



# CALUNG: THE BAMBOO ENSEMBLES OF BANYUMAS, CENTRAL JAVA DANIELE ZAPPATORE



ISTITUTO INTERCULTURALE  
DI STUDI MUSICALI  
COMPARATI

*fondazione* ONLUS  
GIORGIO CINI

**WORLD MUSIC  
LISTENING GUIDES**

INTERCULTURAL MUSIC  
EDUCATION COURSES

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**World Music Listening Guides.  
Intercultural Music Education Courses**

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**Cover image**

Yusmanto's *calung* troupe, 2019. Photo by the author.

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**The World Music Listening Guides. Intercultural Music Education Courses** aim to provide critical tools for understanding musical diversity. By analysing the dance and music characteristics of pieces belonging to different world music traditions, the guides explore the close relationship between music, culture and society, integrating textual descriptions, images, and multimedia animations created from audiovisual materials held in the IISMC archive. The multimedia animations form the core of the guides and represent their most innovative feature. Designed to function independently of the text, they aim to make the distinctive elements of the musical traditions under study immediately accessible. Each guide concludes with a set of simple exercises intended to assess the knowledge acquired through the texts and animations, which can easily be used as teaching resources by educators.

Starting from significant pieces of a given musical tradition, the guides explore the general aspects of the performance, such as the cultural context, performance practices, instrumental ensemble, song texts, and symbolic elements. The guides also offer the analytical elements needed to understand the formal and syntactic procedures peculiar to each music tradition: metric-rhythmic structures, processes of melodic variation in instrumental and vocal parts, the relationship between music and sung verse, tuning systems, methods of combining parts, and the interaction between music and dance movements. Organised according to progressive levels of complexity, the educational materials presented in the various guides are intended to provide students and teachers with a support for intercultural music education, and address a wide audience, including those with no prior expertise.

This fifth listening guide, *Calung: the Bamboo Ensembles of Banyumas (Central Java)*, created by Daniele Zappatore, is devoted to the music of Javanese *calung* ensembles of tuned percussion instruments. The audiovisual materials it presents were collected during the event *Music and dance from the borders of Java. Calung-Lénggér Banyumasan*, organised by the IISMC in 2024.

With the aim of situating the practice of *calung* music within the broader panorama of Javanese arts, the contents are organised to highlight the distinctive features of this musical tradition – from its close connection with the ritual dance *lénggér* to a description of the principles that guide its lively and dynamic performance practice. From a perspective that

recognises how musical knowledge is grounded in technical and material expertise, the description of the roles of the various instruments in the ensemble is accompanied by a short video documentary – based on field materials collected by the author – which illustrates the processes of constructing and tuning the bamboo instruments.

The roles and functions of the instruments in a *calung* ensemble are illustrated in an first multimedia animation, which demonstrates the musical principles underlying performance through the integration of video and transcriptions in Javanese cipher notation (*kepatihan*). Two further video animations explore the performance techniques that characterise the sound of the *gambang* xylophones, the main melodic instruments of the ensemble: through video and real-time transcriptions, they present the workings of rhythmic-melodic interlocking (*imbal*) and the advanced techniques of melodic ornamentation (*gambangan* and *onelan*) on the two xylophones.

Finally, each chapter of the guide is accompanied by a series of multiple-choice quizzes, designed to support the verification and consolidation of the knowledge acquired, as well as to serve as a resource for the planning of educational and workshop activities.

Lorenzo Chiarofonte



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# 1. *Calung*: introduction

In the Indonesian regency of Banyumas (located at the border between Central and West Java), the term *calung* is used to define a bamboo musical instrument, a collection of these instruments, the ensemble of musicians who perform them, and the associated musical genre. Likely originating in the early 20th century, this tradition reflects the prolonged interactions between local populations and those in neighboring areas. Over the past century, it has gained increasing significance in the musical life of Banyumas to the point of being regarded as an icon of the region's cultural identity.

The *calung* musical tradition is profoundly intertwined with the daily lives of the communities in Banyumas, and it has long been envisioned as a folkloric offshoot of more noble and complex practices (such as the elaborate traditions of the Central Javanese courts). When introduced to Banyumas, *calung* ensembles were quite small in scale and were primarily used by itinerant musician troupes for their begging activities (a practice still observable in the district and the surrounding areas, as seen in Fig. 1.1).



Fig. 1.1. A troupe of itinerant musicians in the Pekunden district, Banyumas, 2018.

The current configuration of these ensembles, which consistently include bamboo instruments of varying registers, a set of double-membrane drums, and a ‘blown’ *gong* (see Fig. 1.2; the instrumental ensemble is discussed in §2), emerged around the late 1960s, when musicians in Banyumas began to experiment with innovative artistic expressions derived from their regional folklore. During this period, *calung* ensembles were reimagined by incorporating instruments inspired by the metallophones of the Javanese *gamelan* orchestras, with the aim of expanding the range of performance possibilities and enriching the texture of the local pieces.



Fig. 1.2. Yusmanto’s *calung* troupe during a rehearsal session at the Sanggar Seni Sekar Shanti art centre, Karangjati village (Susukan, Banjarnegara), 2019.

Since the 1970s, *calung* music has assumed a fundamental role in the process of heritage preservation and the spectacularisation of local performing arts, becoming the emblem of a unique and distinct regional culture capable of representing Banyumas in modern Indonesia. This process was further supported by the recording and distribution of commercial audiocassettes and the incorporation of this practice into the educational programs of some of the leading Central Javanese art academies (see Fig. 1.3), phenomena that have contributed to standardize this practice.



Fig. 1.3. A *calung* lesson at the Institut Seni Indonesia in Surakarta (Central Java), featuring instructors Darno Kartawi and Muriah Budiarti, 2021.

*Calung* music is associated with the accompaniment of the *lénggér* dance (see Fig. 1.4), which belongs to a family of ancient and widely practiced traditions in Java, characterised by a mystical and ritual significance and a long history of social misconduct, particularly when assessed against contemporary Indonesian moral standards. Historically, this dance appears to have been connected to the worship of Dewi Sri (the Javanese goddess of fertility) and was performed during various types of agricultural ceremonies. However, in 20th-century ethnographic accounts, the genre is more commonly associated with itinerant begging practices, panhandling, and cross-dressing. Until the first half of the last century, the *lénggér* dance was perceived by the elite classes as crude entertainment for the common people due to its corporeal sensuality and mischievousness, which starkly contrasted with the ideals of feminine grace found in other courtly dance traditions of Central Java.



Fig. 1.4. A *lénggér* dancer during a traditional ceremony in the village of Kedawung (Susukan, Banjarnegara), 2019.

With the ‘cultural modernisation’ program imposed by the authoritarian regime in the 1960s, the *lénggér* was stripped of its overtly sexual aspects, which were shamefully repudiated by modern, predominantly Islamic Indonesia, leading to an increasingly idealised representation of the dancers. During the 1970s and 1980s, this revitalised genre reached its zenith, becoming a respected, lucrative artistic profession that was highly sought after by local audiences. During this period, the canonical movements of the dance were established, and innovative choreographies that embraced influences from related regional traditions were introduced.

Beginning in the 2010s, the genre gained significant media visibility due to the phenomenon of cross-dressed dancers, popularised by internationally acclaimed artists such as Rianto (see Fig. 1.5), whose life experiences inspired the film *Memories of My Body* by Garin Nugroho (2018). The themes of gender fluidity and androgyny are recurrent in Javanese philosophy and performing arts. The identity presented does not necessarily reflect the dancer’s sexual orientation; the transition from the masculine to the feminine sphere carries a profound significance that challenges conventional gender categories. The focus is not on the artists or the mask they employ, but rather on the collective cultural and performative elements that guide their expressiveness.



Fig. 1.5. Rianto performs in female clothing during a performance held in Rome in 2024.

The *calung-lénggér* performances can take place during a variety of ritual-propitiatory or merely spectacular occasions. The first category, in fact more related to the Banyumas of the past, includes community ceremonies aimed at healing sick livestock, purifying villages from malevolent entities, or propitiating the annual harvest. In contemporary times, these ceremonies are becoming increasingly rare, and over the last century, the mystical-ritual significance of *calung-lénggér* has gradually been absorbed by the logics and needs of spectacular entertainment.

Today, local troupes are hired for the celebration of private (weddings, circumcisions) or community festivities, often coinciding with specific calendrical events (Fig. 1.6). These practices also find a place in a variety of spectacular occasions ranging from competitions to concerts and festivals, both at the local and national, as well as international levels. The repertoire performed in these contexts is characterised by the intersection of different regional styles, primarily including regional pieces with relatively simple structures, sung in the Banyumas dialect, and pieces from the Central Javanese tradition, as well as local pop music and new compositions. The variety of performative contexts and the repertoire performed reflect the openness and great vitality of these traditions.



Fig. 1.6. A *calung-lénggér* performance during a traditional Javanese ceremony associated with ancestor worship, Kedawung village (Susukan, Banjarnegara), 2019.

In **Video 1.1**, Rianto performs a dance to the piece ‘Sekar Gadhung’, which is regarded as sacred within the realm of performing arts in Banyumas and is often performed as a ritual offering during the opening of *calung-lénggér* performances.

1.1 SEKAR GADHUNG  
<https://youtu.be/ZDyw1RQhxQY>



## 2. Bamboo and music between Java and Sunda

Bamboo, an endemic plant on the island of Java, holds fundamental significance in the daily and spiritual lives of the people of Banyumas. Regarded as a symbol of fertility due to its durability and excellent sound propagation potential, this plant is closely associated with the region's agricultural rituals. Additionally, its practical applications are numerous: it is used as fuel, construction material, an ingredient in dishes and traditional medicines, and, notably, in the manufacture of utensils and a variety of musical instruments (see Fig. 2.1).

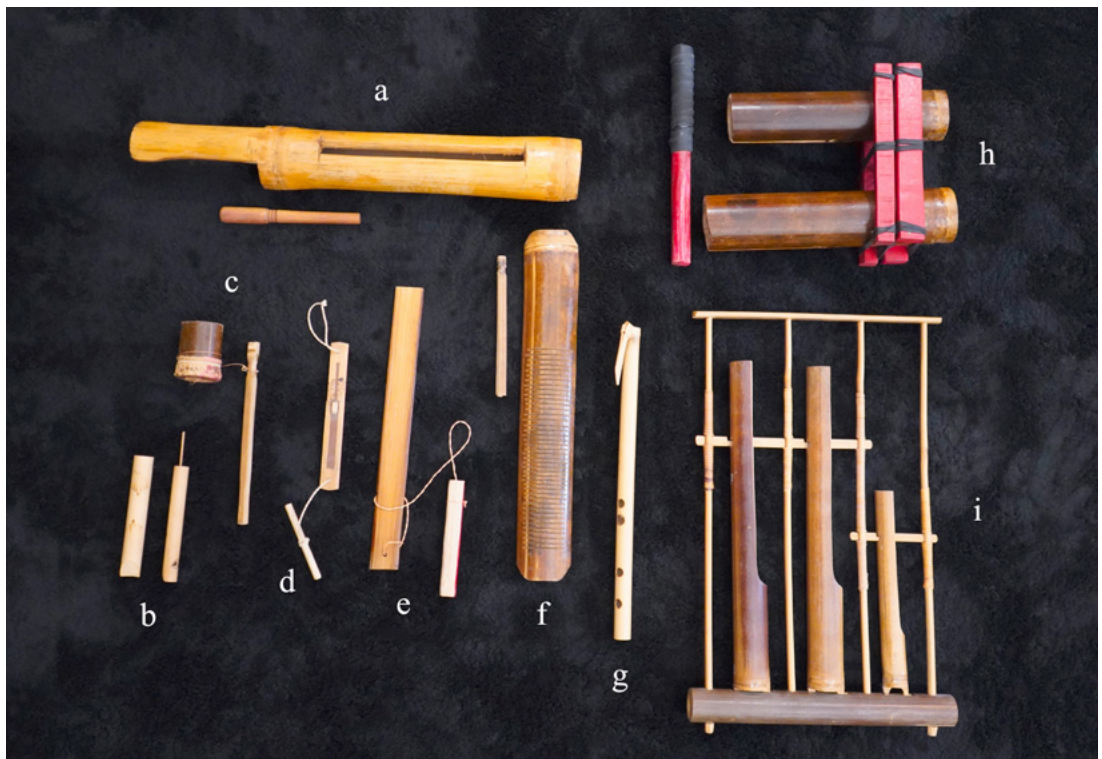


Fig. 2.1. Some of the bamboo instruments commonly found in the Banyumas area: a) *kenthong* – slit drum; b) *sempritan* – bird calls; c) *oret-oret* – friction drum; d) *bethothot* – mouth harp; e) *kitiran* – whirl; f) *ret-ret* – friction idiophone; g) *suling* – pentatonic aerophone; h) *kentur* – percussion idiophone; i) *angklung* – shaking idiophone.

Although it is not possible to accurately reconstruct the history and dissemination paths of indigenous bamboo instruments, it is likely that many of these were introduced from the territory of West Java, inhabited by Sundanese populations. Indeed, it appears that in this part of the island bamboo was utilised for musical purposes as early as the 4th

to 5th century, and despite progressive technological advancements, it continues to be largely favored over other types of economical and readily available materials. While the bamboo musical culture of Banyumas exhibits clear Sundanese influences, it has also developed in close contact with the refined traditions of Central Java (the music of *gamelan* orchestras, dominated by bronze instruments), a connection that has led to various fusions and adaptations.

### ***Calung Banyumasan: the musical instruments***

Contemporary *calung*, designed to be performed by an ensemble of six musicians, include a pair of double-membrane drums, a bamboo aerophone, and four sets of idiophones (musical instruments whose vibrating body is the instrument itself) made of bamboo, each of differing pitch. The idiophones are tuned according to a five-note scale and the sections of cane of which they are made are suspended in series from corresponding support structures, ranging from the lowest pitch on the right to the highest pitch on the left. Depending on the performance context, these ensembles can be played in combination with metallophones from *gamelan* orchestras and sometimes even with Western instruments. The *calung-lénggér* troupes always include a variable number of singers, dancers, cross-dressed performers, and comic characters. Specifically, the ‘traditional’ components of a *calung* *gamelan* are as follows.

A set of barrel-shaped, double-headed drums (see Fig. 2.2), including the *kendhang gambya* (medium-sized) and the smaller *kendhang ketipung*, both made from wood (jati, jackfruit, or barlean) and tanned goat skin. The two instruments can be tuned via a membrane tensioning system made from bovine leather. The *gambya* is positioned horizontally or at an angle on a wooden support, while the *ketipung* is placed vertically on the ground, resting on its larger membrane. The musicians strike all three available membranes with both hands, and sometimes use the heel of their right foot to adjust the tension of the lowest-sounding membrane.



Fig. 2.2. *Kendhang gambya* and *kendhang ketipung*, double-headed barrel drums

A *gong sebul* ('blown' *gong*, Fig. 2.3), a bamboo aerophone consisting of an open-ended tubular blower inserted within a hollow cylindrical resonator closed at one end. The instrument is played using a technique similar to that employed for Western trumpets, producing a low, deep and often continuous sound reminiscent of a metallic gong, yet with an enhanced expressive versatility.



Fig. 2.3. *Gong sebul*, an aerophone composed of a blower inserted into a bamboo resonator.

A *dendhem* (Fig. 2.4), a low-pitched idiophone made up of six bamboo keys (with a range of one octave), struck with two mallets whose ends are covered in rubber.



Fig. 2.4. *Dendhem*, a one-octave range, low-pitched idiophone.

A *kethuk-kenong* (Fig. 2.5), a medium-pitched idiophone composed of six bamboo keys (with a range of one octave), played with two rubber-tipped mallets.



Fig. 2.5. *Kethuk-kenong*, a one-octave range, medium-pitched idiophone.

A *gambang barung* and a *gambang penerus* (Fig. 2.6), which are similar in shape, number, and tuning of their struck sections. Both instruments consist of 16 bamboo keys, with a range of approximately three octaves, and are played with a pair of flexible mallets whose ends are covered in rubber.



Fig. 2.6. *Gambang barung* and *gambang penerus*, idiophones with a range of three octaves, morphologically identical.

Vocality also plays a central role in *calung* music, expressed through practices of female solo singing (Fig. 2.7) and male choral singing, which intones melodic accompaniment or rhythmic interjections. In addition to conveying the content of the pieces, the sung parts hold significant importance in shaping the atmosphere or character of performances, interacting with the rhythmic sections and markedly influencing the elaboration paths of the melodic instruments.



Fig. 2.7. Singers during a recording session of *calung* music, Oemah Gamelan Banyumas, 2021.

### 3. Selection, preparation of the bamboo, and tuning of the idiophones

The making of *calung* idiophones (Video 3.1) is a complex process that begins with the selection of living bamboo. Among the various species found in Banyumas, the only one used for this purpose is known as *pring wulung* (*Gigantochloa atroviolacea*, Fig. 3.1), which is highly valued for its mechanical and acoustical properties (it features long, pliable culms with excellent resonance).



Fig. 3.1. Clusters of *pring wulung* (*Gigantochloa atrovioleacea*). Banyumas, 2020.

The harvest of bamboo occurs between the seventh and twelfth month of the Javanese agricultural calendar, preferably during waning moon phases, when the cellulose content in the culms tends to decrease. This helps to prevent deformation and shrinkage during the drying phase, reducing the risk of infestation by insects and fungi. *Calung* makers prefer plants that have grown near water, in fertile and well-ventilated hilly areas, and are between 2 to 5 years old (with whitish circular spots on their culms). Their culms can reach heights of up to 20 meters and diameters of 15 cm, making them easier to cut and better suited for drying.

The selected culms (at least four are needed to make an entire ensemble) are cut near the aerial roots using a curved knife with a protuberance on the lower part of the blade. Once separated from their roots, they are placed on the ground and left to dry in a vertical position for 2-4 weeks, until the foliage falls off. Subsequently, they are laid flat and stripped of secondary branches and the apex before being cut into sections with a saw. This process involves creating cylindrical sections that have one open end and one closed end (both cut near a nodal diaphragm), referred to as *wilahan*. These sections are then

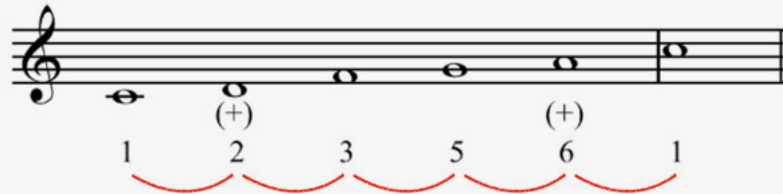
sorted by size, tied into bundles, and stacked to dry horizontally for a period ranging from 6 to 24 months, protected from rain and sun (Fig. 3.2). Air drying hardens the bamboo and makes it more resistant to moisture.



Fig. 3.2. *Pring wulung* culms cut into sections and left to dry. Banyumas, 2020.

### **Tuning of the *wilahan* (sounding bodies)**

The tuning process for *calung* requires considerable experience and a good ear. Generally, builders use existing instruments that are well-adapted to the prevailing climatic conditions as a reference, which produce a stable and clear sound due to prolonged use. Of the two scale systems in use in Java, the one traditionally employed for tuning *calung* is called *laras sléndro*. This scale (approximated in Western notation in Fig. 3.3) consists of five tones per octave, arranged at nearly equal intervals and referred to as *Siji* (degree 1), *Loro* (degree 2), *Telu* (degree 3), *Limo* (degree 5), and *Enem* (degree 6).



I suoni sono pressoché equidistanti  
 Pitches are roughly equidistant from each other

Intonazione dei <i>calung</i> - ottava centrale <i>Calung</i> tuning system - central octave						
Grado - Grade ( <i>sléndro</i> )	1	2	3	5	6	1
Frequenza - Frequency	262	306	353	400	466	530
Nota (sistema temperato) Pitch (tempered system)	Do4 / C4	Re#4 / D#4	Fa4 / F4	Sol4 / G4	La#4 / A#4	Do5 / C5

Fig. 3.3. Approximation of the *sléndro* scale in Western notation and an example of the tuning of the central octave of a *calung* set in relation to the tempered system.

This system is not standardised: the diapason, the position of the tones within the reference octave, as well as the relative amplitude of the individual intervals, vary from one ensemble to another, making it nearly impossible to find two *calung* ensembles tuned according to the same sequence of sounds. There is, therefore, a certain margin of tolerance within which the tuning of an ensemble may vary, always referring back to the essentially pentatonic model of the *sléndro* scale. In Fig. 3.3, an example of the tuning of the different degrees of this scale is presented, in relation to the temperate system used in Western music. The degrees do not correspond precisely to the notes indicated, which are conventionally associated with specific frequencies (the number of vibrations per second, expressed in Hertz, that determine the pitch of a sound), but deviate from them by a few cents (units of measurement for intervals, equal to 1/100 of a tempered semitone).

To tune the *wilahan*, it is first necessary to select a series of them and arrange its elements in descending order of size, from left (lower sounds) to right (higher sounds). Sixteen *wilahan* are needed for each of the two *gambang* (three octaves), six for the *dendhem* (one octave, low register), and six for the *kethuk-kenong* (one octave, intermediate register). The outer surface of the sections must be cleared of protrusions to

make it smooth and manageable; subsequently, a diagonal cut is made near the center of the *wilahan* using a rigid saw, and then the open end of the cylinder is struck to remove a tongue-shaped segment. The remaining piece is called *godhongan* (leaf-shaped), while the opposite end, closed by a knot, is called *bumbungan* (onomatopoeic term), and serves as an integrated resonator: the percussion of the idiophone vibrates the column of air inside this segment, which increases the volume and sound retention (Fig. 3.4).

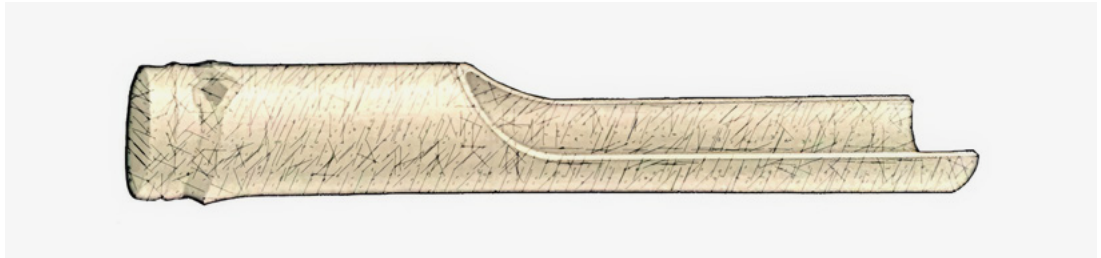


Fig. 3.4. *Wilahan calung*, tuned section of a culm.

The tuning process aims to ensure that both parts of the *wilahan* (*bumbungan* and *godhongan*) produce the same sound. The initial pitch of each segment is determined by parameters such as the thickness of the bark, the length and the diameter of the culm. By carving and thinning the open section of the *wilahan*, precise frequencies can be achieved, thereby tuning the series of bamboo keys according to the desired intervallic succession. Builders work with great patience and care, making small adjustments and being careful not to produce cracks in the resonator, in order to achieve a rich, soft, and brilliant timbre. This operation is repeated for all the sounding sections of each of the four melodic instruments that make up a *calung* ensemble.

### 3.1 THE MAKING OF CALUNG IDIOPHONES

[https://youtu.be/IuRjF\\_wMV6A](https://youtu.be/IuRjF_wMV6A)



## 4. Musical principles

*Calung* music is characterised by sustained performance tempi, dense rhythmic interplay, rapid dynamic changes, and a close interaction between vocal and instrumental parts, attributes that endow it with a particularly lively character. Like other Javanese music, it is based on processes of simultaneous variation of a given melody, known as *balungan*, which is cyclically repeated. The elaboration of this melody is based on shared rules and models that involve constant variation to enrich the sound texture of the ensemble. A certain degree of performative autonomy is always anticipated in *calung* music, meaning that players are free to choose their own patterns and to vary them extemporaneously, as long as they correspond to the structure and cadential progression of the pieces being performed.

The instruments of the ensemble with the function to articulate the rhythmic cycles include the *dhendem*, the *kethuk-kenong* (low and mid-register idiophones), and the *gong sebul* (aerophone). The *dhendem* articulates the reference melody omorhythmically, on the beat. In contrast, the *kethuk-kenong* is employed to mark the internal punctuation of rhythmic cycles: the player's left hand always strikes the low sound 2 on the upbeat, while the right hand emphasizes the cadential notes of the melody through repeated sounds on the main beat. The *gong sebul* marks the cycles by accentuating the strong beats and is always played in conjunction with the last pulse of a melody or the phrases that comprise it. In [Video 4.1](#), the functioning of these instruments can be observed in the piece 'Gudril', whose melody (*balungan*) consists of four phrases, each with eight pulses. The video employs a simplified form of Javanese cipher notation (*kepatihan*), introduced in academic contexts in the early 20th century as a mnemonic-didactic aid and which has become the standard for transcribing *gamelan* music. This is a system that assigns a number to each note of the scale and generally only notates the reference melody, allowing ample room for the idiomatic variations of each melodic instrument.

The rhythmic section of the ensemble is led by the *kendhang gambya* drum, played either solo or in combination with the smaller *ketipung* drum. The percussionist modulates tempo and dynamics, signaling

transitions between different sections of the pieces and variations in rhythmic-melodic density (*irama*). In Javanese *gamelan* music, this concept refers to the relationships—in terms of rhythmic density—between a reference melody, its elaborations, and the formal structure of a particular piece. During the transition from one *irama* to another, indicated by specific percussive formulas and a variation in performance tempo, the pulse of the reference melody is contracted or expanded, granting varying degrees of elaborative freedom to the instruments of the ensemble (Video 4.1, see in particular 01’50”).

4.1 MUSICAL PRINCIPLES

[https://youtu.be/jlgtfLp\\_QRo](https://youtu.be/jlgtfLp_QRo)



## 5. Techniques of melodic ornamentation

*Calung* music is associated with specific performance techniques that allow for unique and distinctive elaboration pathways. The choice and use of particular techniques depend not only on the skills and individual styles of the musicians but also on the roles attributed to the various components of the ensemble and the interaction that develops between them.

Unlike the instruments discussed in §4, the *gambang barung* and *gambang penerus* serve a function of reciprocal reinforcement in the ornamentation of the reference melody. Specific patterns from the *barung* correspond to specific responses from the *penerus*, which accompanies and completes (balances) the musical discourse of the first instrument by emphasizing the cadential progression of the pieces. In *calung* ensembles, the two *gambang* actively influence the melodic flow of the pieces, building up elaborations that are closely intertwined with the rhythmic patterns and the related vocal pathways, for which they serve as melodic guides.

The melodic ornamentation techniques typically executed by the two *gambang* include *imbal* and *gambangan/onelan*. The *imbal* (Video 5.1) is a rhythmic-melodic interlocking that features a basic pattern and numer-

ous common variations in this performance style, generally emerging ‘spontaneously’ during performance. The *barung* ‘circles around’ the cadential notes on the downbeat, while the *penerus* reinforces them on the upbeat. The rhythmic-melodic nuclei underlying this interweaving are continuously altered extemporaneously to create lively and shifting motifs. The technique of *imbal* is applied pervasively in the denser sections of pieces, particularly at fast tempos.

#### 5.1 IMBAL

<https://youtu.be/8PsC5qwbaIg>



The *gambangan* technique (Video 5.2, 00’26”), on the other hand, is played by the *gambang barung* when the reference pulse is relatively slow, allowing the instrument more space for elaboration. This technique involves ornamenting the base melody (*balungan*) of a piece by concatenating melodic formulas called *cengkok*, which consist of a sequence of 16 sounds. These formulas, based on shared patterns related to specific cadential progressions, interact dynamically with the solo singing and leave ample room for variation. The player’s hands typically proceed homorhythmically in parallel octaves, but in the case of experienced musicians, a certain degree of independence between the hands, contrary motion, and rhythmic syncopation are always present, adding particular expressive momentum to the performance.

When the *barung* employs *gambangan*, the *penerus* responds and integrates with *onelan* (Video 5.2, 01’06”), which consists in the elaboration of modular patterns in the higher register of the instrument, characterised by an alternation between single notes and bichords. The *onelan* varies according to fairly regular schemes, following the cadential flow of the pieces in order to emphasize certain passages. Instrumental masters continuously remix the secondary elements of their musical discourse, vary passing notes, play with rhythm and phrasing, and build elaborate pathways that transcend mere idiomatic variation.

#### 5.2 GAMBANGAN/ONELAN

<https://youtu.be/WC-CIvPpu-M>



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1991 *Traditions of Gamelan Music in Java: Musical Pluralism and Regional Identity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

## Selected discography (available on YouTube)

*Beksan Calung Banyumas*, Rasito & Karawitan Purba Kencana, audiocassetta Kusuma Recording KDG 086, 1984.

*Calung Kencana Laras*, cassette, Dahlia Record 909, 1990.

*Traditional Music form Central Java: Banyumas Bamboo Gamelan*, Audio CD Nimbus Record NI5550, 1998.

## Selected filmography

*Sang penari* (The dancer), dir. I. Isfansyah, Indonesia, 2011 (drama, 112’).

*Kucumbu Tubuh Indahku* (Memories of My Body), dir. G. Nugroho, Indonesia, 2018 (drama, 107’).

*Calung Banyumasan: Shaping Bamboo, Sounding Identities*, dir. D. Zappatore & Yusmanto, Italia/Indonesia, 2020 (documentary, 45’). [https://www.soundethnographies.it/it/aiovg\\_videos/1-calung-banyumasan/](https://www.soundethnographies.it/it/aiovg_videos/1-calung-banyumasan/).

*CArang Pring WuLUNG: the Journey of a Bamboo Gamelan Maestro*, dir. D. Zappatore, Italia/Indonesia, Diego Carpitella Fellowship, IISMC, 2022 (documentary, 63’).



Test your skills → in this part you can test what you have learned in the listening guide:

## CALUNG: THE BAMBOO ENSEMBLES OF BANYUMAS (CENTRAL JAVA)

The following sets of quizzes present 10 multiple-choice questions each. The sets refer to the corresponding chapters:

1. CALUNG: INTRODUCTION > VAI AL QUIZ  
<https://forms.gle/AywKr3bCrrYJQp9r5>

2. BAMBOO AND MUSIC BETWEEN JAVA AND SUNDA > VAI AL QUIZ  
<https://forms.gle/gUfBzrz7baFrENom7>

3. SELECTION, PREPARATION OF THE BAMBOO, AND TUNING OF THE IDIOPHONES > VAI AL QUIZ  
<https://forms.gle/nWuuoj8FRXgGsuyk9>

4. CALUNG: MUSICAL PRINCIPLES > VAI AL QUIZ  
<https://forms.gle/7zMBxrbAtMZTPeik8>

5. MELODIC ORNAMENTATION TECHNIQUES > VAI AL QUIZ  
<https://forms.gle/nJL7vg61BEDQF6Hz7>

ANSWER THE QUESTIONS, COMPLETE THE SERIES BY SUBMITTING YOUR ANSWERS, AND YOU WILL RECEIVE FEEDBACK FOR EACH ANSWER!

The music of *calung* - ensembles of bamboo idiophones and percussion instruments - is the most representative expression of the cultural identity of Banyumas, an Indonesian district located at the border between Central Java and West Java. Closely associated with the *lénggér* dance, this practice - once considered a folkloric offshoot of more refined traditions, such as Central Javanese *gamelan* - is vital within a variety of ritual-propitiatory and spectacular occasions, and is now taught in some of the major Javanese art academies. *Calung* music is based on processes of simultaneous elaboration of a given reference melody, and is characterised by dense rhythmic-melodic intertwining - often varied extemporaneously - that gives it a particularly lively character.

**Daniele Zappatore – Sapienza University of Rome**

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Daniele Zappatore is a PhD ethnomusicologist and filmmaker who has conducted extensive research in Java and Bali, specializing in *gamelan* music traditions and ethnographic documentary production. His doctoral research focused on the *calung* music of Banyumas (Central Java) and led to the production of two feature documentaries between 2020 and 2022. His interest in audiovisual media as a research and divulgation tool led him to establish a professional studio in Rome and a film production company in Purwokerto, Banyumas. Zappatore has long collaborated with Italian and Indonesian Institutions in teaching the principles of Javanese and Balinese *gamelan* music, coordinating several music ensembles as well as international projects aimed at promoting Indonesian art and culture in Italy. In April 2025, with the support of the Indonesian Embassy in Rome, he founded the cultural association Rumah Budaya Indonesia ETS. He completed a 1-year post-doctoral fellowship in audiovisual ethnomusicology at the Sapienza University of Rome and his latest documentary project on the *ebeg* trance dance of Banyumas received a Wenner-Gren/Fejos Postdoctoral Fellowship in Ethnographic film (NY, USA).