

5th-graders learn Indonesian arts



Students practice gamelan instruments, dance for culture night

By **Patty Mattem**
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CLEAR LAKE — Eleven-year-old Casey Schmoll shifted his feet and moved his arms to the music playing in Clearview Elementary School's gym.

Schmoll is one of about 70 Clearview fifth-graders introduced to Indonesian music and dance by artists Joko and Tri Sutrisno in the last few weeks.

About half of Clearview fifth-graders are learning to play gamelan instruments. Gamelan is an Indonesian instrument ensemble that includes xylophones, gongs and drums. The other half are learning how to dance to that music.

At 7 p.m. Tuesday, the students will join others in performing at Indonesian Night 2000 at St. Cloud State University's Kimberly A. Ritsche Auditorium.

During rehearsal at Clearview last week, Schmoll watched intently as Tri demonstrated the dance.

"It's hard to remember all the moves, and she's not going to be up there when we're per-



TIMES PHOTOS BY PAUL MIDDLESTAEDT

Kelly Meemken, 11, concentrates on hitting the right notes while playing the bonang at Clearview Elementary School last week. Students are learning to play gamelan instruments, an ensemble that includes xylophones, gongs and drums.

forming," Schmolz said.

Eleven-year-old Tanya Bloch enjoys learning the Indonesian dances.

While learning about Indonesian music and dance, the students also have learned about Indonesian culture, which Bloch feels is good.

"The opportunity for the students to learn about a whole new culture is just wonderful," said Clearview Princi-

pal Dan Anderson.

While some students practice their dance, Joko and another set of students rehearsed their music in another room at the school.

The young musicians played well even though they were just introduced to the instruments a few weeks ago.

Some of the instruments included: Kendangs (drums);

pal Dan Anderson. (metallophones with six or seven bronze keys lying over a wooden trough resonator); a slentham (metallophones with bamboo resonators); bonang (a set of small horizontally suspended gongs); a gambang (a wooden xylophone) and many others.

All of the instruments are ornately decorated and painted.

Joko, a world-renowned gamelan composer, leads the students.

Joko claps and the students begin.

"Everybody should play softly," Joko said.

"Let's play it from the beginning and sing it while you play too," Joko told his students.

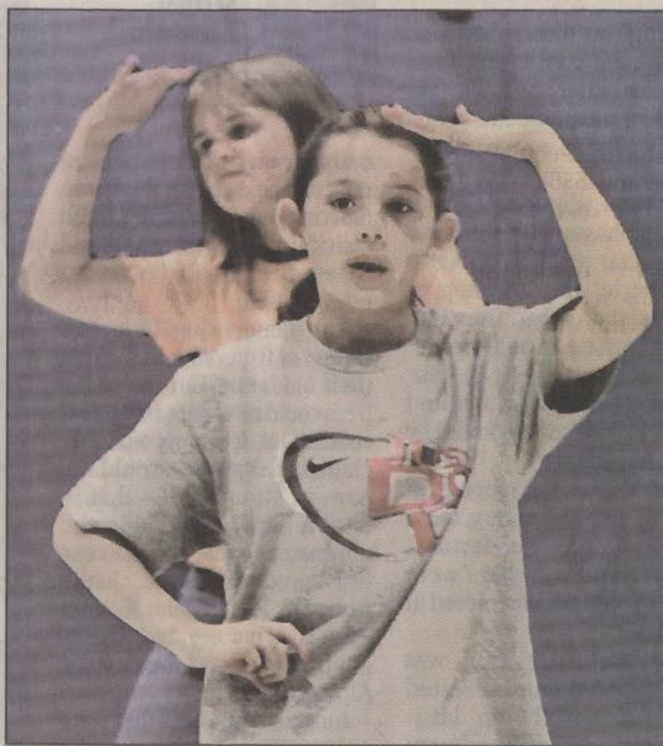
Fifth-grader Kelly Meemken, who usually plays the violin, is trying his skill at the bonang.

"It's kind of difficult," Meemken said.

The rhythm section is very loud, he said.

"You can't really hear yourself play," Meemken said.

Eleven-year-old Tim Meyer chose to dance instead of play



Fifth-grade students Katlyn Stout (front) and Emily Wels practice their dance routines for Indonesian Night 2000.

an instrument because he wanted more action.

But he said it is challenging to learn Indonesian dance.

"It's sort of hard to learn a new dance. It's kind of like learning a new language," Meyer said.



Joko Sutrisno leads a group playing gamelan instruments. The students will perform at SCSJ's Indonesian Night 2000.