

Gamelan Composition; Extended Garap

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Abstract

A major part of gamelan's appeal lies in the prevalence of aural transmission for both *karawitan* (traditional gamelan music) and new compositions. It is a medium through which I hope to have created music that departs from existing repertoire to an interesting degree, satisfyingly rich with fresh ideas even to specialists' ears, without losing the players' comprehension-of-the-whole that is a prerequisite of good ensemble.

This comprehension can be much aided by building on existing norms, to make use of that which has been honed over generations by knowledgeable players, to extend rather than replace conventions of *garap* (musical realisation from an abstraction of, and/or partial notation of a piece). For this reason the pieces presented here tend to start with an initial tweak to a karawitan norm which then requires a cascade of related tweaks to *garap*. The initial modifications I explore in this body of work fall into two strands:

- *Garap* for 3-beat *gatra*
- *Garap* to three-note *seleh*-chords – to *seleh* notes harmonised with the *kempyung* above and the *kempyung* above that, for example harmonisation of *seleh* low 6 with 3 and high 1.

For subsequent transmission of music initially created in these ways, full scores will not most usefully aid other musicians whether their wish is to play, to lead rehearsal of, or to analyse pieces. What is required instead is a guide to the interconnected set of ideas and skills required to realise a piece from various media. Ideally this guide will convey the desirability of adaptation of those realisations to context: to sets of players, to sets of instruments, to performance situation, to musical whims. That is, the means of transmission ought not inadvertently define “the piece” as an immutable ideal. Hence the submission as a website, for clear connecting of multiple media sources in the communication of my extended *garap* methods.

The PhD/website is hosted by the University of York at

<http://php.york.ac.uk/library/dlib/johnjacobsphd/>