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Description: This lesson introduces students to the Javanese Lancaran musical form and texture. This is a loud style form which is relatively easy to learn. Ricik Ricik is a piece that only has two musical phrases, and each of these repeats. This piece can be played in either the *slendro* or *pelog* tuning systems. For the purposes of this lesson, the tuning system chosen was *slendro*, and the mode *manyura*.

Curricular Outcomes: Students will learn to read and interpret standard Javanese gamelan notation (a score in western notation is included for the teacher's reference only). In the process, students will learn about the interaction between texture and rhythmic density in Javanese Gamelan music.

Prerequisite/Co-Requisite: "Glass Gamelan Lesson" included in this website.

Materials and Preparation: Orff Instruments: soprano glockenspiels; soprano, alto, and bass metallophones; alto xylophones; large frame drum; 'D' bass bar. Prepare all of the METAL instruments by removing the following bars: low C; all E's; 'B'; high D, F, G, and A. The five notes you have remaining should be: D, F, G, A, and high C. Place these notes together without any gaps. This makes it possible to play the bars the way they are played on a Javanese *saron*. For the alto xylophone simply remove all B's and E's and low C. The notation below should be written up on the white/black board for the entire class to see:

Lancaran Ricik Ricik, (laras slendro, pathet manyura)

$$\text{Buka: } 6 \quad . 3 \ 5 \ 6 \quad . 5 \ 3 \ 2 \quad 6 \ 6 \ 6 \ (\overswarrow)$$

$$\quad \quad \quad \overswarrow \quad \searrow \quad \overswarrow \quad \searrow \quad \overswarrow \quad \searrow \quad \overswarrow \quad \quad \overswarrow$$

$$. \ 3 \ . \ 5 \quad . \ 6 \ . \ 5 \quad . \ 6 \ . \ 5 \quad . \ i \ . \ (6)$$

$$\quad \quad \quad \overswarrow \quad \searrow \quad \overswarrow \quad \searrow \quad \overswarrow \quad \searrow \quad \overswarrow \quad \quad \overswarrow$$

$$. \ 3 \ . \ 2 \quad . \ 3 \ . \ 2 \quad . \ 3 \ . \ 2 \quad . \ i \ . \ (6)$$

Key to structural parts
 ^ Kenong stroke (alto metallophone)
 () gong stroke ('D' bass bar)
 ~ kempul stroke (bass metallophone)
 . kethuk & bonang stroke
 (cow bell & alto xylophone)

Lesson One

Step One: Introduction to Ricik Ricik and Javanese Gamelan

- Tell the class that they are going on a journey to Southeast Asia. Show the class where this area of the world is on a map. Ask the students what they know about Asia. Give the class a few generalizations about Asian cultures: the population density is greater than in North America or Europe; social philosophy is that the good of the group is more important than the good of any single individual; there are many ancient civilizations resulting in classical music, art, and literature which predates any of the same cultural productions in Europe.

- Play the recording of ‘Ricik Ricik’ by the University of Michigan Gamelan Ensemble. Ask students the following questions: “What is the main instrumental timbre you hear in this recording? How many instruments are playing at once? What do you think makes the melody so catchy? (Yes, it is short and repeats throughout the piece.)”
- Show power-point slides 1 through 5 (up to “Gamelan Musical Structure).
- Have students describe the instruments that they see on slide three. All the instruments are percussion instruments (vibration is created by hitting the instrument with a stick or beater). There are two main types of instruments: metalophones; and two types of gong instruments: sitting and hanging. The smaller sitting gongs are organized in large groups of notes and the bigger ones are organized in smaller groups. The largest hanging gong (*gong agung*) is at least three feet in diameter.
- Show slide eight and explain: The instruments used to play the skeletal melody, called the “balungan,” are the metalophone instruments called the sarons. This melody is notated as numbers instead of letters or notes on a music-staff. Point out the numbers in Ricik Ricik notation. Ask students: “How many different numbers are there in the notation on the board? What type of scale is being used? Yes, it is pentatonic. Which numbers are missing or written in a strange manner? Yes, 4 is not there and 1 has a dot above it (i) to indicate that it is a higher note than 6.
- Point out the dots that occur between the numbers in the notation. This piece is written in *nibani* style where there is a rest before each note played in the *balungan*. There are two structural instruments which “fill-in” all of these rests: the *kethuk* (acting like a timekeeper) and the *bonang*.

Step Two: Playing Gamelan Music on Orff Instruments

- Hold up the soprano metalophone that was prepared before the class started. Show the students that, unlike the other pentatonic songs they have done on these instruments, there are no gaps between the notes. This is because there are no notes “missing” on the *sarons* in the Javanese gamelan.
- Explain that almost all of the instruments in the gamelan are made of metal (brass or iron to be specific) and therefore they ring much longer than wooden xylophones. This makes it difficult to articulate the melody because all the notes will ring into each other. The way this problem is solved is by “damping” - stopping the sound of a previous note just after you hit the next one.
- With your left-hand thumb on the top of the bar and index finger below, show students how to “pinch” each bar with their left hand to “damp” the sound.
- Practice playing the *balungan* in the air while singing the numbers aloud. Watch to make sure students are engaging both of their hands in the action: right hand is striking the notes and left hand is damping each one just after the next one is struck. **NOTE: each line of the *balungan* is played twice.**
- Hand out all metal barred instruments so that students can try playing and singing the *balungan* together.
- To help the class feel the rest, assign one student to play the dots between the numbers on a cowbell (*kethuk*).
- **When playing the piece on instruments or with body percussion, the teacher or a student leader will conduct the class by pointing to the note numbers and dots (rests) with a steady pulse. It is most helpful if the conductor to sings the pitches while pointing to them.**

Lesson Two

Step One: Review and Add Structural Parts (all students are sitting for these activities)

- Review the power-point slides from last class. Ask: “What slide did we skip last class?”
- Show: slide seven “Gamelan Texture.” Explain that the gong-type instruments have a different function from the metalophone instruments. Point out the symbols in the notation that are used to indicate when they are played.
- Tell the class: “We don’t have any tuned gongs in our collection of Orff Instruments. So, we will need to use larger barred instruments to play the structural parts.”
- Hand out the soprano metalophones and some alto glockenspiels to some students and ask them to play the *balungan* part. Remind them to “damp” each note slightly after they play the next one.
- Ask the rest of the students to choose to be either the *kenong*, *kempul*, or the *gong agung* part. Review which symbol belongs to which instrument part. Instruct the students that when their sign comes up in the music . . . *kenong*: make your arms into a circle above your head; *kempul*: make your arms straight above your head (as if you are holding on to a rope); *gong agung*: stand up when you see your symbol come along in the music.
- Play through the *balungan* several times (using the cow bell for the rests) so that students being the structural parts can get to the point where they almost anticipate when their next sound will come.
- Hand out instruments to individual students doing the structural parts: *kenong*: alto metalophone; *kempul*: bass metalophone; *gong agung*: ‘D’ bass bar.
- Go through the piece several times making sure each student has an opportunity to play an instrument.

Step Two: Adding the Bonang Part

- Give the *balungan* instruments (soprano metalophone and alto glockenspiel) to a new group of students so that you can teach the *bonang* part to the rest of the class.
- Explain the following:
 - (a) Most gamelan notation is organized in groups of four beats.
 - (b) Each group is called a *gatra*.
 - (c) The most important beats in each *gatra* are the second and the fourth.
 - (d) This is why we have a rest on beats one and three in *nibani* style and not on beats two and four, as we might in Western European and American music.
 - (e) In this particular lancaran style, the *bonang* uses beats one and three to warn the *kenong* player what his note will be at the end of each *gatra*.
- Ask the class: “What note the *bonang* will play on beats one and three of the first *gatra*. Yes, it will be note 5, since that is the note the *kenong* plays at the end of the *gatra*.”
- Go through each *gatra* in the first line of Ricik Ricik and ask the same question: “What note will the *bonang* play on beats one and three?”
- The class will notice that in the first three *gatra*s the *bonang* plays a 5, while in the last *gatra* it plays a 6. Due to the important nature of the *bonang*’s job, he/she plays each note in simultaneous octaves that is why there are two rows of pot gongs on the *bonang*. These rows are organized in opposite directions: bottom row ascends in pitch from left to right (like the piano); top row ascends from right to left (at an octave higher than the bottom row).

- Instruct the students to place their hands in the following manner: left hand on left knee and right hand on thigh for note 5; move both hands to the outside of the legs and thighs (essentially opening the arms further apart) for pitch 6. Practice switching back and fourth from note 5 to note 6 a couple of times.
- Next: Instruct the students to place their hands in the following manner: left hand on left knee and right hand on thigh for note 5 (same as before); place right hand on right knee and left hand on thigh for note 2. Practice switching from note 5 to note 2 a couple of times.
- Have a small group of students play the *balungan* part as the rest of the class goes through the actions for the *bonang* part. Remind the *bonang* students that they make their imaginary ounds at the same time as the cowbell (*kethuk*).
- Explain that there is no set of pot gongs in the Orff Instrumentarium. Since these gongs play a more percussive role, the xylophone would be a better instrument than the metalophone to manage the *bonang* part.
- Show a small group of students how to transfer their hands on to an alto xylophone. They will play their notes in octaves with two mallets.
- Put together everything the class has learned thus far. Students will play: *balungan* on alto glockenspiels and soprano metalophones; *structural* parts on alto metallophone, bass metalophone and ‘D’ bass bar; and *bonang and kethuk* parts on alto xylophone and cowbell. Students who are not playing will practice their parts using the body movements they have learned.

Lesson Three

Step One: Adding the Peking Part

- Review the parts that have already been taught (*balungan*, structural parts, and *bonang* part). Be sure that these are really steady before adding these final parts.
- The *peking* is added last because it plays at a different rhythmic density than the other parts. If you examine the teachers score, you will see that the *peking* is the only instrument which plays during the regular pitches and the rests.
- The *peking* plays each *balungan* note twice – once with the *saron* instruments (alto glock. & soprano metalophone) and once during the rest that follows each pitch.
- Explain to the class that “There are many different ways of playing the *peking* part. For this piece, the transcriber has chosen a style of playing that comes from Solo. This style is called *Nacah Iåmbå*. The word *nacah* means to chop. Since each *banlungan* note is played twice, it is as if each pitch were ‘chopped’ in half” (Pickvance 2005: 125). See the example below:
Peking 3 3 5 5 6 6 5 5 6 6 5 5 i i 6 6
Saron . 3 . 5 . 6 . 5 . 6 . 5 . i . 6
- Hand out some soprano glockenspiels and add this part to the texture of the piece.

Step Two: Adding the Frame Drum Part

- The drum part would normally be played on a *kendhang* and *ketipung*. For our purposes a normal class frame drum (at least 12 to 14 inches in diameter) will work.
- There are three different drum sounds needed for this piece: *tak* (similar to the sound of a closed slap on a conga drum); *dum* (a medium pitched tone); and *da* (a bass tone).

- The *tak* is produced by grabbing the drum skin with all four fingers (made flat) and then pulling the fingers across the skin toward the palm of the hand. The result is a loud popping sound.
- The *dum* is produced by tapping the drum near the rim with only one or two fingers.
- The *da* is produced swinging the thumb toward the center of the drum skin. This whipping type of motion produces a nice low pitch.
- These sounds are represented in the Western notation (for the teacher’s eyes only) as three different pitches. The note-head above the line is the *tak*; on the line is the *dum*; and below the line is the *da*.
- In gamelan notation these different drum sounds are represented by the following letters: *tak* in a ‘t’; *dum* is a ‘p’; and *da* is a ‘b’. Add the following drum part to the notation you have already written on the board:

Buka: 6 . 3 5 6 . 5 3 2 6 6 6 (6)

t t p b p p p p

^ v ^ v ^ v ^

. 3 . 5 . 6 . 5 . 6 . 5 . i . (6)

p p p p p b p p p b p p p b p p

^ v ^ v ^ v ^

. 3 . 2 . 3 . 2 . 3 . 2 . i . (6)

p p p p p b p p p b p p p b p p

Last time through: during the repetition of the second line, start slowing down, then signal the coming ending using the strokes below:

^ v ^ v ^ v ^

. 3 . 2 . 3 . 2 . 3 . 2 . i . (6)

p p p p p b p p p b p p p b t p t

Keep slowing down and then end on the first line:

^ v ^ v ^ v ^

. 3 . 5 . 6 . 5 . 6 . 5 . i . (6)

p t p t p b p t b p t b t p p .

- Using the palm of their left hand as a drum, have the class practice making the drum strokes with their right hand. Make sure that they all say the words: *tak*, *dum*, and *da* as they read the notation and make the appropriate strokes on their “hand drums.”
- Try adding this drum part to the piece. It would be best if half of the class plays the *balungan* while the other half does the drumming. Make sure that the drummers slow the rest of the group down as they come to the final repetition of the second phrase and then the first and final phrase.

Application and Conclusion

- Divide the class into small groups. Have each group compose a gamelan piece in the lancaran form (using Ricik Ricik as a template).
- Have each group perform their piece (all parts, including: *balungan*, structural, *peking*, *bonang*, and *kendhang* (drum) parts).