

**Call for contributions *China Perspectives / Perspectives chinoises***

**Sinophone Musical Worlds and their Publics**

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*Photograph by Elaine Ip for The Week Hong Kong, 2017*

Recent success of Chinese reality television singing competitions broadcasted on national television or streamed directly on the internet, has shown the extent of musical genres represented in the Chinese world, from pop to folk via hip-hop or rock 'n' roll. The popularity of new musical styles up to then considered as deviant as well as the recent attempts of the State to intervene directly on musical contents, tend to blur the distinctions between “mainstream” (流行) music, “popular” (民间) music as non-official, “underground” (地下) music or even “alternative” (另类) music. This call for papers aims at promoting a better understanding of the transformations of Chinese “musical worlds”, in the sense that Becker gave to “art worlds”, which stresses the role of cooperation and interactions between the different actors of the

artistic sphere. As Becker wrote, *“all artistic work, like all human activity, involves the joint activity of a number, often a large number, of people. Through their cooperation, the artwork we eventually see or hear comes to be and continues to be. The work always shows signs of that cooperation”* (Becker, 2008: 1). We thus welcome contributions which take into consideration the necessary cooperation between individuals, allowing the constitution of musical worlds.

This call for papers wishes to approach the political management of popular music and its paradox. For instance, the Chinese authorities have indeed tried to co-opt marginal or ethnic minorities artists on national television or by producing their albums, such as the nationalist rap collective CD-Rev whose songs are produced by the Youth League, or the Uyghur folk singer Perhat Khaliq, celebrated on the popular TV show “The Voice of China”. However, at the same time, the authorities went after hip-hop culture after the so-called [“hip-hop ban” of January 2018](#), or even imprisoned popular musicians as the “Xinjiang Justin Bieber”, Ablajan Awut Ayup, incarcerated since February 2018. We also welcome contributions which analyze the use of music and music-video by the organs of government propaganda, such as the multiplication of music-videos to promote the “Belt and Road Initiative” – the most recent was made by the *People’s Daily* using the music of a famous Coca-Cola advertisement of the 70s – or in the recent past to celebrate international events, as the Olympic Games of 2008 or the Shanghai International Expo of 2010.

In this special issue of *China Perspectives*, we would like to rethink the role of music in Chinese society. If the intervention of the Party-State is essential, it is necessary to raise the question of the public. How and where do people consume music? What is the relationship between music and the construction of subjectivity in contemporary China? We invite submissions focusing on the public and spaces of popular music and the meanings the audience gives to the activity of listening to music; we thus strongly encourage submissions which use an ethnographic approach. The papers can focus on precise case studies, for instance Karaoke consumption (Fung, 2010), dancing and singing in public spaces, or the transformation of popular opera.

This special issue will also represent an opportunity to analyze Chinese musical worlds beyond the national boundary of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) by considering the relations and influences of other parts of the sinophone world, such

as Taiwan and Hong Kong, without forgetting the territories at the margins of the PRC like Xinjiang, Tibet or Inner Mongolia. The use of the term “sinophone”, as coined by Shu-mei Shih, allows us to investigate musical worlds outside the national territory of the PRC, but also the cultures of “*minority peoples who have acquired or are forced to acquire the standard Sinitic languages of Mandarin, often at the expense of their native language*” (Shu, 2013: 3) residing on Chinese soil.

We welcome contributions from any discipline focusing on popular music and encourage the inclusion of visual material. We are also open to non-academic papers as scene reports or photographic reports.

We welcome proposals, but by no means exclusively, exploring the following topics:

- Opposition and crossing from the underground to the mainstream
- Listening, dancing and singing together in contemporary China
- Political uses of popular music
- Music and the construction of identities
- Musical influences and local adaptations
- Music, the public sphere and uses of the past
- Metamorphosis, structures and actors of the Chinese musical industry
- Censorship and its circumvention, uses of propaganda
- Music medium (radio, TV, internet, magazines, music schools)

**For those who are interested, please send abstracts (between 300 and 500 words) to Nathanel Amar <namar@hku.hk> before 31 October 2018.**

### **Format of abstracts and articles**

Abstracts (written in English or in French) should be 300-500 words long, submitted **by 31 October 2018.**

Research articles (written in English or in French) should be 8,000 words long, and follow [the format of articles guidelines available here](#). They will follow a double blind academic peer-review process.

“Current Affairs” articles, based on the latest developments in the Chinese music scenes, should be 4,000 words long.

**Schedule of publication:** full articles should be submitted **by 15 February 2019** for publication of the special issue in the winter 2019.

**About the journal *China Perspectives / Perspectives chinoises***

[China Perspectives / Perspectives chinoises](#) is an interdisciplinary academic journal, established in 1995, which focuses on the political, social, economic and cultural evolutions of contemporary China (PRC, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan). It is endowed with an Editorial Board of internationally recognized experts in all areas of the social sciences; All submissions are blindly reviewed by two anonymous external referees; Indexed in the [Emerging Sources Citation Index \(Web of Science\)](#); Indexed in 8 international databases (including SCOPUS); Ranked by the French Council for the Evaluation of Research (HCERES) in Political Science, Sociology/demography and Anthropology.

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