



(LYRCD 7179)

GAMELAN MUSIC OF BALI GAMELAN ANGKLUNG AND GAMELAN GONG KEBJAR

TRACKS

1. Topeng Tua - performed by Gamelan Angklung - 3:14
2. Kebjar Teruna - performed by Gamelan Gong Kebjar - 13:49
3. Tabuhan Djoged - performed by Gamelan Angklung - 7:37
4. Segera Madu - performed by Gamelan Angklung - 3:12
5. Gamelan Angklung - performed by Gamelan Angklung - 6:27
6. Gambang Suling - performed by Gamelan Gong Kebjar - 8:58
7. Kebjar Hudjan Mas - performed by Gamelan Gong Kebjar - 6:35

NOTES

Bali, one of the several thousand islands forming the Republic of Indonesia, has long been famous for its gamelan music. A tiny Hindu minority in a predominantly Moslem land, the Balinese enjoy a way of life filled with an incredible number of temple celebrations and life-cycle ceremonies, all of which require music.

In earlier times when the Balinese Radjas still maintained splendid palaces, they supported large numbers of musicians and dancers for such gamelan which traditionally belonged to the courts. Nowadays with most palaces reduced to a mere shadow of their former magnificence, palace-owned orchestras have been pawned or sold and musical activity is chiefly carried out at the village level. Today, gamelan instruments are owned by a group of musicians who, in either case, form a club to regulate their activities.

Although money and leisure time are less abundant than formerly and fewer gamelan clubs are active than before 1940, there are still at least ten different kinds of gamelan in

Bali of which perhaps four or five perform with some regularity. Gamelan Angklung and Gamelan Gong Kebjar, the two types of gamelan represented on this recording, are among the most popular today.

Gamelan Angklung is an ancient miniature-sized orchestra whose instruments are small and light enough to be easily carried in processions. It also provides music to temple festivals, cremations, and virtually every other occasion for which music is needed. Traditionally this gamelan does not accompany a dance performance; however in recent years it has been used in the south for the Topeng or masked dance drama and for some modern dances particularly in villages, which no longer own a large gamelan and cannot afford to hire one. Although every Gamelan Angklung originally had a four-tone scale, a fifth tone has been added to those in the north where a sweeter sound is preferred. The Great Gamelan Gong Kebjar for which a five-tone pelog scale is used, was developed in the early part of this century to accompany the brilliant kebjjar dance. In all but a few villages it has replaced its ancestor, the ceremonial Gamelan Gong, and also accompanies the Topeng, the classic Legogn, Baris (an ancient warrior dance) and other modern dances which are currently popular. Included in its nondance repertoire is a type of composition called genderan, which is designed to show the virtuosity of the metallophones.

The instrumental make-up of both these orchestras is similar. Both are composed of metallophones, called gangsa, with bronze keys over bamboo-tube resonators. In south Bali the keys are freely suspended over the resonators while in the north, where a more rapid and louder style is preferred, the keys rest on the bamboo tubes. Also included are gongs of various sizes, bamboo flutes, cymbals and drums. Ostinato form is commonly used for all gamelan compositions. One or a series of melodic patterns is repeated several times and since each instrumental group provides its own interpretation of the ostinato, the result is a kind of simultaneous set of variations.

One pair of single-octave metallophones perform the basic melodic ostinato, while a second pair extracts certain notes from it. Those metallophones which span two octaves provide elaborate interlocking patterns based on the ostinato. The rejong (small gongs mounted horizontally in a row and played by four men) play similar patterns or join the cymbals in accenting certain drum patterns while further melodic elaboration of the melody is provided by the flutes (suling). The large gong marks the end of the ostinato pattern while smaller gongs punctuate it on subsidiary beats. The entire ensemble is directed by the interlocking patterns of a pair of tuned drums.

TOENG TRA

A performance of the Topeng is preceded by the appearance of several characters whose dances are simply a prelude to the actual story and have nothing whatever to do with the plot itself. One of them is an old (tua) man whose amusing movements bring waves of laughter from the audience. His dance consists of several attempts to move rapidly which invariably result in near collapse due to his advanced age. His movements, alternately fast and slow, are paralleled by the gamelan, in this case a Gamelan Angklung form south Bali.

KEBJAR TERUNA

As the title suggests, this composition is based on a melody borrowed from the repertoire of the Gamelan Djoged. Since the Gamelan Djoged also uses a five-tone slendro scale, only slight changes were needed to convert this piece to one for Gamelan Angklung.

SEGERA MADU

The village of Sajan, where this recording was made, is the home of one of the few remaining Gamelan Angklung in central Bali which still uses the ancient angklung is a rattle made of bamboo tubes in a wood frame. The bamboo is tuned to one note in three octaves and the sound is produced by shaking the frame. Four angklung are generally used, one for each note of the scale and they are played in hoquet style doubling the interlocking patterns of the metallophones.

GAMELAN ANGKLUNG

Another example of the five-tone Gamelan Angklung found in north Bali, this piece is fairly recent and was composed by one of the drummers of the orchestra.

GAMBANG SULING

Several years ago, the song Gambang Suling was popular throughout Indonesia. Although originally written in the seven-tone pelog scale, it appears here as the basis for a full-scale gamelan piece for the Gamelan Gong Kebjar which uses the five-tone Pelog system. Designed solely for the listening pleasure of the audience, it illustrates the distinct style of the flute playing found in the north.

KEBJAR HUDJAN MAS

Composed in north Bali and recorded in the south, this composition combines elements of debjar and genderan styles. The opening is dominated by the metallophones and they are later joined by the full gamelan in kebjar style. Although this piece often serves as an instrumental interlude, it is also used frequently as a prelude to a larger dance composition such as the Kebjar Teruna.

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Ruby Ornstein is an ethnomusicologist from UCLA, who made these recordings while on a two-year grant in Bali. She is now a member of the faculty of Queens College.



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