

Jeremy Wallach, *Modern Noise, Fluid Genres: Popular Music in Indonesia, 1997-2001*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008. xvi + 323 pp., 31 b/w illustrations, tables, appendices, notes, glossary, bibliography, index. CD included. ISBN 9780299229047 (paper), US\$24.95.

It is perhaps more than ironic that one of the world's most populous countries (and one of the most musically diverse countries boasting annual recorded music sales of well over 50 million units) has for decades escaped the attention of scholars interested in popular music. But this situation is about to change. Along with Emma Baulch's pioneering monograph on reggae, punk and metal in Bali, Jeremy Wallach's *Modern Noise, Fluid Genres* is the first book-length ethnographic study of popular music in Indonesia. Researched for the most part in Jakarta in the aftermath of *krismon*, the financial meltdown of the late 1990s, the subsequent downfall of Suharto, and the period of *reformasi* following in its wake, the book covers what may well be remembered as one of the most exciting moments in the history of Indonesian music in the twentieth century.

The book is organized around a variety of emblematic sites, genres and instances in which popular music intersects with a complex set of issues affecting young Indonesian men and women as they "reconcile their disparate allegiances to and affinities for local, global, and national cultural entities" (p. 3). Wallach follows the circulation of *pop Indonesia*, underground rock, and *dangdut* from the moment of its creation and materialization in the recording studio, through its attachment to video images, its distribution through various kinds of retail outlets, its performance on various kinds of stages, and finally, its creative reproduction in informal gatherings. In negotiating this partial albeit crucial segment of the country's soundscape, Wallach joins a number of well-known ethnographic and historical studies that draw on concepts such as "genre" or Greg Urban's notion of "metaculture of modernity" to examine the relationship between popular music and the formation of conflicted modern identities. But what lends *Modern Noise, Fluid Genres* a distinct flavor is the author's insistence that the failures of modernization in Indonesia, far from producing isolated, passive consumers of mass culture, revitalize what he calls an "ethic of sociality." While pop, rock and *dangdut* may differ in the way they enable youth to deal with social difference, they all share a concern with inclusion, however ephemeral and flawed it may be.

After an introductory chapter, Chapter Two situates Jakarta's soundscapes and mediascapes in a highly dichotomized cultural logic dividing the city's population into haves and have-nots, middle-class urbanites and *kampung* low class dwellers; those employed in the formal, fully capitalist economy and those eking out an existence on the fringes of the global market in the "bazaar-based," informal sector. Much of this bifurcation is reflected in the organization of media distribution in the city's myriad cassette retail outlets discussed in Chapter Three: music stores, malls, *warung kaset* (cassette stalls) and mobile cassette vendors. Whereas the first two mainly cater to middle class tastes, the latter attract a clientele mostly interested in *dangdut*. Another site where the class divide between middle-class, life-style oriented pop and sociality-centered *dangdut* is being reproduced are recording studios, the vast majority of which are concentrated in Jakarta. In Chapter Four Wallach examines three such studios and the contrasting ways in which they sonically materialize fantasies of authenticity, community, globality and musical value. While 601 Studio Lab, a well-appointed studio specializing in *dangdut* and pop Indonesia, operates on capitalist principles of cost-efficiency to produce the low-tech aura of "Indonesian" music "close to the people," Paradi Studio carefully negotiates a sound situated somewhere between pop Indonesia standards and a certain "coolness" associ-

ated with the West, easy listening or hegemonic genres such as R & B. Underdog State, finally, is a smaller studio located in Denpasar, Bali, that serves as an important center for the island's underground scene and whose owner combines death metal with Balinese gamelan music. In Chapter Five, Wallach examines the production of video clips in two sharply contrasted locations: a *dangdut* clip in the Riau exhibit of the Taman Mini Indonesia Indah theme park and a rock clip in a kind of non-space. Both clips blend images of local, "Indonesian" spaces (the Riau village) with images of foreignness rooted in Javanese archetypes such as "Dracula" or fire-eaters. Chapter Six is about the everyday sociality and gendered camaraderie offered by Jakarta's innumerable roadside stalls (*warung*), many of which are sites of nightly informal music-making by male youth. Chapters Seven through Ten review a wide range of "live" performances from street musicians and televised award shows to *dangdut* concerts to rock and pop events. All these performances enact the familiar bifurcation of Indonesian popular culture along crisply drawn lines of social, cultural and economic distinction and function as key sites for the negotiation of competing visions of modernity and Indonesia's place within the global order. As such neither is free of internal contradictions of gender, class, and ideology. For instance, while both student-organized music festivals and *dangdut* concerts feature women in prominent performance roles as lead singers and/or dancers, they differ in the way such female participation indexes varying degrees of economic necessity, affluence, and the stability of normative gender relations. In the student festivals, women's dancing resulted from a playful impersonation of glamorous divas, whereas in *dangdut* concerts women's role predominantly consists in providing emotional release for an all-male audience.

Wallach, clearly, has his musical (and political) preferences. Thus, he has little sympathy with pop Indonesia (and I yet have to encounter a Western ethnomusicologist or anthropologist who has) which he considers to be syrupy and generally as "representing acquiescence to global corporate hegemony" (p. 255). Overall, however, Wallach's panorama of Jakarta soundscape is remarkably even-handed. He finds warm words for *pengamen* street musicians despite their often mediocre performance skills; he praises *dangdut*'s inclusiveness, vitality and ability for hybrid expansion; and even pop Indonesia is seen as a vital form of expression which is worthy of scholarly scrutiny if only by virtue of it outselling Western imports and thus becoming a starting point for investigating Indonesia's uncertain future as a nation-state. At the same time these sympathies for the *rakyat kecil*, the "little people," never blur Wallach's sharp analytical focus on the larger social, political and economic factors at work. If in certain moments, the constant shifting between micro-spaces and genres seems to work against the ethnographic "thickness" of Wallach's work, for the most part, such a broad sweep allows him to tease out some of the complexities in the interrelated issues. As he moves across social class, city geography and different musical genres, Wallach complicates the idea of modernity that seems to haunt the history of the New Order as well as the political transition during his fieldwork period. Rather than equating Western influences and globalization with a modernity desired by Indonesian urban youth, Wallach notes that the modernities are multiple and exist in tension with each other. As a result, each genre and each site Wallach visits, reveal a different aspect of a shifting and multiform modernity that may at once be desirable for and rejected by the youth. Ultimately, it is this combination of empathy, analytical rigor, cultural critique and optimism that makes Wallach's book a compelling and enjoyable read.

Indonesia, it is safe to predict, in the coming decades will take its rightful place in the literature on the global music industry as one of the world's most dynamic regions. Jeremy

Wallach's *Modern Noise, Fluid Genres* may well be the book that will give direction to this new literature for years to come.

Veit Erlmann

Helen Rees, ed., *Lives in Chinese Music*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009. 223 pp., 12 b/w photos, illustrations, endnotes with references, index. ISBN 9780252033797 (cloth), US\$45.00.

One of the many challenges in writing about music of China is its great scope and diversity: from instruments, genres, and ethnic groups to historical periods, geo-cultural regions, and conceptual themes. *Lives in Chinese Music* is a timely collection that not only speaks to this scope and diversity but does so in a personal and meaningful way. The edited volume includes seven chapters that each focus on the music and musical life of seven different musicians. This focus on the individual offers a truly human point of view in understanding the music of China.

The seven chapters are divided into three main sections: 1) Regional Focus: The Yangtze River Delta, 2) The Literati, and 3) Music on the Cultural Frontiers. The first section focuses on the connection between music and place. The regional ties to musical traditions are explored through the life stories of two singers. The first chapter, written by Kouwenhoven and Schimmelpenninck, introduces the reader to folk singer Zhao Yongming (1919-2000), whom the authors first met several decades ago in Wujiang County—a bus ride of two and a half hours from Shanghai. They beautifully tell of this first encounter with Zhao, as well as their subsequent meetings with him. Kouwenhoven and Schimmelpenninck provide great insight into the life of Zhao as well as other local musicians with whom they worked over time. Most interesting is how Kouwenhoven and Schimmelpenninck weave the story of Zhao and his folk singing into the changing social and political contexts. The detailed ethnographic account of Zhao's life provides a unique glimpse into the role of *shan'ge* (mountain songs) and folk singing from the perspective of one individual. Kouwenhoven and Schimmelpenninck's great respect for the peoples and traditions they have researched for several decades is evident in their writing.

Jonathan Stock (chapter 2) wrote both with and about Chinese opera singer Shao Binsun, crediting Shao with much of the chapter. Stock acknowledges what they each brought to the project: while Shao provided Stock with "a case study," it on the other hand enabled Shao to publish his life story in an academic, English-language book. This exchange and mutual respect appears throughout the edited volume in related yet distinct ways. The story of Shao's life as an opera singer in Shanghai is connected to the collection's central theme: to examine the individual while recognizing the broader context in which the individual exists or existed. For example, Shao was born in 1919 in a suburb of Shanghai and introduced to the local opera and traditions of the time by his father. Shao chose a career in acting despite the low social status of artists. As he trained in the *huju* (Shanghai Opera) tradition, Shao soon made a name for himself; by the late 1930s and 1940s he began to appear in film and radio. Attempts to modernize local opera were cut short in the 1950s as political and social reforms disrupted artistic production. After being targeted as an artist of a banned art form during the Cultural Revolution, Shao emerged in the 1980s to take on influential administrative roles in the development of local arts.