulse for the piece should be as fast as possible. Slight rubati may be taken at selected points.

The text is written in Spanish by the composer. In general, an English translation should not be included in the program notes, but the text might be.

*"Por no escuchar las voces, a los spiritos del futuro, las
echas del cambio.
Por el vivir aqui que no permite el vivir alla.
Por jugar en el mar en vez de mirar a las estrellas.
Por no manejar los barcos, del cielo, como Ustedes., con las
musica y la poetica."*

My appreciation goes to John Chalmers and Lou Harrison for stimulating my interest in expanded modal approaches to melody, especially in Javanese music. This score was copied by Jarrad Powell, and edited with the assistance of Jody Diamond and Gino Forlin.

Larry Polansky
(Revised, Oakland, 1990)

J H S K
(al Het)

for the people of Nicaragua

Voice and gender/ambana
(one player)

for Judy Diamond and Gino Forlin

Larry Polansky
(1986)

As fast as possible, mostly loud

I. (S₃) ($\text{♩} = \text{at least } 220$)

Por no es — cu —

Voice

Gambang

Gender

II. (P₇)

— char las vo — ces a los spi — ri — tos del fu — tu — o

Vce.

Gb.

Gd.

III. (P₅)

las e — chas de cam — bi — o.

Vce.

Gb.

Gd.

2.

IV.(S1)

Vce. *Por el vi-vir a-qui que no per-mi-te el vi-vir a-lla*

Gb.

Gd.

ossia 3

ossia 3

Vce. *Por ju-gar*

Gb.

Gd.

ossia (5) or ornament freely

VI.(S2) *en el mar en veg de*

Vce. *or some thing in between*

Gb.

Gd.

3.

(ad libitum)

VII. (S5)

mi-rar a las es-tre — llas

ossia

This section features a vocal line with a melodic line and a guitar accompaniment. The vocal line includes a triplet of eighth notes and a five-measure rest. The guitar part consists of a bass line with a triplet of eighth notes and a five-measure rest. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

VIII. (P2)

Por no mane-jar las bar-ros

evenly

This section features a vocal line with a melodic line and a guitar accompaniment. The vocal line includes a triplet of eighth notes and a five-measure rest. The guitar part consists of a bass line with a triplet of eighth notes and a five-measure rest. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

IX. (S6, P6)

(Tambor)

del cie-lo con la mu-si-ca y la po-e-ti-ca

ossia MU-SI-ca

This section features a vocal line with a melodic line and a guitar accompaniment. The vocal line includes a triplet of eighth notes and a five-measure rest. The guitar part consists of a bass line with a triplet of eighth notes and a five-measure rest. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

X. (P3)

Vce. 8

9

Por ju—gar en el mar

Gb. 9 (7)

Gd. 8

9:8

ossia: 5:4

* use one

XI. (S5)

Vce. 5

12

en vez de mi—rar a las os—tre —llas

Gb. 12

Gd. 5

(gliss)

XII. (P2)

Vce. 5

7

5

Por no escu—char a las vo—ce —s

Gb. 5

Gd. 7

5

5:4

XIII (S5)

las e—chas de cam—bi—o Por el vi—

This system contains the musical notation for XIII (S5). It features a vocal line (Vce.) and guitar accompaniment (G and Gd.). The vocal line has lyrics "las e—chas de cam—bi—o" and "Por el vi—". The guitar part includes a double bar line with a fermata and a section marked "ossia" with a 5:3 ratio. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 2, 3, 5, and 7.

XIV (S1)

—vir a qui que no per—mi—te el vi—

This system contains the musical notation for XIV (S1). It features a vocal line (Vce.) and guitar accompaniment (Gb and Gd.). The vocal line has lyrics "—vir a qui que no per—mi—te el vi—". The guitar part includes a section marked "ossia" with a 4:3 ratio. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 2, 3, 5, and 7.

XV (P5)

—vir a lla

This system contains the musical notation for XV (P5). It features a vocal line (Vce.) and guitar accompaniment (Gb and Gd.). The vocal line has lyrics "—vir a lla". The guitar part includes a section marked "ossia" with a 3:2 ratio. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 2, 3, 5, and 7.

XVI. (P1)

Por no mane—jar los bar— —cos del cie— —lo

Vce.

Gb.

Gd.

5:4

Detailed description: This musical system is for piece XVI. (P1). It features a vocal line (Vce.) and two guitar parts (Gb. and Gd.). The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 5/4 time signature. The lyrics are "Por no mane—jar los bar— —cos del cie— —lo". The guitar parts are in standard tuning. The bass guitar part (Gd.) has a 5:4 time signature. The system includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and accents.

XVII. (S3)

co—mo u—sted—es con la mu— si—ca y la (S) po—e—ti—ca

Vce.

Gb.

Gd.

7:6

Detailed description: This musical system is for piece XVII. (S3). It features a vocal line (Vce.) and two guitar parts (Gb. and Gd.). The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 7/6 time signature. The lyrics are "co—mo u—sted—es con la mu— si—ca y la (S) po—e—ti—ca". The guitar parts are in standard tuning. The bass guitar part (Gd.) has a 7:6 time signature. The system includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and accents.

HP Oclakoke/Frisco, North Carolina
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Modes Used

2, 3, 5, 7, 8, and 9 note modes; 12 beat measures and higher are fully chromatic.

S₃ (2 note) (3 note)
P₇
P₅
S₁
S₅
S₂
P₂
P₃ 9 (full scale)

Tuning required
 Gambang
 Gender
Full scale required
 Gbang 5
 Gbang 7