David D. Harnish and Anne K. Rasmussen, eds. *Divine Inspirations: Music and Islam in Indonesia.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. 408 pp.

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This groundbreaking volume is framed by editors David Harnish and Anne Rasmussen as a corrective to a long-held "reductive summary" (p. 34), perhaps most famously articulated by Clifford Geertz and Benedict Anderson, that Indonesia is primarily an Indic region. All of the chapters are organized around specific local or regional musical genres, with the majority situated in Javanese regions, but most incorporate considerable discussion of other aspects of Islam in Indonesia, including clothing, mass mediation, Islamic organizations, government policy, religious practice, and movement forms (for example, dance and martial arts).

Four themes serve to connect the disparate musical forms and cultural practices surveyed in this book. First, two institutions had a seminal role in shaping the nature of Islamic practice and governmental relations with organized Islam during the twentieth century. Muhammadiyah (founded in 1912) was originally concerned with a "pure" form of religiosity based on new readings of historical texts, while Nahdlatul Ulama (NU, founded in 1926), once a rural organization, was historically more accepting of local traditions. While most of the authors implicate these organizations in the transformation to particular traditional art forms, it quickly becomes apparent that these organizations had deep and complex relations with local communities, and thus musical change and transformations to public religiosity took divergent forms. Second, many of these authors structure their analysis around a dichotomy or continuum between *adat* (humanly generated custom, tradition) and *agama* (divinely revealed organized religion freed of local customs), a dichotomy also relevant to the organizations being considered. Third, and one of the most striking aspects of the case studies here, these essays demonstrate that many traditional art forms, even those without historical roots in Islam, were reconfigured to become a tool for *dakwah* (proselytizing, or bringing closer to Islam, from the Arabic term "*da'wa*"). Arguably, the preponderance and variety of Islamic music genres in Indonesia relate to the flexible way in which *dakwah* can be put into practice. *Dakwah* is not just an index of the permissibility of individual groups but is intertwined with the major religious associations and even national governance. Rasmussen cites the example of a music and sermon cassette released in the 1990s by Gus Dur, the leader of NU at the time and later the president of Indonesia. The role of *dakwah* in musical change is a recent topic in the historiography of Indonesian music, and most of the scholars draw on Rasmussen's earlier essay[1] that helped invigorate this new avenue for research, and which compares *dakwah* with *da'wa* in the Arab world. Fourth, these authors show that a history of changes to music and religious practices necessarily confronts Indonesia's colonial past. As such, Islam as a national project posits an Islamic modernity (more accurately, plural Islamic modernities) in relation to the legacies of Dutch colonialism—and, in the case of Lombok, Balinese colonialism.

Sumarsam's chapter explores the impact of Islam on Central Javanese gamelan and *wayang kulit* over a five-hundred year period. He distinguishes between tangible and

[1] Anne K. Rasmussen, "The Arabic Aesthetic in Indonesian Islam," The World of Music 47,1:65–90, 2005.

intangible transformations to Javanese expressive arts in relation to the morality continuum between *halal* (legitimate/approved) and *haram* (illegitimate/controversial) practices. Sumarsam notes that *gamelan sekate*n is believed to have been founded in the sixteenth century by a *wali* (Javanese Islamic saint) for the purposes of *dakwah*; *gamelan sekaten* illustrates how local traditions of heirloom worship were "appropriated and enhanced by Islam" (p. 49). Islam, rather than residing in opposition to extant musical practices, prompted an "intensive cultural development" involving new musical forms (e.g., *terbangan*), additionally intensifying gamelan making and leading to distortions of human depictions in wayang puppets and the introduction of Sufi mystical themes to wayang poetry. Concerning twentieth-century transformations, Sumarsam compares Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama and their changing relations with traditional expressive arts. From its founding in 1912 until the 1990s, Muhammadiyah launched campaigns to rid Indonesia of "imaginations," "innovations," and "superstitions," but started to liberalize in the late 1990s, formally adopting a "conciliatory approach toward local arts" (p. 66) that condoned refined (*alus*) expressive arts such as *wayang kulit* that had the capacity to impart a positive ethical value.

David Harnish analyzes "complex problems of *adat* and *agama*" (p. 81) in relation to the social functions of expressive art genres in Lombok. These problems do not solely concern Islamic morality or practice, but rather contemporary debates about the continuing legacy of Balinese colonialism, a legacy felt and seen today through the numerous temples dotting the island. Balinese and later Dutch colonialism restricted the expansion of Islam, but by the 1950s Islam had a central role in regional governance. Of particular interest to Harnish are the Waktu Telu (those who hold onto *adat* tradition), and he discusses instrumentation and musical texture changes to *gamelan rebana*, including substitutions of goatskin frame drums for bronze gongs and a shift to a monophonic or heterophonic texture that approximates "an Arab aesthetic" p. 93). He contrasts this with *zikrzamman*, a "pan-Islamic" men's choral form with texts said to derive from the Maulid of the Iraqi Kurdish scholar al-Barzanji (p. 94) that shares many features with *dhikr* practices in the Arab world. While I found the historical analysis to be clear, I was confused about the transition between the period when "Islam was the rationale used to dismantle music in Lombok" and many Waktu Telu were forcibly converted to Orthodox Islam, and the more recent transformations happening to expressive art forms. Waktu Telu are discussed historically and not explicitly mentioned in relation to contemporary performance practice, leading me to wonder if they are playing a role today in the change of musical practices.

Returning to Java and the metropolis of Jakarta, Anne Rasmussen's chapter summarizes key themes from her excellent recent book,[2] succinctly providing a context for readers to understand social life and individual negotiations around the practice of Quranic recitation. "The Muslim Sisterhood" she describes is not unified, cohesive, or universal, and her analysis of Islam "muddies clear understandings of women, of Muslims, and of Indonesians" (p. 112). Furthermore, her ethnography of women's Islamic musical arts complicates simplistic and reductive definitions of modernity, as she theorizes that the strong activism, civic engagement, and public participation in

[2] Anne K. Rasmussen, *Women, the Recited Qur'an, and Islamic Music in Indonesia* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010).

Islam of the women she studied originated in tradition. Rasmussen focuses on one particular professional reciter, Maria Ulfah, whose speeches and performances at a Quranic recitation competition perfectly illustrate the questions at the beginning of the chapter, taking account of both how specific individuals transform themselves and how this happens in the context of organizations such as NU and religious schools.

Matthew Cohen analyzes the oral art and ritual practice of *brai* in the region of Cirebon (Java) to show how the simultaneity of private expressions of faith and public entertainment complicates divisions between private–public and articulates what Jean Luc-Nancy theorizes as "being-in-common" (p. 134). Cohen begins with a discussion of *brai* as it was chronicled in the *Centhini*, a narrative encyclopedia written in Java in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which defines *brai* in relation to instrumentation and class associations, and denigrates the ritual aspects by characterizing them as orgies. The highlight of this chapter is an account of the author's journey with a *brai* group to the Cipanas hot spring where a ceremony is performed, and Cohen's ethnographic prose attempts to depict how the feeling of spiritual ecstasy and the aura of inclusiveness evoked by the performers can be contagious to spectators as well.

One of the more unusual contributions to this volume is Uwe Pätzold's study of the West Javanese movement (martial) art form *pencak silat*. Different *pencak silat* schools align with secular or Islamic institutions, articulating the *adat–agama* continuum as discussed earlier by Harnish. One difference between schools is the extent of the guru-student relationship, which is viewed as problematic within the Islamic-leaning schools, but as necessary among the secular/traditional-leaning ones. The purpose of *pencak silat* has shifted. Historically, it was part of a broader *dakwah* project and used to attract people to Islam. Then, during Dutch colonialism, it was perceived as subversive and was banned, leading to a practice whereby movement arts were disguised as prayer exercises. Today, *pencak silat* is a "medium for the education of youths' self-discipline, self-consciousness, and social responsibility within Islamic school institutions" (p. 187). While Pätzold's focus is more on the interplay between self-defense, art, spiritual exercise, and sport, he also offers an account of instrumentation and song repertoires of three different musical ensembles that accompany *pencak silat*. All ensembles feature a flexible repertoire ranging from secular folksong traditions to prayer and religious advice songs, and groups must negotiate norms of permissibility in different performance contexts.

Two chapters explore the musical genre *gambus*, "an art form of the Muslim Arabs in Indonesia that has been adopted as an art form for Indonesian Muslims in general" (p. 235). Charles Capwell focuses on *gambus* in Jakarta, which he uses to theorize the "Islamic social imaginary" (p. 198) of Indonesia/Java. Rather than dismissing such imaginaries in Hobsbawmian terms as part of the illusion of nationhood, Capwell instead draws on a more productive concept of imagination—rooted in practice—as articulated by Charles Taylor, Arjun Appadurai, and James Clifford. His case study focuses on a group called Debu, with unlikely origins in the United States, which performed for a brief stint in the Dominican Republic, before arriving in Indonesia and gaining popularity through providing singing lessons and partnering with an entrepreneur "specializing in SMS text-messaging services" (p. 203). As the group's background was eclectically international, and its music style sonically and lyrically

evokes themes of travel and imagery from the Arabian peninsula, the range of imaginations Debu inspires is similarly eclectic, and perhaps in part accounts for its rise to a top-ten group, even though none of the members is from Indonesia.

Birgit Berg analyzes *gambus* performed by descendants of Yemeni Arab migrants to Sulawesi. *Gambus* is locally considered by many to be a form of *musik islami* (Islamic-themed music) due to its instrumentation (the word *gambus* refers to either an indigenous stringed instrument of West Asian origin or to the Arabic 'ud), use of Arabic language texts and melodies, and frequent broadcast during Ramadan and Islamic festivals. Yet, Berg shows how *gambus* is not completely Islamic, as *gambus* performances are loud events with dancing, and the secular-themed lyrics from Arab popular songs are either unintelligible to listeners unfamiliar with colloquial Arabic or regarded as problematic for deviating from religious texts and more familiar Islamic vocal practices (e.g., Quranic recitation, Nasyid, Sholawat). Beyond generic specificities, Berg aims to understand how and why Arabs were more successful in some regards than other ethnic groups at integrating into Indonesian society, and relates this to Mumammadiyah and NU's different approaches towards the indigenization of Islam (*pribumisasi* Islam).

Wim van Zanten's work is concerned with discourses surrounding the relation between Islam and Javanese religion (*agama Jawa*), which center on "the degree of acceptability of trance and mysticism in the performing arts rather than casting these practices in the absolute terms of 'acceptable' and 'not acceptable'" (p. 245). He is interested in "Islam-inspired music with Sundanese features" (p. 260), in particular the long-standing popular group Bimbo that now employs Islamic themes and sings *qasidah* among other genres. Much of the discourse analyzed appears to be taken from slogans on cassettes or song lyrics, and a few excerpts from interviews provide more of a personal sense of the motivations and intentions of particular musicians, but, overall, it is unclear how the author arrived at his interpretations, or precisely how the artists in question put *dakwah* into practice.

Margaret Kartomi's chapter draws on research she conducted in the 1980s and 2000s in West Aceh concerning the sitting dance *ratêb meuseukat*. In particular, she is interested in issues concerning women's power and agency within Aceh's "gender-segregated, male-dominant society" (p. 273), and this sitting dance form, which derived from a mode for performing the liturgy (*wird*), is one site where women's leadership is especially prominent. While her research is primarily situated in Aceh, Kartomi also considers the linguistic and performative implications of *ratêb meuseukat* becoming a "national" genre. One aspect that particularly stood out to me was the dialogic relation of Kartomi with the local dance ethnographer and performer Ibu Cut Asiah. In contrast with some of the other essays, in which history is either treated as a given or is relegated to a role of background information, in this study the practice of *ratêb meuseukat* is intertwined with its history and historiography, meaning Kartomi's work is as much an ethnography of historiography as it is an ethnography of women's collective participation in music.

It is not only traditional (*adat*) genres that have been influenced and affected by Islam. R. Franki S. Notosurirdjo examines art music composition in Indonesia in relation to national discourses about modern music (in particular "The Great Debate," Polemik Kebudayaan), and differing audiences for performed music. He compares two

compositions by the composer Trisutji, both drawing on Islamic themes, but which were initially performed for different kinds of audiences in different performance contexts. The demonstrably different receptions of these two works lead Notosurirdjo to conclude that Indonesia today is experiencing two different forms of modernity: modernity as a Muslim sociopolitical discourse, and modernity as a cultural discourse (p. 306). His work provides an excellent case study for how to integrate an analysis of contemporary art music composition with a study of audience reception, and furthermore shows how—in Indonesia—such an integration is an integral part of the compositional process.

Whereas all of the preceding chapters cover musical forms that in some way relate to *musik Islam* (the music of Islam), *music islami* (Islamic music), or *seni musik Islam* (Islamic musical arts), Andrew Weintraub's contribution considers a popular music genre that is unequivocally not a form of Islamic music but has "material and symbolic connections to Islam" (p. 320), is popular primarily among Muslim Indonesians (as opposed to Indonesians of other religious backgrounds), and has a prominent place in public discourses about Islam and morality. *Dangdut* is an especially interesting site for debates about morality as, more than any other genre, it has been implicated in debates about sexuality (it is often disparagingly described as "porno" music), yet some of the most popular *dangdut* artists view their performances as a form of *dakwah* that can lead listeners away from sin.

Due to the considerably different approaches of the authors and a focus on local or regional genres, a book like this runs the risk of being excessively disjointed. Fortunately, this volume's cogent introduction by the editors helps to lay out some of the common thematic elements, and Judith Becker's epilogue provides useful summaries of the disparate case studies interspersed with her own analyses of the linkages between chapters. The introduction is a must-read essay that would be a great addition to the syllabus of any course on expressive arts or religion in contemporary Indonesia.

While overall I felt the book was extremely successful in its aims and will be very well received within the circles of Southeast Asian studies and ethnomusicology, I do have a few minor quibbles. The readability of the book would have been improved with the inclusion of a fuller glossary and a more comprehensive index. Important terms such as *brai, seni musik Islam, alus,* and *perguruan* are absent in the glossary, and glossary entries for terms such as *dakwah,* Muhammadiyah, and Nahdlatul Ulama differ from inline definitions provided in chapters. Despite the historical importance of colonialism and the present impacts of UNESCO (UN Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) and cultural tourism (as noted in several chapters), none of these influences is indexed, making it difficult to trace those themes across chapters. Also, authors appear to have uneven assumptions about the prior knowledge of prospective readers. The articles by Rasmussen, Kartomi, and Weintraub, the introduction, and Becker's epilogue are all clearly laid out and require little prior knowledge of the expressive arts in Indonesia. By comparison, the Harnish and Pätzolds articles overflow with terminology and assume the reader has considerable prior familiarity with Bahasa Indonesia religious, movement arts, musical, and cultural terminology—and with debates surrounding prior scholarly writings on Indonesia (e.g., Clifford Geertz, Margaret Mead).

The contributions to *Divine Inspirations* also feature uneven theorizations and discussions of methodology. While Kartomi, Rasmussen, and Notosurirdjo are especially clear about their research methodology, Cohen, Pätzold, and van Zanten are not, and, as a reader, I wanted to know more about how they arrived at their interpretations. Only four of the contributors explicated their theoretical framework and thereby situated local practices of Islam and music within a broader intellectual and theoretical narrative. Capwell's chapter ties into a broad debate about the role of imagination and imaginaries in nationalism, tradition, and local practices. Rasmussen's essay dovetails with early twenty-first century anthropological work into Islam and piety movements (especially the work of Lila Abu-Lughod and Saba Mahmood), while showing the significant differences between women's practices of Islam in Indonesia and the Arab world. Weintraub's chapter is concerned with the broader question of how music influences individual/social practice, especially in light of the sexual-moral debates about music denigrated as "porno." Finally, Cohen's essay is theorized through Jean Luc-Nancy's concept of "being-in-common," a surprising choice that would have been even stronger if the author had been more explicit about why he chose this rather than other theorizations of the relation between individuals and society (e.g., Irving Goffman's presentation of self, Victor Turner's communitas, or Pierre Bourdieu's habitus).

Most of the other chapters hint at a broader relevance. Nearly all examine transnational, translocal, or global moves of people, religions, musical instruments, recordings, telecommunications technologies, and discourses. The United Nations figures in several chapters, as its recognition of intangible cultural heritage can provide substantial benefits for a local expressive arts tradition, and modern Indonesia has an especially strong Ministry of Tourism that is involved with local and national musical forms. *Divine Inspiration* has the potential to make a significant impact on a broader field of scholarship, touching on key issues concerning music in the world of Islam, cultural tourism studies, transnational popular music studies, and studies of musical nationalisms.