

# Gamelan in North America

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## EARLY INFLUENCE OF GAMELAN IN WESTERN MUSIC

The influence of gamelan in the history of Western music is widely known to begin with Claude Debussy (1862–1918) after his encounter with performances of Javanese gamelan at the 1889 Paris Exhibition. The piano piece “Pagodes” from *Estampes* (1903) is probably the clearest among his other works to capture gamelan sonorities. Soon gamelan musical features appeared in works by other European composers, including Maurice Ravel’s orchestral version of “Laideronnette, impératrice des pagodes” from *Ma mere l’oye* (1911), Béla Bartók’s “Island of Bali” from the fourth volume of *Mikrokosmos* (1926–39), Francis Poulenc’s Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra (1932) and the prologue to the opera *Les mamelles de Tirésias* (1944), Olivier Messiaen’s *Turangalîla-Symphonie* (1946–48), and Benjamin Britten’s *The Prince of the Pagodas* (1956).

On the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, a Sudanese gamelan acquired by the Field Museum of Natural History after the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago became the first set of gamelan instruments in the United States.[i] Yet, American compositions inspired by music from the Indonesian archipelago did not appear until the late 1910s, when German-trained pianist and composer **Charles Griffes** (1884–1920) wrote a song cycle entitled *Three Javanese (Sundanese) Songs* (c.1919–20) for voice and piano. The three songs, “Hampelas,” “Kinanti,” and “Djakoan” were adapted from folk melodies that the mezzo-soprano Eva Gauthier (1885–1958) claimed to be collected in Java.[ii] Unlike Griffes, **Henry Eichheim** (1870–1942) experienced gamelan firsthand when he made five trips to East and Southeast Asia during 1915–37.[iii] His devotion in combining Asian instruments with Western orchestra resulted in two gamelan-influenced works, *Java* (1929) and *Bali* (1933), both of which made use of gamelan instruments and large European orchestra. In a similar vein, *Java Suite (Phonoramas, 1925)* for piano solo written by Polish American pianist **Leopold Godowsky** (1870–1938) was inspired by a trip to Java that the composer made in 1922.

Yet, gamelan did not actually enter the American music circle until a decade later with great contributions from Canadian-born American composer **Colin McPhee** (1900–1964). McPhee lived almost seven years in Bali, where he studied Balinese gamelan, recorded its performances, and built not only a Balinese house but also Balinese musical instruments.[iv] He also spent several hours a day transcribing gamelan music; his most well-known transcription was the three pieces for two pianos published under the title *Balinese Ceremonial Music* (1934). *Tabuh-tabuhan* (1936) is McPhee’s first major orchestral work to incorporate materials from Balinese

gamelan, most of which come from his own transcriptions. The piece puts a “nuclear gamelan” (two pianos, celesta, xylophone, marimba, glockenspiel, and two Balinese gongs) up against a standard symphony orchestra. Balinese references also appear in most of his later works, including *Transitions* (1954), *Nocturne* (1958), *Symphony No. 2* (“Pastoral,” 1957), and *Concerto for Wind Orchestra* (1960). Even with these compositions considered, it was actually McPhee’s writings that proved his rich legacy of Balinese gamelan: *A House in Bali* (1946) details his daily life on the island, *A Club of Small Men* (1948) tells a delightful children’s story about the *gamelan angklung* that he established for Balinese boys, and an encyclopedia *Music in Bali* (1966) culminates the composer’s nearly thirty years of Balinese gamelan experiences, presenting the gamelan in relation to its culture and analyzing structures and stylistic features of each gamelan type that he encountered in the 1930s.

## OVERVIEW OF GAMELAN IN THE UNITED STATES

Regardless of efforts by individual American composers, the visibility of gamelan in the United States has actually resulted from the setting of gamelan groups in various public universities and private institutions. As of January 2013, American Gamelan Institute listed approximately 170 gamelan ensembles in the country, with roughly 60% affiliated with a university.[v] From the number, roughly 130 groups are active, 15 are permanently disbanded, and 25 are somewhere in between. Most of the active groups focus not only on training and performing traditional gamelan repertoires but also on creating new works for the ensembles. This article henceforth will follow each gamelan group in a chronological order, discussing its associated composers and their compositions. Nonetheless, this essay is by no means a thorough history of gamelan groups in the United States nor a complete list of American composers who write for gamelan. Names of gamelans, composers, and compositions provided here make up merely a portion of those available and should serve as a starting point for those who are interested in the topic of new American gamelan music.

The UCLA Institute of Ethnomusicology was the first among American institutions to acquire a gamelan group. With the goal to make graduate ethnomusicology students “bi-musical”—in the same way that some people are “bi-lingual”—ethnomusicologist Mantle Hood formed the Music of Java Performance Group in his home in the mid 1950s and the Music of Bali Performance Group during the 1959–60 academic year.[vi] Both remained extra-curricular study groups until the 1964–65 academic year, when the courses on Javanese and Balinese music and dance were offered. The University currently houses two gamelan ensembles: ***Kyai Mendhung*** (Javanese) and ***Gamelan Sekar Anyar*** (Balinese).

Among Mantle Hood’s first students to specialize in Indonesian music was **Gertrude Rivers Robinson** (1927-1995), who made a research trip to Bali and Java in 1970. Inspired by the trip, Robinson wrote her M.A. thesis composition, *Bayang Bayangan* (Shadows) for Western Septet, Balinese Octet, Dancers and Visuals (1962) for an ensemble of gamelan instruments. Another UCLA figure, composition professor emerita **Elaine Barkin** (b. 1932) joined the University’s Javanese and Balinese gamelan ensembles during the 1980s–90s after the search for non-

hierarchical socio-musical environments led her to the interest in gamelan music. Barkin's devotion to new gamelan music resulted in five trips to Bali, where she compiled interviews, led improvisation workshops, and produced recordings of new music in Bali.[vii] Her gamelan-inspired compositions include *Encore* (1988) for Javanese gamelan; *GameLange* (1992) for harp and mixed gamelan; *Lagu Kapal Kuning* (1996) and *Inti Sari* (2005) for Balinese gamelan angklung; *touching all bases/di mana-mana* (1997) for electric double bass, percussion, and Balinese gamelan; and *Faygele's Footsteps* (2006) for three gamelan instruments, dulcimer, sitar, chimes, harp, and piano. She also contributed an article "Cross-cultural Collaboration: Composing a work for Balinese Gamelan and Basso Bongo with I Nyoman Wenten" published in the fifth volume of *Intercultural Music*.

Here at the University of Michigan, **Gamelan Kyai Telaga Madu ("Venerable Lake of Honey")** was bought by Professor of Musicology William Malm in 1966. The ensemble was directed by Judith Becker, who was superseded by Susan Pratt Walton in 1990. In 1999 Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra commissioned U-M composition student Gabriel Ian Gould (b. 1974) to write a piece for gamelan and orchestra as part of a millennium celebration. The result was *Lokananta* (2000), which evoked the concerto semblance, although not labeled as such, in a sense that the gamelan functioned essentially as one large instrument. Premiered in February of 2000, the piece also served as Gould's D.M.A. composition dissertation. As recently as March of 2016, a concert of U-M Gamelan Ensemble featured a newly commissioned work *Fantasia for Erhu and Gamelan* by Evan Ware (b. 1977). The work melds together Western, Javanese, and Chinese musical aesthetics and traditions. It embraces the gamelan punctuation pattern, while simultaneously replacing the cyclical nature of gamelan music with the Western teleological concept of a linear, goal-oriented process. The *bonang* and metal slab instruments yield their conventional polyphonic stratification to the Western-influenced homophonic texture, so as to provide a harmonic background for the *erhu* which governs the melody almost entirely.

Across the States in Middletown, Connecticut, **Wesleyan Gamelan Ensemble** at Wesleyan University has offered gamelan study groups since the late 1960s. In 1975, **Dennis Murphy** (1934-2010), who was acknowledged as the first American to build gamelan instruments based directly on Central Javanese gamelan, completed his doctoral dissertation, "The Autochthonous American Gamelan." [viii] The dissertation soon became a handbook for the next generations of American gamelan builders. As a composer, Murphy wrote *Ladrang Sulukala*, *Happy Mongoose*, and *Bragodharma* for Javanese gamelan during 1961–2010. *The Magic Cat and The Tragic Poet* is an example of his shadow puppet play, for which he wrote both music and libretto. His writings include "Building a Javanese Gamelan" and "A Shadow Play Tradition in Vermont," both published in *EAR Magazine* (vol. 8, no. 4). In 1982, Wesleyan University commissioned Canadian-born American composer **Henry Brant** (1913–2008) to write a piece that would feature every ensemble available on campus at that time. The result was an epic spatial work *Meteor Farm* (1982), scored for Javanese gamelan ensemble, chorus, jazz band, symphony orchestra, West African drumming ensemble, and Western and South Indian soloists. Over a

decade later, Wesleyan composition faculty **Alvin Lucier** (b. 1931) presented an on-campus festival of his works, for which he also wrote *Music for Gamelan Instruments, Microphones, Amplifiers, and Loudspeakers* (1994). A sonic environmental explorer, Lucier avoided direct Indonesian references and treated gamelan instruments more as “resonant chambers to be sounded than objects to be struck.”[ix] Different sized *bonangs* and *genders* were placed over microphones to create pitches of the feedback strands which generated various beating patterns when the musicians slow down or speed up their playing.

Returning to the West Coast, UC Berkeley has offered Javanese gamelan classes since 1976 and now houses **Kyai Udan Mas**, a Javanese gamelan formerly owned by San Jose State University. In 1977, the university organist Lawrence Moe commissioned **Richard Felciano** (b. 1930), now emeritus professor of composition, to write a work that would combine Kyai Udan Mas with Western instruments for the 12<sup>th</sup> World Congress of the International Musicological Society that was to be held at Berkeley. The result was *In Celebration of Golden Rain* (1977) for Indonesian gamelan and pipe organ. The work deliberately addresses the conflicts between Eastern and Western tunings and timbres in order to present a symbiosis, rather than a fusion, of the two musical cultures. The composer describes in his CD liner notes that the piece balances “the gamelan and the organ . . . [as] opposites, the one being many instruments conceived as one; the other being one enormous instruments capable of almost infinite subdivision and synthesis into smaller instruments.”[x]

At the same time that UC Berkeley offered its first gamelan class in 1976, Philip Corner, Daniel Goode, and Barbara Benary founded a community gamelan ensemble **Gamelan Son of Lion** in Downtown Manhattan. One of the oldest American gamelan groups to function as a composers’ collective, Gamelan Son of Lion specializes in contemporary and experimental pieces written for Javanese gamelan instruments.[xi] **Philip Corner** (b. 1933), a pioneering minimalist and John Cage’s colleague, is known for his integration of chance and systematic procedures, repetition and improvisation, and noise and silence to create compositions that reflect Eastern musical influences.[xii] He has composed over 400 pieces for gamelan, including *Gamelan* (1975), *The Barcelona Cathedral* (1978), *Gamelan P.C.* (1979), *Gamelan LY* for gamelan, erhu, clarinet (1979), *Gamelan IRIS* for gamelan and flute (1980), and *Gamelan CONCERT! O* for gamelan, harpsichord, and electric guitar (1980). Another co-founding member, **Daniel Goode** (b. 1936) has been associated with the New York’s “downtown” avant-garde scene. He has experimented with structured improvisatory procedure in *Eine Kleine Gamelan Music* (1980) for gamelan with additional instruments of any type or tuning. His *Circular Thoughts* (1977) for gamelan is an arrangement from a minimalist process piece for solo clarinet. His other works for gamelan instruments are *Hear the Sound of Random Numbers* (1978) for gamelan, *Random Chords* (1979) for gamelan quartet and wind or string obbligato, *Gong Dance a 7* (1982) for hand-held gongs, *Semaphores* (1998-99) for ten gamelan players, and *Sad/Happy* (1998) for clarinet and gamelan. Scores of his gamelan compositions are available through the American Gamelan Institute website (<http://www.gamelan.org/composers/goode/index.html>). The last co-founder **Barbara Benary**

(b. 1946) has composed more than thirty works for gamelan ensemble, for instance, *Hot Rolled Steel* (1985) for gamelan and *Aural Shoehorning* (1997) for piano, clarinet/bass clarinet, vibraphone, marimba, and Javanese gamelan. She has also written for the Bali-Java Dance Theatre; both *Karna: A Shadow Puppet Opera* (1994) and *Wayang Esther: A Javanese Purimspiel* (2001) combine gamelan, vocal oratorio, and Javanese *wayang kulit* (leather shadow puppetry). In 2011, she co-composed *911: A Memorial Suite* with other composers of Gamelan Son of Lion. Her scores of *Gamelan Works*, volumes 1–4 (1974–94) can be downloaded at <http://www.gamelan.org/composers/benary/index.shtml>.

In 1985, Barbara Benary commissioned **Pauline Oliveros** (b. 1932) to write a piece for Gamelan Son of Lion, which became *Lion's Eye* (1985) for gamelan supplemented by sampled sounds. Based on a repetitive, minimalist procedure, *Lion's Eye* made use of a simple procedure: the piece repeated a short, multilayered melodic pattern several times before replacing it with a new one. *Lion's Tale* (1989), another gamelan-influenced work by Oliveros, applied a similar procedure, but generated the sound entirely from digital sampler instead of an actual gamelan. A mixed ensemble of gamelan and electronic instruments also found its way into another work for Gamelan Son of Lion *ReRebong* (1989) written by **Neil Burton Rolnick** (b. 1947). For this piece, Rolnick transcribed and re-arranged material from the Balinese shadow puppet piece *Rebong* for gamelan instruments. While these instruments performed, the sounds of which were simultaneously amplified and processed with different delay and transposition effects by a digital signal processor.[xiii] The outcome was both acoustic and electronic sounds. **David Simons** explored other options of electroacoustic ensembles in *Kebyar Leyak* (1995) for digital gamelan and acoustic instruments and *Music for Theremin and Gamelan* (2000) commissioned by American Composers Forum. Simons also wrote for purely acoustic instruments, for example, *Cool It Wayang* (1998) for gamelan, trombone, and voice; *Uncle Venus* (2005) for gamelan and string quartet; and *Gong-Humping Ceremony* (2009) for gamelan. Two other composers of Gamelan Son of Lion, however, turned away from electronic means altogether. **Elizabeth Brown** (b. 1953) wrote *Cloudrest* (2010) for soprano, shakuhachi, gamelan when she was the ensemble's composer-in-residence during the 2009–10 season. **Miguel Frasconi** (b. 1956) composed *Pelog Study: Stilling* for gamelan in 1986 before revising it the following year.

In Portland, Oregon, **The Venerable Shower of Beauty Gamelan (Kyai Guntur Sari)** at Lewis & Clark College was made approximately in 1880 in a village of Central Java, Indonesia, but came to the United States almost a century later when Lewis & Clark ethnomusicology faculty Vincent McDermott purchased and brought the instrumental collection to the College in 1978. The ensemble's name was given by K.R.T. Wasitodiningrat (Pak Cokro), a famous and respected Javanese musician and composer. Its members consist of not only Lewis & Clark students but also alumni and local residents in Portland.

A native of Portland, the Father of Gamelan Lou Harrison (see below) visited the Venerable Shower of Beauty Gamelan several times and contributed greatly to new gamelan music for the ensemble. In 1980, Harrison became friends with **Vincent McDermott** (1933-2016) and

encouraged him to start composing for gamelan. McDermott began with *A Stately Salute* (1980) for *pelog* gamelan in honor of Harrison, followed by *Kagoklaras (A Different Song)* (1981) for gamelan and prepared piano, *The Bells of Tajilor* (1984) for gamelan, a more experimental work *The Spirit Takes Wings and Soars* (2002) for twelve-tone gamelan and saxophone quartet, and *A Little Concerto* (2005) for gamelan. His four theatrical works juxtaposed gamelan and Western instruments: *A Perpetual Dream* (1978) for solo voice, tape, dancers/mimes, toy piano, and *bonang*; *The King of Bali* (1984–90) for solo voices, chorus, puppets, chamber orchestra, and Javanese gamelan; *Mata Hari* (1994) for solo voices, chamber orchestra, and gamelan; and *The Blue Forest* (2005) for chorus, dancers, shadow puppetry, and gamelan. In an article “Gamelans and New Music” (*Musical Quarterly* vol. 72, no. 1), McDermott offered insight on contemporary gamelan works by American, English, Dutch, and Indonesian composers. Under the direction of McDermott, the Venerable Shower of Beauty Gamelan premiered two works by **Alan Hovhaness** (1911–2000), who wrote them at the request of Lou Harrison. *Stars Sing Bell Song* op. 350, no. 1 (1981) was scored for coloratura soprano and Javanese gamelan, while *Pleiades* op. 350, no. 2 (1981) was for Javanese gamelan. Although the two works presented Hovhaness first attempts on the Indonesian instruments, the composer had been inspired by gamelan music much earlier, as seen in his *Gamelan and Jhala* op. 106 (1951) for carillon and “Gamelan in Sosi Style,” the fifth movement of his String Quartet No. 2, Op. 147 (1952).

A year after the Venerable Shower of Beauty Gamelan arrived at Lewis & Clarke, Michael Tenzer, Wayan Suweca, Rachel Cooper, and Wayne Vitale co-founded a **Gamelan Sekar Jaya** in Berkeley, California in 1979. For this Balinese gamelan ensemble, **Michael Tenzer** (b. 1957) wrote *Semara Yanthi* (1982), *Jaya Sakti* (1983), *Sandiarsa Muni* (1985), *Sinar Jegog* (1987), *Pascima Segara Madu* (1987), and *Situ Banda* (1989). His triptych— *Puser Belah* (“Unstable Center,” 2003), *Buk Katah* (“Underleaf,” 2006), and *Tabuh Gari* (“Resolution,” 2008)—combined Balinese and Western performers and instruments, as well as various cross-cultural musical techniques. *Puser Belah* and *Buk Katah* were for Balinese gamelan and ten-piece chamber ensemble (piano, 2 clarinets, 2 saxophones, 2 trumpets, and 2 trombones). Both were commissioned for the Bali Arts Festival and inspired by arts of the Pengosekan village in Bali. *Tabuh Gari*, on the other hand, was a commission from the American Composer’s Orchestra for a small orchestra and Balinese percussion. Tenzer has also explored combinations of gamelan with other musical traditions, for instance, *Banyuari* (1992) for gamelan gong kebyar fuses Indian, European, and Balinese techniques and *Talakalam* (1995) for gamelan gong kebyar, *tabla* trio, *tabla* soloist, and Balinese drum soloist. From 1996, Tenzer has been appointed Professor of Ethnomusicology at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, where he directs **Gamelan Gita Asmara**.

Another founding member and past director of Gamlean Sekar Jaya, **Wayne Vitale**, co-composed an evening-length work *Kali Yuga* (“The Age of Chaos”) with I Made Arnawa in 2006. Inspired by the great epic of ancient India *Mahabharata*, *Kali Yuga* responds to twenty-first century world conflicts through the sounds of gamelan in combination with poetry, song, and ambient sound. Vitale is now a member of the **Lightbulb Ensemble**, a twelve-member group of

percussionists emerging from the new music culture of Mills College and the Balinese-American musical exchange of Gamelan Sekar Jaya. Lightbulb champions experimental music and contemporary gamelan works performed on newly constructed, gamelan-inspired instruments. *Pantulan* (2013) and *Mikrokosma* (2015) are two works that Vitale tailored especially for the ensemble.

Along on the East Coast, **Evan Ziporyn** (1959) formed and directed a Balinese gamelan, **Gamelan Galak Tika**, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1993. Ziporyn had earlier been a member of the Berkeley Gamelan Sekar Jaya, for which he wrote *Aneh Tapi Nyata* (1992) for chamber ensemble and Balinese percussion and *Kekembangan* (1990) for saxophone quartet and Balinese gamelan. With the MIT Gamelan Galak Tika, he has produced three evening-length works: *ShadowBang* (2001), *Oedipus Rex* (2004), and *A House in Bali* (2009), an opera based on the memoir of Colin McPhee for Western singers, Balinese traditional performers, the Bang On A Can All-stars, and a full gamelan. Ziporyn has explored the interaction between Western technology and Balinese gamelan in *Tire Fire* (1994) for two electric guitars, electric bass, keyboard, and Balinese gamelan; *Kebyar Maya* (1995) for solo cello and pre-recorded cello ensemble, in which the cellos turn into a gamelan; and *Amok!* (1996) for double bass (or cello), percussion and keyboard samplers, and Balinese gamelan. In addition, he has written for different combinations of instruments, for instance, *Ngaben (for Sari Club)* (2003) for Balinese gamelan and orchestra, *Aradhana* (2004) for Balinese gamelan with Chinese pipa, *Sabar Gong* (2005) for Balinese gamelan and Senegalese sabar drums, *Cu(Bali)Bre* (2007) for gender wayang duo, and *Bayu Sabda Idep* (2007) for Balinese gamelan and string orchestra. Together with MIT Professor Emerita Jeanne Bamberger, Ziporyn published the article “Getting it Wrong” (1992) which offered insights to Balinese ornamentation and pedagogical techniques.[xiv

## **BUILDING NEW GAMELAN ENSEMBLES**

Farther north along San Francisco Bay, the liberal arts women’s college, Mills College, became enthusiastic about gamelan when **Lou Harrison** (1917–2003) revisited the institute in the early 1980s (Harrison was there once in the 1930s to teach composition) and soon, together with his life-partner William Colvig, built two gamelans. These gamelans were named **Si Darius** and **Si Madeleine** after the composer Darius Milhaud (1892–1974), who taught at Mills from 1940–1971, and his wife. While Si Madelaine is a Javanese gamelan, Si Darius is an “American gamelan,” that is, a set of metallophones inspired by gamelan models and built from easy-to-find materials such as iron sheet, steel pipes, and aluminum slabs, with stacked tin cans as resonators. Will Ditrich’s documentation of the two gamelans’ designs, constructions, and tuning systems are available on the American Gamelan Institute website ([http://www.gamelan.org/balungan/back\\_issues/balungan\(9-10\)/14-Ditrich\\_HarrisonMills.pdf](http://www.gamelan.org/balungan/back_issues/balungan(9-10)/14-Ditrich_HarrisonMills.pdf)).

**Si Madeleine**, however, was not Harrison-Colvig’s first American gamelan. “An American Gamelan”—hence the name of the ensemble type—which was later dubbed “Old Granddad” was successfully built by the partner as early as 1971. Since then, Harrison composed three

works for the American Gamelan: the puppet opera *Young Caesar* (1971, rewritten as a standard opera with Western instrumentation in 1988), *La Koro Sutro* (1972, a setting of the Buddhist *Heart Sutra* in Esperanto), and the Suite for Violin and American Gamelan (1974). After studying gamelan with native masters, K.R.T. Wasitodiningrat (Pak Cokro) and Undang, in the mid-1970s, Harrison composed more than three-dozen gamelan works for traditional gamelan ensembles. A complete list of Harrison's works for Javanese, Balinese, Cirebonese, and Sudanese gamelans is available at the end of the Harrison entry in the fourth volume of *The Grove Dictionary of American Music* (2nd ed.). Among his compositions for mixed ensembles are Double Concerto for Violin, Viola, and Gamelan (1982) and Concerto for Piano and Javanese Gamelan (1987). Harrison also wrote gamelan-inspired compositions for non-gamelan instruments, for example, *Concerto in Slendro* (1961), which borrows performance practices and *sléndro* pentatonic mode from gamelan, is a concerto for violin accompanied by two tack-pianos, celesta, and percussion.

When Harrison passed away in 2003, Spanish-born American composer **Ramón Sender Barayón** (b. 1934) wrote *Aidan's Gamelan* for audience participation on tuned water drums with pre-recorded tape in memory of the great American gamelan composer. A Mills alum, Sender Barayón had written two gamelan-inspired works: *Loopy Gamelans on "A" and "B"* (1976) for four performers and *Loopy Gamelan, Oh "C" Can You Say* (1976) for children's chorus. Another friend of Harrison **Larry Polansky** (b. 1954) also composed a piece, although much earlier, for the senior composer: *Movement for Lou Harrison* (1975, revised 1988) was scored for four double basses tuned in just intonation. Polansky taught at Mills during 1981–90, during which he wrote *Al Het, Soprano* (1986) for Javanese gender and gambang and *Bedhaya Sadra/Bedhaya Guthrie* (1990) for voices, instruments, and gamelan.

One of Harrison's collaborators on instrument-building projects was **Daniel Winslow Schmidt** (b. 1942), a gamelan musician and builder who currently teaches at Mills and elementary and middle schools in San Francisco area. As a composer, he has written mainly for gamelan. His selected works for gamelan alone are *And The Darkest Hour Is Just Before Dawn* (1978), *Abies Firma and Abies Magnifi* (1986), *From the Corner of My Eye* (2010), *Fresh Start* (2010), and *Here to There* (2011). His works for gamelan and other instruments include *Changing Part* (1975) for rebab and gamelan; *In My Arms, Many Flowers* (1978) for rebab, bonang, and gamelan; *Calls* (1991) for spoken voices and gamelan; *For This One* (1996) for spoken voice and gamelan; *Blossoms in the Rain* (2010) for voice, rebab, and selected gamelan instruments; and *Gending Lou Harrison and Trinket* (2010) for bells and gamelan. As an instrument maker, Schmidt has designed and built gamelans for Sonoma State University and North Texas State University, and in 2011 began to construct a set of instruments to improve the gamelan at Mills.[xv]

Together with Paul Drescher, Schmidt built a set of tuned metallophones, based on a traditional Javanese ensemble, from aluminum and brass slabs for **the Berkeley Gamelan** in 1977, for which he served as artistic director from its formation until its disbandment. In 1981, Schmidt, with a support from the National Endowment for the Arts, commissioned **Ingram Douglass**



**Marshall** (b. 1942) to write *Woodstone*—Marshall’s only gamelan work—for the Berkeley Gamelan. The piece took Beethoven’s Waldstein Sonata as its inspiration, using the Sonata’s theme as main material to build up a gamelan fantasia. Another work for the Berkeley Gamelan was *Ah Ah (Sh! Listen)* for gamelan, strings, timpani, and dancer written in 1981 by **Janice Giteck** (b. 1946), Schmidt’s disciple.

The Berkeley Gamelan’s co-founder **Paul Dresher** (b. 1951) also directs **Gamelan Pacifica**. Founded in 1980, this Seattle-based ensemble grew out of Daniel Schmidt’s instrument building workshop at Cornish College of the Arts, where Dresher also taught in 1980–82. In 1989, Dresher wrote a gamelan-inspired piece *Double Ikat* for violin, piano, and percussion based on Lou Harrison’s *Varied Trio* of 1987. In the same year, Janice Giteck wrote *Home* for Philandros of the Seattle Men’s Chorus and Gamelan Pacifica for their collaborative concerts. The piece was revised in 1992 as *Home (revisited)*, scored for gamelan and six male voices, cello, and synthesizer. From 1983 Gamelan Pacifica has been directed by another Cornish professor **Jarrad Powell** (b. 1948). His gamelan compositions can be separated into four categories. The first, for Javanese gamelan alone, is represented by *Lancaran Wild Swan* (1996), *Kiev* (2010), *Nourishment* (2010), and *Entangled* (2014). The second is for Javanese gamelan and voice(s), including *Mountains and Waters* (1992–93), *Fragments and Ecstacies* (1994), *Thunder River Song (Kali Serayu)* (1994), *Tsuki (The Moon)* (2008), and *Gending Tala The Wanderer* (2011). The third presents the combination of Javanese gamelan with instruments from different parts of the world, for instance, *The September Vision* (1984) for erhu, angklung (bamboo rattle), female vocalist, and Javanese gamelan; *Ladrang Yamaloka* (1994) for Javanese gamelan with additional percussion, trumpets, suling, and drone instruments; and *Lagu Pangajabsih* (1995–96) for Chinese erhu or violin and Javanese gamelan. The last category offers works for American gamelan: *Gendhing Erhu* (1983) is written for erhu and American gamelan, while *Small of My Back* (1990) is for American gamelan instruments, suling, kendhang, and harmonizer.

The year 1981 witnessed the establishment of **American Gamelan Institute**, which documents and publicizes all aspects of Indonesian performing arts and their international counterparts. *Balungan*, the Institute’s journal focusing on gamelan, made its first appearance in 1984. Its current and back issues are available on the Institute’s website (<http://www.gamelan.org/>), which also hosts online resources and directories of gamelan groups around the world. The Institute’s founder and director, **Jody Diamond** (b. 1953), studied Javanese music with Ki Wasitodiningrat, Nyai Tumenggung Mardusari, and Nyi Supadmi. She has taught gamelan and world music at Bates, Mills, Dartmouth, and Goddard colleges, and at the University of California, Berkeley, and Monash University. Currently, she serves as Artist in Residence in the Music Department of Harvard University, which has housed the American gamelan **Si Betty** since 2007.[xvi] Diamond has written extensively for voice(s) and gamelan instruments; *In that Bright World* (1981), *Sabbath Bride* (1982), and *Hard Times* (1984) make up a series of her Western folksong settings. In memory of Lou Harrison, with whom she worked for over twenty years, she wrote *At Lou’s Table* for Javanese gamelan when the senior composer passed away

in 2003. As an ethnomusicologist, Diamond has written a brief, yet provocative essay “There is no They There” (1990) which offers a valued insight on ethics of cross-cultural interaction. Her article “Out of Indonesia: Global Gamelan” (1998) explores myriad approaches to creating, defining, and recording gamelan music based on repertoires, modes of presentations, and liner notes of twenty-six recordings of gamelan music produced from different parts of the world.[xvii]

## **GAMELAN IN CANADA**

Founded in 1983, the **Evergreen Club Contemporary Gamelan** became the first performing gamelan in Canada. Based in Toronto, this eight-member Sudanese gamelan is particularly famous for commissioning new works, including those by American composers such as John Cage, James Tenney, and Miguel Frasconi. **John Cage** (1912–1992) probably began the interest in gamelan during his participation in Henry Cowell’s “Music of the World’s Peoples” lectures in New York in the 1930s, as well as through the lifelong friendship with Lou Harrison. The gamelan-like sonorities and ostinato patterns are apparent in his works for prepared piano and percussion ensemble, for instance, *First Construction* (1939), *Second Construction* (1940), *Bacchanale* (1940), *Double Music* (1941), *Amores* (1943), and *Sonatas and Interludes* (1946–48). Yet, Cage had only one gamelan work, *Haikai*, written in 1986 for the Evergreen Club’s concert “The Circle Completed.” The piece was scored not for the whole gamelan ensemble, but some of its instruments: suling, boning, jengglong, saron, panerus, gambang, kendang, kempul, and gong. English composer Clive Wilkinson later realized the work for Central Javanese gamelan. “The Circle Completed” concert also featured *The Road to Ubud* (1986, revised 2001) for gamelan and prepared piano by **James Tenney** (1934-2006). Composed in memory of Ann Holloway, the piece took inspiration from the walk between the towns of Peliatan and Ubud in Bali that the composer and his wife often journeyed during their visit in the early 1980s. In 2000, Tenney wrote *Last Spring in Toronto* for gamelan and orchestra commissioned by the Evergreen Club and the Esprit Orchestra, with the assistance of the Canada Council. Also for the Evergreen Club, **Miguel Frasconi** (b. 1956), colleague of Cage and Tenney, wrote *Distancing #3* (1981, revised 1983) and *Air of the Temple: Placement + Degree* (1985).

On the other side of Lake Ontario, Eastman School of Music founded **Gamelan Lila Muni (“Heavenly Sound”)** in 1993. For this Balinese gamelan angklung orchestra, English-born American composer and theorist **Robert Daniel Morris** (b. 1943) wrote *Playing Outside* (2001), the first piece of his outdoor composition series. The work calls for chorus, orchestra, four improvisers, and the Eastman Balinese Gamelan to perform in ten locations in Webster Park, where the music was conceived and actually written.[xviii] Within the 100-minute timespan of the piece, the musicians would move from one specific location to another to form different ensembles for each of the piece’s forty-seven sections.

\* Judith Becker once stated in 1983 that the “American-composer-for-gamelan” trend—that is, music for gamelan written by American composers—would become more important in the 1980s.[xix] Her prophecy was indeed fulfilled, and yet the trend did not cease after the decade

but continued to proliferate well into the twenty-first century, as seen in the number of new American gamelan compositions throughout this survey. In the same essay, Becker perceived that while some ensembles should remain dedicated to Mantle Hood's aim of "bi-musicality" and stay true to imitation and repetition of the past, the others were to take on a different approach, rejecting Hood's initial purpose of American gamelan training.[xx] These "alternative" gamelans were to free gamelan from its context, compromise its Javaneseness, and allow American composers and performers to treat the ensemble simply as instruments, as sound producers. The tremendous number of American gamelan composers and their compositions have proved that straying away from bi-musicality does not entail negative results. In the end, both approaches have their own merits. Without solid knowledge of the past tradition, the direction to the present and the future could be vague and confused. But, without adaptation and innovation, the existence of the past could easily cease, dwindling away from our memories.

#### Notes

[i] "Directory of gamelan Groups: United States," Sharon Millman, American Gamelan Institute, [http://www.gamelan.org/directories/directoryusa/us\\_quick-facts.html](http://www.gamelan.org/directories/directoryusa/us_quick-facts.html), last modified accessed April 30, 2013.

[ii] Henry Spiller, "Tunes That Bind: Paul J. Seelig, Eva Gauthier, Charles T. Griffes, and the Javanese Other," *Journal of the Society for American Music* 3, no. 2 (May 2009): 129–54.

[iii] W. Anthony Sheppard, "Continuity in Composing the American Cross-Cultural: Eichheim, Cowell, and Japan," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 61, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 468.

[iv] McPhee became interested in the magical sound of Balinese gamelan when he heard newly released recordings of the ensemble in the late 1920s and soon decided to visit Bali for the first time in 1931 before returning to the West for a short period and moving back to Bali in 1933 and staying until Christmas 1938.

[v] [http://www.gamelan.org/directories/directoryusa/us\\_quick-facts.html](http://www.gamelan.org/directories/directoryusa/us_quick-facts.html).

[vi] Judith Becker, "One Perspective on Gamelan in America," *Asian Music* 15, no. 1 (1983): 83–84.

[vii] J. Michele Edwards, "Barkin [née Radoff], Elaine," vol. 1 of *The Grove Dictionary of American Music*, ed. Charles Hiroshi Garrett (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 353.

[viii] Jody Diamond, "Murphy, Dennis," vol. 5 of *The Grove Dictionary of American Music*, ed. Charles Hiroshi Garrett (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 606.

[ix] Alvin Lucier, liner notes for *Theme*, Lovely Music Ltd. LCD 5011, 1999, compact disc.

[x] Diamond, "Out of Indonesia: Global Gamelan," *Ethnomusicology* 42, no. 1 (1998): 181.

[xi] *Ibid.*, 178–79.

[xii] David W. Bernstein and Amanda Fawcett-Lothson, "Corner, Philip (Gwan Pok)," vol. 2 of *The Grove Dictionary of American Music*, ed. Charles Hiroshi Garrett (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 424.

[xiii] Neil B. Rolnick, liner notes for *Macedonian AirDrumming with Gamelan Son of Lion*, Bridge BCD 9030, 1992, compact disc.

[xiv] Jeanne Shapiro Bamberger and Evan Ziporyn, "Getting it Wrong," *The Worlds of Music: Journal of the International Institute for Traditional Music* 34, 3 (1992): 22–56.

[xv] Ingram D. Marshall and David Atkinson Wells, "Schmidt, Daniel W(inslow)," vol. 7 of *The Grove Dictionary of American Music*, ed. Charles Hiroshi Garrett (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 375.

[xvi] This American gamelan was built in 1979 by Lou Harrison and William Colvig, who modeled it on the Central Javanese Gamelan Kyai Udhan Mas at UC Berkeley. It was named for its benefactor, American philanthropist and photographer Betty Freeman. Prior to its coming to MIT, Si Betty was housed at San Jose State University, where Harrison founded a gamelan program in 1976.

[xvii] Diamond, "Out of Indonesia: Global Gamelan," 174–83.

[xviii] "Playing Outside (2001)," Robert Morris, Eastman School of Music, <http://lulu.esm.rochester.edu/rdm/notes/po.html>, accessed 19 August 2016.

[xix] Judith Becker, "One Perspective on Gamelan in America," *Asian Music* 15, no. 1 (1983): 85.

[xx] *Ibid.*, 86–88.