

## Gamelan Starter Set MS47364



Gamelan is the name of a type of music that comes from the islands of Java and Bali in Indonesia.

Archaeologists have discovered Indonesian people playing this type of music for a very long time. Sir Francis Drake heard gamelan music when he first sailed around Java in 1580.

Gamelan is an ancient tradition that is still important today.

By playing the gamelan instruments you can learn more about the gamelan culture and Indonesian ways of life. Try to use the correct terminology where possible.



Giving pupils access to authentic, Indonesian instruments is the perfect way for them to experience the tradition of gamelan music.

# Gamelan Starter Set



The word gamelan probably comes from the Javanese word 'gamel' meaning hammer or mallet.

Gamelan is used to accompany ceremonies, as well as dance and shadow puppet theatre (**wayang**)

The instruments are kept together, designed to form their own ensemble. They are beautifully constructed in metal and wood. They are played by a group of musicians (**a Sekaha**) with interlocking parts building around simple repetitive patterns.

**Kendong** is a type of drum with two different size heads at either end of the wooden body which can create two different sounds.

This gamelan instrument provides the rhythm. Use this instrument to keep a steady pulse.



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**Saron Demung** is a kind of metallophone played with hammers. The different lengths change the pitch of the notes. This is a middle-pitched instrument. They produce the core melody in the ensemble.



Use the saron to keep the **Balungan**, the core melody.

Slendro scale

C	D	E	G	A
1	2	3	5	6

Pelog scale

E	F	G	A	B	C	D
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

*Although there are 7 notes in the pelog scale, only 5 are used at a time.*

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**Kenong** is a gong that plays the lower sounds. The largest gong always plays the last beat of the cycle and can ring out. It is suspended on a stand and played with a mallet.



The gongs punctuate the performance and close the piece of music. In addition, cymbals and other percussion instruments can be used. Also use the voice to add vocal elements.

Gamelan is a group activity that builds a sense of team spirit. Emphasise the teamwork when using the instruments and highlight the importance of good listening.

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Indonesians have great respect for the sacred contexts in which gamelan is performed.

When playing your gamelan instruments, it is important to observe the Indonesian custom by:

- removing shoes and socks to show respect for the instruments
- Avoiding stepping over the instruments
- Taking care to carefully place mallets down and not dropping them.

Listen to each of the instruments being played and compare the sounds. Which instruments play high notes, medium notes and low notes?

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A good starting point is to listen to a range of Javanese gamelan first as the gentle tempo makes it easier than the Balinese alternatives. You can progress onto this later and listen and compare the different styles. A great deal of good examples can be found online. For example, the Southbank Gamelan Players are a group based in London. Look at the different performances and discuss how the musicians work together.

The Andy Gleadhill Indonesian Gamelan Book, included in this starter set, is great to help you build confidence and give you a practical introduction to the music.

Simple repeated patterns make it easy to teach and to learn. Rhythms can be passed on from one player to the next and learnt by heart in the traditional way.

## Try these...

Count Drum Beat	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1 0	1 1	1 2	1 3	1 4	1 5	1 6	
High part	C	C	E	E	F	G	B	B	B	G	F	E			C		
Medium part	C		E		F		B		B		F				C		
Low Part	C				F				B						C		
Cymbals Gong	○				○				○				○				○

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- Listen to Indonesian stories and legends such as the Cinderella story- Bawang Merah Bawang Putih, The story of the Golden Cucumber- Timun Mas, and Stories of Ramayana.
- View videos of an Indonesian puppet show (Wayang theatre)
- Create own puppets or ceremonial masks out of card.
- Write own shadow puppet storyline and select or create a piece of gamelan music to accompany the show.

- With the help of educator and professional percussionist Andy Gleadhill use the Percussion Buddies book included in this pack to effectively deliver whole class instrumental lessons.
- Watch videos of gamelan instruments being played and enjoy creating own musical patterns with movement and dance.





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Gamelan Starter Set :

- 1 x Small Metallophone - Saron Demung
- 1 x Medium Metallophone - Saron Barung
- 1 x Large Metallophone - Saron Panerus
- 1 x Balinese Drum - Kendang
- 5 x Ceng Ceng with Basket
- 1 x Gong - Kenong
- 1 x Gong Stand
- 1 x Percussion Buddies Book
- 1 x Indonesian Gamelan Book



If you have a brilliant idea that you would like to share with us, please get in touch.