

SECTION 1 – GAMELAN NOTATIONS FOR TRADITIONAL PIECES.**Slendro – number system**

Javanese:	ḡ	1	2	3	5	6	ḡ
Western:	Bb	Db	Eb	F	Ab	Bb	Db
And transposed:	A	C	D	E	G	A	C

Pelag – number system

Javanese:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Western:	Db	Eb	F	G#	A	Bb	C
				[or G nat??]			

NB: Western pitches are approximate

PIECES – written out in full traditional gamelan notation**A) Lancaran KOTEK laras slendro pathet manyura**

Lancaran refers to the form, and primarily to where the gong, kenong, kempul and ketuk strokes are placed within each phrase/gong cycle etc.

Laras slendro – means in the *slendro* tuning system. It can also be translated verbatim across to pelog.

Pathet manyura – mean in the *manyura* mode which tends to emphasis 6s, 3s and 2s.

This is a piece from Central Java.

The *buko* (Javanese spelling: *bukå*) is the opening melody. Often played on the *bonang barung* (i.e. the larger of the two bonangs), you could play it on anything suitable (e.g. saron, slentem, clarinet! etc.)

Here's a Western gamelan playing it (in the *pelog* tuning system): <https://youtu.be/Ti9fajX4PF8>

KOTEK

BUKA: . 3 . 6 . 3 . 6 . 3 . (2)

[: + + ^ + 6 + ^ + 6 + 3 + 6 + 6 + ^ 2
 . 3 . 6 . 3 . 6 . 3 . 6 . 3 . 2

+ + ^ + 6 + ^ + 6 + 3 + 6 + 6 + ^ 2
 . 3 . 6 . 3 . 6 . 3 . 6 . 3 . 2

+ + 2 + 2 + ^ + € + € + € + ^ 6
 . 5 . 3 . 2 . 1 . 3 . 2 . 1 . 6

+ + 2 + 2 + ^ + € + € + € + ^ 6 :]
 . 5 . 3 . 2 . 1 . 3 . 2 . 1 . 6 :]

NOTATION:

+
= ketuk

^
= kenong (and implies you play the same note as in the tune)

~
= kempul (and implies you play the same note as in the tune)

BUT – for example:

^
= play kenong 6 – even if the note in the tune is different!

2
= play kempul 2 - even if the note in the tune is different!

() = BIG GONG AND KENONG

() = GONG SUWUKAN (slightly smaller than BIG GONG) AND KENONG

(You have a few GONG SUWUKAN – they are the second largest gongs –labelled as “Swk 2” (or similar depending on pitch etc.) inside.

. = a “rest” but not silence... it’s just another beat (actually, the “off-beat” here in this piece) and is just included as a useful guide to the eye in the notation.

B) Bubaran UDAN MAS laras pelog pathet barang

Pathet barang is a pelog mode using the notes 2, 3, 5, 6, 7.

Here's a recording - https://youtu.be/1huR_uVj5G4 - played in *pelog*.

And here is a fancy orchestral version used in the video game, *Civilisation V*:

<https://youtu.be/ZUfPSIMWTn8>

<https://youtu.be/w2ejqyduBsl>

Buka (the octave indicators/dots only really apply if you are playing on the bonang):

• 7̣ 7̣ 7̣ 5̣ 6̣ 7̣ 2 2 7̣ 6̣ 5̣ 6̣ 7̣ 6̣ (5)

[: + + ^ + 6̣ + ^ + + 3̣ + 6̣ + ^ (2
6 5 3 2 6 5 3 2 3 3 2 3 6 5 3 2)
+ + ^ + 6̣ + ^ + + 3̣ + 6̣ + ^ (2
6 5 3 2 6 5 3 2 3 3 2 3 6 5 3 2)
+ + 3̣ + 6̣ + ^ + 6̣ + ^ + 6̣ + ^ (5
7 5 6 7 5 6 7 2 2 7 6 5 6 7 6 5)
+ 3̣ + 6̣ + ^ + 6̣ + ^ + 6̣ + ^ (5 :]
7 5 6 7 5 6 7 2 2 7 6 5 6 7 6 5)

BONANG PARTS:

A) KOTEK

i) Off-beat/octave styles

Line 1 & 2: . 3 . 6 . 3 . 6 . 3 . 6 . 3 . 2

Bonang¹: 6 . 6 . 6 . 6 . 2 . 2 . 2 . 2 .

Line 3 & 4: . 5 . 3 . 2 . 1 . 3 . 2 . 1 . 6

Bonang: 1 . 1 . 1 . 1 . 6 . 6 . 6 . 6 .

ii) Interlocking styles – example for experimentation

Tune: . 3 . 6 . 3 . 6 . 3 . 6 . 3 . 2

 . 5 . 3 . 2 . 1 . 3 . 2 . 1 . 6

Bonang 1: 6̣ . 6̣ . 6̣ . 6̣ . 6̣ . 6̣ . 6̣ . 6̣ .

Bonang 2: . 5̣ . 1 . 5̣ . 1 . 5̣ . 1 . 5̣ . 1

Then this continues the same throughout the second set of lines.

¹ Here, the bonang note is best played in octaves.

B) UDAN MAS

i) Off-beat/octave style:

Tune (Lines 1 & 2): 6 5 3 2 6 5 3 2 3 3 2 3 6 5 3 2

Bonang: 2 . 2 . 2 . 2 . 2 . 2 . 2 . 3 .

Tune (Lines 3 & 4): 7 5 6 7 5 6 7 2 2 7 6 5 6 7 6 5

Bonang: 2 . 2 . 2 . 2 . 5 . 5 . 5 . 5 .

ii) Interlocking:

Tune: 6 5 3 2 6 5 3 2 3 3 2 3 6 5 3 2

 7 5 6 7 5 6 7 2 2 7 6 5 6 7 6 5

Bonang 1: 6̣ . 6̣ . 6̣ . 6̣ . 6̣ . 6̣ . 6̣ . 6̣ .

Bonang 2: . 5̣ . 1 . 5̣ . 1 . 5̣ . 1 . 5̣ . 1

SECTION 2: PREPARING PIECES FOR TEACHING**TEACHING KOTEK, 1st line only – step-by-step**

1) TEACH THE MELODY – on the instruments or by singing.

[: 2 3 6 3 6 3 6 3 :]

2) ADD THE GONG

[: (2) 3 6 3 6 3 6 3 :]

3) ADD THE KENONG – just say, for example: “play KENONG note 6 on EVERY OTHER note starting WITH the GONG”

[: 2 3 ⁶6 3 ⁶6 3 ⁶6 3 :]

4) ADD “EASY” KEMPUL – just say: “play KEMPUL note 6 on the SECOND 6 AFTER the GONG in the tune each time”

[: (2) 3 6 3 ⁶6 3 6 3 :]

4a) OR – just say: “play KEMPUL note 6 on EVERY OTHER note in the tune... but starting ONE NOTE AFTER the GONG”

[: (2) 3 6 3 6 3 6 3 :]

5) ADD KETUK – “off-beats”

[: (2) ⁺3 ⁺6 ⁺3 ⁺6 ⁺3 ⁺6 ⁺3 :]

6) BONANG – use one of the versions given above

TEACHING UDAN MAS, 1st line only – step-by-step

1) TEACH THE MELODY – on the instruments or by singing.

[: 5 6 5 3 2 6 5 3 2 3 3 2 3 6 5 3 :]

2) ADD THE GONG

[: (2) 6 5 3 2 6 5 3 2 3 3 2 3 6 5 3 :]

3) ADD THE KENONG – just say: “play KENONG note 6 on every 4th note starting ON the GONG”

[: 2 6 5 3 2 6 5 3 2̂ 3 3 2 3 6 5 3 :]

4) ADD “EASY” KEMPUL – just say: “play KEMPUL note 6 on the THIRD 3 in the tune each time AFTER the GONG”

[: (3) 6 5 3 2 6 5 3 2 3 3 2 3 6 5 3 :]

4a) OR – just say: “play KEMPUL note 6 on EVERY OTHER note in the tune... but starting TWO NOTES after the GONG”

[: (3) 6̇ 5 3 2 6̇ 5 3 2 3 3 2 3 6̇ 5 3 :]

5) ADD KETUK – just say: “play EVERY SECOND note, starting ONE NOTE AFTER the GONG”

[: (3) 6⁺ 5⁺ 3⁺ 2 6 5 3 2 3⁺ 3⁺ 2 3 6 5 3 :]

6) BONANG – use one of the versions given above

SECTION 3

WORKSHOPS –THINGS TO DO

1) PLAY A NOTE – ANY NOTE!

Ask the group to pick a note on their instrument. Any note. Count down from 4 to 1 and tell them to hit it when you reach 1. Do a few of these singly, then try and chain a few together one after another, each time cued by the countdown.

This is a good way of assessing the group's musical skills and particularly helpful if you have just met the group and only have a single session with them. How good their timing is... the way in which they hit the instruments/notes... are all good indicators and insights into their ability and previous experiences in making music.

2) “LONG” NOTES

Try building some textures up by getting the group to play “long” notes on their instruments by hitting a note very quickly over and over again - but quietly - to produce a sustained continuous sound. Ask individuals to demonstrate if they can do it on their own first. Observe how they approach the problem, and perhaps make some suggestions on how they can improve the sound. Then with the whole group:

- Try starting and stopping.
- Try different dynamics.
- Try some crescendos and diminuendos.
- Try changing to different notes.

3) “CONDUCTION”/GRAPHIC SCORES

Both 1) and 2) above can be extended – and even combined – by using hand signals or using a suitable instrument as a cueing device - e.g. bell tree, big gong etc.

Ask people in the group to take on the role of a “conductor”, using these signals and cueing devices to create a group improvisation.

An alternative is to use symbols (e.g. the colours on the notes) and graphic scores (e.g. a flipchart and pens are useful here) to achieve the same results as with the hand signals/cueing devices.

4) GONG CYCLES – PICK A NOTE AND A BEAT

- Get a cycle of 8 beats going by counting 1 to 8 over and over again.
- Ask someone to put the big gong in on beat 1 to signal the start of each cycle.
- Ask the group to pick one note on their instrument and play it on just one beat in the cycle (e.g. play note 5 on beat 3 each time etc.). This creates a repeated texture – and it doesn't matter if some in the group don't get the idea or perhaps play inconsistently – the overall effect should be fine.
- Try experimenting with some damping techniques – i.e. get everyone to start using their other hand! A good first start might be to get the group to damp the note on the very next beat (e.g. play note 5 on beat 3 and then damp on beat 4).
- See how far you can take the group – e.g. can you get the group to play 2 different notes in each cycle, all with the right type of damping (i.e. damping the previous note when you hit the next one)?
- What are the steps you could devise and go through prior to reaching this higher level of competence?
- A nice variation is to get everyone to stop/damp the note as they play it (e.g. holding the note before/as you strike it to produce a strongly metallic, almost unpitched, sound).
- What happens if you get everyone to play on different beats... but play the same note (e.g. pick the beat you are going to play on... but ask everyone to play note 5)?
- But remember... don't try and explain too much verbally... make sure you demonstrate what you mean by playing an example yourself. Ask members of the group if they can demonstrate it themselves first before getting the whole group to do it together at the same time.

5) GROUP INTERLOCKING PATTERNS

Similar to 4) in some respects. Get one side of the room to play a note on beats 1, 3, 5, 7. Get the other side to play on 2,4,6,8. Add in some damping – e.g. play on 1,3,5,7 and damp on 2,4,6,8 and vice versa. Get each side of the room to use two notes instead of one etc. etc. etc.

6) COMBINE ALL THE ABOVE APPROACHES TO MAKE A GROUP PIECE

'Nuff said!

7) SLOW MELODIES

- Pick a small selection of notes (e.g. about 4) to make a short melody.
- Perhaps ask group members to pick the notes for the tune.
- Play the resulting melody really slowly with someone counting throughout – e.g. 4 beats on each note.
- Add in the gong on the “home”/tonic note.
- Do it again, but this time ask someone in the group to pick their favourite number... and use that to determine the number of beats to each note.
- etc. etc.

8) REVISIT ALL THE ABOVE – BUT GET THE MEMBERS OF THE GROUP TO TAKE TURNS TO DEMONSTRATE WHAT THEY CAN DO.**9) DEMOS**

Even if you can't muster enough people to demonstrate a whole piece with all the parts, learning a tune on one of the sarons, and playing it back to the whole group confidently, and with all the correct damping etc. can be a really effective way of engaging a group.

Here's a challenge. Sounds really good played fast:

(5) [: 6 5 6 5 2 3 5 (3) 5 3 5 3 5 2 3 5 1 6 5 3 6 5 3 2
 3 2 3 2 3 5 6 (5) :]

(NB: For these purpose, it is sufficient to just play the tune. But if you have some colleagues... and want to work out the kempul, kenong and gong parts.)

10) FLASH CARDS/NOTATIONS

This can be a good strategy if you have a group where:

- Different people arrive and leave at different times in the session – i.e. you never have all the group together at the same time OR:
- The individuals of the group don't have a good sense of group identity, but individuals may be able to achieve something musical (e.g. learning to play a tone on a saron) on their own.

Write down on pieces of card the part a particular instrument has to play – e.g. the tune for the sarons.... maybe some variation of the tune for the bonangs.... some instructions on how to play the gongs/kempuls etc.

Attach these cards to each instrument.

Allow people to sit at the instrument they want... show them the card... and invite them to try and work out the part for themselves. Perhaps involve support workers/parents/teachers in this process.

If, at some point, you hit “critical mass”, and can get a whole group pieces going... then great!

If not, it doesn't matter!!

11) COMPOSITION <-> ORCHESTRATION

If you want to do some group composition, a good way is to split the group up into smaller sub-groups (e.g. 3 people). Give each group a small compositional task to work on (e.g. make up a tune that ends on note 2 OR work out your own interlocking pattern etc.).

This gives you a chance to: i) relax; ii) observe everyone working together; iii) go around each sub-group and converse with a smaller group of participants (e.g. not the whole group).

When you think everyone is ready you can move into a sort of “orchestration mode”... led by you, but also drawing on suggestions from the group... where you can bring all the material together to create a single group piece.

Because of the tuning and sound of the gamelan, you will find that most material will fit well with most other material. Usually, the thing to work on is getting people playing with a reasonably degree of rhythm and timing (even if this is just starting and stopping together!).

In “orchestration” mode, more often than not, you will be doing one of more of the following:

- Juxtaposing – putting different bits of musical material together in sequences to form longer phrases or sections of music.
- Superimposing – layering up different sets of material played together at the same time.
- Augmentation and diminution – if you start to get a muddled, busy texture, getting one or more groups to play their material at, for example, half or double speed can usually help to thin out the texture a bit.
- Sometimes groups will have too much material – e.g. a really long tune. So, cut it down to size (e.g. tune it from a “tune” into a “motif”) – at least you are still using material composed by the group!
- Dynamics – the final refinement!

12) CROSS-ARTS PROJECTS

<https://youtu.be/pxzTMT6pKTl>

As discussed on 27/2/16, connecting individual sessions into a bigger, more ambitious project, can be a good way of making the best use of a small amount of material.

The Youtube link above is a recording of a final performance from a one-day project with a group of SEN adults from a local day centre.

The project involved two gamelan musicians, three Western musicians, a video artist and a Javanese dancer.

The tasks for the day were:

- Come up with a theme for the day – the subject chosen was: “Going to a Football Match”.
- Devise some music. Here, the gamelan group is working more or less with just two textures: the first without a strong rhythm/metre, the second in time with the backing music.
- Work with the dancer and video artist to shoot some footage around the building depicting the narrative.
- Rehearse the music and video together.
- Perform the music live to a screening of the video at the end of the day.
- Also video record the performers playing the piece – so you get two versions: the video with the live music as the soundtrack; a version with a video camera pointed at the performers to capture the actual performance in situ.