

LINDSTRÖM IN BALI, 1928

(Editor's note: In 1928, the Lindström company made its first recordings on the island of Bali for the Odeon and Beka labels. These historical recordings of gamelan music have now been reissued on CD (World Arbiter 2011, Bali 1928). We thank the author, Edward Herbst, and Arbiter Records for their permission to reproduce these album notes)

The Roots of Gamelan

These historic recordings were made in 1928 as part of a collection of the first and only commercially-released recordings of Balinese music prior to World War II. This diverse sampling of new and older Balinese styles appeared on 78 rpm discs that same year, with subsequent releases for international distribution. The discs were sold world-wide (or not sold, as it happened) and quickly went out of print. It was a crucial time in the island's musical history, as Bali was in the midst of an artistic revolution, with kebyar as the new dominant style of music. Gamelan groups were having their older ceremonial orchestras melted down and reforged in the new style. Intense competition between villages and regions stimulated young composers to develop impressive innovations and techniques. Andrew Toth has written of these landmark recordings:

"Representatives from these companies [Odeon & Beka] were sent in August of 1928 to extend their coverage to Bali. Five of the ninety-eight existing matrices (sides) made at that time were included by the well-known scholar Erich M. von Hornbostel in an early anthology of non-Western traditions, *Music of the Orient*; this collection was the first exposure to Indonesian music for many people, the public as well as potential ethnomusicologists.

"A third of the Odeon/Beka recordings appeared in Europe and America, but the majority had been intended originally for local sale in Bali. For this reason the information on the labels was printed in Malay, the lingua franca of the archipelago, and in some cases even in Balinese script. The ambitious plan to develop an indigenous market was a complete failure, however, since few Balinese were interested in this new and expensive technology - especially when there was a world of live performances happening daily in the thousands of temples and households throughout the island. McPhee was the only customer to purchase these 78 rpm discs in an entire year from one frustrated dealer; his collection contains most of the copies that are still preserved to this day, for the agent later smashed the remaining stock in a fit of rage. (McPhee 1946: 72)

"Fortunately the recordings were made under the guidance of Walter Spies, the painter, musician and long-time resident whose intimate knowledge of Balinese culture was so freely given and so often benefited the work of others (Rhodius 1964: 265; Kunst 1974:24). Although limited by the medium to being three-minute excerpts, they consequently are remarkable examples of a broad range of musical genres - vocal as well as instrumental - and many outstanding composers, performers and ensembles of the period who are now famous teachers of legendary clubs - I Wayan Lotring, I Nyoman Kaler, and the gamelan gong of Pangkung, Belaluan, and Busungbiu. These invaluable sound documents of the musical and family heritage of the Balinese include styles of vocal chant rarely heard today; Kebyar Ding, a historically important composition that has been relearned from the recordings by the present generation of musicians, whose fathers and grandfathers made the original discs; and records of renowned singers that are considered even sacred by their descendants, who keep tape copies in the family shrine.

"No new material was released in the West during the ensuing depression and war, while only reprints of the old 78's were issued on different labels and in several anthologies." (Toth 1980: 16-17)

These are the discs the young Canadian composer Colin McPhee (1900-1964) heard in New York in 1929, when friends brought them back from Java. On listening to the 1928 Odeon recordings, McPhee was inspired to embark on his research in Bali, which was to consume him for eight years and lead to a major work of scholarship, *Music in Bali*: It would dominate his musical ideas for the remainder of his life.

"I was a young composer, recently back in New York after student days in Paris, and the past two years had been filled with composing and the business of getting performances. It was quite by accident that I had heard the few gramophone records that were to change my life completely, bringing me out here in search of something quite indefinable-music or experience, I could not at this moment say." (McPhee 1946:9).

His teacher, Arthur Friedheim (1859-1932), an eminent pianist and pupil of Liszt, wrote in his autobiography:

"And the day has dealt kindly with me too, for I have received from far-off Java a letter from a former Toronto pupil, Colin McPhee, perhaps the most gifted pupil I ever had. His innate musical sense, his sturdy application and a striking personality marked him out for a brilliant career on the concert platform. I felt a personal sense of loss when, after I left Canada, he gave up the piano altogether and applied himself entirely to composition. Now he is in Java and other distant lands seeking new inspiration in the relatively unfamiliar native music. Yet I must not criticise him because he has neglected my favorite instrument. Did I not do the same thing when I was his age?" (Friedheim 1961: 256)

After four years in Bali, McPhee's article, "The Absolute Music of Bali," appeared in the journal *Modern Music*, reflecting both McPhee's experience on the island and an idealistic vision of an "absolute music" shared by many of his American contemporaries.

"Here is a music which has successfully achieved the absolute, -impersonal and non-expressive, with a beauty that depends upon form and pattern and a vigor that springs from a rhythmic vitality both primitive and joyous. But even more than this, perhaps, what inspires the musician with wonder and envy, is the satisfactory *raison d'être* of music in the community. The musicians are an integral part of the social group, fitting in among ironsmiths and goldsmiths, architects and scribes, dancers and actors, as constituents of each village complex. Modest and unassuming, they nevertheless take great pride in their art, an art which, however, is so impersonal that the composer himself has lost his identity." (McPhee 1935: 163)

As Balinese music profoundly effected McPhee's life, there came a considerable reciprocity: McPhee instigated revivals of older styles, facilitated gamelan loans between villages, and helped disseminate new and old compositional styles by arranging to bring teachers from one village to another.

The Balinese gamelan:

Gamelan, the term for Bali's dozen or so instrumental music ensembles, derives from *gamel*, to handle: the Balinese differentiate between gamelan *krawang*, bronze instruments, and ensembles utilizing bamboo. The distinctive features of Bali's major styles highlight shimmering resonances of gongs, knobbed gong-chimes, and metallophones (with

bronze keys suspended over bamboo resonators), ranging four or five octaves, and differ from neighboring Java in their explosive sonorities and phrasings. Gamelan styles are associated with specific ceremonies, entertainment, or recreational activity. Gamelan generally utilize a five-tone octave, whether it be in the sléndro tuning of gendér wayang or the pélog tuning of most other genres. Gamelan angklung uses a four-tone version of sléndro. The suling (bamboo flute) provides additional pitches and tonal shadings, as do singers, who may join with the gamelan. Several five-tone pélog tunings derive from an older seven-tone saih pitu system, still in use by ensembles such as gamelan gambuh, Semar Pagulingan, and gamelan gambang.

Traditionally, instrumental music is rarely notated; musicians learn their parts by rote. As the music is highly structured, improvisation is reserved for the leading drum, the flute, or solo instruments in specific contexts. In contemporary schools, music is taught using a system of cipher notation.

The unique collection of tuned gongs, gong-chimes and flat metallophones associated with the gamelan styles of Bali and Java, appears to have developed between the construction of the 9th-century Borobudur Buddhist temple and the arrival of the first Dutch expedition in 1595. In its most expanded form, Balinese gamelan is organized into instrumental stratification spanning over five octaves:

- a. Basic statement of the melody within a one-octave range.
- b. Articulation at regular time intervals of the basic melody, generally every four tones.
- c. Full melodic expression, ranging from two to three octaves.
- d. Doubling and paraphrasing in the octave above.
- e. Ornamental figuration of the melody.
- f. Punctuation of larger time intervals (the general function of the gongs).
- g. Drumming, with 1 or 2 musicians playing two-headed drums, using their hands or a single mallet, which conducts the group and provides a propulsive rhythmic undercurrent.

Titles of compositions may describe a dramatic context associated with the music, but are often images reflecting the composer's inspiration, humorous allusions to nature, or whatever happened to pass through his mind during or after creation.

A Sketch of the Time Period of these Recordings:

Bali was then part of the Dutch East Indies (now the Republic of Indonesia). Although the Dutch fully administered Java, Bali's rajas were not conquered and placed under Dutch control until 1908. By 1914, innovations were brewing around North Bali's Beléng region, the center of Dutch colonial administration. Most notably, it was in the villages of Jagaraga and Bungkulan that this explosive musical style came into being. Around 1914, performers in Jagaraga created a pure dance which intimately followed and reflected the musical phrases without any narrative element. Bungkulan had created a musical innovation by using the often-neglected trompong, a row of tuned knobbed gongs, as a featured melodic instrument. A new form of gamelan instrumentation with a striking compositional style was bursting upon the scene, creating heated competition between gamelan clubs in different villages and regions. The style derived much from both traditional styles, gamelan gong gedé, and pelégongan. The word kebyar is interpreted in several ways: as "lightning," "the bursting open of a flower," or "explosive." It describes abrupt bursts of sound, shifts in tempo, rapid stops and a style of fast successions of themes within a single piece, in contrast with the more evenly colotomic and

structured traditional repertoire. Buleleng's gamelan clubs excelled at lightning-speed playing. Kebyar soon spread throughout Bali, and a Bali tengah "central Bali" style emerged, with Belaluan (Badung district), and Tabanan as the most influential. The greatest exponent of kebyar dance, I Maria (spelled Mario by most writers), first heard a kebyar orchestra around 1919, when a gamelan group from the village of Bantiran, North Bali, performed at a cremation ceremony in Tabanan. The realization of his creation Kebyar Duduk derived from the rich rhythms of these kebyar compositions.

Kebyar Duduk interpreted into dance a new musical form which was a roller coaster of melody and rhythm. In earlier male dances such as the martial baris and masked jauk, the gamelan would follow and reflect the movements of the dancer. Maria helped create a new equilibrium, with each dance gesture dependent on the music. Maria's slender physique was considered perfect for interpreting each nuance of the gamelan's dynamics. With Maria as performer, the form grew over time as his choreographic and musical ideas influenced one another. While some Balinese classicists failed to appreciate his departure from traditional form, his work has endured and spawned generations of choreographic heirs.

I Maria worked closely with the famed Gong Pangkung gamelan orchestra of Tabanan and later became associated with the gamelan gong kebyar of Belaluan. Although illness forced Maria to stop dancing around 1931, he continued to teach.

I Wayan Lotring (1898-1983) was leader of the gamelan pelégongan in the coastal village of Kuta. His brilliant compositions startled and inspired musicians throughout the island. Lotring was a masterful player of gendér wayang, the virtuosic quartet of ten-keyed metallophones which accompanies shadow-puppet theater (wayang). But his major musical innovation centered on pelégongan, the gamelan associated with légong, the elaborately choreographed court dance. Lotring's rhapsodic melodic fantasies and subtle rhythmic shifts of phrasing were often inspired by other traditional genres. His Gambangan, Gegendéran, and Gegénggongan (heard on this CD) were modern visions deriving from musical elements within these forms. In pelégongan, one hears a more fluid, lyrical, and subtle style than in gamelan gong. Colin McPhee's fascination with Lotring's art led him to analyze, for example, one of Lotring's many compositional devices:

"A characteristic procedure was to drop a beat or half-beat somewhere in the middle of a passage, disturbing the rhythmic balance and throwing the rest of the passage into rhythmic dislocation. The missing beat is never forgotten, however, but is inevitably restored through the extension of some phrase, though often at so distant a point in the composition as to create a new element of surprise." (1966:320)

While McPhee's ideal of Balinese music was "impersonal and non-expressive", he quotes Lotring: "Ké-wah! It is hard to compose! Sometimes I cannot sleep for nights, thinking of a new piece. It turns round and round in my thoughts. I hear it in my dreams. My hair has grown thin thinking of music." (McPhee 1946: 162.)

The gamelan pelégongan led by Lotring went in and out of use over the decades, due to local conflicts and reflecting an island-wide trend towards kebyar. One year after these Odeon recordings were made, his group disbanded as a result of disagreements over the distribution of club funds. Colin McPhee helped revive the gamelan club in the 1930s, but it folded again after McPhee left in 1939. Much sought after as a teacher, Lotring instructed McPhee's club in Sayan as

well as gamelan throughout Bali. His gamelan was recorded once more in 1972, although many of the musicians were by then old and out of practice. Lotring played the kendang (drum) solo since no one was adequately trained to join him in the interlocking patterns in the repertoire. Soon after these recordings were taped, the instruments were melted down to enable the younger players to order a kebyar orchestra which would accompany dances for tourists.

The "Bali tengah" kebyar style emerging in the 1920s combined the Beléleng kebyar style with the pelégongan style of the South. There was, in fact, a kebyar légong genre in the village of Jagaraga in the 1920s, which was a transitional style. And herein lies some of the historical importance of these Odeon recordings.

The Kebyar Ding composition by the gamelan gong kebyar of Belaluan village (heard on this CD) exemplifies this developing Bali tengah style as it existed during the rapidly evolving musical life in Bali. It prized a particular kind of technical precision within the ensemble, without the rapid playing of the Beléleng ensembles, which worked with great speed, necessitating a somewhat less complex form. According to gamelan authority I Wayan Beratha, one particularly important aspect of Kebyar Ding lies in its innovation with ngecek (literally, rubbing), a variety of rapid melodic-rhythmic figurations played in unison and used for thematic transitions. Ngecek, which became an identifying characteristic of kebyar, involves different rhythms with rapid triplets alternating with phrases of dotted rhythms. The back and forth melodic movement of ngecek is meant to suggest a sonic equivalent of "the movement of rubbing," as for example, "rubbing one's eyes, or rubbing smoldering pieces of wood together to put out a fire." Ngecek interrupts the steady pulse of the preceding theme with its freer rhythmic phrasings. Modern gamelan groups have continued to further their idiomatic aspects of speed and technical subtlety. At the same time, contemporary musicians marvel over the complex kebyar form in these recordings, achieved in such a short period of time.

Due to local politics, the gamelan gong kebyar of Belaluan is now referred to as Seka Gong Sadmertha, officially based in an adjacent hamlet. The significance of the composition Kebyar Ding is so highly regarded that in 1975, a reconstruction project was organized by the village with the distinct talents of the renowned local musician and teacher, I Wayan Beratha. His father, I Madé Regog, had been leader of the gamelan at the time of the 1928 recordings and long thereafter. I Regog joined in as advisor and trompong player, as they revived the Kebyar Ding piece. Their reconstruction was based on these Odeon recordings, brought to Bali from the UCLA Institute of Ethnomusicology.

Recordings from Bali, 1928:

Gamelan Gong Kebyar of Belaluan

1. Kebyar Ding I: Kebyar

As 78-rpm discs only allowed for three-minute selections, the Kebyar Ding was broken up into separate movements (1 through 6). In actual performance they would proceed immediately from one section into the next. Ding is the first pitch of the Balinese scale. The first movement of a kebyar composition is still generally called kebyar, and features explosive sequences of unison playing without a steady beat, introducing the first examples of the rapid ngecek style.

2. Kebyar Ding II: Surapati

Musicians also refer to Surapati as Sempati, the tiger character in the wayang wong dance drama (stories from the Mahabharata). According to some musicians, we can hear stylistic traces of gender wayang technique and phrasing, which is the musical style accompanying wayang wong, especially in the kotékan (interlocking "flower" ornamentation)

in the upper-register. Introduced here, and also featured in movements III, V and VI, are interlocking *kokétan* phrasings played by the *réyong*. Replacing the *trompong* with the *réyong* was a major innovation in instrumentation associated with the new *kebyar* form. Physically similar to the solo, lyrical and majestic *trompong* (which is still used in the *pelégongan*, *Semar Pagulingan* and traditional *gamelan gong gedé*), the *réyong* are played by four musicians in complex, rippling rhythms. The *ngucek* we hear at the end, and at the finale of several of the succeeding movements, offer a transition into the next, each time a reinfusion of the initial *kebyar* section's energy.

3. Kebyar Ding III: *Oncang-uncangan*

Oncang-uncangan is a technique inspired by the polyrhythmic pounding of rice mortars as grain is husked. The "jumping melody" played by the *gangsa* (metallophones played with one mallet) involves an interlocking method of playing a main melodic theme (unlike the interlocking of florid higher-register *kotékan* ornamentation). The melody is broken up into a two-part figuration, *polos* (basic, simple) and *sangsih* (differing, filling in). This intense coordination of musical parts allows musicians to play rapidly and also has a spatial acoustic effect of making a melodic line issue from more than one location. According to the UCLA Archives, McPhee identified this section as *Surapati*, but contemporary *gamelan* musicians call it "*Oncang-uncangan*", as it was on the Odeon record. *Oncang-uncangan* technique is the distinctive element of this section, with one *ngucek* rhythmic phrase in the middle.

4. Kebyar Ding IV: *Baté*

Baté is traditionally music for dramatic fighting scenes and marches, often associated with an ensemble of rhythmic percussion instruments. This section contains only a suggestion - at the beginning and end - of the rapid *baté* phrasing played by the large *gong* and smaller *gong* (*kempur*), and briefly suggests the regular pulse associated with this genre. *Baté* may also signify transition music from one movement of a piece to another. Following up on the previous movement, there is some *uncang-uncangan* figuration here as well.

5. Kebyar Ding V: *Pengrang-rangan*

Pengrang-rangan derives from "composing" (*ngarang*), originally referring to the distinctive improvisational playing of a soloist on the *trompong* or two-mallet *gendér*, in the introductory section of a *gamelan gong gedé* or *Semar Pagulingan* piece, or within the body of the composition itself. In *kebyar*, *ngarang-rang* came to connote new music composed in a fixed, permanent sense. The section ends with a flurry of *ngucek* phrases which, in performance, lead directly into the *pengawak*.

6. Kebyar Ding VI: *Pengawak* and *Pengecét*

Kebyar compositions frequently conclude with a *pengawak* and *pengecét*, which derive their themes from the classical repertoire of *légong*, *gambuh*, or *gamelan gong gedé*. *Pengawak* generally refers to the "body" of a composition, in which the main themes are fully developed. *Pengecét*, the last section, has the theme developed at a faster tempo, rising to an energetic finale. As the *pengawak* ends, a transition features the two *kendang* (drum) players, followed by an *uncang-uncangan* phrase played by the *gangsa* which leads into the *pengecét* section and climax. The bamboo resonator suspended under and tuned in relation to each metallophone key allows the resonance to continue at the ending.

7. Curik Ngaras "Starlings Kissing"

This composition is not performed in Bali at present, having fallen into disuse decades ago, and was not part of the 1975

Belaluan-Sadmertha reconstruction. The main body of the composition utilizes a simple pattern of large gong and smaller gong (kempur). In the accelerated second section (pengecét), the réyong fill in with norot and related kotékan syncopations, as the gong phrasing expands. A ngucek is played for one transition.

8. Kembang Langkuas

This is the name of a flower which sways as rainwater shifts around on its surface. The music may have been intended to convey this feeling of shifting weight, suggested by the way the kokétan patterns of the réyong play off against the regular beat of the gangsa melody, and the sudden angsel cadences at the ends of phrases. Derived from the ceremonial gamelan gong gedé, which has a piece by the same name in its lelamatan repertoire, this kebyar version exhibits one striking feature which distinguishes it as a modern work: asymmetrical phrasing. Gong gedé music is structured in multiples of four beats, with gongs punctuating phrases of four, eight, sixteen, and so on. But kebyar compositions sometimes utilize uneven, or odd counts of the ketuk timekeeper. This early expression of kebyar form creates a gentle imbalance (another expression of shifting weight) with two beats added to the expected sixteen.

Gamelan Pelégongan of Kuta, directed by I Wayan Lotring.

9. Sisyá [Sisyan]

Calonarang is a magic drama genre which achieved its present form around the turn of the century, combining elements of barong and Rangda ritual, gambuh and arja dance dramas, and gamelan bebarongan, a close relative of the pelégongan and Semar Pagulingan. Calonarang is a semihistorical story which takes place in the eleventh-century East Javanese kingdom of Kahuripan. It continues to be an exceedingly popular religio-dramatic genre, embodying forces of malevolent witchcraft and that of healing magic.

Sisyá [Sisyan] is the music accompanying the opening dance by young female disciples (sisya) of the Witch of Girah, at which time they still appear as beautiful girls. The music's development reflects the unfolding choreography, as the sisya gradually enter in up to three pairs. An interesting feature of this recording is the use of bamboo flutes, suling menengah gambuh, lower in range than those associated with Calonarang and pelégongan gamelan today. Not as long and low as normal three-foot long gambuh flutes, these fall into an range in between (menengah) those and the smaller, higher pitched flutes now used in gamelan pelégongan or bebarongan. Music in Bali includes an analysis of this music. (McPhee 1966: 169-176)

10. Ngalap Basé-Ampin Lukun

These sometimes interchangeable names literally mean "picking a betel leaf-arranging and rolling it." The pengawak (body of the composition) may follow directly after Sisyá, as an extended composition - or with the faster pengecét of Ampin Lukun interspersed with Sisyá - to accommodate a more developed choreography. As with Sisyá, the suling provide a wailing, windlike quality commonly associated with gambuh dance drama. The disciples later appear as léyak, grotesque, malevolent spirits, with their loosely hanging and disheveled hair covering their faces in the likeness of wild animals.

11. Gegénggongan

One of Lotring's more playful creations, it is inspired by génggong, an ensemble of bamboo mouthharps (jew's harps) made from sugarpalm wood. Notable are syncopated unison passages weaving in and out of the interlocking,

polyphonic phrases, a favorite compositional device of Lotring's. Two excerpts are transcribed in *Music in Bali* (McPhee 1966: 324-325).

12. *Gonténg* (Djawa) *Pengawak Solo* was inspired by Lotring's visit to the royal city of Solo (Surakarta), Java, where his gamelan and *légong* dancers performed for the Sultan. This kind of purely instrumental, non-programmatic composition is referred to as *pategah*. Again, Lotring could brilliantly contrast unison phrases with clever, nuanced polyphonic sections. Current scholars in Bali have difficulty in defining *gonténg*. In Java *gonténg* signifies a "termite with a big head." As the Balinese have a penchant for fanciful and humorous nature-inspired titles, it is not unlikely that Lotring had this in mind.

Gamelan Gong Kebyar of Busungbiu, Northwest Bali

13. *Tabuh Gari*

Generally played as a *penutup*, the final piece in a program, *Tabuh Gari* is an aural signal for the audience that it is time to leave. This rendition departs from the better-known *Semar Pagulingan* and *pelégongan* versions, and the original version of *Tabuh Gari* in the classic *gambuh* repertoire.

14. *Lagu Cocantungan* [*Cecantungan*]

The title suggests a style of combining and mixing different thematic elements. In *Arja* dance opera, *cecantungan* (branching out) are extemporaneous songs derived from varied poetic sources intended to suit a specific occasion within the plot development of the play.

Gender Wayang of Kuta, directed by I Wayan Lotring

15. *Seléndro*.

Lotring was a master of *gendér wayang*, the quartet of metallophones accompanying *wayang* shadow puppet theater. This is one among a genre of pieces performed as introductory music, before the *dalang* (shadow puppet master) begins. Each musician uses two mallets to play complex, often contrapuntal, patterns in which striking and dampening the keys are precisely coordinated. One pair of *gendér* play in one octave while the other pair are an octave higher.

Jangér [Jangér] from Abian Timbul [South Bali]

16. *Putih Putih Saput Anduk* (White, White Bathing Towel)

Another hybrid genre, the lighthearted and often comic *jangér* has experienced waves of popularity interspersed with periods of neglect since its inception in North Bali early in this century. The word *jangér* has been translated both as "infatuation" and as "humming." The form involves boys and girls interacting in ways resembling very old social and ritual dance styles. Under the influence of *Stambul*, an Asian-European hybrid in itself, and other Western theater styles introduced during the Dutch colonial period, *jangér* early on incorporated realistic scenic backdrops and Western male costumes as the *beret*, tennis shoes, short trousers, knee socks, neckties, large epaulettes, etc. Boys are referred to as *cak*, and their songs and movement utilize *kecak* (*cak*) elements derived from the chorus of *Sang Hyang* trance dance rituals (later to develop into its own dramatic form, *kecak*, or *cak*). The choreography departs from *kecak* and relies more on modern military salutes and gymnastic exercises. Their *cak* chorus is interspersed with comic nonsense syllables as well as "si do re si do." This *kecak* group alternates and interweaves with female performers, whose calm and refined dance is based on traditional ceremonial *rejang*, and whose music is straightforward *gagendingan* folk song

in pélog tuning. Two featured instruments are the rebab, a two-stringed bowed fiddle, and an unusual single-headed drum, called tambur, or rebana.

Gamelan Angklung of Sidan [district of Gianyar]

17. Lagu Gending Merdah

Angklung is the four-tone gamelan primarily used for ceremonies associated with odalan temple anniversaries and most importantly, cremations and rites for the dead. The name and musical theme derive from the wayang character Merdah, one of the four comic narrator characters, who are both profane and divine in origin. This theme has been adapted from gendér wayang instrumentation to the angklung style of orchestration. Lagu means melody, or tune, while gending is a musical composition. A repertoire of pieces was adapted from gendér wayang to angklung, since both genres are in sléndro tuning.

18. Lagu Ngisep Dublag [Jublag]

This title refers to the jublag, one of the lower-octave metallophones which use padded mallets, making them less percussive. Ngisep means 'to inhale' or 'to suck' as a honey bee, and its common musical reference is to the higher-tuned of a pair of instruments. In this case, ngisep probably refers to the sweetness of the jublag demonstrated within the piece.

Colin McPhee in Bali

In *A House in Bali*, McPhee describes his routine practice of having Balinese gamelan instruments placed beside his Steinway grand piano. As musicians would play a phrase, McPhee would try to repeat it on the piano, going back and forth until all were satisfied, after which he would transcribe the music onto paper. This was an effective (though detached) mode of participation. The selections on this CD of Pemungkah, Lagu Délem, and Rébong were transcribed in this manner with Wayan Lotring at the gendér during Lotring's two-week visit to McPhee's house in the hill village of Sayan. At various times in 1972, 1980, and 1992, musicians I Madé Gerindem and I Madé Lebah, and gambelan-maker Pandé Sebeng, each described to me McPhee's process of learning and transcription in the 1930s. In *A House in Bali*, he wrote of one context in which he often played gendér with I Lotring (McPhee 1946: 166-167), but Madé Lebah, his long-time companion, told me that he never saw McPhee play in a gamelan. I asked Lebah why he thought McPhee never did sit down and join in the gamelan, as foreign students have done since the 1950s. Madé Lebah suggested that during the colonial era this would have been considered inappropriate and suspect by the Dutch authorities, and it would have been embarrassing for any Euro-American to put himself in the position of sisya or murid (student) to a Balinese guru (teacher). This inability to engage directly did not hinder McPhee's enormous accomplishments in studying Balinese gamelan.

McPhee's recordings, New York, 1941

Some American composers have admonished McPhee for attempting to capture the music of Bali in his piano transcriptions. Much of their criticism stems not only from a post-colonial perspective in which participation is expected, but also as a result of a half century's technological progress in recordings and their worldwide distribution. In his writings from the 1930s, McPhee notes that he was terribly frustrated at his failed attempts to arrange audio recordings: Transcriptions were thus his only available means. Although the piano facilitated this process, many musical elements are not reproducible. Each of the many-keyed metallophones in a gamelan ensemble is one of a pair

(with a few exceptions). Pangumbang (literally mason bee or hummer), is the lower-pitched of the pair. Pangisep (inhaler or sucker) is the higher-pitched. The acoustical beats resulting from the precise, synchronous striking of the matching keys of each instrument, is what gives Balinese gamelan its unique, shimmering quality. The acoustical spacing (*penyorog*) of pangumbang and pangisep varies from genre to genre, and according to the tastes of the *pandé krawang* (bronze-smith) and his patrons. Generally, *gendér wayang* is six beats per second, *gong kebyar*, eight, and *Semar Pagulingan*, seven. One other example of an essential musical element specific to Balinese gamelan instruments is the rhythmic silencing (*metekep*) of the bronze keys. In complex interlocking patterns, silencing provides an additional rhythmic and timbral element (track 15). And, of course, "lost in translation" to piano and flute are the variety of Balinese tunings, an essential element of melodic expression. Non-equidistant intervals, particular to each genre and often unique to each set of instruments, are presented in a generic manner on piano. The Balinese end-blown bamboo flute (*suling*) produces a unique, sinuous, liquid sound, with a seamless stream of melody through circular breathing. (The player need not pause for breath since he inhales through his nose as he blows into the flute.) The *suling* style involves bending tones to produce microtonal shadings. While these were the limits of the medium available to McPhee at that time, his transcriptions still offer a fascinating bridge between musical languages, and pose many timely questions concerning intercultural artistic influences, their potential as well as limitations. These works are evidence that McPhee was an astute listener who had the skill and feeling to communicate to pianists something of what he heard, enriching the piano repertoire. Indeed, it is not Balinese gamelan, but a pianist's and Western flutist's reflection of it. In addition to his transcriptions, McPhee composed numerous works for Western instruments, perhaps his most successful composition being *Tabuh-tabuhan*.

The following are McPhee's liner notes for tracks 19-24, the 1941 Schirmer recordings of his transcriptions, entitled *Balinese Ceremonial Music*. (pp. 23-24). Tracks 19-22 are works for two pianos, performed by Colin McPhee and Benjamin Britten. Tracks 23 and 24 are played by McPhee (piano) and Georges Barrère (flute). The Haynes Company had given a platinum flute to Barrère in 1935, for which Edgard Varese composed his *Density 21.5*. According to Barrère's students, he continued to use his older silver flute as well. As there is no visible or distinctly audible difference between these flutes, we cannot determine which instrument he used for these recordings (Nancy Toff, personal communication 1998). -Edward Herbst ©1999.

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Edward Herbst, composer and ethnomusicologist, made his first visit to Bali in 1972, spending one year studying gendér wayang with I Made Gerindem in Teges Kanginan, gong-smithing practices and acoustics in Tihingan, Klungkung, and the relationship between gamelan and dance theater in Batuan and various other villages. He and Beth Skinner, who was studying mask dance theater, lived in Batuan, in the home of I Nyoman Kakul, master of gambuh, baris, and topéng. In 1980-81, Herbst and Skinner spent fifteen months in Bali. The main focus of Herbst's research was vocal music, and its relations to gamelan, dance and theater characterization, within varied social, religious, and environmental contexts. His work on arja dance opera took place in the village of Singapadu. Herbst returned to Bali for four months in 1992 to complete research for a book, *Voices in Bali: Energies and Perceptions in Vocal Music and Dance Theater* (Wesleyan University Press).