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Hong Kong Popular Music Education and Its Discontents

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Abstract

In face of the new age of creative economy, global cities such as Hong Kong need to develop their creative and cultural industries with their own characteristics, which can contribute to both economic growth and job creation. Many cities have been pro-active in developing policies to boost their music industries and conducting researches on popular music education to examine how to engage young people with popular music. However, in-depth researches on this topic are far from adequate in Hong Kong. While film and design industries have received special attention in Hong Kong, the popular music industry is also a significant sector to be considered, but there has been a lack of systematic research on how to facilitate its sustainable development. Hong Kong popular music had since the 1970s been the market leader and trendsetter of Chinese as well as Asian music industries, exerting profound influence on the younger generation in not only Hong Kong but also Asia. Due to the transformation of global mediascape, the influence of Hong Kong popular music has been diminishing in the new millennium. Meanwhile, thanks to education reforms in the new millennium, Hong Kong students are encouraged to deal with everyday experiences, and thus popular music has received more attention in the school curricula. Against this backdrop, this essay explores the (dis)contents of popular music education in Hong Kong through the examination of various local popular music education programmes, assessing their effectiveness of enhancing the musical creativity of youngsters. The opportunity to produce and/or play popular music would not only develop their creative and social skills, but also contribute to their personal growth. Adopting an approach that places the young audience as the base, this essay will identify the ways to engage young people and design appropriate popular music programmes to enhance their creativity as well as growth. It endeavors to develop creativity and intellectual capital through research based knowledge transfer for Hong Kong popular music. Although the focus is Hong Kong popular music education, this essay considers it in the light of Asian music as a whole. It will hopefully generate a more nuanced understanding of the influence of popular music education on the energetic music culture in cosmopolitan cities such as Hong Kong.