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# “Quotations Songs: Portable Media and Pop Song Form in the Chinese 1960s”

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Center for Korean Studies, UHM  
4:30 p.m., Thursday, October 24, 2013

As the Cultural Revolution reached its height in the years between 1966 and 1969, a new and remarkable form of popular music saturated Chinese public space by way of a system of tens of millions of wired loudspeakers that spanned the country. ‘Quotations songs’ set Chairman Mao’s writings to music, and were deliberately conceived as a musical analogue and mnemonic device for *The Quotations of Chairman Mao*. Surprisingly, these songs adapted from what is now known as “Little Red Book” were eventually proscribed by Chairman Mao’s wife, Jiang Qing, who objected to what she saw as their off-color propensity to set listeners into pleasurable motion. Yet what could possibly be promiscuous (or even pleasurable) about a choral march titled (to cite just one of the more than one hundred such compositions that were published and recorded) “Ensure that Literature and Art Operate as Powerful Weapons for Exterminating the Enemy”? The answer may lie in the deliberate promiscuity of their form: how the songs made use of the new technological possibilities and ever expanding reach of the socialist mass media in the 1960s.

*Andrew F. Jones, Professor and Louis B. Agassiz Chair in Chinese, received his Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1997. Professor Jones teaches modern Chinese literature and media culture. His research interests include music, cinema, and media technology, modern and contemporary fiction, children’s literature, and the cultural history of the global 1960s. He is the author of Like a Knife: Ideology and Genre in Contemporary Chinese Popular Music (Cornell East Asia Series, 1992) and Yellow Music: Media Culture and Colonial Modernity in the Chinese Jazz Age (Duke University Press, 2001), co-editor of a special issue of positions: east asia cultures critique entitled The Afro-Asian Century, and translator of literary fiction by Yu Hua as well as Eileen Chang’s Written on Water (Columbia University Press, 2005). His latest books are Developmental Fairy Tales: Evolutionary Thinking and Modern Chinese Culture (Harvard University Press, 2011), and a volume co-edited with Xu Lanjun, 儿童的发现 — 现代中国文学及文化中的儿童问题 [The Discovery of the Child: the Problem of the Child in Modern Chinese Literature and Culture], (Peking University Press, 2011).*