

Alunan Dengung



Project Booklet

Wednesday, 23rd of July 2025 | 8:00 PM

Hands Percussion Studio

Presented by



Rhythm in Bronze

Supported by



Connections Through Culture
UK - Malaysia 2024-2025

Creative Partner

Bate Collection,
University of Oxford

Venue Sponsor:



Hands Percussion

Welcome Note

Welcome, and thank you for joining us.

This public sharing is a glimpse into a sound journey that began with curiosity and a simple question: what if we listened to the sea differently?

Over the past few days, artists from the UK and Malaysia have come together to play, experiment, and collaborate. With Malay gamelan at its heart, this project weaves in electroacoustic textures and sounds from Malaysia's seagrass meadows, fragile and vital ecosystems that quietly sustain life along our coasts.

Alunan Dengung is about more than instruments or gear. It is about listening deeply — to each other, to nature, and to what wants to emerge.

Tonight, you'll hear works in progress. They are raw, honest, sometimes playful, sometimes bold, but always rooted in shared discovery. We hope what you experience sparks your own curiosity.

Warmly,

The Alunan Dengung Team



About the Project

Alunan Dengung is a cross-cultural sound project bringing together artists from Malaysia and the UK to explore new sonic possibilities using Malay gamelan, electro-acoustic elements, and field recordings from Malaysia's seagrass ecosystems.

Inspired by Rhythm in Bronze's 2023 production *Seruan Setu*, which introduced the idea of listening to the sea as part of an eco-performance, this project takes that idea further. Rather than simply performing with nature, the team is tuning into it. The gentle hums, distant clicks, and underwater textures of coastal seagrass meadows have become part of their musical language.

UK-based composer Adrian Lee brings a rich body of work in gamelan-theatre and electro-acoustic innovation. His recent research explores how gamelan can be reshaped through improvisation, processing, and inclusive creative practice—an approach that aligns closely with this project's spirit of experimentation.

Across a five-day residency, the team experimented with traditional instruments, digital tools, recycled materials, and spontaneous collaboration. What emerged is a series of work-in-progress compositions, shaped by curiosity, care, and a deep connection to place.

Alunan Dengung invites us to notice what's often unheard—revealing how sound can carry stories that words alone cannot.



How it Began

It all started over coffee when Adrian and Sune were in Kuala Lumpur last year. We had been wanting to work together again for some time, and that catch-up sparked something familiar, the joy of shared ideas and a deep curiosity for sound.

We talked about seagrass meadows, about their quiet importance, and how their underwater world could inspire new sonic textures. What would it mean to listen closely?

To blend the acoustic with the electronic, and to let nature shape the music?

That simple chat became the starting point. With support from the British Council's Connections Through Culture grant, as a team we set to explore, play, and create. There was no fixed outcome, just the intention to co-discover what Alunan Dengung could become.



The General Process

We worked together over a five-day creative residency at Hands Percussion Studio in Kuala Lumpur. Each day began with listening: to recordings from seagrass meadows, to the natural resonance of the gamelan, and to each other.

From there we moved into play. We tried contact mics, room mics, layering, delay and reverb, looping, and processing live sound with laptops and small gadgets. We struck bronze, bowed it, rubbed surfaces, added found and recycled materials, and compared what happened when sound was left natural versus shaped electronically.

Rhythm often came last. Texture came first. Conversations flowed into music. Someone adjusted a mixer, someone else began a rhythm, and a short exchange became a duet. Bits of these moments grew into the sketches you will hear tonight.

Throughout the residency we also documented the journey through audio, video, photography, and quick interviews. These helped us reflect, refine, and notice what was emerging.

What you will hear in this sharing is work in progress. It carries experiments, questions, and traces of the room where it was made.



Behind the Name: Alunan Dengung

By Dr Mohd Anis Md Nor

Alunan Dengung wasn't just a name we chose — it was something that revealed itself gradually, through conversations, resonance, and deep listening.

In Bahasa Malaysia, “alunan” means flow, ripple, or undulation — often used to describe music, the sea, or even a gentle breeze. It carries movement, continuity, and grace. “Dengung”, on the other hand, is the hum or drone that lingers after a note is struck — a vibration that stays in the air and in the body.

Together, Alunan Dengung reflects something both physical and emotional. It speaks of how sound doesn't end when the instrument is silent. It continues — in memory, in emotion, in the energy of a space.

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To me, this name perfectly captures the heart of the project. Alunan Dengung is not just about performance, but process. It's not just about music, but what the music leaves behind.

The project explores how traditional Malay gamelan and modern electro-acoustic techniques can interact — not in opposition, but in flow. It brings together artists from different countries, backgrounds, and generations. And in doing so, it honours both tradition and innovation, structure and spontaneity.

Most importantly, Alunan Dengung reminds us to listen — not only to what is loud or immediate, but also to what lingers, hums beneath the surface, and resonates long after. Because sometimes, what stays with us is not the strike of the note... but its gentle, persistent echo.





Project Team

This project brought together long-time friends, collaborators, and new faces who were all curious to discover what might happen when the sounds of gamelan meet electroacoustic possibilities, and what stories might emerge

Malaysia

Rhythm in Bronze

Jillian Ooi

Project Team, Artistic Director

Sharmini Ratnasingam

Project Team, Executive Producer

Musicians and Creative Contributors

Colleen Wong

Nuradilla Mohamad Fauzi (Dillie)

Amira Farhana (Apple)

Etty Suhaya Yahya

Kyrie Boak

Loo Shi Hao

Front of House:

Adilah Junid

Ishra Kamiso

Hajar Nadhirah Onn

United Kingdom

Adrian Lee

Project lead, Composer, Musician Educator

Sunetra Fernando

Project Team, Musician, Composer

Simon Limbrick

Musician, Sound Tech and Educator

Fernando Lee

Videographer

Caspian Lee

Musician

Acknowledgements

British Council Malaysia:

Florence Lambert, Erica Choong, Khadijah Turner

Cultural Anthropologist :

Dr Mohd Anis Md Nor

Hands Percussion :

Bernard Goh, Moongfei, Reid Yeoh

Bate Collection, University of Oxford:

Dr Emanuela Vai, Prof Martyn Harry. Zack Di Lello

Alunan Dengung in Numbers

48

Hours



5

Days

9

Musicians



4

Sound specialist/
tech support

14+

Gamelan pieces,
equipment and gadgets



100+

Documented moments



Thank You

**Website**

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