Twitter Thread by Michael L Bonic



Michael L Bonic
@BonicMichael

North Korea isn't culturally isolated. It has quietly assimilated Western culture, music & fashion. Moranbong Band members, mastering western rock elements in their performances, are “fusion rock stars”.

This is from the Moranbong Band HD YouTube channel: https://t.co/a26uQMzS57

2/On their channel:
[The commentator's musical analysis resembles a Billboard review.]

Moranbong Band - Tansume (■■■)
https://t.co/6n1eCVkFz3
“■■■■■ - ■■■
Music: Hwang Jin-yong (■■■) 2003
Recorded: 2013.01.01 Mokran Video DPRK

3/"One of the most iconic Moranbong Band songs. Originally performed to celebrate the successful launch of a satellite into orbit but lately also used to celebrate missile launches.

This music is by no means a simple copy of western rock music but a completely new style where

4/"they use an existing well known DPRK song as basis and incorporate western rock elements (like guitar solos, etc) but note that the lead instrument here is not the guitar but Sonu Hyang-hui's violin. She is the one who makes the most expressive agogic rubatos in her solos at

5/"2:50 and 4:48 so this is still basically a string quartet with no lead guitar but a "lead violin". This incorporation of foreign styles but transforming them into there own is actually a practical example of music made according to Juche principles, and a successful one too.

6/"British synth-pop from the late 1980s comes to my mind when I listen to this. There are som similarities to Pet Shop Boys' hit "It's a Sin". I also cannot help but think of the orchestra at the orphanage Ospedale della Pietà in early 18th C. Venice, Italy. All young female

7/"master musicians lead by Antonio Vivaldi, playing his fresh compositions. They toured around with great success but at the time had to perform behind a curtain to hide their beauty. Fortunately this is no longer the case here."

8/The Pochonbo Music Ensemble, active to the mid-2010s, performed this song. Moranbong Band has performed "Without A Break/Tansume" in concert after concert thru the years, reminisce of a rock group like Pink Floyd on tour perfoming hits from Dark Side Of The Moon. They have

9/mastered rocking this song during live performances before patriotic Millennials, elites & Old Guard in Pyongyang who are hearing Western rock music elements for the first time.

More concert performances:

Moranbong Band - Without a Break
https://t.co/8JrPCgdDvI
[Jul 14, 2017]

10/Moranbong Band - Without a Break
https://t.co/Z30d1lQQaD