

## **Gamelan Sekar Jaya to perform Balinese music April 25 at UCSD**

**April 3, 1998**

Media Contact: Ruth Bally at University Events, (619) 534-0497, rbaily@ucsd.edu or

Jan Jennings, (619) 822-1684, jnjennings@ucsd.edu

GAMELAN SEKAR JAYA TO PERFORM BALINESE MUSIC APRIL 25 AT UCSD

Gamelan Sekar Jaya, praised by Indonesia's news magazine Tempo as the "finest Balinese gamelan outside of Indonesia," will perform at 8 p.m. April 25 in Mandeville Auditorium at the University of California, San Diego.

The 35-member ensemble of American musicians and dancers is dedicated to the study and performance of the intricately patterned, interlocking Balinese music of rhythmic precision closely synchronized with dance. The musicians play bronze metallophones, tuned gongs, drums and flutes, and both musicians and dancers perform in elaborate masks and colorful costumes.

The San Francisco Chronicle calls a Gamelan Sekar Jaya performance "breathtaking: the shimmering richness of the music, the clangorous din of the xylophones, the delicate laciness of an interlude for flute and the fiendish group precision evident throughout."

The April 25 San Diego performance of Gamelan Sekar Jaya is sponsored by the UCSD University Events Office.

I Made Arnawa is Gamelan Sekar Jaya guest music director. He is a Balinese composer, musician and teacher and a graduate of the National Institute of the Arts in Bali where he is currently a member of the faculty.

Ida Ayu Diastini, guest dance director, is also a graduate of the National Institute of the Arts in Bali and has appeared in Indonesian film and television productions. She currently directs a dance school in South Bali.

The northern California-based ensemble was formed in 1980. It has performed widely in California and Canada and was invited by the Indonesian government to do concert tours in Bali and Java in 1985, 1992 and 1995.

Sekar Jaya means "flowering success" and the group attributes much of its success to the long list of teachers over the years who, according to Rhythm Music Magazine, "reads like a Who's Who of the finest Balinese performers and composers."

Sekar Jaya members learn the layers of melody and complex figuration directly from the master Balinese musicians. They learn by rote, committing everything to memory. They do not learn or perform from notation. This means long hours of group instruction and rehearsal to achieve the highest level of rhythmic precision and ensemble unity.

The New Haven Advocate describes a performance: "Suspenseful percussion, at moments just short of cacophony, merge with ethereal wind instruments to form a swirling, interlocking (though interestingly, non-

improvised) vortex of sound, anchored with mesmeric repetition and curious, complex rhythmic structures. All enhanced by the spectacle of dancers."

Gamelan Sekar Jaya is the subject of a PBS television documentary, "Kembali," that won first prize in the performing arts category of the National Educational Film and Video Festival. Its recordings are sold both in America and in Bali.

The American ensemble appeals to the Balinese, as well as American audiences, "in part because (the members) are seen as cultural ambassadors...paying their respects to the art" of Bali, writes Rhythm Music Magazine, and also because it is contributing to Balinese music composition by commissioning new works.

"You don't need to be a scholar of world music to appreciate the freshness of Gamelan Sekar Jaya," writes the Providence Journal-Bulletin, "It is joyous, energy-filled music."

Tickets for Gamelan Sekar Jaya's April 25 performance are \$16 general admission, \$14 for faculty, staff and senior citizens, and \$12 for students. Tickets are available at the UCSD Box Office, 534-8497, and at Ticketmaster outlets. For further information, call the UCSD University Events Office at 534-4090.

(April 3, 1998)