



Garbage, Music, and Environmental Sustainability in Contemporary Taiwan

Thursday, May 5, 2022, 16:15–18:00

University of Zurich, Room ZUB 314, Zürichbergstrasse 4, 8032 Zürich

Guest Lecture by Prof. Dr. Nancy Guy, University of California, San Diego

This talk focuses on references to garbage and its pickup heard in popular music from the 1980s through the 2020s. These pieces demonstrate some of the ways in which the everyday practices aimed at managing household waste have seeped into a wide range of sensibilities. It will be argued that a pervasive awareness in Taiwan of garbage and its collection has contributed to a marked cognizance of environmental protection. The immediate physicality and musicality of Taiwan's garbage collection routine works to keep the long emergency of waste disposal in the public's imagination. The everyday engagement with waste, including aurally through garbage truck music, is no doubt partly responsible for Taiwan's success at reducing household waste and for

it being heralded by the New York Times as “an island of green in Asia” and for the Wall Street Journal declaring Taiwanese the “world's geniuses of garbage disposal.”

Prof. Guy is an ethnomusicologist and Professor of Music at the University of California, San Diego. Her broad interests include the musics of Taiwan and China, varieties of opera (including European and Chinese forms), music and state politics, and the eco-critical study of music. Among Guy's award-winning publications, “Flowing down Taiwan's Tamsui River: Towards an Ecomusicology of the Environmental Imagination,” (*Ethnomusicology*, 2009) is a foundational ecomusicology text.