

# Chinese Street Opera in Singapore



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著者:Tong Soon Lee

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Since Singapore declared independence from Malaysia in 1965, Chinese street opera has played a significant role in defining Singaporean identity. In carefully tracing the history of amateur and professional performances in Singapore, Tong Soon Lee reflects on their role in fostering cultural nationalism and entrepreneurship. He explains that the government welcomes Chinese street opera performance because they combine tradition and modernism and promote a national culture that brings together Singapore's four main ethnic groups - Eurasian, Malay, Chinese and South Asian. In performing Chinese street opera, amateur troupes preserve their rich heritage by underscoring the Confucian mind-set that a learned person engages in the arts for moral and unselfish purposes. Educated performers also control behavior, emotions, and values. They are creative and innovative, and their use of new technologies indicates a modern, entrepreneurial spirit. Their performances bring together diverse ethnic groups to watch and to perform, Lee argues, while also encouraging a national attitude focused on both remembering the past and preparing for the future in Singapore.

作者介绍:

Tong Soon Lee is an associate professor of ethnomusicology at Emory University. His research and teaching focus on Southeast and East Asian music.

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