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# Divine Inspirations: Music And Islam In Indonesia



## Synopsis

Divine Inspirations: Music and Islam in Indonesia brings together the work of 11 international scholars into an unprecedented volume focused on religion and performance in a nation celebrated for its extraordinary arts, religious diversity, and natural beauty. The resulting collection provides a panoramic view of Indonesia's Islamic arts in a variety of settings and communities. Together the authors address how history, politics, spirituality, and gender are expressed through performance and how Indonesian Islamic culture intersects with the ideology and practice of nationalism. Unique and engaging, Divine Inspirations will fascinate readers interested in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Islam, world religions, global discourse, and music, arts and ritual.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Absolutely essential reading for anyone wishing to understand the complex diversity of music in Indonesia today." --Prof. R. Anderson Sutton, School of Music, University of

Wisconsin-Madison"Divine Inspirations illustrates and confounds the perennially contested line between religion and culture in Islam. This pioneering volume reanimates Islamic studies in Indonesia and beyond by revealing the many performative paths to the divine." --Engseng Ho,

author of The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean"The influence of Islam on the arts has long been overlooked in Western studies of contemporary Indonesia. This timely and original book changes that entirely. It will become the standard for the study of the arts in Indonesia and a model for similar studies in the broader Muslim world." --Robert Hefner, Director,

Institute on Culture, Religion, and World Affairs, Boston University"[A] groundbreaking volume...Extremely successful in its aims and will be very well received within the circles of Southeast Asian studies and ethnomusicology." --Indonesia"Essential reading for anyone studying Islam or music in Indonesia, for individuals seeking to understand the diversity of Islamic practices throughout the world, and for those interested in how arts interact with and actively shape the expression of Islam...[with] increasing academic agendas, budgets, and numbers of faculty lines devoted to the study of Islam, Divine Inspirations offers a timely ethnomusicological contribution to this project. --Ethnomusicology

David Harnish is Professor of Ethnomusicology at Bowling Green State University. He is author of *Bridges to the Ancestors: Music, Myth and Cultural Politics at an Indonesian Festival* (2006) and has recorded and/or performed Indonesian, jazz, Indian and Tejano musics with five different labels. Anne K. Rasmussen is Associate Professor at The College of William and Mary, where she also directs a Middle Eastern Music Ensemble. She is the author of *Women, the Recited Qur'an, and Islamic Music in Indonesia* (2010), co-editor of *Musics of Multicultural America* (1997), a former Fulbright senior scholar, and Sultan Qaboos Cultural Center Research Fellow

When we think of Islam, the Middle East first comes to mind, but the nation with the largest Muslim population, over 200 million, is at the junction of the Pacific and Indian Oceans, Indonesia. We Americans know very little about Indonesian Islam and its relationships with the various musical forms of this huge archipelago. For most world music fans, Indonesian music is the stately classical court music of Java, or the bright, fast, dance music of Bali, or perhaps the lyrical Sundanese dance forms from western Java. These are metallophone gamelan musics. This book dispels such a restricted viewpoint wedded to the past and presents the amazing diverse forms of popular and religious musics of today that incorporate both Western electric guitars and Arabic ud, reeds, and drums among other world instrumental adaptations. Indonesian 'musik islam' is performed in Arabic and is of Arabic religious texts; "musik islami" is sung in regional languages and is of a popular form, though religious, including boy-bands. This collection of articles also guides us into the wide variety of Islamic forms, arising from Muslim traders and missionaries from Arabia, India, and Persia, that have adapted syncretistically with the previous importations of Indian Hinduism and Buddhism along with indigenous animism. Indonesia thus is a culturally dynamic land where forces of new conservatism and orthodoxy compete with traditional multiculturalism. As edited by David D. Harnish and Anne K. Rasmussen, the 11 scholarly essays take the reader into unexpected areas,

such as the musical forms of Islamic martial arts (think of Afro-Brazilian capoeira and its own special music). Indonesia is where Sufism, entering the lexicon as late as 1970, is a disparaging term, (as it is associated with saint and guru worship) but which was key in spreading Islam because of its mystical practices so similar to Buddhist and Hindu approaches. The practices of Sufism, if not the formal designation, are still very much active in Indonesia, particularly among those practicing brain mystical music. Two chapters focus on Muslim women, their religious scholarship, and their musical and theatrical performances. Another section discusses Arabo-Indonesian fusions in musical arts and the confusion and disputes regarding the relative importance of religious and ethnic roots. The small print over some 380 pages with some photographs, maps, glossary, and musical scores and lyrics support studies of the historical legacy and politics that affect the musical arts. This one book is an education that will significantly broaden the reader's perspective on Islam and on Indonesia and its music. Its strategic location and resources, especially its spices and wood, once brought the Portuguese, the English, and the Dutch to colonize its shores, but the greatest influence on its people has always been religion. Divine Inspirations will instill a deep appreciation for historical and modern social-cultural changes at a central global crossroad.

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