

Giovanni Giuriati (ed.), *Patterns of Change in the Traditional Music of Southeast Asia*, Udine, Nota, pp. 246, 2022, ISBN 9788861632233.

Patterns of Change in the Traditional Music of Southeast Asia edited by Giovanni Giuriati presents original ethnographic research by Lorenzo Chariofonte, Ilaria Meloni, Francesca Billeri, Véronique de Lavenère, Giorgio Scalici, Vincenzo Della Ratta, and Luca Pietrosanti, early career Italian and French ethnomusicologists who have engaged in long periods of fieldwork using the methods of participant observation and practice-based research to explore the adaptation and change of traditional musical cultures in insular and mainland Southeast Asia. The seven chapters draw on specific case studies from Indonesia (two from Java and one from Sulawesi), Burma/Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. The written text of the volume is complemented by musical notation, color photographs, and QR codes that link to audio and video references.

As Giuriati explains in his introduction, Indonesia, particularly the musical cultures of Java, Sunda, and Bali, has received a staggering amount of attention in national and international ethnomusicological scholarship, while the music of Laos, Burma/Myanmar, Cambodia, and ethnic minorities of Vietnam have received relatively limited scholarly attention (p. 6). The scholars in this volume research repertoires, rituals, and genres in Southeast Asia that have yet to be fully investigated. Through their meticulous documentation of musical texts and the contexts in which they are produced and performed, they explore how individual performers and communities are actively adapting and reinterpreting performance traditions to suit local understandings of globalization, modernity, religiosity, as well as engage with overlapping ethnic, regional, national, and gendered identities. Research for many of the chapters in the volume included long periods of apprenticeship with local practitioners of musical traditions. Engagement in bi-musicality (Hood 1960), participant observation, and practice-based methodology contribute to an understanding and analysis of the music from emic perspectives.

Giuriati notes that the concept for the volume developed from a panel presenting new research on the musical cultures of Southeast Asia European Association for Southeast Asian Studies (EuroSEAS) in 2015 and was finalized during the seminar *Patterns of change in the Music of oral tradition: research on archive and inquiry into contemporaneity*, held in Venice in 2017 (p. 5). Apart from Véronique de Lavenère, all the contributing authors to *Patterns of Change in the Traditional Music of Southeast Asia* were trained in ethnomusicology at the Università di Roma “La Sapienza”, emphasizing the importance of this institution for Southeast Asian ethnomusicology. This is particularly noteworthy given that Italian ethnomusicology has historically focused on the research of Italian folk music. Italian musicologists and ethnologists researched folk forms like Basilicata funeral laments and Apulian tarantism in the 1950s and 1960s, inspiring an enduring interest in the role of music in ritual catharsis and altered states (De Martino 1958 and 1961). Giuriati explains that this focus on Italian folk music also sensitized Italian ethnomusicologists

logists to the importance of oral tradition and the way music was practiced independently from what was notated or written: « when our generation was trained in the 1970s and 1980s, in Italian folk music one could still find strong evidence of what we used to call “oral mentality” and musical practices autonomous from the written and urban tradition. I believe that this kind of approach was transferred later on to Italian scholars who carried out their research abroad and looked at musical cultures with the same lenses, able to recognize traces [...] of an oral mentality while avoiding an essentialist approach» (p. 16). Università di Roma “La Sapienza” has also maintained a long-standing agreement with Southeast Asian conservatories like ISI Yogyakarta that has facilitated graduate student research in countries in Southeast Asia where it can be notoriously difficult and time-consuming for foreign researchers to obtain formal research permits.

Lorenzo Chiarofonte’s chapter examines the role of music for nat pwe ceremonies in Myanmar in the urban centers of Yangon and Mandalay. These ceremonies often feature possession of transsexual mediums by nats or spirits and music along with the dances of mediums are how spirits acknowledge that they are satisfied with the offerings that they have received. Chiarofonte links the concept of everchanging tradition to the Burmese concept of *thamazin* – living transmitted knowledge – that allows for masters of particular lineages the ability to manipulate repertoires and introduce their innovations that are then passed on as traditional within their lineages (p. 31). Chiarofonte demonstrates through his examination of the music associated with nat spirit possessions events that he documented in Myanmar in 2013 and 2017-2018 that lyrics and melodic lines are more interchangeable while rhythmic parts of the songs are more adherent to a traditional structure. This, he notes, is because it is the drums that are directly linked to the control of possession dances (p. 50). However, Chiarofonte concludes that the corpus of music connected to the celebration of the cult of the thirty-seven is a continuously moving object, always in the process of transformation. Ilaria Meloni’s chapter explores innovation in the structure of the performance practice of Javanese *wayang kulit* from the perspective of the role of *sindhèn* or female singers that accompany the performance. Meloni trained as a foreign *sindhèn*, or *sindhèn bule*, and participated as a performer in many Javanese *wayang kulit* performances during her fieldwork. Meloni documents the expansion of the comedic interludes of Javanese *wayang kulit* from 2013 onwards and notes the insertion of new repertoires and musical styles including *campursari* and *dangdut* during the *limbukan* as well as how the puppeteer engages the *sindhèn* in *banter* and encourages the appearance of rivalries and intrigue between the *sindhèn* to captivate the attention of the audience. Francesca Billeri’s chapter examines how Khmer music and theater that previously had a ritual function have been reinterpreted by mass media, heritage creation, and tourism. She investigates how this process of adaptation occurs through the exploration of case studies of wedding music, *phleng kar*, and the reinterpretation of the theatrical forms of *lkhaon yike* and *lkhaon bassac* by Cambodian national television and an NGO-supported troupe. Véronique de Lavenère’s chapter addresses the dialectic

between national policies and local practices in Laos and explores the articulation between the music of the Lao majority and the ethnic minorities of the Hmong and the Lolo. She also explores the creation of the Laos national music that attempts to represent different ethnic groups and blend court music with folk music. Giorgio Scalici's chapter investigates the musical history of the Wana of Sulawesi, attempting to understand how and when Balinese gongs began to be incorporated into Wana ritual, healing, and funeral music. This process leads him to explore Wana concepts of mythical time and historicity which he comes to understand is cyclical rather than linear and conclude that the gongs may have been introduced through a process of Indonesian transmigration that began in the early 20th century.

The last two chapters are case studies that explore the inculturation of traditional music in Vietnam and Java into Catholic liturgical music. Vincenzo Della Ratta's chapter investigates the inculturation of Jurai music of the Central Highlands of Vietnam instigated by Catholic missionaries in the early 20th century. The Catholic Church has written extensively about the process of musical inculturation to facilitate religious conversion, particularly after the II Vatican Council. Della Ratta argues that this process has given the Jurai as ethnic minorities of the Central Highlands a sense of access to modernization and has been used as a means to mark an ethnic boundary and assert resistance against Vietnamese government policies. Luca Pietrosanti's chapter explores the process of inculturation of local musical traditions into Catholic liturgical music but takes Javanese Gamelan as his case study. This process was carried out both by European and Javanese Catholic priests in the 20th century. Pietrosanti examines the power dynamics that are inherent in the inculturation process in the Javanese Catholic Church and how these colonial and post-colonial power dynamics influence the formal qualities of Javanese liturgical music where arrangements for choir music remain the prerogative of Western musicians.

Patterns of Change in the Traditional Music of Southeast Asia will be of interest to scholars of Asia, Southeast Asianists, heritage studies, ethnomusicology, anthropology, and folkloristics. It draws on the unique history of Italian ethnomusicology that combines the close and careful study of Italian folk culture with the concept of bi-musicality which requires a long period of engagement with research communities to gain competency in performance. This embodied way of understanding leads to highly technical discussions of musical practice and the ability to theorize about the performance forms through the use of local concepts and ontologies. While the Performing Arts of Southeast Asia Study group of the International Council of Traditional Music has facilitated considerable dialogue between scholars of Insular and Mainland Southeast Asian performance, many extant edited volumes on Southeast Asian music and performance tradition feature Anglophone scholars who work in maritime Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia. Few scholars research the music of Myanmar/Burma, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam, due in part to the tumultuous histories of these countries in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Even fewer scholars chose to focus on possession cults, the music of ethnic minorities, or the way Catholic inculturation of musical traditions has become part of local identity in Southeast Asia, particularly outside the Catholic-majority nation of the Philippines. The rigor of the scholarship based on long-term ethnographic engagement by scholars who perform and practice with specific musical communities sets this volume apart. This type of research has become increasingly difficult given the global movement restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, the contraction of research funding, and the political volatility of Southeast Asian countries like Myanmar. However, I hope that this volume will inspire other anthropologists, ethnomusicologists, folklorists, heritage scholars, and oral historians to look beyond “digital ethnography” and “remote fieldwork” to re-evaluate the importance of personal engagement that is facilitated by situated ethnography, participant observation, practice-based research and long-term engagement with communities of practice.

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