

claim that Singaporean food is especially popular or that Singaporean restaurants and chefs are at the forefront of the world cooking scene.

To conclude, *Food, Foodways and Foodscapes* is a valuable, stimulating book, one that tells us much not only about Singaporean foodways but also about contemporary Singaporean culture, society, politics and power structures. It calls, however, for a special kind of reading that pays attention both to the written text and to the unwritten one.

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DOI: 10.1355/sj32-2o

Tropical Renditions: Making Musical Scenes in Filipino America. By Christine Bacareza Balance. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2016. ix+256 pp.

Christine Bacareza Balance's *Tropical Renditions: Making Musical Scenes in Filipino America* is an important and welcome contribution to an emergent body of writing that provides innovative and incisive analysis of Filipino diasporic expressive forms and, specifically, Filipino performance. This scholarship also includes Lucy Mae San Pablo Burns's *Puro Arte: Filipinos on the Stages of Empire* (2012), Sarita Echavez See's *The Decolonized Eye: Filipino American Art and Performance* (2009), and Theodore S. Gonzalves's *The Day the Dancers Stayed: Performing in the Filipino/a American Diaspora* (2009). It amounts collectively to a body of work that provides a genealogy and an archive of Filipino performance that

serve to illuminate how Filipinos grapple with the ongoing legacy of U.S. empire-building. In approaching questions of history, empire and identification through the lens of performance, these works broaden the contours of Filipino America to account for the roles of music and performance archives as a constitutive force. *Tropical Renditions* builds on and extends the insights of this body of writing. It demonstrates its author's keen ear for nuances, details and meanings often overlooked in dominant renderings of Filipino cultural productions.

Each chapter in the book revolves around a critical consideration of a music scene and the ways that Filipino artists engage in what Balance describes as “disobedient listening practices” (p. 9). For Balance, disobedient listening constitutes a critically important practice because it troubles dominant discourses that configure Filipino popular music and performance in the language and logic of authenticity, purity and origins. She deploys another crucial term throughout the book, “tropical renditions” (p. 4), to signal those performances — both staged and mundane — that go against dominant discourses and tropes of Filipino music. The latter include the idea that Filipino music is derivative of Western music. In using these terms in tandem with each other, Balance meticulously maps practices that circumvent the imperatives of, demands for and burdens of authenticity.

In chapter 1, Balance scrutinizes the sonic productions of Invisibl Skratch Piklz, a prominent collective comprised of Filipino American disc jockeys known for their foundational role in the evolution of turntablism. She pays close attention to what she describes as a “turntablist methodology” (p. 35) that mirrors her own approach to the performance archive of Filipino America. In chapter 2, Balance shifts her focus to karaoke and cover performances. She approaches them as generative practices constitutive of Filipino music scenes rather than as derivative and facsimile of American popular music and therefore inauthentic expressive forms. In chapter 3, Balance interrogates the tropical renditions of Jessica Hagedorn and her band the Gangster Choir. The focus is on the ways in which an

examination of Hagedorn's collaborations and performances disrupts the notion of the authorial voice as singular. Balance argues that a critical study of the band requires a phonographic approach that encompasses a consideration of the sonic, visual and the literary. In chapter 4, Balance offers a critical study of Pinoy indie rock. She conceives of this genre as not simply a derivative form of American popular music but a creative reworking and rendering. In this chapter, Balance offers a broader understanding of *genre*, one capturing not only aesthetics or style but also a material force embedded in translocal networks and relations.

In the book's epilogue, Balance rehearses its core themes through a critical consideration of the circuits of the Pinoy indie rock scene. She reiterates the need for a different and differential mode of listening, one attentive and attuned to the tropical renditions of Filipino America and not predicated on well-worn tropes of mimicry, authenticity and purity. Balance's analysis is very much aligned with a queer of colour critique, and in chapter 3 she cites the late José Esteban Muñoz's work. She refers in particular to his consideration of disidentification as a mode of political engagement that opens up novel ways of navigating and refashioning mainstream cultural norms and logic. It would have been interesting to see how a more direct engagement with a queer of colour critique throughout the book might enhance an already rich and textured analysis of Filipino popular music and performance.

Balance is to be commended for delineating the stakes of listening, for making a compelling case that listening constitutes a materially grounded practice and an indispensable social force in the formation of Filipino America. In resorting to a "phonographic method" (p. 10), Balance is able to trace a particular genealogy of Filipino listening, one that speaks to the ways in which Filipino music and performance tradition are marked by unruliness and refusal. She is thus able to provide an alternative frame for rendering legible musical scenes, performances and exchanges that are often understood in reductive and essentialist terms. Ultimately, Balance offers a sharp and compelling analysis of musical scenes. She fleshes out the

theoretical, methodological and political potential and possibilities of performance and spotlights how Filipinos in the diaspora engage in performances that “produce new affiliations, politics, and ways of thinking” (p. 28).

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DOI: 10.1355/sj32-2p

Cities in Motion: Urban Life and Cosmopolitanism in Southeast Asia, 1920–1940. By Su Lin Lewis. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016. xii+309 pp.

Cast as, “largely, a social history of an aspirational multi-ethnic group of urban professionals and their children who moved and thrived within the context of the colonial-era port-city” (p. 15), *Cities in Motion* seeks to draw on the cases of interwar Penang, Rangoon and Bangkok to make a contribution to the blossoming field of global history.¹ The book is comprised of an introduction, six substantive chapters and an epilogue. Those chapters address “Maritime Commerce, Old Rivalries, and the Birth of Three Cities”, “Asian Port-Cities in a Turbulent Age”, “Cosmopolitan Publics in Divided Societies”, “Newsprint, Wires, and the Reading Public”, “Playgrounds, Classrooms, and Politics”, and “Gramophones,