

The New Role of Javanese Traditional Performing Arts:

A Case Study of Educational and Socially Transformative Gamelan Music Programs in Prisons

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Abstract

In this present study, I examine the benefits of a Javanese Gamelan program conducted over two months at a juvenile prison in Central Java. The participants were 40 teenage prisoners between 13 and 19. Many of them exhibited dramatic changes in behavior, sociability, and self confidence during the course of this gamelan program. I also compare this program with a similar one at a prison in England. Through this comparison, I explore the significance of using a traditional performing art, the Javanese Gamelan in a case where it is a local tradition and one where it is not. In present day Javanese society, due to the effects of globalization, the decline of traditional performing arts is a matter of concern. However, I demonstrate that it is possible for this type of program to add new value to traditional performing arts and re-invigorate this traditional art while simultaneously empowering local society.

Keywords: *Gamelan, Prison, Social Transformation, Music Education, New Value of Traditional Performing Arts*

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Introduction

A program featuring Javanese Gamelan at a juvenile prison in central Java was conducted from November 2nd 2010 to January 11th 2011 and achieved a reasonable degree of success. The aims of the program were:

1. To introduce art to children or youths who have limited access to art.
2. To help incarcerated children or youths gain social skills through the practice of a local traditional art, in this case, gamelan.
3. To explore a possible role for gamelan or local traditional arts currently in a state of decline in people's daily lives.

In this article, I will examine the meaning and the benefit of this program through observations of and interviews with participants, prison officers and a teacher. I will also explore the significance of using the local traditional art for such programs through the comparison with a program done in England.

In recent years, the role of art in society has been changing rapidly. Not only has art come to be valued for its own sake – distinct from any social function, but also art is used as a socially transformative tool. The gamelan program in the juvenile prison is one such example.

I am aware of few studies have been conducted on this subject. There are a few research projects that focus on using Javanese Gamelan for therapeutic or communal projects. In England, a registered charity organization called Good Vibrations, founded and directed by Cathy Eastburn, is conducting education programs using Javanese Gamelan in prisons and secured hospitals in England and Scotland regularly since 2003. I went to England to observe one of the programs by Good Vibrations in July 2011. I will discuss this program at length below. There are several academic articles about Good Vibrations' programs. Maria Mendonça, in her article,¹ argues that the way in which gamelan has been perceived and developed in its British context have contributed to the success of Good Vibrations as an educational tool to combat re-offending.² According to her, gamelan in England has developed with social-inclusive and egalitarian characteristics and can be used as a somewhat "neutralized" cultural medium as opposed to gamelan in Indonesia which is often performed in political contexts to express ethnic identity. While I agree that gamelan was once extensively functioned in that way by Javanese, and even now, for some Javanese people, Javanese Gamelan is a marker of ethnic identity, I know many Javanese Gamelan musicians who also see gamelan as social-inclusive and egalitarian music tradition now.³ From my own extensive performance study of gamelan in Java, I have come to believe that the structure of gamelan music and the arrangement of the orchestra itself are intrinsically social-inclusive and egalitarian. However, outside of Java, not only in England but also in Japan, where I am from, these qualities of gamelan tend to be more heavily emphasized. A Canadian ethnomusicologist, Rodrigo Caballero has examined Javanese Gamelan music programs at several prisons in England by Good Vibrations and the Downtown Eastside Community Gamelan Project in Vancouver, Canada, which Caballero himself coordinated.⁴ He defines "any purposeful at-

tempt to extend gamelan performance beyond its traditional or performance-centered contexts”⁵ such as educative, therapeutic and socially transformative attempts as “applied gamelan.” He concludes that gamelan has significant suitability in applied contexts in the west because it is an unfamiliar musical tradition to most in the industrialized world and it has always left room for the novice or initiate even though it is one of the most virtuosic ensemble traditions alive today. There are also some analyses of the effect of the gamelan music programs by Good Vibrations from the perspective of criminology.⁶ They find the gamelan music programs at prisons by Good Vibrations “significantly improve confidence, listening and communication skills, tolerance, levels of self-expression, and ability to cope with stress and prison life”⁷ and discuss the potential for arts-based programs in prison. In the United States, researchers lead by ethnomusicologist Alexander Khalil at University of California, San Diego’s Temporal Dynamics of Learning Center, are conducting research in the field of cognitive neuroscience on possible translational effects of refinements at temporal processing and perception through the practice of Balinese gamelan.⁸ Studies on “applied gamelan” by Indonesian researchers also exist. Toetiek Septriasih⁹ in her M.A. thesis suggests playing gamelan is significantly effective in the enhancement of social behavior among troubled teenagers. She arrives at this finding through analysis of the psychological results of a gamelan music program at a rehabilitation facility for children with behavior problems in Magelang, Central Java. Several studies exist that explore the therapeutic use of non-indigenous performing arts in Java,¹⁰ done in the Yogyakarta area with handicapped children aiming to establish an educational model for those children.

Amongst the studies described above, none were conducted in a prison environment in Java using Javanese Gamelan for educational and social transformative purposes. Also, no study explores the significance of using local traditional performing arts for such programs. Because of that, I believe this study will add new insight to Javanese performing arts studies and art education.

Traditional Performing Arts in Java Today

In central Java, many traditional performing arts such as gamelan music (*karawitan*), dance (*tari*), wayang (both shadow puppetry (*wayang kulit*) and dance drama (*wayang wong*), *ketoprak* (Javanese traditional theater), *tayub* (a kind of local social dance originated in villages), and many others have been developed and have flourished for a long time. These art forms played very important roles in many rituals, the education of royal family members, and as entertainment both in and out of the palaces until the independence of the Republic of Indonesia. Even after Indonesian independence, until mid-1970s, traditional arts were very popular among local people and met their ritual and social needs. They were used for weddings, *kitanan* (circumcision) ceremonies, *selapanan*¹¹ ceremonies for baby, *bersih desa*,¹² and some occasions in both government and private offices. Also, by mid-1980s, many local amateur gamelan groups had formed, developed, and gained extraordinary popularity in central Java. It would thus be safe to say that Javanese traditional arts flourished until the 1980s.

Further, across Indonesia, until mid-1970s, traditional performing arts peculiar to each region were very popular entertainment for each region's people and were often the only entertainment available to them. Simultaneous with the change of times and the increase of people's capacity to buy, starting from mid-1970s, many kinds of electronic devices for entertainment such as TV and radio began to be sold in Indonesia. Also, many new types of entertainment appeared in Java around 1975 such as *dang-ndut*¹³ music, Pop, Rock, Jazz, and facilitating access to such music, tape deck rental rapidly became popular. Through this access to such new types of entertainment, young people gradually began to leave their own traditional arts behind. Nowadays, most young people and children seem unfamiliar with any kind of traditional art. In Central Java and Yogyakarta, many children only experience traditional arts at elementary and junior high school during classes that focus on local cultures.

The appearance of new types of entertainment and access to them through tape deck rental also affected traditional performing arts in many ways. People started leave traditional performing arts out of important ceremonies, therefore, existence of traditional performing arts, such as gamelan music and traditional Javanese dance, declined significantly. Additionally, amateur gamelan groups have been on the decline, especially in urban areas, so that few such groups exist today. The decline of traditional performing arts and the phenomenon of children and younger people becoming less and less fond of traditional arts are now very big matters for concern in Central Java.

The Nature of Gamelan

A Javanese Gamelan is an instrumental orchestra consisting of many different types of instrument. Each instrument has its own characteristics in appearance, sound, technique of playing, and role in the ensemble. No traditional piece can be played on any one single instrument: multiple players and instruments are always necessary. Therefore, cooperation is very important. Although gamelan music can be very complex, delicate, and profound, it is also very accessible for the novice. There are some instruments which can be learned so quickly and easily as to be played on one's first day--even for those with no musical background. Also, all players are equally important in an ensemble, even though some instruments demand highly sophisticated techniques. There is no overall conductor, but tempi can freely be changed and songs or pieces can be changed or re-interpreted during performance. Therefore, in order to put a piece together, every player must pay close attention to what all other players are doing. Gamelan has a communal nature in which even traditional pieces have ample room for improvisation and pieces are constructed and re-interpreted in real time through musical communication amongst players. Many gamelan musicians see the gamelan as a very accessible, socially inclusive, and egalitarian tradition of music. It believed to reflect an ideal community or society.

The Gamelan Program at a Juvenile Prison in Kutoarjo

The juvenile prison in which the present study was conducted is called "LAPAS Anak Kutoarjo" in Central Java. LAPAS stands for "Lembaga Pemasyarakatan," which

literally means “institution for socialization.” It is located at Kutoarjo city which is about 60 km west of Yogyakarta city. Most of the male youths under 20 years who committed crimes and given sentences in Central Java or Yogyakarta Special Region are incarcerated there. At the time of my research about 85-90 youths were incarcerated there.

The program was held from November 2nd 2010 to January 11th 2011 and concluded with a gamelan performance by student inmates. It was taught by Mr. Sukamso, a teacher of *karawitan* (gamelan music) major in ISI Surakarta. He is an experienced gamelan teacher and also has experience teaching children with special needs.

Research investigating the effects of the gamelan program was conducted through interviews with participants, several prison officers, the gamelan teacher, and through direct observation of classes. Most of the participants were interviewed twice. During the initial interviews, most of the interviewees were very nervous and reticent to express themselves or share their problems or concerns. Therefore, I felt direct observation of the program was more effective. At the final interviews, which were conducted with groups of four to five interviewees, changes in sociability were already apparent as many participants would openly talk to me how they thought or felt with cheerful and friendly looks.

a. Participant Data

Many of the youths in this Juvenile prison were continuing regular school education¹⁴ on site. In order to not interrupt their regular curriculum, the prison management and the gamelan teacher divided participants into two groups (group A and group B) of 20 participants aged between 13 and 19. Participants were selected by prison management. Mainly, they chose ones who don't have other activities in the prison at the time of gamelan practices. Only 4-5 of the participants had already had experience playing gamelan either in their villages, elementary schools, or Junior high school.

<Group A>

A breakdown of age of the participants in group A is as follows:

One 13-year-old, one 14-year-old, three 15-year-old, three 16-year-old, six 17-year-old, four 18-year-old, and two 19-year-old. Four were attending regular school (3 in elementary school 2nd grade level, 1 in Junior high school level) when this program was started. The participants in this group were relatively new to the prison. Five of them entered there within one month before the gamelan program started. Ten were already in there three to eight months, 3 about one year and 2 about two and half years. A breakdown of their offences was as follows: sexual assault 9, homicide 7, theft 2 and drug abuse 2.

<Group B>

A breakdown of age of the participants in group B is as follows:

Three 14-years-old, four 15-year-old, seven 16-year-old, three 17-year-old, two 18-year-old, and one 19-year-old. Most of them were attending mainstream

schools (1 in elementary school – 6th grade level and 15 in junior high school). Five of them had been incarcerated in the prison more than two years, with 10 more than one year, and 5 for three to nine months before the gamelan program started. A breakdown of their offences is as follows: theft 9, sexual assault 8, and homicide 3.

According to one of the prison officers, more than half of the youths in this prison came from troubled home environments. Many of them had committed their crimes as part of gangs. Hence, one can speculate that a negative environment played a role in their criminal activity.

b. Timing and Method of Practices

Gamelan music practices were conducted twice weekly, meeting every Tuesday and Friday, over a period of 10 weeks. Group A practiced in the morning from 9 to 11 o'clock, and group B practiced in the afternoon from 12:30 to 2:30. There was almost always at least one prison officer present in the gamelan room during practices.

Participants were taught to play various traditional Javanese Gamelan instruments and sing traditional songs in the form of *lancaran*, *ketawang*, and *ladrang* by following musical notation written on a white board in front of them. They were asked to listen carefully to the other players to facilitate tight coordination. The teacher gave them a lot of room for improvisation in the traditional pieces and did not force them to play in a strictly traditional manner. For example, when playing *kendang* (double-sided drums) some participants created their own rhythmic patterns. Instead of forcing them to play traditional patterns, they were encouraged to explore their own patterns so long as it worked with the overall ensemble. Also, *kendang* players were encouraged to invent their own signals to change tempi, begin vocal sections, and end pieces. All players must listen carefully for cues from *kendang* and the *kendang* player must make these cues as clearly as possible. *kendang* players also must listen carefully to the other players so as to find comfortable tempi for the ensemble. Amongst other players, similar processes also took place. The participants in this program also spontaneously learned how to connect one piece to another. Because of the level of freedom built into the gamelan classes the two groups developed distinctly different music in spite of the fact that they were taught the same pieces. They formed the pieces themselves from communication each other under the guidance of the teacher. The teacher also adapted his teaching to the ability of group and individuals even within the context of a given piece. Here I felt that the tolerant, open-minded, and communal nature of gamelan playing was working well.

Deserving special mention was the teacher's attitude towards the participants. In spite of some unruly behavior, especially in the initial stages of the program, the teacher dealt with the participants respectfully. He admonished them calmly for poor behavior and dealt with them patiently. I consider this demeanor very important for a teacher who teaches in this kind of environment so that the participants can learn to act nicely towards others from their own will – not from being forced.

My position in this program was somewhat awkward. Initially, I wanted to be solely an observer, but after observing the difficulties the teacher faced in managing the group, I decided to assist as needed. It was good to be the assistant because I could be closer to the participants. This improved my rapport with them although I was somewhat concerned that my participation could affect my objectivity.

c. First Impressions

A large number of the participants in group A were unexpectedly approachable and unremarkable in the context of their group. However, they were very energetic and had difficulty regulating their behavior. Usually, they entered the gamelan room before the gamelan teacher and I and would be playing loudly and freely by the time of our arrival. Some of them even played disruptively while the teacher was talking. Such disruptions were common unless a prison officer of whom they were afraid was present. In these early sessions it seemed to me that fear was the only means of controlling the participants. Compared with group A, group B was surprisingly quiet and obedient from the beginning. They learned much more rapidly than participants in group A. However, there were some among them who appeared introverted and lethargic and were difficult to communicate with. In addition, I found that most of them (both group A and B) were uncomfortable talking with us or prison officers on a one on one basis. There were also some participants who seemed uninterested in participating and remained alone or inactive during the practices.

d. Change in the Participants' Attitudes

As a whole, group A changed more dramatically than group B. By the end of third week, they started to be quiet on their own when the teacher spoke, even when no prison officers they feared were present. In addition, some of them kindly began to help teach ones who were learning more slowly. By the beginning of sixth week, they had begun to practice spontaneously as a group even before we entered the gamelan room. It was a dramatic change for me because until that point they would not work as a group while we were not there, preferring to strike keys at random and play individually. Their enthusiasm was evidenced in their frequent communication with the teacher, which generally consisted in asking many questions about gamelan. By the end of this program, they were very well-coordinated as a group that they even made mistakes together.

For group B, I also observed some changes. Those who were initially reticent about playing or singing¹⁵ participated more frequently. Further, their ability to coordinate as a group indicated increased ability to pay attention to what others were doing.

e. The Participants' Final Concert and Comments

The concert was held inside of this prison with invited guests¹⁶: the head of the public prosecutors and judicial office of Central Java, the president of the court of Purworejo,¹⁷ the chief of police department of Purworejo, a representative from the department of education in Purworejo, representatives from regency office and district office of Kutoarjo, and representatives from ISI Surakarta. Of course,

most of the prison officers also attended the event, including the warden governor of the prison and the education manager.

Due to time restraints, they could not play all the pieces they had practiced in the concert. However, it was very impressive to see the pride with which they played or sang. During the intermission of the concert, as a representative of the participants of this program, one 18-year-old youth gave a speech about what the gamelan program meant to him and his friends. Standing before all of the guests, he spoke freely, confidently and fluently without referring to notes. His speech was brilliant and touching and I felt representing the others well. I copy an excerpt of his speech below.

“(...) For me, this activity is very beneficial. It has a positive influence on youths in this prison because we can imitate good models from gamelan. For example, when we play gamelan, we need to be gentle, patient, cooperative, united as a group, and respectful to each other. And these kinds of things (qualities) we try putting into practice ourselves to each other, making effort to respect each other, be patient and not using violence without right reasons. We hope we'll have this kind of activities again in the future because gamelan is an art and culture especially of us, Javanese people, and we have to keep everlasting and be proud of it. (...) When we were playing gamelan, our thought became fresh, lively, new, and bright again. (...) Maybe people consider us as worthless people. Maybe we are the criminals who are the rubbish of society for people in the community outside of this prison. However, we (will) make effort to prove to them that we still have the future which we will make better.”¹⁸

From his speech, I could see he was eager to move forward in a positive way for his future. I believe this program contributed to the opportunity for him and his friends to gain or regain self-confidence and think positively.

Below are the participants' comments toward this program excerpted from interviews conducted on the 4th and 10th of January:¹⁹

- I think of the practice of gamelan as comforting to my heart (amusement), the fast and slow tempo of the music can be a tool to control emotions.
- We practiced to work together and learned to be patience, tolerant and be in harmony.
- Practice gamelan is a tool to connect people.
- I was always looking forward to having next practices.
- I think practicing gamelan is very important (for us) because gamelan music contains some important teachings: (such as,) patience, cooperation, tolerance and be in harmony.
- I learned something new which I've never learned before.
- All the problems or bad feelings can be gone with the gamelan practice.
- Practicing gamelan is an effort to keep our culture going.
- We need to practice gamelan to love the traditional art of our own people just like children in old days did.

Also, the below is a part of the list of benefits of practicing gamelan which the participants themselves experienced:

- We started willing to change, wanting to be better, and became more enthusiastic.
- I feel I became more adult. Now I can respect and value others.
- Some of my friends smile a lot at rehearsal. One of my inmates also looks much happier than before, often makes jokes, and more patient.
- One of my inmates now started to communicate with others. He was very shy and had never talked to me before.
- Now I can understand more about my friends here. Relationship with friends became closer. I have more friends now.
- From practicing gamelan, I can understand more about feelings of others. I think many of us changed and my friends are braver to communicate
- I can work together with friends
- Behavior changed. We are more patient and look together
- I like the traditional music more than before.
- Feeling more peaceful, calm and pleasant.
- I've got a new way of thinking.
- I started thinking twice before doing anything.

From these interviews and my observations, I could see many of them were more open to others and had begun to communicate with others more. They also learned to respect the opinions of others, work together, pay attention, listen while others spoke, and be tolerant. Besides, more of them were willing to share their opinions and willing to express their feeling during the final interviews than during the initial interviews.

Prison officers including those in the role of guardian or supervisor of the prisoners²⁰ made the below remarks on the changes in attitude and behavioral characteristics of some of the gamelan program participants:

- Before joining the gamelan program, some of the participants were closed, seemed depressed and scared, and often fought with others, but after joining the gamelan practices, their behavior significantly changed. Many of them became more open, seemed to have enthusiasm to live, became easy to talk with, looked happier, seemed happy to help others, and could work together.
- They are braver to express themselves to me now.
- They became much calmer during the regular school classes after they started attending gamelan program including the one who used to be a restless and constantly walked around and not able to sit still for a second.
- They became to like getting together and chat.

The gamelan teacher made this comment:

- Now they can cooperate and be respectful to each other, and they want to know more about gamelan. They are also willing to experience more.

Through my observation and interviews, I was able to identify participants who changed dramatically. On the other hand, there were also ones who seemed not to benefit as much from this program. Maybe the gamelan program was not equally beneficial for all. However, almost all the participants enjoyed this program. Further, many of them noticed changes in the nature of relationships with their friends and character changes in their friends. It was difficult to measure exactly how much they changed particularly in prison.²¹ However, it is clear that some improvement in communication skills and sociability, along with new, positive relationships arose from this program. The new relationships arose in wider sphere, not only among the participants but also between participants and prison officials, and participants and the teacher. In addition, some of them mentioned that they started to become more aware of others and consider their feelings. This indicates that their social and communication ability had improved. Becoming more social will help them while they are in prison as well as after they are released to build better relationship with others and rebuild their lives. Consequently it will help community which they are going back to after release. Because of these facts, we can say this program ended with a reasonable success.

Also important is the fact that many of them felt this opportunity very valuable and were proud to get an opportunity to study their own traditional music as transmitted from generation to generation. I will return to this point later in this article.

Gamelan Program by Good Vibrations in an English Prison

In July 2011, I visited England and participated in one of the programs using Javanese Gamelan conducted by Good Vibrations from July 25th to 29th (Monday through Friday) at Her Majesty's Prison (HMP) Dovegate, in Uttoxeter, Staffordshire. This time, Good Vibrations worked with men in the "therapeutic community" in this prison during their "Rezarts" week.²² It was conducted from 9AM to 3:45PM with a 2-hour lunch break for the first four days and had a 'play-through' in the morning of fifth day in front of the audience. It was held inside the therapeutic community.

At first, I intended to act solely as an observer, but I decided to participate in the program and also give a small scale workshop on Javanese dance there. As when in Java, it felt better to be an insider than an outsider in prison situation. Participants were 15 men, 'residents'²³ of therapeutic community, 2 officers (a male and a female) and myself. What happened during the week was dependent on what participants wanted out of it. According to the facilitator for the program in this case, Nikki Kemp,²⁴ the ethos of Good Vibrations is not to be a 'musical expert' but rather encourage the group and members to come forward and to work things out for themselves – more facilitation of learning about teamwork rather than teaching. The programs are really about developing skill at teamwork through the use of instruments rather than a music program.²⁵

The facilitator led the program in a respectful and considerate manner toward participants. She asked for the opinions of the participants before making

decisions on almost everything. Strikingly different from the program in Java was that participants were all adults and most of them were relatively calm throughout the program. In the program, other than learning some traditional pieces in *lancaran* and *ketawang* forms and learning something about Javanese culture, improvisations and group composition using gamelan instruments were took place multiple times. After each improvisation or group composition, a discussion was held to improve the pieces themselves or the technique by which they were composed. One of the highlights of the Good Vibrations program was that they produced a professional quality CD from the recordings during each program and distribute it to all the participants. This seemed to motivate them to improve the pieces.

On the fifth day, they had a play-through in front of many prison officers, other residents of the therapeutic community, and the guest from outside who were invited by Good Vibrations, to show the results of the last four days. At the end of the play-through, the participants all received a certificate. Everyone looked proud and happy, brimming over with a great sense of achievement even though some of them had been very nervous before the play-through and thinking about avoiding it.

Below are participants' comments on this program.²⁶ Interestingly, they have much in common with the comments of the youths in Javanese juvenile prison.

<Question> *What did you like (about it)?*

- Made me feel more patient
- Getting to play different instruments
- Playing together
- Pulling together different sounds

<Question> *What do you think it will benefit you (in here/ outside etc)?*

- Learn about being part of a team. There are very few things you do in prison that give you the chance to work in a team and now we can
- Good to express yourself- escape.
- Good stress reliever; you can bang on these instrument rather than on someone else's jaw
- It's been about developing your social skills - interacting, accommodating people and their strengths and weaknesses
- I've learned not to give up at the first hurdle
- Made me more tolerant, able to see others' point of view

<Question> *What have you learned about working in a team?*

- Compromise
- Go with other people's ideas
- There's more than one opinion
- I can respect other's views even if I don't agree or understand them
- Explore other's view point, try to see it from where they are
- Help them out when they're struggling

Additionally, some commented that they liked learning about different culture:

- Culture - never even heard of the people before.
- Opened my eyes to a different culture/instruments. It's character developing, there's always new things you can learn.
- Several of them were also very interested in learning more about Javanese mythology, shadow puppets, and dance during the program.

Comparison of the Two Programs

Although the structure and execution of the two programs was different, the benefits of these programs to the participants featured multiple similarities. Participants in these programs both talked about patience, cooperation, respect for others, relief of stress, and learning something new. Therefore, I believe it is really the nature of gamelan itself, being social-inclusive and egalitarian, that contributes to the benefits experienced by the participants. Consequently, I don't necessarily agree with the idea of Mendonça and Caballero that suggest gamelan is fit for social transformative programs only in England or in the industrialized world. It really works locally also. It was really the power of gamelan which made the success of these programs possible.

At the same time, I also realized the importance of the teacher or facilitator's ability and skill. These two programs succeeded because the teacher or facilitator were both very conscious of the nature of gamelan and its potential for socially transformative contexts. Because they were conscious of these things, they could lead the participants to maximal results, promoting their social transformation. Further, I saw their patient, respectful, and considerate attitudes toward the participants built a relationship of trust between them and participants. Because of this, the participants could open their minds toward the teacher or facilitator. Both of these facts helped lead the participants to build the connections with others and contributed to the success of these programs.

Strikingly different between these two programs was that one was conducted in a local context and the other was conducted in global context. Gamelan was received with fascination as a unique foreign cultural product in the English prison. On the other hand, many of the youths in the Javanese prison, most of them Javanese, perceived gamelan as a cultural product that they own, handed down through the generations from their ancestors. They felt this opportunity was valuable and were proud to learn it even though many of them had never experienced playing gamelan before. This program might have given them a chance of building self-respect, establishing identity and take pride in themselves in this global era.

Here, I also want to reiterate what one participant in Java said which I quoted above: "I think practicing gamelan is very important (for us) because gamelan music contains some important teachings: (such as) patience, cooperation, tolerance and being in harmony." I believe these teachings are nothing but a demonstration of the important qualities of a Javanese as a member of Javanese

community. This is because art that arose from a certain culture is the reflection of the community which has that culture, and the gamelan program has possibility to show it to the participants. Consequently, considering the decline of the importance of the traditional arts in Javanese people's daily lives, here, I also see a faint but a clear possibility of traditional arts to be needed again in the local community, with a different meaning or new role – not only for entertainment or ritual sake. Therefore, it can be said that gamelan programs like this, conducted in the local contexts, solves two problems at once. It not only benefits the participants and the community as I describe above, but it also gives a chance for the revival of traditional arts through giving new value or new role to the traditional art itself in the local community. I demonstrate that this is the significance of having the gamelan programs at its point of origin.

Conclusion

From the research conducted in the prisons both in Java and England, I can conclude that gamelan can be a very effective tool in social transformative programs not only in foreign situation but also at its point of origin. The gamelan program can cause characters, attitudes, and behaviors of participants to become more social. Becoming more social will help them while they are incarcerated as well as upon their release to build better relationships with others. Consequently it can help communities to which they return. In this way, I also conclude this kind of program has a socially inclusive quality and possibility can contribute to making a more stable community. At the same time, it can add a new value or a new role to the traditional arts because the traditional arts can be used to make better community, not simply as entertainment, ritual, or art for art's sake. That is why, in the context of the decline of importance of traditional arts in Javanese people's daily lives, conducting this kind of program locally holds the potential to lead traditional arts revival. And if this kind of program applied more to the other people currently in difficult situations, it is possible to encourage and empower them which could lead to the empowering of local communities from the bottom up, rather than the top-down, in this global era.

On the other hand, I understand it is difficult for the community at large to appreciate the scope and breadth of programs such as these. Many people feel that criminals are not worth the effort or privilege of this type of experience. In fact, the program by Good Vibrations has been criticized by the tabloid newspapers such as the Sun and the Daily Mail in England.²⁷ Also, I personally encountered negative opinions toward this kind of program. I understand especially for victims or family of the victims of crime, it might be emotionally challenging to accept this kind of program. If I, myself, were to become a victim, I might not be able to accept emotionally this kind of work. However, we have to accept the fact as members of society that most offenders will return to the community sooner or later. Besides, I consider that a whole community must assume part of the responsibility for their crimes, because some crimes are caused by the difficult environments that shaped their perpetrators. And if this kind of program can provide an opportunity for even a few of the participants to return to the outside

community as a productive member of society, it will decrease a recidivism rate and it will constitute a significant contribution to society.

Also, I have not yet assessed the impact or downside of this kind of program may have upon the arts. I will explore it in near future.

Opening the heart to others, good communication skills, cooperation, patience, tolerance, and sympathy are very important qualities to communal life. Gamelan can be a very powerful tool for learning those qualities. This study is a good example also to prove that increasing accessibility of the arts can also open the accessibility to the community.

Endnotes

- 1 Maria Mendonça, "Gamelan in prisons in England and Scotland: Narratives of Transformation and the "Good Vibrations" of Educational Rhetoric," *Ethnomusicology* Vol. 54, No. 3 (2010): 369-394.
- 2 Ibid., 385.
- 3 From personal communications.
- 4 Rodrigo Caballero, "Applied Gamelan: Approaching health-engaged research in ethnomusicology" (University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 2010).
- 5 Ibid., 2-3.
- 6 David Wilson and Matt Logan, "Breaking Down Walls – The Good Vibrations Project in Prison" (Birmingham: Centre for Criminal Justice Policy and Research, 2006)., David Wilson, Laura Caulfield and Susie Atherton, "Promoting positive change: Assessing the long term psychological emotional and behavioural effects on the good vibrations in prisons project" (Report for the Firebird Trust, Birmingham: Centre for Criminal Justice Policy and Research, 2008)., David Wilson and Laura Caulfield, "Good Vibrations: The long-term impact of a prison based music project," *The Prison Service Journal* 182 (2009): 27-32., Léon Digard, Anna Grafin von Sponeck, and Alison Liebling, "All Together Now: The therapeutic potential of a prison-based music programme," *The Prison Service Journal* 170 (2007): 3-14., Laura Caulfield, David Wilson, and Dean Wilkinson, "Continuing Positive Change in Prison and the Community: An analysis of the long-term and wider impact of the Good Vibrations Project," (Centre for Applied Criminology, Birmingham City University, 2010).
- 7 Caulfield, Wilson, and Wilkinson, "Continuing Positive Change in Prison and the Community," 5.
- 8 <http://tdlc.ucsd.edu/gamelan/index.html>.
- 9 Toetiek Septriasih, "Bermain Gamelan Untuk Meningkatkan Perilaku Prososial Pada Remaja Bermasalah (Playing Gamelan to Enhance Pro Social Behavior among Problematic Teenager)" (Master thesis, Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, 2009).

- 10 Sari Rudiwati, Suparno, and Haryanto, "Pengembangan Model Pembelajaran Kecakapan Motorik Fisiologis Bagi Penyandang Cacat Tubuh Melalui Latihan Permainan Gerak Berirama (Developing Physio-Motor Learning Model for Physically Handicapped Persons through Rhythmic-Movement Game Training)" (Research report, Yogyakarta State University, 2006)., also see, Y. Sumandiyo Hadi, Sumaryono, Raja Alfirafindra, and Tri Fajar Irianti, "Studi Eksperimen Model Pembelajaran Gerak Olah Tubuh (Tari) Sebagai Terapi Bagi Anak-Anak Tunagrahita (Experiment Study of the Teaching-Learning Dance Model As a Therapy for a Mentally Retarded Children)" (Research report, Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta, 2002).
- 11 A traditional ceremony for baby held on the 35th day after birth.
- 12 One of the traditional village ceremonies in Java.
- 13 A genre of Indonesian popular music.
- 14 Elementary school and 7th and 8th grades (junior high school) education was carrying out at the time when gamelan program started and senior high school education started by the end of the gamelan program. Children can get school education in accordance with their ability, not their age. They can also choose not to attend any school.
- 15 Some of them used to mouth the songs.
- 16 The guests were selected by the prison management.
- 17 Purworejo is a regency which Kutoarjo is in.
- 18 Translated from Indonesian to English by the author. The words in parenthesis and emphasis (underline) were added by the author.
- 19 All comments by the participants, the prison officers and the teacher were translated by the author.
- 20 The prisoners here are all underage, so there are several officers becoming "wali (guardians, deputy of parents)" of the prisoners. Each of "wali" had about 10 prisoners under his/her supervision at the time I was there.
- 21 In the beginning, I prepared the questions on their relations with others in the prison to investigate changes of sociability by comparing results of initial interviews and final interviews. However, as mentioned above, because most of them seemed very nervous during the initial interviews, I felt they were not really telling me the truth. Therefore I gave up on measuring sociability specifically. Instead, I gave more weight to the observation during the program and the comments they gave me during the final interviews.
- 22 This is a week when they have a break from therapy sessions and, instead, have a range of music/art programs and activities to choose from.

- 23 'Therapeutic community' is separated from the main prison and they are called residents rather than 'prisoners' and they stay in 'communities' rather than wings/ cells. They have more privileges than 'normal prisoners' and they are going through intensive therapy programs.
- 24 She is one of the first facilitators of Good Vibrations.
- 25 From the personal communication through email with Nikki.
- 26 This is from what they wrote on the evaluation form which Helen Carter, the course manager of Good Vibrations, prepared for this program. They filled in this form just after the play-through. I received this data later from Cathy Eastburn, the director of Good Vibrations.
- 27 From an interview with Cathy Eastburn (Aug 2011).