

Public Seminar ‘Music and Islam: Opening the Heart’

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This unique event, hosted at IAIS Malaysia, was introduced by Professor Mohammad Hashim Kamali (Chairman and CEO, IAIS Malaysia) and by Professor Syed Farid Alatas (Department of Malay Studies, National University of Singapore, NUS). Three scholars gave detailed presentations of their research which included audio and video exemplars: Mohd Anis Md Nor (Cultural Centre, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur) talked about “Islamic Aesthetics in Southeast Asian Music and Dance,” Syed Farid Alatas presented a lecture entitled “Zafin and the Sufi Tradition,” while this writer spoke about “*Samā’* Spiritual Audition: Training the Ear of the Heart.” These three presentations were punctuated by two authentic musical interludes: a *Taqāsīm al-ʿud* by Syeikh Radzie Maula Daweelah and a *ney* recital by Mahdi Aghily. Fresh vistas on the significance and permanent value of musical practice and movement in Islamic civilisation were well received by listeners which included also Professor Syed Farid Alatas’s students from NUS. The event was coorganised by IAIS Malaysia, the Department of Malay Studies and the University Scholars Programme (both NUS) and Kuala Lumpur’s Fajr Symphony.