ABSTRACT

The ballads (xin yao, 新谣) of Liang Wern Fook (1964--) have long been regarded as a cultural and musical phenomenon of the 1980s. While much has been discussed about the relationship between the ballads and the construction of the Singaporean identity, its significance as a reflection of historical consciousness has been vastly overlooked. This thesis attempts to fill this gap by examining the different representations of Singapore in the ballads of Liang Wern Fook, and in doing so, enrich the larger historical narrative with commonplace occurrences and voices that have often been neglected. Most importantly, this paper will seek to illuminate the prevailing attitudes of both the state and its citizens in the course of history, and thereby highlight the tension and negotiation between the two sides.