CYCLICAL NARRATIVES AND THE POWER OF THREE:
INSTITUTIONAL HISTORIES AND PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES OF GAMELAN
ENSEMBLES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

BY

CHRISTINA HORTON

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Music in Music
with a concentration in Musicology
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2019

Urbana, Illinois

Master’s Committee:

Professor Gayle Sherwood Magee, Adviser
Associate Professor Michael Silvers
ABSTRACT

This project builds upon the scholarship of gamelan ensembles in the United States, particularly the work of Brent Talbot and Elizabeth Clendinning, by focusing on discourses of music transmission, pedagogical lineages, and the Balinese concept of *air mengalir* (“water flows”). In this thesis, I provide a history of gamelan music and gamelan ensembles at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), starting from the early 1970s, and explore various narratives constructed from oral histories, interviews, and archival materials. I then focus on a particular moment of this history—namely the years in which I have been involved in the UIUC Balinese gamelan ensemble (2015-2019)—and examine the pedagogical practices of Pak I Ketut Gede Asnawa situated in relation to institutional histories and theories that shape them and are equally influenced by them. Specifically, I theorize about Pak Asnawa’s pedagogical strategies from his own theoretical language and terms and expand this model to talk about the educational realities of the UIUC Balinese gamelan ensemble at this moment. Ultimately, I study how the historical narratives and pedagogical practices of the various gamelan programs uniquely exemplify what it means to be a gamelan musician in UIUC’s School of Music as well as show how these ideas about the function of a gamelan at a US postsecondary music institution interact with larger institutional forces such as campus policies, the discipline of ethnomusicology, and national and transnational legacies and theories.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION..............................................................................................................................1

CHAPTER 1: “WHY NOT HAVE BOTH?” THE HISTORY OF GAMELAN AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS.................................................................................................................................20

CHAPTER 2: PANCA “WI,” PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES, AND PAK ASNAWA’S PHILOSOPHIES...............................................................................................................................................63

CONCLUSION...................................................................................................................................110

BIBLIOGRAPHY................................................................................................................................116

APPENDIX A: ARCHIVAL MATERIALS.........................................................................................122

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEWS ..........................................................................................................124
INTRODUCTION

I Ketut Gede Asnawa (Pak Asnawa1), I Putu Tangkas Adi Hiranmayena (Putu Hiranmayena), and I are practicing before gamelan rehearsal, trying to solidify certain sections of music for Pak Asnawa’s dance composition, Tari Canang Porosan. At this moment, Pak Asnawa is the current professor of Balinese gamelan at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and PhD student Putu Hiranmayena—a Balinese American well-trained in the art since childhood—has become Pak Asnawa’s unofficial assistant over my years of study. As students start to enter the gamelan room for the day, they sit at their respective instruments and join in playing or wait for Pak Asnawa or Putu to give extra assistance. Throughout the rehearsal, we review sections and learn new parts, all trying to follow Putu and Pak Asnawa’s pangguls (mallets) as best as we can. As we make mistakes or try to figure out interlocking parts and harmonies, smiles are passed around, joking remarks are made, and laughter ensues. A sense of trust and support is felt among the musicians, many of whom have become friends through this ensemble, and have witnessed growth in each other throughout the years—in their gamelan playing as well as in their academic and personal lives. This is counter-balanced with the days where we struggle to make progress in learning the music of Porosan. We become frustrated with each other and ourselves as we receive annoyed but endearing glares from both Pak Asnawa and Putu during rehearsal. We leave aggravated with our technical or mental limitations even as we continue running the pattern in our mind again and again until we are certain we know it. The sounds of rehearsal follow us outside the classroom through recordings shared via email or social media. My friends and I play them often over our phone or laptop speakers while discussing our

---

1 The title of “Pak” derives from “Bapak,” which means “father.” It is a term of respect used to address older, usually married, men as well as teachers. It is similar to our use of “Mr.” in English.
progress with each other. As with every semester that I have been a part of this ensemble, there is always one particular piece that becomes a fixation for the gamelan members—one that encapsulates the idea of what being in a gamelan ensemble at the University of Illinois means to us.

In many of the rehearsals for this piece, Pak Asnawa often reminds us of the foundation of *tri sakti* (Power of Three) as it relates to *Tari Canang Porosan*. In his article entitled, “Kebhinekaan dan Kompleksitas Gamelan [Diversity and Complexity in Balinese Gamelan],” from the academic journal *Bheri* sponsored by *Institut Seni Indonesia Denpasar* (Indonesian Arts Institute Denpasar or ISI), Pak Asnawa summarizes the religious context of this concept, explaining that the idea of *tri sakti* (Power of Three) from Balinese Hinduism serves as one concept of achieving balance. Specifically, it is the third dimension within overall balance that humans must try to achieve in their lives (Asnawa 2007: 35). ² *Tari Canang Porosan* relates to the concept of *tri sakti* because it is named after a type of religious offering called *canang porosan*, which symbolically portrays the three major gods of Balinese Hinduism. The term *canang* more generally refers to the small, square-shaped offerings found everywhere in Bali (Figure 1)—in houses, on the streets, around temples—that are used in daily rituals to thank the gods. *Porosan* (Figures 2 and 3) is an element included in the daily offerings that represents the three major gods: Brahma (Creator), Wisnu (Preserver), and Iswara or Siwa (Destroyer). The green betel leaf (*daun sirih*) symbolizes Wisnu; the white limestone powder (*kapur*) represents Iswara; and the *gambir* fruit, which is red on the inside and found in a type of palm tree in Bali, represents Brahma. The *porosan* is made by dipping the betel leaf in a limestone paste mixture and then placing the *gambir* fruit on top (Asnawa, pers. comm., 2019a).

---

² Asnawa further explains that this third dimension is one of 10 total dimensions. More detailed religious context is provided within his article, which is written in Indonesian.
Figure 1

Figure 2
Porosan elements, photo taken by Ni Putu Oka Madriani, 2019

Figure 3
Finished Porosan, photo taken by Ni Putu Oka Madriani, 2019
This dance composition, as with many compositions at Illinois, is a collaboration within the Asnawa family, with Pak Asnawa composing, his wife and renowned choreographer Ni Putu Oka Mardiani (Ibu Mardiani) choreographing, their two daughters Yonitika and Yunirika serving as two of the three dancers. Within this collaborative piece, various elements of the musical composition and choreography symbolize aspects of this type of porosan offering. For example, Ibu Mardiani’s choreography is for three dancers, each representing one of the offering’s elements. Furthermore, one main melody with Balinese lyrics sung by the musicians addresses the three gods, pays respect to them, and invites them to join us on earth. Finally, the piece ends with the following vocal line: *Tri Sakti, Maha Suci* (Power of Three, Very Holy), activating this important concept from Balinese Hindu philosophy (Asnawa, pers. comm., 2019a). Overall, this piece reminds me of how often Pak Asnawa relates what we learn in class to this same concept of *tri sakti*. Ideas drawn from *tri sakti* influences much of what and how Pak Asnawa teaches his ensemble. It has become a defining feature in more ways than one, whether recognized by its members or not.

My purpose in thoroughly explaining the learning, cultural, and creative processes behind *Tari Canang Porosan* is to demonstrate a moment very characteristic of my experiences during my four years as a gamelan ensemble member at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). After working closely with the Asnawa family and Putu Hiranmayena, I have started to think about the different seasons—cycles—of the gamelan program at Illinois as compared to cyclical gong structures3 (Hiranmayena, pers. comm., 2019a). As discussed by numerous others.

---

3 Judith Becker wrote a chapter (1979) entitled “Time and Tune in Java” which explains how different cyclical organizations of time in Javanese society correspond with cyclical structures in Javanese gamelan. She sees the relationship as homologous, as well as proof that each musical practice is conceptualized in a different way, i.e. there is no “universe of music” (1979: 198). Andrew McGraw has an article (2008) entitled “Different Temporalities: The Time of Balinese Gamelan” that critiques Western approaches to understandings of Balinese music. He attempts to clarify conceptions of temporality (or time-in-music as he calls it) according to the context of
gamelan teachers and ethnomusicologists of both Javanese and Balinese gamelan music, cyclical gong structures defined as colotomic meters demarcate the passing of time in musical pieces. Different types of gongs repeat a regular pattern within a repeating melodic cycle, thus creating a structural framework. The sizes, placements, and timbres of the gongs provide different degrees of emphasis, but the punctuation of the gong ageng (big gong) holds a special power in both Javanese and Balinese ensembles, as it signals the beginning and end of the cycle (Gold 2005, 42). While this seems to be a straightforward model, it is important to take into account conceptions of this cyclicity according to those who perform the music, as their actions and responses change how it is interpreted and enacted in the moment.4

In a similar way, the various stories about the UIUC gamelan—both about its historical Javanese ensemble and the current Balinese ensemble—represent the different cycles of this gamelan program, repeating within the larger cycles of academic years and semesters provided by the university. Each cycle of an Illinois gamelan ensemble varies in span, as it may be over a series of years or a few semesters. The span and significant moments of each cycle are constructed collectively by whoever happens to be a part of the ensemble at that time as well as the institutional forces that impact them. The members punctuate the patterns and directions that the gamelan ensemble follows within that cycle for however long they choose to be a part of it. The end of one cohort of members signals the beginning of another, and their collective contributions serve as different ways of sounding the identities and histories of the UIUC gamelan programs. The narratives of these gamelan programs that have appeared throughout the

---

4 For Andrew McGraw, he specifically emphasized how his understandings of cyclicity changed after interacting with and learning from Balinese drummers who accompanied dance. He emphasizes that Western understandings of repetitions in Balinese gamelan music may not always match that of a typical Balinese musician (2008: 141-142).
UIUC School of Music’s history are often recounted in relation to the School’s ethnomusicological and compositional legacies, as well as its larger transnational network.

In this moment of my research, *Tari Canang Porosan* signals the end of a cycle, for many of the group’s more advanced members are graduating, taking breaks, or leaving after *Porosan’s* performance. This cycle is not uncommon, and like other gamelan teachers across the US, Pak Asnawa has learned to accommodate these changes in membership. Still, *Tari Canang Porosan* encapsulates so many elements that make the U of I Balinese Gamelan ensembles what they are. It represents the teaching and personal philosophies of Pak Asnawa in partnership with Ibu Mardiani’s subtle yet strong influence in the form of choreography. It contains musical aspects that showcase the technical capacity of Asnawa’s students—meeting them where they are, pushing them to succeed, and reflecting the best aspects of our group. With the case of *Porosan*, Pak Asnawa has even expressed in class that part of his inspiration from the piece stemmed from Putu’s latest dance composition, *Laku* (Hiranmayena, pers. comm., 2019a). Pieces such as these, as well as Pak Asnawa’s renowned *gong kebyar* pieces,⁵ represent the communal creativity that flourishes in our ensemble even in the midst of the uncertainties that come with being in a university setting. *Porosan* may signal the ending of an era, but it holds the potential of a new start.

**Purpose of Research**

The purpose of this project is two-fold: to first, provide a history of gamelan at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign constructed through various oral and archival narratives and secondly, to examine the pedagogical practices of the current UIUC Balinese

---

⁵ *Gong kebyar* is a famous Balinese gamelan genre intended for showing off technical virtuosity but can also refer to certain kinds of gamelan orchestras as well as a type of musical introduction often used in this repertoire.
gamelan program in relation to the institutional histories and theories that shaped it during my involvement from 2015-2019. My research asks: How do the historical narratives of gamelan programs at UIUC converge and conflict, and what does this multi-faceted history tell us about the interactions of these programs with the institutional forces that influence and shape them? Furthermore, how does an analysis of the current pedagogical practices of the UIUC Balinese gamelan ensemble—over a decade after its establishment—perpetuate as well as rewrite the historical narratives before it? Specifically, how does it provide a model for gamelan pedagogy at US postsecondary music institutions and expand upon established ideas in US music scholarship about music education discourse, transnational pedagogical networks, and *air mengalir* (“water flows”)—a concept modeled after traditional Balinese irrigation systems that concerns musical genealogies that connect gamelan communities in the US and in Indonesia (Talbot 2010; Clendinning 2013, 2016)? My project builds upon the works of music scholars who have written about Balinese gamelan pedagogy, including Brent Talbot’s own work on the UIUC Balinese gamelan in 2009-2010, as well as histories and ethnographies of gamelan programs in the US. My research adds to this body of scholarship by examining the unique elements that make the history and practice of gamelan music at Illinois what it is.

In this thesis, I thus argue that the various historical narratives and pedagogical practices of both the Javanese and Balinese gamelan ensembles at the University of Illinois, in all their iterations, perpetually reinforce or redefine the legacies of what it means to be a gamelan musician at the university, which in turn relates to a wider network of institutional histories—both at UIUC’s campus, throughout the US, and abroad in Indonesia. The Balinese philosophical models that Pak Asnawa uses as teaching tools in everyday rehearsal become ways of engaging with, understanding, critiquing, and theorizing about the past and present. The larger implication
of this, to echo those who have come before me, includes but is not limited to how ethnomusicological ensembles in US post-secondary institutions function as a way to understand and study another cultural practice, a way to serve as cultural ambassadors and mediators for a musical practice and its related communities, or a way to develop our own understanding or reiteration of the musical practice that is taught. In other words, understanding the histories and social impacts of transnational/global pedagogical practices happening at US post-secondary institutions can inform the surrounding academic and local communities about the significance of their interactions with such ensembles.

**Background and Literature Review**

My thesis fits within the literature about gamelan ensembles in the United States, a scholarly phenomenon within both US musicology and ethnomusicology that has developed over approximately the past thirty years. Most studies on gamelan ensembles in North America and Europe focus on Javanese ensembles in relation to the legacy of UCLA and ethnomusicologists Mantle Hood and Robert E. Brown (Becker 1983; Harnish et. al. 2004; Sumarsam 2004, 2013; Mendonça 2011; Spiller 2015). The scholarship on Balinese gamelan ensembles in the US is a smaller but steadily growing body of ethnomusicological literature, often examining the meaning behind the labels of “American-Balinese gamelan” or the transnational roles of Balinese gamelan ensembles in academic contexts (Diamond 1992; Harnish 2004; Steele 2013, 2015; Clendinning 2013, 2016; Brinner 2016). Themes of community-building and affinity also arise in related studies that expand their scope to gamelan ensembles in Britain and North America (Mendonça 2002 and Lueck 2012). Another approach to studying gamelan music in the US concerns the intersections of American experimental practices with traditional or related gamelan instruments.
and ensembles. These works often explores the lives of major composers such as Lou Harrison, Barbara Benary, Jody Diamond, and others along with the phenomenon of “American gamelan” ensembles—a term that emphasizes ensemble groups, musical practices, gamelan-based instruments, or subcultures developed within the United States and is often associated with experimental gamelan music-making (Becker 1983, Diamond 1992, Steele 2013, Alves and Campbell 2017, Arms 2018). Specifically, this thesis intends to contribute to sources on both Javanese and Balinese gamelan ensembles in the United States that devote attention to the teaching of US gamelan ensembles, the position of gamelan ensembles within the academy, and the issues of representation that arise from such ensembles (Bakan 1994, Vetter 2004, Harnish 2004, Lueck 2012, Sumarsam 2013, Clendinning 2013, and others). As Clendinning observes, this understudied area has not been given priority in the field, despite the surprisingly large impact of ethnomusicological ensembles in postsecondary music institutions and the field of ethnomusicology itself (2013: 47).

The literature regarding gamelan ensembles in the US frequently mentions two ethnomusicologists crucial to its history—Mantle Hood and Robert E. Brown. Mantle Hood established the first Javanese gamelan ensemble in a US post-secondary institution—Gamelan Udan Mas—at UCLA in 1954 (Spiller 2015, Alves and Campbell 2017). The intention behind the establishment of Gamelan Udan Mas corresponded with Hood’s famous concept of “bi-musicality,” which he defines as the acquisition of another musical skill to the extent of being bi-musical—akin to “bilingual” (Hood 1960). This term has become a definitive, even necessary practice for certain scholars and programs within the discipline of ethnomusicology. Jeff Todd Titon speaks positively of “bi-musicality,” extending its interpretation beyond that of acquiring another musical skill to a means for empathetically understanding others who make that music
with you (Titon 1995, 288). At the same time, this idea has been challenged by scholars such as John Baily and Bruno Nettl. Baily calls attention to the terminological limits of “bi-musicality” and its original definition of musical skill acquisition and argues for replacing it with the phrase of “learning to perform.” According to Baily, this phrase more adequately covers a broader scope of methodological practices and allows for greater understanding of the music that can only be gained through performing (2001, 86). Nettl’s response to “bi-musicality” is not exactly one of full rejection, as he recognizes the term’s history and its usefulness to help music students and audiences with crossing musical borders (2015, 63). He furthermore understood the necessity of performance study that often arose when it came to doing fieldwork (462). Nettl’s initial expressions of ambivalence and reluctance to the ideas of “bi-musicality” or “multimusicality” appear to stem from his worries with the results of crossing musical borders and its effects on musical traditions, the practice’s relation to aspects of colonialism, and the ethical complications of his own encounters in the field with Persian music and being deemed forever an “outsider” by his own teacher (Titon 1995, 288; Nettl 2005, 56; Nettl 2015, 157 and 461). In his most recent edition of *The Study of Ethnomusicology*, Nettl describes such reservations but also explains how his perceptions of this concept and of music more generally have changed as the discipline has transformed (2015, 458-463). Indeed, Hood’s practice of “bi-musicality” at UCLA has led to the establishment of many performance study ensembles in the US, both academic and community-based, a practice which has changed how ethnomusicology has been perceived and how the discipline has understood aspects of itself and its purpose.

Robert E. Brown, an ethnomusicologist attributed with the coining of the term “world music,” wholly embraced the concept of “bi-musicality” and developed a legacy based around this idea through the establishment of numerous performance study ensembles. Specifically,
Brown and his Center for World Music in San Diego, California was instrumental in bringing various musical traditions to the United States by sponsoring master artists from these traditions to come teach and perform in academic and community groups. In fact, many of the gamelan ensembles in the US today have a direct correlation to Brown’s legacy in some way, whether through a specific Indonesian artist sponsored by the Center, a student of Brown’s from either Wesleyan University or his teaching appointments in California, or various materials or instruments (Diamond 1992, Hunt 2005, Capwell 2007, Alves and Campbell 2017).

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is included in this history for, after Brown’s death, much of his US collection of instruments, paintings, books, recordings, and archives became the Robert E. Brown Center for World Music at UIUC and resulted in the establishment of the UIUC School of Music’s current Balinese gamelan ensemble (Robert E. Brown Center for World Music 2019). Specifically, the founding of the Center at UIUC happened because musicology alum Andrew Granade, then studying the life of composer Harry Partch, interviewed Prof. Danlee Mitchell at San Diego State, the former caretaker of the Partch Instrument Collection (Center for World Music 2016). Mitchell encouraged Granade to talk with musicology professor Charles Capwell, the ethnomusicologist responsible for establishing the Javanese gamelan program at Illinois, about establishing a center at UIUC for the study of world music. The idea was passed on to former School of Music director Karl Kramer who, after a conversation with Brown in 2004, readily agreed to start the process. After being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2005, Brown made certain that his legacy would carry on through collections maintained at the new Center for World Music at UIUC. In addition to this, both Capwell and Philip Yampolsky, the former Director of the Center, studied with Robert Brown. Capwell studied different aspects of Carnatic, Hindustani, and gamelan traditions with him at
Wesleyan during the late 1960s, while Yampolsky studied with him at California Institute of the Arts starting in 1970 (Capwell 2007; Yampolsky, pers. comm., 2019).

Jody Diamond, an American ethnomusicologist who has taught and composed for American gamelan ensembles, also studied in one of the programs designed by Robert E. Brown (Diamond 1992, 117). Impacted by her past of learning, teaching, and composing for gamelan in the academy, Diamond wrote a chapter entitled “American Gamelan in Composition and Education.” This work compares the various approaches of music educators and composers to gamelan—mainly Javanese ensembles—in American higher education. Amidst historical and ethnographical information, Diamond relates her own experience as a part of the Americanization of gamelan in which American composers and performers started to “consider gamelan as an art form of their own culture” (1992, 118). She analyzes this phenomenon in light of the tradition and innovation dichotomy, her ultimate argument being that respect for another culture and experimentation go hand-in-hand. She specifically acknowledges how creative music-making has altered the original functions of gamelan ensembles in the United States (1992, 120, 135).

Ted Solís’s book, Performing Ethnomusicology: Teaching and Representation in World Music Ensembles, contains several chapters on gamelan ensembles in higher education and focuses on gamelan pedagogy. The second chapter is completely devoted to an interview with Javanese artist Hardja Susilo, who was invited by Mantle Hood to teach gamelan and study ethnomusicology at UCLA. The interview relates Susilo’s experiences in Java and America, his pedagogical approaches, and his reactions to the development of the academic gamelan community and “American gamelan” (Susilo 2004: 53-68). Sumarsam, another Javanese artist, provides a brief history on the relationship between Javanese gamelan and the West in the third
chapter of this book. He not only compares the process of learning gamelan in Java to the process in the United States, but also features Wesleyan University’s gamelan as an example of a long-term, non-Western performing ensemble (Sumarsam 2004: 69-92). In another chapter, Roger Vetter, an American ethnomusicologist who teaches a Javanese ensemble, analyzes the positive impact gamelan ensembles can have on students as well as the challenges he has faced as a teacher. Furthermore, Vetter problematizes the constraints placed on gamelan ensembles in higher education institutions. He presents an idealized solution to the issues caused by the Western “canonic ensemble” model, specifically one that involves re-structuring gamelan programs to allow students to have a longer period for intensely learning the details of the Javanese music system before being required to perform it in a concert setting (Vetter 2004: 115-125).

David Harnish’s chapter in Performing Ethnomusicology is the only chapter about a Balinese gamelan ensemble in an academic institution. Harnish mainly stresses the importance of adaptation in directing a gamelan ensemble (2004, 126). The framework behind Harnish’s adaptive pedagogy is based on his experiences, which involve the influence of “pedagogical histories” and the issues of orientalism grounded in the “Self and Other” dichotomy. By “pedagogical histories,” Harnish refers to the strategies passed on to gamelan directors by their teachers and promotes a teaching approach that both honors this influence but also reflects the realities of the present environment. As for issues of orientalism, Harnish discusses how the Western academic environment often “treats non-Western music as the exotic, romantic, yet insignificant Other” (2004: 127). With his experiences in mind, he proposes solutions that consist of compromising pedagogical methods to meet student needs; responding to orientalist, marginalizing perspectives in a Western music environment; building community within the
ensemble; and preparing performers to be conduits (not representatives) of Balinese culture (Harnish 2004: 127-136).

Two major voices in more general gamelan scholarship and in ethnomusicology at large are Lisa Gold and Benjamin Brinner. Gold primarily specializes in Balinese gamelan musical practice and how it relates to wider community and ritual practices in Bali (Gold 2005). Brinner primarily specializes in central Javanese gamelan musical practice, focusing on theories of competence in performance (Brinner 1995, Brinner 2005). Though their scholarship examines regions on the islands of Bali and Java, their work with gamelan ensembles in the States has also received recognition. Both recently contributed articles to the Smithsonian-sponsored research website, “Performing Indonesia” (2016). In particular, Benjamin Brinner’s article, “The Ecology of Musical Transmission between Indonesia and the United States,” uses the term “ecology” as a metaphor to describe the circulation of transmission that takes place between Java, Bali, and the United States through Indonesian gamelan artists and college gamelan groups (Brinner 2016). Overall, Lisa Gold and Benjamin Brinner’s strong presence in gamelan scholarship continues to influence new and upcoming scholarship on gamelan ensembles in US universities.

More recent works contributing to the literature of gamelan ensembles in the United States include the works of Ellen Lueck, Elizabeth Clendinning, and Pete Steele (Lueck 2012; Clendinning 2013, 2016; Steele 2013, 2015). Lueck’s thesis provides an ethnography of Balinese gamelan community ensembles in North America and builds upon Mark Slobin’s concept of “affinity groups.” Though focusing on community groups, she also discusses the organization of certain academic ensembles (Lueck 2012: 12-13, 16). Steele’s dissertation and related publications primarily focus on various case studies of “Balinese fusion music,” including examples of hybridity that have taken place in North America (2013, 10-13; 2015). Through his
North American case studies, he explores how gamelan ensembles in the US have shaped perceptions of Balinese music for American performers and audiences (2013, 41). Furthermore, he analyzes American works for Balinese gamelan, situating them in the context of the history of gamelan in the US as well as in relation to ideas about liberal multiculturalism (2013, 57-60; 2015, 191-195). Clendinning’s dissertation uses Balinese gamelan as a “case study of transnational performing arts pedagogy.” (2013: xi). She defines the transnational Balinese gamelan community as consisting of Balinese musicians in Bali involved in international work (teaching and performing), American Balinese-focused ethnomusicologists, American gamelan enthusiasts, American students of Balinese gamelan, and the audiences that attend gamelan concerts shaped by transnational contexts (33). Her case study focuses on the life, work, and family of I Made Lasmawan and his work directing several academic ensembles in the Rocky Mountain region; the community group Tunas Mekar in Denver, Colorado; and the student gamelan groups that study abroad at Sanggar Manik Galih, his compound in Bangah, Bali (79-80, 82, 107-110). Clendinning also recently contributed an article to the “Performing Indonesia” research website (2016), entitled “Air Mengalir: I Madé Lasmawan, Pedagogy, and Musical Kinship in the Transnational Balinese Community.” This article reiterates the conclusions from her dissertation about how tracing pedagogical lineages exemplifies the powerful, transnational connection between gamelan communities in the US and Bali (2016).

A relevant study on pedagogical practice in a gamelan ensemble at a US postsecondary institution features UIUC’s very own Eka Sruti Illini (another name for the UIUC Balinese Gamelan ensemble) as a case study (2010). Music educator and ethnomusicologist Brent Talbot examines the processes of music transmission within this ensemble during 2009-2010, a few years after its establishment in 2006. Using the theoretical foundations of Foucault’s and
Bloemaert’s concepts of discourse as well as ethnographic methods, Talbot identifies certain discourses of music transmission within the Eka Sruti Illini ensemble that provide applicable examples of how music educational practices of transmission are actually diverse, flexible, and complex processes rather than fixed or essential methods (2010: 2, 29-33). He particularly identifies two pedagogical discourses of transmission within the UIUC Balinese gamelan ensemble: direct acculturation (Pak Asnawa’s practice of encouraging students to engage in Balinese values, social patterns, and ways of learning) and analytics teaching (Pak Asnawa’s method of compromising his own ways of teaching to accommodate student needs). He furthermore examines these discourses of transmission within the larger context of legacies of ensemble participation in Bali and the United States and shows how these discourses are transformed within their respective contexts—Balinese communities versus US postsecondary institutions (72-75). Talbot argues that Balinese gamelan ensemble pedagogical practices in US postsecondary contexts like those of Eka Sruti Illini have much to offer music educators in a variety of contexts. Furthermore, he encourages music educators to learn from the various means of transmission performed in different ethnic and non-institutional ensembles and to engage in small yet powerful means of resistance to “centering institutions,” a concept from Bloemaert, through developing a more flexible approach to musical transmission (117-118).

This thesis contributes to both the foundational discussions within gamelan scholarship about the ethnomusicological legacy and gamelan ensembles in the US as well as to the growing literature that focuses more on specific Balinese gamelan communities in the United States. I am building upon the scholarship of the many authors in Ted Solís’s edited volume *Performing Ethnomusicology*, the analyses of Lueck and Steele regarding themes of affinity and hybridity in relation to Balinese gamelan ensembles in the North America, the work of Elizabeth Clendinning
concerning pedagogical lineages and transnational transmission of Balinese performing arts, and the research of Brent Talbot about the processes of musical transmission within the UIUC Balinese gamelan ensemble. Starting from this foundation, my work distinguishes itself by using the pedagogical tools and philosophies I have learned from the gamelan community at the University of Illinois to analyze the unique histories, legacies, and realities of the UIUC gamelan programs. Talbot’s use of Foucault and Bloomaert’s models of “discourse” are effective for understanding and theorizing about the way Pak Asnawa perpetually talks about and employs his teaching strategies for gamelan at UIUC, especially in relation to the context of an academic institution and its transnational legacies. However, for my project, I want to theorize about Pak Asnawa’s pedagogical strategies from his own theoretical language and terms and furthermore expand this model to talk about the educational realities of the UIUC Balinese gamelan in the particular moment of my research (2015-2019). Overall, this study also aims to contribute to the histories of the School of Music and global studies at UIUC, histories of gamelan programs in the US, and ethnomusicological literature that explores pedagogical practices and theories in various cultural contexts, including that of US music postsecondary education.

Methodologies and Overview

For this project, I used methodologies common to both historical musicology and ethnomusicology. First, I relied heavily on primary source material to document the history of the gamelan at UIUC. I studied various archival materials such as correspondence, grant records, and school records from collections contained in the University of Illinois’s Sousa Archives and Center for American Music and the University of Illinois Archives. Moreover, I analyzed various video tapes from the University of Illinois’s Musicology Area archives. The bulk of my
ethnographic research methodology consisted of interviews and fieldwork. I interviewed as many contributors to the gamelan program at Illinois as possible within the scope of this project, including past and present UIUC faculty, past and present gamelan teachers, and gamelan ensemble members who chose to participate in my study.

Regarding fieldwork, I used the participatory-observation method, as I had already been a member of the student and community Balinese gamelan ensembles for two years when I started my research on this topic. I took part in rehearsals, performances on campus and in the surrounding community, gigs with the smaller advanced group Bali Lantari, class demonstrations, gamelan improvisation projects, and other Balinese gamelan performance activities.

In Chapter 1, I provide several historical narratives about gamelan music and gamelan programs at Illinois from interviews and archival materials. This chapter is not only an attempt to provide a comprehensive account of gamelan’s history at UIUC but also to examine the School’s and its various members’ ideas about the purpose of a gamelan ensemble within a US postsecondary music institution. I discuss UIUC School of Music’s history about itself, historical conversations about bringing a gamelan to UIUC, the establishment of the UIUC Javanese gamelan program in relation to the musicology and composition departments, and the music-making processes that take place with the current UIUC Balinese gamelan program associated with the Robert E. Brown Center for World Music.

In Chapter 2, I relate the pedagogical philosophies of Panca “wi” as taught by Pak Asnawa to the learning space and materials of the gamelan rehearsal space, community-building practices, and pedagogical and performance practices of the UIUC Balinese gamelan student and community ensembles. Panca “wi” (panca means five) is a model that outlines the five steps of
becoming a successful gamelan musician—*wiraga* (material), *wirama* (rhythm), *wirasa* (feeling), *wicaksana* (wisdom), and *wibawa* (charisma). I primarily focus on the first three steps, as they deal more specifically with aspects of the active learning process while the last two steps are more of a result from practicing the first three steps. *Wiraga* (material) involves first learning the basic musical materials and techniques necessary to perform various repertoire; *wirama* (rhythm) consists of placing the learned materials within their musical context and being attuned to the “rhythm” of the group; *wirasa* (feeling) is a more internalized, ever-present element of learning that concerns using one’s musical sensibilities to perform at one’s best and to fully understand how to perform the repertoire. I situate these pedagogical elements and practices within the institutional histories of Pak Asnawa’s educational background as well as the histories of the Balinese gamelan program and other ethnomusicological ensembles at UIUC. I especially focus on the gamelan rehearsal space itself, the discourse surrounding it and created by it, and the impact it has on the University of Illinois School of Music as an institution.
CHAPTER 1

“WHY NOT HAVE BOTH?”

THE HISTORY OF GAMELAN AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

The history of gamelan programs at Illinois is inherently intertwined with the history of the School itself and of its musicology department. Currently, the most comprehensive account of a history of the University of Illinois School of Music is a book commemorating the centennial of the School of Music entitled, *A Sympathy with Sounds: A Brief History of the University of Illinois School of Music to Celebrate its Centennial* by Ann L. Silverberg (1995). The forward by former School of Music Director Don V. Moses briefly highlights the School’s many accomplishments, including its ties to famous composers from American and experimental musics such as John Philip Sousa, Aaron Copland, John Cage, and Harry Partch. Director Moses locates the reputation of the School of Music in its ability to achieve prestige in its performances—specifically through its Western art music ensembles—and in its academics, represented by the divisions of musicology, composition, and music education (1995: ix-x). In this dichotomy, the performers are presented as upholding the Western art music tradition while the academic divisions are characterized by not only their studies of tradition and practical applications of music but also their tendency towards experimentation and deviations from the norm.

In the one short section dedicated to the “new directions of musicology” at Illinois from the 1950s to 1995, Silverman recounts the impact of the division’s contributions to research in Renaissance music and American music in particular. Prior to this chapter, she had outlined the development of historical musicology in the 1950s-60s through the work of specific faculty members (1995:63-64). In this section, she emphasizes the full integration of the
ethnomusicology component with the historical musicology component, an aspect that the
division proudly promotes in its recruitment of students, even to this day. Silverman notes that
one of the first ethnomusicologists at the school, Bruno Nettl, built the ethnomusicology program
to become one of the best and largest programs in the United States (104).

While the goal of the book is to uncritically celebrate the School of Music’s history, I
find it interesting that the only other mentions of musicology in this book highlight the
“liberation classes” that occurred in response to student demonstrations, and the establishment of
various ethnomusicological ensembles. “Liberation classes” grew from student demonstrations in
1970 over the Vietnam War and civil rights: demonstrations that were especially prominent at
college campuses across the US, including the University of Illinois. Though the School of
Music as an institution decided to continue programs as usual, some faculty—mostly those in
musicology—chose to cancel their regular classes and offer “liberation classes” on various topics
of music and politics in an effort to show solidarity with their students’ anti-war sentiment—an
act Silverman simply describes as “a move of doubtful legality” (80-81). In contrast to this
depiction of musicologists as revolutionary, the establishment of ethnomusicological ensembles
such as the Javanese gamelan, the Andean panpipe ensemble, the Afro-Bolivian Saya group, and
the mbiras ensemble are shown as performance groups that contribute to the School’s reputation
and outreach into the surrounding community. Concerning the purpose of these ensembles,
Silverman explains how their purpose is to educate, not to create professional musicians (97-98).
While seen as vital contributors to the School’s academic development and reputation, the
representation of Illinois musicologists consists of either voices of dissent or institutional image-
bearers that perform musics “alternative” to the Western art music tradition as a way to enrich
the campus community. Either way, these images indicate that musicologists at UIUC are among the educators and researchers of the School of Music who do things differently.

This sentiment has commonly been experienced and expressed by ethnomusicologists in the wider discipline’s history. In the same year that A Sympathy with Sounds appeared, Bruno Nettl published Heartland Excursions: Ethnomusicological Reflections on Schools of Music.\(^6\) When discussing the social organization of music schools in general, he talks about the relationship between a central repertory (Western art music) and a non-central or peripheral repertory (all other musics). According to Nettl, these peripheral musics often enter through “the back door of musicology” because, though they are not seen as worthy in a School of Music performance department, nonperforming or academic departments are usually more receptive to musical practices outside the central Western art music canon (1995: 84-85). In a more recent publication, Deborah Wong (2014) explicitly confronts the issues of power dynamics within schools of music and how the work of ethnomusicologists in these institutions consists of challenging normalized, powerful assumptions—certain canons or central repertoires being only one example. She writes, “We give ourselves over to value systems that dictate we work in permanent states of contradiction and asymmetry” (2014: 347).

It is under the shadow of this tension that the Javanese gamelan appears within the account of the School of Music’s history in 1995. The account positively depicts the Javanese gamelan as the most prominent ethnomusicological ensemble with its own practice room, organized by Professor Charles Capwell and taught by teachers from Indonesia, though not mentioning the names of the teachers from Java themselves. The text’s structure implies the

\(^6\) Nettl explains that this ethnography is not describing a specific school or schools but instead is attempting to characterize the guiding principles and values of how Western art music is taught in the United States (1995: 3).
influence of Bruno Nettl in its description of the purpose of ethnomusicological ensembles as an opportunity to learn about another musical practice rather than develop a professional capability in the music itself. Nettl has expressed this same sentiment to me in an interview (Nettl, pers. comm., 2018). The description also adopts a different tone from typical descriptions of ensembles in a School of Music in that it advertises the ensemble’s accommodation of differing musical skill levels, stating: “No experience is required to join the ensemble; a number of its members are undergraduates majoring in business and the sciences, along with graduate students in musicology, composition, and anthropology who are pursuing intensive study of Indonesian music” (Silverman 1995: 97). It is interesting this distinction is made—or advertised—as it is common for all kinds of music ensembles at UIUC to have non-music majors join, and some of them do not require an audition. One could speculate that this advertisement is featured as a way to encourage student involvement, as many students born in the United States would probably not have any prior experience with Indonesian musics at all, in contrast to other ensembles in the School often joined by music and non-music majors alike. However, it seems strange that promotion for an ensemble was specifically incorporated into its portion of the text of a School of Music history, in contrast to a history of the ensemble (it was almost 10 years old at this point) or a more thorough explanation for the earlier statement about how this ensemble and other ethnomusicological ensembles serve as institutional image-bearers in the local community.

While analyzing all these depictions of the musicology division, its ethnomusicological component, and the Javanese gamelan ensemble within the UIUC School of Music’s narrative of

---

7 Music education literature on non-music major involvement in US post-secondary music ensembles often discusses this topic in relation to themes of defining music participation, music-making and recreation, adult and life-long music-making, and authority and leadership within these ensembles. Some scholars are interested in why students choose to participate in these ensembles in connection with their past musical backgrounds (Gates 1991, Mantie 2013, Paparo 2013, Nichols 2014-2015).
its history, it is important to remember that the UIUC musicologists also have a role in telling the story about themselves. In all of the descriptions of the musicology division in Silverman’s account, Bruno Nettl’s voice appears, whether directly or indirectly. The Illinois musicologists thus live and retell the oral histories that emphasize this portrayal of them, their program, their position in the School, and their ethnomusicological ensembles. These oral histories also indirectly argue for wider ideas about what it means to be a “good” ethnomusicologist in US academia—a model continually reshaped by the field and its US ethnomusicology programs like Illinois.

This chapter constructs several historical narratives about gamelan music, ensembles, and programs at Illinois from interviews and archival materials. It analyzes how these various narratives converge and conflict, thus presenting an image about how musicologists at Illinois and their colleagues understand the purpose of a gamelan program at this institution in conjunction with the School of Music, concepts about gamelan music-making, and ideas about ethnomusicology as a discipline. This history not only includes voices from musicology but also from performers and composers. I argue that the history of gamelan music at UIUC has always been about the UIUC School of Music’s contribution to the debate about whether gamelan ensembles in the US postsecondary institutions should be for making interesting music or for educating students, faculty, and community audiences about musical and cultural practices from Java and Bali. Though historical participants in this debate at Illinois have typically taken one stance or the other, the actual gamelan music-making practices of the programs at Illinois have not only cycled through these various approaches but have also demonstrated a sentiment that echoes the Robert E. Brown slogan of “Why not have both?” (Yampolsky 2008). To support

---

8 Philip Yampolsky used this slogan as his subtitle in his paper presentation (“Against Restrictive Canons, Or: Why Not Have Both?”) for at the University of Illinois conference called “Canons in Musical Scholarship and
this argument, I will present the historical conversations surrounding bringing gamelan to Illinois, two historical narratives about the beginnings of the Javanese gamelan program, and conclude with an epilogue describing the kind of gamelan music-making at Illinois that has happened in the current moment of this project (2015-2019).

Who Will Bring Gamelan to Illinois? The Conversations of John Garvey and Bruno Nettl

“As major ethnomusicology programs go, we were fairly late getting into the gamelan business. Partly, I have to confess, it was a little bit of a matter of resisting what seemed to be, kind of a required trend. After I came here, if I told someone at another school that we were doing ethnomusicology, they would say, ‘Oh! Do you have a gamelan?’ It was the epitome of ethnomusicology programs.” ~ Bruno Nettl, pers. comm., June 8, 2018

Dr. Bruno Nettl is an avid supporter of our current UIUC Balinese gamelan ensembles, and during my time at the University of Illinois, he has attended as many end-of-semester concerts as he is able. Within the University of Illinois Musicology Area,9 he has taken upon a more “grandfatherly” role through his reputation in the field at large and also in his continued support of the musicology program itself. While I sat with him at his kitchen table, he fondly recalled his own first experience with gamelan at six years of age, through a copy of Erich M. von Hornbostel’s 33 1/3 RPM vinyl recording entitled Music of the Orient that his father brought home—a recording that introduced many non-Western musics to Europe (Decca 1951). As someone who figuratively embodies a history of ethnomusicology in his connections with Jaap Kunst, his talent for telling oral histories came as no surprise, and he recounted the entirety of a history of the gamelan program at Illinois to me. His first statement in the interview, quoted

Performance” in 2008. He explained that this was a favorite slogan of Robert Brown that “he used to dissolve and neutralize any either/or opposition” (Yampolsky 2008).
9 The UIUC School of Music recently renamed all of its divisions and departments as “areas” in 2019. Before that, it was called the “Musicology Division.” Throughout this chapter, I will use “Musicology Division” when referring to the Musicology Area before 2019.
above, situates the gamelan program at Illinois within discussions about gamelan ensembles being considered an important part of larger ethnomusicology programs. Nettl somewhat questioned this attitude of other programs that a gamelan must be readily acquired, and Jeff Todd Titon, in his 1995 article, attributed this to general reservations about the idea of “bi-musicality” by many scholars in the discipline. According to Titon, this is why the University of Illinois and other ethnomusicology programs like Indiana, Harvard, Berkeley, and others were slow to integrate world-music ensembles into their curriculums (288-89). As implied by Nettl, the UIUC ethnomusicology program represents an important voice in the field, and thus, the critique of Titon and others in regard to its delay in acquiring a gamelan and the counter-response of Illinois to resist the trend until the 1980s holds a certain significance.

However, what is more surprising is that the conversations about bringing a gamelan to Illinois did not start within the musicology department. John Garvey, an Illinois professor of viola, first started proposing to bring a Balinese gamelan ensemble to the University of Illinois in the early 1970s. Garvey had started his career at UIUC as an artist-in-residence with the School’s Walden Quartet in 1948. He became a memorable, unstoppable force at the School, for he founded the first official U. of I. Jazz Band10 in 1959 and established the University of Illinois Russian Folk Orchestra in 1974 after a trip to the Soviet Union with the jazz band. He is most known at the School for his work with both of these ensembles (Wood 1996, 3-6). Garvey’s friend Bruce Wood wrote a short biography about Garvey, and Wood depicted him as a “modern-day Renaissance man” who fearlessly and tirelessly fought for big, transformative ideas (1996, 1-9). For example, Wood writes about how, when Garvey proposed a jazz curriculum to the School of Music in the 1960s, it was ignored because the prevailing sentiment at the time was

---

10 The official name of John Garvey’s jazz band used the older acronym of “U. of I.” for “University of Illinois” in contrast to the acronym more commonly used now, UIUC (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign).
that jazz did not belong in a music school curriculum. Despite this, Garvey would not take “no” for an answer and appealed to the Illini Union Student Activities office and its head Irene Pearson about this matter. The School finally gave in after Pearson successfully raised funds for a university jazz band (Wood 1996, 4). By 1970, the jazz band had become a huge success in US competitions and festivals, had toured throughout eastern and northern Europe and the USSR with the sponsorship of the US State Department, and eventually developed into multiple bands at Illinois. Finally, jazz was an official part of the UIUC music curriculum (5-7). Scenarios like these would appear to be a trend for Garvey’s career: producing big ideas and pursuing them, sometimes haphazardly, with immense perseverance until either the ideas greatly succeeded or there was absolute certainty that there were no options left.

This perseverance characterized his interest in Javanese and Balinese gamelan music as well. The beginning of this interest appears to be linked to his sabbatical in 1972-73 that was initially for a completely different musical pursuit. An application for sabbatical leave by John Garvey in the University of Illinois Archives shows that he requested this sabbatical for the purposes of studying various performance techniques of the Russian balalaika and domra (1971). Wood states that Garvey had already taken some balalaika lessons and purchased a small number of instruments during a short trip in the winter of 1970. This was sponsored by the Russian and Eastern European Center (REEC) instead of the School of Music where, once again, the idea of a Russian Folk Orchestra was not initially received (Wood 1996, 6). According to the Champaign-Urbana Courier, it appears that this 1972-73 sabbatical, though approved, unintentionally drew the negative attention of Illinois State Senator Jack Knuepfer. Senator Knuepfer attempted to propose an amendment to make sabbatical cuts in 1972-73 because, as the

---

11 This would later become the Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center that is a part of Illinois’s campus today.
Senator stated, “When I saw some of the programs for the sabbaticals, such as going to Russia to study how they establish a balalaika orchestra, I thought that should be given second priority to providing jobs for students who need them” (Peters 1972, 2). As the article explains, this amendment did not pass, and Ralph T. Fisher, the chair of REEC at the time, responded with letters to the Editor of the Courier and Senator Knuepfer in support of John Garvey and the Russian Folk Orchestra (1972). Fisher was already a whole-hearted supporter of Garvey’s endeavors and the balalaika orchestra in particular, and correspondence at the University of Illinois archives (discussed in a later section) displays a close friendship between them.

By August 1972, Garvey seems to have expanded his musical interests as well as his goals for sabbatical research to exploring non-Western musics more broadly, including Balinese/Javanese gamelan music as well as “Afghan, Near-Eastern, and Slavic musics,” for the purpose of “expanding the range universality of the repertory of the University of Illinois jazz band.” He does not explain how he encountered these musics but simply how he wants to use them—to make interesting music. This expansion can be found in two letters in August 1972 from Garvey to Victor Sakovich, the Cultural Counsellor of the USSR, and the USSR Ministry of Culture, in which he requests further aid and assistance for this 8-month project, 4 months of which he desired to spend in Moscow and 4 months of travel to study a variety of “non-Western musics.”

He writes a similar letter to the University of Illinois Graduate Research Board, received by them in September 28, 1972, applying for a grant and asking for $10,000 for this same 8-month project. In his budget, he outlines the amount as divided between $5,000 for 8 months of travel expenses and $5,000 for various instruments, including balalaikas, domras, Bulgarian bagpipes, Slovak shepherd’s flutes, Uzbek instruments, and “assorted other instruments, as I
choose.” At the very top of this list, Garvey writes “Balinese-Javanese gamelan instruments, a quartet.” From this short description, it seems that he possibly thinks of Balinese and Javanese gamelan as similar and that he only requires four of them, which is usually not the case for these ensembles. In other words, Garvey seems slightly under-informed about what gamelan music is exactly, but at the same time, this music is at the top of his list of instruments to attain.

In this 4-page grant, he more thoroughly describes his project and his beliefs behind it. Garvey believes that the jazz bands can use not only the musical elements from the cultures described in his project for jazz repertoire but also the instruments themselves, as they would be designated for university use. He further explains that the Jazz Bands would not simply do pure imitation of these musics but instead divide into small focus groups that would learn how to perform them in their “native idioms.” These small groups would then use these instruments in their larger ensembles to perform pieces that incorporated these styles, created by the jazz bands’ own composers. He explicitly states his vision that the “music environment [at UIUC] must be open-ended and capable of constant evolution and development, in this case following the already-evinced interest in musics of the world shown by students and faculty [at UIUC] and else-whwre [sic] in our society.” In other words, Garvey saw studying such musics, including gamelan, as a means for musical innovation at Illinois, most likely in response to trends in Free Jazz and avant-garde jazz from the 1960s (McClure 2006, 79-82).

Garvey’s enthusiasm is very much evident in how he paints these “big picture” ideas, but the grant itself appears to be very ambitious, hurriedly written with numerous mistakes, and unclear about how exactly the Jazz Band would go about learning these idioms and performing

---

12 There are some cases where you could perform certain gamelan musics with a limited number of instruments, depending on what they are and for what they are being used. Furthermore, there are types of gamelan like gender wayang from Bali that are sometimes played in a quartet. However, Garvey does not make any of these specifications in his grant.
with the instruments. Would Garvey have to teach all of these small groups if he was the only one who knew how the instruments functioned, and would he be able to do this after only four months of travel in all of these areas that he lists? A sense of urgency is present in Garvey’s tone as well, for he admits in the budget section of the grant proposal that he has already left the country and the funds he has are not sufficient to carry out this project he has proposed. Eventually, he receives a letter in Hong Kong during October 1972 from the Research Board saying that they have rejected his proposal because they have no funds for extensive travel and that they can only fund projects in the initiation stage before a member leaves for sabbatical (Letter to John Garvey from H.R. Snyder). To make matters worse, Garvey has complications with his visa and is denied entry into the USSR. Because of this, his original plans were completely transformed, which resulted in him spending more time traveling through Indonesia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, India, Japan, and Iran rather than Russia (Wood 1996, 7). In the midst of all this, Garvey complains about both the rejection letter and visa problems to Ralph Fisher in two letters sent from Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia on November 15 and 16, 1972. Garvey confides in Fisher because Fisher was included in the grant process as a reference for Garvey and also because of their close friendship. He informs Fisher in these letters about his excitement for all he is learning and seeing in Bali at the renowned high school arts conservatory there (KOKAR)—an institution long known for its contribution to Balinese arts—as well as his plans to stay longer in Bali due to the affordable cost of living there, a necessity for a researcher running low on both personal and academic funds while waiting for a visa approval. Fisher responds on November 29, 1972 with a kind critique of Garvey’s hasty grant-writing, explaining that the grant proposal was too vague and the amount too large and thus there was no way it could have been accepted, especially with the budget cuts they were to experience that year.
According to Fisher, specifics had to be given in relation to each instrument and its use in the jazz band—in contrast to Garvey’s broadly formulated ideas. He assures Garvey that he will try to find some funds for him, and on December 28, 1972, Fisher writes to Garvey that he is able to offer a small sum of $300 for instruments, but only for the Russian Folk Orchestra. This experience would be the first of many of Garvey’s proposals to bring a gamelan ensemble to Illinois, and he would face many of these same hardships and critiques over his years at the School.

Despite all these setbacks from the 1972-73 trip, Garvey was greatly inspired by his musical discoveries along the way. He wrote Fisher again on January 14, 1973, thanking him for the $300 and updating him on his upcoming travel plans in India. In this same letter, Garvey’s tendency to eagerly propose a large project appears again, this time with a brief sketch of a “Performing Arts Center of Non-Western European Arts.” He lists many musics that he wants this Center to include, but within his vision for the first three performing groups associated with the Center’s establishment, Garvey lists an “Indonesian (Javanese and/or Balinese) gamelan (which means orchestra).” He also makes a note that “the importing of native musicians and dancers is imperative.” We see from this letter that Garvey has become somewhat more informed of what it takes to perform gamelan music in the US, for he now realizes that when purchasing these instruments, the gamelan instruments typically come as an “orchestra” rather than a “quartet.” Furthermore, he expects that they will need specialists for learning and performing this music, though his choice of words—“importing”—implies a reification or even commodification of their artistry, as if he sees their practices as a resource rather than a true collaboration. Though this is only a preliminary sketch, I believe this was a continuation of his earlier proposal from the 1972 Research Board grant, as he lists the jazz bands as another one of the three main
performing ensembles. His goal is still for making interesting music and, in this case, maybe also cultural exchange. He attempts to eloquently clarify this idea of musical exchange to Fisher by stating, “In the departments, there are many individuals who would support such a Center, but it’s well to recognize that the concept is radical, in that it proposes that we learn these arts as the Chinese, Japanese, Balinese, American jazzers, Russian balalaika players (and all the dancers) do; by doing them!” This is a generalizing and essentializing statement to make, as it assumes that the “Chinese, Japanese, Balinese” each practice one main art form and that they all learn it in the same way, but I think Garvey was thinking of these musical practices as many would have in his time—as cultural entities with fixed boundaries (Nettl 2015). More interesting is that he is, intentionally or unintentionally, making the case for a cross-cultural pedagogical strategy that somewhat reflects an aspect of Hood’s “bi-musicality”—acquiring the musical skill of another musical practice through simply doing it. This mindset of performing as learning would characterize many of his arguments to bring a gamelan ensemble to Illinois in the years to come.

Indeed, Garvey’s pursuit of attaining a Balinese gamelan ensemble for the University of Illinois did not end with his 1972-73 sabbatical trip. His interest in this music and the place surrounding it led him to make multiple return trips to Bali over a 10-year period—1977, 1979, 1981, and 1987. On September 13, 1979, Garvey writes again to Fisher while on another sabbatical research trip, describing a good deal he found for a complete Balinese gamelan orchestra of 25 or 26 pieces. He asks Fisher to forward this to the director of the Asian Center of the time, who responds with regrets that they do not have the funding for this (Letter to John Garvey from Peter Schran, 1979). No longer wanting to wait for funding, Garvey mortgaged his home so that he could commission a Balinese gamelan set to be built. Following that, he would spend this decade trying to persuade the School of Music to help out with shipping costs so that
he could establish a gamelan ensemble at UIUC (Wood 1996, 7). At one point, he assumes that he will have success in this, for a newspaper article in the *Champaign-Urbana News Gazette*, entitled “Musical Innovation Characterizes Garvey’s Career,” states that Garvey is waiting for a gamelan and expects it to arrive in the summer of 1981. However, nothing more is said of this projected arrival, and Bruce Wood clarifies in his biography on Garvey that he was never successful in shipping the gamelan to the US (1996, 7).

The last attempt of John Garvey to bring a Balinese gamelan to the University of Illinois can be found in a grant proposal draft from his own papers on April 7, 1986. This draft is not addressed to anyone, and its audience or intention is unclear. However, compared to his initial 1972 proposal, Garvey demonstrates a wider knowledge of Balinese music practices. He provides specificities for his readers. He elaborates on a particular style of Balinese gamelan—*gong kebyar*[^13]—as well as its basic musical functions and provides a travel plan for how he will study the genre of *kebyar* within the scope of a year through visits to various art conservatories in Bali. Though it is implied that he will lead the ensemble, Garvey also asks for a one-year residency for a “native resource” through a couple, the husband specializing in Balinese and Javanese gamelan and the wife specializing in Balinese dance.

Still, as with his other proposals, Garvey demonstrates some of those same generalizations that he has expressed before, with the intention of displaying positive aspects of cross-cultural exchange through music, but instead reproducing colonialist rhetoric about “high” or “classical” art forms. Within the 1986 proposal, Garvey quotes from an Indonesian “Insights

[^13]: *Gong kebyar* is a famous Balinese gamelan genre intended for showing off technical virtuosity, but can also refer to certain kinds of gamelan orchestras as well as a type of musical introduction often used in this repertoire (Tenzer 2000, Gold 2005).
Guide” in order to defend the validity of the study of Balinese gamelan through its connections to the West and Java. He quotes the following passage:

“Although once ignorantly dismissed as primitive, or simply admired for its exoticism, this music has since been sensitively studied by scholars such as Jaap Kunst and Colin McPhee, and is now indisputably recognized as one of the world’s most sophisticated musical arts. In Indonesia, of course, gamelan music has always been simply the sound of everything civilized—the music of art, religion, and government.”

To be fair, Garvey is taking these words from a tourist guide that is intended to promote a depiction of Balinese culture that the authors think would resonate with English-speaking tourists. However, the fact that he uses this in this grant proposal draft implies that he either believes this statement or that he thinks, due to previous experiences, that he must incorporate a statement such as this to appeal to School of Music or UIUC campus perceptions about what classifies as musical “art” and that he must show how the music is “civilized”—how it fits within Western art music sensibilities. His selected depictions of Balinese gong kebyar and gamelan practices emphasize both its “flashy” appeal—a word he uses to describe styles of playing—and traditional practices of transmission and composition. These descriptions, while possibly intending to be educational, could be read as essentializing, especially due to Garvey’s method of compiling various passages about gamelan from a tourist guide to Indonesia to prove his point.

Of course, these proposals and discussions by Garvey for a Javanese and/or Balinese gamelan ensemble were not just directed to formal Area Studies centers and the School of Music; evidently, Garvey had informal conversations with faculty in efforts to promote his vision. In the same interview in which we discussed how long it took to establish a gamelan ensemble at Illinois, Bruno Nettl mentioned John Garvey’s attempts in the 1970s, and he stated that his response at the time was that he felt uncertain about the claim that an instructor could learn enough about a certain type of music in a year and come back to teach that musical practice.
to students at Illinois (Nettl, pers. comm., 2018). Based on my archival research into Garvey’s various proposals and sketches, it is possible that Nettl was especially referencing Garvey’s early proposals where he thought he could just incorporate any kind of instrument from his sabbatical trips directly into jazz band repertoire after learning them on brief excursions. Nettl later clarified again in an email interview with me that his pushback against Garvey’s ideas were specifically regarding Garvey’s and other colleagues’ apparent disregard for actually learning about the context of the musical traditions and the effort that goes into studying them. Nettl stated, “My skeptical attitude had to do with combating the attitudes of many senior musician [sic] and music professors in the 1960s and 1970s, namely that non-Western traditions…were basically simple compared to Western classical music, and did not need to be studied seriously” (pers. comm., 2019). This is a fair critique of Garvey’s ideas, as he never appears to place the same emphasis on professionalism often associated with teachers of Western art music. It could be speculated that the same assumption would never be made of a performance studio teacher or orchestral conductor working in the Western art music tradition. As an ethnomusicologist who understood the ethics and politics of fieldwork and performing a musical tradition that is not one’s own, Nettl was certainly not comfortable with such ideas, and he made sure to voice these concerns to Garvey as well as to others in the musicology and composition departments through various conversations (pers. comm., 2019).

In the thirty-first chapter of his *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-Three Discussions* entitled “Some Personal Disclosures,” Nettl tells this same story without mentioning Garvey’s name. Nettl presents Garvey as someone who had only experienced Balinese gamelan music through recordings, once again perhaps referencing Garvey in the early 1970s when he first started discussing these ideas. He recounts the story of this “colleague” who wanted to bring a
gamelan as someone who had stated: “What’s the difference…whether it is authentic according to Indonesian musicians? We would at any rate be making good and interesting music” (2015: 463). It is important to note that Nettl also confesses in this same section of his *Thirty-Three Discussions* that his responses to such discussions are also related to his initial ambivalence towards “bi-musicality,” active musicking, and performing in ethnomusicological studies. He writes:

> “Would American gamelans still count as proper Indonesian music? Would we be presenting East Asian ensembles to American and European audiences with no more than the modest degree of expertise comparable, say, to having Western orchestral music represented in other cultures by seventh grade orchestras? And would the Western norms of gamelan and gagaku playing adversely affect the musical cultures of Indonesia and Japan?” (2015: 461).

While somewhat sympathizing with desires to make “good and interesting music,” Nettl was always more concerned with matters of representation and authenticity. Nettl also clarifies that, while he feels that his ambivalence is justified by certain cases, he recognizes that the benefits of the performance study have outweighed the perceived drawbacks. Ethnomusicological ensembles of all kinds have undoubtedly transformed ethnomusicological education in North America and Europe and have provided exposure to musical practices from around the world for various students and communities that may have never encountered them otherwise (462).

While Nettl’s cautionary ambivalence of musicking components of ethnomusicology exemplify certain biases about his definition of ethnomusicology’s purpose as a discipline, his concerns reasonably reflect the issues of representation and realities of colonial histories associated with establishing a gamelan program at any US university and with the discipline of ethnomusicology more generally. Proposals like Garvey’s, while well-intentioned and exciting, potentially reinforce colonialist practices. These are concerns that have plagued ethnomusicologists for years and continue to be included within present-day conversations at
UIUC. Ultimately, these conversations of John Garvey and Bruno Nettl about innovative music-making, cultural context, and the ethics and politics of working within colonialist, institutional histories would continue to pervade the establishment of any gamelan ensemble at UIUC.

**Establishing the UIUC Javanese Gamelan Program**

It could be argued that Nettl’s conception of authentic musical practice and his expectations for how an ethnomusicological ensemble should function represent a specific approach to the discipline of ethnomusicology, one that was starting to be questioned around the arrival of UIUC’s first Javanese gamelan program. While issues of representation intertwined with ethnomusicological ensembles are valid, continually relevant, and extremely important, ethnomusicologists have also been discussing for a long time how to take into account the idea of culture as consisting of ever-changing, complex, flexible processes rather than functioning as texts or objects (Clifford 1986: 12). In “Some Personal Disclosures,” Nettl does state that he has recently turned more attention to these complexities rather than the boundaries he had once used to understand musical practices (2015: 458-460). However, at the time of the UIUC gamelan program’s founding, specific discourses about authenticity and representation pervaded within the Musicology Division and influenced the musicology faculty’s pedagogical choices. This would become evident in the actual establishment of the first Javanese gamelan program at UIUC.

Based on my interviews, the earliest discussions in the Musicology Division about bringing any type of gamelan ensemble to the University of Illinois began a few years after Dr. Charles Capwell joined the UIUC faculty in 1977. He specialized in music of India, and the UIUC musicology program hired him to replace Dr. Ranganayaki Ayyangar who had recently
returned to India. Having played in the gamelan ensemble at Wesleyan University in Middletown, CT with Robert E. Brown, Capwell maintained an interest in music from Indonesia when he arrived at the University of Illinois. In the early 1980s, he became interested in the refurbishment project of the Field Museum’s Javanese (specifically, Sundanese or West Javanese) gamelan that had been originally acquired by Java-Chicago Syndicate members for the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago and then later sold to the Museum. This Chicago fair in 1893 was modeled after the 1889 Paris Exposition. It followed the same practice of featuring a West Javanese village (*kampung*) with gamelan music and dance to not only represent social Darwinist ideas of certain people groups being at a lower level in the hierarchy of human races, but also to promote Javanese beverage products from the exhibits’ sponsors—Dutch plantation owners (DeVale 1978, 6-7; Sumarsam 2013, 104-105). The refurbishment project of the gamelan instruments from this Columbian Exposition was led by organologist Dr. Sue Carole DeVale, as these instruments were integral to her dissertation research (DeVale 1978, 1; Sumarsam 2013, 90). When Capwell first offered to teach a course on music of Indonesia, which he developed under the consultation of his colleagues from Wesleyan—Martin Hatch and Anderson Sutton,\textsuperscript{14} he arranged workshops in Chicago with DeVale for musicology students and faculty as part of this course (Capwell, pers. comm., 2018). These experiences of Capwell—heavily influenced by ethnomusicologists now renowned for their work with Javanese gamelan music in the United States—initiated conversations about bringing a Javanese gamelan ensemble to the University of Illinois. He effectively promoted the benefits of having a gamelan ensemble as part of the

\textsuperscript{14} Dr. Martin Hatch is a Professor Emeritus of music in Cornell University’s Southeast Asia Program, where he founded the Cornell Gamelan Ensemble. Dr. R. Anderson Sutton taught at the University of Wisconsin-Madison before his current position as the Dean of the School of Pacific and Asian Studies at the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa.
musicology division, but as Nettl notes, the process itself took a long time for Capwell to arrange (Nettl, pers. comm., 2018).

Nettl’s initial reservations with bringing a gamelan to the University of Illinois included the fact that he only wanted to have a gamelan ensemble if there was someone on the faculty who knew something about Indonesian music, and Capwell successfully fulfilled that role (Nettl, pers. comm., 2018). Even though Capwell admitted to me in an interview that he had limited knowledge of Indonesian music when he offered to teach a course on it, his solution was to confer with various Indonesian music specialists. His plan included eventually bringing musicians from Java to the US so that they could teach the ensemble, but to start out, he relied on the expertise of gamelan musicians such as R. Anderson Sutton. Capwell was always a member of the ensemble, never a teacher, as he recognized that he never had enough performance knowledge to guide it (Capwell, pers. comm., 2018). The attitudes of Capwell and Nettl concerning how to start a gamelan program—or any other type of ethnomusicological ensemble—centered around the idea that the purpose of studying a musical practice from a sociocultural group that you do not claim as your own is always strictly educational, i.e., it offered an opportunity to try to understand another cultural practice that differs from yours. Most importantly, this approach appealed to Nettl’s initial concerns with the concept of “bi-musicality” and world music ensembles. All together, these aspects influenced Capwell’s actions in establishing the Javanese gamelan ensemble at Illinois and set a precedent for the gamelan program and other ethnomusicological ensembles at Illinois for years to come.

Dr. R. Anderson Sutton, who was teaching Javanese gamelan at the University of Wisconsin-Madison at the time, played an important role in helping start the gamelan performance program at Illinois. According to both Capwell and Sutton, the Javanese gamelan
ensemble began with the rental of Sutton’s personal gamelan. Though he typically taught on a set of instruments owned by the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Sutton had a personal set at his parents’ house in Philadelphia which he had bought in Java in 1974. After Capwell expressed interest in renting this gamelan set, Sutton moved his personal set from Philadelphia to Urbana-Champaign in January 1987 and became the first Javanese gamelan teacher at the University of Illinois. Every three weeks, he would commute from Madison to Urbana-Champaign by plane on Saturday mornings, teach the gamelan class and individual lessons on various Javanese instruments, and then return to Madison on the same day. He was eventually replaced by Maria Omo, who was part of the group from 1987 to 1989 (whose work with the ensemble is discussed more fully in the following section). Sutton also served as a vital connection to musicians from Java who would later teach at the University of Illinois. There were three Javanese artists-in-residence total over the course of the UIUC Javanese gamelan ensemble program—F.X. Widaryanto (also known as Pak Yanto), Dr. Sumaryono (also known as Pak Maryono), and Raharja (also known as Pak Raharja or Pak Raharjo)—all from ISI Yogyakarta, a renowned arts conservatory in Java.\textsuperscript{15} Sutton knew all three artists very well and helped Capwell connect with them personally (Sutton, pers. comm., 2018).

Capwell’s pursuit of hiring teachers from Java demonstrated his and Dr. Nettl’s persistence in attempting to provide the best educational experience possible for members of ethnomusicological ensembles at Illinois. Acquiring funding for these ensembles, however, proved to be a difficult task, and Nettl admitted that they were never able to hire anyone from

\textsuperscript{15} It should be noted that many of my interlocuters sometimes referred to Widaryanto, Sumaryono, and Raharja with the Javanese name titles of \textit{Mas} instead of \textit{Pak}. This is because these ways of respectfully addressing others in Indonesian or Javanese depends on your age in relation to the person with whom you are speaking. Since I am younger in age than all three teachers, I will be using the title \textit{Pak} which means essentially “Mr.” or “Father.” It is used to respectfully recognize a male-identifying person that is older than you and is often used when addressing male Indonesian teachers.
Java for a full-time lecturer position. Capwell eventually secured enough funding for teaching assistantships with the School of Music and offered each instructor from Java an opportunity for a Master of Arts degree in either Asian Studies or Musicology (Nettl, pers. comm., 2018).

Though not at the level of support that Capwell and Nettl desired, these offers of essentially an educational exchange proved useful in recruiting first Pak Yanto, then Pak Maryono, and lastly, Pak Raharja.

For the remainder of this section, I will mainly be focusing on the teaching career of Pak Yanto, though Pak Maryono and Pak Raharja play a vital role in the history of the UIUC as well. They are both renowned for their contributions as Javanese gamelan teachers in the US, and they occasionally continue to visit the US for artist residencies and performances.\(^{16}\) Capwell describes Pak Maryono as having the spirit of Bima\(^{17}\) in how he led the ensemble and as demonstrating great skill in teaching Javanese gamelan music. Capwell notes that the first collaboration at the UIUC between a Balinese baleganjur ensemble\(^{18}\) and the Javanese gamelan ensemble took place in 2000 at Tyron Hall under Pak Raharja’s leadership. For that concert, Capwell and Raharja collaborated with I Ketut Gede Asnawa, who would later become the Balinese gamelan ensemble teacher in 2006 (Capwell, pers. comm., 2018). All three teachers—Pak Yanto, Pak Maryono, and Pak Raharja—represent an active exchange of artistic legacies between the US and Java music institutions, including the UIUC gamelan program.\(^{19}\)

---

\(^{16}\) During 2018, Pak Maryono and Pak Raharjo visited Javanese gamelan groups at the University of Michigan and with the Friends of the Gamelan in Chicago.

\(^{17}\) Bima is a fierce warrior from the Hindu epic Mahabharata. His character sometimes appears in shadow puppetry (wayang) performances in Java and Bali.

\(^{18}\) Baleganjur is a type of Balinese gamelan ensemble that has been described as “marching gamelan.” It is especially characterized by the use of metal cymbals, called ceng-ceng kopiak, that create interlocking patterns. It is often used in funeral processions, sacred ceremonies, or in secular competitions (Bakan 1999).

\(^{19}\) An exploration of this legacy and in particular the lives of Pak Yanto, Pak Maryono, and Pak Raharja would be a worthy avenue for future research but is currently beyond the scope of this project.
Pak Yanto’s Pedagogy and the UIUC Gamelan Orchestra

As the University of Illinois’s first introduction into this cross-cultural, educational exchange, FX Widaryanto, or Pak Yanto, was the first official gamelan teacher from Java (specifically Bandung, West Java) at Illinois, and he taught at UIUC from Fall 1989 through Spring 1992. Pak Yanto explains that he received an invitation to teach gamelan from Nettl based on a recommendation from an ethnomusicologist from Indonesia who was at the University of Washington Seattle. Pak Yanto’s reputation preceded him, as he came from a family well-known for its involvement in Javanese classical music (*karawitan*). His father was a major authority on *karawitan* who worked closely with Sutton, and he learned dance from his siblings (“A Concert of Music from the Central Javanese Courts,” 1992). Furthermore, both Capwell and Pak Yanto reference their mutual connections with Dr. Judith Becker from the University of Michigan, Dr. R. Anderson Sutton from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Dr. Roger Vetter from Grinnell College in Iowa. The UIUC Gamelan Orchestra (as they called themselves) took a new turn with the arrival of Pak Yanto. Capwell and Pak Yanto continued to receive support from gamelan programs throughout the Midwest, who sometimes assisted with concerts by providing extra performers and support. With the help of this Javanese gamelan network of ethnomusicologists and the presence of Pak Yanto, Capwell and Pak Yanto were able to further develop the UIUC Javanese gamelan program. (Widaryanto, pers. comm., 2018; Capwell, pers. comm., 2018).

During his time at the University of Illinois, Pak Yanto’s pedagogical approaches defined the new developments of the UIUC gamelan ensemble. He primarily specialized in Javanese...
dance, and Capwell observes that Pak Yanto was “reserved and elegant like his dance character.” These attributes were manifested as well in his patient and considerate approach to teaching, which Capwell admired (Capwell, pers. comm., 2018). Because of his specialization, Pak Yanto particularly enjoyed performing dances with the UIUC ensemble, which included *Tarian Klana Alus*, *Klana Raja*, and *Beksan Lawung*. According to concert programs, his repertoire mainly drew from Central Javanese court musics. As for teaching the gamelan music itself, Pak Yanto’s approach typically involved layering in different instruments, starting with the basic gong structure of each *gendhing* (composition). His method privileges understanding how each instrument functions within the ensemble and how everything relates to the larger gong structure—a pedagogy that accommodates students within a US university context due to its step-by-step approach (Widaryanto, pers. comm., 2018).

This pedagogical practice proved to be especially effective at Illinois, in many ways reflecting and shaping the educational philosophy behind the gamelan program at Illinois. For Pak Yanto’s final concert, the written commemoration of his contribution to the UIUC gamelan program included the following paragraph:

During his three year tenure at the U. of I., Mas Yanto has introduced an element of music making that was formerly unknown to most of us. Although we do use notation in order to be able to prepare a sufficient number of compositions each year, Mas Yanto has taught us to rely [a] great deal on our ears and memories. By letting us begin with playing rather complicated pieces and, as we struggle along, making us aware of the structure of the compositions and the different function each instrument fulfills, our director has been able to mold groups of highly responsive musicians for three consecutive years. This is not to say that what we do is up to Javanese standards; there is still a lot to be learned and taught. (“A Concert of Music from the Central Javanese Courts,” 1992).

This dedication to Pak Yanto highlights his contribution as a teacher while stressing the impact of new ways of learning and listening as a measure of true success for the ensemble. This learning process, not developing professional Javanese gamelan performers, was what the
Musicology Division strove for—the reason it had established a gamelan program initially—and it followed as a precedent for the teachers from Java after Pak Yanto. Following the practices of Mantle Hood and Robert E. Brown, the UIUC Musicology Division believed that the best way to attempt to understand Central Javanese court music practices was to experience them through the pedagogies of their teachers from the conservatories of Yogyakarta, Java—to bring a practice from one academy that specialized in a certain tradition to another.

To conclude, the UIUC Musicology Division statement of purpose regarding the gamelan program is best summarized in this short paragraph that, according to Nettl, was included with every Javanese gamelan ensemble concert program from its very beginnings. He included this paragraph in a letter to former Director of the School of Music, Don V. Moses, on April 23, 1990. In this letter, Nettl promotes two performances that he wants to draw Moses’s attention to, a concert of Persian music and the Javanese gamelan concert, primarily for the reason of showing how these performances drew large audiences from the campus community. In other words, Nettl was showcasing the effective outreach of the Musicology Division through these concerts in efforts to encourage more concerts of the same kind. He calls this Javanese gamelan concert the “debut,” as this is the first concert with Pak Yanto, and after praising Pak Yanto’s educational approach, he quotes this paragraph from the program notes:

The purpose of the U of I gamelan is to provide students and faculty a chance to learn about Javanese music through performance. The learning experience is primary — not the giving of concerts — and as we are all beginners, we would like to emphasize that our “performance” is only a shadow of the real thing. Our instructor, Pak Yanto, is definitely talented and patient, but even his best efforts can not produce competent Javanese musicians in a couple of semesters’ worth of rehearsals. We hope that our indulgent audience, while congratulating us on our effort, will recognize that there is much more to Javanese music than we are capable of presenting. (Letter to Don V. Moses from Bruno Nettl, 1990).
The key phrases that stand out to me are: “capable of presenting,” “the real thing,” and the gamelan’s purpose offers “students and faculty a chance to learn.” This one paragraph combines the issues of representation and performance practice and relates them directly to educational opportunities—for both listeners and performers. The emphasis is on educating an audience that may have never encountered this kind of music before and to invite them to engage with it, just as the members of the ensemble were attempting to do. This paragraph would be featured on program notes for years to come, providing a precedent for future gamelan performances at UIUC to follow.

**Gamelan in a US School of Music: Experimental Beginnings**

For this section, I want to briefly revisit the beginnings of the gamelan program at Illinois by tracing another historical narrative about it—the UIUC Javanese gamelan and its connection with experimental composition at the UIUC School of Music. Alongside discussions of gamelan as a canonic ensemble of instruction, discussions about “American gamelan” and what it means to make gamelan an American practice of the gamelan musicians that perform it have appeared in musicological forums, especially in the scholarship of Jody Diamond (1992). This has been the result of gamelan ensembles starting in US academic institutions and has connections with long histories of Java and the West, as also discussed in works by Sumarsam (2004) and Henry Spiller (2015). Though the primary discourses surrounding the UIUC gamelan program is one about pedagogy and what this means for ethnomusicological practices at large, a secondary set of discourses relates to ideas about building bridges of creativity through inter-departmental exchanges within US postsecondary music institutions through interesting music-making, as promoted by John Garvey in the 1970s. As discussed earlier, such discourses related to the
tensions between new, innovative musical practices and ideas about authenticity and tradition as they relate to certain musical practices.

When Nettl arrived at Illinois in 1964, he found that experimental composers within the School of Music considered him an “ally.” He noted in our interview that the composers desired to bring a gamelan to UIUC as well for experimental music purposes. This desire stemmed from a history of interest in various musical practices from different regions of Asia—including Indonesia—that had an early beginning in modernist, experimentalist composition circles in the United States.

This history can be traced through the various actions of key figures and arts organizations associated with American experimental music. American composer Henry Cowell taught a course entitled “Music of the World’s Peoples” that included Asian musics at the New School for Social Research in the late 1920s, and he developed this course due to his long-time fascination with non-Western musical practices that had started in his childhood. Cowell’s friendship with American composer Colin McPhee would play a role in inspiring McPhee to expand his musical explorations, and McPhee would later complete anthropological research in Bali and use Balinese gamelan idioms in his compositional style. McPhee also took part in the New York Polyhymnia in the 1930s, a performance arts organization that promoted the exploration of “unknown musical cultures” and the “union of the musics of East and West” (Oja 2004: 62). In the 1940s after returning from Bali, McPhee would publish articles and books about his research in Bali that were circulated in experimental music groups, one being “The Five-Tone Gamelan Music of Bali” published in the Music Quarterly in 1949—an article that greatly influenced composer Lou Harrison (Oja 2004:166; Miller and Lieberman 2006: 50). Around the same time, Harry Partch, an American composer and instrument builder known for
his ideas about reinventing musical scales based on the tuning system of just intonation, had just published his vision in the form of a book entitled, *Genesis of a Music*. Performances with Partch’s instruments that used 43-tone scales and just intonation had already happened before this publication at League of Composers concerts, an association known for promoting modernist American works (Alves and Campbell 2017: 141). Similar to Cowell and McPhee, Partch drew from ancient Greek and non-Western practices in his compositional and tuning methods, and his instruments and tuning practices in turn would have an impact on composers such as Harrison and Ben Johnston as well as American gamelan experimental practices (Oja 2004: xi; Alves and Campbell 2017: 141, 224-226; Arms 2018:153-155). From these initial influences concerning compositional styles and tuning systems, both philosophical and musical ideas from areas of Asia would increasingly gain traction amongst American composers after the 1940s, as seen in the lives and various works of John Cage and Lou Harrison (205). These influences furthermore had a physical presence at the University of Illinois from the late 1950s into the early 1980s in the form of residencies by John Cage and Harry Partch, as well as the presence of Ben Johnston as a UIUC faculty member.

It is within this larger context that the UIUC experimental composers approached Nettl. Similar to his response to Garvey mentioned in the previous section, Nettl expressed some reservations because their intention came from a place of expanding musical horizons rather than a scholarly approach of learning about cultural practices (Nettl, pers. comm., 2018). Despite all this, it is evident that some collaboration happened between the UIUC composition and musicology divisions during the first two years of the Javanese gamelan instruments arrived, and this resulted in two concerts that feature the UIUC gamelan within the context of experimental music concerts—essentially the Javanese gamelan ensemble’s first concerts. It is thus evident
that support from the UIUC composition division played a role in establishing a gamelan program at Illinois.

The two major contributors to the UIUC Javanese gamelan’s involvement in experimental music practices at the University of Illinois were Professor William Brooks and the gamelan’s second director, Maria Omo. Both have connections to the scholarly worlds of musicology and composition/music theory, though in different ways, and both served as important voices in advocating for and helping establish the gamelan program at Illinois.

When the gamelan instruments arrived in January 1987, Brooks was a Visiting Associate Professor in charge of UIUC composition division concerts. He was responsible for organizing both experimental concerts that featured the gamelan, the first one being “ChAnGEs III: Structure” on December 1, 1987, and the second being “+466: Music & Movement” on February 9, 1989. Though primarily a composition faculty member, Brooks is also known at the UIUC School of Music for his background and involvement in musicology. Brooks joined as a member of the gamelan ensemble as soon it arrived as a show of support but also to expand his knowledge of the music that he had encountered as an undergraduate at Wesleyan University. He mentions this in an endorsement written on October 12, 1987, for the purpose of supporting Capwell’s endeavors to bring a teacher from Java, Indonesia. It appears to be a general endorsement, beginning with the header of “To whom it may concern,” but Brooks statement about why he has chosen to support the gamelan ensemble is very clear:

It is my hope that knowledge of other musical cultures will become an integral part of music education in this country. We need an audience which is open to all idioms; we need programs on which Chinese and German music, bluegrass and Beethoven all coexist. To this end I have asked the gamelan to appear on a New Music Concert later this year; it will play both a traditional Indonesian piece and a work written for gamelan and French horn by the American composer Lou Harrison. (Endorsement by Brooks, 1987).
Here, Brooks presents an educational and political purpose behind his support of the gamelan—one that engages US audiences in all kinds of musical idioms with the aspiration of eventually equalizing the hierarchal aspects of School of Music programs. He further clarified to me in an interview that he saw this “alliance of convenience” between ethnomusicology and composition to bring a Javanese gamelan as one that was subconsciously affected by the US political climate at the time—the seventh year of the conservative Reagan administration. From Brooks’ point of view, UIUC faculty and students alike were looking to musical collaborations such as this one as opportunities for expressing optimism and solidarity in ways that to them counteracted certain policies of the administration. According to Peter Steele, these same optimistic views about cultural relativism and multiculturalism were already held by many participants in gamelan “fusion” musics in the 1970s, such as Barbara Bernary (2013, 60). Within a similar mindset, Brooks thus programmed the performance of a piece that attempts to bridge the cultural practices of Sundanese gamelan and new music—Lou Harrison’s *Main Bersama-sama*—and adapt it to the performance by the UIUC Javanese gamelan (Brooks, pers. comm., 2019; Endorsement by Brooks, 1987).

Maria Omo also notes the presence of Lou Harrison’s *Main Bersama-sama* on the 1987 concert program, which she taught to the ensemble during her first semester at Illinois. She became involved in the UIUC Javanese gamelan because of her experiences with Sue Carole DeVale’s gamelan classes at the Field Museum in Chicago and the non-profit group that developed from it, Friends of the Gamelan, Inc (FrOG). She started learning Javanese gamelan on the Field Museum gamelan instruments while she was working on her bachelor’s degree in music theory at DePaul University. She remained a part of the group after it became FrOG, purchased its own set of iron Javanese gamelan instruments, and moved to the Old Town School
of Folk Music in Chicago, later becoming the group’s director. Because of her involvement with these Javanese gamelan groups, she had the opportunity to study with various gamelan specialists and Javanese artists who had connections to Javanese ensembles in the Midwest, including R. Anderson Sutton, Roger Vetter, Sri Djoko Rahardjo (Pak Djoko), and Suratno (Pak Djoko’s nephew). As mentioned in an earlier section, Capwell’s involvement with the Field Museum gamelan also inspired his pursuit of establishing a gamelan program at Illinois, and it was Capwell who asked Maria Omo to become the second director after Sutton left. Omo excitedly took this teaching opportunity, as she greatly respected the work of ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl. Though Omo never pursued a degree in ethnomusicology herself, Capwell exhibited faith in her ability to lead the ensemble, and she successfully taught beginning gamelan classes at the University of Illinois from around 1987 to 1989. She employed methods of teaching that both privileged learning by rote and solfège (as it was taught in Java) and learning from notation (mainly for learning new music pieces). In this way, her presence represented a figurative bridge in many ways: as a musician accustomed to the worlds of music theory and musicology and as the interim director of the program until the UIUC musicology division was able to hire an instructor from Java. (Omo, pers. comm., 2018).

The contributions of Brooks and Omo to the gamelan program as well as their attention to Lou Harrison’s Main Bersama-Sama especially reflect Harrison’s major influence on American experimental music practices at the time—a phenomenon that Maria Omo describes as being “all the craze” (pers. comm., 2019). Harrison’s captivation with gamelan traditions began in 1939 with a live performance of Balinese gamelan in San Francisco at the Golden Gate

---

21 Tanya Lee writes extensively about the history of Chicago’s Old Town School of Folk Music. She does not specifically mention the gamelan, but she talks about how “world musics” in general played a part in the School’s financial survival (2011).
International Exposition and in his studies with Henry Cowell. As mentioned earlier, his pursuits to understand the music itself and to explore different tuning systems in general continued with publications by Colin McPhee and were cultivated through his friendship with Harry Partch (Miller and Lieberman 2006, Alves and Campbell 2017, Arms 2018). This resulted in various pieces through the 1950s and 1960s that incorporate gamelan-inspired sounds and the construction of Old Granddad, a set of instruments made by Harrison and his partner Bill Colvig in an attempt to attain “a stable source of just intonation tunings.” Though Harrison and Colvig did not create these instruments with the intention to imitate or copy gamelan instruments, the term “American Gamelan” has been retroactively applied to Old Granddad (Miller and Lieberman 2006: 49-52). All of these experiences culminated in Harrison’s involvement with Robert E. Brown and the Center for World Music (CWM) starting in the mid-1970s. Through CWM, Harrison was introduced to Pak Cokro, a master artist of Javanese gamelan, and began numerous discussions with Pak Cokro about Javanese music theory and history. It was Pak Cokro who suggested that Harrison compose experimental gamelan pieces for actual gamelan instruments, and Harrison gladly took on the task, eventually producing a prolific number of pieces for gamelan (Alves and Campbell 2017: 327-330).

*Main Bersama-sama* (“Playing Together”) represents one of Harrison’s experimental gamelan pieces that incorporates Western elements through its use of French horn. Harrison intended to capture the concepts of egalitarianism and communitarianism he had learned in relation to Javanese gamelan music and society through his application of the Indonesian word “main,” which means “to play” both in the context of children playing and in playing music. He features the Javanese *suling* flute alongside the French horn, and their musical interactions are meant to represent communal music-making. Harrison additionally hoped to promote an idea of
communal cooperation as an essential for societal practices at large through this piece, a sentiment that corresponds with Brooks’ reasoning behind his choice of programming *Main Bersama-sama* for the 1987 concert at UIUC (Gunden 1995: 246-247; Alves and Campbell 2017: 248-351).

Brooks further clarified that he included Lou Harrison’s *Main Bersama-sama* in the program because of how Harrison’s friendship with John Cage coincided with when Cage was developing this four-fold (later five-fold) compositional aesthetic. (Brooks, pers. comm., 2019). The “ChAnGEs III: Structure” 1987 concert at Foellinger Hall in Krannert Center for the Performing Arts was one of five concerts organized around the theme of five compositional aesthetics defined by American experimental composer John Cage in the 1940s—materials, method, structure, form, and theatre (Cage 2010: 18-34). This series was in honor of the composer’s 75th birthday. As the program notes explain, though Cage attributed his definition and application of “structure” in the 1940s—specifically his use of the “square-root formula”22—to 20th century French music, it is clear that both Cage and French composers were borrowing from Javanese gamelan *gendhing* (composition) structures—an idiom to which they were definitely exposed.23 The presence of Javanese gamelan repertoire, specifically the traditional piece *Wilujeng*,24 was therefore intended to demonstrate the origins of Cage’s compositional ideas about structure (“ChAnGEs III,” 1987). Discussions about the impact of Asian musics on

---

22 According to the program notes, the “square-root formula” organization of John Cage’s early compositions consisted of the following: “the whole was divided into a certain number of parts and each part into the same number of subparts. At both levels, the parts (or subparts) were grouped in the same proportions.”

23 Javanese gamelan music has a cyclical, skeletal melody called *balungan* which occupies a certain number of beats, and various gongs in the ensemble are used to demarcate key structural points within this cycle. This skeletal melody is further elaborated on by different melodic instruments in the ensemble, who play subdivisions of the beat. All these different parts—*balungan*, elaboration melodies, gong structures—correspond to the same cycle of beats.

24 The full title is Ladrang *Wilujeng* Slendro Patet Manyura. It should be noted that for Javanese gamelan pieces, titles are organized in the following way: (Formal Structure) Ladrang, (Piece Title) *Wilujeng*, (Tuning system) Slendro, (Mode) Patet Manyura.
John Cage’s compositional methods and works have been highly debated within scholarship, as represented in these program notes. Some of his prepared piano works have been described as sounding like Balinese gamelan, but other scholars have dismissed this, stating that there is no solid evidence for it. The consensus has been to distinguish the differences between influences that are purely musical from those that are from East Asian and South Asian philosophies. Essentially, Cage’s main engagement with Asian cultures were through his studies of various philosophical texts, and the ideas he extracted from them were used to shape or redefine his abstract approaches to his compositional practices (Patterson 2011: 49-69). This 1987 concert, therefore, also represents the UIUC composition department’s engagement with this debate and their ideas of John Cage’s compositional approaches.

As for the “+466: Music & Movement” 1989 concert at Playhouse Theatre in Krannert, Brooks states that this was a third concert in a series for the 1988-89 season called “Music &…” Program notes for concerts in this series all mention that the these concerts continue a lineage from the first Festival of Contemporary Arts in 1947, a hallmark for contemporary and experimental music at Illinois, but this series in particular demonstrates “Illinois’ interest in linking music with other domains” (“+466 Music & Movement,” 1989). The repertoire for the “Music & Movement” concert is extremely varied, but the theme consists of different representations of theatre and dance intertwined with music. Maria Omo collaborated with a married couple, Roger Vetter (an ethnomusicologist specializing in Javanese gamelan) and Valerie Vetter (who specialized in Javanese dance), to perform a Javanese dance piece with the UIUC gamelan ensemble for this concert (Omo, pers. comm., 2018). According to the program

---

25 In fact, the +466 indicates two specific things. The + represents the lineage of the Festival and the hopes that Illinois will continue this practice, and the number indicates the estimated number of concerts within this lineage so far. Thus, the “Music & Movement” concert was estimated to be the 466th contemporary music concert since the Festival (“+466 Music & Movement,” William Brooks Papers, 1989).
notes, the UIUC gamelan performed *Golek Ayun-ayun*, a solo female dance from the Central Javanese courts of Yogayakarta (“+466 Music & Movement,” 1989).

The UIUC gamelan’s participation in these contemporary music concerts displays an interesting intersection of conflicting ideas in the context of these inter-departmental collaborations. The program notes for the “ChAnGEs III” concert and the “Music & Movement” concert provide extensive information about Javanese gamelan music and dance practice in their original sociocultural contexts. Within the “About gamelan music” section of the “ChAnGEs III” concert, the description offers basic information about the instruments themselves and performance practices, but there is a particular emphasis on cultural respect and how Javanese gamelan practices contrasts with Western musical traditions. One paragraph even states, “To help minimize the discrepancy between the music and tonight’s setting, we urge you to come up to the stage during the intermission to examine the instruments and talk with the players” (“ChAnGEs III,” 1987). Within the notes about *Golek Ayun-ayun* in the “Music & Movement” program notes, the cultural context of Javanese dance and music in Yogyakarta is emphasized and accompanied by a brief but detailed explanation of the basics of Central Javanese dance (“Music & Movement,” 1989). In regards to the programming of Harrison’s *Main Bersama-sama* for “ChAnGEs III,” Brooks writes, “The concerto’s eye-opening (and problematic!) marriage of cultures and styles seemed then to be exactly what the world needed,”26 but also clarifies that he believes musical cultures have become increasingly isolated (pers. comm., 2019).

---

26 Henry Spiller expounds on this issue in his chapter on Lou Harrison’s pieces in *Javaphilia*. He specifically explains that *Main Bersama-sama* seems to bridge cultures and promote an optimism of sharing ideas, but in the end, it still privileges and asserts Western sensibilities. (Spiller 2015: 170-171).
Essentially, both the 1987 and 1989 concerts demonstrate a successful collaboration, although one riddled with the attempt to balance wanting opportunities for creative development and exchange but also recognizing cultural authorities and context. For both instances, an effort is made to educate the audience and to steer them away from misconceptions about Javanese gamelan music practice. A present, underlying fear in the program notes is that these experimental concerts will wrongly represent Javanese gamelan music and perpetuate ideas of exoticism that have long affected and shaped gamelan-on-display and gamelan-in-the-academy, especially in the United States. These are very similar fears expressed by Nettl when Garvey first started proposing to bring a gamelan ensemble to UIUC, and similar anxieties about the ethics of appropriation were a common response in gamelan ensembles in the US in the 1970s-1980s (Steele 2013, 60-61). Still, what is most significant about these 1987 and 1989 concerts is that they were the first instance of demonstrating instances of gamelan music-making at UIUC that tried to balance the desire to make interesting music and the desire to educate others about Javanese musical practices by saying, “Why not have both?”

Conclusion: The UIUC Balinese Gamelan Program – Why Not Have Both?

The Javanese gamelan ensemble continued steadily under the direction of Javanese teachers Pak Widaryanto, Pak Sumaryono, and Pak Raharja into the early 2000s. According to R. Anderson Sutton, the School of Music and Charlie Capwell eventually decided to not continue the Javanese gamelan program, and in 2002, the instruments were returned to Sutton and sold to Dr. Theodore (Ted) Solís at Arizona State University (pers. comm., 2018). My interlocuters from Illinois cannot clearly remember as to why this happened, but Capwell specifically believes that this may be related to the fact that he could no longer find funding to support teachers from Java.
through teaching assistantships (pers. comm., 2019). However, what is certain is that the current UIUC Balinese gamelan program and the Robert E. Brown Center for World Music was established in 2006. More aspects of the history of this ensemble will be more thoroughly discussed in the next chapter, but to conclude this chapter on the historical narratives about gamelan music and gamelan programs at UIUC, I will briefly discuss how this ensemble has not only perpetuated this conflict of making interesting music in opposition to studying other musical traditions for the purposes of educating others about another cultural practice, but has also approached this matter by incorporating both aspects into its music-making—in the words of Robert Brown, “Why not have both?” Specifically, Balinese musicians I Ketut Gede Asnawa (Pak Asnawa) and I Putu Tangkas Adi Hiranmayena (Putu) have introduced pieces of their own throughout 2015-2019 that encouraged the current ensemble to interact musically with the wider discourses surrounding Balinese current events within the local context of the UIUC gamelan classroom.

Ethnomusicologist Philip Yampolsky, known especially for his work with recording, editing, and annotating the Smithsonian Folkways CD series *Music of Indonesia*, was hired to be the founding director of the Robert E. Brown Center for World Music in 2007 after it was established at the University of Illinois (Robert E. Brown Center for World Music 2019). He took this position after his sabbatical year at Yale University as a fellow in Southeast Asian studies. This sabbatical was funded by the Ford Foundation, as he had just finished a contract with them as Program Officer for Arts and Culture in Jakarta. He arrived at the University of Illinois in November 2007 in order to direct the campus and community outreach programs that would be associated with the Center’s many ensembles. He thus joined the Balinese gamelan
ensemble led by Pak Asnawa, which was started before Yampolsky’s arrival through funding with the Ford Foundation (Yampolsky, pers. comm., 2019; Capwell, pers. comm., 2019).

Before Yampolsky had arrived, former School director Karl Kramer worked with Pak Asnawa and provided funding to organize a new East-West ensemble that would perform both Balinese gong kebyar pieces and new compositions by American students in attempt to recruit music students from percussion, composition, and ethnomusicology. This group was working together to prepare repertoire for their performance at the Bali Arts Festival in Summer 2008. In a similar manner to Nettl’s expression of reluctance to engage with “bi-musicality” practices, Yampolsky explained that he wouldn’t have established this project if he had already been director at the Center. He stated, “I personally…don’t support fusion as an academic activity. That is, now of course, it’s fine for people to do. But I would want to have students confronted with Balinese music on its own, as hard as it is, without trying to bring in elements that are more familiar to the students, which is what I think a fusion does. So I would have wanted it to be—because that’s who I am—I would have wanted it to be pedagogically, purely Balinese.” (Yampolsky, pers. comm., 2019).

It seems that Yampolsky is worried about the educational outcome from teaching fusion musics, while Nettl was worried more about any adverse effects that could happen from “intercultural interaction” (Steele 2013) in regard to preserving certain musical traditions. Yampolsky, having worked with Robert E. Brown, seems more open to bi-musicality as a practice, but his mindset seems to be thinking about how music practices should be re-presented in ethnomusicological ensembles like gamelan. He has also been associated with the concept of “canons of instruction”—specifically, a set of musics studied in the discipline of ethnomusicology that have the goal of teaching students something they need to know to reach a
certain end—and how these canons of musical traditions in the discipline relate to the establishment of certain ethnomusicological ensembles in US academies (2008, 8). Through Yampolsky’s approach, the same narrative of gamelan ensembles functioning as only an educational tool appears once again in UIUC School of Music history.

As Steele has discussed, university world music programs and attitudes about their function and performance have developed in relation to “postcolonialism, civil rights, the expansion of higher education, theories of cultural relativism, and multiculturalism” (59). In other words, the politics of ethnomusicological ensembles and what they represent to the public in an academic setting has long been tied to postsecondary politics, which are in turn influenced by larger social phenomenon and funding (or lack thereof) from governmental forces; the university is never the “bubble” that it appears to be. Thus, as US history has progressed, the concerns of Yampolsky and Nettl that have led to a desire for “strategic essentialism” (Trimollos 2004) in UIUC’s gamelan programs go beyond that of simply being concerned with educational purposes and ethnomusicological concepts but are indeed part of a conversation about what socio-political influences affect these ensembles. Do fusion musics encourage positive ideas of multiculturalism or do they mis-inform others about a cultural practice very different from their own, thus affecting student education? Steele draws attention to critiques of multiculturalism due to its tendency to promote a problematic paradox of recognizing both simultaneous universal sameness and inherent differences—a delicate balance which can lead to exotifying or objectifying another cultural practice if one is not careful (Steele 2015, 201). Fusion music-making could be an instance of cultural appropriation, and anxieties about appropriation can unintentionally place borders and restraints on certain musical traditions we bring into the academy and thus objectify them. It’s a never-ending cyclical narrative that a gamelan program
can be trapped in, and as seen throughout its histories, UIUC’s gamelan programs have faced this very dilemma.

It is important to note that Yampolsky and Nettl both have made clear that they support interesting music-making and changing boundaries, as Yampolsky made clear in the quote above and Nettl stated in his chapter from *Thirty-Three Discussions* entitled “Some Personal Disclosures” (2015). Yampolsky and Nettl have also placed priority and emphasis on supporting cultural authorities from Java and Bali, as I have witnessed in how they interact with and talk about Pak Asnawa’s leadership in the Balinese gamelan program and how Nettl discussed the careers of Pak Yanto, Pak Maryono, and Pak Raharja. I think this is still an important way to navigate the ethics and politics of being an ethnomusicologist. This support in itself has led to the making of interesting music that has long been sought after within UIUC’s School of Music, indirectly promoting the approach of “Why not have both?”

When Putu took part in the Balinese gamelan ensemble from 2015-2019, he and Pak Asnawa—both serving as cultural authorities on the subject of Balinese gamelan—spearheaded and encouraged collaborations and experimental performances with UIUC composers in ways that still honor the tradition in which they were raised. For the performances by the UIUC Balinese Gamelan at the 2008 Bali Arts Festival, Pak Asnawa encouraged and mentored new student compositions, such as the experimental pieces “Reverberations” by Ming Ching Chiu and “Renggam Jazz” by Chris Reyman. As Yampolsky mentioned before, the East West Ensemble also featured faculty compositions, such as composer Steve Taylor’s electroacoustic piece for gamelan (K&C Production 2008).

From what I have experienced while being a part of the ensemble, Pak Asnawa sometimes features compositions that, to certain US audiences, would sound experimental due to
the use of a variety of modal changes and extended techniques. In Spring 2018, we performed a programmatic piece entitled, “Agung Explosion,” which depicted the recent eruption of Gunung Agung in Bali in 2017 through its formal organization, certain special techniques, and the use of auxiliary instruments. Specifically, there are five sections, each which musically represent a scene: Nyurya Sewana (morning sun invocations and people waking up to start their day), Caciren (the first signs of eruption and the panic that ensues), Sabha Urip (“Meeting to Survive” – the call to action for how to respond), Jagra Kanti (Alerts – signaling through the common method of slit drums, traditionally used in many Balinese villages), and Maha Baya (the “big incident” or aftermath). Pak Asnawa clarified to me in an interview that this piece is not “experimental” in the sense of how experimentalism with gamelan is expressed in Bali at this current moment (for more information, see McGraw 2013). Instead, he mainly used certain techniques and sounds in order to depict the images and scenes he had in his mind about the Gunung Agung eruption—thus why he characterizes this piece more as “programmatic” (pers. comm., 2019c). Still, the use of plastic water bottles to portray fire crackling, the scraping of gongs, and the interlocking glissandos on the metallophone instruments are practices that stand out in contrast to other gong kebyar pieces typically performed—and potentially expected—at UIUC gamelan concerts.

Putu Hiranmeyna has especially added to the fusion music-making scene through his prolific composing while part of our ensemble, and Pak Asnawa has always supported his compositions, often programming them as part of our concerts. Putu’s compositions have included the Fall 2018 major production of “Discursive Metals,” which involved the collaboration of the UIUC Balinese gamelan ensemble, the improvised noise metal trio TATWD, and UIUC graduate student dancers (Youtube 2018). Smaller compositions—though equally
dynamic—have included pieces like “Metakon (To Ask)” and “Garang Buyung (Swarmed by Flies),” both of which were composed for a smaller, all-women ensemble that was organized by Putu during his time at UIUC. These pieces experimented with the combining of certain modes, and “Garang Buyung” specifically involved one instrument for five players (Youtube 2016 and 2019). Hiranmayena further explained that he had specific meanings and intentions for each of these compositions. “Discursive Metals” is about the term and concept of “metal” in all of its manifestations, and it was composed to commemorate the natural disasters in Sulawesi that happened in 2018. “Metakon” was the first piece written and performed by UIUC’s Women’s gamelan, and it was intended to be a piece that provoked the audience to “asking” in the broadest sense—it was up to their interpretation what should be asked. Lastly, “Garang Buyung” was meant to serve as a commentary on the state of global trash as well as the spectrum of aesthetics in relation to trash (as examples: ideas of people seeing another person’s trash as beautiful or being enticed by something deemed “trashy”). By “global trash,” Putu explained that he was referring to situations similar to trash resulting from tourism and the state of foreign personnel living in places like Bali as well as issues of environmentalism more widely (pers. comm., 2019b).

As is evident in the music-making created and facilitated by Pak Asnawa and Putu, performing their pieces has become a way for students in the ensemble to interact musically with current and political events that affect the composers’ communities, both locally and abroad. Pak Asnawa and Putu’s composing and the performing of their pieces represent how globalized, complex, and ever-changing the act of being a gamelan musician at UIUC and in the US really is. In these ways and other instances, the UIUC Balinese gamelan program perpetuates the converging and conflicting dialogue that started from its experimental beginnings. It continues to
attempt to give voices to cultural authorities, to navigate the colonial histories and perspectives associated with the discipline of ethnomusicology and US postsecondary music institutions, and to also embrace creative, globalized exchanges that come with the ever-changing, cultural processes of being a gamelan musician at UIUC and in the US—all while making interesting music.
CHAPTER 2
PANCA “WI,” PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES, AND PAK ASNAWA’S PHILOSOPHIES

Central to the gamelan rehearsal space at the University of Illinois is the teaching philosophy and pedagogical practices of our teacher, Pak Asnawa. His principles permeate the ensemble, directing the members to the tasks at hand and the goals of the semester. As Talbot observed, focusing on Pak Asnawa as a central figure in the ensemble arises from the role of the teacher in Balinese gamelan music being a vital and powerful one (2010, 23). The teacher holds the entirety of the repertoire for the ensemble within himself, for all of the music is typically taught through a method called maguru panggul (“teaching through the mallet”), which literally involves the teacher presenting the different parts of the music to the students in real time and having them follow as best as they can (Bakan 1999, Talbot 2010, Clendinning 2013).

Talbot also recognizes that communal memory, rehearsal, and performance play just as important of a role in this process of learning. Because parts are interlocking, it is easiest to practice in the group setting, and continual reactions and corrections from the teacher as well as others in the ensemble are necessary for music transmission and for retaining what is being played. Thus, this chapter on pedagogical practice starts with Pak Asnawa’s strategies and philosophies as a foundation and then examines how these are implemented into the ensemble and its rehearsal space, all the while recognizing that there are also complications to this relationship in the setting of a US postsecondary institution that keep transmission from being completely unilateral. These complexities are referred to by Talbot as transcultural negotiations between “Western-oriented musicians” and Balinese teaching practices (2010, 23-24).
Both Talbot and Clendinning discuss how the historical standardization of Balinese gamelan practices through Indonesian art conservatories have influenced gamelan pedagogy in the States as well. Having studied with Pak Made Lasmawan (another prominent teacher of Balinese gamelan music in the US), Clendinning talks about this standardization in relation to Pak Made’s understanding of the concept of *air mengalir* (‘water flows’) — an idea metaphorically mimicking Balinese traditional irrigation systems in the sense of how teacher-student relationships in Bali and the US have created powerful connections and transnational pedagogical lineages — ones that prepare for and pass on to the next musical generation (Talbot 2010, Clendinning 2013 and 2016). Pak Asnawa expressed his agreement with Pak Made about this concept in an interview with me. He personally interprets it as various sources, all flowing from one to another, sometimes accumulating in certain spots for a while, and then passing on ideas of musical styles and musicianship from one generation to another. For him, there is also a main source (wellspring) from which everything flows down, and always down. However, when I asked Pak Asnawa if the water could ever flow “up,” he answered that there is the phenomenon of *nyegara gunung*, the process of the water cycle or ecosystem that starts from the ocean (*segara*) and eventually returning to the mountain top (*gunung*) through rain. The water from the mountain always flows down into the ocean, but through natural processes of transformation, it finds its way back to the top (pers. comm., 2019b). Clendinning describes this very same metaphorical, cyclical process from her discussions with Pak Made, talking about how foreign gamelan groups and their transformations and applications of gamelan pedagogy and music can return once again to the system of knowledge from which it came, and even influence it (2013, 245).

27 This phrase, *nyegara gunung*, is also associated with the final ritual for the dead — the one for the process for those having passed away of becoming an ancestor (Asnawa, pers. comm. 2019c).
Thus, what educational lineage and background is Pak Asnawa drawing from and where did his pedagogical strategies that he now uses at UIUC originate? Pak Asnawa typically describes his educational background in relation to his training in Denpasar, Bali at the music and arts institutions of KOKAR (Konservatori Karawitan Indonesia – Indonesian Conservatory of the Arts) for high school and ASTI (Akademi Seni Tari Indonesia – Indonesian Academy of Dance) for postsecondary education. He also received an SSK (Seniman Seni Karawitan – “Musical Artist”) degree from ISI (Institut Seni Indonesia – Indonesian Institute for the Arts) since he took composition classes affiliated with this institution in Denpasar, Bali. From his training in Denpasar, Pak Asnawa usually talks about one of his main teachers, I Wayan Beratha, who is especially known for his expansion and application of a four-part structure to tabuh kreasi (“new composition”) used in gong kebyar contests and his invention of the versatile gamelan semara dana instruments—a type of gamelan that combines two types of gamelan instruments into one: the classical element of semar pagulingan and the more modern innovation of gong kebyar. Pak Beratha was a major influence on Pak Asnawa’s development as a gamelan musician. Even in childhood, Pak Asnawa witnessed Beratha’s capabilities as musician because his community was in the same vicinity as Pak Asnawa’s community. Pak Asnawa has transmitted aspects of his conservatory training and kebyar specialization into our Balinese gamelan ensemble at the University of Illinois, and he was the one who encouraged the commission of our current gamelan semara dana set at the University of Illinois (Bakan 1999, 192-203; McGraw 2013, 113; Asnawa, pers. comm., 2019a and 2019b).

One specific aspect of Pak Asnawa’s conservatory training has manifested in his teaching strategy that he calls Panca “wi” (a five-step teaching model for becoming a successful gamelan musician). This institution later became STSI (Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia – Indonesian College of the Arts).
musician) as well as philosophical ideas about the Balinese Hindu concept of *tri sakti* (discussed in the Introduction). When I asked Pak Asnawa about where he learned the strategies of the *Panca “wi,”* he explained that he first heard the use of this model when he was a student and members of a government-sponsored cultural board called LISTIBIYA came to KOKAR to give advice on musical aesthetics. According to Asnawa, the terms in *Panca “wi”* were commonly used in judging competitions or advisory situations to describe what type of aesthetics should be present in a musical performance (pers. comm., 2019b). LISTIBIYA stands for *Majelis Pertimbangan dan Pembinaan Kebudayan,* which translates to Arts Evaluation and Cultivation Board. Andy McGraw in his book *Radical Traditions: Reimagining Culture in Balinese Contemporary Music* explains that, during the New Order, this advisory culture board sponsored by the Indonesian central government and implemented in the Balinese provincial government was a conservative organization focused on the revitalization of traditional arts (2013, 59). Organizations like these, tasked with the standardizing of arts and culture in Indonesia, were intertwined with Indonesian nationalist, cultural policies. Such New Order policies resulted in a few specific regional cultural practices (including Javanese and Balinese gamelan) being upheld as belonging to Indonesian national culture as a whole, while numerous other practices from the country’s other thousands of islands were excluded (Yampolsky 1995 and 2008). Pak Asnawa clarified that though he first heard *Panca “wi”* from this setting, he never really thought about it with more depth until he became an academic himself through his postsecondary studies. He then transformed this model to fit his own teaching methods and

---

29 The “New Order” is a historical phrase used to denote Indonesian President Suharto’s regime, which began in 1965 with the coup that overthrew Sukarno and oversaw the murder of up to one million Indonesians accused of associations with the Communist party. For more information, ethnomusicologist Andrew McGraw and historian Anthony Vickers provide thorough descriptions of this period in Indonesian history (McGraw 2013, Vickers 2013).
needs, which led to the teaching strategies he uses in the UIUC classroom today (pers. comm., 2019b).

Additionally, Pak Asnawa talks highly about his experience of studying ethnomusicology with Mantle Hood at the University of Maryland Baltimore County, where he received a Master of Arts degree (pers. comm., 2019a). This training influenced his approach in how he talks about his teaching methods, philosophies, and gamelan music more generally from an ethnomusicological perspective. Though Pak Asnawa does not usually talk about specific ethnomusicological concepts, Hood’s influence of “bi-musicality” is displayed in how Pak Asnawa uses the gamelan rehearsal space as a starting point for teaching aspects or ideas of Balinese culture, and he begins this process on day one of each semester by talking about the instruments and the function of gamelan music in immense detail.30 Through his actions, Pak Asnawa believes that by having students and community members interact with the instruments and play the music, they will develop a better understanding of Balinese-ness. By enacting his training from Mantle Hood, Pak Asnawa is able to synthesize his standardized training from Indonesian arts institutions and his own experiences as a gamelan musician in Bali so that he can communicate them to his students in the US through specific teaching strategies and philosophies. Pak Asnawa’s persistence in teaching these ideas and their history, in having us enact them in rehearsals, and in performing them along with us at end-of-semester concerts produces an expected, perpetuated practice and discourse about Balinese gamelan music at UIUC.

In this chapter, I theorize about pedagogical topics regarding the UIUC gamelan rehearsal using the Panca “wi” model from Pak Asnawa’s teaching philosophy, a model for teaching

---

30 Talbot provides a thorough example of this in recounting Pak Asnawa’s typical “introduction speech” on the first day of a semester class (2010, 48-56).
strategies for Balinese gamelan derived from Pak Asnawa’s educational background and history. Building upon the work of Talbot and Clendinning, I want to more closely examine how the specific Balinese philosophical models of Panca “wi” and tri sakti (Power of Three) are reiterated within the ensembles’ rehearsals and thus shape conceptions of what it means to be a gamelan musician at the University of Illinois. Drawing from my own research as a member of the UIUC Balinese gamelan ensembles, this chapter investigates how these models manifest themselves in routine pedagogical practices and how the localized application of these practices by UIUC gamelan musicians respond to and structure their academic environment at UIUC. I especially want to use Pak Asnawa’s language to theorize about the educational practices and realities of UIUC’s Balinese gamelan ensemble in the particular moment of my research (2015-2019) in order to showcase how such language—when understood in its complex historical and cultural context as well as repeatedly implemented in the classroom—can effectively serve as a pedagogical tool for gamelan ensembles in the US.

The Panca “wi” Method Explained

The concept of tri sakti has been explained in the introduction, but here, I will provide a description of the Panca “wi” model. Panca “wi,” are five total steps for learning gamelan: wiraga (material), wirama (rhythm), wirasa (feeling), wicaksana (wisdom or understanding), and wibawa (charisma or power).31 Because the last two steps take numerous years of study and a certain level of maturity to achieve, Pak Asnawa focuses on the first three steps. He describes wiraga (material) with the word “material” because, by this, he means that each individual student has to learn and know their part. This means not only knowing the technique for playing

---

31 Translations provided by I Ketut Gede Asnawa.
your individual instrument but how your part on that instrument interlocks with another. By *wirama* (rhythm), Pak Asnawa refers to putting the material parts together in their musical context. This not only means that the players are firm in their relation to the beat and tempo and dynamic changes, but also that they actively listen together and communicate with one another—thus forming the overall “rhythm” of the group. Finally, the one Pak Asnawa always wants us to strive for is *wirasa* (feeling). Though the previous steps appear to have a chronological order, *wirasa* is a concept that Pak Asnawa explains as ever-present, even when learning the basic materials and musical context of each piece. When talking about this step, he always says, “You have to know it not only from here [points to his head] but also in here [puts his hand over his heart].” From this, he not only means that he wants us to use each of our musical sensibilities to the best of our abilities, but also to understand it so well that it seems as if it is a part of us, to the point that the audience feels our excitement, passion, and confidence. In fact, *wirasa* is more of an internalized element, one that we are continually working towards throughout the learning process (Asnawa, pers. comm., 2019a).

For the first section of this chapter, I expand the original meaning of *wiraga* regarding sound material (pitches, melodic patterns, structure, and repertoire) to discuss Balinese student and community gamelan ensembles’ various interactions with physical space and instruments. I situate these interactions within the history of the Robert E. Brown Center for World Music and the experiences of UIUC ethnomusicological ensembles overall. Primarily, I explore how the material aspects of academic environments can influence learning experiences in US postsecondary music institutions. For the second section, I show how the *wirama* or rhythm we aim for directly correlates with ideas of community-building through music-making. Drawing from Balinese philosophy about *tri sakti* (the Power of Three) and musicological scholarship, I
explore how a certain *tri sakti* concept explained to me by Pak Asnawa—*asah, asih, asuh*—exemplifies itself in the community-building practices of the current UIUC Balinese gamelan student and community ensembles. For the last section, I extend this concept of *wirasa* or feeling to include discussions about our pedagogical and performance practice as a group. I explain how Pak Asnawa accounts for the different needs of his students and their individual sensitives through compromising certain pedagogical practices and how the pedagogical practices and philosophies we internalize result in our performance practice on the stage.

The gamelan rehearsal space—though focused on learning, performing, and playing—can leave a personal imprint on the individuals who partake in it. Recognizing that experiences within gamelan ensembles differ from individual to individual, I want to echo Ellen Lueck’s attentiveness to “a body of people who maintain an active and intellectual engagement with the music, the instruments, Balinese aesthetics, and Balinese methodology.” (2012: 6) The terms she uses to describe this body of people in North American-based ensembles who practice this active and intellectual engagement with gamelan are “enthusiasts” and “super-enthusiasts.” While I am focusing on the experiences of “enthusiasts” and “super-enthusiasts” contained within the student and community Balinese gamelan ensembles at the UIUC for this project, I am also thinking of the larger impact of pedagogies on the ensembles as a whole. In recognizing the general capability of gamelan rehearsal spaces in the US to impact some of its student and community members, I aim to explore why this happens by examining what takes place in the UIUC gamelan rehearsal space itself.

---

32 These terms are intended by Lueck as a means of distinguishing gamelan enthusiasts from those who participate in gamelan ensembles but do not hold the practice as “the most important interest or activity in their day-to-day lives” (2012: 6).
Wiraga (Material)

When Pak Asnawa refers to *wiraga* or “material,” he means the literal musical material and repertoire that we learn and perform as an ensemble. My use of *wiraga* is not a reference to the pitches, patterns, and repertoire but rather a reference to the UIUC Balinese gamelan ensembles’ engagements with material aspects of its academic environment as an ethnomusicological ensemble. In this section, I trace the history of UIUC Balinese gamelan rehearsal spaces from its establishment in 2006 to its present-day location. From this context, I make observations about the current impact of physical space and sound on learning processes within such ensembles. I then compare the gamelan ensembles’ experiences with other UIUC ethnomusicological ensembles in order to discuss its position within a US postsecondary music institution.

Currently, there are two official UIUC Balinese gamelan ensembles – a student ensemble and a community ensemble. The student ensemble is a class offered by the UIUC School of Music for credit that is open to any university student and is entirely composed of college-age students. The community ensemble is a free weekly class that is open to students of all ages, university faculty and staff, and Urbana-Champaign community members. Both of these ensembles are tied to the history of the Robert E. Brown Center for World Music, which was established in 2006 after receiving Brown’s library and collection of Indonesian instruments and artifacts in the United States. The goal of establishing this institute for the study of “world music” at UIUC was to encourage cross-cultural understanding in both the campus and local communities by training university students as well as public school students in musical practices from around the world. Essentially, the Center was originally intended to produce a program that synthesized music education and ethnomusicological practices (Capwell 2007).
The Center’s beginnings re-established the gamelan program at Illinois as one that focused on Balinese gamelan practices. The preceding Javanese gamelan ensemble had dissolved with the selling of the instruments themselves, bought by Arizona State University in 2002, as well as the loss of funding for teachers from Java (Sutton, pers. comm., 2018; Capwell, pers. comm., 2019). Former School of Music Director Karl Kramer hired the married couple Pak Asnawa and Ibu Mardiani to teach Balinese gamelan gong kebyar style and traditional Balinese dances respectively, starting the academic year of 2006-2007. Ibu Mardiani equally contributed the expertise of someone from an Indonesian standardized arts education, having received a degree in Balinese dance from ASTI. Before their arrival, Kramer commissioned a Balinese gamelan semara dana set of instruments as well as half of an angklung gamelan set, separate from the Robert Brown collection, for the UIUC School of Music. Later, in 2008, based on the advice of Pak Asnawa, Kramer also refurbished and retuned Brown’s old angklung gamelan set so that it would complete the original half set he had purchased. These instruments are still owned by the School of Music and are used for current rehearsals and performances (Capwell 2007; Asnawa, pers. comm. 2019a; Yampolsky, pers. comm., 2019).

The early visions for the Center included plans for a physical location that would display all of Brown’s gamelan sets and host gamelan rehearsals and performances. An anonymous report entitled “Creating an Ambience for Indonesian Music” found in the Robert E. Brown papers describes an ideal gamelan setup for the Center that contrasts the typical setting for a gamelan ensemble in the United States. It is likely that this report was part of the correspondence and discussions that began happening in April 2005 between former School of Music Director Karl Kramer and Robert E. Brown himself before Brown’s death (Capwell 2007). This description states:
In almost all of the 200+ gamelan setups in the United States, the instruments are inevitably crowded into spaces that are too small to contain, for instance [sic], the 70-foot standing waves of the most important instruments, the great gongs of nearly one meter in diameter….So the first criterion should be to find a space as large as possible. At the University of Illinois, a corner building near the School of Music, with large plate glass windows along two sides, would seem to be ideal. (2005).

These plans for the Center request this ideal space described based not only on the acoustics of the instruments but also on their typical placements in Java and Bali—outdoors in an open pavilion. Of course, recognizing the differences in climate between Indonesia and Illinois, the plan suggests a corner building near the School with large plate-glass windows as alternative solution to open-air storage. The expectations and goals for the Center were thus set high from the beginning, and it was believed these resources could be met.

Unfortunately, the establishment of the Center did not go as smoothly as planned, due to financial limitations and major setbacks concerning resources (Capwell, pers. comm. 2018; Yampolsky, pers. comm. 2019). The “corner building…with large plate-glass windows” was not to be rented by the School, and during my time at UIUC, it has been the home of pan-Asian restaurant chain, Ko-Fusion, located below high-rise apartments. The next best solution for a rehearsal and storage space was a room on the top floor of Levis Faculty Center, which is a UIUC multi-purpose building often used for conferences and meetings that is currently located on the intersection of Illinois Ave. and Gregory St. on UIUC’s campus. Philip Yampolsky, the Center’s former director, described the room as particularly spacious—large enough to store the instruments from the Brown collection and the School’s commissioned instruments, function as a rehearsal space, and host performances. When the financial crisis of the state of Illinois started to adversely affect state universities, the Robert E. Brown Center for World Music eventually lost funding for its activities, bringing everything to a halt and eliminating Yampolsky’s position in
2011. The Center now exists without a physical location as an institute under the School of Music, and Jason Finkelman, the Director of the Global Arts Performing Initiatives program, manages its activities. Because Pak Asnawa was hired as a faculty member with the School of Music, he retained his teaching position. Thus, the Balinese gamelan instruments used for rehearsals were moved to a concrete block room enclosed by a windowless door, located in the outer corner of the Music Building basement. Moreover, Brown’s gamelan instrument sets and his collection of Indonesian artifacts, much of which were damaged through the shipping process, were either transferred to the basements of the Music Education Annex and the Child Development Laboratory—neither of which are climate controlled. In an attempt to preserve some of the paintings and artifacts, the School of Music Operations and Facilities has used these artworks as decorations for various office spaces throughout the Music Building. This continues to be the current state of the Robert E. Brown collections and gamelan instruments at UIUC—a much different reality from the original vision for the Center (Yampolsky, pers. comm., 2018; Finkelman, pers. comm., 2018).

Once you are within the room that now hosts the UIUC Balinese gamelan ensembles, the limitations of the space become apparent, especially when there is a large group of people. Everyone leaves their shoes and belongings at the door, first as a sign of respect for the instruments, but also as a practical means of allowing room for musicians and dancers to sit either at the instruments or somewhere nearby. The gamelan instruments are usually played by sitting directly on the floor or by sitting on soft pads (though there are some chairs or stools for larger instruments), which removes the clutter of chairs and music stands that many music ensembles often face. Within a space that could hold the equivalent of a large chamber ensemble,

---

33 This is due to the animistic beliefs of Balinese Hinduism, for it is believed that spirits reside within the instruments.
there are two full gamelan orchestra sets (*gamelan angklung* and *gamelan semara dana*), which each can have an estimated 20-25 instruments, though some like the gongs may be shared between the two sets. Some semesters the ensemble may use less than 10 of the instruments, but if recruitment goes well, there can be as many as 20 or more people playing at a time, each paired with an instrument of various sizes.

The layout of the room and instrument storage tries to accommodate the space as well as reinforce the rule of never stepping over the instruments. Once again, this rule is tied to certain animistic beliefs but has the practical aspect of preventing injuries to either instrument or human, especially with the tight spaces. The instruments that are being used for the semester are often arranged in rows parallel to the outer walls so that musicians can navigate through or around the instruments. Unused instruments are either pushed to the sides behind these rows or are stacked on metal shelves along one of the walls, which also holds numerous dance costumes and props, various boxes of documents, a *baleganjur* set, a set of Balinese *gender wayang*, dance masks, etc. These shelves still cannot hold all that is tied to the Balinese gamelan, and thus various closets and basements near to the School of Music hold the ensemble’s other materials.

This less-than-ideal placement and room condition are not uncommon for academic gamelan groups in the United States. Certainly, such conditions are also not uncommon for music ensembles that do not necessarily have priority within scheduling or accreditation, as addressed in a later portion of this section. However, as Lueck summarizes in her thesis, “Many school gamelan groups are forced to negotiate and compromise with their respective university music departments regarding time slots, space, and priority level of the ensemble. Some departments are more supportive than others” (2012, 30). She continues with a comparison between Gamelan Bintang Wahyu at Brigham Young University (BYU) and Gamelan Chandra
Bhuana at Sarah Lawrence College, showing how these elements as well as support or lack thereof from faculty can affect membership, teacher availability, and overall ensemble performance—not necessarily in concerts, but in day-to-day functioning. Pak Asnawa and Ibu Mardiani have adjusted their teaching to the materials and resources available in this space, but these limitations particularly have effects on the process of learning and rehearsing gamelan music. Indeed, being in a space with loud instruments of any sort—an experience common to many ensembles, including ethnomusicology ensembles of various kinds—affects what one hears, how they are hearing it, and how their own ear health is impacted (Buchanan, pers. comm., 2019).

Linked to my initial description of this room and how it leaks sound throughout the building is the reality of how detrimentally loud the space itself can be and how this damages the hearing of musicians and dancers within the ensemble. Noise-induced hearing loss from rehearsal spaces has been addressed in music education literature in relation to music teachers and Western ensembles such as orchestras and bands. Levels of hearing loss are affected by “factors [such] as room, acoustics, size of bands, and frequency of rehearsals” (Cutietta et al. 1994: 328). More recently, Kris Chesky and Amyn Amlani address how the industry-based protocols—hearing conservation protocols designed for industrial or factory spaces—used in musical rehearsal spaces known for inducing hearing loss, “can and do produce erroneous, misleading and undesirable outcomes.” Such protocols often assume the sounds are predictable and constant at the same level—a quality that does not apply to musical ensembles who are performed by musicians rather than machines (2014/2015: 17). For the UIUC student gamelan members, rehearsing at least twice a week within four concrete walls while playing on the numerous, resonating percussive instruments meant for wider, outdoor spaces can certainly lead
to noise-induced hearing loss. Industrial measures have been put in place—a box of disposable earplugs has been given to us by the School of Music operations and facility managers and some carpeted padding has been placed on the wall. Wisely, many students bring their own forms of ear protection that cater to musical settings, but earplugs in general may not actually protect as well as we hope, as Chesky and Amlani have stated (2014/2015: 18). Though this may not prevent members from staying committed to the group, the loud and sometimes painful impact of the sound itself could potentially hinder performance quality and endurance during practices and provide concerns for those who consider joining the ensemble.

To reiterate, the purpose of this section is to examine how material aspects of an academic environment have an effect on learning processes and experiences and how music ensembles such as the UIUC Balinese gamelan have had to adapt to this situation. Conversely, it is additionally essential to acknowledge that such conditions are not uncommon for many music ensembles who have historically experienced being under-prioritized in School of Music’s history. This potentially includes chamber ensembles, early music ensembles, jazz bands, percussion ensembles, experimental ensembles, popular music ensembles, and numerous musicians within postsecondary music institutions. Since my experiences for this project have mainly entailed working with UIUC ethnomusicological ensembles, I focus on their place in the School in this section.

These common limitations for music ensembles have not only been attributed to a problem with inadequate resources, but also to historical biases and hierarchies within US postsecondary music institutions (Kingsbury 1988, Nettl 1995, Talbot 2010). Bruno Nettl, in his Heartland Excursions: Ethnomusicological Reflections on Schools of Music (1995), wrote that despite their names, Schools of Music do not always advocate for all musics. He continues,
stating, “Even the various sorts of Western art music may not be included on equal terms. Actually, there are some ways in which the music school functions almost as an institution for the suppression of certain musics” (1995, 82). In this particular chapter, Nettl describes a typical School of Music taxonomy with Western art music canon at the center, and all other musics inhabiting the peripherals. He thus does not deny various types of musical practices have a place in postsecondary music institutions, but the overall system still caters to its central foundation of the Western music canon, as evidenced by the history of how certain musics gained placement in these schools and departments, by the administration and faculty’s attitudes towards the central music, and through the requirements for faculty and students (84-85). Nettl furthermore discusses this taxonomy as not static, but as one of constant mediation, consisting of “convergences and collisions” (106, 110-111).

Donna Buchanan, a UIUC professor of ethnomusicology who has led UIUC’s Balkanalia ensemble (or Balkan Music ensemble), explained that there are several factors in the School’s history that have contributed to the state of ethnomusicology ensembles at UIUC. Despite being slow to incorporate world music ensembles into its curriculum, UIUC’s School of Music has had a vibrant history of such ensembles, having featured an mbira ensemble, an Andean pan-pipe group, a koto group, a Korean percussion ensemble, an old-time Appalachian string band, a digeridoo ensemble, and a traditional Chinese ensemble. Due to these ensembles not being part of musicology faculty members’ teaching loads and sometimes being taught by graduate students, a perception of them having less importance or being more extracurricular developed within the School’s administration. Buchanan also mentioned the long-fought battle to have

\[34\] Timbalú, a local salsa band originally co-led by Gabriel Solis and Ian Middleton, sometimes rehearses within the School of Music, though it is not considered a school ensemble for credit. It was also associated with the Robert E. Brown Center for World Music.
these ensembles recognized as appropriate for ensemble credit for musicology majors (pers. comm., 2019). This battle started with Bruno Nettl when it was first announced in June 1986 memorandum from former Director Robert Bays that ensemble credit for undergraduate and graduate music majors required participation in “conducted ensembles,” a demand that excluded any ensembles that did not feature Western music methods of conducting (Nettl pers. comm., 2018). Thankfully, the Musicology Division has succeeded in advocating for ethnomusicology ensembles to be counted as ensemble credit for musicology, music education, and even composition majors (Buchanan, pers. comm., 2019). Since then, “Ethnomusicology Performance Ensembles” and the “Black Chorus” have been added to the list of ensembles that can be taken for credit (UIUC Handbook, 2018-2019), and this change can be found in all the handbooks listed on the School of Music website, ranging from 2010 to the present.

However, this history has affected what classroom and storage spaces are assigned to these ensembles, and because they are not part of the core teaching load for musicology faculty, ensemble teachers have had to take what they were given and adapt. For example, both Balkanalia and the UIUC Brazilian ensemble (a group originally co-led by ethnomusicology professor Michael Silvers and student Ellen Rice that performs musics from Northeastern Brazil) started in regular classrooms for rehearsals. Balkanalia has since outgrown this, and since situations for ethnomusicology ensembles have become better each year, Balkanalia was able to choose and move into bigger spaces such as the Recording Studio near the Music Building Auditorium or the large lecture room in Smith Memorial Hall over the years. Buchanan has recounted that before these rooms, she originally had to search for stands and chairs as well as moving the instruments, but these spaces are more prepped for rehearsals and have sufficiently provided for the groups’ needs (pers. comm., 2019). As a member of the UIUC Brazilian music
ensemble, which formed more recently in 2017, I can recount the experiences of being in a music ensemble that does not have an assigned room and large storage facilities. We store our instruments in the Ethnomusicology Archives—a space that is smaller than an academic professor’s office—and we have to retrieve them for every rehearsal. This makeshift storage space currently has to be shared with Ethnomusicology archival instruments and some of the instruments for Balkanalia due to a ceiling collapse in the original Ethnomusicology Instruments room (an even smaller space than the archives). We meet in a classroom space that has to be reserved at the beginning of each semester, and sometimes, other rehearsal groups accidentally take over the space, not realizing we are scheduled. Still, we have been able to adapt to this situation, and the Brazilian ensemble has learned to adjust to the space for our processional and dance musics. We have structured a “path” with classroom chairs or simply made room so that we can march or dance—a compromise that has to be made between Illinois weather conditions and needing to demonstrate how the music functions in certain contexts. The experiences of these UIUC ethnomusicological ensembles are only two examples within the larger context of a US postsecondary music institution, an academic environment that often encounters financial restraints.

It is important to conclude this section by demonstrating how the active correlation between academic environment and learning processes includes the positive reclamation of rigid and limiting spaces through materials and resources. For example, the ensemble Andrew McGraw writes about rehearses in a basement as well, and they have added rugs, pillows, artwork, textile, incense, and offerings to make the space itself feel more “homey” (2016: 131). The UIUC gamelan room also has multiple rugs lining the entire floor, padded seats for each instrument, maps of Bali, and a designated offering space with incense. The rugs and padding
might slightly aid in reducing the noise’s physical impact, but overall, such materials function similarly to that of McGraw’s group: they “combine to distinguish the rehearsal space from the ‘objective seriousness’ of the laboratory or classroom, with its hard edges, hygienic surfaces, and homogenous, anonymizing lighting” (ibid). To add to the welcoming, communal atmosphere, Ibu Mardiani always brings snacks for the community ensemble and sometimes for the student ensemble. Talbot specifically denotes the phenomenon of Balinese rehearsal breaks as an example of “small resistance to centering institutions” (2010, 111). Furthermore, the golden designs on the instruments themselves—often including detailed scenes from the Hindu epic Ramayana, animals in various natural settings, or, in the case of one instrument, words proclaiming it as the property of the University of Illinois—immediately draw away from the university classroom feel and set it apart. Pak Asnawa and Ibu Mardiani also have made it known through their actions that this rehearsal space is always welcome to visitors and students who simply want to know more about our music-making. For example, we often open up community gamelan rehearsals to students who need to write their papers for the popular Intro to World Music class, and this has led to impromptu audiences of up to 15 or more students, especially near paper deadlines. As a member of the ensemble rehearsing in an already overcrowded space, I have sometimes wanted to ask students to leave, but Pak Asnawa and Ibu Mardiani have always accommodated these situations willingly and with great patience. These active and passive reclamations of space—which includes many other instances beyond the scope of this thesis—provide a comforting atmosphere for both rehearsing and resting, an atmosphere that transforms conceptions of what a rehearsal space or practice space should look like and function within a postsecondary music institution.
So, have we at least made some progress? Of course, the realities of limited economic accessibility for spatial needs in the School and administrative concerns related to university regulations (such as accreditation) do play a role in the smaller decisions of ensemble room placement and scheduling, and likely this will always be the case. Still, winning the ensemble credit “battle” was a huge step forward for UIUC’s School of Music. Furthermore, the fact that the School of Music selected the Balinese gamelan concert to be promoted as one of the Pillar Performances of the 2017-18 school year reiterated that an ethnomusicology ensemble concert met the same criteria for the variety of ensembles featured as part of this concert series. Former director Jeffrey Magee explained that this was a series intended to encourage concert attendance and cross-departmental community-building in the School of Music. Including the gamelan ensemble meant that the committee that selected these performances saw it as a viable option for encouraging the crossing of “divides” and as a part of the School’s community (pers. comm., 2018). It is also worth recognizing that the UIUC Balinese gamelan ensemble has the most stable set-up of the ethnomusicological ensembles associated with the Musicology Division and the Robert E. Brown Center for World Music. After renovations of the Music Building were completed in 2016, a small plaque was added next to the door of the rehearsal room, naming it as a location of the Center for World Music, with a small subheading describing it as a gamelan. Thus, the gamelan ensemble’s practice and storage space are more permanent than ensembles that have to request classroom spaces every semester. In these ways, the gamelan ensemble has become more actively associated with the School of Music as a whole; it is no longer a question of needing to be moved more towards the center, but more about becoming woven into the fabric of what makes US postsecondary music institutions what they are today.
Wirama (Rhythm)

Asah, Asih, Asuh.

“So, with this Power of Three, if you develop in certain ways, wherever [you are], in any vocation—teaching gamelan... or working in the community, something like that—you have to understand these three things: you are equals; you have to love each other; and sharing... So this is what I mean by the Power of Three. In gamelan, especially in gamelan, this is very clear—the philosophy of the gamelan” ~I Ketut Gede Asnawa

When Pak Asnawa talks about wirama or “rhythm,” he means that we must not only know how our individual material parts relate to the beat but more importantly how all our different parts relate to each other and function together in their musical context. This requires active listening as well as a more general knowledge of the piece’s form and overall direction. For this section, I am using the concept of wirama as a model for exploring how the UIUC Balinese gamelan ensembles build community through music-making. For these gamelan members, music-making as community-building does not simply mean showing up to rehearsals, learning the repertoire, and performing together, though this is certainly a central aspect. More importantly, it means becoming immersed in how the group itself functions together through sharing the experience of Pak Asnawa’s pedagogical philosophies and styles, chatting and exchanging jokes during snack breaks, listening attentively to each other’s joys and frustrations for that rehearsal or that day, and trying to work out parts of pieces on our own by either teaching each other or setting up extra practices. Certainly, these community-building experiences apply to various music-making ensembles outside of Balinese gamelan or gamelan in general.

Therefore, I find that a key element for community-building in the UIUC gamelan ensembles lies in reiterating what philosophies we have internalized from our gamelan rehearsals and how it pertains to our relationships with each other.
Community-building practices in the UIUC gamelan ensembles reflect one specific implementation of *tri sakti* (Power of Three): *asah, asih, asuh*, which are defined in the opening quote to this section as equality, empathy, and reciprocity or sharing.\(^ {35}\) As shown in the quote, Pak Asnawa linked this model to how the gamelan ensemble functions as a community (Asnawa, pers. comm., 2019a). Pak Asnawa and Ibu Mardiani do not explicitly teach these philosophies in rehearsals, but due to how they structure rehearsals and teach their students, the members of the ensemble have subconsciously adopted these practices in their communal actions. Using the philosophy of *asah, asih, asuh* as an organizational marker within the larger section I have designated as *wirama* (similar to how the *pur* and *tong* gongs can provide divisional markers between each *gong ageng*),\(^ {36}\) I will define each aspect of this philosophical concept in relation to active realities of community-building from the UIUC student and community gamelan ensembles, as voiced by some of its members. Essentially, the reiterations of *asah, asih, asuh* through the members’ collaborative efforts display the overall “rhythm” of the group.

**Asah (Equality)**

“Asah means ‘flat’…Between the teacher and the student, it is the same level…Just like in the gamelan, there is no superiority; there is no need [for] inferiority. We are equal.” ~ I Ketut Gede Asnawa

“Music means a lot to me, and gamelan even more so because of the communal aspect to it. I mean, Pak Asnawa is the leader of the group, and he has more experience and knowledge of this form of music than anyone else in our group…and probably more than most people in the world. But he doesn’t even really feel like he’s the teacher and we’re the students sometimes. Sometimes he just feels like another member in the group.” ~ Cody Jones, student member

---

\(^{35}\) Translation provided by I Ketut Gede Asnawa and I Putu Tangkas Adi Hiranmayena.

\(^{36}\) In order from largest to smallest gong, the three main gongs for Balinese gamelan are *gong ageng*, *pur*, and *tong*. Gong ageng always marks the beginning/end of a cycle, while pur and tong mark smaller sections within the cycle.
The meaning behind *asah* as it applies to the gamelan ensemble speaks to Pak Asnawa in particular, as he received inspiration for his pedagogical philosophy from his own mentor, the renowned ethnomusicologist Mantle Hood. Pak claimed that before every class, Mantle Hood would say, “So you are a student? Even though…I still learn from you,” and Pak Asnawa added his own interpretation, saying “Just because you are a professor you are always on the top? No, no way. Sometimes you learn from somebody else in the class” (Asnawa, pers. comm., 2019a).

As mentioned before, the student-teacher relationship in a Balinese gamelan ensemble revolves around the common practice of *maguru panggul* (“teaching through the mallet”), a form of pedagogy that supports this idea of equality in the learning process (Bakan 1999, Talbot 2010, Clendinning 2013). A hierarchal aspect exists in that the teacher holds and shares their knowledge of all sections of the piece by playing it in front of the student, and the student must try to follow and memorize as best as they can while they play along. However, after the teacher feels confident that the student can play a new part by themselves, they will begin to play a corresponding part along with the student (interlocking part, harmony, melody from another instrumental section, etc.), not only to test the student’s knowledge but also to support their progress. If the student begins to fall behind, or forgets a certain aspect, the teacher will play with the student again and again until they are able to reproduce the melody on their own. The end goal is to achieve a point where not only the student can play their part, but specifically where the student and teacher can seamlessly play together, enriching each other’s performance and awareness of the piece overall, and thus acting as fellow performers who communicate as opposed to engaging in a unidirectional relationship often associated with teachers and students.

When asked what being in the gamelan ensemble meant to him, Cody Jones, a UIUC physics major and gamelan member who has performed with both UIUC ensembles, called
attention to the lived realities of teacher-student equality in his and other gamelan players’ interactions with Pak Asnawa. He states this observation and continues by saying that one of the defining characteristics of “feeling like a member” for him involves this egalitarian practice of switching instrument positions, which “levels the playing field” (Jones, pers. comm., 2018). By switching instrument positions, I am referring to how, for each piece, the gamelan musicians play a different instrument within the gamelan orchestra. This means, for example, that when we practice multiple pieces during a rehearsal, we often have to get up and change places for each piece unless Pak Asnawa requires us to stay at a certain instrument because of our skill level. This is beneficial pedagogically in many ways. More advanced members have the opportunity to continually develop their skills on instruments that they have previously learned, but sometimes they are required to move on to other instruments in order to challenge their musicianship (regarding musical material or technique). Beginning members have a chance to try something new with each rotation and thus expand not only their basic knowledge of gamelan techniques but also their understanding of how the ensemble functions together as a whole.

Whether a beginning member or a returning one, Pak Asnawa starts the semester by emphasizing how important it is for the ensemble to function together. He always reassures newcomers when they express anxiety about learning something new or about musical material being too fast to not worry because we will meet them where we are—we will compromise. To be honest, it does not always work out perfectly this way. Pak Asnawa typically ends up teaching to the stronger players in the room, which sometimes makes newer students feel that they are being left behind. Sometimes, these stronger players tend to be male-bodied percussionists, and this creates an unintentionally gendered dynamic that Asnawa and even other players are unaware of, due to Western percussion and gamelan traditions typically being very male-
dominated. At the same time, Pak Asnawa has adapted quite well to the co-ed nature of US gamelan ensembles, and when teaching to the strongest player means teaching to female-bodied persons, he doesn’t question or hold back from teaching at his fullest. Moreover, if stronger players in the ensemble recognize that others feel that they are being left behind, they sometimes take the initiative to help with teaching melodies or patterns, often using the practice of *maguru panggul* themselves. There are also moments of everyone singing different patterns or melodies at each other to help reinforce whatever material Pak Asnawa is teaching or to help speed along the process by teaching a corresponding part. The primary goal is still that everyone is given equal footing—that eventually we are all able to play our parts as best as we can. This is one way we build community, through a form of musical pedagogy that reflects the concept of *asah*.

**Asih (Empathy)**

“Asih is ‘love each other’...You have to understand, you have to make a communication to the other, right? This is our life, right? This is not just gamelan. Everywhere!” ~ I Ketut Gede Asnawa

“Being a part of the gamelan means a great deal to me. To me, being part of the gamelan resembles the importance of many people working together as one. Not only does the music require for different people to cohesively interlock patterns together, but it also represents the supportiveness and kindness within the community of gamelan at UIUC which is very meaningful to me.” ~Rebecca Panitch, student member

In her interview, Rebecca, a UIUC music education major and student gamelan member, succinctly summarizes what she perceives as an integral link between music-making and community building in the gamelan ensemble—empathetic support that arises from learning and performing interlocking parts together (Panitch, pers. comm., 2018). Rebecca’s observation echoes that of ethnomusicologist David Harnish in his chapter in *Performing Ethnomusicology,*
in which he discusses how his Balinese gamelan students at Bowling Green State University\textsuperscript{37} created community through listening practices (2004: 133). Balinese gamelan can sometimes initially sound like a “wall of sound,” and students who are coming from different musical backgrounds have to learn to listen in a different way—a more cooperative way—in order to perform their own musical parts correctly as well as create something together as a group.

Rebecca is referring to a characteristic in Balinese gamelan called \textit{kotekan}—an interlocking melody that is shared between two players. While it is important to know how your kotekan pattern precisely fits with the other, a gamelan student soon learns that it is equally important for them to listen for and recognize other instrumental parts in order to perform well. \textit{Kotekan} happens on what can be described as “elaboration instruments,” instruments that elaborate upon a skeletal melody performed by another set of “melodic instruments.” Often when trying to figure out how one’s part interlocks within a kotekan pattern, it can be useful to know how it relates to the skeletal melody, and in turn, how that melody relates to the overall gong cycle marked by a set of gongs and to the steady beat provided by the instrument named the \textit{kajar} (which translates to “teacher”). Knowing how a cycle repeats, how the skeletal melody repeats, and therefore how your \textit{kotekan} pattern repeats according to the overall cycle helps with memorizing and playing the pattern correctly. In addition to all of this, a gamelan musician must pay attention to the drum or \textit{kendang} to know when to change dynamics and tempo or when to break within the \textit{kotekan} pattern, an element called an \textit{angsel}. Learning to play gamelan thus means learning to participate in simultaneous, cooperative listening in order to know when to play and/or what to play.

\textsuperscript{37} Harnish now teaches Balinese gamelan at University of San Diego.
I find that this practice of learning cooperative listening resonates with my own experiences in the Balinese gamelan ensemble here at the UIUC. When I first started playing gamelan, I struggled because I could not always pick apart the different melodies and sections that were playing simultaneously with mine and did not understand the relationship between them. Some days, I definitely just guessed and hoped that it worked. Pak Asnawa and my more experienced friends like Putu and Tara would try to help by singing to me or saying things like, “Listen to gong! Hear how your part comes right after it?” or “Listen to the melody! Use it as a cue for when to start” or “Do you hear how your part fits with the beat?” or simply “Gong!” Of course, learning the material means learning the patterns themselves as well as the techniques necessary to play them. Still, after attaining the basic skills required to play, I eventually realized that if I was still struggling with a part, the problem most likely involved not listening correctly in some way and thus not hearing how everything fit together. Now that I have grown in my listening abilities, Tara and I are able to exclaim in frustrated solidarity, “I hear it! I hear how it works. But my hands just refuse to do it!” Some rehearsal days are more difficult than others, but we know that listening is definitely half the battle. When we do listen correctly, we are able to better maintain the interlocking and to organize everything very tightly (Hatfield, pers. comm., 2018).

When David Harnish discussed how listening practices created community in his Balinese gamelan ensemble, he made parallels to his perception of how traditional Balinese society functions communally. He further clarified that while his ensemble would not be able to fully follow this societal model in their own group, he still preserved and emphasized this connection between social bonding and ensemble playing and listening. He therefore witnessed results in how students supported and helped each other, both in and out of the classroom.
Harnish concludes, “It is the gamelan that has made this unique sociomusical world possible” (2004: 134). Rebecca also believes that learning to listen together while performing has led to better understanding each other and communicating with one another—what Pak Asnawa defines as the concept of *asih*. By having shared experiences of failing to listen, trying to listen better, having others give audible cues, and feeling the excitement and accomplishment when it finally works, gamelan ensemble members—no matter the level of ability—can empathize with the difficulties of the learning process.

Another way that the concept of *asih* is lived out and promoted in this ensemble is through the constant support and labor of Ibu Mardiani and twins Yunirika and Yonitika during my time in this ensemble. The twins have also indicated to me that their older sister Tarika also contributed to this foundation of support when she lived in the US and was a member of the ensembles. Though it is often left unspoken, it is understood that they all are a vital part to making sure the gamelan ensembles function as they should, and they hold just as important and powerful of a role as Pak Asnawa and his teaching as our resident cultural authorities. As mentioned before, Ibu Mardiani brings snacks for community gamelan, sometimes made with Yuni or Yoni’s help. This may seem like a gendered expectation for families like the Asnawas that teach in the US, but Ibu Mardiani definitely uses “snack time” as a way for her to indicate when the ensemble needs to rest. If Pak Asnawa and the ensemble become too focused on the task to the point that it seems we are losing motivation, Ibu Mardiani will shout out, “Ok! Snack break!” as soon as she gets the chance, and she will keep saying it until it happens.

Regarding their active participation in the gamelan ensemble, Ibu, Yoni, and Yuni fill in wherever there is a space needed, especially when membership numbers are low. They are able to pick up their musical parts very quickly, and they can usually start playing without extensive
instruction, only requiring small corrections or some guidance about specific elements every so often. Ibu, Yoni, and Yuni also lead the dance aspects of the ensemble’s semesterly performance, and actively discuss with Pak Asnawa what pieces should be featured and how they should be arranged for the performance. They schedule and lead dance rehearsals as needed, often opening up the Asnawas’ home for extra practice. Once again, there is a gendered expectation associated with this based on Balinese cultural practices, but as stated before, Ibu, Yuni, and Yoni take their roles in dance very seriously and powerfully take charge to make sure the ensemble is progressing accordingly. For example, if during combined dance and music rehearsal the musicians or even Pak Asnawa play one section too many times or not enough times, Ibu and the twins stop the ensemble and make sure we understand our mistake. They also provide constant feedback on the aesthetics of the dance accompaniment—whether it is too fast, too slow, too loud, etc. In many ways, Ibu, Tarika, Yuni, and Yoni are the metaphorical gong ageng (big gong) for our ensemble: their support and labor, though sometimes subtle, provides the framework for our ensemble to function correctly, and when they are not present, their absence is greatly felt. Their constant enactment of asih creates the atmosphere of empathy which in turn presents itself through our music-making.

Asuh (Reciprocity/Sharing)

“And Asuh---if you have more, you can [share] it... If they ask you a question, you have to answer it.” ~I Ketut Gede Asnawa

“Being away from Indonesia—far, far away from Indonesia, I still want to maintain my identity as Indonesian....because I grew up with this culture, traditional culture with dances, even though mostly Javanese. But I basically believe that wherever you are, if you can, you need to introduce or show your culture and share with others, especially those that don’t know much about your culture...and that’s...that’s what I do!” ~Ika Putri, community member
Ika Putri, a member of the community gamelan ensemble, both dances Balinese traditional dance and plays gamelan, though typically her main role in our group is as a dancer. Along with the Asnawa family, she and her family are part of the native Indonesians in the group. We definitely have other Indonesian members, but during my time here at UIUC, Ika has been one of the most dedicated participants who returns every semester. When asked about why she joined the UIUC Balinese gamelan, Ika excitedly shared about her past experiences with Javanese traditional dance and growing up in her hometown of Surabaya. She described learning both Javanese dance and gamelan in high school, touring from village to village with her teacher’s ludruk dance group, and even learning some Balinese dance like pendet (a type of welcoming dance). For her, the community gamelan is a way to keep up her hobby of learning Indonesian traditional arts. More specifically, she sees practicing and sharing these arts as a way of defining herself as an Indonesian citizen (Putri, pers. comm., 2018). In this way, Ika, her family, the Asnawas, and other Indonesian members of the community gamelan practice what Pak Asnawa considers the concept of asuh (reciprocity/sharing).

The holistic approach to learning and sharing about various cultural practices associated with a specific genre of music is not uncommon in what US universities denote as “non-Western ensembles.” In his book Performing Ethnomusicology, Ted Solís addresses issues of representation that accompany teaching a non-Western ensemble. He situates them in the midst of transnational, transcultural power dynamics, stating “In no sphere of ethnomusicological academia do we enter this contested space more unequivocally and richly than through the world of the ensemble, with its formidable diversity of cultural relationships: the director and each of the ensemble members, each of the members to every other, and one and all to the represented cultural tradition” (Solís 2004: 2). Though an ensemble represents the music practices of an
ethnic group that may or may not be present in their ensemble or audience, such ensembles can serve as connections between the higher education institution and community members of that ethnic group (5). All of these elements provide the potential for sites of community-building among students, between students and teachers, and between ensemble members and community members of the represented cultural tradition within the context of a space for music-making.

When talking about community-building practices and spaces for music-making related to gamelan, Balinese gamelan scholars typically describe the practices of a sekaha gong (also spelled as sekehe, seka, or sekaa)—a gamelan group or club—which usually gathers at a banjar, a community meeting place often present in many Balinese neighborhoods and villages. Bakan, Gold, and Talbot explain how a sekaha can form around other village activities such as making religious offerings, dancing, sacred singing, and kite-flying. Regardless of what kind of organization you choose to join, it is understood that being in a sekaha is a highly respected, community practice and, when necessary, one must put aside your daily, personal activities for the needs of the community (Bakan 1999, Gold 2005, Talbot 2010).

These scholars and others make comparisons between the structures of a sekaha or sekaha gong and that of Balinese gamelan ensembles in the US. Clendinning mentions the sekaa gong that I Made Lasmawan, a gamelan teacher in the US, still leads in his hometown of Bangah in Bali every summer to highlight the transnational nature of his work (2013: 107). Harnish compares the ensemble he led at Bowling Green State University to a sekaha, observing that while they aimed for a similar level of cooperation and social bonding among ensemble members, there were definite differences in hierarchal structure and frequency of rehearsals due to the limitations of a university ensemble (2004, 134). Even though being in the US may come with different social expectations and realities, especially in a university setting, McGraw and
Lueck recognize how some American gamelan community groups are committed to trying to create a *sekaha* in the States, particularly following their egalitarian and democratic processes as closely as possible. For example, Lueck describes the main goals of one of the largest and oldest non-profit community gamelans in the US, Sekar Jaya, located in San Francisco Bay Area. The group was founded with the specific intent of mirroring a *sekaha* in Bali, and thus gamelan members often have other duties in addition to learning and playing gamelan. Through the financial and voluntary support of their membership, Sekar Jaya is able to provide for all its needs such as a rental space, staff, visiting artists-in-residence, and various workshops, rehearsals, and performances (McGraw 2016: 135; Lueck 2012: 39-42).

The UIUC student and community gamelans do not function quite like a *sekaha gong* as other American gamelan ensembles do. Because of the presence of Pak Asnawa and the context of the university setting, it may fit more closely with what Lueck describes as a group that follows a single leader with a vision (2012:16). For both ensembles, Pak Asnawa develops a repertoire plan for the end-of-the-semester concert for them to work towards, and both groups typically abide by that plan unless unforeseen circumstances arise. However, as discussed before in the section on *asih* (empathy), Pak Asnawa and ensemble members aim for a context of developing comradery, respect, and cooperation within the student gamelan ensemble—a context that mirrors what Balinese gamelan scholars have described within an ideal *sekaha gong*. The community group has a similar goal of cooperation, and since it uses the same university space and has an affiliation with the Robert E. Brown Center for World Music, it essentially functions as a free version of the student class that is open to the Urbana-Champaign community. However, because of the relationship this community ensemble has developed with the Urbana-Champaign Indonesian community, it has become a more prominent vehicle for sharing
Indonesian culture—both within the group itself and across campus and community through performance.

Community gamelan ensemble contrasts the student group in not only the presence of adults from the community but also the common presence of Indonesian undergraduates, graduate students, and families who are trying to find a community-based activity that promotes their ideas of Indonesian culture. Indonesian students often try out the community group because they heard of it from Permias, the Indonesian Students Club on campus. Sometimes, the Asnawas or members like Ika convince their Indonesian friends to join, and Ika has recently brought her two daughters to learn and play gamelan as well. If there is a decent number of Indonesian members, Pak Asnawa likes to switch between instructing in Indonesian and in English during community gamelan rehearsals. The dance class led by Ibu Mardiani is typically composed of mainly Indonesian women who have befriended Ibu Mardiani and/or the Asnawa twin daughters, Yoni and Yuni. Sometimes, students like Tara and I will join the community dance class as well, unless there is a shortage of gamelan players, and thus Ibu Mardiani will switch between instructions in Indonesian and in English. Furthermore, the community gamelan snack break for both musicians and dancers usually has some type of Indonesian or Balinese savory snack or dessert, largely thanks to Ibu Mardiani, and someone always happily shares the Indonesian or Balinese word for the weekly snack, if asked for it. Overall, community gamelan serves as a place for sharing Indonesian language, food, and cultural practices, all while learning about Balinese gamelan and traditional dance, which Indonesians have deemed as some of its most important traditional arts (Yampolsky 1995 and 2008).

Although Urbana-Champaign is small in scope, Pak Asnawa receives a decent amount of requests for gigs and performances throughout the year. Usually, a specific group is requested.
Typically, the student gamelan performs for class demonstrations such as in the world music survey course, while the community gamelan performs for events like the annual Indonesian Cultural Night with the Indonesian Students Club (Permias). The smaller Bali Lantari, a merged group of committed musicians and dancers selected by Pak Asnawa and Ibu Mardiani from both ensembles, may perform for both Indonesian Cultural Night and off-campus gigs in the Urbana-Champaign area or in nearby towns. Most of these performances have the intent of teaching and sharing with the audience—whether mainly Indonesian or not—our representation of Balinese traditional music and dance.

During the Indonesian Cultural Night performances that I have attended or participated in, the students running the event often have a skit that introduces each type of Indonesian cultural tradition that Permias wishes to highlight. They pretend to visit and learn about famous Indonesian islands—such as Java, Sumatra, and Bali—and encounter different Indonesian cultural practices (Javanese traditional dances, Saman dance, modern Angklung choir, etc.) while presenting different facts about these islands and Indonesian history and culture more generally. The event also features visitors from the Indonesian Consulate in Chicago, who not only represent the larger Indonesian community in Chicago but also formally promote Indonesian culture and travel to Indonesia to the audience. For several years, the Balinese gamelan ensemble—whether the community group or Bali Lantari—has represented the island of Bali and its vibrant culture for this event. In 2016, Yoni and Yuni recruited Permias members and student gamelan members to learn and perform kecak, a type of Balinese vocal gamelan developed by foreign expats and local Balinese musicians in the early 1900s that has become a common tourist attraction (Youtube 2016; Dibia 1996). This annual event has the purpose of sharing with Indonesians and non-Indonesians alike what the nation has to offer, and Bali being a popular
tourist attraction is always featured as a shining example of success through the Asnawa family and the gamelan members who join them.

On the other hand, Bali Lantari participates in performances for largely non-Indonesian audiences. As a smaller, more mobile group, we have a repertoire that we perform for off-campus events. Also functioning as a representative group of one of the various examples of Indonesian culture, we have performed for gigs that have a world music, cultural fair, or Asian American heritage theme featured in places like community centers or the local library. Other events, like at the annual Urbana Sweet Corn Festival or a performance at the nearby Alto Vineyards, promote Bali Lantari as a local music group, and thus the ensemble has gained recognition as a valuable cultural practice in the Urbana-Champaign community. While our performances at the Sweet Corn Festival tends to draw a familiar fan base of friends, the Bali Lantari performances at venues like Alto Vineyard or the local restaurant Seven Saints often has audiences that have never encountered any type of Balinese or Indonesian music. Thus, in all of these instances, we usually provide a brief explanation of where the music comes from and the purposes of the dances and instrumental pieces.

Pak Asnawa and his family always make an effort to teach about their knowledge of Balinese culture, particularly in how they understand its relationship to Indonesian citizenship and identity. Through the community gamelan ensemble, they hope to share their music and dance tradition with not only locals and students in the Urbana-Champaign area but also with the Indonesian community connected to the university. Their passion for this art receives further support from Indonesian members in gamelan, like Ika, who see sharing their cultural practices as a vital part of maintaining their Indonesian identity. In the UIUC Balinese gamelan ensembles,
this sharing of Balinese and Indonesian culture is the best example of the concept that Pak Asnawa calls asuh (reciprocity/sharing).

**Asah, Asih, Asuh**

Using concepts from Balinese philosophy that Pak Asnawa has shared with me, I have explored how the UIUC Balinese gamelan ensembles build community through music-making, specifically in relation to the frameworks of asah (equality), asih (empathy), and asuh (reciprocity/sharing). Pak Asnawa stated in an interview with me that these concepts could relate to the philosophy of how a gamelan ensemble functions and should become a more internalized aspect of the group. The actions of Pak Asnawa, his family, and gamelan members during my time at the UIUC have shown this to be true to our ensembles. In all of the instances and examples described, a common theme of concepts related to teaching and learning Balinese gamelan seems to be how these philosophical concepts are reiterated by the members themselves, as seen in each of my interviews, whether they realize it or not. According to Pak Asnawa and Cody, asah (equality) concerns maintaining equality between the teacher and students as well as among the gamelan members themselves while they rehearse through certain pedagogical practices that meet the students where they are in their playing abilities. According to Rebecca, asih (empathy) involves listening correctly and intently to each other while learning a piece together; this way of learning to listen creates a type of empathetic support that can extend beyond the gamelan rehearsal space into everyday friendships. According to Ika, asuh (reciprocity/sharing) consists of teaching others about her Indonesian identity through learning Balinese music and dance. Though Pak Asnawa often teaches the student gamelan ensemble about Balinese culture, the UIUC community gamelan and its related ensemble, Bali Lantari,
particularly become places for learning about a subset of Balinese and Indonesian cultural practices and for representing a form of Balinese music traditions in the Urbana-Champaign community at large through performances. Collectively, these different pedagogical practices and approaches cultivate the *wirama* or overall “rhythm” of the UIUC student and community gamelan ensembles.

**Wirasa (Feeling)**

When Pak Asnawa discusses *wirasa* or “feeling,” he refers to not only our individual approaches to learning our parts, but also the internal, embodied aspect of being a musician and having musical sensitivities. Though achieving *wirasa* is not necessarily an act of achieving something practical, it does have practical results (a concept Pak Asnawa calls *kompak* or *risih*): we become performance ready. In order to do this, we have to practice knowing and memorizing the musical material of the piece correctly (including the overall form) and developing a musical sensibility for tempo and dynamic changes. Solidifying these practical aspects will help us perform to the best of our ability and communicate a sense of confidence and sincerity to our audience. For this final section, I am using *wirasa* as a way to discuss specific pedagogical and performance practices as they relate to the UIUC ensembles. How does Pak Asnawa communicate his concept of *wirasa* and performing Balinese gamelan to us in rehearsals so that we can perform at our best? How has he had to adjust his pedagogical methods to better suit the university context in order to reach this goal and to better accommodate each student’s abilities? How does this discussion relate to ethnomusicological scholarship about gamelan ensembles and other forms of world music ensembles? As I provide an overview of frameworks and critiques about different aspects of representation and performance practice from ethnomusicological
scholars, I will also expound on corresponding examples of how the UIUC ensembles takes its repertoire from the rehearsal space to the performance hall every semester.

“For Finding A Way”: A Pedagogy of Compromising

In his chapter “A Square Peg in a Round Hole: Teaching Javanese Gamelan in the Ensemble Paradigm of the Academy” (2004), Roger Vetter presents three dilemmas that he has faced as a Javanese gamelan instructor in the academy. When he first started teaching, he had ideal objectives that focused on producing competent performers in the Javanese music tradition and on teaching extensively about Javanese music and its relationship to Javanese society. Noticing the tendency of high turnover every semester, he soon realized that he as a teacher had to think more broadly about how his class could be used to equip students for their futures in music-making. Thus, he adjusted his objectives to focus on his students experiencing first-hand Javanese music and culture and on him encouraging them towards self-exploration of this music as well as other musics beyond the Western traditions they had most likely encountered growing up. Vetter further critiques the expectations of transmission and performance placed on his university Javanese ensemble. He compares the rehearsals to a foreign language class, in which he is expected to immerse the students for a semester in musical structures, vocabularies, and syntax most likely unfamiliar to them. Then, the university music school system tends to require a performance every semester, just as they would require of (as Vetter says) “canonic ensembles” such as orchestra or choir. However, music students in choirs and orchestras typically have an extensive background in that musical tradition, while students in a Javanese gamelan ensemble have to learn the basics of a tradition and perform what they have learned in a short span of time. While Vetter does offer a possible model that could address these major
issues of the current ensemble paradigm in US schools of music, he concludes that until such institutions recognize and respond to the instructional challenges that ensembles like Javanese gamelan must overcome in a university context, he and other world music ensemble teachers are resigned to “forcing a square peg into a round hole” (2004: 117-124).

David Harnish discusses the similar challenges of teaching a Balinese gamelan ensemble in the US within his chapter, “‘No, Not ‘Bali Hai’!: Challenges of Adaptation and Orientalism in Performing and Teaching Balinese Gamelan” (2004). Because his students sometimes did not remain in the ensemble beyond one or two semesters, he saw his method of transferring knowledge about Balinese music and culture as one of constant compromise. He described pedagogical approaches that differed from Balinese teaching styles, such as denoting the main gong stroke as “beat one” despite it technically being the last beat, using cipher notation for certain instruments to teach the core melody (pokok), breaking up longer patterns into smaller groups and repeating those parts until students felt comfortable with them, and stopping to discuss verbally how certain interlocking parts work to help students learn it faster. All of this is done to combat the time constraints placed upon a semester-long gamelan class. Overall, Harnish believes the Balinese gamelan ensemble in a US university should try to combat romantic, orientalist attitudes and instead encourage the better understanding and enhanced musicality that comes with experiencing and performing a musical culture different from one’s own (2004: 129-133, 136-137).

In his own study of music transmission within the UIUC Balinese Gamelan, music educator Brent Talbot observes how Pak Asnawa in the past has altered “traditional Balinese mediational means” to improve his musicians’ abilities and to accommodate the norms of higher education institutions (2010: 93). In his fourth chapter, Talbot introduces the concepts of “direct
acculturation” and “analytics teaching” to describe how Pak Asnawa transmits pedagogical material. By “direct acculturation,” Talbot refers to how Pak Asnawa encourages his university students to adopt Balinese traits, values, and social patterns that relate specifically to playing gamelan. Essentially, how do the players learn about the meaning behind this musical practice while simultaneously learning how to play the instruments put before them? Talbot illustrates this through the typical “first day of gamelan” lecture that Pak Asnawa gives, in which he not only lectures about his idea of how Balinese values apply to the gamelan instruments but also teaches beginner technique exercises that reiterate these concepts. For example, Pak Asnawa usually has beginner players on a skeletal melody instrument (like jublag or jegogan) hit the first note together to hear the acoustic beating formed by the pairing of male and female instruments (lanang/wadon) and then immediately teaches them the muting technique of how to move from one note to the next (48-54).

By “analytics teaching,” Talbot is borrowing from Pak Asnawa’s own words about his mediational means of teaching—specifically how does Pak Asnawa teach in the style of maguru panggul (having students copy and follow his mallet)? How does Pak Asnawa “find a way” to communicate with his university students, and how do the students “find a way” to understand him? Based on his experiences in the UIUC gamelan rehearsal space, Talbot defines “analytics teaching” as consisting of few words and using mediational means that are adjusted to the students’ needs. These adjustments include using Western numbers to represent pitches, slowing down the tempo when teaching a specific part, or showing the composite of the interlocking parts so that students can better understand how they work together. Talbot concludes by contrasting how, with direct acculturation, Pak Asnawa served as the main interpreter, but when using his methods of analytics teaching, he expects the students to act as active translators as well (61-74).
During my own time in the UIUC Balinese gamelan ensembles, I have witnessed Pak Asnawa using the same methods that Talbot so closely observed and facing the same constraints that Vetter and Harnish thoroughly described in their own experiences as gamelan teachers. Despite having the advantage of conservatory training in Bali and a native Balinese perspective, Pak Asnawa confirmed in an interview with me that he still has to compromise his teaching style to accommodate both the oral tradition he learned and the academic system in which he now teaches—he still has to find a way that we can all find our way together. Having observed how others teach gamelan music within a US academic system, Pak Asnawa noticed that teachers would notate the music, break down the various structural elements, and then analyze them one by one. This is most likely akin to how Harnish described breaking down longer patterns into smaller parts, repeating them until students were comfortable, and then discussing verbally how they fit together with students. Pak Asnawa responded to this by saying, “I don’t want to do that…I want to communicate with my feeling with you. I don’t talk very much. If you have questions, you automatically can ask me. I don’t want to waste my time during the practice.” (Asnawa, pers. comm., 2019a).

In order to meet the time-constraining requirement of performing at the end of semester, Pak Asnawa feels that he must use a different approach to compromising, though one that still attempts to take into account student abilities. Although he may show us one smaller section at a time, he constantly reiterates the importance of seeing the bigger picture of the piece. Sometimes, he will move on within the section or within the piece even if we may not have a full grasp of the initial part we are trying to learn so that we can get a feeling for where the piece is headed and how everything fits together. After repeating a larger section multiple times and having us follow along as best as possible, Pak Asnawa will stop and start breaking down the
specifics of the pattern with which we are struggling. He gives us time to ask him about certain parts that we have not mastered, and he will address technique issues, too. However, he explains that his goal is not to develop really strong gamelan students in one semester who can play one piece well, as this is unrealistic for the requirements placed on a US university gamelan ensemble. Instead, he wants his students to experience multiple pieces at different levels of complexity so they can compare and learn from rehearsing and performing them. In this way, we are able to perform a decent repertoire at the end of each semester that challenges us but also meets us at our varying levels of playing ability (Asnawa, pers. comm., 2019a).

Another way that Pak Asnawa compromises and expedites the process of learning is his use of notation. Similar to Harnish, he provides cipher notation to help both beginning and returning gamelan musicians learn the core melody (pokok). Usually, it is understood that the instruments that play the core melody (jublag and jegogan) will have notation while embellishing instruments who mainly play interlocking parts (kotekan) still have to learn by following along and memorizing. However, Pak Asnawa sometimes gives the gangsa and reyong players (both types of embellishing instruments that play interlocking parts) notation as well if he thinks they need the framework or if he needs to accelerate the piece’s progress. Furthermore, some semesters the student and community gamelan groups have a large number of members, and it can be difficult for one person to teach each section of instruments a full piece by rote in a designated amount of time. He clarifies, “If I have an assistant—maybe 3 or 4 assistants—I wouldn’t need that thing [notation]…but it’s a little bit longer process. But with notation, it’s a shortcut” (Asnawa, pers. comm., 2019a). As I mentioned in an earlier section of this chapter, learning how to listen to gamelan correctly while rehearsing is a vital part of becoming a more competent musician in a gamelan ensemble, but at the same time, Pak Asnawa’s use of notation
also serves as an important aspect of his pedagogical approach and thus slightly complicates this aspect of cooperative listening and learning to listen.

Learning through a mix of notation and oral tradition has both pedagogical benefits and drawbacks for gamelan students. Students with a strong background in reading Western art music notation can find it useful for quickly locating the right set of notes to play, but beginning students with this background may struggle with reading the cipher notation in a way that reflects Balinese gamelan idioms. Forgetting that it is primarily to be used as a framework, they thus misinterpret how their part is supposed to sound or to be counted and often listen incorrectly to how their part fits with others (or maybe develop a bad habit of not listening at all). More advanced students can usually read and perform the notation correctly, since they have a better sense of certain idioms and how to listen to others in the group, but the use of notation tends to inhibit their ability to later memorize the full piece. In contrast, students who do not have a strong background in reading music but have the ability to learn by ear especially struggle with playing from notation. Having experienced mostly music majors or people who have musical training in the Western art tradition, sometimes Pak Asnawa does not realize that the students are not able to apply musical notation in this way, and this can lead to slower progress. For example, Tara, an advanced student in the UIUC student and community ensembles, can play from the notation for interlocking parts but finds that she cannot read and translate it fast enough to play the patterns at a consistent tempo.\(^3\) She usually ends up either asking Pak Asnawa to show her the pattern in person or tries to memorize the notation quickly so she does not have to use it (Hatfield, pers. comm., 2018). Since Pak Asnawa knows my and Tara’s skill level, sometimes he allows us to not use notation, even for core melody instruments. Essentially, he offers notation as

---

3\(^3\) This is due to her experiences of studying Balinese gamelan with Pak I Made Lasmawan at Colorado College for several years before she came to the University of Illinois. Pak Lasmawan has a different teaching style.
a possible tool for his students, but if we can, he prefers that we move past relying on it and memorize our parts as we learn them. Having taught in the US academic system for a while, Pak Asnawa has learned to offer compromises so that his students can be successful, but for his returning students, he tries to encourage them to try different methods of learning that fit more closely with Balinese practices (Talbot 2010).

As I attempt to learn more in the “Balinese” style and progress in my ability to rely more on my ears, I realize that I watch Pak Asnawa’s movements very closely in order to understand how certain sections work and how the overall piece should be performed—in contrast to staring at the notation. If Putu, the only student in our group who grew up playing gamelan, helps with teaching different parts of a piece, I have learned to watch his movements as well. I notice that some of the other students, especially the returning ones, have learned to do this, too. I believe this habit develops from learning via maguru panggul. This may also result from becoming accustomed to Pak Asnawa’s method of “analytics teaching” that described by Talbot earlier in this section. Both Pak Asnawa and Putu expect us to watch their body movements for cues, and returning students know how to do this and call others’ attention to this as well.

In the context of ensembles within a US School of Music, maybe some of Pak Asnawa’s and Putu’s movements would be compared to the cues that a conductor gives, depending on their function. Sometimes, Pak Asnawa and Putu provide hand gestures to show us a melody or a certain rhythmic pattern. For example, similar to solfege, Pak Asnawa and Putu will use big hand gestures to show the instruments playing the skeletal melody (pokok) the order, shape, and rhythm of the pitches. More generally, Pak Asnawa and Putu provide larger structural cues with their body signals. In Balinese gamelan gong kebyar style especially, going from one large section to another is often signaled by tempo or dynamic changes. Leading these changes with
sonic signals from the *kendang* (drum), Pak Asnawa usually sits up taller, looks around with eyes wide at the rest of us, and makes more pronounced, excited movements with his arms and shoulders. He often slightly leans back with his head up to indicate that we should be anticipating a change and playing louder or faster (or both), and then moves his head forward and down on the exact moment when he wants us to change. Missing that cue either results in a livid stare or just pure laughter—all depending on our progress thus far. These body movements appear to function as pedagogical tools as well, and a US university student may definitely draw correlations between them and styles of conducting they see in their other ensembles. From my standpoint, I also see this as Pak Asnawa’s way of embodying and communicating the “feeling” or *wirasa* he wants us to achieve.

**Conclusion: Wicaksana and Wibawa**

When interviewing Pak Asnawa about these various models and how they applied to my concepts of learning Balinese gamelan at the University of Illinois, I told him I wanted to primarily focus on the first three elements of *Panca “wi.”* He challenged this, stating, “But you can’t talk about *Panca “wi”* without all five!” He says this because *panca* literally means “five,” but more than that, the way he describes the five elements always involves how they interrelate. For example, *wiraga* (material) and *wirama* (rhythm) together are the starting place for a gamelan musician. The musical elements of a piece—pitches, melodic patterns, structural form, beat, tempo, dynamics, musical context etc.—are where one has to begin in order to learn how to play a specific piece and how to develop basic techniques. *Wicaksana* (wisdom) and *wibawa* (charisma), on the other hand, together represent the end goals of becoming a professional gamelan musician. Pak Asnawa defines them as elements that concern maturity and enrichment
in gamelan performance. When a musician achieves wicaksana (wisdom), they are able to recall pieces and pick up the flow of the music without any help. They have solidly trained in the first three elements of Panca “wi,” and thus recognize musical patterns and structures in gamelan music very easily. Pak Asnawa equates wibawa (charisma) with wider recognition from community and society. The gamelan musician who achieves wibawa well-deservingly receives respect for their many performances and achievements over the years. In the midst of all of this is the element of wirasa (feeling). From the first steps to the desired goals, wirasa remains as the underlying, internalized element—the unique musical sensitivities that becomes the defining personality of each gamelan musician (Asnawa, pers. comm., 2019a). Even in the five-part of structure of Panca “wi,” the Power of Three model emerges: the gamelan musician’s journey begins with wiraga and wirama, results in the successes of wicaksana and wibawa, and is held together by the uniqueness of their wirasa.

This concept of Panca “wi” also applies to the process of learning Balinese gamelan at the University of Illinois. The gamelan rehearsal space (wiraga) and the internalized philosophies of community-building through music-making (wirama) are vital to becoming a Balinese gamelan musician at the University of Illinois. Through these elements, the UIUC Balinese gamelan communities have learned creative, transformative ways of working within a postsecondary music institution. The UIUC Balinese gamelan ensembles, furthermore, strive toward their own end goals of wicaksana and wibawa—the wisdom of how to successfully function within the environment of a US academic system and the recognition for their hard work of maintaining a visible and audible presence in the UIUC School of Music and the surrounding community through their active performances. In the midst of all of this, the underlying foundation for their success—the element (wirasa) that defines their uniqueness as a
Balinese gamelan program in the United States—is located in the transmission and embodiment of their pedagogical practices shared by the groups themselves. All of this stems from the collaborative effort of Pak Asnawa, Ibu Mardiani, and their daughters Tarika, Yuni, and Yoni, who have had to work within and adapt to the framework of institutional histories—both within the US and in Indonesia—and then show us how to function within these same frameworks as a group successfully.
CONCLUSION

Sikut is “measurement”… and diawak means “in the posture” or “in the body.”

Your body is divided into three parts—head, body, legs. This is the same as the
universe—bhur, bhuah, swah—Mother Earth, space [or atmosphere], and Father Sky.
Everything connects, but the order comes from here… So this is sikut diawak: Whatever
you do, look at yourself first.


***

When teaching gamelan, Pak Asnawa often relates this concept of sikut diawak
(measurements of the body) to certain aspects of gamelan—both the music and the ensemble. He
particularly uses it in reference to the tri-angga (three divisions) musical structures of gamelan
compositions in gong kebyar style. This three-part form typically consists of the following:

kawitan – “head,” pengawak – “body,” and pengecet – “legs.” Another classical way, often
associated with tabuh kreasi (new compositions) is the following four-part form: gineman –
“head”, gegenderan and bapang – “body,” and pengecet – “legs” (Bakan 1999, Tenzer 2000,
Gold 2005, McGraw 2013). This type of compositional téori (theory) developed in Balinese
gamelan conservatories during President Suharto’s New Order as a way to merge together
influences from Western theory or Theory,39 the spirit of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (“Unity in
Diversity”), and Balinese Hindu concepts originally associated with higher-caste priests.
Specifically, “Unity in Diversity,” was one New Order strategy for maintaining certain cultures
and customs. It became a political movement that encouraged the development of a collective

39 As McGraw explains, Theory in the sense of Western ideas of supposed universals— theories that can be applied
both in the West and the rest of the world. Such ideas were spread with Dutch colonialism and other postcolonial
forces in Indonesia (2013).
national cultural identity with the revitalization and promotion of certain regional cultures as the possession of all Indonesians. Through tri-angga forms, certain Balinese gamelan compositional practices were thus standardized and feasibly transformed into representatives of national Indonesian culture. Not only retroactively implemented on to klasik (classic) forms, tri-angga forms changed compositional directions with the impact of renowned conservatory composition faculty I Wayan Beratha and his expansion and application of a four-part structure to tabuh kreasi (“new composition”) used in kebyar contests (McGraw 2013: 58-60, 113).

Pak Asnawa engages with this historical and political background in his article “Kebhinekaan dan Kompleksitas Gamelan Bali [Diversity and Complexity in Balinese Gamelan],” in which he argues that various elements of Balinese gamelan arts, materials, and practices inherently correspond with the concept of Bhineka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity), especially in how they draw from Balinese cultural and spiritual values (2007: 26). For example, Pak Asnawa demonstrates how tri-angga form corresponds with the idea of tri sakti (Power of Three) through how it borrows from the Balinese Hinduism concepts of bhuwana agung (macrosom) and bhuwana alit (microcosm). He explains how the universe’s structure of bhuwana agung is composed of bhur loka (earth), bhuah loka (atmosphere or middle space), and swah loka (sky) and is reflected on to the human bodily structure in the form of bhuwana alit, which consists of the head, the body, and the legs (41). This reflection is the concept of sikut diawak.

This reflection, however, does not necessarily have a unilateral direction. Pak Asnawa clarified in an interview that bhur also describes our activities on earth, and what happens in the larger context of bhuwana agung can act as a resource for these earthly activities or even as a source of clarification. At the same time, if the activities on earth exploit these resources, this
negatively affects *bhuwana agung* itself. This is why Pak Asnawa says, “Everything connects, but the order comes from here” (Asnawa, pers. comm., 2019a). Essentially, the concept of *sikut diawak* (measurement in the body) as it relates to *bhuwana alit* and *bhuwana agung* can be described as a balance between internal and external elements. The external models from others or the surrounding environment become internalized as your own creation, and your own internalization of these models feeds back into those same external elements, affecting change. This can become a cyclical, dialectical process, but the most important aspect is the connection between these opposing forces, for the intermediary connection defines where you are in relation to the contrasting elements.

From what I have seen in writings of music scholars on Balinese gamelan music, we have a tendency to write about Balinese philosophical concepts taught to us by our teachers and apply them poetically to our understanding of the music or phenomenon we are studying or performing. Having worked with Pak Asnawa, Michael Bakan’s book is organized according to a common *baleganjur* compositional form, very similar to this *tri-angga* form I have described. In his introduction, Bakan also references a Balinese Hindu concept about cultural history being divided into three main periods, a narrative that I recognize from my conversations with Asnawa, and Bakan uses this model to theorize about fieldwork and the research process for ethnomusicologists (1999, 6, 18-20). In the introduction to her book *Music in Bali*, Lisa Gold discusses these same three periods of Balinese Hindu history and the concept of *desa, kala, patra*—a concept about everything having an appropriate place, time, and circumstance—to frame how she will inform the reader about the wide range of musical practices in Bali in the chapters to follow (2005, 6-26). Since she studied with Pak Made Lasmawan, Elizabeth Clendinning not only uses the concept of *air mengalir* mentioned earlier in this thesis but also
desa, kala, patra to explain how Balinese gamelan ensembles in the US adapt to their individual situations in order to effectively carry on the pedagogical and artistic lineages taught to them (2013, 254). Brent Talbot recently co-published an educational resource with Pak Asnawa and their friend Pak Made Taro entitled, Gending Raré: Children’s Songs and Games from Bali. This book of children’s songs from Bali meant to be used by music teachers in the US is an outgrowth of Talbot’s 2010 dissertation, and each song is paired with a Balinese philosophical concept (2017). All of this is only a small subset of examples from the music scholarship on Balinese gamelan topics.

I think it is important that music scholars, educators, and performers who want to be a part of the larger Balinese-US gamelan network continue to employ the language of these philosophical terms in the way that they were taught by their Balinese teachers. This gives preference to the teachers’ voices over their own and allows these scholars, educators, and performers to use these tools to make sense of their personal, musical experiences. This was my own goal with using Asnawa’s understanding of the concepts such as Panca “wi” and tri sakti—specifically his theoretical language found within his teaching strategies and philosophies—to make sense of what it means to be a gamelan musician at UIUC in a particular moment.

If applicable and useful, such philosophical concepts could extend beyond their use in written scholarship to active pedagogy in the classrooms of gamelan ensembles in the US. I think the specific language and terminology used in teaching strategies and philosophies like those of Pak Asnawa’s Panca “wi” and Pak Made Lasmawan’s Panca Meguru⁴⁰--from which they

---

⁴⁰Pak Made’s Panca Meguru consists of a similar arrangement of concepts outlined as five gurus or “teachers:” Guru Tingal (learning through the instruments themselves), Guru Panggul (learning through following the teacher’s mallet), Guru Kuping (learning through listening well to the tempo and beat correctly), Guru Lagu (learning through how the song’s form flows together), and Guru Rasa (the element of feeling that ties all other aspects together). Pak Made’s model has rasa as the main goal, and he has talked about how he used this model to shape and teach his own gamelan ensembles—including community group Tunas Mekar, in Denver, CO (Pranishita 2019; Lasmawan, pers. comm., 2019).
learned from their similar educational backgrounds in Bali and have taught to their own
groups—have proven to be successful models that not only encourage gamelan music-making
but also teach the students participating in that music about some of the histories and cultural
context associated with such practices. Such pedagogical and theoretical models provide a
measure or a framework similar to the tri-angga forms for effectively representing and engaging
with the bhuwana agung that consists of the institutional histories, US postsecondary music
institution policies, pedagogical legacies, and transnational networks within which gamelan
ensembles in the US operate, whether they choose to acknowledge this or not.

Of course, I recognize that such frameworks come with complicated histories and issues,
including that of colonialist practices and nationalist standardizations, much of which
characterizes the bhuwana agung. However, this is why we—scholars, educators, and performers
associated with gamelan programs, musicology programs, and/or US postsecondary music
institutions—must first look intensely at ourselves. We need to fully scrutinize the bhuwana alit
of cyclical narratives of our own institutional histories and their impact on our music-making.
We must continue to examine the narratives we tell ourselves about our gamelan programs, our
ensembles, our Schools, our disciplines, and our histories in order to remind ourselves about
what we should continue to pass on and about what we can do better.

This was the purpose of this thesis: constructing a history of gamelan programs at UIUC
from various historical narratives and examining how they converged and conflicted in regard to
whether a gamelan ensemble in the US should be for making interesting music or for educating
others about musical and cultural practices in Java and Bali. The practice of UIUC gamelan
programs, both at its experimental beginnings and in its more recent pursuits led by Pak Asnawa
and Putu Hiranmayena, to perpetuate a style of gamelan music-making that says, “Why not have
both?” tells us how a gamelan program at UIUC can continue to succeed. However, it also tells us where we fall short. For example, I will admit my own history of gamelan programs at Illinois as well as its current ensemble mainly features the voices of men in this history, both in Indonesia and the US, mainly because they are the ones that hold these narratives. My work does provide a place for the experiences and contributions of important women in these gamelan programs such as Maria Omo, Ibu Mardiani, and Yonitika and Yunirika Asnawa. However, the main woman’s voice is primarily my own. What would this project look like if it was revised to explore mainly the voices of female-bodied persons in these gamelan programs as well as those programs in the larger Indonesian-US network? What can we do to make sure these voices are recorded thoroughly for future histories about the gamelan programs in the US? If the cyclical philosophies taught to us hold true, then lessons that are learned and implemented within the bhuwana alit of our scholarship and our educational realities will return again to the bhuwana agung of transnational legacies to transform them.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Youtube. “KECAK, Innovated (Kreasi) – UIUC Indonesian Students Club.” Uploaded on Nov. 4, 2016. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HeuCTQGwXwE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HeuCTQGwXwE).

---. “Metakon (To Ask) by Putu Tangkas Adi Hiranmayena.” Uploaded on Dec. 5, 2016. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3xnykQ4AN4E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3xnykQ4AN4E).


APPENDIX A: ARCHIVAL MATERIALS

Sousa Archives & Center for American Music


University of Illinois Archives


APPENDIX B: INTERVIEWS

Asnawa, I Ketut Gede.
Capwell, Charles.
Hatfield, Tara. Interviewed Nov. 27, 2018.
Hiranmayena, I Putu Tangkas Adi.
Nettl, Bruno.
Omo, Maria.
Widaryanto, F. X. Interviewed Nov. 21, 2018.