

Reviewed by Lisa Lehmberg

Gending Raré: Children's Songs and Games from Bali

Written by Brent C. Talbot in Collaboration
With Made Taro

Illustrated by neverlandART Graphic Studio
Instrumental Arrangements by I Ketut Gede Asnawa
Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, Inc., 2017

Gending Raré: *Children's Songs and Games from Bali* is a fresh, delightfully appealing, thoughtfully constructed resource, created to provide students and educators with an authentic glimpse of the vibrant culture found on the Indonesian island of Bali. The publication comprises a collection of 15 separate booklets appropriate for use with students in kindergarten through Grade 8, with an accompanying website that houses an enticing array of multimedia materials.

The introductory booklet contains a topographical map and information on Bali's natural setting, arts, religion, customs, and daily life of its inhabitants. Included is a history of the project that reveals a series of deep collaborations over time between author Brent Talbot and Bali-born musicians, educators, and scholars Made Taro and I Ketut Gede Asnawa and supports the publication's reliability and trustworthiness. Those wishing to teach songs from this collection will find the final two pages of this booklet especially valuable. The first contains a detailed guide for reading the musical scores of the songs, which are written in traditional Balinese solfège and rhythm notation. The next contains a pedagogical guide in table format, providing an at-a-glance overview of songs by topic, type of game (where applicable), related Balinese belief or custom, tempo, meter,

solfège syllables utilized, mode, and rhythmic and tonal concepts. Songs are suggested for a range of three to nine different grade levels, supporting the possibility of multi-age learning experiences.

The 13 song booklets contain 14 children's songs: 10 with corresponding games, and four without. Each song is in its own booklet, except that the *Sut* ("selection" songs) booklet contains two songs used in choosing special characters for games. Each booklet's beautifully illustrated cover relates to the topic of the song. Additionally, each booklet contains:

- information on the song's cultural background;
- instructions for the corresponding game (if applicable);
- musical score for the song, in traditional Balinese solfège and rhythmic notation, including Balinese lyrics with English transliteration; and
- arrangement of the song in Western notation (all booklets except *Sut*), for gamelan or Orff instruments.

Each song's topic relates to a specific Balinese belief, tradition, or aspect of daily life. For example, the song *Meong-Meong* (Meow-Meow) is framed by the belief that the world must be in balance to avoid the prevalence of evil. Since mice are considered pests in Bali, the cat is called upon in this song to catch mice and restore balance to the environment. It follows that the corresponding game is a lively one of chase and capture, involving the characters of cat and mouse, with remaining participants forming a circle-shaped barrier between the two.

Examples of other song topics and corresponding Balinese beliefs include: (a) hiding stones/seen and unseen worlds, (b) protecting



sea turtles/laws of the universe and human body, (c) architecture in Bali/service organizations, (d) grandparents eloping/caste system, and (e) fishermen/reward for doing good in the world. Games are high-energy and active, such as tag, hide and guess, bridge and capture, three-legged race, or balance competition.

All songs in the publication use the Balinese tonal system *Slendro*, which approximates the pentatonic scale widely used in children's songs within various cultures. Pitches range from low *la* to high *do*, and melodic lines are mainly syllabic (one syllable per pitch), all of which help make the songs accessible to children.

The three-part instrumental arrangements for gamelan or Orff instruments follow a musical form of introduction/statement of melody/transition/restatement of melody/conclusion. Parts 2 and 3 are simple enough to be performed easily by elementary-age students. Part 1 is more challenging, often containing rapid sixteenth-note patterns and is similar in style to instrumental accompaniments in the associated website's videos. Music educators might wish to consider playing Part 1 themselves, teaching it to advanced elementary or middle-school-age students, or simplifying it somewhat to make it more accessible while remaining true to the cultural style and intent.

The final booklet is a build-your-own shadow puppet kit, containing templates for three puppets commonly found in Balinese *wayang kulit* (shadow puppet) performances. The back cover provides some brief information on shadow puppetry; a useful addition to the accompanying website might be a how-to video on creating a shadow puppet screen with lighting, or a video of a representative wayang kulit performance.

The material found in this publication alone would very likely make for rich, satisfying, high-quality world music learning experiences. The creators recognize it can be daunting to teach music of a culture other than one's own, however, and have provided multimedia materials on the accompanying website to provide a final boost toward acquiring the knowledge to teach this material confidently. Clearly filmed videos of the songs and dances are available, performed with energy and enthusiasm by Balinese children, with additional videos of some songs performed by young adults. Each song also has an accompanying video of a child speaking the song's Balinese lyrics. Cover illustrations, cultural information, and particulars about the project and its contributors complete an engaging web-based resource that can be accessed both in and out of school.

Author Brent Talbot and collaborators have carefully crafted a wonderfully multi-faceted, high-quality resource that helps fill a gap in pedagogical materials for children on the music of Southeast Asia. Students and teachers alike are sure to find *Gending Raré: Children's Songs and Games from Bali* informative, exciting, and engaging, and it is very highly recommended for use with students from kindergarten through Grade 8. ■

LISA LEHMBERG is associate professor and coordinator of music education at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. She holds a bachelor's and master's degree in piano performance from the University of Illinois and a PhD in music education from the University of South Florida. Lisa has successfully completed three levels of Orff Schulwerk teacher education and has earned National Board Certification in Early/Middle Childhood Music. She recently co-authored the book *Music for Life: Music Participation and Quality of Life of Senior Citizens* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

INDEX OF ADVERTISERS

Anderson University	56
AOSA 2018 Conference	inside back cover
Beatin' Path	52
Carl Orff Canada	21
George Mason University	26
Malmark	34
Music Is Elementary	33
Music Rhapsody	33
Peripole	back cover

Quaver	1
SONOR	inside front cover
Studio 49	2
Suzuki	47
Teaching With Orff	5
West Chester University	44
West Music	41
Yamaha	7