

Central Javanese Gamelan

Sunday October 15, 3 PM
Greenwall
Bennington College

Ladrang Wilujeng, laras sléndro pathet manyura

Pathetan sléndro manyura

Ladrang Pakumpulan, laras sléndro pathet sanga

Lancaran Sembungilang, laras sléndro pathet sanga

With Guest Artists:

Pak I.M. Harjito
Bu Denni Harjito
Chris J. Miller
Anne Stebinger

The Musics of Asia Class:

Brie Dombrowski, Luna Galassini, Nate Goossen, Mary Gregg, Dillon Meyer, Brienne Panneton, Alex Powell, Jessica Ruth, Dmitri Sled, Julia Walker, Benjamin Wood, plus Ross Dillon, Kirk Kenney, Matt Souther, Matt Scott, and Robert Singley

This event is supported by Bennington College and the generous loan of gamelan Kyai Muncur Basuki from Wesleyan University

The term *gamelan* refers to musical ensembles from the islands of Java and Bali in the Republic of Indonesia, and by extension to the music that is played on them. Javanese *gamelan* consist primarily of bronze percussion instruments—various sizes of gong and gong-chimes, suspended either vertically or horizontally, and various types of metallophones—but include other types of instruments as well. The different instruments perform different functions. The largest gong marks the end-point of the cyclical formal structures which underlie each piece, while smaller gongs mark subdivisions of the cycle. (The terms *gangsaran*, *lancaran*, *bubaran* and *ladrang* precede the proper title of each piece and indicate its structure.) A group of slab-keyed *saron* and one thin-keyed *slenthem* play the *balungan*, a skeletal melody, while the smallest and highest pitched *saron* and two sets of gong chimes, *bonang*, add simple elaborations. Soft-style pieces are led by the *rebab*, a two-string fiddle, and include singers. Their characteristically complex texture is the result of additional layers of melody and elaboration provided by instruments such as the *gender*, a thin-keyed metallophone played with two padded mallets, and the *gambang*, a xylophone. The *kendhang*, or drum, acts like a conductor in both soft and loud-style pieces, setting tempos and giving cues to begin, end, or switch to different sections. In dance pieces, the various patterns of the *kendhang* correspond directly to the movements of the dancer. Javanese *gamelan* normally include two sets of instruments in each of the two tuning systems, *laras pélog* and *laras sléndro*. Tuning is not standardized, but particular to individuals and to sets of instruments. Each *gamelan* thus has a unique character, reflected by the practice of giving the instruments formal names. Tonight's ensemble plays on the *sléndro* half of *Kyai Muncur Basuki* ("Sir Sparkling Prosperity"), on loan from Wesleyan University. --Chris J. Miller

I. M. Harjito is one of the finest Javanese musicians of his generation. He is a graduate of Indonesia's state conservatory for the traditional performing arts, where he worked closely with one of the major figures of 20th-century Javanese music, R.T. Martodipura. Harjito has directed gamelan ensembles in Indonesia, the United States, Canada, and Australia. He is also a composer of traditional and innovative works for gamelan and other instruments. For the past twenty years he has been a faculty member at Wesleyan University. Besides directing Sekar Setaman at Brown University, he also directs Kusuma Laras, New York City's Javanese gamelan ensemble, and is a regular guest at concerts of the Boston Village Gamelan.

Denni Harjito is from Surakarta in Central Java. She regularly sings with Kusuma Laras, New York City's Javanese gamelan ensemble, Sekar Setaman at Brown University, and with the Boston Village Gamelan. She specializes in singing as a *pesindhen*, the female vocalist in Javanese gamelan, as well as in Javanese dance.

Chris J. Miller is active in composition, improvisation, performance, and scholarship. One of the leading non-Javanese performers of traditional Javanese music, Miller plays regularly with ensembles in New England and New York. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate in ethnomusicology at Wesleyan.

Anne Stebinger is one of the original founders of the Indonesian Consulate Gamelan in New York, Kusuma Laras, where she now serves as Assistant Director. She has performed the *karawitan* repertoire across the U.S. and in Indonesia.