

UCSC Summer Session 2018

MUSIC 5A
BEGINNING WEST JAVANESE GAMELAN

Music Center 230 (the "Gamelan Room")

Class Times: Thursdays 6:00–9:00 pm

Section 1: 6–7:30

Section 2: 7:30–9

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Course Description

This ensemble class develops students' abilities in West Javanese gamelan performance. Each student will learn the basic playing technique of at least two instruments of the gamelan applied in the performance of traditional and contemporary music of West Java. All levels of ability are welcome. No previous experience with gamelan or music performance is required to participate. This class will culminate in a public performance at the end of the session on **Thursday, August 30** during regular class time. Participation in this performance is required for credit.

What is Gamelan?

Gamelan is the name of a type of music ensemble from Indonesia. These ensembles use primarily percussion instruments made out of bronze or iron, and sometimes bamboo. Though several forms of gamelan are practiced throughout Southeast Asia, the most commonly encountered styles of which come from the regions of Bali, Central Java, and West Java. The region of West Java is made up of several interconnected, yet distinct musical and cultural practices, including several related styles of gamelan music. This class will focus on the Sundanese style *gamelan salendro*, as practiced in city of Bandung and its surrounding areas, but may also include the performance of pieces attributed to region of Cirebon.



Map of Indonesia showing the island of Java and the nation's capital city, Jakarta in the region of West Java

Important Dates to Keep in Mind

- Thursday August 2 – Last day to Add
- Monday August 6 – Last day to **Drop** (tuition refunded)
- Friday August 10 – Change Grade Option
- Friday August 17 – Last day to **Withdraw** (no refund)
- Thursday August 30 – Final Performance (during class time)
- Thursday September 6 – Grades Posted

Class Policies

- This five-week summer class requires attendance at all class periods to receive full credit; missing one class will severely diminish students' class time and ability to catch up on the material. Students may be excused a maximum of one class period with advance approval from the instructor.
- The instruments may not be removed from the rehearsal space for any reason. Student who would like additional practice may schedule extra time with the instructor or TA
- Each student must learn to play at least two separate instruments to receive full credit

Class Rules

- This is an electronics free class; if you need to take a call, please step out of class to minimize the disruption
- No food or drink near the instruments
- Students are expected to follow two commonly practiced rules of etiquette particular to gamelan
 1. No shoes may be worn while using the instruments
 2. Do not step over the instruments; please move the instrument to pass by, or go around

These rules of etiquette are in place both out of respect for the instruments and cultural traditions of West Java, as well as to protect students' safety

- Student's who repeatedly violate these rules may be asked to leave class

Grading Policy

- Grades are determined solely on attendance and participation. Given the size and nature of the class, no make ups or extra credit are possible

Introduction to Sundanese Gamelan Instruments

Saron Family: A group of four metallophone instruments that have bronze keys resting over a wooden box resonator.

Saron I: has six keys, low to high: 5 4 3 2 1 5

Plays an elaboration of the main melody of the piece, also plays the *pangkat*, or introduction to the piece

Saron II: has seven keys, low to high: 1 5 4 3 2 1 5

Plays an off-beat pattern which interlocks with the *saron I* part to form a melody

Panerus: has seven keys, low to high: 1 5 4 3 2 1 5

Pitched one octave below *saron I*. Plays a sparse elaboration of the main melody.

Peking: has seven keys, low to high: 1 5 4 3 2 1 5

Pitched one octave above *saron I*. Plays a denser elaboration of the main melody.

Bonang Family: Two instrument each consisting of ten bronze pots suspended by rope in two rows over a wooden frame.

Bonang: Low-pitched, large pots. Bottom row is pitched one octave below *saron I*.

The "simple" *kemprang* style contributes to the colotomic structure of the ensemble, while the "melody" *caruk* style elaborates the main melody.

Rincik: High-pitched, small pots. Top row is pitched one octave above *saron I*. The

"simple" *kemprang* style contributes to the colotomic structure of the ensemble, while the "melody" *caruk* style elaborates the main melody.

Colotomic Instruments: Provide the basic structure of gamelan music

Kenong: Six very large pots, 5 4 3 2 1 5, suspended over wooden frames. It plays the unelaborated main melody of the piece; all other instruments derive their parts from the kenong notation.

Kabluk: Two large pots placed on cushions; plays a simple, repetitive rhythm that interlocks with the kempul and kenong

Gong: A large gong suspended vertically from a wooden frame. Marks the most important rhythmic structural points in a piece. In this class, the gong always signals the return to the beginning of the song.

Kempul: a smaller, high-pitched gong suspended on the same frame as the gong. It punctuates key moments of the structure interlocking with the kenong.

Non-Bronze instruments:

Gambang: Wooden keys laid over a box resonator. Plays rhythmically complex patterns elaborating the main melody.

Kendang: A group of three two-headed, barrel shaped drums. Leads the gamelan by signaling tempo and dynamic changes, transitions, and interacting with dancers and puppeteers.