WELCOME TO GAMELAN

Artistic and Musical Director: I Nyoman Suadin (latifahnyoman@earthlink.net)
Teaching Assistant: Caroline Reyes (caroline.palser@rochester.edu)
Director, Gamelan and Ethnomusicology Programs: Ellen Koskoff
(ekoskoff@esm.rochester.edu)

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE, ATTENDANCE, AND PROCEDURES:
1. There are two rehearsals a week:
   a. Saturday afternoons: 3:00—5:30
   b. Midweek rehearsal TBD.
2. Because our music is learned by ear and relies so much on ensemble interaction and energy, attendance is very important. Please arrive on time to all rehearsals. If you cannot make a rehearsal, contact Caroline beforehand.
3. Saturday rehearsals are required, but, after the first couple of months, you may opt out of the midweek rehearsal if you think that you do not need it.
4. You may also want to bring a recorder to rehearsals to record new songs, as we use no notation and you cannot take an instrument home to practice.
5. It is customary to eat during breaks, so whenever you feel moved to do so, bring in a little “nosh” to share.

ATTENDANCE POLICY/GRADING:
Grading is done purely on the basis of attendance. Saturday rehearsals are required. You will be allowed one freebie Saturday absence; if you need to miss another rehearsal for an important reason, contact Caroline. To make up for any absence you will be required to attend the next 2 mid-week rehearsals so as not to lose your place in the ensemble. If you do not follow these practices, your grade will be lowered by one notch (from A to A-, etc) for each absence.

Lateness counts. We expect everyone to arrive on time for rehearsals. If you are more than 15 minutes late two times, this will count as one unexcused absence.

GAMELAN ROOM RULES:
1. Remove shoes before entering room
2. Do not step over any instruments; in Bali they tell children that stepping over an instrument makes you sterile (it is considered offensive)
3. Do not remove an instrument from the room
4. At the end of each rehearsal, please make sure the instruments and pillows are back in place, all pangguls are off the floor, the covers are back on the instruments, and the room is neat.

5. You may eat/drink in the room, **BUT CLEAN UP AFTER YOURSELF. TAKE WITH YOU, STORE, OR THROW AWAY ALL FOOD (we have bugs!)**

**GAMELAN BEHAVIOR:**

1. Leave your egos at the door—this is not a competition. We are here to help each other and to share this experience as friends and family.

2. Come to rehearsals with extra energy—the most essential ingredient for playing this music well!

3. Some people learn more quickly than others. If you learn quickly, help someone else out—but do it unobtrusively. If you learn slowly, take it in stride. We all learn at different rates and in different ways. Just try to relax and the music will come.

4. If you are finding it exceptionally difficult to learn your part, don’t fuss out loud. The time you are spending in anger and frustration is wasted time for the group. Take some deep breaths and just listen for a while, or simply “float” and come back in when you can. We have all had this experience at one time or another and we all make mistakes.

5. While Nyoman is working with a particular person or section, sit quietly and listen—there’s a good chance you’ll have to play that part yourself some day, not to mention that your part **ALWAYS** makes more sense when you know it against the other parts. In other words, even if you are not playing an instrument for a while, there is always something to listen to and learn.

**HOW TO PRACTICE**

**How to Get into the Gamelan Room:**

The gamelan room will be available for practicing only by pre-arrangement. Contact Caroline and arrange to pick up a key. You will need to trade your ID card for the room key, so don’t forget to return the key.

**What to do:**

Gamelan music is learned through the oral/aural tradition known as **maguru panggul** (“the hammer is the teacher”). You will not be able to rely on notation for learning, nor will you be able to take an instrument home with you to practice, yet you must find a way to remember the music. **Please make rehearsal recordings on your own, and/or listen to the recordings made available to you on the Gamelan Lila Muni website.** When the pieces get complex and lengthy, and you just can’t remember anything from one rehearsal to the next, these recordings will be your best friend!

**Some practice hints:**

1. Constantly listen to the recordings.

2. **LEARN TO SING!!** If you can sing your part, it will help enormously. If you can sing the other parts, too, then you’ll really be on top of your game and you’ll have the best feeling for the music possible.
3. Force yourself to keep a steady beat while you are practicing, or learn to call out the gong structure to keep yourself on track. A lot of the music emphasizes the offbeat—learn to hear which is which.

4. To help yourself you may wish to make transcriptions of the songs under study—but do not bring them to a rehearsal or a performance!

**Key Things to Learn:**

Here are some of the most important concepts and techniques you should concentrate on learning in the first few weeks (in addition to the songs):

1. Names of instruments and their functions and relationships to each other;
2. Dampening, both in melodic and interlocking contexts;
3. Different forms of elaboration, including interlocking (if you learn the different forms and how they work, you’ll be able to see patterns you never knew existed!);
4. The unique counting and phrasing system (different from Western music);
5. How to hold the panggul and play relaxed, with agility;
6. How to react to drum cues

**WHY GAMELAN IS DIFFERENT**

Unlike many western musical ensembles, gamelan is not about the individual. There are no soloists, conductors, first, second, or tenth “chairs” in gamelan. There is no hierarchy of instruments or musical parts. The gamelan is a community and all members are equally important to the whole. The Balinese refer to the instruments and players in a gamelan as a family, where each member is responsible for helping others. Everyone does his or her own part to the best of his/her ability, and all parts are equally valued.

It does not matter how quickly (or slowly) you learn your part. Eventually, we will all be in the same place, and that is when the music will begin. Showing off, complaining, gloating, or rudeness have no place in this kind of music-making. Gamelan is for the community and if we adhere to the principles of cooperation and collaboration, the music will follow. So, RELAX AND ENJOY!

**MONTHLY SELAMATAN**

Once a month, we will hold a selamatan, a communal feast, during the last hour of rehearsal (from 5:00—6:00). This is customary in Indonesia, where gamelans perform regularly for festivals and ceremonies. We ask that each of you bring a “pot luck” item of food (it can be homemade, store-bought, small or large) to contribute to the whole. It doesn’t matter what you bring, but that you bring. I will provide rice and juice, plates, napkins, etc.

We will use this time to schmooze with Nyoman about Bali, his musical training, his upbringing, what it is like to grow up and live there. We can watch videos, listen to Balinese music, and ask questions about Balinese culture, Hinduism, globalism, etc., in short, get to know Nyoman better and to find out everything you ever wanted to know about Bali, Indonesia, Nyoman, or anything else pertaining to gamelan. This is a wonderful opportunity to place what you are learning in gamelan rehearsals into a bigger picture, and to have some fun—not to mention GOOD FOOD!

**Selamatan dates for fall semester:**
September 29
October 27
December 8