

**Community Gamelan in America:
Identifying Best Practices in Ensemble Management**

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I. INTRODUCTION

The shimmering tones and dense textures of gamelan – the percussive ensembles of metallophones, drums, and gongs found in various forms across Indonesia – have long excited and influenced innovative Western composers, from Debussy and Bartok to Glass, Cage, and Reich. Gamelan's influence can also be heard in modern electronic and pop music: Bjork commissioned the building of the *gameleste*, a hybrid between a celesta and a gamelan; and Beck invited Burat Wangi, a gamelan ensemble based at the California Institute of the Arts, to participate in his live version of David Bowie's *Sound and Vision*.

The sounds of gamelan have never been more readily accessible to global listeners as they are today, and while gamelan maintains a vibrant standing in its original context, a strong culture of gamelan has proliferated outside the Indonesian archipelago. In the United States roughly 150 gamelan ensembles are currently active, and while the majority are university-affiliated groups that hew to classical repertoire – often under the tutelage of Indonesian instructors – a number of them seek to carve out unique musical identities that depart in varying degrees from the Javanese and Balinese traditions.¹

Gamelan Dharma Swara (GDS), a New York City-based Balinese gamelan group, is one such ensemble that has undertaken this research study as part of a larger initiative to articulate an artistic and programmatic vision for the ensemble that embodies the maxim “think global, act local;” a vision that holds Balinese tradition as a touchstone but aims to break out of the “world music” silo and to engage more actively and collaboratively in the broader New York City cultural ecology. Undergirding this vision is the belief that the presence of gamelan – live, participatory, and in dialogue in its local context – is an originative and enriching addition to American performing arts, and that cross-cultural pollination contributes meaningfully to the art form as it is practiced in Indonesia and around the world. It is through this lens that GDS aims to be an influential New York City ensemble known for exhilarating experiential performances and regarded as a nexus of learning, creativity, collaboration, and dialogue among artists and audiences.

This study explores various models of ensemble management, identifies best practices, and offers ideas to support the realization of GDS's artistic objectives. Independent community gamelan ensembles such as GDS lack the institutional and cultural infrastructures that support gamelan in Indonesia, and managing such an ensemble in the U.S. presents a unique set of challenges not

¹ According to the American Gamelan Institute, which maintains a directory of gamelan ensembles, “As of 2012, approximately 60% of the listed groups are associated with a university, 20% are independent community groups, 10% are closed-membership bands, 10% are associated with K-12 programs, and about 5% are at Indonesian diplomatic missions or in museums.” “Directory of Gamelan Groups – United States.” *American Gamelan Institute*. Web. 15 Nov. 2015. http://www.gamelan.org/directories/directoryusa/us_quick-facts.html#Quantity

addressed by existing resources on ensemble administration. The most salient of these challenges, which pose significant obstacles to achieving and maintaining the professional performance caliber implicit in the GDS's vision, are (1) recruiting, training, and retaining personnel; (2) securing viable and affordable rehearsal space; and (3) achieving financial sustainability and development in a volunteer model. These challenges are intertwined and cannot be addressed discretely. The profiles of gamelans and other community ensembles in this study are intended to share information and open dialogue. Observations and recommendations will be used to inform GDS's management and provide direction for the organization's long-term strategic planning and it is hoped they may be a helpful resource for gamelan peers and similar community ensembles more broadly.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study compares and analyzes the operating models of a select group of ensembles and makes recommendations for how GDS and similar community ensembles can establish a model – encompassing policies, processes, and administrative structures – supportive of ambitious programming, despite challenges inherent to this type of ensemble. While certain challenges and suggestions are particular to gamelan, others may be more widely applicable to community ensembles at large.

The ensembles in this study were chosen based on one or more of the following characteristics:

- U.S.-based groups specializing in music/dance forms not widely represented in the American performing arts world
- Ensembles that rely heavily on unpaid volunteer staff, whether or not they are able to sustain a small paid administrative staff
- Community ensembles that train members from the general public
- Ensembles that have uniquely inherent specifications for rehearsals and performances

The groups profiled consist of six music and/or dance-based ensembles, and comprise a mixture of emerging and veteran ensembles that are exemplary in their respective fields. Each of these ensembles are representative along a spectrum in terms of size (eight to sixty), repertoire (traditional and contemporary), and presentation mode (multimedia, cross-disciplinary collaborations).

The research methodology began with a long-form survey, followed by in-depth interviews with artistic leaders, administrative staff, and/or representative members of each organization. The study gathers organizational, artistic, and management approaches; identifies particular challenges and the solutions undertaken; and pinpoints common practices shared across these organizations that contribute to engaging and motivating members. Recommendations draw on observations of these groups and on GDS's own experience, and propose practical application of best practices in the context of GDS's current scenario.

III. ARTICULATION OF CHALLENGES

Recruiting, Training, and Retaining Personnel

There exist in the U.S. no formal gamelan training programs. GDS and other community gamelans draw members from the general public, and often must juggle onboarding beginners and developing their skills with continuously challenging and retaining veterans. In an ensemble that aspires to achieve and maintain consistent artistic excellence, these competing imperatives must be carefully balanced.

Balinese gamelan music is traditionally taught without notation. GDS follows this pedagogy, memorizing the extended and intricate patterns through imitation and repetition. A first-time spectator of Balinese gamelan will be in awe of the music's lightning-fast tempi and interlocking rhythmic patterns. But virtuosity in Balinese gamelan is not defined by the speed and technical prowess of individual players; the form prizes the group's ability to negotiate abrupt shifts in dynamics, tempo, and mood in perfect unison. This feat, achieved without a conductor, requires many hours of full-ensemble rehearsal.²

Javanese and Balinese gamelan instruments are built as a set, each unique in tuning and design, and they are collectively rather than individually owned. Without access to personal instruments, ensemble members have little opportunity to practice outside of group rehearsals. This, combined with the intensively cooperative nature of the music itself and the laborious process of learning in a group, necessitates long rehearsals and a high ratio of rehearsal-to-performance hours. Due to the demanding time commitment, member retention is a commonly-cited challenge for American gamelan ensembles. High turnover can hinder a group's ability to progress from year to year or carry out multi-year projects.

Rehearsal Space

Community gamelans that lack a formal institutional affiliation, like GDS, need viable and affordable rehearsal and storage space. Gamelan instruments are too large and heavy to be transported to and from rehearsal and must be stored on site. Designed to be played outdoors, Balinese gamelan in particular is a disruptive neighbor when housed inside, making successful space-sharing arrangements contingent on appropriate soundproofing or a carefully negotiated schedule. In a shared rehearsal space, access to the instruments outside of group rehearsal times is often restricted, limiting individual members' ability to develop proficiency and the ensemble's ability to realize artistic goals. An alternative to space sharing is renting a dedicated rehearsal space, a prospect difficult to realize in a real estate market like New York City and, one that requires an adequate financial model.

² The requirements in a Javanese gamelan are somewhat different, but lead to similar challenges. Javanese ensembles in the U.S. commonly rely on cipher notation, and the slower tempi demand less technical proficiency from players than the Balinese style.

Fiscal Sustainability and Development in a Volunteer Model

Though a core challenge, the lack of formally trained gamelan performers in the U.S. also creates artistic – and by extension financial – opportunities that allow community gamelans to operate in a professional sphere. Compared to community ensembles working in Western traditions, gamelan groups are more likely to engage with top-tier venues, producers, and collaborators. With little or no competition, community gamelan groups can command relatively high fees, appear in major venues, and collaborate with preeminent artists and ensembles.³ It follows that GDS and similar gamelans occupy a unique space straddling volunteer-based and professional ensemble models.

The dual mission of training members and delivering professional-caliber performances carries through to financial considerations at all levels, including arrangements between members and the organization: should members make a financial contribution as beneficiaries of the educational program, should they receive compensation for their role in income-generating performances, or neither? Given unlimited financial resources, the decision to pay performing members would be a given. However, achieving the goal of professional-caliber performances requires ongoing investment in ensemble training, which may add significantly to the organization's operating budget.

For many gamelans, this investment takes the form of hiring Indonesian guest artists – whether from Indonesia or the U.S. – to introduce new repertoire, compose works, or appear as guest performers. Several leading American gamelans, including GDS, have also used ensemble revenues to tour in Indonesia. Touring is an opportunity to bring new works to Indonesian audiences, observe contemporary gamelan practice, deepen members' understanding of the art form in its original context, collaborate with master performers, and, through these experiences, elevate the artistry of the touring group. Such activities demand significant expenditures and constitute an important investment in developing the ensemble.

Fundraising is a potential source of revenue, but groups that rely on volunteer administrators will have limited capacity to prepare proposals and report to funders, and equally to manage an individual donor program. Community ensembles of all types share these challenges, but gamelan ensembles face the added difficulty of finding support for their member-training activities. As institutional funders often prioritize project support and public visibility – especially at the easiest entry point to grant funding, the local government level – grants are not ideally suited to underwrite the labor-intensive processes involved in member training and long-term ensemble development. With membership turnover a perennial issue, the degree of advance planning necessitated by long grant cycles can pose additional barriers to accessing grant funding.

³ Gamelan Galak Tika with Kronos Quartet and Gamelan Sekar Jaya with the California Symphony are just two notable examples.

The size of the instruments and the related expense and labor involved in moving them pose further obstacles particular to gamelan ensembles; domestic touring is cost-prohibitive. Even without the expense of transporting instruments, a full ensemble performance depends on the availability of 20-30 non-professional players, making it difficult to schedule even local performances, let alone extended touring.

IV. BEST PRACTICES

While all ensembles encounter their own unique set of circumstances, there is great value in identifying common drivers of success. Several key themes emerge in analyzing ensemble-specific challenges and solutions deployed, suggesting their broader relevance in facilitating an optimal membership experience and organizational sustainability. What follows is a distillation of those best practices, which ultimately inform a repertoire of practical recommendations for GDS, with potential application for other community ensembles, gamelan or otherwise.

Fully-Embedded Organizational Vision

A committed and engaged membership is essential to the vitality of all ensembles interviewed, yet it is a particular challenge for community-based groups to cultivate and retain talent and experience. Interviews suggest that by articulating a clear vision and embedding it throughout the membership experience, such ensembles can inspire a sense of purpose, loyalty, and focused energy among members. This is evidenced in the ensembles whose particular characteristics directly support their artistic and organizational goals.

One of Gamelan Son Of Lion's (GSOL) mission - manifest in the model of a composer's collective - is to encourage the composition of new American gamelan music. Unlike many gamelan groups, GSOL learns under the artistic direction of a given composer. This is possible due in part to the limited use of traditionally difficult instruments that may otherwise require expert instruction. Together these practices – and the deliberate minimization of member volunteer requirements – keep composition at the forefront of their experience. GSOL is continuously reinvigorated through new membership, yet has also sustained a core group of veterans, indicating a successful balance between recruitment and retention that directly supports the group's vision.

Formed by community activists, PT has adhered to its goal of building community throughout its 21-year history by giving free or low-cost performances that align with their mission and forging strong relationships within the larger community. This quality, seen in the continued dedication and collaboration of the group's membership and in strong community support, is reportedly helping them weather structural transitions.

Gamelan Sekar Jaya's (GSJ) mission to foster artistic exchange between Bali and the U.S. is carried out through their close engagement with Bali's most distinguished and celebrated artists. Its membership experience includes study with resident Balinese artists and the opportunity to participate in the group's regular touring activities in Bali, ties that are further strengthened by a director who splits her time between the U.S. and Bali. Such activities contribute to GSJ's reputation as the preeminent Balinese gamelan ensemble in the U.S. for traditional repertoire. When there was a lapse in enforcement of recruitment policies that safeguard this standard, retention suffered; this outcome may be understood as stemming from a disparity between the artistic vision and the membership experience.

For a community group, ineffectual membership recruitment and low retention can hinder long-term stability and development. This is especially true for gamelan ensembles, which invest exhaustive hours in teaching basics of the art form while simultaneously aspiring towards maximum ensemble cohesion. Each example above illustrates how an organizational vision and mission can inform membership experience through repertoire selection, pedagogy, community building, and artistic collaboration. The Portland Taiko (PT) case indicates that a shared sense of purpose can continue to motivate member participation during times of organizational flux, while failure to deliver the promised experience can lead to member dissatisfaction and resignation as arose in GSJ.

The conclusion can be drawn that community ensembles will be strengthened by articulating a clear vision and ensuring that it is embodied in the membership experience. Doing so may ensure that ensemble leadership have a clear framework for prioritization, and new members are aligned with the group's goals and have clear expectations, which could in turn minimize turnover.

Volunteer Accountability

Four of the six groups interviewed are either comprised entirely of volunteers or have a small staff that depends on its volunteer members. These groups rely heavily on volunteers to keep the organization running, yet volunteer accountability is listed as a major challenge. Unpaid staff are inherently less accountable than paid staff but are necessary to organizations with limited resources. Invariably, volunteers have diverse levels of motivation and capacity, which can induce imbalances in the distribution of responsibilities and contribution of time. However, even if drive and motivation exist among its volunteers, the necessary expertise may be lacking. Member turnover can further impact the quality and consistency of the organization. Furthermore, volunteer accountability becomes more prominent the larger ensembles becomes, as it may be easier for members to count on others to shoulder responsibility. In cases where volunteerism is a major factor in its operations, successful strategies include implementing systems that tie membership status to accountability, or—where resources are available—creating paid positions to which administrative responsibilities are strategically delegated.

GSJ inculcates its members early on with a sense of mutual accountability through its onboarding process, which includes a trial membership phase. Expectations related to attendance and volunteer work are communicated at the outset, and are key measures used by GSJ's Steering/Artistic committee (STAR) committee for evaluating the candidate at the conclusion of the trial phase. Those that demonstrate reliability and commitment are recommended by the committee and are put to vote by the GSJ general membership. Confirmation by peers again illustrates the central role accountability plays in the membership experience.

PT is one organization that has dedicated financial resources to hiring administrative staff, while fiercely preserving a culture of volunteerism. Further, it is clearly outlined which responsibilities are delegated to paid positions and which are reserved for volunteers. In the context of changing levels of financial resources in recent years, the hired executive director position has remained a constant, charged with functions that inarguably require expertise and dedicated continual time investment such as fundraising and cultivating donor relations. The administrative staff, recently reduced from three to one, assists in day-to-day operations. Volunteers are expected to lend a hand with respect to rehearsal and performance logistics, most of which are finite and task-related. Interestingly and of particular importance to be discussed later, since the organization has operated without an artistic director since 2014, artistic decisions are now made by volunteer leaders of the ensemble, with feedback from their peers.

It is also bears emphasizing that ensembles comprised of volunteers have to navigate complex dynamics related to teaching and learning. With limited rehearsal time, an efficient ensemble would avoid allocating significant time to re-teaching material, relying on members to practice diligently on their own. However, compelling members without financial incentive to dedicate this time in between rehearsals offers a perennial challenge, especially as daily lives present competing priorities.

To reinforce the value of accountability in the context of developing the ensemble for performance, GSJ designates proactive ensemble coordinators – members designated to work closely with their guest artists to monitor member attendance, progress, and quality control of the ensemble. Doing so establishes the terms of accountability more concretely, assigning a face and name to the commitment to do one's part. This ensemble coordinator has the trust of the guest artist to make ensemble decisions that are in the best interest of the programmatic vision and group development. For example, members who continue to struggle are encouraged to take paid private lessons with guest artists and to attend GSJ's public workshops. When these measures do not result in players learning their parts, members will be asked to sit out for pieces or move to different instruments.

PT makes accountability in ensemble development more personal through its feedback sessions. The sessions make it impossible for those who have fallen behind to hide behind their more prepared peers, compelling them to practice more, and ultimately encouraging members to take ownership over

their preparation and performance.

It is especially important for community ensembles to build mechanisms that imply and reinforce the importance of accountability as this mutual acknowledgement of responsibility has great implications for organizational administration and ensemble progression. While further research is warranted in understanding the possibilities, limitations, and growth potential for a volunteer organization, initial research suggests that a completely volunteer-represented organization cannot be sustainable if the organization has plans to expand in activities and grow in membership.

Flexibility

Ensembles with a high degree of flexibility will be resilient in the face of today's ever-evolving arts ecology. Those ensembles can recognize early on when systems and processes are no longer effective, are willing to try new approaches, and adapt efficiently to changing internal and external factors. In the process, the ensemble may have to make sacrifices. Regardless, for such adaptive change to be swift and successful, decisions must be guided by the organizational vision, and governance systems in place must support flexibility and adaptability. Each of the ensembles surveyed in this report demonstrated an aptitude for experimentation and weathering change in observance of its values and organizational vision.

PT is an example of an organization that has encountered financial constraints and was compelled to adjust its tiered ensemble model to accommodate only one group, while also reducing paid administrative staff. The resulting structure as an artist-collective still manages to emphasize the organization's tripartite mission of affirmation, inspiration, and creation. LBE's Baumbusch has had to navigate a complex set of logistical challenges in order to keep the ensemble active and able to adhere to an ambitious schedule of artistic output, including finding ideal rehearsal space that will also provide full time instrument storage, while reconciling a rehearsal schedule that accommodates active professional musicians with various time commitments outside of LBE participation. Baumbusch in response has offered various barter arrangements for space, and set up recurring sectional rehearsals outside of full ensemble rehearsal time to maximize practice opportunities while avoiding creating too much time burden on all LBE members.

Especially where increasing audience exposure is a key part of an ensemble's mission, flexibility can also facilitate a multi-faceted approach to outreach. Each of the groups surveyed has a larger membership, and most of the ensembles also have (or have had in the past) a smaller, core group of personnel who have multiple skill-sets and can be enlisted for select performances or productions. Of the ensembles that do not have a formalized system in place, many actively rely on the assistance of "subs," or a reserve pool of musicians/dancers, to fill in any necessary gaps in performance roles. Functioning much as a chamber ensemble would in the realm of classical music, these ensembles have

demonstrated an ability to be artistically agile and adept in navigating a wide variety of venues and audiences.

GJS takes a flexible approach and can often pull together a small or half-ensemble dependent on the performance; additionally, their smaller ensemble of *gendèr wayang* musicians are often booked to play private performances or events. Gamelan Galak Tika (GGT) pays a smaller core group of the gamelan when playing high-profile concerts with other professional ensembles. PT formerly existed as two-tiered community and professional touring ensemble. And although Calpulli Mexican Dance Company (Calpulli) has a professional company of dancers and musicians who actively tour, they also have student groups for children and adults who have opportunities to perform throughout NYC.

With a mindset of incorporating flexibility throughout operation, ensembles with smaller core groups have been able to maximize the avenues for audience exposure, created opportunities for different segments of members to perform, and even provided new sources of revenue for the organization.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Pedagogy

Like GDS, many of the community ensembles profiled here juggle training new recruits while functioning as paid ensembles in the professional sphere. All but two of the ensembles draw membership from the general public and have little to no formal arts training prerequisites for joining. Interviews revealed a variety of pedagogical strategies used to ease the burden of a dual mission of education and professional performance.

Strategic pedagogical approaches are especially relevant in the community gamelan context, where member training leads to an extraordinarily high ratio of rehearsal-to-performance hours. A ten-minute piece may, for example, take a cumulative eight hours to learn, before run-throughs are even possible. Traditional Balinese gamelan pedagogy does not use notation. Instead, players learn aurally and visually by following a teacher's example and playing passages repeatedly until they are committed to memory. This process comes with relative ease to those who grow up in a gamelan sound environment. But for non-Balinese players who lack that depth of understanding, the approach can be punishingly difficult, especially for newer players. The non-gamelan community groups profiled report similar challenges instructing members of varied experience levels. GDS could bridge the gap between new and advanced members through the adoption of a mentor program, ensuring that those with less experience receive equitable guidance and attention within a larger group setting. At the same time GDS could facilitate the progression of members towards more advanced instruments by offering workshops

and private lessons for its members.

The practice of rotational seating on various instruments, which is widespread in the U.S. but uncommon in Bali, contributes significantly to the time spent learning. The prevalence of this practice is due to the educational imperative and the fact that retaining members necessitates giving individuals a chance to try many instruments. GDS does not currently have a formal policy in place to assign seating and tension can arise when members are disappointed with their instrument or question how parts assignments were made.

Rotational seating has its merits as a pedagogical tool, but may compromise the artistic level of the ensemble as precious hours are funneled towards teaching instead of refining technique and expression. In an effort to incorporate an educational framework, GDS could consider a blended model, whereby seating for the season is mostly fixed, except on one specific piece of repertoire where changing is allowed. This encourages members to simultaneously deepen understanding and as well as develop expertise. GDS could complement this practice by assigning partners for the season, which could create another layer of accountability, and facilitate practicing together. Lastly, GDS could designate leaders for each section of the ensemble, who carry the responsibility of teaching and refining performance.

By employing some of the strategies above, GDS could address some of the issues related to artistic quality, foster accountability to others, and optimize the development process.

Decision-Making

The profiled ensembles vary widely in their approach to decision-making, from collective models to decision-making authority held exclusively by the founding member(s). Avenues for membership participation, as well as members' influence over programmatic and artistic decision-making in particular, are important as they can be regarded as benefits of membership.

For GSOL, collective deliberation is intrinsic to its identity. The administrative structure, primarily drawn from the membership, includes a lead administrator, an administrative team, a board of directors, and an advisory board, all of whom are expected to be involved in artistic and programmatic decisions. GSJ also involves the general membership in big-vision decisions at biannual meetings, while a smaller committee meets bi-weekly to decide on artistic matters. A board of directors holds final decision-making power on staffing, legal matters, and finances.

As a group undergoing a period of transition in both leadership and membership, GDS is looking for best practices in management and decision-making. Involvement in artistic decisions often constitutes a key part of the membership experience, and, can improve overall member engagement. GDS must carefully consider how, and the degree to which, members can participate in artistic and programmatic conversation.

More generally, GDS should assess its general decision-making processes and communicate it clearly. GDS has suffered from the perception of bureaucracy and a lack of transparency among the membership. Without clearly identifying which decisions are relegated to which parties and the steps by which final outcomes are reached, GDS may create the impression that decision-making is arbitrarily considered; illustrating the responsibility lines may help clarify policies and dismantle these impressions.

Though this topic was not been explicitly addressed in most of the research interviews, it may be helpful to look to GSJ in understanding that inter-organizational dynamics can be actively addressed and worked through. Over the group's 36-year history, GSJ has experienced transitioning director posts, changes in staff and organizational leadership, and a growing and evolving membership. The group has held retreats and hired consultants to facilitate member-inclusive brainstorming about organizational structure, leadership, and maintaining community. GSJ circulates leadership meeting dates and agenda topics to the general membership prior to each meeting to invite member input; likewise, meeting minutes are distributed to keep the membership informed about the current organizational planning. When instated and maintained, these systems have proven effective in upholding organizational transparency and memory for this 60-member organization, and can act as a guiding point for GDS.

More in-depth interviews are needed to provide more concrete conclusions, though initial research suggests a strong correlation between the level of communication transparency that is expected by members who belong to volunteer-based organizations versus non-volunteer organizations.

Ensemble Models & Financial Implications

A tiered model whereby a smaller subset of musicians exists within a larger ensemble has been employed by several of the groups. This approach can accommodate a spectrum of member commitment and ability, offering varied opportunities to study, perform, and contribute.

Given its educational and performance goals, GDS might consider such a model, which could manifest in a few ways. By introducing a student or community group, GDS could incubate new talent to funnel into the group's core performing ensemble. New players would receive more attention and be relieved of the pressure to perform at a high caliber too soon. Inversely veteran players might also find the experience more rewarding, having spent less time teaching during rehearsal, and more time focused on elevating the ensemble's artistic caliber; the resulting core ensemble may be rendered more nimble, enabling GDS to pursue and accept more ambitious performance opportunities relevant to its vision. GDS might consider the converse approach, putting more support behind smaller ensembles such as *gendèr wayang* and *batel*, which have been active to varying degrees within the umbrella organization. These ensembles create yet another avenue for GDS to participate in projects of different style and scale.

Additional issues that must be carefully considered in adopting any of these models include

defining the delineations and expected requirements among the different ensembles, how such transitions may affect the current membership, and what may constitute appropriate incentive models given each of the ensembles in the context of the whole. But especially as GDS aspires to be more professionally oriented as an ensemble, it is worth contemplating the implications of membership dues and member compensation, and their roles within the membership experience. Community gamelans such as GDS, GTT, and GSJ all require membership dues, which is at once a demonstration of member commitment as well as an acknowledgement of benefits received as perpetual students of gamelan. At the same time, these ensembles compensate members who may be involved in certain performance circumstances. Certainly in the case of GDS, it has raised the questions of what constitutes appropriate occasion for compensation, especially when incremental performance participation is not the only contribution a member could make. It is also worth noting that GDS had previously experimented with compensating members in general for performances, but given the level of administrative complexity, as well as the reduction of earned revenues back to the ensemble—and, thus, resources available for larger scale initiatives—the decision was collectively made to revert to the old model.

GDS might consider adopting a hybrid membership model. Taking a cue from GSJ and PT, GDS could impose a trial membership phase where dues are paid. This trial phase may be in line with participation in a beginner group, though it need not be. After a defined amount of time, a member is considered an earning member, whereby the member is entitled to a fair percentage of ensemble revenues based on number and types of gigs performed. The earnings are accrued over the course of a year, and at the end of the fiscal year, the member could choose to receive a full or partial payout, and donate the rest to the ensemble. The size of the payout could be based on individual decision, or could be determined based on a collective decision by the membership. Before any payouts are made, GDS's Executive Committee and Artistic Director could propose to membership what long term projects could be pursued with the accrued revenues, painting a clear picture of possible investments. Members who did not participate in the full year would forfeit their revenue entitlement by default. Such a model could potentially have the following effects: members observe a clear avenue for everyone being compensated for their contributions, and at the same time, see it in the context for where collective investment could lead, and actively participate in the investment decision; turnover is mitigated because financial benefits to members are only realized over a longer term; administrative headache—as associated with the previous incarnation of compensation policy—is potentially reduced.

Space Arrangements & Partnering Institutions

As noted above, outreach activities are the primary way for ensembles to recruit members and these activities are enhanced through partnership arrangements that extend the ensembles' reach.

Calpulli has partnered with community centers, libraries, and theater companies to host classes and collaborate on productions. All of the company's projects and productions have involved a partnership or collaborator. GSJ fostered a close relationship with UC Berkeley; the University's Music Department and Center for Southeast Asian Studies Department helped sponsor the group's guest artists and have engaged them as guest lecturers or educators.

Other groups are exploring extended residencies with institutions: Lightbulb Ensemble (LBE) is looking for such opportunities in universities and plans to offer a compositional program for students to write music for the ensemble in exchange for rehearsal space and instrument storage; upon the expiration of their lease, PT will seek a larger space that they could possibly share with other local taiko groups.

Partnering with other organizations, whether for programmatic collaboration or cost-sharing purposes, has helped these ensembles make substantial headway in audience-building, community engagement, and creating meaningful and lasting relationships. However, an institutional relationship may only offer a solution to a resource-constrained organization if the arrangement allows for the organization to steward its mission fully. The most ideal situation would be for the host institution to hold a complementary, if not closely-aligned, mission; otherwise, a relationship that possesses a lack of alignment may in fact create burden for the ensemble.

For the past three years, GDS has benefited from the generosity of Queens College, CUNY (Flushing, NY), where it has been in residence at the Aaron Copland School of Music. Rehearsal space, instrument use, and storage are offered for a small fee and exchange of services. However, the arrangement has not always guaranteed space: multiple organizations utilize the space and some can afford rent at retail; it is easy to understand that, in the case of competing priorities, GDS is not immune. Other trade-offs: rehearsals must occur during weekends, and the location is not conveniently accessed by public transportation, a major challenge for an NYC-based ensemble.

While GDS certainly could not have pursued its ambitious goals without the space provided by Queens College, it has also acknowledged that insufficient accessibility—no matter how small the price—has hindered ensemble development. A Relocation Committee was created in 2014 to spearhead the search for a new space. Under consideration are cross-disciplinary educational programs and extended residencies at educational institutions, museums, and community centers. If GDS is unable to secure an institutional partnership that allows for uninhibited pursuit of member and ensemble development, then paying rent may be the next best solution to ensuring space for such activity to occur on their own terms. GDS could pursue this route in conjunction with instating a tiered model as recommended above, in order to build a revenue stream that could offset the rental expense.

VII. CONCLUSION

Membership is inarguably the heart and soul of community ensembles, and therefore deserves an environment where it can be ultimately nourished. Community gamelans in America are unique in that member education is inherent to their models, which may inadvertently create impediments to the pursuit of ambitious goals. Having recently articulated its vision and mission that aspires to artistic and technical excellence while still encountering major challenges to development, GDS embarked on an exploratory journey of community ensembles - gamelan and otherwise - to seek common threads and harvest solutions. The study offers strong evidence that in order to effectively bring about sustainability, GDS would be well served to establish a stable rehearsal situation, effectively mitigate turnover, and prioritize technical and artistic progression. To that end, it is imperative that GDS focus on the following key areas:

- Independence - invest in arrangements that limit external constraints on key activities and ensemble development
- Clarity in communication - provide clear documentation on operational policies and procedures to ensure alignment on expectations among membership; invite member deliberation and offer transparent guidance on decision-making
- Agility - introduce pedagogical models and programs that streamline learning and empower the ensemble to flex to various circumstances and opportunities

Financial sustainability, while crucial to GDS's longevity, is a secondary issue that can only be attained after successfully stewarding the ensemble through the above three areas. While its spirit, aspirations and vulnerabilities may be altogether unique, GDS - as do all community ensembles - seeks fundamentally to bring people together through music. With openness to the guidance above and a temperament for experimentation, may GDS and likewise its peers be better positioned to serve its artists and audiences, no matter the times.

VIII. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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APPENDIX A: ENSEMBLE PROFILES

Ensembles are presented by the year of founding.

1. **Gamelan Dharma Swara** (*New York City, 1989*)

Gamelan Dharma Swara (GDS) was founded in 1989 and, after a period of inactivity, was revived in 2000. The 25-member music and dance ensemble operates as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization under the legal name Arts Indonesia.

Over the past fifteen years, the group has evolved from a resident ensemble at the Indonesian Consulate of New York, focusing primarily on traditional *gong kebyar* repertoire, into an independent community group, currently based out of Queens College, that aims to balance proficiency in Balinese traditional arts with a commitment to contemporary works and new compositions. GDS stands out as one of only a handful of American gamelan groups performing on *semara dana* instruments, a tuning system developed in the 1980s to accommodate classical, modern, and contemporary repertoire, and which has since become the site of the most innovative new music coming out of Bali. In the last two years, GDS has also formalized a small-group *gendèr wayang* ensemble.

GDS has collaborated with some of Bali's leading artists, including Made Bandem, Gusti Sudarta, Gusti Nyoman Darta, and Made Sidia, and performs in top venues in the New York area, including Basilica Hudson, Lincoln Center, Asia Society, Gracie Mansion, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Museum, MoMA, the New Museum, Symphony Space, LaMama, the Stone, Japan Society, Roulette, Issue Project Room, Joe's Pub, and (le) Poisson Rouge. The ensemble has worked with composers such as Dewa Ketut Alit, Vivian Fung, Matthew Welch, Joel Mellin, Richard Marriott, and Andrew McGraw. U.S.-based collaborators have included Momenta Quartet and the NOW Ensemble. In addition to performances, the group engages in educational programming through lecture-demonstrations and public and private workshops.

In 2010, GDS was the first non-Balinese ensemble invited to participate in the Bali Arts Festival's annual *gong kebyar* competition alongside the island's best professional groups. Following this highly acclaimed performance – called “awesome” and “astonishing” in a *Bali Post* review – GDS released its first album, a self-titled double-CD featuring two American works commissioned by the ensemble.

GDS identifies as a hybrid of professional and volunteer-based ensemble models; though the ensemble's performance fees range into the thousands of dollars, members forgo individual payment in favor of using program revenues to pay guest artists, commission new works, fund large-scale or free public programs, and make capital investments. However, more experienced members may be compensated for private performances of smaller-group ensembles such as the *gendèr wayang*

ensemble, with GDS retaining a portion of performance fees to cover administrative costs. GDS operates with modest annual surpluses that are saved until sufficient funds accrue to take on large initiatives, with major financial decisions put to member vote; because of this cycle, annual operating budgets may range from \$15,000 to \$60,000.

In 2010, GDS instated a membership fee to offset the costs of running the ensemble and to increase the capacity to undertake ambitious projects. Fees are currently set on an income-based sliding scale for \$100-\$150 a year and no one is barred from participating if unable to pay. Members who are in a financial position to give more are invited to make donations to cover those who cannot contribute. Additional funding is sought through grants; GDS has received project support from the Asian American Arts Alliance, the Asian Cultural Council, the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, the Mid-Atlantic Arts Fund, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Paul R. Judy Center for Applied Research at the Eastman School of Music. Occasional public fundraising campaigns raise additional support for projects.

The ensemble is artist-run, and is overseen by an Executive Committee, which is responsible for programming and administration, and doubles as the board of Arts Indonesia. Executive Committee members are neither compensated nor exempted from membership dues. They are nominated and elected by majority vote of the full ensemble membership and serve for two-year terms. In the last several years, ensemble members have been encouraged to join ad hoc committees to carry out project-based initiatives. This effort has had mixed results, with some committees working actively and others stagnating; not surprising in a volunteer context, some members are more proactive than others.

Artistic and programmatic decisions are made at the leadership level under the oversight of the Artistic Director, who, until early 2016, also served as President. Since 2012, several models of artistic leadership and instruction have been explored and modified according to the availability of qualified personnel: teaching has variously been the responsibility of a sole Artistic Director (2012-14); a Music Director, Dance Director, and Gendèr Wayang Director (2014-15); and a Music Teaching Team, made up of veteran players, and a Dance Instructor (2015-present). The current Teaching Team model allows the instruction workload to be shared among experienced members, reducing the burden on any one individual.

Each spring since 2012, a Balinese guest artist has been in residence with the group. While GDS lacks the funds to unilaterally bring and house an artist from Bali, the group has coordinated with Queens College to engage Dewa Ketut Alit, who has an annual residency with Gamelan Galak Tika at MIT and has commuted to New York regularly to lead GDS rehearsals. In 2014, GDS brought five visiting artists from Bali to work with the ensemble during a week-long intensive retreat. In 2016, the group is exploring a new model of guest artist engagement whereby Balinese artists traveling to the U.S. for other projects, or based in North America, will be brought to New York for short-term engagements of one or several days.

During these periods, the group will workshop repertoire that falls within the artist's field of specialty. This model is intended to focus the time with visiting artists on refining musicianship rather than simply learning notes.

In order to mitigate the challenge of training new members, in 2014 GDS bought several additional instruments that are lent out to members. The group has also helped individual members buy their own instruments from Bali, offering a payment plan to make the expense more manageable.

Approximately one-fifth of GDS's members are dancers, of varied levels of experience. Crucial to GDS's mission to promote multiple facets of the Balinese performing arts, dance is generally featured in two or three pieces of the ensemble's seasonal repertoire. Indeed dance is also considered a main draw for its audiences. GDS has at the same time struggled to identify an optimal model for its coordination, as well as seamlessly integrate it with the rest of its activities. The principal challenge is identifying a consistent champion of the dance program. Despite establishing a Dance Director position in 2013, GDS has found few candidates within and outside the ensemble available who have the capacity, skills and motivation to teach, as well as manage logistical aspects of the role. Additional issues that continue to test the program include how to best incorporate dance into rehearsals, how to increase performance opportunities for dance members and align dance to its vision to develop new performance works, how to accommodate members who are interested in both dance and music, and whether the membership structure is sensitive to the needs of dancers.

New members are recruited through semi-annual public workshops. Interested attendees are invited to join the ensemble if they demonstrate reliability, enthusiasm, and musical potential; there is no formal audition process or trial period. Members come from many different professional backgrounds and include professional musicians, dancers, and ethnomusicologists, alongside members with little or no prior performing arts experience. GDS has made various attempts at having members formally commit to the ensemble. For several years, this took the form of individual signed contracts outlining attendance policy and community standards. In 2015, a new collective pledge was written emphasizing the community spirit and artistic vision for the group.

Since 2012, GDS has rehearsed and performed on a set of instruments owned by Queens College, which generously provides rehearsal space, instrument use, and storage for a small fee and exchange of services. The difficulty of accessing the campus by public transportation has been a primary challenge since the move to Queens College, impacting recruitment, attendance, and retention. In 2015, the ensemble membership voted to purchase a new set of instruments, which are due to arrive in New York in summer 2016. The organization is currently seeking a new rehearsal space or institutional partnership in Manhattan or the inner boroughs.

In 2015, the Executive Committee acknowledged the need to define an inspirational vision to orient Dharma Swara's constituents around long term goals, as well as to facilitate prioritization and organizational alignment. Through a six-months process of introspection and discovery, the Executive Committee articulated a set of core values, an enduring core purpose, and a bold mission [See: APPENDIX B]. With a renewed sense of confidence and inspiration, GDS is eager to embark on its next chapter, and embrace the challenges along the way. They recognize that adaptability is vital to its evolution, and are hungry to explore new ways of working that will help the organization to flourish and actualize its vision.

2. ***Gamelan Son of Lion*** (*New York City, 1976*)

Gamelan Son of Lion (GSOL) is a composer's collective and new music repertory ensemble specializing in contemporary pieces written for the instruments of the Javanese gamelan. The group has performed continuously since 1976, making GSOL among the longest-running gamelan ensembles active in the United States today. It is also one of the few in this country to operate independently of an institution as a professional music ensemble. GSOL has performed throughout the United States at schools, colleges, libraries, and community centers, and host concerts at the Gamelan Loft – the group's New York City headquarters and rehearsal space, which is also co-founder Daniel Goode's residence. GSOL's international appearances include Expo 86 in Vancouver, the 1996 Yogyakarta Gamelan Festival, the Borobodur Festival, and performances in New Zealand and Estonia in 2003.

The group was founded by violinist Barbara Benary, clarinetist Daniel Goode, and pianist Philip Corner. Each of the founding composers brought a strong personal compositional perspective to the group. Benary studied Indian music and Javanese gamelan while pursuing her doctoral studies in ethnomusicology at Wesleyan University. She has written several pieces that integrated shadow puppetry, opera, and gamelan. Goode's compositions for gamelan are informed by contemporary developments in minimalist music and drew on his studies with experimental music pioneers Henry Cowell, Otto Luening, Pauline Oliveros and Kenneth Gaburo. Corner, a member of the Fluxus movement, has had a long career in avant-garde music; many of his works involve improvisation, verbal instructions, and graphic notations. This trio's shared love of gamelan music, new music, composition, and collaboration inspired four main pillars to GSOL's mission:

1. To promote public interest in and exposure to the instruments of the Indonesian gamelan percussion orchestra and the various musics which they play;
2. To encourage the composition of new American gamelan music by commissioning, performing, publishing, and recording such works and making them the focal point of the ensemble's repertoire;
3. To encourage the growth of new gamelan music through repertoire exchange with other ensembles both in North America and internationally;

4. To explore artistic collaboration by presenting both new and traditional productions with theatre groups, dance companies, *wayang kulit* (shadow puppet) performers, electronic composers, and other artists.

With over 100 original works, GSOL's repertoire is expansive and wide-ranging, focusing on new compositions by both American and Indonesian composers, ensemble members, and commissioned guests. As a composer's collective, any GSOL member is free to write compositions for the ensemble and have their music performed. The shifts of musical styles over the years highlight the varying influences of GSOL's composers; minimalist pieces dominated the group's early repertoire while later albums feature Afro-Cuban rhythms.⁴ Exploratory collaborations have paired gamelan with electronics, string quartet, piano, theatre works involving opera, *wayang kulit* shadow puppets, multimedia, and dance. Grants support commissions for outside guest composers, serving to expand the group's repertoire.

GSOL has two different sets of gamelan instruments. The group regularly performs with the set of instruments that were built and constructed by Benary in 1974 for teaching purposes at Rutgers University. Tuned in typical central Javanese non-diatonic *slendro* and *pelog* scales, this particular gamelan set is unique: steel metallophone keys were used in place of the traditional bronze, cans were fashioned into resonators, and hubcaps were repurposed to make a set of pitched gongs (*kempul*). This gamelan set has since been supplemented with iron gongs and pitched kettle pots (*bonang*) by the late Suhirdjan, a Javanese musician and instrument builder. The group also has a second set of instruments that is a Balinese *angklung* gamelan, a 4-tone scale of bronze metallophones tuned to *slendro*. These instruments are used primarily for GSOL's educational workshops.

Since the group performs mostly new music, traditionally difficult instruments are not frequently utilized or performed in the same musical context as customs may dictate. New members wanting to learn more challenging instruments will generally meet with experienced members, but the group does not have one single teacher. As Benary explains, "...in new music we are all teachers to each other."

Atypical of most gamelan ensembles in North America, GSOL's financial priority is to pay performance fees to their performers and composers as a gesture of professional respect. If a concert generates income, all participating performers get a share. Members have the choice to participate in performances made free to the public. Beyond that, the performing members have no specific responsibility except to attend rehearsals, play the music well, and transport the instruments when necessary.

Ensemble size varies from year to year, but the group usually has between eight to ten members in a given season. The group uses a variety of recruitment methods to find new personnel. The most successful method is by word of mouth. Interestingly, Benary states that few results have been generated

⁴ Perf. Gamelan Son of Lion. Cond. David Demnitz. *Gamelan as a Second Language*. GSOL Records, 1996.

by postings at local conservatories. There are no formal auditions to join the group, but they generally invite interested personnel to sit in on a rehearsal. Prospective members who are performing musicians (in any style, instrument, or voice) with some kind of ensemble experience are preferred. Because GSOL composers use everything from interpretive drawing to variations of cipher notation to staff notation, there are no specific requirements for reading music. GSOL is receptive to new performers as this typically tends to revive the group with new energy, personal connections, and repertoire. Even so, there is not a particularly high turnover rate among the membership compared to other U.S.-based gamelan ensembles. About 50 to 75 percent of the members have played together for five to thirty years, and a reliable core group of experienced musicians who no longer have time to play with the group regularly fill in for concerts when needed.

Since its inception, the founders were vehemently committed to the democratic and collective decision-making process of the group. Jody Diamond's interviews with the founders revealed that they "firmly believed in and fiercely defended this founding principle, which they credit with enabling the ensemble to endure the changes of time and personnel over thirty years."⁵ Several times a year, the group meets to decide repertoire and conduct business. Members lead rehearsals for their written compositions and are responsible for all decisions pertaining to their piece, although performers are allowed constructive suggestions. The group has veto power if a new piece is not ready for performance. Seating assignments are generally left to the discretion of the composer, thus effectively eliminating any issues of seniority and encouraging learning and growth among the members.

The group's collective efforts also extend to GSOL's organizational planning. As the co-founder and artistic director, Benary acts as the main administrator for the organization with the assistance of three to four members who assist with grant writing, bookings, and recruitment of potential new players. Specific funding targets are assigned to a member to pursue. The group has a board of directors mostly made up of ensemble members, along with an advisory board of friends. The board and members are responsible for programmatic planning and administrative matters. Benary explains that this system evolved naturally out of the fact that GSOL is a volunteer organization whose existence is sustained by those who are most involved – the members and performers.

As a not-for-profit corporation, GSOL's presentations have been supported by the New York State Council on the Arts, National Endowment for the Arts, Arts International, and several private foundations. GSOL seeks to use co-sponsorship whenever possible and continues to apply for other funding. Concert ticket sales are a secondary source of income, and in the interest of expanding their audience, GSOL chooses to keep ticket prices relatively low at around ten to twenty dollars per ticket. The group has no membership dues, but individual composers will often donate some funding towards a

⁵ Jody Diamond, "Gamelan Son of Lion in the Early Years" (2010)

program featuring their composition(s). GSOL's expenses are relatively low as they have no teachers to pay and no monthly rent, and the group's annual operating budget of \$50,000 has remained consistent over the last few years.

3. **Gamelan Sekar Jaya** (*San Francisco Bay Area, 1979*)

Gamelan Sekar Jaya (GSJ) is a sixty-member company of musicians and dancers that specializes in the performing arts of Bali, Indonesia. Founded in 1979 by Wayan Suweca, Rachel Cooper, and Michael Tenzer, GSJ was the first community-based Balinese gamelan in the United States. In 1985, the group was invited to perform at the Bali Arts Festival, making GSJ the first foreign ensemble to formally perform Balinese music and dance in Bali. This tour was the subject of a widely broadcasted PBS documentary, *Kembali*. The group is highly lauded – Indonesia's *Tempo Magazine* called the group "the finest Balinese gamelan ensemble outside of Indonesia," and GSJ is the only non-Balinese group to receive the *Dharma Kusuma*, Bali's highest award for artistic achievement. The company has performed at prestigious venues such as Zellerbach Hall (Berkeley), Symphony Space (NY), The Los Angeles Music Center, The Hollywood Bowl (LA), Davies Symphony Hall (SF), and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (SF). The group has presented more than 500 concerts throughout California, the U.S., and internationally, and has sponsored the creation of more than eighty works for gamelan and dance, by Balinese and U.S.-based artists. These works have won critical acclaim on both sides of the Pacific.

GSJ's mission reads: "To foster artistic exchange between Bali and the United States through residencies, workshops, performances, and the creation of innovative new works of music and dance; and to share the excitement of this exchange with diverse audiences in California, the US, and abroad."

Central to GSJ's success has been direct artistic interaction. Over fifty of Bali's renowned master musicians and dancers have engaged with the group as guest artistic directors through its Master Artists-in-Residence Program for periods ranging from one month to two years. They lead rehearsals and performances, and are featured in workshops, school programs, and lecture-demonstrations. GSJ remains the only independent program in the U.S. to regularly host Balinese artists for extended residencies outside of a university or consulate. These extended residencies have enabled the group to become a key player in Bali's living artistic traditions, which are continually invigorated through new artistic creation and re-interpretation of older forms.

Over the last decade, GSJ has created collaborative work with an Oakland hip-hop and urban dance youth organization (Destiny Arts); appeared with two symphony orchestras (Oakland East Bay Symphony, California Symphony); and collaborated with percussionists and dancers (Keith Terry's Crosspulse), a South Indian dance troupe (The Abhinaya Dance Company), a North Indian dance company (The Chitresh Das Dance Company), a music ensemble specializing in live accompaniment for

silent films (Richard Marriott's Club Foot Orchestra), and a theater company specializing in innovative shadow-lighting techniques (Larry Reed's ShadowLight Productions). Recently the group commissioned GSJ member Wayne Vitale to create *Mikrokosma* for Brian Baumbusch's Lightbulb Ensemble, a handful of whose members perform with GSJ. The group also commissions original works by its members, and all members are welcome to recommend repertoire and pitch project ideas.

Gamelan Sekar Jaya is also noteworthy for its breadth of programming offered to the public. The group regularly sends guest artists and experienced members into universities, public K-12 schools, and community centers to offer lecture-demonstrations and workshops. These take place 20 to 40 times per year, and reach approximately 5,000 kids and youth annually. The group's commitment to multicultural education is evident in its school programs and residencies, such as the California Arts Council's Artists-in-Schools program, in which artists hold lecture-demonstrations and workshops in music, dance, and puppetry. GSJ has also partnered with organizations such as Cal Performances, Oakland Youth Chorus, Oakland Asian Cultural Center, Mountain View's Community School of Music and Arts, and UC Berkeley's Department of Music and Center for Southeast Asian Studies. In 2004, the group hosted one of its largest education efforts to date: an eight-day intensive workshop in Balinese arts taught by some of the Bali's leading musicians and dancers.

Over the group's 36-year history, GSJ has grown to offer advanced study in five Balinese performing traditions. In addition to their dance program, GSJ comprises four distinct kinds of gamelan ensembles, including *gong kebyar*, *angklung*, *jegog*, and a quartet of gamelan *gendèr*⁶.

Each ensemble has a command of a core repertoire of pieces at any given time, which shift gradually from year to year depending on the specialties of the visiting guest artists. These guest artists serve as guest directors and are assisted by appointed ensemble coordinators who help with seating charts and other logistics. Every year, the guest artists compose and teach new work to the ensembles. The ensembles may also learn an additional commissioned piece by a U.S.-based collaborator.

True to the Balinese tradition, the musicians learn the music aurally without the aid of notation. Additional private lessons and sectionals are scheduled as necessary. GSJ's dancers learn the elaborate choreographies of Balinese dance in a similar manner though intensive training with resident dance directors. Beginner dancers often learn core movement and fundamental pieces. More experienced dancers learn dances in conjunction with the repertoire of the music ensembles. Details of music and dance are tightly coordinated, and an ideal perfect unity is sought in every gesture, nuance, expression, phrase and rhythmic change.

⁶ Past performances have also featured ensembles playing gamelan *semara dana*, *joged bumbung*, *kecak*, *gamelan gambuh*, *genggong*, and *beleganjur*.

Rehearsals occur one to two times weekly depending on the ensemble, and the total output of time spent rehearsing and performing for the entire organization of GSJ comes to about 1,300 hours per year. Members are free to participate in as many of the music ensembles and dance classes of their choosing. Rehearsals are held at the group's facility space in Berkeley, CA, which has served as GSJ's headquarters since 2011. In addition to an office space, there are upstairs living quarters for the guest artists. The group offsets some expenses by renting extra rooms to other tenants and community members. The overall space fills most of the group's daily needs, but the group will rent out larger spaces to rehearse large-scale works.

GSJ is a non-profit membership-based group. There is a small administrative staff who depend heavily on the members' volunteer efforts to assist in running the organization. Each member is expected to volunteer ten hours per season at minimum. Coordinators in each ensemble are expected to recruit member volunteers for performance logistics, and the staff will send out general calls for help as well. Volunteer work is always plentiful and examples include instrument loading, transport logistics, ordering concert dinners, costume management, making Balinese offerings for each performance, and hosting lunches for guest artists.

There are two general meetings per year where the membership determines the big-vision decisions for the group. The membership also nominates their fellow members for the Steering/Artistic committee (STAR), by consensus. The STAR committee comprises ensemble coordinators, members-at-large, artistic/cultural consultants, and has four overlapping board member positions: president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary. This committee is expected to meet bi-monthly to make decisions about seasonal programming, guest artists, and collaborations. Any propositions with a big risk or financial component must be proposed to the board for final approval.

GSJ's board of directors is financially and legally responsible for the organization and approves STAR and staff decisions such as hiring artists and signing leases. The group's annual operating budget has been steady for the last four years at about 200,000, with income derived from grants (40-50%); performance, touring, and education fees (25-35%); individual donors (10%); membership dues (10%); and merchandise sales (5%). As a community group, the general membership is not paid for performances. The group will pay experienced members to perform for smaller, private performances with the organization keeping 30% of the performance fee to supplement administrative costs. The staff and board make decisions around financial matters, strategic planning, and fundraising.

The staff consists of three part-time, paid positions. The current director splits her time between the U.S. and Bali and will often consult by phone while in Bali. The associate director and manager each work approximately twenty hours per week. Additional assistant personnel are brought in when needed. All staff members share the administrative and programming responsibilities.

GSJ's members come from all walks of life and have varying performance backgrounds, from none to professional. Many members join the group after encountering gamelan at university. The standard protocol for begins with a visiting to rehearsal and taking a class. If a prospective member shows enthusiasm and dedication in the classes, they are invited to join as a trial member. Trial membership can last up to two seasons (approximately one year) for music and up to two or more years for dance. After the trial membership is completed, the ensemble coordinator reviews the trial member with the STAR committee to discuss any issues to full membership, such as rehearsal attendance, volunteer work performed, and so forth. If there are no issues for membership, the trial member is brought to one of the general meetings for full ratification by the general membership. However, General Manager Sara Gambina-Belknap notes there have been instances where the protocol was neglected due to miscommunication, leaving the group at risk for a compromised artistic quality and decreased morale of the group. Gambina-Belknap observes that this may be a contributing factor in the high turnover rate in its membership in recent years. Competent and experienced members may end up leaving the group if members with lesser levels of commitment and competency are invited to join. In such cases, GSJ's ensemble coordinators must rely heavily on ringers and subs for high profile performances.

In an attempt to deal with varying musical skill levels, ensemble coordinators will work with the guest artists to identify problem areas, seat less experienced players on less challenging instruments, and pair these players with a more advanced partner. Members with less experience are encouraged to take private lessons and to attend the public classes. However, if these measures don't actualize in people learning their parts, sometimes members are asked to sit out for pieces or move to different instruments. Gambina-Belknap says this system works best with those ensembles that have proactive ensemble coordinators who work towards the artistic quality of their ensemble.

Gambina-Belknap admits that running a volunteer-based organization of this size can be difficult. During her decade of working with the GSJ, the organization has gone through three different systems of volunteer management in an effort to find an effective system. Some members neglect their responsibilities to those members who consistently go above and beyond what is expected. There is currently no system in place to take action for those who do not meet the minimum requirement of volunteer hours, and thus the organization has no means to ensure an equitable distribution of tasks. This can build resentment among members and lead to angst when calling for volunteers. Gambina-Belknap explains that when GSJ was a smaller organization, everyone had input in the programming, repertoire, artist invitations, and so forth. With the current size of the group, she ponders how to address the perception of anonymity among the newer membership and the decreased sense of ownership among the veterans in the group.

In Fall 2015, the group resumed its fall season's programming and invited co-founder Wayan Suweca as guest music director, along with Luh Andarawati as dance director; Balinese composer Ida Bagus Made Widnyana is scheduled to lead the music groups in spring 2016; Made Keranca will lead the dance group in the late spring. The group's future goals include a desire to make Balinese arts more accessible and inclusive to the local Bay Area community by developing closer relationships and offering classes taught by local artists.

4. ***Gamelan Galak Tika*** (Boston, MA, 1993)

Gamelan Galak Tika (GGT) is known for presenting an eclectic mix of material, merging traditional and contemporary Balinese gamelan music and dance with Western instruments and electronics. The group was founded by Evan Ziporyn, co-founder of the Bang on a Can All-Stars and Professor of Music and Director of the Center for Art Science and Technology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. GGT is made up of approximately 25 to 30 members and draws membership from local universities (MIT, Boston University, Berklee College of Music, and Northeastern University), MIT staff, and the community at large. The group has performed dozens of concerts around the East Coast and New England at venues including the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Lincoln Center, the Boston Museum of Science, Cleveland Museum of Art, and the Bali International Arts Festival. They have also presented music and dance workshops at numerous universities and high schools, including the first-ever "kecak-along," a participatory performance in which one thousand people were taught to shout the interlocking rhythms of *kecak*, the famous Balinese monkey chant.

"*Galak Tika*" translates into "intense togetherness" in Bahasa Kawi (classical Javanese, a dialect of Sanskrit), and is also a cross-lingual pun on the title of the old television show *Battlestar Galactica*. The group's current repertoire leans toward new works with about 60% contemporary and 40% traditional. The group seeks to be at the forefront of presenting innovative music for Balinese gamelan and encourages its members to compose and teach their pieces to the group. Experimental pieces have incorporated instruments such as electric guitars and glass chimes in a variety of musical styles. Their collaborations have involved string ensembles, rock instrumentation, and electronic music, and the group has worked with Ensemble Signal, Ensemble Robot, the MIT Shakespeare Ensemble, the New England Conservatory Philharmonia, tai chi master Bow Sim Mark, computer music duo Basso Bongo, Odd Appetite, Kronos Quartet, Wu Man, Terry Riley, and the Boston Pops. They have also commissioned music and dance works by such renowned artists as Balinese composers Dewa Ketut Alit and Nyoman Windha, *topeng* masked-dancer Nyoman Catra, and American composers Terry Riley, Evan Ziporyn, and Glenn Kotche, to name a few.

GGT has three sets of gamelan instruments: a traditional *gamelan gong kebyar*, a smaller gamelan set designed by Ziporyn tuned in just intonation, and an electronic midi set called *Gamelan Elektrika*, designed and developed by the MIT Media Lab and Alex Rigopulos, founder and CEO of Harmonix Music. The *Gamelan Elektrika* set is designed for fifteen musicians and is played in the same fashion and configuration as a Balinese gamelan, with musicians playing contrapuntal, interlocking patterns on metallophones, drums, and gongs. However, the instruments are channeled through a single processing unit that controls their sound, tuning, and timbre. Through the use of knobs, the composer can thus alter the sonic environment for the complete ensemble making the *Gamelan Elektrika* the first ever collective midi instrument requiring a group of players rather than a single musician.

GGT rehearsals are held biweekly in the World Music Room at MIT, which they share with other MIT music and dance ensembles. Detailed schedules and recordings are sent out in advance of rehearsals, often with time carved out for sectional practice. Members are expected to attend rehearsals regularly and retain previously learned material in order to keep the rehearsals efficient and fun. The group learns and teaches some of the music by rote, but also relies heavily on notation to teach music for those members who have difficulty memorizing parts. This can become a problem for those members who become overly reliant on notation. Erratic attendance is also a challenge that makes the rehearsal process suffer since most instruments in the gamelan are dependent on a partnering instrument. Additionally, technical issues can take up a lot of rehearsal time when using the *Gamelan Elektrika* set of instruments. Despite the various logistical elements of managing a large ensemble, the group remains strong and active due to the high quality performances that are offered and Ziporyn's musical connections, which have presented many exciting opportunities for the group.

About one-third of GGT's members are college students, which results in the group having an even-tempered turnover rate of an average of three years. New members may join the group at the start of each school semester with relative ease – there is no audition process, no formal music background is required, and membership is maintained by dues payments and rehearsal attendance. Despite the seemingly lax process of joining, new members have been able to learn the music very quickly. Music Director Sam Schmetterer states, "The MIT students in our group have great mathematical minds, which allow them to learn quickly. We also have many members who join with prior gamelan experience."

In the last two to three years, GGT has become a volunteer-run ensemble with three to five key members who take on the bulk of the administrative work; Ziporyn has handed over most of the control of the ensemble to Schmetterer and General Manager Emeric Viani, but still helps advise the group in the decision-making process. Schmetterer and Viani have made the majority of the artistic decisions in the 2014 to 2015 season with input from several veteran members. The concert manager, a volunteer position within GGT, oversees performance logistics and concert timelines with additional assistance from

several members who write program notes and create marketing materials. The MIT concert staff also assists with program printing and other concert activities. Currently, the only paid position in the group is the guest director. Each spring semester, GGT brings in guest artist Dewa Ketut Alit to compose new music for the group and help teach traditional Balinese repertoire. Usually there is one concert per year that involves a smaller core of the group performing with a professional ensemble, and that is the only time members are paid for performing.

The group's earned income is relatively low. Most of their revenue comes from ticket sales, which they try to keep at five dollars per ticket. With new financial cuts from MIT and little earned income from ticket sales, the group recently decided to implement a membership fee of \$100 per semester for those members not enrolled at MIT in order to cover guest artist expenses.⁷ Through a grant received by MIT, the group is currently in the midst of editing a professional promotional video to be used in their upcoming fundraising campaigns.

The group typically performs four concerts per year, two of which take place at MIT's Kresge Auditorium; their remaining concerts are usually held at other colleges throughout the Northeast. The 2015 season was event-filled for GGT; in celebration of Terry Riley's 80th birthday, the group performed *White Space Conflict*, a piece that Riley wrote for the group in 2011. In June, they joined the Boston Pops to present a movement of Ziporyn's piece *Bayu Sabda Idep* for gamelan and strings as part of MIT Tech Night at Boston Symphony Hall. At the time of writing, their most recent appearance was at Outside the Box Festival on the Boston Common.

5. **Portland Taiko** (Portland, OR, 1994)

Portland Taiko (PT) is a community ensemble that formed out of a desire by local community members to have a taiko group. Two alumni of Stanford Taiko, Ann Ishimaru and Zack Semke, formed the group along with a group of community activists including Kyle Kajihiro, Valerie Otani, Kenji Spielman, and June Arima Schumann. All of the original members are interested in social justice, and they strived to address the concerns of the wider Asian-American community through PT's formation and performances.

PT's mission states: "Through innovation and excellence in taiko, we affirm Asian-American pride, inspire audiences, build community, and educate about our heritage and culture." Community support is at the core of their values, and the group will often perform at events that are closely aligned with their mission for little to no cost. Their performance venues range from formal stages to casual outdoor picnics.

The group is known for blending contemporary and traditional elements in their musical arrangements, and their repertoire encompasses a wide range of styles from large "power taiko" pieces to smaller, more introspective works. Most of their pieces are original compositions written by current or

⁷ Guest artist expenses include the artist fee, international airfare, housing, and public transportation.

former members of PT, and the group has also commissioned numerous works by other taiko musicians. PT's typical instrumentation includes a variety of sizes of taiko drums, melodic instruments such as a Japanese bamboo *shinobue* flute, and the unique addition of a violin. As accomplished violinists, co-founders Ishimaru and Semke often incorporated one or more violins in their compositions for taiko, and this tradition has continued since their departure. Other defining characteristics of the group display the use of storytelling and humor. Past works include a series of community-based compositions that explored intergenerational conflict, Japanese-Filipino relations, and the internment camp experience.

The group previously operated in a two-tiered system consisting of a community ensemble and a professional touring ensemble. Currently there is one performing ensemble that functions as an artistic collective. The core ensemble is made up of thirteen performers spanning five generations in age range. About 70% of the membership identifies as Asian-American, although membership is open to anyone who is interested in taiko. PT recruits primarily through their introductory workshops, and prospective members will usually take several sessions of classes. Some members have come to the group with previous taiko experience, while many other members joined with little to no formal musical training. The current membership process requires an audition followed by a period of time as a performer trainee.

Rehearsals focus on exercises and drills to improve technique and accuracy of timing, as there are different techniques for hitting different sizes of drums. Because playing taiko poses the unique challenge of choreography, even highly skilled musicians may have a difficult time mastering the movements. The group employs the tactic of splitting into smaller groups, performing for each other while other group members give constructive feedback. Pieces are learned by memory which makes it almost impossible to use substitute musicians or "ringers", although personnel is supplemented from time to time with a handful of former members who will perform and rehearse as their schedules allow.

Workshops, classes, and bi-weekly rehearsals are held in PT's facility space, a small warehouse located in an industrial district that permits the group to rehearse with fewer noise constraints. Upon their upcoming lease expiration, they hope to move to a more suitable facility in the next year, with ideally more space for drum storage, office space, and more than one rehearsal room. New possibilities of sharing the space with other local taiko groups would offset any increased rental costs.

As a registered non-profit, the group receives funding from foundation grants, individual donors, and performance fees. The group performs between one to four times per month with increased performance activity during the summer season. The organization does not require membership dues, but most of the performers choose to donate money or provide in-kind services. Many factors have contributed to a shrinking budget, but the hope is that the structural transition will initiate change.

In regards to the structural changes, PT hired Wynn T. Kiyama as their new executive director, who most recently served as assistant professor of musicology and ethnomusicology at Portland State

University. He is also the founder and director of the PSU Taiko Ensemble, which he continues to teach. The executive director's responsibilities include representing the organization in the community, overseeing day-to-day operations, writing grants, cultivating donors and potential board members, and general fundraising. The administrative staff has been reduced to one point person who assists the executive director. In place of an artistic director, the organization has two part-time artistic/administrative staff members who handle performance requests and teach classes, as well as several volunteer leaders within the group who make artistic decisions in consultation with the other performers. As a volunteer organization, there are "fair share" responsibilities, including performance-related tasks (loading/unloading equipment, posting posters, managing costumes, leading rehearsals) and non-performing tasks (cleaning the practice space, weekly email updates). Tasks are distributed among the members as equitably as possible, keeping in mind the strengths, skills, and schedules of each individual. PT performer Keiko Araki says the group has remained active throughout its 21-year history because there is a real sense of community, both within the group and with the local Asian American and greater taiko communities:

All of the performers are very dedicated to the organization and are willing to step up when the need arises. Particularly during this time of transition, the group has been extremely collaborative...We are evaluating our organizational structure and remain flexible to what the future structure may be.

The last few years have seen the formation of new taiko groups in the area, and PT has found themselves competing with these other ensembles for performance opportunities and members. Despite these challenges, Araki attributes the group's longevity with the widespread and longtime support from the local Japanese American community and the community at large. The founding directors produced pioneering artistic work that helped establish PT's reputation in the local community and the wider taiko community. The volunteer performing group is a particularly devoted group of individuals who are essential to the organization's success. While recent resource constraints have compelled the board of directors to make some difficult decisions, the group remains optimistic about the organization's future with Kiyama's new post as executive director. Since 2014, the group has functioned as an artistic collective without an artistic director. At the time of writing, PT was currently preparing to perform a full-length concert with taiko master Kenny Endo and his ensemble, and they continue to present high quality performances throughout the community.

6. ***Calpulli Mexican Dance Company*** (New York City, 2003)

Calpulli Mexican Dance Company, also known as *Calpulli Danza Mexicana*, is known as NYC's preeminent Mexican dance company. Celebrating Mexican culture through performance and interactive engagement, the company incorporates visual media, theater, and live music in its productions. Calpulli

tours throughout the U.S. and has performed in distinguished venues in New York City and beyond, including Carnegie Hall, Symphony Space, CalTech University, Dollywood's Festival of Nations, and the Schimmel Center for the Arts at Pace University. The company made its international debut in 2013 by performing for one week in the Kingdom of Bahrain in the Middle East.

Calpulli is a non-profit arts organization whose mission is “to produce dance-based programming incorporating live music to promote the rich diversity of Mexican and Mexican-American cultural heritage.” In carrying out their mission, the company produces professional performances via its touring company, has an “Arts-in-Education” cultural enrichment program, and hosts community outreach activities that range from free to low-cost, targeting the underserved Mexican and Mexican-American community. Calpulli is well known within the Mexican-American community, and their outreach is mostly by word of mouth, with families and students being their biggest recruiters.

The repertoire includes over forty active dances developed collaboratively throughout the years by a team of international and New York-based artists. Though recognized primarily for its traditional and folkloric works, Calpulli believes its mission can also be fulfilled by exploring contemporary movement and through varying interpretations of Mexican culture. The company experiments with new choreography and commissions contemporary dance inspired by Mexican stories, often accompanied by original music and visual media, such as photography. Their interest in new commissions serves to broaden the scope of the company dancers’ expertise and works are thereby chosen according to whether they may offer new perspectives in contemporary dance not already represented in the company repertoire. A recently commissioned dance piece from choreographer Francisco Graciano, a dancer with the Paul Taylor Dance Company, explored the relationship between modern dance and Mexican folk dance movements. Calpulli has also worked with choreographer Roberto Lara, a classical dancer from Mexico City, incorporating Mexican themes in a suite of classical dances inspired by Mayan stories.

In addition to producing professional performances, the company provides year-round employment for capable and dedicated dancers, musicians, and educators to teach low-cost classes to the community. The company employs folk dancers who are knowledgeable in a variety of movement forms such as hip hop, ballet, and theater, and who share a love for Mexican culture. In addition to year-round employment, these artists are given the opportunity to enhance their professional development through performance opportunities while expanding their knowledge in folkloric dance technique.

Prospective dancers are invited to open rehearsals or Calpulli’s bi-yearly formal auditions, and if shown to be a good match, are subsequently invited to Calpulli’s company rehearsals. The company dancers rehearse 3 to 4 times per week in Long Island City, Queens and at City Center studios in Manhattan. There are no open auditions for music as musicians are directly recruited by the music director. The overall company has twenty dancers and twelve musicians, with about half of them

performing as part of the touring company. The touring company performs in formal performing arts centers, festivals, and outdoor spaces, and offers an aggregate of six weeks of touring performances per year.

As a vendor of the NYC Department of Education, Calpulli hosts an Arts-in-Education program in which they offer an array of cultural programming to schools and educators in the form of lecture-demonstrations, workshops, and residencies. The program has been successful, but because the Arts-in-Education programs are exclusive to the participating schools and not the general public, the company felt a need to expand their outreach programming to include the wider community of New York City.

In 2006, Calpulli decided to offer community classes for youth and adults in both dance and musical training led by the company's teaching artists. These programs are free to low-cost, operating on a voluntary donation system to ensure access to quality arts education for working class immigrant families and the underserved Mexican and Mexican-American community in the northeastern United States, primarily the tri-state area of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. The children's dance classes are grouped by age and introduce the fundamentals and techniques of ballet and Mexican *folkloric* dance. These classes are held at Spaceworks in Long Island City and Little Shop Studios in Staten Island. In the summer of 2015, Calpulli also started a partnership with the New Rochelle Public Library, offering a free two-month dance program culminating in a final student performance. The costs to propel these community programs and to offset rental space, supplies, and teaching artists was made possible by fundraising, donors, and a 2007 grant from the Union Square Awards. The children's program has since expanded in repertoire and size to accommodate over 100 students, and the children have performed at local libraries, the Alvin Ailey Studios, Carnegie Hall, and at Mexico Vive Arts, the annual summer festival hosted by Calpulli.

Calpulli's organizational structure is not based on membership or volunteer work. The company specifically chose to stay away from a model that requires payment to be part of an organization, and everyone involved in Calpulli is financially compensated. The company consists of three part-time staff: Co-founder and Managing Director Juan Castaño is responsible for financial planning, grant writing, and administration, and he directs the Arts-in-Education program; Artistic Director and Co-founder Alberto Lopez manages all artistic content, directs the community programming, and leads the majority of the dance rehearsals; Music Director George Sáenz recruits the musicians and arranges the music for the productions. There are also two Dance Captains, four teaching artists, and two program coordinators. The company works with a graphic designer, webmaster, bookkeeper, accountant, and grant writers on an ad-hoc basis. Castaño is also one of five members of Calpulli's board, all of whom have varied backgrounds in the arts, medicine, and law.

One of the challenges of a small, part-time staff is that there is little time that can be devoted to development, which is why a large percentage of their total revenue is from earned income (70-80%). The remainder is provided by grant money, donations, and in-kind contributions, with a very small portion of their contributed income coming from sponsorships.

Future goals include expanding the staffing to full time and hiring a development director and an arts/education director. Obtaining a facility space that could house a rehearsal studio and classes is also a goal, as it has become increasingly difficult to find studio space in NYC that can accommodate their evening rehearsal schedule and allow percussive footwork. However, Castaño points out that Calpulli is still an emerging dance company, and all of these goals add a new set of financial and logistical responsibilities that the company is working towards. The current mindset is to limit their overhead as much as possible and to continue to be aware of opportunities and organic growth, a philosophy that Castaño emphasizes as a contribution towards the organization's success.

At the time of writing, recent events included a performance as part of the "Heritage Sunday" program at Lincoln Center Out of Doors in which the New York Times dance critic Brian Siebert wrote about Calpulli: "Terrific company of warm, generous dancers and a mostly female band gave a quick, vibrant tour of Mexican traditions- from Yucatan, Oaxaca, Jalisco- with eye-popping costumes for every stop. The finale with the flying machetes was something to see."

In the next few years, Calpulli plans to focus on presenting stories within a dance and music context. The company is developing a production about traditions in Mexican wedding and partnering with a theater company in Queens to develop the piece for a spring 2016 debut. Other projects include a *Dia de los Muertos* piece, and an exchange with a company in Mexico planned for 2016.

7. **Lightbulb Ensemble** (Oakland, CA, 2011)

Lightbulb Ensemble (LBE) describes itself as "a new music percussion ensemble that champions experimental music, instrument building, and contemporary gamelan." Emerging from the culture of new music in the Bay Area, LBE was born out of *Prana*, a piece that Founder and Director Brian Baumbusch wrote for eight musicians as part of his master's thesis at Mills College in 2013. The group has since expanded to twelve musicians and they perform only contemporary repertoire on instruments designed and built by Baumbusch. The group presents in-house compositions and collaborations with other artists of the new music community, including The Paul Drescher Ensemble, JACK Quartet, and Jessika Kenney and Eyvind Kang, among others.

Baumbusch initially conceived the ensemble as a composer's collective, but over the course of the group's evolution, LBE became a vehicle to primarily showcase his and fellow member Wayne Vitale's compositions. Vitale, a composer and former director of acclaimed Bay Area ensemble Gamelan

Sekar Jaya (profiled above), is a long-time veteran of the gamelan music scene. Baumbusch and Vitale both share an interest in gamelan music, microtonal music, different aspects of tuning, and contemporary acoustics. While the bulk of the repertoire features the compositions of Baumbusch and Vitale, the group will occasionally commission works from other composers.

Conversations with Baumbusch about LBE included an exploration of what American gamelan music can be. With LBE, there is a keen focus on contemporary, experimental, and new music. Baumbusch consciously strays away from the pitfalls of the term “world music”, and the result is a kind of a post-modern musical approach that frees LBE and its musicians from any cultural baggage that comes with performing traditional music, granting them the opportunity to explore this musical entity more honestly without having to sidestep cultural issues.

Baumbusch first designed and constructed LBE’s instruments in 2011 while taking part in the Mazama Residency in Washington State. With the help of local sculptor Bernie Hosie, six steel metallophones were built in one week (with the Balinese gamelan equivalent being two *pemades*, two *kantil*, and two *jublaga*.) In 2014, Baumbusch built two baritone marimbas and two bass marimbas during a residency at Paul Drescher’s studio in Oakland. The group has since added additional instruments from Bali and other accompanying percussive instruments. The metal and wooden instrumentation of the ensemble and the style in which they are played is reminiscent of a gamelan *gambang*, a rare and sacred style of gamelan most prevalent in East Bali.

Unlike most gamelan groups based in the U.S., the seating for the instruments is fixed. This is a system that most American gamelan groups are perhaps reluctant to adopt, because in most contexts, these gamelan groups exist in an educational infrastructure – whether university-affiliated or independent – and retaining membership necessitates giving everyone a chance to try out different instruments within the ensemble. Despite the fact that LBE musicians do not have the opportunity to switch instruments, their personnel has remained consistent. Baumbusch attributes the low turnover rate to his recruitment of musicians based on their particular skill set, their interest in new music, and their willingness to commit to rehearsals. The ensemble is made up of musicians from Mills College, Gamelan Sekar Jaya, and musicians within Baumbusch’s network. Half of the members have a background in gamelan music, while the other half have a formal percussion background, and a few of the musicians have experience with both.

Baumbusch and Vitale share in artistic and programmatic decisions. They write out the scores and mock-up tracks for the musicians prior to rehearsals. They also handle administration, grant writing, and financial decisions. Funding from grants propels their projects and is dispersed amongst the LBE personnel. LBE will not play concerts that do not meet their minimum rate because the musicians are guaranteed a minimum fee for all performances. There are no membership fees, and the group does not

operate as a volunteer organization. All responsibilities that are necessary to keep the group functioning are financially compensated.

The group operates in a relatively simple and efficient system of organization, but not without its challenges. Two of the biggest impediments are rehearsal space and rehearsal scheduling. For the past year of 2015, LBE had been rehearsing at Mills College in Oakland, CA. Through an arrangement with Daniel Schmidt, a composer who currently teaches gamelan and instrument building at the college, the group was able to obtain rehearsal and storage space in exchange for building shelving and storage for the Mills gamelan. The arrangement recently concluded its terms and Baumbusch now rents rehearsal and storage space at composer Paul Drescher's vast warehouse studios in West Oakland. Baumbusch's four-hour commute to and from Santa Cruz is less than ideal, but necessary as the rest of LBE's musicians live in the Bay Area. The group currently rehearses once per week with sectional arrangements occurring every two weeks. However, with one-third of the group working as professional gigging musicians, scheduling is always a challenge for the group. Currently, there is no permanent home base for the group, but Baumbusch is in the midst of reaching out to various universities to offer a compositional program for students to write music for the group in exchange for rehearsal space and instrument storage.

Despite these challenges, LBE continues to be active. At the time of writing, the group had recently premiered a co-commission from the Gerbode Foundation for Baumbusch and Vitale entitled *Mikrokosma*, a suite of explorations in music and light of the microcosms of Bali-Hindu cosmology. In the fall of 2015, LBE and JACK Quartet performed together on Baumbusch's "Hydrogen(2)Oxygen" at the Smithsonian Institute. A collaboration with vocalist Jessika Kenney and violist Eyvind Kang is also in the works, along with a co-presentation with jazz pianist Myra Melford.

APPENDIX B: GAMELAN DHARMA SWARA VISION STATEMENT



ORGANIZATIONAL VISION

CORE IDEOLOGY

Core Values: *The essential and enduring tenets of our organization.*

1. Community /gotong-royong
2. Excellence/dedication
3. Respect/reverence
4. Discovery/curiosity

Core Purpose: *Our reason for being.*

To inspire wonder

ENVISIONED FUTURE

BHAG (Big, Hairy, Audacious Goal): *Our bold mission.*

Gamelan Dharma Swara will be an influential New York City ensemble known for its exhilarating experiential performances and regarded as a nexus of learning, creativity, collaboration, and dialogue among artists and audiences.

Vivid Description: *In 5-10 years, who are we, what do we do, and how are we seen?*

Dharma Swara will be a leading NYC arts ensemble and organization dedicated to increasing the access to and profile of Balinese arts in New York and beyond.

Artistically ambitious and technically proficient, we are an ensemble to watch. We have a reputation for intriguing collaborations with composers, artists, and organizations across all disciplines; we deliver visually and sonically exhilarating experiences to those who *encounter* us. Adventurous, dynamic, and flexible, we have fashioned for ourselves a stage from any surface in New York City—its concrete sidewalks, the rolling hills of Central Park, the Park Avenue Armory.

We are *the* destination for students of gamelan because our educational approach develops sensitive and informed performers. We are not about rote learning—we make gamelan accessible by demystifying constructs. Our educational programs, teaching methodology, and student group, enable a talent pipeline for Dharma Swara's core performing ensemble.

Through all our programming, we dissolve distinctions between audience, participant, and performer.