



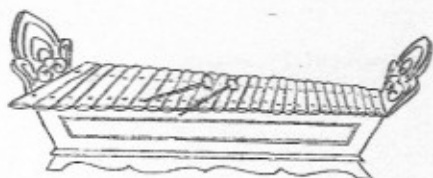
GAMELAN

Why I Play Gamelan

By Anthea Spensley
Head of Music Parmiters School Watford

By 4pm on Wednesdays I have completed three full days of teaching and still have Thursday and Friday to look forward to. The Upper Sixth have given me essays to mark and year 11 compositions need attention. I need some refreshment and the Gamelan Room at Stevenage Music Centre is where I go to find it, along with 9 or 10 like minded individuals.

At 6pm we all declare that we remember nothing from last week. Gently Nikhil reassures us that we do, and we start to play and sing familiar melodies, finding that previous shapes and patterns return to our consciousness. New patterns are introduced, learned through the traditional aural process, with each student moving onto a new instrument at each play through of a piece. We have to react to changes of speed and rhythm from the drum and listen for melodic signals from other instruments so it is essential to know how all the instruments are played, many of the skills practised can be applied to other areas of education- not just the music classroom. By the end of the evening we are all remarkably refreshed and inspired (some might even claim to feel alert!) and above all, the individuals have become a group, enjoying the freedom of playing without music and without watching a conductor. We find that we no longer book theatre tickets for Wednesday evenings or arrange to play squash, the Gamelan class has become an important feature in the week. We would love some more players to join us and beginners can blend easily with more experienced players to enjoy the fascinating, interweaving textures of the Gamelan Orchestra.



Why I Play Gamelan

By Ray George (Architectural
Technician, Stevenage)

Having squandered earlier musical opportunities it has always been my intention to take up an instrument and learn it properly. After seeing the first Gamelan demonstration at the Stevenage Music Centre I realised that here was a chance to learn not one instrument, but several. I was captivated by the sound of the Gamelan and was determined to try at least one term to see if I could learn a style of music that, until the first concert at Stevenage, I had never heard of before.

I am now into my third term and would like to say what an absolute joy it has been to be able to listen to and play these fascinating instruments. I am only sorry that I did not discover