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Negotiating the Space of the Cultural Economy of Indie Music in South Korea

This paper examines how Korean independent musicians and producers strive to survive and sustain their creative musical activities. The contemporary Korean indie music emerged in the mid 1990s at clubs around Hongdae area in Seoul, and has achieved a minor success in establishing a rock-oriented niche alternative scene to the idol-oriented mainstream pop music. I put Korean indie music in the context of changing articulation of the economy and culture and examine how it negotiates its establishment within the complex connections of culture/economy. The present research shows that Korean indie music negotiates its space of artistic creativity across the established media, the Internet and institutional arrangement. It suggests that the artistic creativity of indie music is bound with the commercial creativity of marketing and promotion in the changing cultural economy.