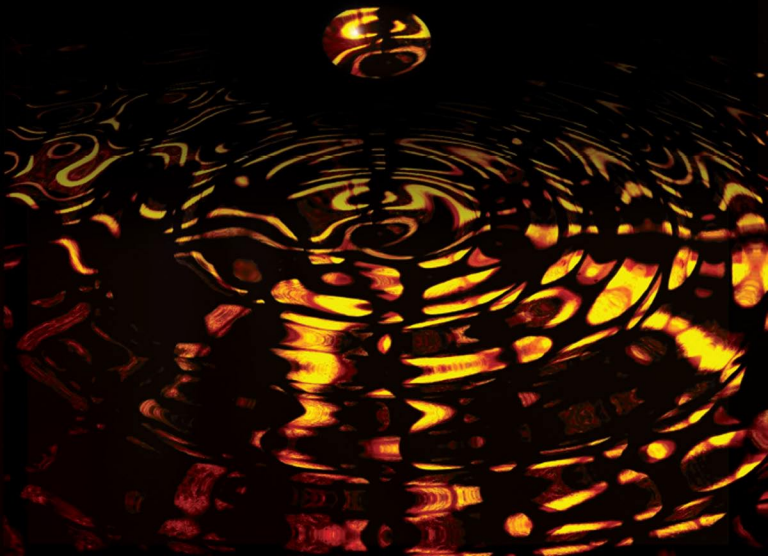


hive
gamelan madu sari



The squat, bulbous puppet is waddling across the screen again, cracking witticisms and apologizing for his bad English. Clearly he's somewhat out of his element, having been banished from the Javanese heaven – for he's indeed a god as well as a clown – and through some unaccountable spacetime warp (or woof) touching down in a metro Vancouver parking lot, where he accidentally sets off a car alarm and is hauled off to jail as an illegal immigrant and likely spy.

This is a scene from *Semar in Lila Maya*, the intercultural, co-composed, live/digital shadow play Gamelan Madu Sari developed and toured across Canada in 2008 in collaboration with renowned Javanese puppet master Ki Seno Nugroho (and toured to Java in an earlier version, *Semar's Journey*, the year before). Four pieces of music from those productions are included here: "Ganjil," "Nang Ning Nong," "From Heaven to Earth" and "Inquietude." And the plays' spirit of sly syncretism, in the service of trying to bridge very different cultures, seems to characterize much of what we've been doing since our first record, *New Nectar*. Lila = play, the dynamic, ongoing adventure that we're all involved in here on Earth; maya is of course illusion, the spell that locks the multifarious forms of lila into "reality" rather than revealing them as the concepts of our minds. Hindu-Buddhist philosophy certainly continues to exert its influence in Java, and has been filtered though the North American rainforest as well.

The big gong, Kyai Madu Sari ("Venerable Essence of Honey") marks the recurring time-cycles of most of these pieces. But as one hippie-era graffiti memorably put it, "Time is an illusion perpetrated by the manufacturers of space." Music though can exert its own particular fascinations: open up new spaces, map unexpected connections in our affections, sound out metaphors of being.

We hope you enjoy playing along.

Tony Reif



Notes on the Pieces and Principal Performer Credits

Ganjil (2005), in the Javanese pelog scale, was inspired by an Indonesian fable about how the ignorance of the human hunter threatens the ordered society of the animals of the jungle. The animals are aware of the hunters' modern guns and their ability to destroy many of them quickly. They feel surrounded and threatened with extinction. 'Ganjil' has significance both in English and Javanese. The Javanese meaning is 'strange' or 'odd'. I represent this oddness by using a seven-beat cycle instead of the traditional eight-beat cycle of Javanese gamelan – and there are corresponding modifications of the tradition in the way the instruments elaborate their parts. The English meaning involves the many associations connecting the words 'gun' and 'jail', in the jungle and in contemporary society. The song that ends the piece talks about the misuse of guns and the mass destruction of animals through hunting. – **SH**

Translation of the Javanese lyrics:

Duet: A story from the jungle: many animals are enjoying their lives, a good thing for people who can observe them; the animals are happy and free. Elephants are living together joyfully in their herds; the birds are chirping and the monkeys shrieking; deer make friends with horses, though the tiger sees them and tries to spy on them. It's the story of the jungle, a great place for animals in their habitat. Unfortunately, humans have come to disturb them.

Solo: It's a great shame that people kill animals cruelly.

Final song: Many weapons have been used to kill animals. They come in various shapes and sizes. But the killer weapons are handguns and rifles. Those weapons are deadly. They will create more victims.

Anis Astuti & Sutrisno Hartana, vocals

Sutrisno Hartana, kendhang, siter, gender, gambang

Ben Rogalsky, bonang barung

Aska Okamura, bonang panerus

Kenneth Newby & Michael O'Neill, saron imbal

Stream (2005) is about flow and fluidity as may be expected, but it is also about the verb 'to stream'. Streaming is what this piece surely does – not just in a unitary sense but also as multiple metrically shifting streams of rhythm, meter, and melody. The long opening melody introduces all of the pitch material with a Javanese approach to structure, although it will certainly sound strange to the traditional Javanese ear as pelog modes are mixed in unusual ways. The stream undulates in its ebb and flow throughout, creating a mosaic of shifting rhythms and patterns, leading up to the torrential flow of the ending gesture. – AC

Mark Parlett, rebab

Sutrisno Hartana, bonang barung

Ben Rogalsky, kendhang

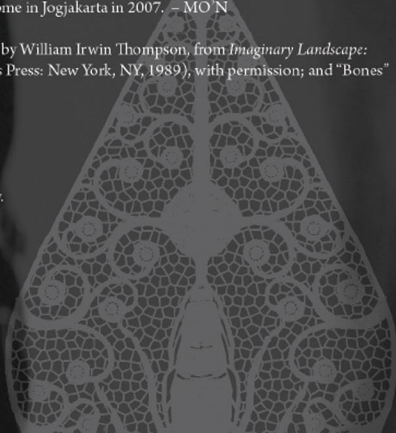
Bonessongs (2005) is in four sections: Starlight (co-composed with Ann Hepper), Whirling, Bones, and Whirling II. The work juxtaposes two texts: "Interceptions of Starlight" by cultural historian and writer William Irwin Thompson, and "Bones" by choreographer Jennifer Mascall. One casts an outward celestial glance at the universe (in the first half of Starlight); the other, an inward anatomical glance at the human body (in the second half of Starlight, Bones, and the latter part of Whirling II). As Bonessongs was commissioned for a dance piece (by Karen Jamieson Dance), it is fitting that the human body is central to both texts. In the first it acts, in my interpretation, as a receiver of cosmic memory, and in the second it becomes the subject in a meditation on its own evolving existence.

Musically, the instrumental accompaniment in Bones is distributed in an imbal or hocket fashion among three sizes of sarons (which traditionally play the same or very similar melodic lines in three octaves), yielding a delicate 'bare bones' texture with the slendro and pelog scales interspersed. The Sufi-inspired Whirling sections are more firmly slendro with pelog interjections. Gamelan Madu Sari had the honour of performing "Bonessongs" for revered Javanese musician and teacher K. P. H. Natapraja (Pak Cokro) and guests at his 98th birthday celebration at his home in Jogjakarta in 2007. – MO'N

Texts: "Interceptions of Starlight" (excerpt) by William Irwin Thompson, from *Imaginary Landscape: Making Worlds of Myth and Science* (St. Martin's Press: New York, NY, 1989), with permission; and "Bones" by Jennifer Mascall, with permission.

Interceptions of Starlight (excerpt)

They are out there all right, passing
Easily through everything that comes their way.
What you don't hear is how they strike you
Hollow of sleeping body, so it best takes soul,
Or a templated mind wiped clean of thoughts
And emptied of the senses noise and imagery.
Like telescopes away from city lights,
Only the deepest dreamless sleep provides
The minimum of existence that is still
Thin film enough to catch the life of stars.



Bones

wading through
shreds of dripping marrow
and the never-ending expanse
as i walk on the shin bone

now listen to the change in tone
when talking from the compact bone

without imagination
feel your bones and know
where you
stand

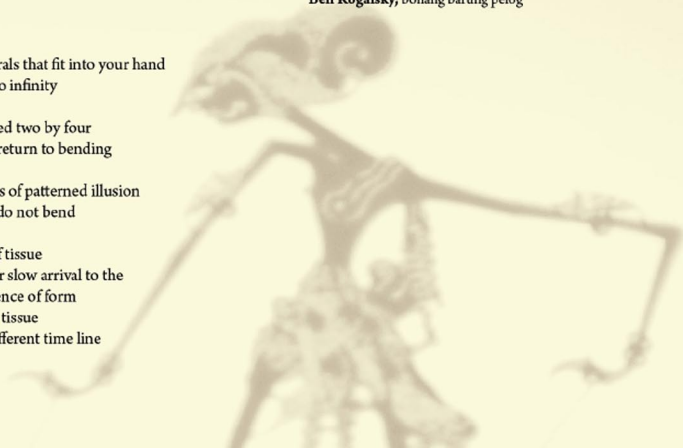
the spirals that fit into your hand
a ride to infinity

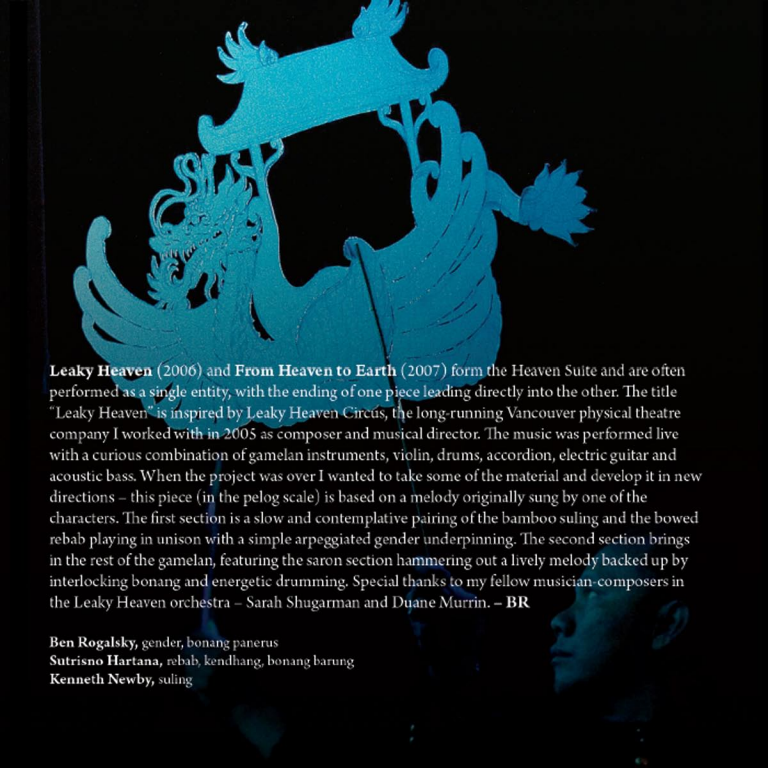
fractured two by four
a slow return to bending
after
decades of patterned illusion
bones do not bend

born of tissue
another slow arrival to the
emergence of form
merely tissue
on a different time line

a trifle or rather a truffle
both are appropriate
from the sheath of the periosteum
to the compact chocolate
covering
melting into marrow cream

Joanna Chapman-Smith & Ben Rogalsky, vocals
Mark Parlett, rebab
Sutrisno Hartana, gender, kendhang
Ann Hepper, bonang barung slendro
Ben Rogalsky, bonang barung pelog





Leaky Heaven (2006) and **From Heaven to Earth** (2007) form the Heaven Suite and are often performed as a single entity, with the ending of one piece leading directly into the other. The title "Leaky Heaven" is inspired by Leaky Heaven Circús, the long-running Vancouver physical theatre company I worked with in 2005 as composer and musical director. The music was performed live with a curious combination of gamelan instruments, violin, drums, accordion, electric guitar and acoustic bass. When the project was over I wanted to take some of the material and develop it in new directions – this piece (in the pelog scale) is based on a melody originally sung by one of the characters. The first section is a slow and contemplative pairing of the bamboo suling and the bowed rebab playing in unison with a simple arpeggiated gender underpinning. The second section brings in the rest of the gamelan, featuring the saron section hammering out a lively melody backed up by interlocking bonang and energetic drumming. Special thanks to my fellow musician-composers in the Leaky Heaven orchestra – Sarah Shugarman and Duane Murrin. – BR

Ben Rogalsky, gender, bonang panerus

Sutrisno Hartana, rebab, kendhang, bonang barung

Kenneth Newby, suling



From Heaven to Earth

you're leaving heaven
you won't return
no more heavenly bodies
no more unearthly wine

your whole life you've lived
with clouds on your feet
the sun in your hair
angels to sing to you

no more chasing nymphs around the garden
no more black swimming holes
no more slipping out
to joyride comets after dark

no more hot biscuits
from supernova kitchens
oh it's sad to say goodbye
to the boy we knew

when you swallow a mountain
you put roots down at your feet
can't you see far
with your head at its peak

just another body now
in a world full of bodies
just another shadow
in a world full of shadows

there, down below
you can see it now
that's the world you're going to
that's where you get off

it's a big world, Semar
and we wish we could guide you
we wish you didn't have to go
so sad to see you go

oh! – it's a long way down it's a long way
oh! – it's a long way down it's a long way



I originally wrote "From Heaven to Earth" for Gamelan Madu Sari's shadow play *Semar's Journey*. The first part of the play re-imagines the origin story of Semar, a well-loved mythological character in Javanese culture. The song takes place as Semar descends from Heaven, a divine prince exiled to live on Earth. I imagined him as a vulnerable and inexperienced young outcast – far from his traditional portrayal as a near-invulnerable, wise adviser – and wrote a farewell song that the angels and his companions might sing as he leaves, never to return. While most events described in the lyrics are invented, there is a reference to a famous story where he swallows a mountain that gets stuck in his belly, leading to his transformation from a handsome prince to a misshapen dwarf.

Compositionally the piece is influenced by two contrasting music traditions in Indonesian pop culture: *kroncong* ("kronchong") a somewhat old-fashioned Indonesian acoustic string band music; and *campur sari* ("champur sari"), a syrupy modern pop genre that blends gamelan instruments with western pop keyboards, electric bass and drums.

Kroncong enjoys a respectable reputation as the music of the original revolutionaries in the fight for Indonesia's independence in the 1940s, the generation that became the leaders of the young nation. By the 1970s its popularity was being eclipsed by other genres. It uses a small ensemble of instruments that reflect its 16th century Portuguese roots – typically bass, cello, two ukulele-like instruments, and guitar. These five form tightly interlocking rhythmic relationships, over which floats a melodic instrument – often violin or flute – and the voice. Campur sari, on the other hand, emerged in the early 80s and is still going strong. It is unabashedly populist, saccharine and almost universally looked down on in the Indonesian traditional gamelan community. Equal-tempered keyboards and drum machines blend with full gamelan orchestras despite their clashing tunings, backing pop star vocalists.

Somehow both of these genres resonate with me and my own background as, among other things, a gamelan musician and a player of bluegrass and old-time music. In this piece, kroncong influences can be heard in the syncopated relationships between mandolin, pizzicato cello and bass, and in the opposition of a bubbling rhythmic ensemble with a languid, flowing vocal melody floating above. From campur sari comes a fearlessness to combine western and gamelan instruments despite their very different tunings. The crunchy out-of-tune moments of discord when a gamelan pitch doesn't quite agree with the closest diatonic note are some of my favourite moments. I hope you enjoy that peculiar sound as much as I do. – BR

Jessika Kenney & Ben Rogalsky, vocals
Ben Rogalsky, mandolin, cello, bass, clapping
Sutrisno Hartana, kendhang, clapping
Mark Parlett, suling

Anis Astuti, DB Boyko,
Joanna Chapman-Smith, Christine Duncan,
Sutrisno Hartana, Kenneth Newby, Mark Parlett, chorus



Symmetries (2006) is a work that engages in notions of cultural encoding and synthesis. The music is based on a hybridization of two traditions – the ringing of bells in unique permutations as developed 600 years ago in England, and the cyclical and stratified microtonal music of the gamelan orchestras of Java. The deep structure of “Symmetries” is provided by the rules that generate the sets of permutations – re-orderings – of a set of 6 tones of the slendro scale. The complete set of permutations is an idealized representation of the traditional objective of the peal of bells in the English tradition. This structure is made manifest in the context of a layered set of microtonal lines of melody at varying densities and tempi – a form close to the core of the Javanese tradition of *karawitan*. Accents played by each instrument further articulate some of the emergent structures, both melodic and rhythmic, that occur when several layers of these changes are played at different densities simultaneously. The choir of sulings draws most of its melodic material from the same deep structure that orders the whole ensemble.

A visual music component exists for this composition in the form of a set of brief animated visual gestures created by Aleksandra Dulic – one for each pitch of the 6-tone gamut of the melody. The resulting animation arises from the same deep structure as that of the music. “Symmetries” is dedicated to new life and family, Tara Kisha and Aleksandra Dulic. – KN

Kenneth Newby, suling choir

Kenneth Newby & Michael O'Neill, peking imbal

Nang Ning Nong (2007), in the Javanese pelog scale, was inspired by Javanese vocal traditions and Sundanese suling (flute) ornamentation. The first section is a lullaby sung in vocables that are used by many Javanese to imitate the sounds of gamelan instruments. This is followed by a song, tenderly expressed to a newborn, of hope for prosperity, peace, and luck. The singer expresses hope that her baby's life will be peaceful and steady in its growth. – **SH**

Lela ledung lela,
Eman angger eman,
lela ledung lela,
Anak ku tak lela tak lela ledung.

Ledung lela ledung,
Tak emban atak ambung,
Nganggo slendang kawung,
Tak suwun anakku tansah jinangkung,
mulung-mulung epang,
Epang semi subur,
Tak kudang tak gadhang nemu nasib mujur.

Panyuwunku bisa anak ku,
Mulung-mulung epang,
Samubarang dadi gampang,
Suket godhong dadi rewang.

Anis Astuti, vocal
Sutrisno Hartana, gender, suling, siter
Ann Hepper, bonang barung
Michael O'Neill, bonang panerus

Cradle embrace cradle,
darling baby darling,
cradle embrace cradle,
my baby, let me cradle and embrace you.

Embrace cradle embrace,
I hold you in the *kawung* scarf
and kiss you.
I wish you peace, my baby,
like the branch of a tree,
the branch is growing,
I wish you luck and prosperity.

My hope for you, my baby,
is that, like the branch of a tree,
everything will be easy,
grass and leaves will help you.



Full Fathom Five (in the pelog scale) was one of two settings of words from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* which I composed in 1983 for the English Gamelan Orchestra. I had just returned from an extended stay at ASKI (now STSI) in Solo, Central Java, where, in addition to studying traditional gamelan music, I became fascinated by the creative experimentation which was then at its height there. Sometime later I had the good fortune to meet the late Martin Bartlett, founder of the Vancouver Community Gamelan (now Gamelan Madu Sari). Martin heard a recording of my *Tempest* songs and asked me if I would like to compose the music for a full-scale production of the play at Simon Fraser University's Centre for the Arts. For me, this was the realisation of a long-held ambition, and I spent a most memorable and enjoyable two months in 1989 working with the Vancouver group. The compositional structure of "Full Fathom Five" combines Shakespeare's words with elements of the austere classical Javanese tradition and some of the avant-garde techniques which I observed as a student at ASKI; but it is the unique personality of the Vancouver gamelan and its musicians which brings an extra special magic to this recording of the music. – AR

Full fathom five thy father lies,
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes;
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
Hark! Now I hear them – Ding-dong bell.

William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Act II Scene ii

Guest composer Alec Roth was born in England of German/Irish descent. He founded London's Royal Festival Hall Gamelan Programme and the South Bank Gamelan Players in 1988. As a composer he is best known for his collaborations with the Indian writer Vikram Seth, which include the opera *Arion* and the *Dolphin* and numerous songs, song-cycles and choral works. *Songs in Time of War* (2006), for voice, violin, harp and guitar, was composed for the tenor Mark Padmore, and is now available on the Signum Classics label. The CD also includes the song-cycle *Chinese Gardens*, the music of which was inspired by a visit to Vancouver's own Dr. Sun-Yat Sen Classical Chinese Garden.

Jessika Kenney & Ben Rogalsky, vocals
Sutrisno Hartana, gender

DB Boyko, Joanna Chapman-Smith, Kenneth Newby, Mark Parlett, chorus
Kenneth Newby, Michael O'Neill, Mark Parlett, Ben Rogalsky,
collective percussion improvisations (and Parlett and Newby, suling)

Inquietude (2006) is a sonic mediation linking Javanese musical gesture, composite time structure, and lyrical reflections on the state of our consciousness in the age of digital tyranny, ethical dilemma and restless yearning for inner peace.

In these times insanity seems bred into the bone –
so it comes out in the flesh –
Gluttony – righteously – endlessly –
No peace will ever be found –
As always, the enemy is within.

This Javanese text sung by Sutrisno and Anis, heard later in English by the sirens, is only one verse from the hundreds of verses of the *Serat Kalatida*, written in the 19th century by the famous Solonese court poet Ronggowarsito. This work was and is a seminal philosophic treatise on the human condition, and a prophecy.

The rhythmic heart of the piece is a 48 beat cycle (6 consecutive 8 beat $\frac{1}{8}$ note lines). Arabic influence is not always audible in Javanese music but its impression is felt in subtle ways. I wished to make a connection to that sensibility by utilizing a rhythmic cycle from the southern desert of Egypt, formerly Nubia, which is frequently used for weddings and processions. The tonality and tuning alternates between pelog and slendro, as well as new extended modes combining pitches from both scales.

The 3 invocations heard at various times sung in Latin serve as ominous warnings to our collective selves of the madness of human actions; "Bellum Omnium in Omnes" – A war by all against all ...; "Ecce Quomodo Moritur" – Behold, in what manner shall we die...; "Quis Custodiet Ipsos Custos Des" – Who will watch the watchers themselves...? – **MP**

Mark Parlett, kendhang, ciblon, rebab, suling, siter, percussion
Sutrisno Hartana, vocals, gender, gambang, rebab (opening section), ciblon
Anis Astuti, vocals
DB Boyko & Christine Duncan (the sirens), vocals
Tony Reif, peking
Andreas Kahre, frame drum, percussion



Deepest thanks to our sound engineer John Raham, for his tireless precision and commitment to the integrity of this project. And to Sutrisno Hartana, for his music, patience, and example in all things Javanese: may our paths continue to cross for many years to come.

Special thanks also to Martin Gotfrit and to SFU's School for the Contemporary Arts, on whose set of instruments we've been fortunate to rehearse and perform since 1986, when Gamelan Kyai Madu Sari was donated to SFU by the Indonesian government.

Heartfelt thanks to the composers and musicians for your dedication.

Finally, a big thank-you to the City of Vancouver, Cultural Services, for supporting the post-production of this recording.

Gamelan Madu Sari Personnel:

Sutrisno Hartana, lead vocals, chorus, kendhang, keprak, gender, rebab, suling, gambang, siter, bonang
Anis Astuti, lead vocals, chorus, gong/kempul
Mark Parlett, rebab, kendhang, percussion, suling, gambang, siter, saron, slenthem, kenong, kethuk, chorus
Ben Rogalsky, lead vocals, mandolin, cello, bass, gender, kendhang, bedhug, percussion, bonang, slenthem, saron, demung, gong/kempul, kenong
Michael O'Neill, bonang, saron, peking, gong/kempul, kemanak, percussion
Kenneth Newby, suling, saron, peking, demung, percussion, chorus
Ann Hepper, bonang, saron, demung, slenthem, kenong
Sam Salmon, bonang, demung, saron, gong/kempul
Tony Reif, peking, saron, gong/kempul, kemanak
David Cunningham, demung, slenthem, gong/kempul, kenong
Andrew Czink, bonang, saron, kenong
Kemal Wahyu, demung, slenthem, kethuk
Jennifer Low, saron, slenthem, kenong
Aska Okamura, bonang, gong/kempul
Ayundita Batari, demung

Guest Artists:

Jessika Kenney, lead vocals (5, 8)
Joanna Chapman-Smith, lead vocal (3), chorus (5, 8)
DB Boyko, lead vocal (9), chorus (5, 8)
Christine Duncan, lead vocal (9), chorus (5)
Andreas Kahre, frame drum, percussion (9)



1. Ganjil	Sutrisno Hartana	10:27
2. Stream	Andrew Czink	6:59
3. Bonessongs	Michael O'Neill	13:07
4. Leaky Heaven	Ben Rogalsky	5:48
5. From Heaven to Earth	Ben Rogalsky	5:04
6. Symmetries	Kenneth Newby	9:03
7. Nang Ning Nong	Sutrisno Hartana	5:13
8. Full Fathom Five	Alec Roth	5:53
9. Inquietude	Mark Parlett	15:36

All compositions SOCAN except "Full Fathom Five" PRS

Produced by Tony Reif and Gamelan Madu Sari

Recorded by John Raham at Simon Fraser University's School for the Contemporary Arts, April-May 2008. Additional recording, editing and mixing by John Raham at Ogre Studios, Vancouver. Mastered by Graemmie Brown at Zen Mastering, Vancouver.

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Design by Jordan Bent

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Please also visit www.songlines.com for composer bios and interviews.



Camelan Madu Sari

featuring vocalists Anis Astuti, Sutrisno Hartana, Ben Rogalsky, Jessika Kenney,
Joanna Chapman-Smith, DB Boyko and Christine Duncan
Compositions by Andrew Czink, Sutrisno Hartana, Kenneth Newby, Michael O'Neill,
Mark Parlett, Ben Rogalsky and Alec Roth

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Total Time: 77:08
Recorded and mixed
in 24 bits/88.2K

Camelan Madu Sari ("The Essence of Honey") presents its second recording of new music for Javanese gamelan, a richly diverse mix of instrumental/vocal pieces and songs merging gamelan styles with contemporary classical and folk/world approaches. Expect a wide range of sounds and moods: tender, mysterious, humorous, rousing, jazzy; file under adventurous.



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