

| GLOBAL OUTLOOK

# NTU Gamelan Gita Lestari Delivers Taiwanese-Indonesian Harmony to Japan



| Condong, danced by Keisha Anggita Pramesti. (Photo by Misato Bali Festival Executive Committee)

Shimane, Japan — NTU Gamelan Gita Lestari made its international debut at the “Misato Bali Festival 2025” on October 12, 2025, in Misato-cho, Shimane Prefecture, Japan, marking a milestone in Taiwan’s cultural diplomacy through music. The ensemble also held a pre-tour concert at the NTU University Players Theater on October 8. Showcasing NTU’s vibrant engagements with global arts and cross-cultural collaboration, both performances received enthusiastic applause from the audiences.

Gamelan, Indonesia’s most iconic percussion ensemble, represents a cornerstone of Southeast Asian musical heritage. The Central Javanese and Balinese traditions are particularly eminent — the former emphasizing refinement and introspection, while the latter is dynamic-- deeply intertwined with Balinese religious life and ever-evolving, now embracing nearly 30 distinct styles. Among these styles, gamelan gong kebyar stands out for its explosive energy and shifting rhythms, requiring extraordinary precision and virtuosity by the performers. The older and



| After the performance, group photo. (Photo by Misato Bali Festival Executive Committee)

more compact gamelan angklung, on the other hand, is typically performed in ceremonies, such as cremations and community rituals.

Founded in 2018 by Distinguished Professor Ying-fen Wang of NTU's Graduate Institute of Musicology (GIM), Gamelan Gita Lestari has been mentored since its inception by the internationally acclaimed Balinese composer I Nyoman Windha. The ensemble holds Taiwan's only set of gamelan gong kebyar instruments, complementing the gamelan angklung ensembles at four other Taiwanese universities. Its current members include faculty, students, and alumni from NTU and National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU), representing a diverse community of musicians from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Indonesia, and Malaysia—each bringing unique cultural and academic perspectives from musicology, anthropology, and ecology.

For the two performances, the group was joined by Pak Windha, his dancer wife I Gusti Agung Ayu Warsiki, and their granddaughter Keisha Anggita Pramesti, along with Indonesian dancers based in Taiwan for the pre-tour concert and Japanese dancers for the Misato performance. The collaborative exchange embodied the spirit of intercultural dialogue through performance.

The concert program featured classical Balinese works, Windha's signature compositions, and two new pieces that integrated Taiwanese musical influences. One, arranged by Windha, reimagined NTU's underground school song "*Longing for the Spring Breeze*" for gamelan angklung. The other, composed by Yi-hsiu Yang, a master's student at GIM and recipient of the 2024 Global Music Award, used gamelan gong kebyar to reinterpret Taiwan's traditional beiguan music, blending Taiwanese folk expression with Balinese sonorities.

Through these performances, NTU Gamelan Gita Lestari not only celebrated the shared heritage of Asian musical traditions but also strengthened Taiwan's cultural presence on the international stage — demonstrating how music, through its universal language, continues to unite communities and transcend borders.



Demonstration of gamelan angklung. (Photo by Yu-Chung Chen)



Gangsa in gamelan gong kebyar, led by Ugal, the largest instrument in the center. (Photo by Yu-Chung Chen)



I Nyoman Windha playing the drum and Ying-fen Wang playing the gong. (Photo by Yu-Chung Chen)



Topeng Tua, a dance traditionally performed on ceremonial occasions. (Photo by Yu-Chung Chen)