

**Review of David D. Harnish and Anne K. Rasmussen,  
editors, *Divine Inspirations: Music and Islam  
in Indonesia***

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Over the last several years, two transitions in Indonesian studies have occurred simultaneously. The first is a turn towards more serious studies of Islam in Indonesia. This has percolated through anthropology, political science, and other disciplines. The second is a change within Indonesia-based ethnomusicology, where more and more scholars are turning their attention to music and performances outside the classical high culture styles, epitomized in the Javanese forms of *gamelan* orchestra and *wayang kulit* shadow puppets, to regional and popular styles. Harnish and Rasmussen's *Divine Inspirations* is a step forward in both of these trends, using a variety of different Indonesian musical and performance styles to discover how Indonesian arts incorporate Islam.

The book is wonderfully accessible for those who are not experts on Indonesia or ethnomusicology. The editors provide a fantastic introduction, surveying not only the contributions of this book to the development of the field but also providing an impressive overview of the Islamization of Indonesia and major hallmarks of Islamic life in the country today. They also preview the contents of the chapters, which, along with the abstracts at the head of each chapter and the epilogue provided by Judith Becker to closer the book, make the book very easy to navigate. Judith Becker's epilogue not only provides detailed summaries of each chapter, it also points to both resonances and discontinuities between essays. The book is divided into four parts but need not be read according to them, or in any particular order; the chapters can each stand independently.

Part I, entitled 'Tensions and Change,' consists of two articles. Sumarsam brings a breath of fresh air to familiar topics by looking at Islamic elements in *gamelan* music

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and *wayang* puppets. Although the book adamantly frames itself against traditional studies of these classical Javanese forms, this chapter provides a jumping off point for the other articles because it ranges from *longue durée* transformations in these arts due to Islamization to the stance of major Islamic organizations towards the arts today. David Harnish, an editor of the book, provides a chapter on the conflict between cultural traditions, embodied in the syncretic Wetu Telu Islamic sect, and religion, embodied by modernizing Islamic organizations and state institutions, on Lombok. Although his use of terminology brings more confusion than clarity (Wetu Telu should not be called ‘traditionalist’ Islam, a term reserved in Indonesian Islamic studies for mainstream Muslims following one of the four Sunni schools of jurisprudence; by calling Nahdlatul Wathan, a traditionalist organization, ‘reformist Islam,’ things become even more muddled), he still shines a light on the front lines of musical change in response to religious demands.

The three authors of Part II, ‘Mysticism and Devotion’ look at three performance types that are closely associated with Islam and delicately tease out the religious experience of practitioners. Anne Rasmussen’s chapter on female Qur’an recitation abbreviates the issues found in her recent monograph (2010, *Women, the Recited Qur’an, and Islamic Music in Indonesia*, Berkeley). In the only chapter that treats an unambiguously Islamic style, Rasmussen shows the agency and independence of female Qur’an reciters as performers and religious leaders. Matthew Isaac Cohen introduces the reader to the practice of *brai* ecstatic chanting in a beautifully-written chapter. Pulling from accounts of local history around Cirebon and participant-observer ethnography, he contemplates in depth questions of public and private, communal and traditional. Uwe U. Pätzold rounds out this part with a chapter on music in connection with Indonesian self-defense arts, *pencak silat*. By showing how the music associated with performances is framed by Islamic symbols and explanations, he demonstrates the Islamic possibility of an increasingly-secularized form.

Part III, on ‘Global Currents and Discourse,’ brings the themes of Islamic change, musical development, and foreign influences into comparative perspective. Charles Capwell provides a short but fascinating look at Debu, a band of Western Muslims based in Indonesia and engaging in propagation through music. Birgit Berg lays out major themes from her recent dissertation about *orkes gambus* music, positioning it between being an ethnic tradition among Indonesian Arabs and an Islamic musical form embraced by the general public. She points to major themes in Islamic studies in Indonesia, including Arabization versus indigenization, form versus content, and Islamic consumption, and provides a nuanced evaluation of how Arabic cultural symbols, including music, fit into these paradigms. Wim van Zanten is not quite as nuanced in his treatment of discourses about music and Islam in West Java, but the Ath-Thawaf band that forms the focus of his study is an interesting example of music engaging Islam.

The final section, Part IV, ‘Contemporary Performative Worlds’ includes three very historically-grounded essays that complement each other nicely. In what may be the stand-out essay of the collection, Margaret Kartomi paints a beautiful picture of the evolution of women’s performance styles in Aceh, Indonesia’s most strictly Islamic province. Looking at the waning and waxing of the form *meuseukat*, a type of seated dance accompanied by singing and body percussion, Kartomi touches on themes of gender engagement in Islam, regional cultural identity, constriction of

performance space, and consumption of Islamic arts. R. Franki S. Notosudirdjo provides a short but insightful look at the Islamic turn in Indonesian modern composition, using two pieces by female composer Trisutji Juliati Kamal and their reception to show the limits of modernity in Indonesian Islamic music consumption. Andrew Weintraub ends the volume very strongly with his chapter on *dangdut*, Indonesia's most popular musical form, and its relationship with morality. Although pioneered by a male artist with an explicit Islamic moralizing mission, *dangdut* has now become the style of love songs, innuendo, and sensualized female stars.

The volume's broad reach is one of its great virtues, including articles focused on Java, Sumatra, Sulawesi, Lombok, and articles on national life. This is difficult to achieve in Indonesian studies, and deserves special commendation. At the same time, because these essays were born out of different conferences, treat such different subjects, and were not always written in conjunction with one another, the authors missed some opportunities for constructive consonance, particularly between the articles of Pätzwold and Cohen, and between Berg and van Zanten. Another interesting innovation of this book is its accompanying website, which provides all of the images used in the book, plus video clips to accompany several chapters and web links of interest. Although it is not entirely clear why certain materials were placed on the website and others were not (why, for example, was a nine-page score printed with Notosudirdjo's chapter instead of placed online), one can hope that many books in the future will also use this model to provide further enrichment materials.

For scholars of Islamic Studies outside of ethnomusicology, the book both excites and leaves plenty of territory to cover. The chapters of the book generally start from looking at a musical tradition and then ask what is Islamic; a contribution thinking in the other direction (starting out with everyday Islamic practice and examining how music is involved) would be a welcome complement. Also, perhaps because most of these chapters are carefully focused on a particular style, they do not draw connections with other disciplines in Islamic studies, so that it would require some work to integrate this text into an interdisciplinary overview course on Indonesian Islam. I was surprised to find no references in the text to the recent advances in Islamic studies by Indonesian historians, like Michael Francis Laffan, Jeffrey Hadler, and Azyumardi Azra, and political scientists, like Saiful Mujani, Tom Pepinsky, and Ed Aspinall; this is replaced by a heavy reliance on anthropologists who have studied Islamic subjects. Still, conspicuously absent were references to a recent collected volume on similar issues in Indonesian anthropology, Greg Fealy and Sally White's *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia* (Singapore, 2008).

On the other hand, this volume already had a difficult task bringing the Islamic turn to Indonesian ethnomusicology writ large, and it has accomplished this goal well. Particularly by introducing the discourse of *musik Islam* (explicitly Islamic music) and *musik Islami* (music with Islamic flavor, but not necessarily devotional music) to English-language readers, the book opens theoretical space that can influence not only Indonesian studies, but studies of the arts in other Islamic contexts.

The book provides new insights into Islam and music, as well as advancing the study of regional musical forms across Indonesia. As a starting place for discussions of Islam and the arts in Indonesia, it will likely become a key text for the next decade.