

SCRIPT. AS3. PRESENTING WORLD MUSIC ON RADIO.

10-Minute Programme Series: 'FLASH ORBIT' - 'Gamelan'

Producer/presenter: Victoria Major

Premise: Pre-recorded music documentary studying adaptation of traditional music's around the globe in modern times.

SCRIPT:

...use 'Circling', last track introduced in show under voice in introduction...

This is *Flash Orbit*, a short programme in a series with me, Victoria Major, where I share with you music I love from around the globe/ Today, we'll focus on Indonesian gamelan, both a musical style and ensemble of keyed metallophones, bossed gongs, and drums from Java and Bali.

We'll address topics of homage and appropriation... welcome to the show.

1. TRACK: Suite for Violin with American Gamelan: I. Threnody
Composer: LOU HARRISON

...vol up music down to talk over...

I've long adored the sounds of vibraphones and glockenspiels / continuously playing the 1983 album *Through The Looking Glass* by Japanese percussionist Midori Takada. / I even found time to stop and listen to wind chimes as I walked past people's gardens./ But when Harrison's suite swept me away, and I crept inside the long resonant vibrations of his gongs / I came across the unfamiliar word 'gamelan' for the very first time.

American composer, Lou Harrison's sparse application of shimmering gongs and chimes / weave a sense of time slowing down / a moment stretched out for the experience of listening and being. / In this suite for violin and American gamelan recorded in 1974, he creates an atmosphere that connects the listener to the present moment and a nostalgic past / an imagined place in time... / throughout the suite, focus shifts between the brooding melody of the violin and the resonance of gongs / and the middle section features a homage to European medieval dance music. / Yet Harrison's homemade American gamelan instruments hint of somewhere geographically distant to America, unnamed, yet suggested...

2. TRACK: Duet
Composer: PAK RAHAYU SUPANGGAH

Javanese composer Pak Rahayu Supanggah (Parh Rahayuh Supangahh) / stretches perimeters of his traditional Javanese musical customs, to explore the potential for new music. / He describes collaboration as an interactive pleasure, / an opportunity for musicians to use their expertise to experience collective creativity / and discover new possibilities for synergistic fusion. / He's participated in workshops with string musicians The Kronos Quartet from San Fransisco who share a similar ethical standpoint regarding collaboration, / and created music with theatre in collaboration with experimental American playwright Robert Wilson, among other projects of both traditional and boundary pushing music. / The track playing now is from his album / aptly named *Homage to Tradition*, / at once stating a distinction from, and commitment to the musical heritage and reputation of Indonesia...

Claude Debussy is arguably one of the most famous devotees of Javanese gamelan / He patterned an entire piano piece on recognisable gamelan techniques for this composition, '*Pagodes*'...

3. TRACK: Pagodes
Composer: CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Debussy's gamelan inspired works show how attentively he listened and the pleasure it gave him. / He has morphed the melodic and rhythmic patterns he experienced as a listener into something strikingly of its own and with a completely different temperament / to traditional Indonesian percussion music / The gamelan influence, although a key element in the piece / rather than creating a difficult debate about appropriation, / offers a biography of Debussy's experience of listening, a phantasmal echo, and a fresh form of music...

Debussy first encountered Javanese gamelan in the Dutch section of the Paris World Exhibition of 1889. / Sadly the event demonstrated empirical exploitation of people under colonial rule. / The performers were presented as “living exhibits” of “colonial natives”, alongside model villages of Senegal, Lapland, and Benin...

Huge fairs of this nature, these mass spectacles, somewhat contrived a ‘global media’ culture where audiences participated in consumption of far off places and distant cultures / Gamelan was exotified as an oriental mystical delicacy from the east...

...fade in part of ‘Duets’ again to go under next paragraph...

As a student of Balinese gamelan in London, I often consider how people view the activity / especially when we perform at public concerts. / We wear traditional Balinese costume on stage. / I’m aware this could be perceived as appropriating a once colonised nation / on the other hand, as a respectful gesture to Balinese tradition and custom / While this is tricky to unpack, it seems nearly impossible to knock the integrity or match the technique of practicing gamelan musicians in Indonesia. / This is worth holding sight of. / If one has access to instruments and musical knowledge from cultural traditions besides their own, it seems imperative to remain humble and look to the people from Indonesian society who’re actively practicing within the tradition for support and guidance.

4. TRACK: Genetic
Composer: DAWA ALIT

Dewa Alit (Darwa Arlear) is another skilled and innovative musician and composer from Indonesia / who's studied in the Balinese gamelan tradition / He’s collaborated with Noh and Butoh dancers from Japan, written music specifically for American gamelan groups, and for *Ensemble Modern* from Frankfurt, Germany. / His work’s gained attention across the globe...in fact / the community gamelan group I play with at the LSO in London performed his famous modal hopping piece / *Geregel* this year, / hoping to do it justice. / Playing gamelan’s really one of the best ways to hear pieces come to life around you / and begin to understand them and the music...

The instruments in this track, *Genetic*, are named ‘Gamelan Sulaka(t)’. Arli(t) designed this set of instruments to have an 11-tone scale, instead of the customary 5 or 7. “Sula” means house, and “ka(t)” signifies the cycles of birth and regeneration, suggesting his philosophy as a composer. The players are from the Ubud area and are well trained in Balinese traditional musical technique / but as part of Arli(t)’s group, they’re on the front line of the gamelan music scene, making new and challenging music based on revered tradition and broad horizons.

...feed in circling to go with “horizons”.

5. TRACK: Circling
Composer: FOUR TET CIRCLING

The track playing right now is *Circling* by Four Tet, a composer of electronica from London. Although not taking directly from gamelan music, you can hear how *Circling* emphasises circular musical form and pattern. It is difficult to imagine that musicians and composers from areas of the globe which traditionally favour melodic narrative over circular pattern could create and publish music which sounds this way without gamelan music having had exposure and popularity in different musical spheres or recent pasts... For me, it suggests that the entry of gamelan music into the European subconscious has begun to affect the way Europeans listen and hear / this is one of the blessings of being able to access music cross-culturally, piece by piece we gather further understanding of one another, and share more aesthetic pleasures...

Next week’s show looks at how music from India has inspired Terry Riley, and will feature recordings from Mahoot The Cloud Messenger at The Curve Theatre in Leicester, a musical fusion project.

...fade out Circling...

Thanks for checking in, good bye.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

'Cuplikan Pementasan The Kronos Quartet & Rahayu Supanggah, Bali, 13 Juni 2009 Kerjasama Yayasan Bali Purnati & Axis Production Yogyakarta'. (2009), <https://youtu.be/HCALWxln1U8>. Accessed 16 May 2020.

"DEWA ALIT". *Dewa Alit & Gamelan Salukat*, 2020, <https://www.dewaalitsalukat.com/his-bio/>.

Garen, Micah et al. "Zwarte Piet: Black Pete Is 'Dutch Racism In Full Display'". *Aljazeera.Com*, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/zwarte-piet-black-pete-dutch-racism-full-display-181127153936872.html>.

Harpole, P. (1986). 'Debussy and the Javanese Gamelan'. *American Music Teacher*, 35(3), 8-41. Retrieved May 13, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/43541055

Mason, Amelia. "What Is Gained, And Lost, When Indonesian Gamelan Music Is Americanized?". *Wbur.Org*, 2014, [#https://www.wbur.org/artery/2014/07/19/boston-gamelan-music.#](https://www.wbur.org/artery/2014/07/19/boston-gamelan-music)

Perlman, M. (1994). 'American Gamelan in the Garden of Eden: Intonation in a Cross-Cultural Encounter'. *The Musical Quarterly*, 78(3), 510-555. Retrieved May 13, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/742271

Puri, Kavita. "They Came From South Asia To Help Rebuild Britain. The Racism They Saw Then Is Back" | Kavita Puri". *The Guardian*, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/dec/20/south-asia-racism-testimonies-hostility>.

Scott, D. (1998). 'Orientalism and Musical Style'. *The Musical Quarterly*, 82(2), 309-335. Retrieved May 13, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/742411

Sumarsam. (2014). 'Past and Present Issues of Javanese–European Musical Hybridity: Gendhing Mares and Other Hybrid Genres'. In Barendregt B. & Bogaerts E. (Eds.), *Recollecting Resonances: Indonesian-Dutch Musical Encounters* (pp. 87-108). LEIDEN; BOSTON: Brill. Retrieved May 13, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctt1w76trp.7

"Videos - Kronos Quartet". *Kronos Quartet*, <https://kronosquartet.org/videos/>.

Vitale, W. (2002). 'Balinese Kebyar Music Breaks the Five-Tone Barrier: New Composition for Seven-Tone Gamelan.' *Perspectives of New Music*, vol. 40, no. 1, 2002, pp. 5–69. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/833547. Accessed 9 Apr. 2020.

Young, P. (2008). 'From the Eiffel Tower to the Javanese Dancer: Envisioning Cultural Globalization at the 1889 Paris Exhibition'. *The History Teacher*, 41(3), 339-362. Retrieved May 13, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/30036916

DISCOGRAPHY

(in playing order)

Track: Circling

Artist: Four Tet

Album: There Is Love in You

Writers: Kieran Hebden

Audio CD (25 Jan. 2010)

Label: Domino Records

Track: Suite for Violin with American Gamelan: I. Threnody

Composer: Lou Harrison

Orchestra: American Gamelan

Conductor: Philip Brett, John Bergamo

Album: La Koro Sutro

Original Release Date: 1 Jan. 1988

Audio CD (3 Feb. 1989)

Label: New Albion Records

Copyright: ©© 1988, New Albion Records, Inc.

Track: Duet

Composer: Rahayu Supanggah

Album: Homage to Tradition (Kurmat Pada Tradisi)

Original Release Date: 5 Jun. 2003

Release Date: 5 Jun. 2003

Label: Rahayu Supanggah

Copyright: 2003 Rahayu Supanggah

Track: Debussy: Estampes, L. 100 - 1. Pagodes

Pianist: Claudio Arrau

Album: Debussy: Preludes; Images; Estampes

Licensed: UMG (on behalf of Decca Music Group Ltd.)

Original Release Date: 31 Aug. 2003

Release Date: 11 Dec. 2006

Label: Decca Music Group Ltd.

Copyright: © This Compilation 1991 Universal International Music B.V. © 1991 Universal International Music B.V.

Track: Genetic [VINYL]

Composer: Dewa Alit & Gamelan Salukat

Orchestra: Gamelan Salukat

Vinyl (8 May 2020)

Label: Kompakt