Waringin: Recording a Composition with Gamelan Salukat, a Crossroads of Music and Culture

Oscar Smith

Sydney Conservatorium of Music, The University of Sydney

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Abstract

As the subject of numerous studies over the last century, Balinese music has been presented in a particular light. In the 21st Century, it has been a priority for Western musicologists to renew our outdated or inaccurate conceptions. This paper joins that discourse by presenting an intercultural project as an opportunity to bring the perspective of Balinese musicians under consideration. Recently, I undertook a recording project in Bali, working on my composition “Waringin,” written for Gamelan Salukat. Gamelan Salukat is a 20-30-person bronze ensemble with a radical tuning system, comprised of young musicians (~18-30 yrs.) from around the Ubud region of Central Bali. The project became a crossroads of musicianship, uncovering many intriguing tensions—notation versus oral learning, counting rhythms versus feeling or embodying rhythms, and composition versus improvisation. The following ethnographic account explores how the young Balinese musicians tackled the problems we faced and discusses what implications these newly formed strategies have for Balinese music in a contemporary setting where East and West, self and other, participant and observer are no longer divided.

Keywords

Balinese gamelan, hybridity, intercultural composition, Gamelan Salukat, Dewa Alit, ethnomusicology, ethnography

The final recording/video of the piece is available here: <https://youtu.be/Lb6DoXeCDRA>.

Waringin: Recording a Composition with Gamelan Salukat, a Crossroads of Music and Culture

Oscar Smith

Year IV – Sydney Conservatorium of Music, The University
of Sydney

“Years of study have convinced me that the real job is not to understand foreign culture but to understand our own ... The best reason for exposing oneself to foreign ways is to generate a sense of vitality and awareness—an interest in life which can come only when one lives through the shock of contrast and difference.”¹ This witticism has had a strong impression on the way I have come to interpret my musical experiences in Bali. For example, the apparent lack of “harmony” in Balinese gamelan music is a striking difference to the Western listener, one which has brought into question the use of harmony in my own compositional practice. This view of Bali as a place of unexpected opposites is now jaded. However, with reconsideration, I have found that flipping the perspective and seeing this ‘shock of difference’ from the point of view of

¹ Edward Hall, *The Silent Language*, (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1959), 53.

Balinese musicians can reveal intriguing nuances about the way the Balinese learn, play and conceive of music.

The First Rehearsal

One by one, young musicians on their motor scooters make their way up the long driveway on which there are the homes of not one, but two gamelan ensembles' rehearsal spaces. The musicians, all young men aged between 18-30 from the nearby Ubud area, sit and smoke their e-cigarettes on the edge of the bale—an open air building in which the instruments of Gamelan Salukat are stored. According to Dewa Alit, the composer who formed Salukat, “Salu’ means house, ‘kat’ signifies regeneration and cycles of rebirth,” which together means “a place for new creativities based on tradition.”² In a traditional house compound, one would expect to find a scattering of bale in a large flat area, organized according to cardinal directions, with a family temple area adorned with fresh offerings (canang) and incense. However, this compound, also the home of composer Dewa Alit, has a pair of two-storey buildings, each with locks on the door. The only familiar aspect of this compound is the bale for the instruments, used as a rehearsal studio. There is a temple, but it is very simple and unadorned, an afterthought in the shadow of his two-storey main residence with immaculate landscaping. About five minutes after 7:00 pm, some of the musicians begin to push the instruments into position and remove their covers. Some sit in front of the instruments they have been assigned to and maybe play a few notes, laugh at someone nearby, take a vape of their e-cigarette, then look down to their crossed legs at WhatsApp or Facebook on their smartphones.

² “Gamelan Salukat,” Dewa Alit, accessed May 3rd, 2020, <https://www.dewaalisalukat.com/salukat/>.

The first rehearsal begins approximately fifteen minutes after the scheduled time. I begin reading instructions from my score, which has a number and a dot scribbled above every notated pitch: “pemade dua polos main tujuh tinggi,” “kantilan satu sangsih main dua rendah,” or “The low metallophone player of the second tuning system, playing the first of two parts, play the higher 7th key,” and “the high metallophone player of the first tuning system, playing the second of two parts, play the lower 2nd key.” Once I have taught everyone some of their notes, I begin to see a few interesting things. I notice some of the musicians are repetitively playing their notes in succession quietly to themselves while mumbling some single syllable words under their breath. Others are staring at laptops, where they have written down the key numbers on their phones in little stanzas for different sections of the music, while continuing to vape every minute or so.

We have a break and eat various snacks, for which an allowance was made as part of my budget for the project. Each rehearsal day, Baduk (Salukat’s manager) brings a different snack, from peanuts, to pisang goreng (fried banana, sometimes even fried jack fruit), and even chocolate-filled martabak (Indonesian pancakes). Once the rehearsal officially concludes, the musicians often stay late into the morning, discussing a myriad of topics while drinking bintang beer, arak palm wine or even Scotch whiskey.

Background

In July 2019, I travelled to Bali³ to be a part of one of the most exciting projects I have ever undertaken. This project was to teach and record my composition “Waringin” (Eng: Banyan

³ Funded by the University of Sydney’s Vice Chancellor’s Global Mobility Scholarships and supplementary funding from the Australian Cultural Fund.

Tree) with the innovation-focused gamelan ensemble Gamelan Salukat. There were a few important constraints on this project: the musicians (with one exception) do not read notation (most of them do not even read Balinese cipher notation⁴), my Indonesian language skills are still developing, my travel was constrained to three weeks, during which time a crucially important Balinese celebration (*Galungan lan Kuningan*, the holiest time in the Balinese calendar) was to occur, and due to both of these time constraints, as well as my budget, we had to learn the entire work in only seven rehearsals.

Beyond the practical concerns, however, this project exposed our “differences” (as Hall calls them) of communication ability and musical learning styles, providing both parties with a chance to test our respective culturally ingrained musical practices and assumptions. Over the course of the project, we had the stimulating opportunity to question practices we took for granted, stretch these practices to fit new contexts, or develop new methods entirely, methods that synthesised local and foreign concepts. This ethnographic account of my experiences will document both the ways in which I observed the young Balinese musicians understanding and learning to play my composition, as well as self-reflexive observations of how I adapted my own musical practice to suit this intriguing cross-cultural context, in which the ideas of the “other” and the conventional roles of participant and observer were distorted.

⁴ The *kepatihan* notation found in Java is not widespread in Bali and, where found, is notated in Aksara Bali (literacy in which is becoming rare) and not used by musicians during performance. Older musicians may use them as a reference for the core melodic form of a piece, but the notation does not contain all of the musical information for an entire composition.

Hall's statement at the beginning of this article takes one step in decolonizing studies of foreign cultures in that he recontextualizes our reason for that study and directs it away from the jaded format of observation, categorization, and dichotomization of older style research by Western scholars. However, flipping the cultural lens to imagine how a Balinese musician might appreciate the value of exposing himself to my culture enables a reciprocal exchange, whereby such opportunities are not only for the benefit of the scholar and their career, but rather, create a dialogic feedback loop of value to both parties. As this dialogue has broken down the traditional roles of ethnomusicologist and subject, it allowed Gamelan Salukat and I to create a "more equitable representation."⁵ To address this important concern directly, the musicians were paid and received a free meal at every rehearsal, and in the final video product, the musicians take the spotlight and are all acknowledged by name. The other, less tangible, but perhaps the most valuable outcome, was the opportunity for the exchange of ideas, to learn from each other; the cross-cultural encounter discussed here will endeavour to demonstrate this.

This paper will analyze and highlight the aspects of this project that reveal new insights into music in Bali today, and how that can reshape our representations of Bali. Additionally, the analysis will bring together discussions of hybridity present

⁵ Andrew C. McGraw, *Radical Traditions: Reimagining Culture in Balinese Contemporary Music*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 235.

between Balinese music and Western composers⁶ with those of traditional musical learning styles in Bali,⁷ all in an autoethnographic style that reflects my role in the project as a composer, facilitator, and teacher. In undertaking this analysis, new ways that Balinese musicians are learning and making music today will be revealed. I will explore how this hybridized context revealed interesting features of the Balinese conception of rhythm, including new strategies for learning and counting unfamiliar music; questioned notation's place in an oral tradition; exposed the musicians' continued dependence on leadership; and, exemplified how young people in Bali are participating in *sekebe* (community clubs) today. Some discussion of these aspects of the project occurred during the learning process and were of interest to all present. These features demonstrate how Balinese musical practice is changing to fit into the interconnected, modern world, while retaining what makes it unique.

⁶ See McGraw, *Radical Traditions*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Ethan Lechner, "Composers as Ethnographers: Difference in the Imaginations of Colin McPhee, Henry Cowell, and Lou Harrison," (PhD diss., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 2008); Peter M Steele, "Balinese Hybridities: Balinese Music as Global Phenomena," (PhD diss., Wesleyan University, 2013); Peter M. Steele, "Split Centers: Gamelan Fusion Post-Multiculturalism," *Perspectives of New Music* 53, no. 1 (2015); Sarah Weiss, "Listening to the World but Hearing Ourselves: Hybridity and Perceptions of Authenticity in World Music," *Ethnomusicology* 58, no. 3 (2014).

⁷ See Michael B. Bakan, *Music of Death and New Creation: Experiences in the World of Balinese Gamelan Beleganjur*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Peter Dunbar-Hall, "Children's Learning of Music and Dance in Bali: An Ethnomusicological View of the Cultural Psychology of Music Education," in *A Cultural Psychology of Music Education*, ed. Margaret S. Barrett (New York: Oxford Scholarship Online, 2011).

Gamelan Salukat

I was quite stunned when I first heard *Gamelan Salukat* perform, as the ensemble's radical tuning system (devised by Balinese composer Dewa Ketut Alit in 2016, see Fig. 1) is quite unlike anything else in Bali. Due to its unique sound, I was deeply inspired and motivated to compose a piece for the ensemble. The group is devoted to playing new compositions, mostly by Dewa Alit, but they frequently collaborate internationally. Alit is the most widely discussed living Balinese composer in scholarly literature. While his ideas are often controversial, they are frequently rooted in tradition, as revealed here in his intentions for founding Gamelan Salukat (before the new tuning):

Balinese *gamelan* music ... needs to be ever-changing and without borders. This mission has also motivated me to design and build *Gamelan Salukat* and form a *sekehe* (community club) to perform new music on these instruments. This strategy has enabled me to more freely realize new musical ideas in a strongly traditional environment. It is a situation analogous to contemporary Bali itself. This gives my work meaning not only because it retains a traditional identity. Much more importantly, it empowers and positions *gamelan* music to be the “master of its own house” until it can give birth [to] a musical lifestyle that is resilient against the increasingly pervasive onslaught of global capitalism.⁸

⁸ Dewa Ketut Alit, “Genetik: Musical Independence for Balinese Gamelan in the Global Era,” trans. Peter Steele (Pengosekan, 2012), 1-2; See appendix of Steele, “Balinese Hybridities” (PhD diss., Wesleyan University, 2013).

In mid-July 2019, I arrived in Bali, met with Alit, and began preparing for the recording session. I discovered a few important things as I prepared in the studio with the instruments. Firstly, the gamelan's tuning had shifted slightly from the incomplete audio files I had been given a year prior, and it was no longer relatively in tune with itself. Secondly, I discovered that the *calung* instruments (tenor range metallophones) were completely different to what I had assumed, as I had not received any information about them. As a result, being there in person meant I was able to make more complete tuning measurements (see Fig. 1).

Figure 1: The instruments of Gamelan Salukat as measured using a smartphone app in August 2019.

Finally, based on Alit's recommendation to me from his own experience teaching his music on the unconventional instruments, I realized that the only way to teach the musicians my piece would be to verbally direct them on which notes to play and when to play them, for the entire eight-minute work. So, I began a long process of marking up the score – converting all of

the notated pitches into key numbers (see Fig. 2), and figuring out how to play the piece myself, so that in the seven rehearsals I could demonstrate all the parts of the piece back-to-front (literally!).⁹

Figure 2: My score markings, turning every note into a key number.

Discussion and Analysis

The idea that this project could be completed within seven rehearsals by young musicians might sound quite ludicrous. However, the Balinese are renowned for their strong memorization skills, and, because they are part of an oral musical tradition, they are naturally adept at learning in this way. Thus, it

⁹ For demonstration purposes, it is normal practice in Bali to play the instrument from the opposite side to the player, meaning that the keys are in reverse pitch order, i.e. left to right is high to low.

may be valuable to discuss some of the normative aspects of Balinese teaching and learning methods. Colin McPhee, an early authority on Balinese music, says, “the teacher does not seem to teach ... he is merely the transmitter.”¹⁰ Balinese scholar Wayan Dibia describes this pedagogy as “emphasizing on [sic] imitating rather than analyzing.”¹¹ Adding to this, Michael Bakan notes that “the effectiveness of teaching is almost exclusively dependent on a holistic demonstration-and-imitation mode ... there is a consistent aim to present the musical whole without drawing undue attention to the parts of which it is composed.”¹² Drawing from his own experiences in attempting to learn Balinese music by transcribing it and performing from notation, Bakan learns that this holistic view of learning is what allows the Balinese to develop seemingly infallible memories of long and highly complex compositions, because their memorization of the piece occurs in the first instance of learning it. This approach contrasts with Western conventions of learning a piece first, then attempting to memorize it, usually “as a sequence of connected but independent musical segments.”¹³ Another important method for the learning and transmission of music is a musician’s ability to sing their part. They normally do this by means of a solfege system:

¹⁰ Colin McPhee, “Children and Music in Bali,” in *Traditional Balinese Culture*, ed. Jane Belo (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 232.

¹¹ I Wayan Dibia, “Arja: A Sung Dance-Drama of Bali; a Study of Change and Transformation,” (PhD diss., UCLA, 1992), 383.

¹² Michael B. Bakan, *Music of Death and New Creation: Experiences in the World of Balinese Gamelan Beleganjur*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 282-283.

¹³ Bakan, 308.

The *ding-dong-deng-dung-dang* solfège is universally known and used in Bali. It provides a clear sense of orientation within the scale [the pentatonic modes generated by the pelog scale], and an unambiguous means of communication between musicians. Any musician can convey melodies to another with near perfect accuracy – no matter how much variation might exist between their respective *gamelan* tunings.¹⁴

Unfortunately, Alit stressed that this method for communicating was no longer useful in the entirely foreign tuning system, and for music outside conventional pentatonic modal practice. Describing teaching his own heptatonic composition ‘Genetik,’ Dewa Alit says:

I just imagined the melody [when I was composing it]. The sound wasn’t clear to me in my ear. And then I just taught it to them (the musicians), even I got confused. ... the musicians - they just remembered the note, the key. It’s very hard for them to memorize at first because they couldn’t understand where the melody was going yet. And the sound is new. Then later they can hear the melody.¹⁵

These important distinctions necessitated the conversion of my score into key numbers, but I still had every confidence that

¹⁴ Wayne Vitale, “Balinese Kebyar Music Breaks the Five-Tone Barrier: New Composition for Seven-Tone Gamelan,” *Perspectives of New Music* 40, no. 1 (2002): 61.

¹⁵ Dewa Ketut Alit, personal communication, August 2019.

Salukat could learn and perform it.¹⁶ At the very first rehearsal of my composition, however, my illusion of an almost superhuman Balinese ability to learn and remember music was shattered. I quickly realized that, on my own, I would be unable to create this holistic conception of my piece on which the conventional Balinese teaching method relies. Additionally, to me it felt unnatural not to break down the musical elements in some way, and thus the teaching process would still be slow—they are only human after all! So, I began teaching the piece, slowly singing parts and verbally instructing the musicians one note at a time.

With all of these challenges, the young Balinese musicians brought their exceptional resourcefulness to the project, developing innovative new ways of learning music that have not yet been documented. The most crucial ability they had to develop was the ability to count rest durations, subdivisions, and repetition times in an efficient way. The musicians of Salukat have been doing this for several years now, as Dewa Alit's music also requires these skills of them. In traditional Balinese music, every part is interdependent, and counting is therefore not as essential in its performance as it is for the performance of Western music (especially in large ensembles like orchestras). For example, when an instrumental section has a rest, the drummer will usually cue their re-entry. With cues like this built into the music itself, there is not a necessity to count. However, in Alit's recent compositions, such as the polyphonic and cross-rhythmic sections of 'Genetik' (2012), the musicians are required to be

¹⁶ Numbers referring to the keys of the instrument.

much more independent and to count.¹⁷ But as Michael Tenzer notes, for Alit, “key nonnegotiable features had to be preserved: the sociality of gamelan oral learning and notation-less performance, the basic physical gestures of playing techniques and ensemble interaction.”¹⁸ For Alit, these features are essential to retaining a unique Balinese identity.

A factor that complicates the development of the ability to count efficiently is that in the Indonesian language, numbers 1-9 all have at least two syllables. Thus, the musicians have cleverly dropped the first syllables of each number (which are unstressed in speech anyway) and created a kind of rhythm solfege (see Fig. 3). I did not observe the musicians ever count higher than 8. Perhaps confusingly, the musicians also used these abbreviations to refer to the numbers of the instruments’ keys, given the aforementioned inapplicability of the traditional solfege system.

¹⁷ See Oscar Smith, “GENETIK: An analytical study of the contemporary gamelan music of Dewa Ketut Alit,” (Honours Thesis, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, 2019).
<https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/handle/2123/22218>.

¹⁸ Michael Tenzer, “Chasing the Phantom: Features of a Supracultural New Music,” *Music Theory Online* 24, no. 1 (March 2018), para. 9.

#	Indonesian	Abbr.
1	satu	tu
2	dua	a
3	tiga	ga
4	empat	pat
5	lima	ma
6	enam	nam
7	tujuh	ju
8	delapan	pan

Figure 3: Numbers abbreviated to one syllable for counting.

In the first section of my composition, the following rhythm is used as an ostinato: , or repetitive groups of 3 then 2 semiquavers, in which the quavers are dampened, rendering a percussive staccato clunk. This uneven rhythm was not intuitive to the musicians, and we spent some time refining it, as it was quite often mistaken for (see Fig. 4). Once I had heard them counting in the rhythm solfege, however, I changed my methods to suit their approach and began to count subdivisions using groups of 3 and 2, like so: “*tu-a-ga tu-a, tu-a-ga*

tu-a.”¹⁹ By using their system, I could successfully communicate the rhythm I intended. At a later rehearsal, however, I noticed that somehow the rhythm had slipped out of this underlying subdivision into something else more complicated, which, due to our limited rehearsal time, I was not able to clarify for the recording.

Figure 4. The discussed rhythms in Western notation.

This confusion revealed another fascinating dimension of the Balinese conception of rhythm: playing rhythm by feeling, which Alit calls “*selah*.”²⁰ When I counted the subdivisions, it sometimes failed to actually correct the musicians’ rhythms. So, I followed up by asking them to count while playing, and this proved to be a very unnatural and difficult task for them, suggesting that the use of vocalizations for the purposes of subdividing, and probably subdividing in general, is simply not done in conventional Balinese musical practice. This is because

¹⁹ It is not difficult to imagine how at a fast tempo, having two syllable numbers would make this vocalization nearly impossible.

²⁰ I have not encountered other musicians using this term, which, according to various dictionaries and other sources means “chance” or “opportunity.”

Balinese musicians feel rhythms rather than count or vocalize them in some way. Yet from my experience, Balinese musicians are able to execute with ease rhythmic feats that to me seem much more challenging. This observation suggests a fairly fundamental difference in the understanding of the basic elements of music, a difference that affords the musicians an unexpected rhythmic virtuosity.

Another challenge presented by the opening section was that I had written four-note “chords” in the *gangsa* (mid-high range metallophones) parts that required the front row of musicians to totally memorize their parts, as they could not look to someone else for help. In more conventional gamelan music, approximately four musicians usually play the same interlocking part, meaning that players can rely on a few other people in the event of a memory lapse. To allow for quick reliability in a setting which required individual memorization from each one of them, I noticed that the players, especially those in the front row, started to keep track of the keys by writing them down on their phones. This reveals a shift in contemporary musical practice towards use of notation, for learning or even performance. Indeed, some Balinese composers have been using notation more frequently in recent years to augment their practice and record their ideas prior to teaching. However, a lack of literacy or consistency in notation methods in Bali still created a challenge in this time-sensitive project.

Conservatory-trained Balinese musicians are becoming increasingly competent in reading a few kinds of notations, but from this anecdote it is clear that even those not trained to read notation feel a natural compulsion to write music down, at least during the learning process — especially given the kinds of

musical feats that composers are pushing their musicians to achieve today. It will be interesting to see the development of notational practice in contemporary Balinese music in years to come.²¹ Another similarly radical Balinese composer of Alit's generation, Wayan Gde Yudana, has formed the Roras Ensemble, a new music group that performs with both Balinese cipher notation and Western staff scores. Alit, however, is hesitant to move away from the oral tradition, as his personal goal is to keep Balinese music "the master of its own house," and he believes that the oral learning tradition is one quintessential Balinese characteristic, which if removed would result in something less Balinese and more Western.

In the final section of my piece, due to rehearsal constraints, I decided to change the *gangsa* parts and make them aleatoric and improvised, which I thought might be less time consuming. My idea was to have only one *gangsa* (metallophone) player play at first, and then gradually build the density until several musicians play simultaneously, but not in sync with each other. In the liner notes for a contemporary gamelan music album *Returning Minimalism*, Wayne Vitale notes that this concept poses a particular challenge to gamelan musicians with their "typical Indonesian mode of follow-the-leader, passively waiting for guidance,"²² and that "free group improvisation is almost never done in Indonesia, even experimentally: too much

²¹ I have already seen some striking scores by young Balinese composers, even an interesting combination of graphic and cipher styles by Ni Komang Sraya Murtikanti, used as an abstract tool to generate music, not just as a memory aid.

²² Wayne Vitale, *Returning Minimalism*, (California: Vital Records, 2011), Liner Notes, CD 444: 18.

individual choice feels like anarchy to most musicians.”²³ I certainly encountered this mindset when teaching this final section of my composition. The first few times we practiced the section, a few interesting things happened. The first time the ensemble rehearsed the section, no-one played! This hesitation was probably a result of timidity. The second time, everyone played at once, but not quite in time. Next, a few musicians entered simultaneously, but they were in sync with each other, defaulting to following the *ugal* (the lead *gangsa* player, the highest musical authority, who in this setting actually had no more authority than any other musician). It took several repetitions before the musicians became comfortable in this musical situation, which probably felt anarchic. However, soon enough they began to take pride in their own personal contributions to the music, sometimes to the point of the texture becoming too dense. This instance of aleatory challenged the musicians to be more independent and revealed their innate tendency toward reliance on leadership in an ensemble performance setting.

The Recording Night

The musicians arrive at Salukat’s rehearsal space at around midday on a Sunday. Many of the players work in backpackers’ hostels and are stepping out of work for this commitment. Like clockwork they load the instruments onto a small truck, from a moving company that specializes in transporting gamelan instruments. In the early evening, the musicians begin parking their motorbikes and scooters in the narrow street behind the recording space, a much larger but still open-air performance stage (wantilan)

²³ Wayne Vitale, *Returning Minimalism*, 13.

in the residence of a dancer whose father was the drummer in legendary touring ensemble Tirta Sari. This dancer owns two dogs and many roosters, all caged and probably used for illegal cockfighting. The chickens make a raucous noise, but the musicians assure me that they quieten down at exactly 6:00 pm. While we wait for the recording engineer to set up, Baduk brings dinner for everyone, a nasi campur from the unanimous favourite warung in the nearby area. The musicians continue to vape throughout the night. We record several takes, and during the final section of the best take so far, one of the resident dogs barks suddenly and ruins the final section, so we have to redo it.

After we return the instruments to Dewa Alit's home, Baduk produces two large cases of Bintang and we all stay up late chatting, eating peanuts off the floor, and vaping. The musicians tell me in unconfident broken English how happy they were to have learnt something about Balinese music from someone who is non-Balinese, and I tell them how incredible the opportunity for exchange was for me. The musicians remain there till the early hours of the morning chatting with Alit about music, discussing Indonesian politics, their favourite flavours of vaping gel, and vintage scooters, or teaching me Balinese youth slang.

Conclusion

While recent literature discusses the statistics concerning Balinese people's dependence on tourism, and that young people in Bali are no longer participating in their own culture, I believe that the *sekehe*, or community club, remains an important part of the cultural landscape for the youth in modern Bali. With the abundance of social media and information readily accessible, it is through the *sekehe* that young Balinese people can learn about their culture, connect with older mentors, make friends, eat and

drink together, and gain access to a support network. Gamelan Salukat offers these and many other important opportunities for these young musicians.

This paper reveals and discusses the new learning methods that Balinese musicians are forging in a contemporary setting where East and West, self and other, participant and observer are no longer divided. The new tuning of the instruments in Gamelan Salukat represents a new direction in Balinese musical practice, and the musicians bring with them a quintessentially Balinese oral learning style that, when augmented with new forms of musical communication, both retains and expands the Balinese musical identity, “one based on its relationship to other cultures.”²⁴ Hybrid contexts like these have become increasingly common, and each instance will reveal different things about both of the contributing cultures through the creation of a third entity, a conglomeration of aspects of both cultures. This recording project provided Salukat with an opportunity for cross-cultural exchange and learning, one which revealed to me many surprising and interesting features of musical learning styles and culture in Bali today.²⁵

²⁴ Dewa Ketut Alit in Michael Tenzer, *Balinese Gamelan Music* (Singapore: Tuttle, 2011), 134.

²⁵ Listen to the final recording here: <https://youtu.be/Lb6DoXeCDRA>

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