

Gastvortrag Musikethnologie – Studienzentrum Weltmusik:

Prof. Keith Howard (SOAS, University of London)

**'Sea of Blood': A Night at the North Korean Opera**

Montag den 18. Mai 2015

Zeit: 10-12 Uhr

Ort: Musikwissenschaftliches Institut der HMTMH (Seelhorststr. 3), Raum 2.015

In the early 1970s, as the 'new' North Korean ideology of self-reliance bedded in and given that artistic integrity was to remain subservient to ideology, so a new operatic genre emerged. This replaced individual creativity with a collective of composers and artists, and took patriotic stories – often the 'true' exploits of revolutionary heroes – the first being *'P'i pada/Sea of Blood'*. The new genre abandoned Korean *p'ansori*, the UNESCO-nominated 'Masterpiece' that some have described as 'one-man opera', reportedly because the Northern leader, Kim Il Sung, questioned how such emotional singing could be used in a socialist revolution. *'Sea of Blood'* also abandoned operatic arias – 'How can Violetta sing as she dies on stage? It would be so unrealistic' I was once told by a North Korean musicologist. *'Sea of Blood'* operas remain celebrated today, and based on fieldwork in Pyongyang, I analyse the juxtaposed artistic components as I ask why the operas continue to be performed some 40 years on.



**Keith Howard** is Professor of Music at SOAS, University of London. Formerly Associate Dean at the University of Sydney, he has held visiting professorships at Monash University, Ewha Women's University and Hangeuk University of Foreign Studies. He has written and edited 17 books, including *Music as Intangible Cultural Heritage: Policy, Ideology and Practice in the Preservation of East Asian Traditions* (2012), *Singing the Kyrgyz Manas* (with Saparbek Kasmambetov, 2011), *Korean Kayagum Sanjo: A Traditional Instrumental Genre* (with Chaesuk Lee and Nicholas Casswell; 2008), *Creating Korean Music* (2006), *Preserving Korean Music* (2006), and *Korean Pop Music: Riding the Wave* (2006). In addition to giving lectures, workshops and concerts at universities in Britain, throughout Europe, and in America, Asia and Australia, he has been a regular broadcaster on Korean affairs for BBC, ITV, Sky, NBC and others. He is editorial chair of the SOAS Musicology Series (Ashgate), and he founded and managed the SOASIS CD and DVD series as well as OpenAir Radio.

Kontakt:  
Musikethnologie – Studienzentrum Weltmusik  
Hochschule für Musik, Theater und Medien Hannover,  
Seelhorststraße 3, 30175 Hannover  
Michael.fuhr@hmtm-hannover.de