

Program in Transnational Korean Studies Presents:

Us & Them: Korean Indie Rock in a K-Pop World

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The spread of South Korean popular music, or K-pop, has been a striking global phenomenon. In 2012 PSY's viral sensation "Gangnam Style" became the most viewed video on YouTube ever, generating over a billion hits and scores of imitations. But Korean music is not only idol groups and viral videos. There is also a vibrant indie and punk scene that has been active for the past two decades.

A lot of the energy driving the scene has come in opposition to mainstream Korean music. Yet, just as K-pop is becoming more well-known internationally, bands from the Korean underground are now touring overseas and have become more professional in their own pursuit of global connections.

The documentary follows several of Korea's most well-known indie bands as they embark on their first US tours in 2011. The spotlight lands in particular on Crying Nut, the endearing godfathers of Korean underground rock; the stylish RockTigers, Korea's most successful rockabilly band; and Whatever That Means..., a melodic punk band led by a married couple--bass player Trash and her American guitarist husband. The documentary's compelling portrait of the Korean indie scene offers sharp insights into a society that is in the midst of frequently dizzying change. The film is narrated by noted Korean-American musician Mike Park of Skankin' Pickle and the B. Lee Band and the founder of DIY label Asian Man Records.

April 15, 2015

5:00pm – 6:30pm

**Warren Lecture Hall
Room 2005**

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Associate Professor Stephen Epstein is the Director of the Asian Studies Programme at Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand. He has published widely on contemporary Korean society, literature and popular culture and translated numerous pieces of Korean and Indonesian fiction. Recent work on Korean popular music includes the articles "Girls' Generation? Gender, (Dis)Empowerment and K-Pop" (with James Turnbull), and "Into the New World: Girls' Generation from the Local to the Global". He is currently completing a sourcebook on the Korean Wave for the Academy of Korean Studies. *Us and Them* is a follow-up to his earlier documentary *Our Nation: A Korean Punk Rock Community*, also co-produced with Timothy Tangherlini.