Gongs

The name gong is also its sound. The word passed into European languages from Malay shortly after Europeans first came to Southeast Asia. Gongs from Java are highly prized and have been exported for centuries. The largest gongs are given personal names, decorated, and honored with incense and flowers. The following questions serve to guide class discussion covering pages 25-26.

AA

1. Briefly describe how a gong is made.
2. What structure creates the well-defined pitch of the gong?
3. How is the gong played? Explain the reasons for this technique
4. As you listen to the sounds of a gong being made (CD track 8), look at Figure 2.1 and visualize the steps followed in creating the gong. Notice the seeming melody created by the hammers striking the gong. What causes this “melody”?

Making and Marking Musical Time

Time in Javanese music is organized into cycles units of time marked by various types of gongs. The large gong marks the end of time cycle, much like the period in a sentence. Other gongs mark smaller units within the cycle like commas, semicolons, and colons mark structures within a sentence. The following questions and activities serve to guide class learning for pages 27-33.

AA: Each question and activity may be undertaken by students of all grade levels. However, the depth to which each is explored must be carefully guided by the teacher based on skill levels of the students in his or her classroom.

1. What are the two subsets of instruments in the gamelan?
2. Explain the concept of “end-weighted” organization.
3. What role is played by the largest gong (gong ageng) in marking time units?

**Listening Interlude 1:**

(1) Listen to CD track 9. Note the use of the gong identifies the point of entry for the full gamelan and gives a sense of resolution at the end of the example.

(2) Listen to CD track 10. Raise your hand when you hear the large gong. How many times do you hear the large gong? Listen to the example again and write down the CD time for each time you hear the large gong.
4. List some of the common lengths of cycles used in Javanese music.
5. Describe the differences in structure of the smaller gongs.
6. Which gong marks the final beat of a cycle for longer cycles? Which gong typically marks the end of a cycle in shorter cycles? Why is a smaller gong used for this function in short cycles?
7. Which gong marks the two to four equal length parts within the cycle? Briefly describe this gong.
8. Which gong marks the middle of a time unit? How does this gong differ from others?
9. Identify and describe two additional types of gongs employed in some colotomic patterns.

**Listening Interlude 2:**

(1) Listen to CD track 11 and identify how many different types of gongs you hear.
(2) Listen to CD track 12 in which gongs are demonstrated in this order: Kempyang, Kethuk, Kempul, Kenong, Gong suwukan, Gong ageng. Use the following table (Worksheet 2.1 in the Supplementary Materials section) to identify the function played by the gong and to write a description of the sound so you may more readily recognize the individual instrument when you hear it again. You may wish to refer to Figures 2.2A, 2.2B and 2.2C to create a visual image for each instrument as you listen.
(3) After completing this exercise, listen to CD track 11 and try to label each gong as it is played.

**Worksheet 2.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GONG</th>
<th>FUNCTION</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF SOUND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kempyang</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kethuk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kempul</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenong.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gong suwukan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gong ageng</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Gongs differ in register and timbre to provide reference points in the course of a performance. Why are several gongs of some types present in a gamelan?
11. Both lancaran and ketawang colotomic patterns have 16-beat cycles. How do they differ?

**Listening Interlude 3:**

(1) Listen to CD track 11 and follow the lancaran pattern notated in figure 2.3 (page 2 in text plus reproduced in Handout 2.1 and in Supplementary Materials). Say the names of the instruments as they are struck. Use the following abbreviations: “nong” for kenong, “pul” for Kempul, “tuk” for kethuk. (Note that these are abbreviations used by musicians in the United States. Javanese players use “tho” for kenong and “gung” for Kempul.)
(2) Now listen to CD track 13 and try to hear gong, kenning, Kempul, and kethuk marking the lancaran pattern within the context of the full ensemble. Again, employ the abbreviations listed in the preceding section.
12. Compare *ketawang* and *lancaran* colotomic patterns as they appear in Figure 2.3 and in Handout 2.1 below and in the Supplementary Materials section. How are these patterns alike? How are they different? How do they appear to be related?

**Listening Interlude 4:**

Listen to CD track 14 as you follow the notation in Figure 2.3 and Handout 2.1. Use what you hear to expand upon your impressions of how these patterns are similar and different.

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**Figure 2.3/Handout 2.1**

![Colotomic Patterns](image)

**Key:** = beat = ketulku = kentang = Kempul = Gong = Kempyung

**Drumming**

Drums and drumming are key to the performance of gamelan in Java. The drummer controls changes of speed and cues the gamelan to start, stop, and shift gears. The following questions and activities serve to introduce Javanese drums and drumming as presented on pages 33-44.

AA = 1-10 (Depth of response depends upon age/grade level) S, C/U = 11

1. Describe the structure of commonly used drums in the Javanese gamelan.
2. Identify specific types of drums and describe the pitch level and playing style of each type.
3. What is the typical pitch difference between the large and smaller drum skin?
4. How do players regulate the tuning of the skins?
5. Which hand plays strokes on the large skin? Which plays on the smaller skin?
6. Identify and describe the two exceptions to the generalized discussion of drums and drumming. What are their functions and how are they played?
7. A vocabulary of named drum strokes serves as a highly efficient form of oral notation. How else may these drum strokes notated?
Listening Interlude 5:

(1) Listen to CD track 15 and note the names of the strokes as they are spoken and played.
(2) During a second listening, say the names along with the performer.
(3) Optional: If a two-headed barrel-shaped drum is available, refer to the descriptions of playing technique found in Figure 2.5 and Handout 2.2, then play each drum stroke while listening to CD track 15 a third time.

8. What role is played by “filler” strokes?
9. Upon which drum is the most complex drumming performed? Describe several of the unique techniques a player on this drum may employ. What is the source of the drum patterns for this drum?
10. (Optional) Obtain a two-headed barrel-shaped drum to practice producing the drum strokes described in Figure 2.5. Some education texts offer suggestions for creating suitable replicas of these drums from congas and parts of bongos and hand drums. Flowing Waters: Building a Musical Bridge Between Your Orff-Schulwerk Ensemble and a Javanese Gamelan (Lillian Holtfreter and FX Widaryanto) is one such resource.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>stroke</th>
<th>sign</th>
<th>head</th>
<th>stroke description</th>
<th>Gendhing</th>
<th>CInen</th>
<th>Ketipung</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dih</td>
<td></td>
<td>large</td>
<td>low-pitched stroke near the edge of the head</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhong</td>
<td></td>
<td>large</td>
<td>higher-pitched stroke in center, partially damping head</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lont</td>
<td></td>
<td>small</td>
<td>same pitch as dhong, but produced by striking the small head while partially damping the large one</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lari</td>
<td></td>
<td>small</td>
<td>slapping the small head while damping the large one</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>long</td>
<td></td>
<td>small</td>
<td>finger striking the rim, producing a complex high sound with a hint of the pitch of the dhing stroke</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lel</td>
<td></td>
<td>large</td>
<td>one or two fingers striking the center while thumb and other fingers rest on the drum head</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ding</td>
<td></td>
<td>both</td>
<td>dih and lari together</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhang</td>
<td></td>
<td>both</td>
<td>dih slightly precedes long (an undamped lari)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: X = main stroke x = subsidiary stroke

Figure 2.5/Handout 2.2

11. What are the two elements of Javanese drumming?
12. How are the basic elements of Javanese drumming put to use?

Listening Interlude 6:

(1) Listen to CD track 16, which presents a sequence of ciblon patterns with a melody.
(2) Then, listen to CD track 17 which resents the same melody played with a different sequence of drum patterns.
(3) Describe the patterns of repetition within each sequence. Describe and discuss other similarities and differences you perceive.
(4) Listen to CD tracks 16 and 17 several times as you discuss the use of drum sequences for this melody.
Refer to Handout 2.3 when discussing the following set of questions.

13. Which drums are used to perform the basic drum patterns for pieces in lancaran form? How does the drummer cue other musicians to enter at the first gong stroke? (See A in Figure 2.6/Handout 2.3)

14. What does the drummer play during the first gong cycle to help stabilize the tempo? (See B in Figure 2.6/Handout 2.3.) When the tempo is stable, the drummer begins to play the basic lancaran pattern. (See C in Figure 2.6/Handout 2.3.) When does the drummer switch to another pattern? Why? (See D in Figure 2.6/Handout 2.3.)

15. How low dhah strokes are draw attention to the approaching end of the piece. What other purpose may be signaled by this cross-rhythm?

16. Identify and describe the pattern that cues other musicians to slow down and end (See E in Figure 2.6/Handout 2.3.)

17. Compare the salahan and suwuk patterns. Pay particular attention to the recurrence of low dhah strokes and what purpose is served by this device.

Listening Interlude 7:

(1) Listen to CD track 8 while reading the notation in Figure 2.6/Handout 2.3 and observing the interaction between the drum patterns and colotomic parts.

(2) Next, recite drum parts while another student recites the colotomic parts.

(3) Before listening to CD track 18 again, do the following exercise: clap a steady beat; stomp your foot on every fourth beat; switch to stomping on every third beat, then back to every fourth. Note how switching can grab the attention of the players in the ensemble?

(4) Now practice saying drum patterns C and D (Figure 2.6/Handout 2.3) in alternation. Practice this until you have memorized the patterns.

(5) While listening to CD track 18 once again, recite the drum patterns along with the performance on the CD. Repeat this until you are comfortable performing these patterns.
Listening Interlude 8:

Pieces in lancaran form can have melodies as short as a single colotomic cycle or as long as ten. The drumming reflects both levels of organization, articulating the individual cycles and the repetition of the overall melody. Both pattern C (Figure 2.6/Handout 2.3) and the salahan fit the 16-beat cycle common to all pieces in lancaran form, but the salahan also demarcates the longer cycle of a specific melody.

1. CD track 18 demonstrates a lancaran with a melody lasting two gong cycles. The salahan pattern is played every other cycle.
2. In “Lancaran Singa Nebah” (CD tracks 13 and 19), the melody extends over three gongs cycles. Therefore, the salahan is played every third gong cycle after two iterations of pattern C (Figure 2.6/Handout 2.3)
3. Listen to CD track 13. In this brief performance, the drummer does not play the salahan, going directly to the suwuk at 0:14 and delaying the low dhah strokes to slow down the performance.
4. Listen to CD track 19. In this longer performance of “Lancaran Singa Nebah,” the salahan is heard twice. At 0:19, the drummer slows down the ensemble drastically. At 3:12, however, the pattern is used to accelerate the performance.

A lancaran may be repeated with only slight fluctuations in tempo. When the drummer cues more extreme changes, this sets in motion a process by which the tempo can be halved, leading to an approximate doubling of the length of each beat and the gong cycle.

18. How many levels of irama are possible in a given piece?
19. How does this change in irama effect drumming? How many drum strokes are now used for each beat? (See Figure 2.7/Handout 2.4) for a graphic representation of this increasing ratio between the main beat and parts that fill in.) What other changes occur in drum patterns? When does the drummer return to the original drum patterns?
20. What term is employed to designate the initial tempo and relationship between the beat and faster parts?
21. What term is employed when the tempo is halved and the beats double in length?
22. What term is employed when the tempo and length of beat are halved/doubled again? Listen to CD track 19 to hear an example of this level of irama.
23. How many levels of irama may be employed in a piece in lancaran form? Listen to CD track 16 and 17 to hear examples of a greatly expanded irama in which nearly four seconds elapse between one melody note and the next while ciblon drumming fills in the space between the beats.
24. See Figure 2.7 to see representations of several levels of irama. After reading the notes for Figure 2.7 on page 42, answer this questions: Where is the main beat often manifested? What is the ratio of the main beat to the fastest beat shown in this example? How do Javanese theorists identify the levels of irama?
25. Look at the melody represented in Figure 2.8/Handout 2.5. Determine the relationships between the main melody (represented by numbers) and the colotomic parts (represented by symbols learned in this chapter).

**Figure 2.8/Handout 2.5**

1. Listen to CD Track #19 and observe changes in *irama*.
2. Note the time code for the beginning of the change from *irama lancar* (0:19).
3. At what time code do the musicians begin to slow to *irama* 2?
4. What is the time code when the musicians begin to accelerate?
5. After the acceleration, *irama* 1 is reached at time code 2:51. What is the time code when the musicians reach *irama lancar* again?
6. Describe the changes in musical texture that occur at each of these points.
Gongs, Drums, and the Flexibility of Time

Pieces in lancaran form offer a first entry into Javanese musical time as it is demarcated and energized by gongs and drums. Other colotomic forms and drum patterns are longer and more complex, but exhibit many of the principles encountered thus far. The following questions and activities serve to guide classroom learning for materials on pages 44-47.

S, C/U

1. Identify the characteristics of drum patterns.
2. Compare the Javanese drumming system and function to other genres, such as jazz or popular music in which drums often create and delineate all important accents.
3. In what ways do changes in drum patterns transform the music?
4. What is meant by colotomic nonsynchrony and how does it allow greater flexibility in performance?
5. Explain “density referent” and how this term applies to Javanese drumming practices.
6. Discuss ways in which musicians determine what degrees of flexibility in patterns are appropriate to performances.
7. In which ways does dramatic context determine what is or is not appropriate in tempo and variation in tempo?

Listening Interlude 11:

1. Review the changes in speed toward the end of “Lancaran Singa Nebah” (CD track 19) to serve as a reference point for the remainder of this activity.
2. Listen to “Talu” (CD track 21). This is a medley of pieces played at the beginning of a shadow play.
3. Identify, by time code, each change you hear in the music and take note of other factors such as texture, instrumentation, voices, and so on. The following chart may be used to record observations.
4. Discuss the following: (a) Are the changes shifts in irama or only a change of tempo? (b) What was the overall trend in this sequence?

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<th>TIME CODE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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