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UCLA'S INSTITUTE OF ETHNOMUSICOLOGY, 1961-1974

Anne Briegleb, Max Harrell,
Mantle Hood, Gertrude Robinson

Interviewed by Dustin Miller

Completed under the auspices
of the
Oral History Program
University of California
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BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARIES

Mantle Hood, the founding director of the Institute of Ethnomusicology, was born in Springfield, Illinois, in 1918. After army service in Europe during World War II, he attended the University of California at Los Angeles, receiving the A.B. in music in 1951 and an M.A. in composition, also in 1951. He studied composition privately with Ernst Toch from 1945 to 1950. A Fulbright Fellowship allowed him to study ethnomusicology and Javanese music with Jaap Kunst at the University of Amsterdam. His thesis for his Ph.D. was an analysis of Javanese mode systems, The Nuclear Theme as a Determinant of Patet in Javanese Music (1954). He joined the faculty at UCLA in 1954 and advanced to full professorship in 1962. In 1975 he was awarded a Senior Fulbright Fellowship which took him to India. He was appointed adjunct professor at the University of Maryland in 1976 and was visiting professor at Yale University and Wesleyan University in 1977.

While at UCLA, Hood developed an extensive program that was novel in its aim of teaching through performance and was the first in America to give instruction in Javanese gamelan performance. Under Hood's leadership, performance opportunities in Persian, Japanese, Mexican, Indian

classical, Balinese, Greek, and African musics were made available to students, as were increased courses in methodology and world music surveys. As early as 1958, Hood brought native instructors to the United States to teach ethnomusicology classes. In 1961, Hood organized the Institute of Ethnomusicology to coordinate research and performance activities on the UCLA campus.

Hood first visited Indonesia on a Ford Fellowship (1956-58) and thereafter traveled and lectured extensively around the world. He was president of the Society for Ethnomusicology from 1965 to 1967. He has been a visiting professor at Harvard University (1961), the University of Ghana (1962), and Drake University (1972). He is a member of the editorial committee and adviser on ethnomusicology for The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, sixth edition.

Hood's second book, The Ethnomusicologist (1971), contains the heart of his philosophy of the field and its methods. He calls for a balanced study in ethnology and music as well as pre-fieldwork training in necessary languages. Actual performance experience with any music studied enhances research as much as the many new devices of the laboratory like the Melograph, the computer and linguistic techniques. Of equal importance is a respect for and understanding of the feelings and rights of the cultural

"owners" of any music studied. His recordings, films, and many of his compositions reflect an interest in world musics, as, for example, his own piece Owari, a synthesis of African, Asian, and Western musical elements for eleven players. (Biographical information on Mantle Hood adapted from The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, sixth edition (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1980).

Anne Briegleb Schuursma, born and raised in Southern California, attended Pasadena City College and UCLA, where she received her B.A. in music. Mantle Hood was among the professors who had the most influence on her undergraduate education. She then received her M.L.S. degree from the University of Southern California but returned to UCLA to take a position as assistant librarian in the College Library. In 1961, when the Institute of Ethnomusicology needed its first archivist, Briegleb was the logical choice as a trained librarian with a background in ethnomusicology.

When she started with the ethnomusicology archive in 1961, the collection comprised only four cabinets: one for phonographic recordings and three for field tapes deposited by Mantle Hood, Robert Garfias, and Robert Brown. She then began to obtain materials for UCLA's Kunst Collection and organized efforts to create the Oriental Collection. She was instrumental in bringing the McPhee Collection to UCLA

and helped to catalogue the field collections of many former UCLA graduates or professors. With a grant to visit the Archives of Traditional Music at Indiana University and the Library of Congress in 1962, she studied methods of cataloging sound recordings and devised the practical system that is still in use at UCLA. In 1966, she visited European archives and published her account in a guide to European sound archives in 1968. In 1969, she traveled through the United States and Canada to review archives in these countries; her study was published in 1971 by the Society for Ethnomusicology. She twice received Fulbright-Hays grants to travel to Romania and study the music of that country. She served two three-year terms as editor of Phonographic Bulletin, the journal of the International Association of Sound Archives. She retired from UCLA in December 1984. (Biographical information on Briegleb drawn from Ethnomusicology at UCLA, Newsletter of the Program in Ethnomusicology, UCLA Department of Music, 2:2, Winter 1985; and Library Newsletter/UCLA, no. 521, January 25, 1985.)

Gertrude Rivers Robinson was born in 1927 in Camden, South Carolina. She received her B.A. from Cornell University in 1947. She then studied at Eastman School of Music. She entered the master's program in music at UCLA in 1955, where she quickly became involved in the nascent ethnomusicology program. As a performer, she plays the

gender barung, the saron, and the bonang in Javanese gamelan, as well as lead gender, the gang'sa, the reyong, and the gender wayang quartet and gamelan angklung in Balinese gamelan. She has done field work in Bali and India. Her master's composition was Bayangan: Piece for Western Septet and Balinese Octet, a one-movement work that fuses selected aspects of Balinese and Western musical practice. In 1970, she recorded the music of Wajan Gandra, issued as Bali South in 1973 by I.E. Records. Since 1970, she has been the director of the ethnomusicology program at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. In 1973 and 1975, she was chair of the Committee on Ethnomusicology and Music Education, Society for Ethnomusicology. (Biographical information on Robinson drawn from Directory of UCLA Ethnomusicology Graduates, Program in Ethnomusicology, Department of Music, UCLA, 1977.)

Max Leigh Harrell was born in 1933 in Bruceville, Indiana. He received his B.A. at UCLA in 1960, his M.A. in 1972, and his Ph.D. in 1974. His master's thesis was entitled "Scales and Modes in the Music of West Java"; his dissertation was on "The Music of the Gamelan Degung of West Java." Harrell has participated in numerous ethnomusicology performance groups at UCLA and has been the director of the Balinese ensemble. He has done field work in Central and West Java and Bali. From 1975 to 1982, he was an assistant

professor in the music department at UCLA. He has been a museum specialist for the ethnomusicology program with responsibility for the care and maintenance of the program's instrument collection. Harrell wrote the article on West Javanese music for The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, sixth edition. (Biographical information on Harrell drawn from Directory of UCLA Ethnomusicology Graduates, Program in Ethnomusicology, Department of Music, UCLA, 1977.)

The Institute of Ethnomusicology was established [in 1961] to encourage collaboration among students and faculty representing disciplines in the humanities and social sciences with particular interest in the performing arts of various parts of the world in order to facilitate an interdisciplinary approach to these studies in music and the related arts. Research objectives are concerned with techniques for defining and describing, on an international and comparative basis, the norms of style and music and related arts viewed within their social contexts. Studies are directed toward fundamental concepts, as well as toward new laboratory methods and techniques. Specific projects, in which there is balanced emphasis on performance, theory, and research, include the following major geographic areas: the Americas; Oceania; the Far East; South and Southeast

Asia; the Balkans and the Near East; Africa; South America; and Europe. A large archive of unique materials and complete laboratory facilities are available to students and faculty. Special symposia, lectures, and presentations of non-Western music, dance and theater are offered as a public service.

--Mantle Hood, Director,
quoted from the UCLA General
Catalogue, 1974-1975

In July 1974, University President Charles J. Hitch in a report to the members of the Regents Committee on Educational Policy recommended the discontinuation of the Institute of Ethnomusicology, effective October 1, 1974. The decision to discontinue the institute was taken primarily because the program had ceased to fit the regents' definition of an organized research unit, which must be interdisciplinary. Hitch's office recognized the quality of the department, saying "it has become recognized nationally and internationally, and has brought great distinction to the Los Angeles campus." According to Hitch, however, the ethnomusicology department was established as an interdepartmental institute but was no longer functioning as a "truly interdisciplinary unit. The recommendation came out of study by several committees, and was a consensus. All institutes and centers on campus are under study. The

committees found the functions of the institute are all carried out through the music department. All the teachers hold their positions through music" (UCLA Summer Bruin, July 26, 1974). Ethnomusicology classes and performing programs have continued under the direction of the music department. Publication and recording functions have continued under the auspices of the Ethnomusicology Archive.

INTERVIEW HISTORY

INTERVIEWER: Dustin Miller, Gold Shield Intern, UCLA Oral History Program. B.S., Political Science, University of California, Berkeley; M.L.S., UCLA Graduate School of Library and Information Science.

TIME AND SETTING OF INTERVIEW:

Places: Hood, Briegleb, and Harrell were interviewed in the office of the Institute of Ethnomusicology, Schoenberg Hall, UCLA. Gertrude Robinson was interviewed at her home in Los Angeles.

Dates: April 20, May 2, May 11, June 30, August 3, August 14, September 18, 1972, and April 14, 1973.

Length of sessions and total number of recording hours: Interview sessions averaged ninety minutes. A total of seven hours of conversation was recorded.

Persons present during interviews: Miller interviewed each interviewee separately. No other persons were present during the sessions.

CONDUCT OF INTERVIEW:

The interviews primarily concern the origins and development of the Institute of Ethnomusicology at UCLA. Some review of the background and education of each interviewee precedes a more detailed discussion of the interviewees and their relations with the Institute. Mantle Hood's role in the formation and development of the Institute receives detailed discussion. In addition, Hood's pioneering work in the field of ethnomusicology, as researcher and composer, is dealt with. Ann Briegleb's expertise as an archivist and her work in cataloging the Institute's archive collection receives extensive discussion. Gertrude Robinson's ties to the field of ethnomusicology, as a student at UCLA and as an instructor of ethnomusicology at Marymount College, are again discussed in detail. Max Harrell's association with the institute and work as the museum scientist for the program is the focus of his interview.

EDITING:

Dustin Miller edited the Hood, Robinson, and Harrell interviews; Rick C. Harmon edited the Briegleb

interview. They checked the verbatim transcripts of the interviews against the original tape recordings and edited for spelling, punctuation, paragraphing and the verification of proper nouns. Words and phrases inserted for clarity by the editor have been bracketed. Mantle Hood's book, The Ethnomusicologist (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1971), and the card catalogues in the UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive were used as authoritative sources for spellings of all non-Western names.

Hood, Briegleb, Robinson, and Harrell reviewed and approved the edited transcripts.

Richard Cándida Smith, principal editor, reviewed the transcript and wrote the introductory biographical summaries. George Hodak, editorial assistant, prepared the index, table of contents, and interview history.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

The original tape recordings of the interview are in the university archives and are available under the regulations governing the use of permanent noncurrent records of the university. Records relating to the interview are located in the office of the UCLA Oral History Program.

TAPE NUMBER: V, SIDE ONE

AUGUST 14, 1972

MILLER: Gertrude, can you tell us something about your family, where you came from, and your early education?

ROBINSON: Yes, I was born in South Carolina, and moved to Washington, D.C., when I was eight years old.

My college education: I went to Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, for undergraduate work, and majored in music while I was there--primarily, composition. As a child I played piano; in fact, I've played the piano since the age of three. A major in music was not out of line, really. Piano was my instrument then. The education at Cornell was regular liberal arts, without any emphasis or exposure to non-Western music. This is the thing that I remember so much about my undergraduate work by virtue of what I'm involved in or have been involved in out in California.

My parents are from the South also: my father, Mobile, Alabama; my mother, South Carolina. They're both in education--both Ph.D.'s from Cornell--my father in French; my mother in English. I have a younger sister, who is also in languages; she is getting her Ph.D. in French from Columbia. So there's lots of academic association in my background.

[Ethnic] mixture--this is an interesting thing for me, by virtue of ethnomusicological involvement and awareness--my dad has Choctaw-Chickasaw-African blood; my mother Cherokee-English-African. I know very little about Choctaw-Chickasaw traditions and one of these days I'll spend time investigating this part of my background.

MILLER: What about other schooling before Cornell?

ROBINSON: Well, I went to public school in Greensboro, North Carolina. Before that, I was in kindergarten in Talledega, Alabama, where my parents were teaching at the college, and from there to Greensboro, North Carolina, public school. At the age of eight I entered the public schools in Washington, D.C. In the tenth grade, I left the public schools in Washington and went to a prep school in East Northfield, Massachusetts--Northfield School for Girls. That was quite an interesting experience. From prep school [I went] to Cornell.

MILLER: A lot of your work has been in dance. When did you begin studying dance?

ROBINSON: Actually, quite late. I became involved with dance for the first time as a sophomore at Cornell University. Interestingly enough, I became very curious about dance movement and its relation to sound. I started out in the dance club, naturally, as a dancer, but my prime focus was the music. I was fascinated with the rhythmic

usage, I guess, of the dancers that I came in contact with. I realized that their perception of rhythm was quite different from anything that we were being taught in music classes. Many of the dancers had no music training, and so they would count movement phrases in very strange ways. Yet, there was a cohesiveness or a kind of rightness in proportions that I perceived that I didn't necessarily get in the traditional classical music courses.

I think that my enthusiasm and excitement with the dance, or the movement activity, really made it very easy for me to accept twentieth-century or contemporary art music at that point. I remember incidents at school when some very new musical compositions were being performed and people who were really traditionalists got up and walked out. This is relatively recent when you think about it, [laughter] but it was happening then.

The other involvement with dance, naturally, for me, was as a composer. That's where most of my activity took place and has taken place since then. I always felt that it was easier for me to write for movement that I saw if I knew something about what was happening in the body myself. It was very easy to make relationships. Don't ask me why, but this is my feeling.

Well, I did a lot of dancing. But not with the idea of being a concert dancer or a professional dancer. It

was only to feed or amplify the musical usage and perception.

MILLER: I was reading in the Ebony article that you had been with the Lester Horton Dance Theatre. Do you want to talk about that?

ROBINSON: Yes, that was in 1951 when I first arrived in Los Angeles; I came from Cornell where I had been an instructor in dance and music. I was very fortunate to find the Lester Horton Dance Theatre active when I got here because I realized that there was relatively little concert dance in L.A., on the West Coast, compared to what was on the East Coast. The only person that I met or knew at that time who was really doing anything in terms of extensive compositions in dance was Lester.

I wish that I had known as much about non-Western music when I met Lester as I do now, because he was very much into Oriental movement and philosophy, but he didn't know very much about the music. I remember two assignments that I had, two commissions for scores for choreography. One was entitled "Dedication to Hiroshima," which naturally required a different kind of accompaniment than I had used for other choreographies that I had composed for him. At one point he wanted me to rescore the music that he had written for his dance "Salome," in which he used many kinds of gongs and other percussion instruments.

I conducted it and did some rewriting. But had I known then what I know now-- Of course one is grateful for intuition and a kind of awareness that is impossible to verbalize.

The score that I wrote to accompany "Dedication to Hiroshima" was surprisingly close in feeling to the gagaku music that I was later exposed to here at the institute. Lester told me about the wood sounds that signal the rise of the curtain in the Japanese theater. He didn't have any records for me to listen to at that time, but he talked about his experiences with Japanese theater. From that, and some reading that I did, I created the score, not really knowing anything about Japanese music--I mean, from an organizational standpoint. I had a vague idea of quality, you know, really vague. I used the inside of the piano, the strings, some gongs, percussion, and Western flute. Of course, at that time I knew nothing about the Japanese bamboo flute or the hichiriki. Vague musical suggestions, but really quite close--I mean, accurate in quality--enough to be acceptable as accompaniment for a dance that had the subject "Dedication to Hiroshima."

He [Lester] was really quite an inspiration, because from my work with the Horton Theater, in fact not long after that, the program in non-Western music at UCLA

started; so it was an ideal progression for me.

MILLER: What about the American School of Dance?

ROBINSON: I was working there, too, at the same time that I was working at Lester's. Oh, I wrote a few minor scores for Eugene Loring. One, a lecture--not a lecture-demonstration, [but rather] a kind of running dialogue entitled, "Dance Is A Language," and he explored different styles of dance, different forms, [but used] nothing from the non-Western world.

I also did a lot of improvising for classes at the American School. That was interesting because there were so many different dance teachers working there; he made a point training students to handle different styles of dancing because of demands in the movies. All of the students were interested in getting contracts or assignments to dance in movies, and so he offered classes in ballet, modern, jazz, tap--everything. I had a lot of variety in that experience.

MILLER: About that time you came to UCLA?

ROBINSON: Yes, my arrival at UCLA was a very strange one, because it was not planned. There was no thought in my mind of doing graduate work at UCLA. I did not know anything about the program. In fact, the program hadn't started, really.

In 1953, my son was born, and at that time I stopped

working with the Horton Theatre. When he, my son, was about a year old, I was interested in finding some other activity as outlet for my musical interests. That year, 1953-'54--and I think I have my dates accurate--the dancers and musicians from Bali came to Los Angeles, the group from Pliatan.

In Ithaca, I had seen and heard a girl from India perform (this was International Students Day or something), and she sang. I think I was then a junior, I can't remember. However, I do remember being so impressed with the musical impact and realized that I didn't understand what was happening. I just didn't know anything about the musical organization; but I was responding. At that point I thought someday I might have the opportunity either to go to India or to be in a situation where I could really unravel this musical experience.

When I saw the ad for the concert of dancers and musicians from Bali, I was intrigued. I knew something about dance movement from that part of the world. So I went to the Philharmonic Auditorium, and it was one of those experiences one has that one never forgets. I was overwhelmed with the beauty of the sound and fascinated by the movement. The sound was entirely new to me. I had never heard gamelan in my life. I was so fortunate that my first experience was a live performance and with the most

famous and the best gamelan from south Bali. I shouldn't say the best, but one of the most electrifying.

When I saw and heard that concert, I suppose I was really not surprised that I accepted it so readily. Bela Bartok had always been a favorite composer of mine. His sensitive use of percussion, and what I call "walls of sound"--all of that implemented my receiving this Balinese musical experience with as much enthusiasm as I did.

I was so excited by having seen the movement and heard the music, I kept talking about it to everyone. I was accompanying dance classes for--Jerry Holseason--who has a studio in Westwood. A friend of hers, June, had returned to UCLA that fall to do graduate work in voice. June heard me talking about the concert I had heard at the Philharmonic. I think this was the year that Mantle Hood came back to UCLA, after having finished his Ph.D. at the University of Amsterdam. She saw a notice on the bulletin board of the music building. I don't remember the exact wording, but an announcement that he [Hood] had brought a gamelan back to UCLA, and anyone interested in learning to play was welcome to come to rehearsals. Now this was way back--'54, '55--I can't remember the date, but anyway, when he first came back to teach at UCLA. June told me about the notice, and I said, "Oh well, that's probably just for students at UCLA. I had no association with the

university at that time. And she said, "Well no, it didn't say that. It just said that anyone who's interested should come." So I went.

It happened to be the third meeting of the first Javanese gamelan at UCLA. The meeting was held at Dr. Hood's home, in the library of his apartment. It was what I call the chamber gamelan now, because it was very small. It had perhaps twelve to fourteen instruments. But it was very small compared to what we have now in the collection. I remember the first instrument that I got to play that evening was the Javanese saron, which is one like that [in this room], except it has seven keys instead of nine. This one has nine.

I was fascinated by the sound of this instrument, but also, having been a pianist and a dancer, by the coordination required to make the instrument sound. One creates a legato melody by striking a key and then damping it with the left hand as you play to the next key. You time the damping so that there is no break in the melodic shape. It was quite an exciting experience.

That's how I got involved in the program at UCLA. From that experience, I learned that this ensemble was attached to the campus. Being a performer, naturally, I wanted to learn to play all the instruments.

From there, Dr. Hood's home, the ensemble moved to

the top floor of the Education Building. I don't know if you were told about that. This was before the Institute of Ethnomusicology was formed, and [it was] the beginning of the development of the program as it is now.

Before Schoenberg Hall was built, we began to give concerts; I remember the Methodist Church concert, but oh dear, I can't remember which one [Methodist Church].

Performance was what interested me and that's what got me involved in the program as it is now. My first concern was with aspect of performance, but then, naturally, as a composer, a desire to unravel the many musics developed.

MILLER: In that Ebony article it said something to the effect that because you wanted to compose you wanted to keep studying this particular music. Could you talk about that?

ROBINSON: I should look at that article again to see just how the author phrased it. When I made the statement, I didn't mean that I wanted to study just the Balinese music. Actually, my first experience in non-Western music performance was Java. That was the first study group that was here at UCLA.

It has always been more exciting to me, and I guess to any musician, to work with the sound as an actual fact, rather than something said about it. To be able to physically shape the sound is even more important. One

gets underneath or into layers more quickly.

I said a little earlier something about my traditional training at Cornell in music. I had no experience outside the Western music tradition, even though there's a large program in Southeast Asian studies at Cornell. There isn't any activity in music from that part of the world-- I felt shortchanged as a composition major, and as a performer, that I hadn't had any practical exposure to music from other parts of the world. I learned from my UCLA experience [non-Western] concepts of time, proportion, and orchestration.

Of course tuning also is something you realize immediately as being different. Because I like to work with sound and movement, and I like to reorganize and shape sound myself, an understanding from a practical performance sense of how the Balinese and the Javanese music was put together, was very important.

I was fascinated with the concept of interlocking parts, for instance, that we don't have in Western music, per se, except maybe in hocketing, which is a very early example, and really not so close to koteka, because it (hocketing) is rather simple. The concept of two parts fitting together to make one was quite a revelation, and one that I was interested in experimenting with in my own compositions in different ways, in using similar instruments, or dissimilar

instruments, just to see what would happen.

I was also interested in combining tuning systems, which is a difficult thing, because we think in terms of just intonation. Long before, I realized, and not so long before it was considered acceptable, I wasn't afraid to use two instruments, say a Western instrument and a non-Western instrument in juxtaposition, capitalizing on the differences in tuning--trying to make something of that in a musical sense, rather than trying to force one or the other to match, which is another way of handling tuning problems. But I chose not to do that because one of the fascinations with the gamelan, for instance, is its unique tuning system, and I didn't want to destroy that; I wanted to use it--successfully or not is something else again.

[laughter]

MILLER: After this chamber gamelan, what happened in this period before the Institute was formally inaugurated?

ROBINSON: Well, that was, in retrospect, a relatively short time, and yet at the time it seemed like a long time. I think that there was maybe eighteen months of performance with the chamber gamelan, and then Dr. Hood received a grant to go to Java to do extended research. He had not been to Java before this time. When he went to Java, he purchased the court Javanese and Balinese gamelan. He purchased them for the University while in Java and Bali.

We worked with those two ensembles for--I don't know if it was for a full year, but for a period of time before Wajan Gandera and Tjokorda Mas, who are from Bali, were brought to the States, to UCLA, on Ford Foundation grants, for the purpose of teaching the American students. I think that the institute was formed right after that. I think they came before the institute was formed. But you might check my dates.

This chamber gamelan did, for us at that time, quite a few informal performances here and there. It was on the basis of that, I think, that the whole institute program began to build. Let me see. We were rehearsing in the unfinished basement of Schoenberg Hall when the two large gamelan arrived. That happened for I don't know how many months before they finished off the whole portion of that hall that's now the institute, where all the instruments and archives are housed. I don't remember any more than rehearsing for rather small performances with that chamber gamelan.

MILLER: Then when did the Gender Wajang Quartet begin?

ROBINSON: At the same time that the gamelan gong kebyar and the Javanese Kjai Mendung [Venerable Cloud gamelan].

Let me see. No, I take that back. It wasn't at the same time. I know that the instruments were acquired [about then], but not too long after, we started working with the large

court gamelan; they were almost simultaneous. Based on one intensive session that we had with Java-- Let me see, was that involved with a production that took place in our theater arts [department]? There was a play that a student had written, and I think the student was a young girl from Thailand, and the theater arts department called some of the music people in to do some of the musical accompaniment. We were used to working crash programs, and, in one weekend, some of us learned the particular technique that is associated with the Javanese gender, which is somewhat similar instrument to the Balinese gender wajang. It's similar, in that it's two-handed--played with two hands--and similar in that it has bronze keys over bamboo resonators, but it's different in tuning, numbers of keys. Further, the beaters are hard on the gender wajang, whereas on the Javanese gender, the beaters are soft or padded, so there are lots of differences. But my learning the gender wajang was almost simultaneous with the court gamelan. We're starting to work with it now.

We didn't perform in public on that as soon as we did with the large Balinese gamelan, because we gave a concert in Berkeley with the simultaneous meeting of the American Musicological Society and the Society of Ethnomusicology. If memory serves me accurately, we did not play gender wajang for that concert, but we did later.

MILLER: Was the personnel in that quartet always the same people, or did it change?

ROBINSON: Until very recently it was the same people that played on the Exotic Sounds of Bali recording that we did for Columbia Masterworks: Dr. Mantle Hood, Max Harrell, and Hardja Susilo, who was the Javanese musician and dancer who was here, and who instructed us in Javanese technique, and myself. We were the original UCLA Gender Wajang Quartet. We always played that music up until two years ago, if I remember correctly, when Hardja Susilo went to teach at the University of Hawaii, then we had to find a replacement. [Since then] we've had several replacements; I mean there are several people now who have learned the technique, and we alternate, depending on the program that we play.

MILLER: Max Harrell told me that the gamelan group was inactive now, but the quartet you feel is very much alive.

ROBINSON: We haven't been doing very much this summer, but when fall comes we will begin to work again. In fact, probably before the quarter, because a dalang is coming, a dalang is the puppeteer. Now the gender wajang is the music that is used to accompany the leather puppet shadow plays in Bali, and for the first time there will be a dalang, with the puppeteer in residence at UCLA. Naturally, with Njoman Sumandi here, then the quartet will be very active, because we will be preparing for a performance in the spring

of a full wajang kulit, which takes all night. Probably Max told you that. So that will be quite a challenge for us. We'll have to work all year to commit the music to memory. But it'll be very exciting to do. We did a Javanese wajang kulit two springs ago on the meadows at the UCLA Recreation Center. That was the first time there's ever been an all night wajang kulit on UCLA campus. They had done a wajang kulit at Wesleyan [University] in Connecticut. [Robinson introduces her son]

MILLER: Do you know how that record came about?

ROBINSON: The Exotic Sounds? Not really. I don't know what the initial contact was that was made with Dr. Hood. I do know that we thought, or that it was said, that even though the music was strange for the general public, the physical characteristics of the gamelan, the difficulties in recording, and the kind of sounds, should appeal to the hi-fi addicts, because it takes a very good system to handle the range of a gamelan. We knew that there weren't that many people around at that point, who had an analytical interest, or even an awareness, of Balinese music, even though the music is very exciting, and people who hear it for the first time are drawn to it. I remember that one of the selling points of the record was not to be a musical one, but a physical or technical one: the fact that the decibel range was so great, and it would take a real sensitive

system to handle it. But I don't know what the initial contact was for producing Exotic Sounds. I do know that the Javanese record is part of the series that the institute produces.

MILLER: Yeah, that's something that's changed there.

ROBINSON: Oh, what do you mean?

MILLER: Well, that the one with Columbia Masterworks was not repeated for some reason.

ROBINSON: Oh, you mean that they didn't do more than one recording?

MILLER: Well, you know that new one [is handled differently]. Maybe someone wasn't satisfied with the way it went. I don't know.

ROBINSON: At Columbia?

MILLER: Well, no, not necessarily. Maybe at the institute.

ROBINSON: Oh, no. I don't think that's the reason. I think [it was] because sales naturally are limited for something like that, and because they didn't do a volume business with that particular recording. It's truly esoteric, at least it was at that point. There wasn't the awareness that there is now, in terms of people buying records of non-Western music. I think strictly sales alone was the reason Columbia didn't do more than one.

MILLER: What about other activities in that [period]? That record says 1963 on the cover, and I don't know if that

means it was made then or in '62, but what other kind of things were going on in that period right after the institute just got [formally] started?

ROBINSON: Do you mean in performance? Academically?

MILLER: Or interesting. For example, I was noticing in that [Ebony] article it says, "pendopo: room where you put the instruments."

ROBINSON: That's right.

MILLER: But I was reading today in Selected Reports, in Dr. Hood's article about medieval technology of music in Southeast Asia, and he said "pendopo" meant the place where the girls dance, or the dancing place. Anyway, I was wondering about that.

ROBINSON: Well, both of those things happened in that room, pendopo. In the truest sense of the word, my impression is that pendopo is a word that refers to a place in the sultan's palace where the instruments are kept, and it's a three sided room. Well, now of course the pendopo at UCLA is in the basement of the music building, and so it really technically isn't a pendopo. But, you find that in the palace or in the villages in Bali, there are special pavilions or special places, for the instruments to be placed. And when there's a festival and the gamelan is to play, that's where you will find the instruments set up. Now a pendopo in the palace is a permanent housing for the

instruments, whereas in the village, or in temples in Bali, you find a balé gong is the word. The instruments are not left there because they are open on all sides, but whenever there is a festival that's where the instruments are placed for a performance in the process of the ritual temple festival. In the pendopo in the palace, because the gamelan accompanies the dance, then naturally the dancing girls are going to be in front of the gamelan.

It was very important for us--what I call the "core group" or the "old-timers," coming along with the building of the program to be able to identify generically items and places that were associated with Javanese and Balinese music, so that's why we use pendopo for the room where the gamelan are kept here. It was one way of building vocabulary.

MILLER: Also in that room is the African collection, that drum collection.

ROBINSON: Oh, that's right, you asked me what other exciting things are going on. Well, I told you earlier that my sense of dates is very fuzzy, but, the gamelan had been active maybe three or four years--I don't know--when Dr. Hood went to Ghana. In the meantime, different area courses had been developing, depending on specialists who were available to UCLA--specialists who were in the area for a period of time, so that classes and seminars in music of

North and South India, for instance, began. That study group began very shortly after the gamelan, and after the institute was formed.

As to the African group, the ensemble arrived after Dr. Hood had spent part of a summer at the University of Ghana with Professor Nketia. There was a very important program that involved exchange between Western and non-Western countries, and Africa particularly. The idea was to begin to document dance and music from the various tribal areas and cultures in Africa. Dr. Hood went as kind of a consultant, and he and Professor Nketia worked out a program of procedure for this documentation that was supported by both governments. In the process he filmed Atumpan, which is about the talking drums, and brought the Ewe and the Ashanti ensemble back that you see in that room.

Right after that, two master drummers came from Ghana to teach us Ashanti drumming and Ewe drumming, and that was in the process of building the institute. I can't really remember the sequence because so many performing groups got started after the Javanese and Balinese--they were the first, and then the Japanese gagaku, which is quite old at UCLA. I played in that a little bit. I even did Japanese dancing. I did bugaku as a result of my previous interests in dance, and performed with Suenobu Togi,

who was the leader of the gagaku group for one of the spring concerts at UCLA. One spring festival--and there's a brochure--I think it's 1961--that was the big one, and before the institute was formed. It was two weeks long. What year was it?

MILLER: That's 1960.

ROBINSON: Something like that, yes. Two weeks of music, dance and exhibits, and I think that was the most exciting non-Western festival that they've ever had at UCLA. The biggest and the most exciting, because it was very new at that point, and we all worked very hard. The African study group was not formed then, but the Indian study group was, and the Japanese, the gagaku, they were a part of the UCLA music development in non-Western musics at that time.

MILLER: Did you take an active part in that African study group?

ROBINSON: Not really. I suppose there would be a question, "Why?" I had a very strange physical reaction. I found that I could not handle the bells. There is an iron bell that carries the time line in both Ewe and Ashanti, and the physical characteristics of that room were such that the bell sounds began to fuse together. I couldn't keep the sounds or the tones separated, and I really can't explain this. Some people can play with cotton in their ears. That cuts out a lot of the sound. Now interestingly enough,

the tremendous sound, or the big sound of the Balinese gamelan never disturbed me, and it's in the same room. But that iron bell--dong, dong dong, dong, dong--and that over and over and over again--of course African music is so repetitive with the drum patterns--I got to the place where I couldn't tolerate it, which was a very strange thing.

Then I thought, "Well, I would prefer," and this is an interesting subjective statement, "I would prefer to learn whatever I'm going to learn in performance about African music, in Africa." That's my own personal thing. Now I didn't really care about that when I was working with Java and Bali, because that was something entirely different. I felt I had no connection with that, really. But the African music I did, and I wanted to have my efforts in context. But I have played. I've done, you know, a little bit off and on. I've played in some of the performances, but never with the intensity or the amount of time as I did with the Balinese or the Javanese.

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AUGUST 14, 1972

MILLER: Have you ever had your role as a woman clash with --I was thinking, for example, certain instruments are not supposed to be played by women, and I was wondering if you had experiences that way, you know, in this age of militancy?

ROBINSON: [laughs] Well, this age of militancy is new in that sense, in relation to my involvement with instruments traditionally not played by women in other cultures. Well, I have thought that I wanted to do more work with the drums in the gamelan, and those two instruments, the pairs of drums, I have not worked with. I haven't handled [them], and that has always been a man's instrument, here, as well as in Java and Bali. As for any of the others, no.

I had an interesting conversation with Iwan Natapradja; he's from Sunda. I was fascinated by pentjak, which is a male dance and very active. It's accompanied by a drum and tarompèt, which is a reed-wind. He reacted very obviously to my desire to play a drum. He really did not want to teach me because women don't play that, and women have not played, ever.

We were told in the beginning that women did not play gamelan. This was when the program first started. But when I was in Indonesia in 1970, I went to visit Kokar, which is

the academy of music and dance in Denpasar. There I saw girls being taught gamelan in the conservatory. Now that still doesn't happen in the village, but in the conservatory now in Bali the girls are being taught gamelan.

I played the lead gender, here, in the Balinese gamelan, which is like the conductor, in one sense, in that for the whole gangsa section, which is the melody-bearing and the interlocking section, one focuses on the person playing the large gender in the front: and you watch the downbeat here.

I don't know if I was supposed to have a conflict physically. Normally, one would not think that women could handle Balinese music. This has been the idea, because it's very demanding physically; they play so fast. The idea was that only men were capable of doing that. But having been a dancer, actually I found it an exciting challenge--not really a challenge--I mean, this was an area where I could bring my muscular capability into use, and I could keep up with the Balinese speed. We were able to play interlocking patterns with the Balinese visitors. So I haven't had any conflict that way except, as I say, with the drums, and I doubt that there would have been a problem with Tjokorda Mas or Wajan Gandera, in terms of teaching me here. I don't know that they would have had the same reaction as Iwan did. I never asked.

But in Bali, that was something else. The short time that I was there, the experience that I had with some of the musicians from Pliatan [was that] they were reasonably surprised. But this was not a new experience. There had been women before who had come to Bali. Ruby Ornstein-- I don't know if you know her name--was in the gamelan there. She had studied here, then went there and did research and collected field tapes. So it was not a totally new experience for the Balinese, but, on the other hand, they really didn't believe that I could keep up with them. I wasn't there really long enough to work up to performance with them, but I would have liked to have done that because I know that my ability to play Balinese music is a very good one. I play that music very easily. I don't know why. I've been asked, but I can't answer that. It's just something that I can handle with accuracy and sensitivity.

MILLER: Did you play in the group that played for President Sukarno?

ROBINSON: Oh, yes! I have played in the gamelan since it started here, until just very recently; so I have played for all the exciting [events]. In fact, I think that when President Sukarno was here, that was the first time that instruments were allowed to go out of the collection of UCLA. It was such a short notice, and we wanted to put together a particular group of pieces: so I was allowed to

bring one of the instruments home to practice. I was practicing a gender part. Of course we had to take it back when we had performed for Sukarno, but I remember that very well.

That was quite an exciting experience. Intimidating, really, because we knew that we were Westerners playing a non-Western tradition, and we were very excited about it. At least I was very excited about it. I thought it was kind of an historical event because before that time, to my knowledge, I don't know of any school where Americans were involved in performance of a non-Western musical idiom.

MILLER: Dr. Hood mentions in his book an instance where there was an impending revolution, and one of his students came up to him and whispered in his ear, "We're all revolutionaries here."

ROBINSON: Oh!

MILLER: When I think of the theory of music as communication, and in the forefront of this world change, and then [what happened to] Sukarno--

ROBINSON: Yes.

MILLER: Have you found that through the music that you're maybe getting at people in ways you don't want to? In other words, that side of it, you know, could happen.

ROBINSON: Getting at people in ways that I don't want to? I don't quite understand.

MILLER: In the sense of you're playing music with some people, and there's clashes between the traditional society and the upcoming society, and you perhaps don't side with one side or the other. You might want to save the instrument, but help the peasants.

ROBINSON: Oh! I see. Well, I haven't been in a situation where that kind of decision would be necessary, because all of my activity has been here; so it's really out of context, in that sense. My main focus and primary concern has been the music and instruments themselves. The people that I've come in contact with here have been from different areas, but the political or economic or whatever situation that concerns them at home has not intruded in any way. I haven't had to make any positive or negative decisions in those areas. We've talked, you know, but I haven't had conflicts at all. I've asked questions, I've learned; but I tried not to offend or intrude.

This is one of the joys of going through the discipline of ethnomusicology, because it ideally, I think gives you clues. Now I really can't say it trains, but it gives you clues on how to approach people and how to approach situations that require delicate handling. This is one of the requirements of being a good ethnomusicologist. I think that that kind of training stands you in good stead no matter what your discipline is, if you develop the kinds of

attitudes or ideals that one thinks a well-trained ethnomusicologist should have. I say that because the whole scope is so broad, and it should prevent a person from being terribly narrow. Now this is my own interpretation.

One can't always handle all of it. You can't really be knowledgeable in all the areas or all the musics of the world that there are, but one can develop acceptable ways of trying to approach, or "get inside" is really what I want to say.

MILLER: Be open to?

ROBINSON: Yes, be open to, yes. And from that, you know, people, and different ideas, and values--of course, maybe I'm giving ethnomusicology more to do than it really should have to do, because it is an academic discipline, but I find that there are lots of carry-overs.

MILLER: Did you have any favorite stories about maybe some of the personalities in the quartet or some of the foreign teachers that come over to teach at our school?

ROBINSON: Favorite stories?

MILLER: Or interesting personalities. You know, they're from all over the world!

ROBINSON: Yes, I do. I mentioned the two drummers that came from Africa--Robert Bonsu was the drummer from the Ashanti tradition and Robert Ayitee from Ewe. I love to say this to my classes when I'm talking about rhythmic precision;

we've learned that there is a guiding line or there is something in the musician's mind that he relates to when playing the African drum ensembles. Now just what that is, we haven't really [settled]. I don't think anyone has said; it's a difficult thing to ask an African drummer, one that's considered very good--because they don't verbalize as we do.

I don't remember the year, but a television film was made at UCLA that, theoretically, was to show what ethnomusicology was all about. You can check this date. And it's a terrible film! [laughter] The people who came here to do the photography knew absolutely nothing about the musical ensembles that they were working with. It's that same old thing: you have a technician who does one thing, but he doesn't know anything about the subject, so that film was really not very good. It was done in a very short space of time.

But Robert Ayitee was a taskmaster in the real sense when he was training various people in the patterns. He would get terribly upset if we missed one hair's beat. It was just uncanny for us to realize how accurate he is, and he was at that time with us, and how quickly he could pick up any slight shift in the rhythmic pattern. Everything has to fit, dovetail; you have to be like a metronome to play in the drum ensembles. He would become so incensed that he

had no words. Just the first mistake he'd take the stick off his drums and he would hit the knuckle. "No! No!" he would say. People who didn't know him would really be surprised. But he was so hurt by the inaccuracy that he just had [to do something]. [laughter] We quickly learned to be as accurate as we could, because he didn't hesitate to use that stick on the hands if we were playing the wrong thing. I appreciated, though, the demand that he made. He just wouldn't allow sloppy playing. I don't know if I can think of any other stories, but I like to tell that one because it was indicative of the demand that he expected and that he had within his own music.

MILLER: What about Hardja Susilo? What was he like? What is he like?

ROBINSON: Ah! That's two interesting questions because now he is not like he was when I first met him, which is understandable. Very warm, very patient, beautiful dancer, and musician also. It was a joy to watch his hands as he played the gender, which is the two-handed instrument in Java. I tried to study Javanese dance with him, and soon realized that I had come to Javanese dance much too late in life; I was not flexible enough. He had a dance class in the unfinished basement of the music building, if you can imagine dancing on that rough concrete floor, with bare feet, trying to be as firm, and yet as fluid as he. It was

really very difficult.

He was a very good teacher. He taught the dance as well as the instruments. Primarily, his function was to teach music, but I think that he was more proficient in dance than he was in music. Yet as a representative for us, he really had a great deal to offer in both areas, which was phenomenal to me to find a dancer and a musician all in one at this high level. We don't usually expect to find the two capabilities embodied in one person.

He's very American now, very Westernized, I think. At least on the outside. He's a mod dresser and plays guitar. Of course he played guitar before he came to the States, but he did not play mariachi, and that he learned while he was here. He's very good. He sings in the falsetto, as well as the [normal] voice.

I guess the thing that impressed me the most about him was his ability to learn different musical styles and musical idioms, of musical media, with seemingly great ease. I learned in the process of study that Javanese and Balinese have very keen ears, compared to ours, because of the tuning demands of their music. So from that standpoint he was really able to pick up lots of different kinds of music easily, and that really fascinated me, and still does.

MILLER: What about Wajan Gandera?

ROBINSON: He's very special to me at this particular point.

Of the two drummers that came, he was the best. I don't think he was at that time, but when he went back to Bali after his experience here, he was considered a master drummer and composer all over the island, and this is something new. He's special to me, in the sense that when I went to Bali in 1970 (I had not seen Gandera since he left here in '65), I asked him if he had composed any pieces after his stay in the States, because he was a very sensitive person, and was very curious about all the things in the symphony orchestra. While he was here he just absorbed so much. He said that he had composed the piece that I was listening to when he was rehearsing with the group gamelan in the village of Sukawati. This was a composition that he had done in 1968. That was significant to me because I had known Wajan Gandera here, and I knew that he did not know very much about Western music when he came, but he learned a great deal while he was here.

He, in drumming, is a dancer--well, he's a dancer anyway--I've never seen anyone drum with [such] a flair. When he would give signals on the drum, it was not just an ordinary hand gesture; it was very florid.

I asked if he would allow me to record some of his compositions, or if anyone had asked him to record just his compositions, and he said that no one had. That's what I was able to do when I was there in 1970.

It's very interesting to realize that many of the

orchestral devices that he uses in the gamelan are new and are a result of his exposure here. I haven't done all of the analysis of my tapes that I intend to, in terms of detail and orchestral usage, but just in superficial hearing, anyone who's heard recordings of this same gamelan, from the 1950s or whatever, will immediately hear the different orchestral effects.

I assume that I can rely on his word when he says this is his composition. Of course, the Balinese means something different by composition than we do. They usually take an old melody and they rearrange it, and that's what he did.

MILLER: Arrangement.

ROBINSON: Arrangement, yes. But just the use of the réong for instance, which is the horizontal kettles on the rack-- you remember seeing it in the pendopo--he will use one hand to move away--the réong is playing kotékan and there are four men playing, and then one hand of the person on the low register will do a complementary melody within the context of all of this kotékan that's going on. That's just one way the instrument is used that I had not heard on any previous recordings, up to that particular date--at least in terms of all of the recordings that had been released.

Gandera and Susilo are two quite different people and really bear out the descriptive statement that's made with

the music and with the people. Susilo is a quieter person, or a softer moving person, and yet they're both very delicate. That's a very hard thing to verbalize. Gandera has, just in the difference in the way he drums and the way Sus drums-- difference in quality of movement, abrupt flashes--a characteristic of Gandera. Sus has not the same kind of movement attack at all--softer.

MILLER: You mentioned working with those tapes. Is this some sort of a thesis that you're writing?

ROBINSON: Well, it's two things. The institute will add this to the series of records that they are publishing.

MILLER: Selected Reports?

ROBINSON: No, no. This is the record series. The tape that I was speaking of is of gamelan gong kebyar. All the tapes that I did make in Bali I will use for my dissertation; the analysis of that material will be a part of my dissertation. The particular group that I was speaking of is just going to be included in the record series and there'll be notes on the jacket. The gong kebyar has already been done. A thesis has already been written about that, so I would only use that for comparative purposes or reference, really, because the ensemble that I'm working with draws some of its repertoire from the gong kebyar repertoire. So in that sense that would be the relationship.

MILLER: When did you get into these films?

ROBINSON: By accident, as my involvement in ethnomusicology was by accident. Just by luck. I had designated myself-- there was a term--"a body of one" to enlighten the community. When I discovered non-Western music, in the performance sense, I was very, very excited about it and chagrined when I realized that it's much easier to learn a new language when you are young and one's ears are not closed because the mind hasn't been shaped too much. I had two children, a daughter and a son, and my daughter was extremely interested and gifted in music. She had very keen ears, and she played by ear when she was very young. She was fascinated when I would take her to rehearsal.

Before she went to school--I guess she was four years old--I took her to the Philharmonic to see the second group of Balinese dancers and musicians who came to Los Angeles. This was a group from Ubud. My daughter had not entered public school; she was in nursery school, and this was an evening performance. She sat for two hours and forty-five minutes, wide-eyed and just very excited with everything that she saw and heard. At that time my son was eight.

I was not involved in teaching regularly, but I had been doing some substitute teaching in the elementary schools in L.A. I decided that I wanted to do something about bringing to children this kind of musical experience because I felt that it was important that they should know very early

that there are many musical systems. There are many ways that you can introduce children to sounds. I had worked directly with my daughter; I didn't insist that she learn to read music first. She would imitate what I played on the piano and had lots of satisfaction making music. So I decided that I would be the music chairman of the PTA at the elementary school up here on the hill where my kids were going.

I brought the African study group from UCLA and I did a number of other things. I had a talk with the principal, and I tried to tell her how important it was to begin to take advantage of the interest that was developing in non-Western music. I did some lectures for teachers and I had recordings. This was very early, and I really hadn't done any extended work. I was very interested in building programs that would include non-Western music for children, and yet, I did not want to go through the education program and become a classroom teacher, which you had to do before you could do music as a speciality. So I just kept donating services here and there.

When my son was in the sixth grade, his teacher called right after Christmas vacation. This was at the time when India and Africa, were introduced in the elementary school system for comparative geography. I've forgotten now what they called it, but this was the first time those two areas

had been included in the L.A. system. The sixth-grade teacher knew that I was in music. She was musically inclined; her daughter played guitar, and she was musically aware. She thought that it would be important to have a musical experience for the children while they were studying India. At that time she was getting ready for culmination; this was when they still had the mid-year graduation. She called and asked if I could help her with music selection, because she had gone to the music store, and realized that she didn't know anything about the music of India, and she didn't know what to do.

So I went to the class, and I took Gayathri Rajapur, who was here studying at UCLA. She played the gottuvâdyam, which is a very old Indian instrument. I made tapes, and we taught the class a gita and a padam. Those are the two forms that the Indian student begins with--never mind what age, but the beginning student. I think that this is the first time in the history of the L.A. school system that students have been given an opportunity to make, or try to make the music and movement from India. This happened to be South India. I know that the West District music supervisors came to that culmination program. I had met her before, and she was very impressed with the performance that the kids gave--this is sixth-grade boys and girls doing Indian dance and singing Indian music. That was really quite an exciting event.

Well, from that I think the word got around. There was a young man at Churchill Films who was interested in music and appalled at the bad music films that were in libraries or schools introducing school children to Western music. I think that he had contact with people at UCLA. I don't remember now if he had taken the Music Cultures of the World course at UCLA, but he knew performers were there. He decided that he wanted to make a series of films, and he wanted to include non-Western sounds. When that request came into the institute office, Dr. Hood or David Morton-- one of them--knew that I was very interested in elementary education and its need for information from ethnomusicologists. Peter Van Dusen I think is the producer's name, or the photographer's name, and so they brought us together. That's how I got to make the film--that is, to act as consultant.

In the meantime I had been working with a group of children in Santa Monica, Cloverfield School, because the music specialist had known me for a long time, and she had received money to buy some of the Orff instruments that she had had tuned to the Javanese scale like the gamelan that we have at UCLA. She wanted to teach the fifth grade students at Cloverfield School how to play Javanese gamelan. Well, she didn't know enough about the performance

to do that part, so she called me, and I worked with those students for about six weeks. I had started working with them before the film project came up, and when I mentioned to Peter that I had done performance with children--before he wanted me to train a group so that they could film them and then I thought, and I said to him, "Well, I'm working with a group at Cloverfield School, and rather than to train a new group of students I would like to use those students because I have planned to work with those students." And then, as one of the final activities, at least for my association, I brought them to UCLA to see a real gamelan.

It was amazing, the transfer was so easy. You'll have to see that film. Percussion Sounds is one where these children are performing. But oh! We had maybe two and a half, maybe three hours in the pendopo with those children, and they played beautifully! People would walk through the halls--they asked, "Where do these children come from?" because they were playing as well, if not better than some of the beginning college students playing the Javanese ensemble. But it [my entrance into the film] was through the work that I did just on my own, because I felt that it was an important thing to begin to introduce [ethnomusicology] to the public school system. But I just did it in my own area, first because I had access to the people, and felt that the children would respond. And

they did, very positively.

MILLER: These are Anglo children?

ROBINSON: Yes. A mixed group of children.

MILLER: We're getting a little short on time, so I want to ask you about what happened after you left UCLA. Did you go directly to Loyola Marymount from UCLA?

ROBINSON: Oh yes! Well, I haven't left UCLA, really, only because all the instruments are at UCLA. [laughs] Remember, my first love is performance, and I only became involved in graduate study through performance, through my interest in all of these instruments. Being a member of the old guard, or the core, or the oldest members of the group still around, I intend to continue performing as long as I have time. I can't keep the Balinese and the Javanese and the gender wajang and the Balinese gamelan all going at the same time, but I will at least be involved in one.

My association at Loyola came because a graduate of UCLA Institute of Ethnomusicology was teaching in the music department at Marymount--it's Marymount College at Loyola University--and her husband had received an assignment to teach at the University of Sydney. This is Rebecca and Wilhelm Adriaansz. Rebecca was teaching at Marymount. She began the program in ethnomusicology at Marymount. It was really only one spring semester, I guess, that she was there. Because the administration at Marymount was so interested in

ethnomusicology, and the things it could contribute to the fine arts at Marymount, she was looking for someone to take her place, and called, as I was planning to go to Indonesia.

I hadn't been looking for a position. I hadn't planned to teach really. [both laugh] And you know, the teaching possibility at college level fell into my lap, just as by chance I went to the Philharmonic performance of the musicians and dancers of Bali, so I say, luck, really! I went, and had the interview with Walter Arlen, who is the chairman. I was interested because it's a small school, small department, and I would have an opportunity to build a program within the context of a four year undergraduate situation, whereas here, ethnomusicology is graduate program. So it's just one of those lucky things, and the campus is not far from where I live. I don't have to fight the freeway to get there, and the administration is amenable to the idea. In fact, I was surprised that they are so forward looking, because you don't find many independent schools that are aware enough and have the money to purchase a Balinese gamelan to begin an undergraduate program. It's kind of fortunate for me anyway.

MILLER: You are in the interdisciplinary program, aren't you?

ROBINSON: Yes, in the freshman interdisciplinary program, and that's been exciting. Last year was my first year working with that. We have a team of four: art history,

world literature, theatre, and music. We've really had a challenge bringing these together in an illuminating way for freshmen. This will be my second year working in that program, and I have some new ideas that I'm looking forward to trying. Interestingly enough, the program was just for the Marymount girls, and this year we'll have the privilege of having the Loyola men, so, that might make a difference as to style of presentation or something. [Both laugh] I'm really interested in their reaction or response to the program as a whole, because this'll be only the third year of its existence.

MILLER: Well, we're running out of tape, although not time or interest. I want to thank you for taking your time to do this, and I'm really pleased the way the interview has come out.

ROBINSON: Thank you, it's been my pleasure. I enjoyed reminiscing.