

**R. Anderson Sutton. *Calling Back the Spirit: Music, Dance, and Cultural Politics in Lowland South Sulawesi*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. CD, 272 pages.**

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In *Calling Back the Spirit*, R. Anderson Sutton provides not only a useful introduction to music in South Sulawesi, but also a keen analysis of how music and dance contribute to identity politics. Although the book is most clearly of interest to those involved with the culture of Sulawesi in particular and Indonesia in general, Sutton's deft handling of the issues of local, regional, national, and global representation are clearly relevant to anybody interested in culture in the modern world.

The international reputation Sutton earned with his ethnomusicological studies of Javanese music in the 1980s undoubtedly opened many doors for him as he conducted fieldwork in South Sulawesi. Sutton sought and gained access to quite a few important individuals and institutions in the South Sulawesi arts scene over the course of a decade or so, and he based the book on his interactions with them. Although this study does not show evidence of the same intimate musical understanding (acquired through diligent years of practical music-making) that characterizes his Javanese studies, it reveals many of the other hallmarks that distinguished his earlier work: a keen eye for detail, a discriminating ear for musical structures and meaning, and empathy for the intentions of his consultants.

In the book's first chapter, Sutton succinctly summarizes his philosophical and theoretical approaches to the material—the overlapping domains of regional, provincial, national, and ethnic identities, the role of expressive culture in articulating these identities, and approaches to thinking about tradition, authenticity, representation, and postmodernity. I found this section to be particularly convincing; Sutton provides an unusually clear account of how musical meaning is produced and received. The chapter also includes an excellent literature survey of musical research in South Sulawesi, as well as a concise overview of the Indonesian government's cultural policy. Although all of these introductory topics serve primarily to set up Sutton's specific topics, they are also useful, taken by themselves, as introductions to these thorny issues.

In chapter 2, South Sulawesi's 1993 "Fourth Annual Culture Week" provides a convenient entry trope for Sutton's research on two levels. The festival featured a smorgasbord of South Sulawesi arts, which provides Sutton the opportunity to introduce and describe briefly some of the music and dance genres that comprise modern South Sulawesi traditional music. He also looks beneath the festival's surface (an introduction to the various "traditional" arts of the region) to focus on how the dynamics of the festival itself are a microcosm of the region's cultural politics—how the artists themselves are treated as anonymous "modern-day court servants" (p. 35) in the service of local and national politics, and how various agents maneuver linguistically, musically, and politically to further various ends, such as the

preservation of “tradition,” the articulation of ethnic, provincial, and regional identities, the acquisition of national and international attention for the province, and the development of recognizably “local” art forms that can compete with other Indonesian forms on both the national and international level.

The subsequent three chapters introduce some influential figures in the contemporary South Sulawesi music scene within the framework of the regional cultural politics Sutton outlined in chapter 2. Chapter 3 focuses on Andi Nurhani Sapada, who “is credited with creating a stage performing arts tradition in South Sulawesi” (p. 50). Sutton describes how she adapted South Sulawesi music and dance into nationalist models by de-emphasizing both its associations with “spirits and magic” and its “sensuous or even openly erotic nature” (p. 49). Her version of *pakarena*, for example, distills a long ceremonial event into a ten-minute stage performance, while her “Tari Donda” exploits the local color and sensuality of the female dance called *pajogek* but eliminates the unseemly possibility of (male) audience interaction.

Sutton makes some important observations about how Bu Nani (as she is known) accomplishes a delicate balance of the local, regional, national, and global in her work. He reports that she regards her diatonic musical accompaniments as signifying modernity rather than simply Western-ness. He analyzes how she blurs ethnic, religious, and class boundaries in her pieces to help articulate a new “South Sulawesi” identity that transcends traditional ethnic identities and reifies the modern Indonesian nation’s provincial boundaries. He charts the process by which these utterly new creations quickly become regarded as “traditional,” and observes that part of their appeal as “traditional” in these transethnic contexts stems from their focus on visual elements (dance movements and costumes) and their de-emphasis on language. All of these insights are significant not only in the context of South Sulawesi, but provide models for considering other Indonesian “invented traditions” as well.

Bu Nani’s creations include staged, secularized ceremonies; according to Sutton, “the presentation of staged ceremonies for a diverse audience of individuals who watch, rather than participate, has been one of the hallmarks of cultural activities championed by New Order cultural policy” (p. 71). Chapter 4 explores alternative approaches to creating modern, global, and entertaining South Sulawesi performances that are no less modern, but which emphasize local and spiritual elements rather than visual and secular elements. He identifies the choreographers Halilintar Lathief and Niniek Sumiani as examples of individuals who attempt to recuperate local notions of spirituality and ritual (precisely the elements that Bu Nani seeks to expunge) and inject them into new “works of art” (which Sutton characterizes as “neo-rituals” on p. 78). Sutton describes these creations as self-conscious attempts to counter what these South Sulawesi artists regard as the “hopelessly bland” (p. 74) staged performances. I am especially appreciative of the great clarity with which Sutton explores the contradictory discourses of authenticity (along with subsidiary and equally ambiguous concepts such as “art,” “artist,” and “modernity”) in this chapter. He deftly makes the difficult point that these artists are still entangled in a hegemonic national discourse about culture, arts, and modernity, but they bring to it a different approach with performances “that serve as ‘art’ and that serve as ‘ritual’—fulfilling national cultural expectations and resisting them” (p. 88) at the same time.

My chief complaint about chapter 4 is the dearth of musical or choreographic analysis in the long and vivid descriptions of Halilintar Lathief's and others' neo-rituals; unpacking the layers of meanings that accrue when traditional elements are reworked in this fashion would add quite a lot to the discussion. Sutton does, however, provide this kind of analysis in chapter 5, in which he does an admirable job of untangling the intertwining discourses of local, national, and religious identities in several experimental works produced for Indonesian Independence Day celebrations.

Chapters 6 and 7 cover more familiar ethnomusicological ground—each chapter documents a traditional form associated with a particular local culture (Makassarese vocal genres in chapter 6 and Makassarese drumming in chapter 7), including technical details of the music itself, illustrated with text and musical transcriptions (in the body of the book) and recordings (on the CD that accompanies the book). Sutton does not lose sight of the book's overall thrust in these sections, however; he still attends to the ways these traditional forms contribute to articulating conflicting identities in South Sulawesi. He details specific stylistic changes in *sinrilik* (a sung oral narrative genre) that make it conform to ideals of modernity and nationalism—for example, making performances shorter and more predictable, using Indonesian language instead of local languages, and even playing down the humorous aspects to make it seem more serious, and therefore “in the realm of ‘art’” (p. 116). The CD excerpts, supported by excellent transcriptions and translations in the text, illustrate Sutton's points about *sinrilik* quite well. The second part of chapter 6 provides a comparable account of *kacapung* (singing accompanied by two-string boat-lutes).

Chapter 7 is an ethnographic account of *ganrang* (Makassarese-drum ensemble music), including documentation of the various ensembles, drum construction, and playing techniques, and an account of the instrument's (and the ensembles') significance as a potent symbol of local identity. Sutton's chief consultant in studying *ganrang* was Abdul Muin Daeng Mile, to whom Sutton “had the great privilege to be apprenticed” (p. 139). After one reads about the rather lengthy training process for drummers, including a formal initiation ceremony for apprentices, Sutton's self-identification as an apprentice sounds a bit overstated; nevertheless, he shares with readers the prescriptive musical knowledge he acquired in his lucid and pithy introduction to *ganrang* drumming patterns. Once again, the CD recordings are a joy to hear. This time, however, they are difficult to match up with the various musical notations provided in the text and provide only the most general aural impression of them. A few short sound clips to illustrate the text's notated drum patterns, supplementing the actual performances (in which the basic drum patterns Sutton illustrates are obscured), would have made a welcome addition to the CD.

Sutton's contextual analysis of *ganrang* focuses on how the local interacts with the national on several levels. First, with regard to notation—Sutton problematizes his decision to use Roman letters in his notation (rather than the Makassarese alphabetic symbols his teachers would probably prefer). More significantly, he addresses how the music's locally recognized “power” is reinterpreted in a national context. His point is that *ganrang* represents South Sulawesi particularly well because it involves “readily observable physical skill” and does not require any local-language skills to appreciate. Sutton's observation that the drummer Daeng Mile has worked with both Bu Nani and

Halilintar Lathief drives home the point that this genre somehow encapsulates an essential “South Sulawesi” quality, no matter what kind of “spin” is put on it.

In chapter 8, Sutton tackles the problems of modern music-institutions—both government-sponsored and private. He rightly identifies the enormous power and influence such institutions exert by “implicitly branding what they produce as legitimate representations of South Sulawesi music and dance in the context of contemporary Indonesia” (p. 193). Throughout most of the book, Sutton aims to provide an even-handed, polyvocal examination of the various points of view that contribute to controversies surrounding South Sulawesi musical politics. He lets his consultants provide most of the opinions; for example, we hear Bu Nani’s own justification for the changes she has wrought to *pakarena* in her dances, as well as the opinions of others who find her work to be “hopelessly bland” (p. 74). In this chapter, however, Sutton teeters at the edge of losing his nonjudgmental voice when he criticizes SMKI (Sekolah Menengah Karawitan Indonesia, High School of Performing Arts) and its administrators for its failure to teach and “preserve” local genres (see p. 185). I find this sudden bout of editorializing a bit jarring. In all fairness, Sutton does present another side to the story (which I must admit I find more compelling than Sutton does).

In chapter 9, Sutton provides a quick history of media in South Sulawesi and examines how various mediations have contributed to the solidification of ethnic, regional, and national identities. Many of the recordings on the CD that accompanies the book provide a welcome aural entry point into this history. One of Sutton’s important observations is that mass media has contributed to making what are often characterized as “Western” sounds—diatonic melodies and harmonies, and the sounds of guitars and other popular instruments—into “local” sounds; it is the constant exposure to these sounds via mass media, Sutton argues compellingly, that has made these sounds index “modernity” rather than “the West.” The cheap and accessible technology of cassette recordings has enabled the mediation of a variety of local musics; Sutton observes that these recordings “confound as well as reify ethnic boundaries and categories” (p. 226).

The overall thrust of Sutton’s argument about mass media—that they reify and blur categories both old and new—is a fitting end to the book, since “reify and confound” is the mantra that underlies the entire book. The notion that this mantra expresses—forging new identities in a changing world is an ongoing process of probing the contradictions that competing influences present—is hardly new to *Calling Back the Spirit*. Yet, it is rarely presented so clearly and convincingly. *Calling Back the Spirit* is a must-read for anybody concerned with the politics of culture. While the particulars of his investigation focus on South Sulawesi, the general themes Sutton develops—local identities versus national directives, the invention of traditions, strategies for recuperating meanings in appropriated cultural productions—are acutely relevant to other peoples and places in Indonesia and throughout the world. In Sutton’s own words, the book explores the “extent to which local performers have used received tradition, reshaped it, and reasserted it, to establish a measure of local power in the larger worlds of cultural discourse” (p. 234). Over the course of the book, Sutton provides several inspiring models for analyzing these issues, which could (and should) be applied to other ethnographic situations.