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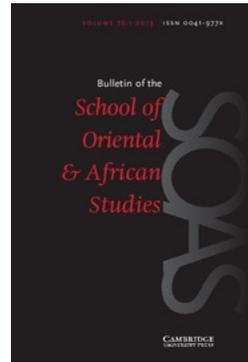
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**Donna Lee Kwon: *Music in Korea*. xxii, 202 pp. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. ISBN 978 0 19 536827 7.**

Keith Howard

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DONNA LEE KWON:

*Music in Korea.*

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Sitting within the mushrooming “Global Music Series” edited by Bonnie Wade and Patricia Shehan Campbell, of the University of California, Berkeley and the University of Washington respectively, Kwon’s volume provides an overview of music in the Korean peninsula that is aimed primarily at university and college students, or as a resource for teachers to use in preparing classes. Although intended as a slim and easy-to-access title, *Music in Korea* is nonetheless substantial, the 220 pages being complemented by a full-length audio CD with 38 tracks, and with the text illustrated by numerous photos, tables, notations, and even activity guides to steer readers through. Rather than adopt the standard South Korean approach, which would divide court from folk traditions considered genre by genre, and Korean from Western-influenced art and popular musics, Kwon takes a more holistic approach. The consideration is of both South and North Korea, and the author notes that too often accounts only consider music in South Korea, leaving this to stand for “Korea” in totality. The author’s ambition is to be applauded, but a fundamental problem remains, namely, access to North Korea. Kwon has made one brief visit to North Korea, and the result is that she is at times touristic and at other times relies heavily on limited published or recorded materials, whereas her account of music in South Korea is highly personal and viewed through the lens of extensive fieldwork and training.

Kwon explores three intersecting themes: transnationalism, cultural continuity, and music and cultural politics. Within the first, she notes issues of space and territory, and how Korea has responded to foreign cultural influences, notably from China over many centuries and, since the late nineteenth century, from Europe and America with the import of Western music. Within the second theme, although the preservation movement in South Korea is a central pillar of continuity, modernization forms something of a fulcrum leading as much to change. Arguably, Kwon overstates the continuity of old folksongs in North Korea, and she might have done better to see the two states as diverging from a common position in 1945 or thereabouts and moving in very different directions. The third theme embraces reunification, as a goal towards which Koreans North and South strive, but feeds back into the politics of preservation and development or change.

The broad themes establish a structure for the six chapters. The first chapter considers politics and society, seen through the prism of a Korea divided into two parts, while the second takes us back to the royal court, seeing it as a “cultural conduit” that fits the widely held view that the “great tradition” (of Confucian/literati culture) has over time filtered down to all East Asian people. The third, “The politics of preservation and revival in instrumental music”, offers a relatively short section on revival coupled to much more about key folk and professionalized folk genres, including shaman ritual music, and how these continue to flourish in South Korea. This leads to a consideration of Korean vocal styles in the fourth chapter, which like a boomerang moves from folksongs back to professional genres such as the UNESCO Masterpiece-anointed *p’ansori* (epic storytelling through song) and vocal music genres of the literati and the court. Popular music, and some consideration of art music composition, comes in two final chapters, the first largely

historical and the second moving to a contemporary consideration that includes K-Pop and hip-hop.

It is in the nature of trying to compress the music of a whole country – in this case, two very different states each with highly developed but distinct approaches to music – into a pocket-sized book that details are at times glossed over and readers are left wanting more. To allow further research, references to pertinent literature in the text would be helpful; this is a comment that should be aimed not just at *Music in Korea* but at other volumes in the Global Music Series – a comment that is surely becoming more pertinent now that the books in the series have become default texts for our degree students. On a personal level, more referencing is also essential because when reading I found myself questioning whether there really was evidence for some statements or noting unreferenced sources that appeared to sit beneath sections of text. In sum, then, while Kwon provides a clear and concise account that sensibly foregoes the standard Korean genre listing for cross-cutting themes, the volume should not be regarded as a full and comprehensive statement about Korean music.

**Keith Howard**

SOAS, University of London

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#### SOUTH-EAST ASIA

MERLE C. RICKLEFS (ed.):

*A New History of Southeast Asia.*

xxxi, 536 pp. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

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This book is the overdue successor to the major historical work on South-East Asia, D.G.E. Hall's *History of Southeast Asia*. Though updated on several occasions, Hall's work has become outdated in more than one respect, but as Merle Ricklefs points out in his introduction, writing a completely new version simply exceeded the capacities of a single scholar. However, with historians from Singapore's National University joining the project, the burden could be shared between several pairs of shoulders. The way this *New History of Southeast Asia* was produced thus follows the example of the project started by David Steinberg and most recently continued by Norman Owen and their *Search for Modern Southeast Asia*, but has a much broader scope than its American forerunners which focus solely on the modern period.

The *New History* begins with a chapter on the ethnic and social background of the whole region, before early forms of state formation are introduced. The third chapter is dedicated to the classical states, a term quite useful for Pagan Burma and Angkor Cambodia, but less so for regions like the Philippines or Vietnam. In the fourteenth century, these classical states fell into decline, while South-East Asia was exposed to a new set of external influence posed by Islam and (later) Christianity. The changes are tackled in chapters 4 (religion), 5 (political developments) and 6 (groups of foreigners) respectively. In chapter 4, the reader is given