

Javanese Gamelan and the West (Eastman/Rochester Studies Ethnomusicology)

By Sumarsam

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Javanese Gamelan and the West (Eastman/Rochester Studies Ethnomusicology) By Sumarsam

Javanese Gamelan and the West studies the meaning, forms, and traditions of the Javanese performing arts as they developed and changed through their contact with Western culture. Authored by a gamelan performer, teacher, and scholar, the book traces the adaptations in gamelan art as a result of Western colonialism in nineteenth-century Java, showing how Western musical and dramatic practices were domesticated by Javanese performers creating hybrid Javanese-Western art forms, such as with the introduction of brass bands in gendhing mares court music and West Javanese tanjidor/, and Western theatrical idioms in contemporary wayang puppet plays. The book also examines the presentation of Javanese gamelan to the West, detailing performances in World's Fairs and American academia and considering its influence on Western performing arts and musical and performance studies. The end result is a comprehensive treatment of the formation of modern Javanese gamelan and a fascinating look at how an art form dramatizes changes and developments in a culture. Sumarsam is a University Professor of Music at Wesleyan University. He is the author of Gamelan: Cultural Interaction and Musical Development in Central Java (University of Chicago Press, 1995) and numerous articles in English and Indonesian. As a gamelan musician and a keen amateur dhalang/ (puppeteer) of Javanese wayang puppet play, he performs, conducts workshops, and lectures throughout the US, Australia, Europe, and Asia.

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Editorial Review

Review
This book offers a sweeping overview of Javanese musical and cultural interactions with the rest of the world, providing critique and reconsideration of the prevalent themes and ideas that have fascinated scholars for decades. It will be essential reading, not only for Javanists but for scholars of postcolonialism in general. --Sarah Weiss, Associate Professor, Department of Music, Yale University

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