

- Gamelan is the traditional ensemble music of the Javanese, Sundanese, and Balinese peoples of **Indonesia**, made up predominantly of percussive instruments. The most common instruments used are metallophones played by mallets and a set of hand-played drums called *Kendhang* which registers the beat
- Gamelan originates from the two Indonesian islands: **Java** and **Bali**. It is played for lots of different reasons in different parts of Indonesia. These could be for puppet shows, court dances or to play as a symphony orchestra.

Musical Vocabulary

Tempo: The speed of the music—Fast (Allegro) Slow (Largo)
Moderate (moderato)

Dynamics: The volume of the music—Loud (Forte) Quiet (Piano)
Gradually getting louder (Crescendo) Gradually getting quieter (Diminuendo).

Timbre: The sound produced from an instrument; Bright, dull, hollow, wooden, metallic

Percussive: The use of percussion instruments such as drums

Mallet: a stick with a rounded end that is sometimes padded, used to strike percussion instruments

Gong: a metal disc with a turned rim, giving a resonant note when struck.

Metallophones: A percussion instrument consisting of a series of metal bars of varying pitch struck with hammers.

Cyclic: Repeated sequences of a harmonic progression

Ensemble: A group of performers

Minim: 2 beat note

Crotchet: 1 beat note

Quavers: 1/2 beat note

Pentatonic: A 5 note scale—a feature of Gamelan music

- Gamelan was originally developed for **solemn religious purposes**, such as **warding off evil spirits or preparing worshippers to enter a state of trance**. In a traditional context, gamelan is **considered sacred**, and practitioners will never step over an instrument or play music with their shoes on.

Javanese Gamelan Set



KEMPUL



KENONG



SARON



KENDANG



SLENTHEM

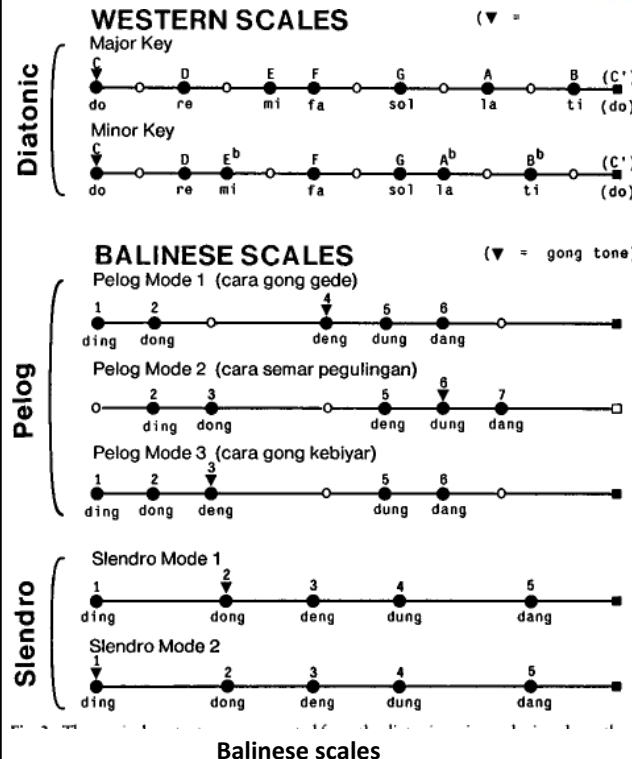


BONANG



SARON

Orchestra



A key feature of Gamelan is the use of a musical cycle. This is a piece that is **based on repeating patterns with different parts fitting together**. It is **often found in Eastern cultures and is always a group performance**.

There are two different scale systems used in Balinese gamelan: **slendro** and **pelog**. It is important to note that these are not scales with specific pitches, or even categories of scales (such as **major** or **minor**) that have specific interval relationships.