

LAU, FREDERICK

Professor, University of Hawaii at Manoa/Chinese University of Hong Kong, HONG KONG

Panel 2.6: The Global Village Soundscape: A Matrix of Cultural Encounters

Chinese Rock Music Now: The Case of Second Hand Roses

Chinese musicians embraced rock music since the open-door policy in the 1980s. The current rock scene, however, takes on a different persona. This paper examines the recent rock band Ershou meigui (Second Hand Rose). It has been credited for establishing a unique brand of “national” (minzu) rock style by overtly incorporating Chinese regional musical elements and references. Focusing on this band, this paper explores issues of individuality, creativity, regional identity, and performativity against the backdrop of China emerging as a global force and great nation by way of its economic success. It discusses the concept of rock in contemporary China and the impact of this transnational genre on Chinese youth culture. How does this new cultural form enable musicians to construct, shape, and imagine meanings for post-socialist China? Most importantly, I investigate how the rock ideology intersects with the dynamic relationship between contemporary China and the world.