
REVIEW ESSAY: MODERN CACOPHONIES

Jeremy Wallach. *Modern Noise, Fluid Genres: Popular Music in Indonesia, 1997–2001.* Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008. 344 pp.

Emma Baulch. *Making Scenes: Reggae, Punk, and Death Metal in 1990s Bali.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007. 248 pp.

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The field of Indonesian popular music studies, it seems, has finally come into its own. Once dominated by musicological analyses of gamelan, as well as a kind of salvage anthropology of the archipelago's most obscure and rapidly disappearing traditions, research into Indonesian music has at last made room for those more commercial genres to which most contemporary Indonesians actually listen.¹ But despite a growing body of literature on Indonesian pop, there have been relatively few ethnographic studies of such music. Most of the existing work, including Lockard's excellent overview of politicized Indonesian pop and Sen and Hill's rich examination of musical "alternatives,"² falls squarely into the realm of comparative surveys and

¹ See, for example, W. Fredrick, "Rhoma Irama and the *Dangdut* Style: Aspects of Contemporary Indonesian Popular Culture," *Indonesia* 34 (October 1982): 103–30; P. Manuel and R. Baier, "Jaipongan: Indigenous Popular Music of West Java," *Asian Music* 18,1 (1986): 91–110; P. Yampolsky, "'Hati Yang Luka,' An Indonesian Hit," *Indonesia* 47 (April 1989): 1–17; C. Lockard, *Dance of Life: Popular Music and Politics in Southeast Asia* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998); R. A. Sutton, "Local, Global, or National?: Popular Music on Indonesian Television," a paper presented at the workshop "Media, Performance, and Identity in World Perspective," University of Wisconsin–Madison, 1999; K. Sen and D. T. Hill, *Media, Culture and Politics in Indonesia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); J. Wallach, "'Goodbye My Blind Majesty': Music, Language, and Politics in the Indonesian Underground," in *Global Pop, Local Language*, ed. H. M. Berger and M. T. Carrol (Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi, 2003), pp. 53–86; and M. Bodden, "Rap in Indonesian Youth Music of the 1990s: 'Globalization,' 'Outlaw Genres,' and Social Protest," *Asian Music* 36,2 (2005): 1–26.

² C. Lockard, *Dance of Life*; and K. Sen and D. T. Hill, *Media, Culture, and Politics in Indonesia*.

historical narratives. Music, in these studies, becomes a metaphor for the larger social body, a medium of nation-building and resistance, rather than a lived practice.

Fortunately, two recent, excellent additions to the study of Indonesian popular music do their part to change this: Jeremy Wallach's *Modern Noise, Fluid Genres: Popular Music in Indonesia, 1997–2001* and Emma Baulch's *Making Scenes: Reggae, Punk, and Death Metal in 1990s Bali*. Both books ground their analyses in the politics of space and place and connect the dynamic sounds of contemporary music with larger discourses of class, ethnicity, and nation. Within these works, music emerges as a "serious game"³ of social positioning and discursive practice, a site of identity play and self-making, where the local, the national, and the global are reworked in complex, often unpredictable ways.

Wallach, in his book, depicts music as one of many competing soundtracks to contemporary Indonesian life. Jakartans, he explains, like other big-city Indonesians, are unusually tolerant of noise. But then they would probably have to be. "Jakarta [after all] is not a quiet city" (p. 59). "The omnipresent roar of traffic, the cries of traveling street hawkers, the Islamic call to prayer ... and the sounds of recorded popular music blaring from *warung* [sidewalk cafes]" (p. 59) all compete with one another to create a dense sonic wall, "a noisecape of overlapping envelopes of overdriven, full-spectrum sound" (p. 60). Wallach attributes the Jakartan tolerance for noise, following Sutton,⁴ to the Javanese idealization of *rame*, a term that implies that something is both crowded and boisterous, and fun. Unlike Western cities, with their Muzak-ridden shopping malls, strict noise regulations, and muffled automobiles, Jakarta has left its competing symphonies of sound intact in all their clashing, discordant, and *rame* splendor.

Quite appropriately, then, Wallach has chosen a similar tack with his analysis of Indonesian popular music. In fact, one of the great strengths of Wallach's book is that he avoids the temptation to construct a grand synthesized theory of Indonesian musical aesthetics and chooses instead to focus on "the complex, multilayered meanings of music in the lives of actual people" (p. 251). The book analyzes music in its sites of production and reception, that is, at recording studios, retail outlets, concerts, cafés, and even street-side *warung*, and pays close attention to the polysemic and heteroglossic practices evident in such spaces. For Wallach, popular music is implicated in a variety of social disparities and power differentials, from the spatial politics of the local, the global, and the national, to the class dynamics of a deregulating Indonesian economy. But these tensions are not resolved through music, Wallach argues. Instead, they "are made into objects of play" (p. 246), performed, parodied, and hybridized in reflexive and creative ways that potentially rework such "meta-cultural" forms into "new and unforeseen constellations" (p. 246).⁵

This predilection for heterotopic messiness, however, is at once an important tool of illumination for Wallach and a specialized lens that significantly affects (and

³ S. B. Ortner, *Making Gender: The Politics and Erotics of Culture* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1996), pp. 1–20.

⁴ R. A. Sutton, "Interpreting Electronic Sound Technology in the Contemporary Javanese Soundscape," *Ethnomusicology* 40,2 (1996): 249–68.

⁵ The term "meta-cultural" is borrowed from G. Urban, *Metaculture: How Culture Moves through the World* (Minneapolis, MN, and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

occasionally distorts) his vision of Indonesian music. Wallach seeks out hybrids wherever possible, and gives preference to musical styles that emphasize syncretism and creative appropriation, sometimes at the expense of more “purist” forms of expression. His chapter on “underground” music performance, for instance, gives rather short shrift to the decidedly derivative death metal, hardcore, punk, and thrash that have long dominated the scene in order to focus on such relative musical rarities as Balinese fusion death-metal groups and art-school *dangdut* bands.

In fact, Wallach displays throughout the book a clear preference for *dangdut*, as if it were uniquely equipped to the task of reconciling Indonesia’s discursive struggles. *Dangdut*, a syncretic genre borrowing from Indian film soundtracks, *orkes melayu*, Western pop, and a score of other sources, is everywhere in this book, sometimes quite appropriately (it is, after all, one of Indonesia’s most popular genres of music) and sometimes more problematically—as the main point of reference in an implicit, generally unfavorable comparison with every other variety of pop. No doubt this has something to do with *dangdut*’s “drive for inclusiveness” (p. 208), its hunger for appropriating foreign sounds into new sub-genres, like *dangdut trendy* and *dangdut remix*. *Dangdut* is Indonesia’s most self-consciously hybrid of genres, the perfect audio example of the kind of musical dynamism that most interests Wallach.

Plus, his focus on *dangdut* is a convenient device for drawing attention to the class dimensions of musical practice, a subject that takes center stage in Wallach’s book, and which, I would argue, is one of his most significant contributions to the study of Indonesian music and society. Taking his cue from Pierre Bourdieu,⁶ Wallach argues that popular music has become one of the critical sites through which contemporary class struggle takes place. In his analysis of cassette retail outlets, for example, he shows how foreign pop bands are hierarchically positioned above regional and national groups—both conceptually and spatially—and makes a compelling case for a middle-class preoccupation with the foreign, what Wallach terms “xenocentrism.” *Dangdut*, Wallach claims, holds a particularly denigrated position in the class hierarchy. Equated with the working poor and the rural, the *kampungan* and the *déclassé*, *dangdut* has become both a symbol of working-class national unity and a sonic shorthand for the crass conformity of the imagined masses.

But class practice, Wallach’s work effectively demonstrates, is never so cut and dry. *Dangdut*, he argues, retains a unique place in the national soul despite its degraded status as the music of the masses, with a power to unify the diverse populations of the archipelago behind a borrowed Indian film soundtrack beat, even if its hypnotic sway sometimes catches its upper-class victims unaware. Indonesians of all stripes, he claims, find themselves tapping their feet to its seductive rhythms in spite of themselves, getting down to its popular hits on the dance floor (even if they do so only with heavily ironic intonations), and constructing elaborate ploys, like performance-art-style *dangdut* ensembles, as an excuse to act out their affection for it in public. Having witnessed many such quasi-ironic displays myself, I was impressed with Wallach’s insight into the cognitive dissonance that sometimes underlies class practice, the conflicting sentiments and sensibilities that present themselves in public

⁶ P. Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984).

performance even when their performers would rather not admit that such elements are there.

My principal critique of Wallach's discussion of class is that it is never entirely clear what he means by the term in the first place. He never defines it, and, indeed, never engages in any real critical reflection as to whether "class" is actually the right tool for the job. Tanter and Young, Dick, Lev, Robison, Subianto, Heryanto, and Werner have all questioned the applicability of the concept of class, derived as it was from the work of German theorists concerned with labor exploitation in nineteenth-century England, to the postcolonial nation-state of Indonesia.⁷ Although each of these theorists ultimately decides to continue using the term to describe the diverse social and economic formations developing in the industrializing nation, as I myself do in my own work, they do so reluctantly, ever aware that it implies a historical trajectory Indonesia never actually underwent. Wallach leaves the class concept unexamined, applying it liberally to musical practice without the caution and self-consciousness that one might hope for.

Another important contribution Wallach makes to Indonesian studies is his concept of the "ethic of sociality," the idea, widespread across the archipelago, "that one's well-being depends on the conspicuous presence of others" (p. 138). He develops the concept to combat the increasingly common assumption among academics, as well as in his own initial hypothesis, that an ideology of "modern individualism" is already rampant among Indonesian youth (p. 9), and he uses it throughout the book as a connective thread unifying all forms of production and consumption under a singular cultural logic. Wallach insists that Indonesian music "function[s] primarily as a tool of sociability, for collective, rather than private, aesthetic experience" (p. 9). Late night jam sessions on city sidewalks, in crammed outdoor stadium concerts, or even at rent-by-the-hour recording sessions maintain a sense of community at the center of their practice, which if not unique to Indonesia, at least remains distinctly Indonesian. Although this treatment of music as social expression occasionally wanders (for my taste) a bit too far towards old school Durkheimian functionalism, it is nonetheless an exceedingly useful tool of analysis in looking at what music actually does in Indonesians' daily lives. Wallach's emphasis on sociality within Indonesian musical practice, for instance, helps shed light on the current popularity of underground music forms—with their do-it-yourself (DIY) ethic of peer cooperation and support—among contemporary Indonesian youth.

But like all good theories, Wallach's ethic of sociality both illuminates his way and restricts his gaze. In his otherwise rich, multifaceted analysis of *acara*, or events at which music (generally) takes center stage, he tends to over-emphasize the community-building function of music, evoking the now canonical Victor Turner

⁷ See, in *The Politics of Middle-Class Indonesia*, ed. R. Tanter and K. Young (Glen Waverly, Australia: Aristoc Press Pty. Ltd., 1990), these chapters: R. Tanter and K. Young, "Introduction," pp. 7–21; H. W. Dick, "Further Reflections on the Middle-Class," pp. 63–70; and D. S. Lev, "Intermediate Classes and Change in Indonesia: Some Initial Reflections," pp. 25–43. See also R. Robison, "The Middle Class and the Bourgeoisie in Indonesia," in *The New Rich in Asia: Mobile Phones, McDonalds, and the Middle-Class Revolution*, ed. R. Robison and D. S. G. Goodman (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1996), pp. 79–101. Finally, in Hadijaya, ed., *Kelas Menengah Bukan Ratu Adil* (Yogyakarta: Pt. Tiara Wacana Yogya, 1999), see: B. Subianto, "Kelas Menengah Indonesia: Konsep yang Kabur," pp. 17–24; A. Heryanto, "Kelas Menengah yang Majemuk," pp. 3–16; and S. Werner, "Mendefinisikan Kelas Menengah Baru," pp. 59–62.

concept of “*communitas*.”⁸ “For the brief duration of the song, nervous questions of national identity, Western culture, socioeconomic class, and cultural difference dissolve,” writes Wallach, “into an ecstatic *communitas* of shared musical experience” (p. 172). Ethnomusicologists have made extensive use of this concept of “*communitas*” in recent decades (as does Baulch in her book), and yet I can’t help but think that such frequent recourse to social solidarity is rooted more in the romanticism of musicians (and those who study them) than in the prosaic reality of actual concerts. Having attended some seventy or eighty *acara* myself during my fieldwork in Indonesia, I seldom witnessed such an ecstatic, socially connected state among audience members. In my observation of mostly indie, underground, and rock gigs, audiences seemed to spend most of their time talking with friends, smoking, texting, taking swigs of *anggur merah* near the back of the venue, or otherwise ignoring the vast majority of what occurred on stage. It’s not that *communitas* doesn’t happen at such events. It does—and it’s certainly the effect most musicians long for—but I would suggest that it is much rarer than Wallach’s (or Baulch’s, for that matter) work would have us believe, a sought-after intoxicating effect all the more valued for its rarity.

More compelling is Wallach’s discussion of *acara* as spaces of dynamic social and discursive practice, as, in his words, “an arena in which the competing sociomoral visions of music genres, cultures, nationalities, classes, genders, and taste publics are displayed, parodied, and juxtaposed” (p. 246). In his thick description of musical practice, there is no closure, no final resolution, no ritual forging of a common culture out of the liminal expressions of Indonesian youth. Instead, Wallach’s scrupulously detailed and analytically rich book allows the discordant discourses circulating through the world of Indonesian popular music to remain what they are in their essence: an “exuberant cacophony” (p. 246) of local and borrowed sounds that together compose a dense field of noise.

In *Making Scenes: Reggae, Punk, and Death Metal in 1990s Bali*, Baulch also takes an active interest in the messiness of musical practice, the unresolved contradictions, “the complex interplays of power and nuances of meaning” (p. 7). But whereas Wallach embeds his analysis in sites of musical production and consumption, Baulch focuses her gaze “elsewhere,” (p. 7) in the constructed imaginaries of Balinese musicians.

Her book, an ethnographic account of three quite different youth music communities, the “alternapunk,” death-metal, and reggae scenes of Denpasar and Kuta, Bali, takes aim at the ongoing debate among media scholars as to whether the circulation of media worldwide is leaving a homogenous or hybrid international youth culture in its wake. Baulch sees these disciplinary debates as essentially missing the point, paying too much attention to the form such mediated expressions take instead of what situated social actors actually do with them. Balinese musicians, she claims, “radically territorialize” the global musical aesthetics that come their way, using them as a potent tool for challenging conventional, national, and tourist guidebook

⁸ V. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (New York, NY: Aldine de Gruyter, 1969).

definitions of Balineseness, even when they leave these aesthetics more or less intact.⁹ Their aesthetic appropriations thus complicate such easy binaries as hybrid and homogenous, resistant or accommodating. Besides, she concludes, Balinese, punk, metal, and reggae musicians are ultimately more concerned with self-definition and social positioning than with any clearly articulated politics. They enact a series of “feigned” musical and sartorial “transgressions” (p. 13), playing with sounds and images rather than construct a coherent critique.

Such an insight enables Baulch to move beyond any potential lionizing demonizing of these Balinese music scenes and depict them instead with their inconvenient contradictions still intact. As with Wallach’s book, the great strength of Baulch’s work lies in her willingness to let social practices appear as messy and complicated as they are. But while Wallach over-emphasizes the hybrid, lending greater weight and significance to those musical styles that seem engaged in dynamic processes of fusion and reconciliation, Baulch is perfectly comfortable with the stubbornly purist. As such, death metal emerges in Baulch’s work in a similar way to how *dangdut* appears in Wallach’s, as a measure of authenticity to which the two other scenes she writes about, alternapunk and reggae, are often unfavorably compared.

Death metal’s sense of authenticity, explains Baulch, is rooted in transnational cultural forms rather than an autochthonous Balinese tradition. In the early era of MTV Indonesia, of a rapidly deregulating Indonesian media, metal musicians actively sought out alternative musical expressions that were outside the realm of commercial representation. They used heavy, abrasive sounds, and a dark, gritty personal style, to carve out their own unique, even self-marginalized, position in Balinese society. Far from simply enacting Wallach’s “ethic of sociality,” Balinese “death-thrashers” embraced capitalist “notions of individuality, creativity, [and] self-confidence” (p. 58). They were a kind of neoliberal vanguard, pioneering the core cultural qualities required by a transnational free-market economy long before Indonesia was close to resembling one. And in doing so, Baulch claims, they enacted a type of what Lipsitz calls “strategic anti-essentialism,”¹⁰ rejecting imposed notions of locality in favor of aesthetic practices that “gesture elsewhere, towards a global scene” (p. 12).

I have found Baulch’s concept of “gesturing elsewhere” extremely useful in my own analysis of indie music in Yogyakarta and Bandung,¹¹ and I think it’s quite characteristic of a variety of middle-class Indonesian aesthetic practices. But while I am indebted to Baulch for developing this concept, I also have a couple of minor critiques regarding how she employs it. For one, although Baulch does make passing reference to class as a structuring element of musical practice in her assertion, for instance, that punk, metal, and reggae are part of a “broader bourgeois identity quest (p. 6), class remains largely untheorized and undeveloped in this work. It lurks beneath the

⁹ The phrase “radically territorialize” comes from M. J. V. Olson, “Everybody Loves Our Town: Scenes, Spatiality, Migrancy,” in *Mapping the Beat: Popular Music and Contemporary Theory*, ed. A. Herman, J. M. Sloop, and T. Swiss (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998), pp. 269–89.

¹⁰ G. Lipsitz, *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism and Poetics of Place* (London: Verso, 1994), pp. 62–63.

¹¹ B. Luvaas, “Dislocating Sounds: The Deterritorialization of Indonesian Indie Pop,” *Cultural Anthropology* 24,2 (2009): 246–79.

surface as a barely acknowledged undercurrent, and the reader is left to piece together for herself exactly what is “bourgeois” about such an identity quest.

For another, while reggae and alternapunk musicians also display clear tendencies towards strategic anti-essentialism, Baulch limits her discussion of the practice to death metal, saddling the other two scenes with less flattering interpretive frameworks. By highlighting its obvious complicity with the tourist industry, and, in particular, its depiction of Bali as a generic tropical paradise, Baulch nearly writes off reggae as an irrelevant, indeed dying, accommodationist practice. Reggae musicians essentialize Balinese culture as laidback, breezy, and more or less indiscernible from a whole variety of other, idealized island traditions. In doing so, they work to commodify it, reduce it to a set of easily manipulated tropes good for selling the tourist industry to stressed-out Europeans. But Baulch signs the death warrant on reggae a little too early for my taste. Still the music of choice for expatriate and tourist haunts across the archipelago, as well a not-insubstantial presence within the larger indie music scene, reggae has been an enduring soundtrack of alternative Indonesianness for decades now, and it deserves a more sympathetic treatment.

As for alternapunk, Baulch sees its adherents largely through the eyes of the death-metal aficionados, that is, as rich kids with a penchant for foreign consumer culture, and much of her depiction of them is given to us by way of either explicit comparison with death metal or descriptions of alternapunk by death-metal fans. If reggae and death metal, she explains, are associated with emergent notions of individualism, then alternapunk has been tainted from the start by its association with MTV, and, by extension, the larger consumerist culture of the urban middle class. If death metal has constructed itself as a defiant re-imagining of locality, in stark opposition to the crass conformity of the urban metropole—namely Jakarta—then alternapunk has defined itself by its idealization of the metropolis.

The mall, for Baulch, has become one of the most important sites for the enacting of these differences as spatial practice. Unlike death-metal fans who stay far away from the mall, alternapunks, she explains, seem to spend inordinate amounts of time there, playing video games, lounging on the sidewalk out front, and participating in its consumer-driven spectacle, even as they actively differentiate themselves from it. Whereas “death metal musicians performed localness (presence) via a truant proximity (self-imposed exclusion/ exteriority) from the mall,” she writes, “the alternapunks practice truancy from localness by ritually appearing there” (p. 109). In other words, alternapunks actively participate in global consumer culture, while taking pains to demonstrate otherwise. They are to transnational capitalism what reggae musicians are to the tourist industry, accommodationist in essence, despite a rhetoric of anti-commercialism.

While I agree with most of Baulch’s reading of alternapunk and particularly appreciate how she later takes pains to chronicle its evolution over the course of the 1990s from trend-following Green Day worshippers to more sophisticated (and harder-core) DIYers, I question her apparent acceptance of death-metal readings of alternapunk. Most significantly, I question her very conflation of “alternative” and “punk,” most obviously observable in her coining of the term “alternapunk” (which she acknowledges is not in use within the scene). “Alternative,” I would argue, a shorthand for “alternative rock,” in fact had a different trajectory in Indonesia than did

punk. Alternative (as well as a lighter, more listener-friendly version of punk) was first introduced to Indonesia by MTV and such mainstream teen publications as *Hai* magazine.¹² Underground punk, however, like death metal, first began to circulate in Indonesia in the early 1990s through mail-order catalogues and the border-crossings of itinerant workers, diplomats, and tourists.¹³ Therefore, denigrating depictions of “alternative” fans and bands are common within the crustier, more self-consciously anti-mainstream punk crowd, just as they are among death-metal musicians. That an eventual reconciliation between punk and metal (and noticeably not with alternative rock) would occur in the late 1990s, as Baulch well documents, is thus, perhaps, not as surprising as she implies. The two shared a common preoccupation with anti-essentialism and anti-commercial distinction from the beginning. Baulch, however, obscures this commonality in efforts to dramatize the tensions among these groups. Acknowledging a pervasive ethic of sociality, even between music scenes, as does Wallach, might have been useful here.

That said, it must be acknowledged that Baulch’s analysis of alternapunk is much more nuanced and complex than simple dismissal. Throughout her book, she insists on the active agency of its practitioners, outlining a set of practices that she describes as “deceptive and slippery, refusing to be pinned to conventional notions of oppositions and hybridization” (p. 110). Even if alternapunks idealized the metropolis, for example, they did so in a way that countered mainstream depictions of it as “the epitome of order” (p. 108) and the center of consumerism. For them, Jakarta was the “core of disorder” (p. 108), an idealized chaos of infinite possibility. And from the start, she argues, alternapunk bands sought to rescue alternative music from its debased consumerist dimensions. They instilled it with new meaning, “radically territorialized” it as a site of local identity practice.

This emphasis on dynamic spatial practice, and particularly her attention to how musicians construct alternative modes of locality, is one of the most important theoretical contributions Baulch makes through this book. For her, aesthetics are inseparable from larger discourses of nation, ethnicity, and globalization, and can work to both reinforce the dominant meanings of such discourses or challenge and rework them in a meaningful way. In doing so, she draws from a long tradition within British cultural (and subcultural) studies, but moves beyond the obsession with semiotics evident in such theorists as Hebdige or Clarke to explore the social dimensions of subcultural practice.¹⁴ For her, the sartorial and musical practices of Balinese musicians are not only about differentiating themselves from existing definitions of self and society, but forging new communities, new possibilities for cooperation and cultural production. The flood of media into Indonesia over the last two decades thus becomes a site, as Appadurai has argued, not only for new conceptions of identity to form, but

¹² E. Baulch, “Creating a Scene: Balinese Punk’s Beginnings,” *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 5,2 (2002): 153–77.

¹³ See J. Wallach, “Living the Punk Lifestyle in Jakarta,” *Ethnomusicology* 52,1 (2008): 98–116.

¹⁴ See J. Clarke, “The Skinheads and the Magical Recovery of Community,” in *Resistance through Ritual: Youth Subcultures in Postwar Britain*, ed. S. Hall and T. Jefferson (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 1976), pp. 99–102; and D. Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London and New York, NY: Routledge Press, 1979).

also for new varieties of sociality to develop.¹⁵ Baulch, in this beautifully written and theoretically sophisticated book, outlines some of these possibilities, presenting a complex and appropriately messy account of musical practice as it plays out in the serious games of Indonesian youth.

Both Baulch's and Wallach's books are welcome additions to the growing body of literature on popular culture in Indonesia. Situated within the political and economic transformations of the last twenty or so years, the end of the New Order period and the period of *reformasi* just beyond, they both very successfully use music to "provide a snapshot of a specific cultural moment in all its lived richness" (Wallach, p. 19). Theoretically complex, while eminently readable, these books provide a roadmap for new possibilities in Indonesianist research, one that maintains a concern with developing social theory, but confronts the very untidiness and complexity of real cultural phenomena as experienced from the ground. These are critical texts, not only for academics interested in Indonesian popular music, but for anyone concerned with the larger social and cultural trends shaping the experience of contemporary Indonesian youth.

¹⁵ A. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis, MN, and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).