group identity, self-representation, and the shifting nature of "tradition" – continue to resonate as powerfully today as they did in the early 1990s.

Herman opens with an overview of status issues that have historically shaped the consolidation of Beta Israel identity in Ethiopia, in particular the Christian Amhara view of Beta Israel as a people "without honor" (35), a conception tied to their Jewishness as well as to prohibitions on their ownership of land. Herman rightly notes that Beta Israel Jewishness has been a topic of much scholarly debate, and she makes a valid methodological point in prioritizing Beta Israel self-definitions over and above academic theories of origin (31). In her brief review of scholarship by Pankhurst, Kaplan, Shelemay, and others, however, Herman may gloss over some of the groundwork and evidence that these key studies actually provide for one of her own guiding assertions: that Beta Israel Jewishness is a fluid construct, evolving in dialogue with the forms and forces of broader society. The real strength of Herman's opening section lies less in its attempt to problematize existing scholarship than in its historicization of the Beta Israel cultural values explored in subsequent ethnographic sections of the book. In particular, Herman's discussion of the ways in which Beta Israel have traditionally "turned around" discourses of impurity and dishonor in Ethiopia deepens our understanding of the Beta Israel concept of *cavod* (Heb.: honor) in relationship to other Israeli ethnic groups.

Much of Herman's work is an account of how Beta Israel constantly reframe and redefine honor and tradition in terms of their desire for group advancement in Israel. According to Herman, this objective is complicated by the public perception of Beta Israel as simultaneously pleasant and "primitive," welcome yet mistrusted, "extra-Jewish … and insufficiently Jewish" (54). At the heart of "Gondar's Child" lies the Beta Israel project of negotiating this liminal social status via the expressive forms of music and dance. Herman aims to present the Band of Porachat HaTikva as "a microcosm of Beta Israel society, displaying … concerns with honor, advancement, and also the conflict between traditional Beta Israel values, and the apparently incompatible values which are adopted by a significant sector of Beta Israel youth" (80). Her ethnographic portrait of the band succeeds in several respects, most fundamentally by illustrating the complex and contingent nature of "tradition" itself in a diaspora context.

Herman offers several engaging transcriptions of songs in which traditional Beta Israel themes of military prowess and agricultural life are adapted to the Israeli context via lyrical references to the Israel Defense Forces and Zionist labor rhetoric. Here, Beta Israel musical structures undergird the lyrical innovations, representing a kind of continuity of tradition in the face of social change. Yet as Herman writes, "there was much in the conception and functioning of the band that contravened Beta Israel traditions," perhaps most significantly its very existence despite the absence of an historic precedent for performing ensembles in Beta Israel musical culture (103). Other explicit departures from tradition include the participation of women in the band and the increasing prominence of electric piano alongside "folk" instruments. The ways in which band members account for and legitimize these departures using Beta Israel rubrics of honor, *busha* (Heb.: shame) and "getting ahead" powerfully demonstrate how "the untraditional becomes traditional" (103). For a sampling of Porachat HaTikva's repertory, listen to Herman's excellent field recordings on CD or at <africaworldpressbooks.com/gondars-child.html>.

Herman devotes significant attention to the band's opinion that Beta Israel music and dance is "no different from that of Ethiopian Christians" (103), primarily because both repertories employ the Amharic language. The band's position on this issue raises provocative questions about the nature of self-representation, suggesting that the Beta Israel link with Ethiopia can trump their Jewish identity within Israeli society while retaining enough Beta Israel "authenticity" to serve as "a medium for the pursuit of honor" (257). Herman puts pressure on the band's claim that their music is fundamentally Christian Amharic, yet her conclusion that Beta Israel *secular* music has no correlation with Christian Amharic *liturgical* music "in terms of intervallic sequence, tonality and mood" (211) seems to miss the point; comparison among secular musics may have been a more appropriate intervention. Moreover, her brief review of Shelemay's work flattens the remarkable precision with which Beta Israel liturgy maps onto the Ethiopian Christian monastic office. Overall, Herman valuably interrogates the notion that Beta Israel expressive culture is somehow "non-Jewish"; in doing so, however, she draws piecemeal from a wide body of research in which she may not be entirely fluent.

"Gondar's Child" is an ambitious work of ethnographic scholarship, revealing multiple dimensions of experience among a fascinating social group. We come away with the impression that being Beta Israel means negotiating between divergent and sometimes conflicting ideocultural forces: this group is Jewish and Ethiopian; Israeli yet "foreign" to Israel; traditionally "landless" yet deeply connected to the notion of homeland in both Ethiopia and in Israel. Herman also touches on the provocative and complex Beta Israel relationship to "blackness," describing a bifurcated sense of solidarity with and distinction from other Afro-diasporic groups worldwide that continues to animate Ethiopian-Israeli discourse to this day. Hermann's ethnographic work with the Porachat HaTikva ensemble infuses every aspect of this text, demonstrating the potency of music and dance to express the nuances and complexities of multifaceted Beta Israel identity.

Sarah Hankins

Hesselink, Nathan: SamulNori. Contemporary Korean Drumming and the Rebirth of Itinerant Performance Culture. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012. 201 pp., CD-ROM. ISBN 978-0-226-33097-6. Price: $ 27.50

In February 1978, a four-piece percussion band called "SamulNori" (literally, "Four Things Play") gave their debut performance in a little venue in Seoul; what they boldly sought to achieve was, as Hesselink puts it, "the

repackaging and revitalization of … age-old rural practice for the entertainment of city dwellers" (2), taking musical patterns from traditional percussion band music (known as *p'ungmul* or *nongak*) and working them into a repertoire of rousing pieces, ideally suited to the modern concert hall and contemporary Korean identities. Evidently, SamulNori achieved their goals: the music that they devised soon became one of the most widely appreciated forms of Korean music (excluding the Westernised pop forms of mass culture), both within Korea and elsewhere. Today, most players of traditional Korean percussion music know at least one of the most famous SamulNori pieces. SamulNori's influence upon other musical projects has also been immense. As Hesselink points out, "SamulNori made tradition relevant again to modern Korean society, bringing prestige, fame, and economic viability back to generations of other traditional performing artists" (13). Meanwhile, the group's artful reworkings inspired many other traditional musicians to adopt more innovative approaches to traditional materials, and their highly-regarded collaborative projects with jazz musicians have gone on to influence countless experiments in musical hybridity.

The appearance of Hesselink's new book is hugely significant for Korean music studies. Amazingly, this book constitutes the first ever extended study of *samul nori* (the genre), offering a wealth of information and analysis about the group's early history, from 1978 until 1998. Material is skilfully brought together from a broad array of sources: discussion with diverse musicians who have been at the heart of the form's development, including Kim Duk Soo (one of the originators) and Kim Dong-Won (an important figure in initiatives relating to education and dissemination); a myriad of contemporary accounts by influential commentators such as Hahn Myong-hee; diverse academic works shedding light on religious, cultural, and social roots and the urban context; various commercial *samul nori* recordings; the author's own earlier publications (including the excellent "*P'ungmul*. South Korean Drumming and Dance." Chicago 2006); and pertinent ethnomusicological texts, investigating central themes such as preservation and hybridity. Hesselink weaves the materials together in a wholly organic fashion, while providing plenty of poignant illustrative materials – quotes from key protagonists, well-formulated musical notations, and striking photos. Every sentence is beautifully crafted, expressing ideas clearly and concisely, while also conveying an infectious passion for the music. These qualities conspire to make the book highly engaging and an absolute pleasure to read.

Rather than merely provide an all-you-ever-wanted-to-know-about-SamulNori account, Hesslink's book has a clear agenda: "The primary goal of this book is to establish and elucidate the links between SamulNori and the *namsadang*" (15) (the *namsadang* being professional itinerant performing troupes). Hesselink argues that "SamulNori represents the rebirth and logical outgrowth of the *namsadang*" (8) – the exact same viewpoint propounded by SamulNori themselves. After concisely setting out this argument and outlining SamulNori's objective (to "preserve the old while creating the new"), Hesselink presents five chapters that address various different facets of SamulNori's *namsadang* connections. The first chapter (The Namsadang) draws extensively from Shim Usŏng's research, providing vivid depictions of the *namsadang* as "circus, carnival, and traveling gypsy group" (17), while also highlighting their "movement toward professionalization and presentational style" (18) – qualities that were, of course, to be further enhanced in SamulNori's art. Chapter 2 (Coming to the City) explores the cultural climate of 1970s Seoul, charting the growth of the people's culture movement (*minjung munhwa undong*), detailing the activities of concert venues, cultural organisations, and performing groups, and revealing why SamulNori was met with such a positive response. Chapter 3 (On the Road) further explores sociological and historical currents, comparing a single ideally-chosen excerpt from SamulNori's core repertoire with its equivalent rendition in the *p'ungmul* style, analysing both live performances and studio recordings. Here, Hesselink goes beyond a mere comparative analysis of sound to show how the actual experience of music has changed for musicians and listeners, while stressing that SamulNori's fans still experience a feeling of closeness to creative processes (described with typical incisiveness as a type of "displaced closeness" – 76). In chapter 4 (Cosmological Didacticism), Hesselink explores SamulNori's teaching materials, discussing how and why the group contrived an elaborate repertoire of conceptions about their music-making, represented through deeply symbolic imagery; these didactic features assist learning, while also forging links to deep antiquity and promoting the idea that the music is somehow representative of a Korean "worldview." Chapter 5 (East-West Encounters in the *Nanjang*) critically evaluates SamulNori's collaborative projects with the group Red Sun, in particular exploring the changing dynamics of interaction between the two groups in the four successive albums. The book concludes with a glowing assessment of SamulNori's position in the world of Korean music – re-emphasizing links to *namsadang* activities and stressing once more the merits of the group's original creative policy (to "preserve the old while creating the new").

Some of the proposed links between *namsadang* and *samul nori* are less comprehensively articulated than others. Most obviously, although it is stated that several SamulNori founding members came from *namsadang* backgrounds (or rather from the reinvented non-itinerant *namsadang*), there is very little explanation regarding what they actually learnt and performed within that world, or about the various processes whereby that material became transformed into the core repertoire of SamulNori; further enquiry into this area would surely have strengthened the overall argument of continuity. Certain other alledged *samul nori* / *namsadang* links may actually be perceived as decidedly tenuous. It is suggested that the *namsadang*'s itinerancy is perpetuated in some way by current musicians, who are "carrying the mantle of their predecessor's and a life on the road" (10); no evidence is given to show that *samul nori* musicians travel any more than other musicians in modern Korea or that their touring practices are any more *namsadang*-like than those of, for

example, a touring orchestra. In fact, it is hard to see any parallels between the truly itinerant lifestyle of the *namsadang* (clearly detailed in chap. 1) and the lifestyles lived by musicians today and, accordingly, I would suggest that the subtitle "The Rebirth of Itinerant Performance Culture" is misleading, as are some other formulations – for example, "itinerant troupe performance culture as lived and experienced today" (15). Elsewhere, it is suggested that the *namsadang* were "early 'fusion' artists" (18) and that SamulNori's international collaborations constitute a natural extension of this; however, no evidence is provided to show that the *namsadang* groups created musical hybrids out of forms encountered during their travels or, more importantly, that they played together with other local groups in distant host communities (which is what "fusion" has meant in the case of SamulNori). Lastly, although some readers may be persuaded by Hesselink's argument that SamulNori's seated and staged performance constitutes a natural progression from the *namsadang*'s increasingly presentational performance style, many may regard other aspects of SamulNori performance practice as constituting dramatic departures away from the *namsadang* ethos; in particular, chap. 1 clearly shows that a defining feature of the *namsadang*'s art was its multifaceted, syncretic nature – fusing dance, drama, acrobatics, percussion music, and more – and this performance feature was notably removed from SamulNori's own performance practice in the 1970s. Meanwhile, it is important to note that there are actually a number of contemporary performance groups who superficially appear far more *namsadang*-like than the original SamulNori group (or even than the current troupe known as "*namsadang*"), although they too are not in any sense itinerant. One such group is the Ulsan Minsok Yesulwŏn (Ulsan Folk Art Group), with whom the present reviewer worked in the late 1990s; they have long championed syncretic performance, professionalism, and versatility in multiple styles (including *p'ungmul*, shaman music, *samul nori* pieces, and more recent creations), while living and working communally as a large and extremely close-knit collective. Any book exploring the *namsadang*'s legacy should surely briefly outline the activities of groups such as this, if only in passing.

In sum, Hesselink's beautifully crafted, incisive, informative, and passionately enthusiastic book sheds much light on SamulNori's extraordinary achievements, comprehensively and (generally) persuasively articulating the various arguments disseminated by SamulNori itself (and its many devoted followers) regarding the group's place in Korean music history. The book will undoubtedly stimulate further involvement in the genre amongst both academics and musicians, while greatly promoting perceptions of the repertoire as being a natural progression from *namsadang* activities – providing the form with stronger roots into the past and stressing a lineage that is clearly differentiated from *p'ungmul* lineages, and thereby enhancing its pedigree. In so doing, the author has done a great service to the SamulNori world – Hanullim Inc., the various groups that specialise in the music, and the legions of fans. It is hoped that the author will build upon this study with a sequel examining current perspectives regarding the repertoire (which is, of course, no longer new and has acquired a canonic status). Undoubtedly, there is no other academic better suited to this endeavour.

Simon Mills

Hoffstaedter, Gerhard: Modern Muslim Identities. Negotiating Religion and Ethnicity in Malaysia. Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2011. 272 pp. ISBN 978-87-7694-081-2. (NIAS Monographs, 119) Price: £ 18.99

Studies of the modern politics and society of Malaysia, a federation which gained independence from the British in 1957 and expanded in 1963 to incorporate Singapore – which left in 1965, Sarawak and Sabah – both in Borneo island, have been fraught with issues of identity. With its convoluted societal make-up, Malaysia has for years been a godsend fieldwork site for social scientists' and ethnographers' intent on unravelling the intricate multilayered relationships tying together the themes of ethnicity, religion, politics, and civil society. The names of such scholars as Judith Nagata, A. B. Shamsul, Michael Peletz and Joel Kahn come to mind in this broad area of Malaysian identity studies.

Having acknowledged the competitive terrain engulfing such a discourse, Gerhard Hoffstaedter's "Modern Muslim Identities" – the outcome of a three and a half-year study generously funded by La Trobe University, Australia, has to be commended for uninhibitedly bringing out perceptions, observations, and conclusions which would be deemed controversial in Malaysia, and of which researchers reliant on local sources of funds would have consciously eluded. Stakeholders in both Malaysia's state and civil society, in their perennial competition with each other, often provide logistical support for studies that can potentially vindicate their heavily slanted visions of a functioning national polity. "Modern Muslim Identities," however, chides both sides, whose influence in society is permeated through patronage-based networks which serve to perpetuate rather than debunk prejudicial interpretations of Malaysian identity constructions. As Hoffstaedter argues, globalisation notwithstanding, "the nation-state remains a pivotal identity marker" (4), and in Malaysia, the state-controlled media greatly facilitates its stakeholder's constantly shifting sociocultural national projects, from Mahathir Mohamad's Vision 2020 and the New Malay, to Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's Islam Hadhari, and to Najib Razak's One Malaysia. As for civil society, Hoffstaedter ably shows how its progressive strand has been steadily submerged by reactionary actors who have willingly "been used by and have utilised the state to further their own agendas" and "are better organised and thus speak with louder voices" (117). So, despite what is seen by many as the encouraging unleashing of civil society forces in the wake of the *reformasi* euphoria of the late 1990s, scepticism abounds in Malaysia, where, at least as far Malay-Muslim politics is concerned, growth of a vibrant civil society might not be in tandem with an enhancement of democracy within an ethnically integrative framework. On the contrary, such civil society elements, which are invariably better organised than pro-