

# Bridges to the Ancestors: Music, Myth, and Cultural Politics at an Indonesian Festival

*David D. Harnish*

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**David D. Harnish : Bridges to the Ancestors: Music, Myth, and Cultural Politics at an Indonesian Festival** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Bridges to the Ancestors: Music, Myth, and Cultural Politics at an Indonesian Festival:

The spectacular Lingsar festival is held annually at a village temple complex built above the most abundant water

springs on the island of Lombok, near Bali. Participants come to the festival not only for the efficacy of its rites but also for its spiritual, social, and musical experience. A nexus of religious, political, artistic, and agrarian interests, the festival also serves to harmonize relations between indigenous Sasak Muslims and migrant Balinese Hindus. Ethnic tensions, however, lie beneath the surface of cooperative behavior, and struggles regularly erupt over which group - Balinese or Sasak - owns the past and dominates the present. "Bridges to the Ancestors" is a broad ethnographic study of the festival based on over two decades of research. The work addresses the festival's players, performing arts, rites, and histories, and considers its relationship to the island's sociocultural and political trends. Music, the most public icon of the festival, has been largely responsible for overcoming differences between the island's two ethnic groups. Through the intermingling of Balinese and Sasak musics at the festival, a profound union has been forged, which participants confirm has been the event's primary social role. Bridges to the Ancestors effectively reveals the Lingsar festival as a site of cultural struggle as the author explores how history, identity, and power are constructed and negotiated. He addresses the fascinating interaction between music and myth and the forces of modernity, globalization, authenticity, tourism, religion, regionalism, and nationalism in maintaining "tradition."

About the Author David D. Harnish is associate professor of ethnomusicology and director of Balinese gamelan Kusuma Sari at Bowling Green State University in Ohio.