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Call to Prayer: Creative Liturgy in Transcultural Islamic Practice

Department of Music, University of Richmond

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Beyond Exoticism

TUCKER-BOATWRIGHT FESTIVAL 2018-19
OF LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

The Department of Music Presents

Call to Prayer:

Creative Liturgy in Transcultural Islamic Practice

A Performance, Demonstration, and Discussion

with Jessika Kenney, Yunus Khaerisman,
and Anne Rasmussen

Monday, October 1, 2018

7:30 p.m.

Perkinson Recital Hall

AS.RICHMOND.EDU/TUCKER-BOATWRIGHT

PROGRAM

Yunus Khaerisman, Jessika Kenney, and Anne Rasmussen lead an evening of performance, demonstration, and discussion of transcultural Islamic music/sonic practice. Yunus Khaerisman will discuss and demonstrate aspects of the Islamic Call to Prayer (*Azan*). Anne Rasmussen will discuss and provide examples of global variations in the *Azan*. Jessika Kenney will demonstrate forms of creative musical liturgy in the Persian and Indonesian traditions of Islam. The demonstrations will include a Javanized *Adhan/Azan* or call to prayer, interpretations of sacred poetry, such as the “Suluk Kutub” of mid-19th-century poet Ronggosasmita, and recitations of “Kidung Rumeksa Ing Wengi” attributed to Sunan Kalijaga, one of the nine Sufi saints who brought Islam to Java in the 15th century, CE. The presentation will end with a group discussion.

Vocalist and Composer **Jessika Kenney** began independently studying and participating in Indonesian music in the 1990’s. Her teachers include the late Nyi Supadmi and the late Ibu Euis Komariah. She also has studied Iranian *radifs* and classical poetry with Ostad Hossein Omoumi since 2004, and continues to perform with him in many contexts, such as the tribute to great Jewish-Iranian musician Morteza Khan Neydavud at Royce Hall in Los Angeles in 2008, and at the “World in Trance” Festival at Roulette in Brooklyn in 2018. Her own compositions and improvisations include “Atria” for gamelan and a *ghazal* of Attar, as well as “Aestuarium”, an experimental liturgy on a psalm of lamentation written and performed with her husband the violist/composer Eyvind Kang. Jessika has also worked closely with scholar/translators Fatemeh Keshavarz and Red Pine. Currently she is developing “Headless Translations” for solo voice and electronics. Kenney teaches Voice and Composition at CalArts and lives in Pasadena, CA.

Yunus Khaerisman is an outspoken, energetic juggernaut of the Muslim community. A native-born Indonesian who spent his adolescent years in the streets of Texas, Brother Yunus has taken it upon himself to be the bridge servicing the gaps of whatever community he has found himself immersed in. Brother Yunus was classically trained in Islamic studies

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at the Madrasah of East Java, where he first began his journey into the memorization and understanding of the Qur'an. He then served the Islamic Society of Greater Houston (ISGH) as a youth mentor, Qur'an teacher, and Jumma Khateeb within ISGH's circuit of *masajids*. He also served as an acting Imam for the Houston Indonesian community during Masjid Istiqlal Houston's inception. Brother Yunus is currently a Team Leader of CenterDC, an ADAMS (all-Dulles American Muslim society) *khateeb*, Qur'an mentor at IMAAM center, and regularly gives much needed Islamic mentorship with various youth leaders around Washington DC, Maryland, and Virginia. Having studied under high-caliber scholars such as Sh. Isa Parada (IslamInSpanish), Sh. Abdullah Oduro (Bayyinah), Sh. Abdul Nasir Jangda (Qalam Institute), and Imam Suhaib Webb (CenterDC), Brother Yunus strives to continuously be a means of education. Inspired by these role models, Brother Yunus dedicates his work to the need to bridge the gap between Islamic literacy and applicable relevancy.

Anne K. Rasmussen is professor of ethnomusicology and Bickers Professor of Middle Eastern Studies at the College of William and Mary where she also directs the William and Mary Middle Eastern Music Ensemble. Her research encompasses music of the Middle East and Islamicate world and multiculturalism in the United States. Recipient of two Fulbright Fellowships for research in Indonesia, and a Sultan Qaboos Cultural Center Fellowship for research in Oman, her award-winning publications include numerous articles and chapters, and three books: *Women's Voices, the Recited Qur'an, and Islamic Music in Indonesia*, (California 2010); *Divine Inspirations: Music and Islam in Indonesia*, co-edited with David Harnish (Oxford 2011); *The Music of Multicultural America: Performance, Community, and Identity in the USA*, co-edited with Kip Lornell. (Schirmer 1997, 2nd, revised, expanded edition, 2016, U. P. Mississippi). She has been elected to the board of the Society for Ethnomusicology three times, including as president (2015-2017).

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2018-2019 Tucker-Boatwright Festival of Literature and the Arts: Beyond Exoticism

Global history reveals the many ways that nations have viewed cultures different from their own as exciting or exotic, often adopting pieces of those cultures into their own. This history is particularly evident in the arts: music, film, theater, and visual arts have all drawn inspiration from creations viewed as unique or different — in a word, as “other.” As artists and scholars have long argued, this practice is socially and politically complex, with motivations ranging from the reinforcement and validation of nationhood to more individualized attempts to bolster cultural capital. So, at what point does admiration and inspiration become appropriation and misunderstanding?

Beyond Exoticism, this year’s Tucker-Boatwright Festival presented by the Department of Music, investigates expression across difference and recognizes the ethical ambiguity and aesthetic complexity this entails. Musical performances, public panels, film screenings, and a cross-disciplinary academic conference will highlight the dynamic and cosmopolitan histories of the many global cultures with which Western orientalists were once enamored, while also expanding its geographic scope beyond those cultures to examine the ways that contemporary artists maintain, resist, reject, and critique the impulse to exoticize others, or lend cultural legitimacy to themselves.

The Department of Music is proud to partner with many campus and community organizations to present the festival. Our on-campus partners include Modlin Center for the Arts; University Museums; Chaplaincy; Department of Religious Studies; Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; International Film Series; and International Education. Our community partners include Richmond Symphony Orchestra, Sound Arts Richmond Festival (co-sponsored by the Virginia Tourism Board), and the Hindu Cultural Center.



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