

Kernowgam - Gamelan for Cornwall

Jo Shaw

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What is gamelan?

A gamelan is a set of percussion instruments from Indonesia. It usually consists of bronze metallophones and gongs, mounted on wooden frames which are beautifully carved and painted. They are played by groups of up to 25 people, and gamelan ensembles traditionally perform outdoors at village temple ceremonies, weddings and funerals, or to accompany performances of dance, drama and puppet theatre. There are many different types of gamelan in Indonesia, and over 20 different types in Bali alone.

For general information about gamelan try

www.seasite.niu.edu/indonesian/budaya_bangsa/Gamelan/Main_Page/main_page.htm

or for information about gamelan in the UK <http://www.gamelannetwork.co.uk/about-gamelan-network.html>

Kernowgam



Lilacita play Kernowgam at the festival to celebrate the re-opening of the Royal Festival Hall, June 2007

At Woodland Valley we have Cornwall's only resident gamelan, a Balinese angklung gamelan, which is a small type of ensemble traditionally played during funeral processions.

The gamelan is called Adnya Suara Metu which translates as 'the sounds of the deepest feeling float out'. It is an old set of instruments which have been re-tuned and for which new frames have been made.

Kernowgam gratefully acknowledge the support of Arts Council England in purchasing the gamelan angklung for Cornwall.



So why play gamelan?

Gamelan is a very sociable activity, and people of all ages are fascinated by the look of the instruments and the sounds they make. You don't need to be 'musical' to take part, or be able to read music, and the instruments are technically very easy to play. Complete beginners can quickly learn a basic piece and begin to make music together, and gamelan is accessible to everyone regardless of age, experience or ability. The parts are learned by ear and are simple and easy to memorise, which leaves the player free to listen to what is going on around them.

For Schools...

Playing gamelan encourages team-work, listening and rhythmic skills, and there is the potential to learn about the wider context of non-western music and culture. Children that have never been considered musical or been members of a music-making ensemble before can experience that for the first time, while more able 'musical' students can explore a totally new way of approaching music making, musical structure and instrument function. There are no solo roles, and participants can try different instruments and parts within the piece which are all equally important.

Specific elements of the National Curriculum which are covered:

- KS1 patterns and pentatonic scale (for example the Dragon Dragon QCA scheme of work)
aural memory
musical purposes
- KS2 cyclical music
global citizenship
the seven aspects of music: pitch, dynamic, duration, tempo, timbre, texture, silence
- KS3 awareness of roles and contribution of each member of the group
inclusion - each player's contribution is essential musically and valued
- GCSE specific reference made in various curricula.

For adults...

Why not try a gamelan workshop as a team building exercise? A stress-buster during your conference? Or just something different to stimulate your mind. As part of your day at Woodland Valley it is an experience totally unique within Cornwall, and something you will never forget.

Gamelan is a great leveller - chances are no-one will have heard of let alone played the instruments, so it is an excellent activity to put into a team building event or works outing. Participants take off their shoes and sit on the floor to play (with necessary adjustments if individuals find this difficult) and most people find it a stimulating and ultimately very enjoyable experience. For some it is the first time they have made music in a group since school, and this can be highly rewarding. Everyone can succeed as there are a variety of musical parts, which range from the very simple to more complex decorative patterns. All the instruments are musically essential so nobody will feel they are not contributing something important to the group.

Workshops available: (Prices on request)

Workshops are adapted to meet the age and ability range of participants, and are flexible enough to satisfy any needs that become apparent. Group size should be between 10 and 20 students, although an entire primary class can be accommodated with adequate adult supervision; we aim to be totally inclusive.

Gamelan has proven very successful with groups of children and adults with special needs, whether they are hearing or sight impaired, physically disabled or have learning difficulties. Sessions can be tailored closely to suit the needs and abilities of participants, so please contact us if you would like to discuss this further.

One off 'taster' session

This workshop can last anything from 45 minutes to 3 hours, and will introduce participants to the instruments, their wider cultural context and traditional function. It is essentially a 'hands-on' session and participants will have the opportunity to explore the instruments and learn a simple traditional piece. They will move around and try different instruments with different playing techniques and musical functions. The more able students can attempt more complex patterns and decorative musical parts.

One day workshops

Moving on from the morning taster session, participants will learn a different, contrasting piece, involving different musical techniques. They will have the chance to ask questions and perhaps create a piece of their own, working in small groups. At the end of the day, the groups will perform their pieces to their class-mates and describe how they have put their music together.

During the day contrasting activity can be provided by listening to or watching original materials, and there are dance masks and puppets to look at. Participants could spend time drawing the materials to give them a rest from the gamelan.

Gamelan weekends

For a fuller introduction to the gamelan, weekend workshops are available. Come and stay at the beautiful Woodland Valley centre, and in between exploring the lovely countryside, learn more about the gamelan and develop your playing techniques. There is always another part to learn, a more complex and challenging pattern to master, and when you've had enough of music, you can try your hand at dancing, or puppeteering!

These weekends cater for between 10 and 20 individuals of any age, although young children might find it tiring over the longer periods and the recommended minimum age would usually be 10.