

# Bonangan 1

## Layout

In most Javanese gamelan sets, there are two bonang type instruments: the bonang barung and the bonang panerus. The two instruments are identical except that the bonang panerus is pitched an octave higher than the bonang barung. There are separate bonang for each scale, slendro and pelog. The notes are arranged in two rows as follows:

<u>Slendro</u>	6	5	3	2	ī	2̇	<u>Pelog</u>	4	6	5	3	2	1̇	7
	1	2̇	3̇	5̇	6̇	1̇		7̇	1	2̇	3̇	5̇	6̇	4̇

In pelog, the adjacent 1 and 7 pairs exchange position when playing in pelog barang, so that the 7 notes are closer to the centre.

## Subdivisions

Along with the saron panerus, the bonang barung usually plays in subdivisions that define the “rhythmic density” of each irama. The bonang panerus generally plays at twice the density of the bonang barung (i.e. twice as many subdivisions).

Irama	Bonang barung	Bonang panerus
Lancar (1:1)	1 subdivision per balungan beat	2 subdivisions per balungan beat
Tanggung (1:2)	2 subdivisions per balungan beat	4 subdivisions per balungan beat
Dadi (1:4)	4 subdivisions per balungan beat	8 subdivisions per balungan beat

## Gembyangan cegat

In this style of bonang playing, the same notes an octave apart are played together. Gembyangan cegat is used in a lancaran in irama lancar. The notes played are generally derived from the final notes of each gatra and anticipate those notes. Below is an example of gembyangan cegat for the first gongan of Lancaran *Singanebah* (pelog barang) – the little circle above a note indicates playing two notes an octave apart together:

<u>Balungan</u>	.	5	.	3	.	5	.	3	.	5	.	3	.	6	.	7
<u>Bonang barung</u>	3̇	.	3̇	.	3̇	.	3̇	.	3̇	.	7̇	.	7̇	.		
<u>Bonang panerus</u>	..	3̇	..	3̇	3̇	..	3̇	..	3̇	3̇	..	3̇	..	7̇	..	7̇

Note than the bonang barung plays together with the kethuk, i.e. on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> beats, which are the off beats. The bonang panerus has a syncopated rhythmic pattern that can be described as being 3+3+2, with the final note coinciding with the last note of the gatra.

## Pipilan

This style of bonang playing is also called “mipil” which means to pick off one by one. Individual notes are played one at a time and are derived directly from the balungan notes. Pipilan is generally used in irama tanggung and irama dadi in a lancar as well as many other forms. Each pair of notes in a gatra provides the basis for the notes that the bonang plays. Following are examples of the basic pipilan patterns in irama tanggung and irama dadi for the first gatra of Lancaran *Singanebah*:

	<u>Irama tanggung</u>	<u>Irama dadi</u>
<u>Balungan</u>	7 6 5 3	7 6 5 3
<u>Bonang barung</u>	7 6 7 . 5 3 5 .	7 6 7 . . 6 7 6 5 3 5 . . 3 5 3
<u>Bonang panerus</u>	767.767.535.535.	767.767.767.767.535.535.535.535.

Note that in these patterns, both bonang anticipate the pairs of notes in the gatra by playing them in alternation in the general pattern “ $x y x$ .”, where  $x$  and  $y$  are the two notes in a pair. In irama dadi, the bonang barung plays a slightly more complicated pattern where the two notes appear to be reversed at the very end of the pattern after two rests: “ $x y x . . y x y$ ”.

## Practice

1. Play Lancaran *Ricik-Ricik* in irama lancar only. You will only play in the gembyangan cegat style. Note that gembyangan cegat begins for the bonang barung in the last gatra of the buka in all lancar.
2. Play Lancaran *Singanebah* (either slendro or pelog) beginning with gembyangan cegat in irama lancar and switch to pipilan in irama tanggung before returning to gembyangan cegat in irama lancar again. When the kendhang slows the tempo in the last gongan of irama lancar, be ready to switch to pipilan in the final gatra that is substituted in the balungan (5 6 5 3). The gembyangan cegat will feel very slow just before you switch. To return to irama lancar, the kendhang will speed up the tempo and the balungan will transit through the substituted final gatra (. 5 . 3) at which point the bonang will switch back to gembyangan cegat. If you find that you cannot play the pipilan patterns before the final gatra, the bonang barung can simply play together with the balungan notes – this is called mbalung. For the bonang panerus, you can play what would be the bonang barung part instead if the tempo is too fast. Transitions which speed up are more difficult than ones that slow down.
3. Play Lancaran *Singanebah* as above but add the transition to irama dadi from irama tanggung before returning to irama tanggung. You will usually switch from irama tanggung to irama dadi in pipilan and vice versa in the final gatra, however bonang players will switch when they feel it is manageable, so this might be earlier or later than the final gatra and can even occur halfway through a gatra after the first pair of notes. The general rule about changing irama for all instruments is: when slowing down, change late; when speeding up, change early. It is better to be forced to play too slowly than too quickly.
4. Play Lancaran *Manyar Sewu* (either slendro or pelog) moving from irama lancar to irama tanggung to irama dadi and back. The irama dadi balungan melody involves twice as many notes in the second half of each gatra, so you will need to treat this half of the gatra as if it were two irama tanggung pairs.