

COMMUNITY MUSIC IN SINGAPORE AS A PRACTICAL NECESSITY FOR MUSIC-MAKING AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION

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Introduction

Community music could be considered a practical necessity in the quest to encourage and advocate active music-making as a “shared musical expression”. This paper explores the emergence of western style popular musical groups in community clubs.¹ Community clubs attract people generally from all walks of life, where various ethnic groups from diverse social and cultural backgrounds come together in the act of making music. Popular style community music first started off in Singapore in the 1980's as an experimental social project in State-run community clubs which provided venues for amateur big band jazz groups to rehearse with minimum State intervention.² This has become an ideological position for community music to venture into active institutionalized structures provided largely by the State. Over the last ten years, pop, rock and blues bands have established themselves in community clubs. This emerging interest in music-making seemed to attract Singaporeans, the “new” citizens, permanent residents (PRs) and the professional expatriate communities to perform in a designated “cultural space”. These amateur music-participants meet at the community clubs usually randomly in “jam” sessions playing familiar top 40's tunes or music based largely on the structured forms of the 12 or 36 bar blues