Musical Fusions in Indonesia and Beyond: Dwiki Dharmawan’s Cosmopolitan Regionalism

Panel: Sustaining Tradition

In 1975 Guruh Soekarnoputra stunned Indonesia’s young elite with an album that seemingly looked outward and inward at the same time, celebrating Indonesia’s regional musical traditions while mixing them with Western-style pop and art music. Taking Guruh’s lead, keyboardist-composer Dwiki Dharmawan, I contend, has done more to constitute a range of “Indonesian” musical practices than any of his compatriots. This paper outlines Dwiki’s diverse musical output in light of current verbal discourses. His music ranges from his ethno-jazz-pop fusion group Krakatau, to collaborations with Islamic pop musicians and a highly fluid music project, “The Soul of Indonesia.” The discourses include liner notes, print and digital commentary, and conversations I have had with Dwiki and his colleagues since 1999. What emerges—and what challenges us to rethink the notion of neat pockets of music styles securely wedded to their places of origin—is a newly complex view of how musicians in Indonesia interact with one another, and how they engage the cosmopolitan world within Indonesia and beyond.