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## Tilghman set to become first U.S. dangdut star

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*Dangdut* music lovers will soon have an American as an idol. His name is Arreal Tilghman, a citizen of Delaware, Philadelphia, and winner of "Dangdut in America" singing competition.

"I love all kinds of music, but dangdut is really special," he told reporters in Jakarta on Friday night.

Tilghman said he was in a process of producing his first *dangdut* music album here with several local talents, which include senior figures such as Trie Utami acting as his singing coach.

"I'm really interested in becoming a *dangdut* star," Tilghman said as quoted by Antara news agency.

The debut album, Tilghman said, would be titled "Dangdut in America" and scheduled to come out in November with eight songs, two of which in English.

Rissa Asnan, the owner of an event organizer responsible for the competition, said that Tilghman was chosen as the winner after beating 90 contestants in the U.S.

"There were several other really-good contestants, but Arreal was the most audacious. That was why we chose him," Rissa said.

Singing coach Trie Utami said Tilghman's strong black music background produced a unique cross-over with dangdut music.

*Dangdut* is an Indonesian music genre which mixes Indian, Arabic and Western music styles. It was initially labeled lower class music, but this image has gradually changed over the years.

"All through these years we have been singing foreign songs and now, here he is, singing our music with his own style. This is something new," she said.

On Friday, Tilghman won a second award for his love of *dangdut*. This time from Indonesia's Museum of Records (MURI), handed to him by chairman of the House of Representatives Agung Laksono for becoming the first foreign singer to record *dangdut* music.

"I'm a politician, not a musician, but as an Indonesian, I am proud of efforts such as this," Agung said.(and)  
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