Regional Networks and Islamic Popular Music in Indonesia GIGI Religious Albums from 2004 to 2017

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Abstract

This article examines GIGI's religious recordings between 2004 and 2017 as a history of cultural circulation connecting regional musical experience with Indonesia's national popular music industry. It argues that the band's contribution lay in sustaining Islamic themes through a recognizable pop-rock idiom while linking recorded repertoires to Ramadan performance, broadcasting, and changing distribution networks. Using historical heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography, the study brings recordings into dialogue with contemporary journalism, a band biography, and retrospective testimony. Three overlapping phases emerge: the rearrangement of established religious songs in 2004–2006; the expansion of original composition and collaborative production in 2008–2012; and renewed engagement with earlier repertoires in 2015–2017. A regional perspective identifies the Bandung–Jakarta connection and the circulation of ngabuburit as mechanisms through which locally grounded practices entered wider Indonesian public life. The evidence also reveals interreligious cooperation, charitable distribution, and social criticism as dimensions of religious music production. Rather than treating the recordings as a linear progression or an uninterrupted annual series, the article interprets continuity as the repeated adaptation of repertoire, institutions, and performance settings. Its contribution is to place GIGI's religious catalogue within Indonesian regional cultural history without confusing commercial visibility, musicians' intentions, and demonstrable audience effects.

Keywords: *Indonesian regional history; Islamic popular music; GIGI; Bandung; Ramadan; cultural circulation*

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Introduction

In 2004, GIGI released *Raihlah Kemenangan*, bringing a recognizable Indonesian pop-rock sound to songs associated with Islamic devotion. The historical significance of this recording was not simply that a successful band entered a religious market. It lay in the encounter between an inherited repertoire, a collective musical identity, and the institutions through which Ramadan became an audible public occasion. By 2017, religious recordings had become a recurrent part of the band's work, encompassing rearrangements, new compositions, collaborations, and returns to earlier songs. This trajectory makes GIGI a useful case for examining how regional cultural experiences acquire national circulation without losing all traces of their particular social origins.[1]

The central problem is how this continuity was produced. Religious themes alone cannot explain why the recordings retained a distinctive identity across changing personnel, production arrangements, and modes of distribution. Nor does an album list explain how songs moved between everyday listening, television, retail spaces, and live performance. This article therefore asks how GIGI's religious catalogue developed between 2004 and 2017, what sustained its pop-rock character, and how its production and circulation connected Bandung and West Java with Jakarta's music industry and wider Indonesian publics. The geographical emphasis concerns relationships between places rather than the assumption that every recording expresses a single, bounded regional culture.

Indonesia's religious popular music long preceded GIGI. Bimbo, Koes Plus, Nasida Ria, and Rhoma Irama had already established different ways of bringing Islamic themes into commercially circulated music. Their work complicates any account in which religious expression begins with bands in the early 2000s. GIGI's distinctive intervention must instead be located within a longer history of rearrangement and the movement of devotional materials across genres. Its recordings did not replace this history; they depended on songs and expectations produced within it. The relevant historical change was a widening of the musical forms and institutional settings through which familiar religious messages could be heard.[2]

A regional approach is especially productive because the national industry did not operate independently of local musical relationships. GIGI's formation drew on musicians whose careers connected Bandung and Jakarta, while its later religious performances adopted the Sundanese term ngabuburit for the time spent waiting to break the fast. These connections place the band within a history of mobility, professional association, and cultural mediation. Regional history here is not an inventory of

[1] GIGI, *Raihlah Kemenangan*, 2004, sound recording. Natisha Andarningtyas, "GIGI Luncurkan Album Religi Baru Jelang Puasa," *ANTARA*, May 15, 2017, https://www.antaranews.com/berita/629336/gigi-luncurkan-album-religi-baru-jelang-puasa.

[2] Denny Sakrie, *100 Tahun Musik Indonesia* (Jakarta Selatan: GagasMedia, 2015). Alviansyah Pasaribu, "Bimbo dan Koes Plus, Lahirnya Pop Religi Indonesia (1)," *ANTARA*, July 14, 2015, https://www.antaranews.com/berita/506946/bimbo-dan-koes-plus-lahirnya-pop-religi-indonesia-1.

birthplace or a claim to exclusive cultural ownership. It examines how situated experiences, practices, and networks entered wider circuits, and how those circuits subsequently sustained or transformed them.

Existing studies have illuminated important parts of GIGI's religious work. Leli Rohimah examined preaching messages in *Jalan Kebenaran*, while Rizki Fadillah studied the religious content of *Amnesia*. Adi Setiadi investigated messages in *Mohon Ampun*. Their attention to lyrics establishes the importance of doctrinal and moral meaning, but their questions do not reconstruct changes across the full period or explain the geography of circulation. Sri Wahyuni's analysis of cohesion and its implications for poetry teaching similarly foregrounds language. These studies remain valuable interlocutors because they clarify what the songs communicate, even where their analytical units differ from those of a historical reconstruction.[3]

Other approaches help connect textual meaning to musical production. Yana Erlyana and Marsella Giovani's study of album artwork addresses visual presentation, while Septiawan Fadly Candra's research on the capitalization of religious pop places commercial processes at the centre of inquiry. Adib Hidayat's biography supplies a narrative of the band's development and professional relationships. Read together, this scholarship and documentation suggest that neither lyric analysis nor commercial explanation is sufficient on its own. A history of religious albums must consider the relationships between musical interpretation, inherited material, collective labour, and the places where music circulated.[4]

The research gap is thus specific rather than absolute. GIGI has not been absent from academic discussion; what remains insufficiently integrated is the relationship between chronological development and regional mediation. This article contributes a historical account in which Bandung–Jakarta networks, Ramadan performance, and distribution arrangements form part of the explanation for continuity and change. Its novelty lies in bringing these dimensions into one source-critical argument, rather than claiming the discovery of an unknown band or a wholly unprecedented religious genre. It also revises the assumption that sustained engagement necessarily means an uninterrupted annual sequence of new albums.

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[3] Leli Rohimah, "Analisis Isi Pesan Dakwah pada Album Jalan Kebenaran Group Band Gigi" (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2009), https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/18905. Rizki Fadillah, "Analisis Isi Pesan Dakwah dalam Album Amnesia Group Band Gigi" (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2014), https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/43511. Adi Setiadi, "Pesan Dakwah dalam Lirik Lagu-Lagu Religi Grup Band Gigi Album Mohon Ampun" (UIN Raden Intan Lampung, 2018), https://repository.radenintan.ac.id/3269/. Sri Wahyuni, "Kohesi pada Lirik Lagu Grup Band Gigi dalam Album Religi Mohon Ampun dan Implikasinya dalam Pembelajaran Menulis Puisi" (Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, 2016), https://eprints.ums.ac.id/45228/.

[4] Yana Erlyana and Marsella Giovani, "Analisis Cover Artwork Album-Album GIGI Band," *Jurnal Titik Imaji* 1, no. 2 (2018): 90–101, https://doi.org/10.30813/.v1i2.1411. Septiawan Fadly Candra, "Kapitalisasi Musik Pop Religi di Indonesia (Studi Kasus antara Tahun 2004–2014)" (UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2016), https://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/23093/. Adib Hidayat, *GIGI: Peace, Love & Respect, Stadion Mandala Krida Yogyakarta, 11 Januari 2008* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2009).

The argument is that GIGI maintained religious work by adapting established cultural resources through several institutions while preserving a recognizable ensemble sound. Early rearrangements linked musical memory to rock performance; subsequent compositions and collaborations widened thematic and production possibilities; later recordings renewed the catalogue and made earlier relationships audible again. This process was neither a simple advance from traditional to modern music nor a withdrawal from commercial culture into devotion. It was an ongoing negotiation within Indonesian popular music, in which religious meaning, professional survival, and regional connections could reinforce one another without becoming identical.

Method

The study employs the historical method through heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. Its principal objects are recordings released within 2004–2017 and the documentary traces of their production, promotion, and performance. Heuristics involved assembling physical and digital musical materials, a band biography, press reports, and relevant scholarship. A cassette of *Raihlah Kemenangan* located in Bandung's Cikapundung antique market provides a material point of reference for the early catalogue. Official digital recordings extend access to musical content, but their upload dates are treated separately from the dates of original release. Historical reconstruction depends on this distinction, particularly where later uploads reproduce older recordings.[5]

External criticism establishes the identity and date of each source and the relationship between an item and the event it documents. A contemporary release report, a later account by a musician, and an official upload have different evidentiary functions. Release chronology is checked against dated reporting rather than inferred from online availability. This procedure places *Mohon Ampun* in 2015, distinguishes *Raihlah Kemenangan* from its subsequent repackage, and identifies *Aku dan Aku* as a seven-track release rather than assuming that all religious products had the same format. The catalogue is consequently approached as a historically variable set of releases, not a uniform series.[6]

Internal criticism considers both credibility and purpose. Musicians' statements illuminate creative intentions and remembered experiences, but launch interviews also

[5] Kuntowijoyo, *Pengantar Ilmu Sejarah* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2013), 49. Abd Rahman Hamid and Muhammad Shaleh Madjid, *Pengantar Ilmu Sejarah* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Ombak, 2018), 43. GIGI, *Raihlah Kemenangan*, 2004, sound recording.

[6] Statements by Armand Maulana at a press conference, Kemang, Jakarta, June 10, 2015, reported in Fakhmi Kurniawan, "Rilis Album Religi, Armand GIGI: Kembali ke Konsep 12 Tahun Lalu," *detikHot*, June 10, 2015, https://hot.detik.com/music/d-2938751/rilis-album-religi-armand-gigi-kembali-ke-konsep-12-tahun-lalu. Leli Rohimah, "Analisis Isi Pesan Dakwah pada Album Jalan Kebenaran Group Band Gigi" (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2009), https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/18905. Qommarria Rostanti, "Armand Puji Toleransi Dewa Budjana terhadap Islam," *Republika*, July 31, 2012, https://ramadhan.republika.co.id/berita/m81aev/armand-puji-toleransi-dewa-budjana-terhadap-islam.

publicize products and establish a favourable public identity. Contemporary journalism preserves statements close to the events, yet repeated stories can derive from the same press conference. Agreement between reports therefore does not automatically constitute independent corroboration. Sales claims, charitable commitments, and descriptions of social benefit are attributed to their reporting context. They are not treated as independently audited outcomes unless supporting documentation establishes that status.

Retrospective testimony is used with particular care. Armand Maulana's published account of religious music, dated 26 April 2022, supplies remembered connections between Bimbo, Ramadan, and GIGI's early religious work. It is a written retrospective testimony, not evidence of a research interview on that date. Statements recorded by journalists at album launches are likewise cited with the date and location available in the report, with the publication identified as their mediated source. No independently conducted interview is claimed where its date cannot be securely established within the evidentiary limit.[7]

Interpretation connects chronology with questions of agency, mediation, and historical scale. Songs are read as cultural artefacts whose religious meanings arise through lyrics, arrangement, repertoire selection, and performance setting. Thematic interpretation does not substitute for evidence of listener response. Geographical connections are established through documented professional networks, venues, and distribution arrangements, while claims of regional influence remain proportional to the available record. Historiography then organizes these findings into three overlapping phases and a discussion of cultural circulation, interreligious labour, and the relationship between devotion and commerce. These are interpretive stages of historical inquiry, not claims to survey research, experimental measurement, or comprehensive ethnography.

Results

Bandung and Jakarta in the formation of a musical network

GIGI was established in Jakarta on 22 March 1994, with Armand Maulana on vocals, Dewa Budjana and Aria Baron on guitars, Thomas Ramdhan on bass, and Ronald Fristianto on drums. The debut album *Angan* appeared that year. The band's emergence brought together professional experience and personal relationships that extended beyond the city in which it formally began. Bandung mattered through the careers and associations of several members; Jakarta provided the setting in which these relationships became an enduring recording ensemble. This distinction allows the band to be located geographically without reducing its formation to a competition between two claims of origin.[8]

[7] Armand Maulana, "Musik Religi: Dulu dan Kini," *Pophariini*, April 26, 2022, https://pophariini.com/musisi-menulis/musik-religi-dulu-dan-kini-oleh-armand-maulana/.

[8] Adib Hidayat, *GIGI: Peace, Love & Respect, Stadion Mandala Krida Yogyakarta, 11 Januari 2008* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2009).

The early network was built through musicians' work as performers, studio players, and collaborators. Budjana's professional activities intersected with Thomas and Ronald, while Baron helped connect Armand to the developing ensemble. These relationships explain more than the eventual distribution of instrumental roles. They show that a band could emerge from overlapping forms of musical employment and sociability. The movement between Bandung and Jakarta joined local musical experience to opportunities within the national recording industry. GIGI's formation is therefore better understood as the consolidation of a network than as the isolated creation of an entirely new musical community.[9]

Personnel changes subsequently tested that consolidation. Baron left the active formation; Opet Alatas and Budhy Haryono contributed during the later 1990s, when the ensemble underwent further changes. Thomas returned, and Gusti Hendy joined in 2004. These transitions matter to the religious catalogue because *Raihlah Kemenangan* appeared at a moment when the band was renewing its internal configuration. Yet a personnel change should not itself be made the cause of a religious initiative without documentary support. The more securely established point is that religious recordings developed within an ensemble already accustomed to reorganizing its labour while maintaining a recognizable collective identity.[10]

This history also qualifies the idea of a purely West Javanese band. The members' careers and backgrounds connected several regions, and the ensemble's sound drew on musical idioms whose circulation was international. Regional specificity resided in particular relationships and practices, not a homogeneous identity shared by every participant. Bandung and West Java constituted important reference points; Jakarta concentrated recording and publicity opportunities; musicians brought experiences formed elsewhere into their cooperation. The band's later religious work should be read within this mobile geography. It joined locally meaningful cultural resources to a national industry through the everyday decisions of named performers.

Inherited religious repertoires and the first recordings in 2004–2006

Raihlah Kemenangan established the religious strand of GIGI's recorded work in 2004. Its repertoire included songs such as "Ketika Tangan dan Kaki Berkata," "Dengan Menyebut Nama Allah," "Rindu Rasul," and "Tuhan." The selection connected the ensemble with religious songs already familiar to Indonesian listeners. The principal intervention was arrangement: existing materials were performed through GIGI's vocal, guitar, bass, and drum idiom. This retained religious subject matter while changing the

[9] Adib Hidayat, *GIGI: Peace, Love & Respect, Stadion Mandala Krida Yogyakarta, 11 Januari 2008* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2009).

[10] Adib Hidayat, *GIGI: Peace, Love & Respect, Stadion Mandala Krida Yogyakarta, 11 Januari 2008* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2009).

texture and energy of its presentation. Reinterpretation, rather than an unqualified claim to original composition, is central to understanding the release's historical character.[11]

The choice of familiar material linked personal musical memory with a wider repertoire. In his 2022 retrospective, Armand recalled hearing Bimbo during Ramadan and connected that experience with the decision to make GIGI's first religious album. He also described consultation among the Muslim members and Budjana, who is Hindu. This testimony offers an explanation of intention, not a complete record of every production decision. Its significance is that remembered listening and interreligious cooperation appear together in a participant's account of the project. Religious recording was presented as compatible with the professional identity the members had already established.[12]

The album also entered commercial circulation successfully. In October 2005, detikHot reported a platinum award for *Raihlah Kemenangan*, with Armand referring to 200,000 copies. The planned award presentation was associated with a ngabuburit performance at Masjid Al-Ittihad in Tebet, Jakarta. These details connect the recording's reported commercial recognition to a religiously situated performance space. They establish visibility and a public claim of substantial circulation; they do not establish how individual listeners understood the songs or whether listening produced measurable religious change. The distinction between circulation and reception is essential to an accurate account of the album's importance.[13]

The 2005 repackage, associated with additional songs including "Perdamaian" and "I'tiraf," extended the initial recording rather than marking a complete break from it. Its existence explains why contemporary accounts could count religious releases differently. A revised product can sustain the same project while occupying another position in a commercial catalogue. For historical purposes, such products should be distinguished from wholly new collections, even when publicity treats each as another album. The repackage demonstrates that repetition and supplementation were present at the beginning of GIGI's religious work, before later returns to the catalogue made this practice more explicit.[14]

Pintu Sorga followed in 2006. Contemporary reporting identified ten Islamic songs and described arrangements ranging across pop, rock, punk, and new wave. The title song had lyrics by Taufiq Ismail, connecting the recording with a writer already associated with religious popular song. Other familiar materials included "Sajadah Panjang," "Kota Santri," and "Ada Anak Bertanya Pada Bapaknya." The release continued the practice of putting inherited repertoire into a contemporary band setting,

[11] GIGI, *Raihlah Kemenangan*, 2004, sound recording.

[12] Armand Maulana, "Musik Religi: Dulu dan Kini," *Pophariini*, April 26, 2022, https://pophariini.com/musisi-menulis/musik-religi-dulu-dan-kini-oleh-armand-maulana/.

[13] "Raihlah Kemenangan GIGI Kantongi Platinum," *detikHot*, October 27, 2005, https://hot.detik.com/music/d-470202/raihlah-kemenangan-gigi-kantongi-platinum.

[14] Leli Rohimah, "Analisis Isi Pesan Dakwah pada Album Jalan Kebenaran Group Band Gigi" (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2009), https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/18905.

while presenting a broader range of arrangements. The chronological relationship is important: diversification occurred within the continuity established by *Raihlah Kemenangan*, rather than through the abandonment of religious recording after an isolated experiment.[15]

Accounts of the title melody's wider circulation point to another geographical dimension. A later discussion associates "Pintu Sorga" with a melody circulating beyond Indonesia, while contemporary publicity noted its resemblance to "Bang Thoyib." These connections suggest adaptation across repertoires, but resemblance does not establish a secure chain of transmission. The available evidence supports treating the song as a point of cultural encounter and acknowledging Taufiq Ismail's lyrical contribution. It does not justify assigning an uncontested national origin to the melody or reconstructing undocumented movements between the Middle East and Indonesia.[16]

Composition and collaborative distribution in 2008–2012

Jalan Kebenaran, released in 2008, marked a significant change in the balance between rearrangement and composition. Contemporary reporting described the material as the band's own work and identified Budjana as the composer and Armand as the lyricist of the title song. The report also noted that GIGI had not issued a religious album in the preceding year. This combination is historically revealing: a change in creative practice followed a break in religious album production, rather than an uninterrupted annual cycle. The recording illustrates deliberate renewal within a continuing project.[17]

The themes expanded toward moral reflection. Titles including "Pemimpin Budiman," "Dosa Ini," "Karunia-Mu," and "Yang Tak Terpikirkan" place ethical leadership, wrongdoing, divine generosity, and reflection within the religious repertoire. These themes did not displace worship or faith; they broadened the situations in which religious meaning could be articulated. The title song's presentation as a prayerful hope for human improvement reinforces this relationship. The recordings permit an analysis of thematic scope, but titles alone cannot supply every nuance of lyrical meaning.

[15] "GIGI Buka Ramadan dengan Pintu Sorga," *detikHot*, August 30, 2006, https://hot.detik.com/music/d-665408/gigi-buka-ramadan-dengan-pintu-sorga. GIGI, *Pintu Sorga*, 2006, sound recording.

[16] Iswara N. Raditya, "Lirik Lagu Pintu Sorga by GIGI: Chord Gitar & Siapa Penciptanya?," *Tirto.id*, April 11, 2022, https://tirto.id/lirik-lagu-pintu-sorga-by-gigi-chord-gitar-siapa-penciptanya-gq6Y. "GIGI Buka Ramadan dengan Pintu Sorga," *detikHot*, August 30, 2006, https://hot.detik.com/music/d-665408/gigi-buka-ramadan-dengan-pintu-sorga.

[17] Statements by Armand Maulana, Jakarta, August 14, 2008, reported in "Ramadhan 2008, GIGI Cari Jalan Kebenaran," *detikHot*, August 14, 2008, https://hot.detik.com/music/d-988677/ramadhan-2008-gigi-cari-jalan-kebenaran. GIGI, *Jalan Kebenaran*, 2008, sound recording.

Interpretation therefore remains anchored in the songs and corroborating statements rather than a speculative narrative of the members' psychological development.[18]

The Bandung–Jakarta network also participated in performance circuits beyond recording. GIGI's concert at Stadion Mandala Krida, Yogyakarta, on 11 January 2008 demonstrated the mobility of its established repertoire and the capacity of live performance to gather a geographically situated public. Adib Hidayat's Rolling Stone report documented the event and its presentation. The concert was not itself a religious album launch, so it should not be used as a direct measure of religious reception. Its contextual value lies in showing the broader performance infrastructure within which the band's religious work developed. The same professional ensemble operated across regular and religious settings.[19]

Amnesia in 2010 introduced an explicitly collaborative production and retail arrangement. ANTARA reported cooperation with Carrefour, participation by Tohpati, Iis Dahlia, Omelette, Dewi Gita, and Solitaire Addict, and a planned donation of Rp10,000 from each Rp40,000 CD through Yayasan Masyarakat Peduli Indonesia. The report identified national retail distribution and linked promotional performances to selected outlets, including Kiara Condong in Bandung. These arrangements located religious recording within commercial spaces that could also accommodate charitable commitments. They provide evidence of an announced scheme, rather than proof that the projected donation totals were subsequently achieved.[20]

The historical significance of this arrangement lies in the route by which the recording reached listeners. A supermarket distribution network provided an alternative point of encounter with music and placed religious products alongside other consumer goods. Collaboration widened the project beyond the work of the regular ensemble alone. Neither development requires assuming that artistic identity disappeared. Instead, *Amnesia* shows that continuity could be maintained through changing institutional partnerships. The spatial connection between Jakarta's promotional setting, a Bandung outlet, and national retail circulation makes the release particularly relevant to a regional history of the music industry.

The thematic vocabulary of *Amnesia* included worship, repentance, fasting, reward, and prophetic knowledge, with titles such as "Beribadah Yok," "Tobat," "Puasa," "Pahala," and "25 Nabi." Its compilation character warns against treating every track as a newly composed GIGI work. The historical object is the assembled release and the collaboration through which it circulated. Its place in the sequence rests on bringing

[18] GIGI, *Jalan Kebenaran*, 2008, sound recording. Statements by Armand Maulana, Jakarta, August 14, 2008, reported in "Ramadhan 2008, GIGI Cari Jalan Kebenaran," *detikHot*, August 14, 2008, https://hot.detik.com/music/d-988677/ramadhan-2008-gigi-cari-jalan-kebenaran.

[19] Adib Hidayat, "Sihir GIGI: Budjana, Armand, Thomas, dan Hendy Menyihir Rakyat Yogyakarta Tepat pada 11 Januari," *Rolling Stone Indonesia*, February 2008, 36–42.

[20] "Gigi Gandeng Carrefour Promosikan Album Terbaru," *ANTARA*, August 14, 2010, https://www.antaranews.com/berita/216167/gigi-gandeng-carrefour-promosikan-album-terbaru. GIGI, *Amnesia*, 2010, sound recording.

religious material together within a new production and distribution framework. This distinguishes thematic continuity from the authorship, age, and recording history of each individual song.[21]

Aku dan Aku appeared in 2012 as a seven-track release combining two new songs with previously circulated material. Its emphasis on care for orphans gave concrete institutional form to the repertoire's social dimension. Contemporary accounts connected the album to Rumah Yatim and television, particularly Para Pencari Tuhan on SCTV. These relationships brought together recorded music, an organized charitable network, and a Ramadan broadcasting context. The songs could therefore circulate through several settings whose purposes overlapped but were not identical: entertainment, publicity, moral reflection, and fundraising.[22]

The Jakarta Post described a plan to distribute CDs through Rumah Yatim counters and music stores and reported the musicians' claim that sales would benefit orphans. This is evidence of how the project was publicly organized and justified. It should not be converted into an independently established total of beneficiaries or money transferred. The same reporting also linked charity with professional survival. That conjunction matters because it resists a simple division between sincere religious commitment and commercial strategy. In this episode, access to a charitable network was presented as both a means of helping others and a way to circulate a recording under difficult competitive conditions.[23]

Catalogue renewal and collective memory in 2015–2017

Mohon Ampun was released on 10 June 2015. Launch reporting described ten songs, nine of which had appeared in GIGI's earlier religious albums, while the title song had previously been performed by Vina Panduwinata. This was a return to reinterpretation, but the material now included a repertoire already associated with GIGI itself. The release combined familiarity with renewed arrangement. Its title foregrounded repentance, while its other songs brought earlier religious themes back into circulation. Chronologically, the release belongs to 2015; the year of a later digital upload cannot be substituted for the album's release date.[24]

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[21] Rizki Fadillah, "Analisis Isi Pesan Dakwah dalam Album Amnesia Group Band Gigi" (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2014), https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/43511. GIGI, *Amnesia*, 2010, sound recording.

[22] Qommarria Rostanti, "Armand Puji Toleransi Dewa Budjana terhadap Islam," *Republika*, July 31, 2012, https://ramadhan.republika.co.id/berita/m81aev/armand-puji-toleransi-dewa-budjana-terhadap-islam. Niken Prathivi, "GIGI: Humanitarian Chords," *The Jakarta Post*, August 12, 2012, https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2012/08/12/gigi-humanitarian-chords. GIGI, *Aku dan Aku*, 2012, sound recording.

[23] Niken Prathivi, "GIGI: Humanitarian Chords," *The Jakarta Post*, August 12, 2012, https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2012/08/12/gigi-humanitarian-chords.

[24] Statements by Armand Maulana at a press conference, Kemang, Jakarta, June 10, 2015, reported in Fakhmi Kurniawan, "Rilis Album Religi, Armand GIGI: Kembali ke Konsep 12 Tahun Lalu," *detikHot*, June

Budjana did not participate in this album's recording because of another professional commitment. Contemporary reporting placed the explanation in scheduling and production circumstances, not religious disagreement. The remaining members worked with an additional musician, and the arrangements were prepared within a short period. This episode complicates any account that makes interreligious cooperation an uninterrupted image of the same four people in every recording. Cooperation persisted as a relationship, even when one member was absent from a particular production. The distinction between personnel continuity and continuity of the collective project is crucial.[25]

The release also demonstrates why rearrangement deserves historical analysis rather than dismissal as creative exhaustion. Songs acquire associations through earlier recordings and performances; returning to them mobilizes that accumulated familiarity. New arrangements can renew a catalogue's presence while keeping the ensemble's past available to listeners. In GIGI's case, the practice connected the first religious recordings with a later stage of professional life. It does not prove that every return produced a radically new meaning, but it shows how maintaining a repertoire could itself become part of the band's strategy of continuity.

Setia Bersama Menyayangi dan Mencintai was launched in Jakarta on 15 May 2017. ANTARA described eight previously released songs alongside a new GIGI rendition of Rhoma Irama's "Adu Domba." The title track brought active members together with Aria Baron, Ronald Fristianto, Budhy Haryono, and Opet Alatas. This recorded reunion made relationships extending across the band's history part of the album's production. Former members were participants in an audible collective memory, rather than merely names in a commemorative account.[26]

"Adu Domba" joined this backward-looking dimension to a contemporary social concern. At the launch, the band associated the choice with antagonism among fellow Indonesians, and reporting documented contact with Rhoma Irama to seek permission for the new version. The recording brought a song from another genre and generation into GIGI's catalogue as an ethical response to perceived division. The source supports that stated intention. It does not establish that the recording resolved conflict, nor does it

10, 2015, https://hot.detik.com/music/d-2938751/rilis-album-religi-armand-gigi-kembali-ke-konsep-12-tahun-lalu. GIGI, *Mohon Ampun*, 2015, sound recording.

[25] Statements by Armand Maulana and Thomas Ramdhan at a press conference, Kemang, Jakarta, June 10, 2015, reported in Fakhmi Kurniawan, "Dewa Budjana Absen di Album Religi GIGI," *detikHot*, June 10, 2015, https://hot.detik.com/music/d-2938957/dewa-budjana-absen-di-album-religi-gigi.

[26] Natisha Andarningtyas, "GIGI Luncurkan Album Religi Baru Jelang Puasa," *ANTARA*, May 15, 2017, https://www.antaranews.com/berita/629336/gigi-luncurkan-album-religi-baru-jelang-puasa. Statements by Armand Maulana and Dewa Budjana at the album launch, Jakarta, May 15, 2017, reported in Natisha Andarningtyas, "GIGI Terkesan pada Setia Bersama Menyayangi dan Mencintai, karena...," *ANTARA*, May 15, 2017, https://www.antaranews.com/berita/629362/gigi-terkesan-pada-setia-bersama-menyayangi-dan-mencintai-karena. GIGI, *Setia Bersama Menyayangi dan Mencintai*, 2017, sound recording.

justify connecting the song to a particular episode unless the relevant documentation explicitly does so.[27]

The 2017 release therefore combined remembrance, reworking, and social criticism. Its historical position cannot be reduced to the next item in an annual list. Contemporary reports counted it as a ninth religious album, but such counting includes products whose formats and relationships to previous material vary. The more reliable analytical approach is to identify the particular releases, their dates, and the kinds of work each performed. Over the period, GIGI sustained religious activity through albums, repackaging, individual songs, collaborations, and performance. The variation is part of the finding, rather than an inconvenience to be removed from the chronology.[28]

Discussion

Regional circulation as a historical explanation

The evidence places regional history at the centre of the explanation without turning GIGI into an exclusively regional institution. Bandung and Jakarta served different but connected functions. Professional relationships associated with Bandung helped form the ensemble, while Jakarta supplied a recurring location for production publicity and industry collaboration. Performance and distribution then connected these centres with other Indonesian places. These relationships show how a national musical presence was assembled from situated networks. National circulation did not emerge from a geographically empty market; it depended on musicians, intermediaries, venues, and institutional decisions located in particular settings.

Ngabuburit offers the clearest example of a practice moving between scales. Armand's retrospective associates the touring concept with a Sundanese term and recalls encountering its use outside Sundanese-speaking areas. His account is valuable testimony to how a musician understood the tour's cultural reach, but it cannot establish that GIGI alone nationalized the word. The stronger conclusion is that the band participated in the wider circulation of a regional expression by using it to identify repeated Ramadan performances. This interpretation recognizes cultural agency while avoiding an unsupported claim of exclusive origin or influence.[29]

The important transformation was also institutional. Waiting to break the fast could be organized as a concert setting and linked to religious address, sponsorship, and local permission. In this form, a familiar temporal practice became a framework for gathering a public around music. Yet memories of restrictions on Ramadan concerts cannot establish a uniform national legal prohibition without a relevant official record.

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[27] Natisha Andarningtyas, "Di Balik Lagu Adu Domba Versi GIGI," *ANTARA*, May 15, 2017, https://www.antaranews.com/berita/629357/di-balik-lagu-adu-domba-versi-gigi.

[28] Natisha Andarningtyas, "GIGI Luncurkan Album Religi Baru Jelang Puasa," *ANTARA*, May 15, 2017, https://www.antaranews.com/berita/629336/gigi-luncurkan-album-religi-baru-jelang-puasa.

[29] Armand Maulana, "Musik Religi: Dulu dan Kini," *Pophariini*, April 26, 2022, https://pophariini.com/musisi-menulis/musik-religi-dulu-dan-kini-oleh-armand-maulana/.

They demonstrate participants' recollection of negotiating performance conditions. Regional analysis is strengthened by this qualification: the practical arrangements of particular events matter more than a sweeping claim about what an entire country permitted at one time.

Ramadan supplied a repeated calendar through which records and performances could return to public attention. This temporal rhythm interacted with geographical mobility. A tour carried music between places, while annual anticipation made previously recorded songs newly appropriate to particular moments. The catalogue's durability was therefore supported by both movement and recurrence. This explanation differs from an account in which a successful release simply creates a lasting audience by itself. It identifies the work required to make religious music repeatedly present: arranging, assembling products, securing partners, and placing songs within recognizable occasions.

This regional perspective also guards against treating Jakarta as the sole source of cultural change. The capital's industry infrastructure mattered, but musicians carried memories, habits, and relationships into it. Bandung's role was not limited to supplying talent for metropolitan production; a Sundanese practice became part of the vocabulary through which a national religious performance circuit was described. At the same time, the evidence does not allow every feature of the music to be assigned to West Java. Regional history is most persuasive when it explains connections and asymmetries rather than asserting that a cultural product has one authentic location.

Continuity and change beyond a linear account of innovation

The three-phase chronology demonstrates that change did not proceed in one direction. The early reliance on established songs was followed by a stronger emphasis on composition and collaboration, then by renewed rearrangement of both inherited and internally familiar materials. These movements occurred within the continuing pop-rock identity of the ensemble. GIGI's history thus challenges the assumption that development must mean progressively less reliance on earlier repertoire. Historical change can take the form of returning to the past under different institutional circumstances, with different participants and a different accumulated relationship to listeners.

Bhabha's concept of cultural hybridity provides a useful interpretive vocabulary for the negotiation between musical idioms and cultural meanings. Applied cautiously, it draws attention to the making of identities through encounter rather than the simple addition of two fixed traditions. GIGI's recordings should not be described as mixing an unchanged Western rock with an unchanged Indonesian Islam. Both terms conceal prior histories of adaptation. The case instead shows performers rearranging materials already circulating in Indonesian public life. Hybridity is useful here as a question about negotiation, not as evidence that a particular audience accepted the resulting meanings.[30]

[30] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

The source material also requires a historically proportionate account of pioneering. Bimbo, Koes Plus, Nasida Ria, and Rhoma Irama prevent a credible claim that GIGI invented religious popular music. The band's contribution was more specific: it sustained Islamic material through the sound and professional practices of an established pop-rock ensemble. Its early success widened the visible possibilities for religious songs in the band format. The subsequent appearance of other religious releases is compatible with this contribution, but chronological succession alone does not establish direct causation. A history of influence requires more than the statement that one product appeared before another.[31]

Likewise, consistency must be defined historically rather than rhetorically. The 2008 report acknowledged the absence of a religious album in the previous year, and the 2015 launch reporting referred to a break in production. These sources undermine an unqualified claim of a new religious album every year. They do not undermine the broader finding that religious work persisted. A recurring repertoire, individual songs, and Ramadan performance could sustain engagement during intervals between albums. This distinction allows continuity to be explained as an enduring practice, while retaining the interruptions and variations visible in the record.[32]

Musical identity was itself maintained through work rather than preserved automatically. The instrumentation of voice, guitar, bass, and drums provided a framework for recognizing the band across different materials, but arrangements still required choices about rhythm, texture, and emphasis. The same religious song could be placed in a more energetic setting without ceasing to address devotion. This does not mean that sound is religiously neutral in every setting. It means that the case reveals an historically situated effort to make a particular musical idiom appropriate to religious expression, with claims of appropriateness negotiated through performance and publicity.

Religious agency and the institutions of commercial music

The production record brings individual conviction and institutional mediation into the same frame. Musicians selected repertoire and interpreted religious themes, but recordings reached publics through labels, broadcasters, retailers, sponsors, and charitable organizations. These intermediaries were not merely channels added after

[31] Alviansyah Pasaribu, "Generasi Gigi hingga Wali, Perjalanan Pop Religi Indonesia (3)," *ANTARA*, July 17, 2015, https://www.antaranews.com/berita/507558/generasi-gigi-hingga-wali-perjalanan-pop-religi-indonesia-3. Septiawan Fadly Candra, "Kapitalisasi Musik Pop Religi di Indonesia (Studi Kasus antara Tahun 2004–2014)" (UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2016), https://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/23093/.

[32] Statements by Armand Maulana, Jakarta, August 14, 2008, reported in "Ramadhan 2008, GIGI Cari Jalan Kebenaran," *detikHot*, August 14, 2008, https://hot.detik.com/music/d-988677/ramadhan-2008-gigi-cari-jalan-kebenaran. Statements by Armand Maulana at a press conference, Kemang, Jakarta, June 10, 2015, reported in Fakhmi Kurniawan, "Rilis Album Religi, Armand GIGI: Kembali ke Konsep 12 Tahun Lalu," *detikHot*, June 10, 2015, https://hot.detik.com/music/d-2938751/rilis-album-religi-armand-gigi-kembali-ke-konsep-12-tahun-lalu.

artistic creation. They affected the settings in which music became available and the purposes attached to its circulation. Carrefour cooperation in 2010 and Rumah Yatim participation in 2012 demonstrate how access and moral claims could be organized together. The recording was at once a cultural artefact and an object moving through institutional relationships.

Candra's emphasis on capitalization helps explain why religious songs should be examined within commercial processes. However, commercial circulation does not by itself resolve the question of sincerity. A product may be sold while also carrying devotional meaning or financing an announced charitable project. Conversely, a religious theme does not remove the need to distinguish intention from outcome. GIGI's case is most informative when these relationships remain visible. Market arrangements could help sustain a musical project, while the musicians publicly explained that project through moral and spiritual commitments. The historian need not reduce either explanation to a disguise for the other.[33]

The regional implications of distribution are equally significant. Retail and charitable networks offered points of access that extended beyond a conventional music shop or concert audience. They connected particular launch events to geographically dispersed outlets and organizations. Such connections reveal how cultural reach was constructed through institutions. They also establish the limits of the evidence: a planned network is not a map of actual purchases, and a production target is not a verified sales total. The history concerns documented arrangements of circulation unless further records demonstrate how completely those arrangements were realized.

The distinction between public testimony and private motivation remains necessary throughout. Launch statements are historical evidence because they record how musicians represented their work at a particular time. They can show that care for orphans, repentance, or social harmony was part of the project's public language. They cannot fully disclose each participant's interior beliefs. A humane historical account respects this limit rather than making spirituality an unobservable explanation for every creative decision. Agency is better demonstrated through identifiable actions: agreeing to a project, composing, rearranging, collaborating, and choosing how a recording should circulate.

Interreligious cooperation and the limits of audience claims

Budjana's participation gives the religious catalogue a distinctive social dimension. A Hindu guitarist worked within an ensemble producing songs explicitly associated with Islam. Contemporary 2012 reporting presents this collaboration as valued by the members themselves. The historical evidence therefore supports an account of interreligious cooperation in artistic labour. It does not require describing the religious content as diluted or supposing that all participants held the same devotional

[33] Septiawan Fadly Candra, "Kapitalisasi Musik Pop Religi di Indonesia (Studi Kasus antara Tahun 2004–2014)" (UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2016), https://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/23093/.

relationship to it. Musical collaboration could accommodate difference while maintaining the specificity of the songs' Islamic subject matter.[34]

The 2015 absence clarifies this interpretation further. Because reporting attributed Budjana's nonparticipation to another commitment, the episode should not be turned into a narrative of religious exclusion. It also prevents the historian from presenting cooperation as an unchanging visual symbol. A collective relationship can persist through practical interruptions, additional personnel, and separate professional activities. In 2017, collaboration with former members similarly showed that continuity depended on relationships extending beyond the current formation. These episodes make toleration and solidarity observable as forms of working together, rather than merely admirable values assigned to a band after the fact.[35]

Thematic breadth reinforces this social dimension. Songs about worship and repentance coexisted with concerns about ethical leadership, care for others, and antagonism among fellow citizens. "Adu Domba" is particularly instructive because the band explicitly attached its selection to a contemporary perception of social division. Such a choice demonstrates how an older song could be reactivated as commentary on a later situation. The continuity lies in the ethical concern; the change lies in the context of renewed performance. This is a historically grounded form of interpretation that does not require inventing a new event to explain the recording.

These findings also identify the limits of claims about listeners. Sales reports indicate circulation, television placement indicates an opportunity for encounter, and concert activity indicates public performance. None alone measures religious understanding, moral improvement, or reconciliation. Musicians' hopes and listeners' experiences are related but distinct objects of inquiry. Studies of preaching messages and lyrical cohesion clarify communicative possibilities, while a reception history would require evidence from listeners themselves. The present account establishes that GIGI created and sustained channels for religious and social meanings to circulate; it does not convert those channels into a universal account of what Indonesians felt or believed.

The historiographical contribution is therefore an explanation of mediation. GIGI's catalogue connects regional relationships, inherited repertoire, collective labour, and national circulation across a defined period. This approach complements textual

[34] Qommarria Rostanti, "Armand Puji Toleransi Dewa Budjana terhadap Islam," *Republika*, July 31, 2012, https://ramadhan.republika.co.id/berita/m81aev/armand-puji-toleransi-dewa-budjana-terhadap-islam. "Toleransi Dewa Budjana," *Liputan6*, October 10, 2005, https://www.liputan6.com/showbiz/read/222708/toleransi-dewa-budjana.

[35] Statements by Armand Maulana and Thomas Ramdhan at a press conference, Kemang, Jakarta, June 10, 2015, reported in Fakhmi Kurniawan, "Dewa Budjana Absen di Album Religi GIGI," *detikHot*, June 10, 2015, https://hot.detik.com/music/d-2938957/dewa-budjana-absen-di-album-religi-gigi. Statements by Armand Maulana and Dewa Budjana at the album launch, Jakarta, May 15, 2017, reported in Natisha Andarningtyas, "GIGI Terkesan pada Setia Bersama Menyayangi dan Mencintai, karena...," *ANTARA*, May 15, 2017, https://www.antaranews.com/berita/629362/gigi-terkesan-pada-setia-bersama-menyayangi-dan-mencintai-karena.

scholarship by asking how meanings acquired repeated public presence, and it complements industrial analysis by keeping musicians' choices and social commitments in view. The resulting history is neither a celebration of uninterrupted success nor an account in which commercial structures erase agency. It is a reconstruction of how continuity was actively produced through changing arrangements within Indonesian cultural life.

Conclusion

GIGI's religious recordings between 2004 and 2017 developed through the interaction of inherited songs, a recognizable pop-rock identity, collective agency, and changing institutions of circulation. *Raihlah Kemenangan* and *Pintu Sorga* established the reinterpretation of familiar religious material; *Jalan Kebenaran*, *Amnesia*, and *Aku dan Aku* expanded composition, collaboration, and socially oriented distribution; *Mohon Ampun* and *Setia Bersama Menyayangi dan Mencintai* renewed earlier repertoires and relationships. These phases overlap rather than form a hierarchy of artistic advancement. Returning to existing songs was part of the process by which the catalogue remained available and meaningful.

The regional focus explains how this trajectory connected situated practices with wider Indonesian publics. Bandung–Jakarta professional networks helped form the ensemble, while ngabuburit linked a Sundanese expression and Ramadan temporality to mobile performance. Retail, broadcasting, and charitable arrangements extended those connections without making regional origins disappear. The contribution is an integrated history of these relationships, showing that religious popular music developed through movement between places and institutions as well as through changes in lyrics and sound.

The evidence supports the conclusion that religious work became an enduring dimension of GIGI's identity, while requiring a distinction between sustained engagement and annual album production. Interreligious cooperation, social criticism, and charitable commitments formed part of that history, alongside commercial adaptation. The article's novelty lies in explaining these dimensions together through regional circulation and source-critical chronology. GIGI's importance was not the invention of religious music but the continuing renewal of its possibilities within Indonesian pop-rock, a process whose public reach can be documented without overstating its effects on every listener.

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