

Jazz in Japan: Changing Culture Through Music

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BOSTON COLLEGE
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**Jazz in Japan:
Changing Culture through Music**

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Acknowledgments

Still it's a real good bet, the best is yet to come.

-The Best is Yet to Come

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Introduction

But Jazz is America's classical music, a profound artistic genre of African American invention...

-Amiri Baraka¹

The relationship between the United States and Japan has always been one of immense intrigue for historians. Throughout the 1920s, '30s, and '40s this relationship vastly evolved and changed, reflecting the volatility of the time period. Starting in the mid-nineteenth century, diplomatic ties formed between the two countries with the arrival of Commodore Perry. While this relationship ebbed and flowed throughout the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the occupation that occurred in the 1940s after World War II forever altered the relationship between the United States and Japan. The United States became the occupier while Japan was the occupied and the Japanese ultimately creating an interesting and unequal bond between the two. One particular intriguing aspect about the occupation was its tremendous focus on the alteration of Japan's cultural identity and thus the occupation impacted all aspects of life in Japan. The occupation would not only affect Japan's identity but also the bilateral relationship between the two countries permanently.

In the past this historical dynamic between the United States and Japan has largely been studied through lenses that focus on politics, technology, the economy, and military aspects, but rarely has the occupation been viewed through music. With culture becoming such a major aspect of the occupation, it was only natural that music would play a part in the creation of a new Japan. In particular, jazz, commonly known in America as the "classical music of America,"

¹ Baraka, Amiri, *Digging: The Afro-American Soul of American Classical Music*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 345.

became the soundtrack for both the devastation Japan experienced during World War II as well as the restructuring of the country by American occupational forces.² Jazz played in dance clubs, on the radio, and in films, staking its claim as the soundtrack to the occupation. Jazz infiltrated Japanese homes, and thus played a significant role in the creation of a new cultural identity after the war. During the occupation, 1920s connotations of jazz changed to fit the objectives of American occupational forces. Jazz represented America, but more specifically, an America devoid of any black aesthetic even though jazz emerged out of the African American community in the U.S. These new connotations and meanings therefore promulgated the image American forces perpetuated in Japan, thereby creating an aspiration to be and exemplify American homogeneity.

While the occupation began a renewed popularity of jazz music in Japan, jazz first entered Japan in the 1920s, as it spread on an international scale after World War I. With the rise of consumerism, music became a type of good, something that could be bought and sold. Japan, a country that had largely benefitted from World War I economically, became one of the consumers of this American art form. Throughout the '20s, '30s, and '40s, jazz maintained a constant presence, with its popularity rising and diminishing in relation to the political relationship between the United States and Japan. Jazz thus became a mirror onto which this binary reflected onto in Japan and more importantly, jazz became uniquely intertwined with Japanese cultural identity. Throughout these three decades up until the occupation jazz accompanied the fluctuations in Japanese identity and was the soundtrack not only for the occupation but for the question the Japanese had long asked themselves: who are we? While the Japanese searched for the answer in the '20s and '30s, American forces had their own ideas during the occupation, which were both accepted and rejected. While some embraced jazz as the

² Ibid.

sound of liberation and modernity, others utilized jazz to express their discontentment with the occupation. Thus, jazz ultimately meant many things to various groups of people throughout these thirty years.

This thesis studies the vast amount of perspectives present in Japan during these thirty years, and how jazz became a medium through which cultural identity could be shaped and expressed. By examining the atmosphere present in Japan in which jazz emerged, the dark period of the late '30s and early '40s, and the reemergence of the genre in the occupation, a traceable trajectory emerged that pointed to the significance of jazz in Japan's identity. Jazz reflected the complexity of the relationship between Japan and the U.S., as well as the intricacies present in Japanese society throughout this time period. As a jazz musician myself, it is often difficult to ascertain how a genre could impact not merely individuals but rather an entire society, given that jazz has always been a form of entertainment or individual expression. However, throughout these years jazz became a tool for both the Japanese and Americans to express their ideas about who they were and what future they wanted to create, thus impacting Japanese society for years to come.

Chapter One

Jazz in Japan during the '20s and '30s:

“Jazzing by day and night”³

Husband: Hey. Go next door and tell the band to stop playing.

Wife: I can't make such a selfish request.

Husband: Go tell them they're disturbing the whole neighborhood.

Wife: Who cares? It's jazz.

-The Neighbor's Wife and Mine⁴

“Who cares? It's jazz,” seems to aptly and succinctly describe the attitudes of some Japanese toward the presence of jazz in prewar Japan. Released in 1931, the film *The Neighbor's Wife and Mine* focused on the problems of a playwright attempting to finish his new play “The Pig and the Pearl,” while a party overflowing with booze, jazz, and laughter is occurring next door. This film was the first in Japan to have sound, and thus for it to include jazz, or “jazu” as the Japanese called it, conveyed the genre's significance.⁵ Similar to the United States, jazz emerged in Japan with the cultural phenomenon of the “modern girl” (*moga*) and “modern boy” (*mobo*), the rise of leftist political parties, as well as an emerging question of what defined cultural identity. Speaking to this large cultural and political atmosphere, the above-quoted conversation between the wife and husband had to concerning a party were representative of the tension the rise of jazz created in the changing world of the '20s and '30s. The movie itself is filled with hybridity; the wife dons a kimono and yet at the same time wears a western hairstyle reminiscent of a flapper's style. Music and film make evident that this was a time of great change

³ Wade, Bonnie C., *Music in Japan*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 18-19.

⁴ Goshō, Heinosuke. *The Neighbor's Wife and Mine*. Shochiku Company, 1931.

⁵ “Blue Nippon: Authenticating Jazz in Japan.” 2014. Accessed September 26.

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu.proxy.bc.edu/cgi/t/text/pageviewer-idx?c=acls;cc=acls;idno=heb09201.0001.001;node=heb09201.0001.001%3A4;view=image;seq=137;size=100;page=root,102>.

where a new sense of globalism and the Japanese people collided, forcing the Japanese to grapple with the question of who they were by where they stood on the matter of jazz.

Japan's cultural identity had been in question since the Meiji Era in the late 19th century, and jazz continued this questioning in the years before World War II. The discussion of jazz produced divides mirroring the political and cultural atmosphere in Japan with those who favored cosmopolitanism embracing jazz and those who clung to traditionalism rejecting the genre. In discussing cultural identity and, by extension, the meaning of jazz to the Japanese, it is imperative to grasp the entwined nature of the political and cultural atmosphere and its connection with jazz as well as how the genre came to be interpreted and utilized by the Japanese themselves. By looking at both musical and cinematic works produced by the Japanese during the '20s and '30s as well as the politics of this time, the complexities of the Japanese identity at this time can be fully understood in a country torn between traditionalism and cosmopolitanism.

The Politics and Culture of *ero-guro-nansensu*

The crises within the 1920s and '30s in Japan came to fruition largely due to the tension between those who embraced cosmopolitanism and those who still yearned for traditionalism in an era of *ero-guro-nansensu* or erotic-grotesque-nonsense. This strain was evident through the emergence of different political groups, the rise of the middle class, modern views, fashion, cinema, and an intense questioning of Japanese identity throughout this period. With the end of World War I, Japan entered a phase of immense economic prosperity, resulting in increased power for Japan as well as a permanent seat on the League of Nations, which emphasized the

importance of “intellectual exchange” between nations.⁶ As John L. McClain states in *Japan: A Modern History*:

To many Japanese, liberal democracy, cooperation with the West, paternalistic colonialism, and participation in a cultural milieu where Ibsen and Tolstoy were no longer strangers represented the mainstream course of development, the road to progress that would enable them to become world citizens as well as Japanese.⁷

The internationalist sentiment propelled Japan and its budding power economically, militarily, and socially, making it appealing to be not only a citizen of Japan but also of the world. This atmosphere produced a society willing to look outside of itself and although the binary of traditionalism and cosmopolitanism never fully faded during this time period, Japan experienced an era of dynamism and change.

The industrial and economic prosperity achieved by World War I led to the eventual emergence of the middle class and consumerism, which further showed the divides between traditionalism and cosmopolitanism. With victories over China and Russia in the early twentieth century, World War I, a “growing affinity with the West,” and increased wealth, consumerism began in Japan, first starting in the urban centers.⁸ Magazines advertising appliances, modern clothes, and other consumer items became vastly popular. This emergence of both consumerism and the middle class created a society that was willing to question or defy the status quo, and as John L. McClain succinctly states in *Japan: A Modern History*, “[the middle class] refashioned social norms to meet the demands and expectations they held.”⁹ Thus the cosmopolitan society in Japan became consumers of both material objects and intangible items such as music from abroad.

⁶ Iriye, Akira. *Cultural Internationalism and World Order*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 64.

⁷ McClain, James L. *Japan: A Modern History*, (New York, N.Y.: W.W. Norton, 2002), 356.

⁸ McClain, 345.

⁹ Ibid.

This development of consumerism led to the emergence of the *moga* and *mobo* in Japan, the equivalent of the modern girl and boy in America, both of which were symbolic of the modern, cosmopolitan feel of the 1920s. These boys and girls were the embodiment of modernity with their flapper hairstyles, provocative dresses, “Lloyd eyeglasses,” and bowler hats.¹⁰ The *moga* and *mobo* were undeniably what cultural traditionalists abhorred; they consumed everything that was not purely Japanese and embraced modernity fully. The existence of the *moga* and *mobo* concurrently with the middle class provided a different society that had never existed previously in Japan and created a new market for innovation in every sense: culturally, technologically, politically, and socially.

The character Naomi and her husband Jōji in the novel *Naomi* by Junichirō Tanizaki exemplify these *moga* and *mobo* in their consumption of all things modern. In addition to resembling the cosmopolitan sentiments of the ‘20s they also represent the question of identity coursing through Japanese society at this time. This problem with identity was more apparent with the husband given his country roots:

There seemed to be no connection between these two worlds of mine.
‘Which is the real I?’ asked the voice that I heard when I examined myself,
lost in tears of grief, sadness, and surprise.¹¹

The dichotomy of identities that plagued Jōji relates to the problem of identity Japanese society faced in the 1920s. Many of the Japanese were caught in between the push for all things modern and an attachment to cultural traditionalism. *Naomi* also discusses these contradictory sentiments from a woman’s perspective thoroughly in Tanizaki’s detailing of Naomi’s modern kimono, her promiscuity, and desire to become all things associated with the West, especially in appearance. Naomi entirely embodied a *moga*; she went to dance clubs at night, was not restricted to the

¹⁰ McClain, 351.

¹¹ Tanizaki, Junichiro, and Anthony H. Chambers. *Naomi*. (London: Secker & Warburg, 1986), 202.

traditional life of a wife in staying in all night, and wished to live an exciting and vibrant life outside of general societal norms. By detailing the experiences of both a man and woman, Tanizaki encapsulates the challenges both genders went through during this time period. Tanizaki mirrors society's issues within these two characters, describing both genders and also acknowledging the new power women experienced at this time through dress, social events, and their general attitude.

As Tanizaki's work detailed, women collectively began to gain more independence and challenged the previous status quo. In the cities, women, like the middle class more generally, defied traditionally accepted standards of behavior and followed individual wishes.¹² During this time women also became a part of the workplace, gaining economic independence through jobs as teachers, telephone operators, bus conductors, and midwives.¹³ The binary of traditionalism and cosmopolitanism could also be found notably in women given their need to "reconcile the freedom of female self-awareness with the burdens of traditional obligations."¹⁴ Thus, while women attempted to embrace modernity there were still ongoing ties to the cultural traditionalism that persisted simultaneously.

While internationalism and cosmopolitanism experienced great popularity in Japan, there also was a backlash against it propelled by traditionalists. Many in Japan saw internationalism as the road to peace, however, unrest in Japan caused others to think differently. Left-wing groups began to be repressed in the mid-1920s and although Grace Seton stated in a 1923 issue of the "Metronome" magazine that the Japanese were "jazzing by day and by night," the party atmosphere of the '20s soon gave way to restrictive policies in the government.¹⁵ The Showa

¹² McClain, 345.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ McClain, 348.

¹⁵ Wade, 18-19.

Depression of 1926 only intensified the traditionalist sentiment already present in Japan and economic failure caused even more people to lean towards conservatism. Thus, the prosperity experienced by many in Japan after World War II quickly changed to panic given the depression and the undertones of traditionalism that always accompanied cosmopolitanism became dominant in society.

Jazz experienced immense popularity with the emergence of the middle class, consumerism, and the *moga* and *mobo*. However, as the '20s gave way to the '30s, this changed with the increase in conservatism and traditionalism in Japan. The carefree nature of the early and mid-twenties gradually disappeared as government surveillance of cafes and dance halls increased during the latter '20s and 1930s. In the '30s censorship marked the arts as well as school and university textbooks, affecting the radio waves and movie theaters.¹⁶ This did not occur without popular dissent. In October of 1936 an article was published entitled "Ten Modern Commandments for Movie Fans."¹⁷ While at face value it may have been innocuous, it was an article "dismissive of political authority and eager to identify with western modernity."¹⁸ This article in particular demonstrated the conscious decision to embrace foreign films, especially those from the U.S., instead of merely following government censorship of jazz and anything seen as demoralizing to Japanese society. Thus while traditionalism took hold in Japan, the binary of cosmopolitanism versus traditionalism from the early '20s persisted.

Real dominance by the conservative government did not threaten jazz until the late '30s and early '40s when Japan was in an all-out war with China. Starting with the National Mobilization Law of 1938 the government suppressed unwanted elements in popular music and

¹⁶ Galliano, Luciana, *Japanese Music in the 20th Century*, (Maryland: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2002), 120.

¹⁷ Silverberg, Miriam, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense the Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 129.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

solely promoted elements useful to the war front.¹⁹ It was in October of 1940 that all dance halls were officially closed within Japan and in 1942 the Information Bureau banned all Western music such as jazz.²⁰ Japanese officials thus renamed jazz as “light music” and certain instruments that were seen as Western were renamed such as the saxophone, which became *kinzuoku seihin magari syakuhati* or “bent metallic flute.”²¹ The government acknowledged that it could not completely wipe out jazz, yet they diffused its elements by merging it with Japanese music and names. The Japanese identity therefore was no longer to be characterized by the blurring of a Japanese and western identity; it was solely to be comprised of Japanese elements.²² The Japanese government promoted increasingly nationalistic behavior and supported poems and advertisements that conveyed its shared sentiments:

If your country’s different, your race is different
 If your race is different, your makeup is different
 As for long ago and now, the eras are different
 Throw different makeup clean away
 Be in good spirits.²³

Instead of promoting a sense of internationalism that accompanied the 1920s, this poem speaks to the strict divides between nationalities regarding race and “makeup,” which falls in line with the “purely” Japanese identity that Japan turned to. In throwing “different makeup clean away” the poem references the blurred identity that had been prominent in the ‘20s and early ‘30s and says the Japanese should rid themselves of this different makeup. The ‘20s and ‘30s had long been typified by an internationalism craze in Japan that ended slowly with the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese War, leading to a more nationalistic and allegedly pure Japanese identity.

¹⁹ Bourdaghs, Michael K., *Sayonnara Amerika, Sayonnara Nippon*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 37.

²⁰ Yano, Christine R., *Tears of Longing: Nostalgia and the Nation in Japanese Popular Song*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), 37 and Silverberg, 140.

²¹ Wade, 133.

²² Wade, 142.

²³ Ibid.

The Neighbor's Wife and Mine (1931)

The complex attitudes and connotations associated with jazz at this time in Japan can be perfectly exemplified in the movie *The Neighbor's Wife and Mine*, which Japanese filmmakers released in 1931. The majority of the film is slapstick humor mixed in with various distractions that the playwright must grapple with, however, the most irritating distraction comes from the Mammy Jazz Band next door. As the playwright enters his neighbor's home, the viewer is reminded of the sounds, sights, and fashion characteristic of roaring '20s in America. The song that plays over and over is entitled "The Speed Generation," implying connotations of change, consumerism, and the modern girl or *moga*.²⁴ There's a sense of exoticism, sensuality and excitement about this song with the main vocalist and her companions dancing about singing "I'm the kind of girl who's very capricious," while the playwright sits to the side drinking and laughing. Jazz itself was capricious in the sense that it followed no formal parameters of European classical music, and the main vocalist is emblematic of that characteristic of jazz. Jazz reflected a certain cultural internationalism, most obviously through its diffusion into Japan, as well as its association with anti-traditionalism, speeding towards a new age.

This hurtling towards the future sentiment contrasts vastly with the playwright's wife who represents the traditionalism and more conservative views of the time, vastly differing from the scene of booze and jazz going on next door. His wife, for the majority of the movie, wears traditional Japanese clothing as well as traditional styled hair, which is a clear difference between her and the vocalist next door. Yet, later in the movie the playwright's wife states "who cares? It's jazz."²⁵ This harkens back to the multitude of ideas and nuanced political, cultural, and societal environment existing within Japan at this time. While the wife's style and constant

²⁴ Goshō, 40:00.

²⁵ Goshō, 35:30.

worrying about money seem to represent the past, there is an implication that she yearns for the carefree attitude associated with jazz. She clearly displays her jealousy as she accuses her husband of wanting to “play around with that modern girl” next door and states that those “madams” he had been carelessly sitting with for the entire afternoon were dangerous. Yet, moments later she desires to be that *moga* by having her husband buy her a modern dress.²⁶ By the end of the movie the wife is representative of the coexistence of traditionalism, cosmopolitanism, and western ideals. Her hair is styled in the typical finger-wave curls of a *moga* while wearing a modern kimono. This transition within the film mirrors much of what was occurring within Japan and provides further insight into the complexity of the ‘20s and ‘30s and the questioning of cultural identity.

These juxtapositions of traditionalism and cosmopolitanism are found not only within the characters of the film but also within the scenic countryside in which the film takes place. The playwright escapes to the countryside in order to get away from the chaos of the city so that he can therefore complete his play. Yet it is in this setting that he is inexplicably distracted by jazz, which was a more urban genre of music. It seems odd at first that a genre like jazz would exist in such a place; a place removed from the hustle and bustle of city life and less apt to follow popular trends that existed elsewhere in the county. However, this odd juxtaposition in the film serves to demonstrate the two polarized ideals existing in Japan yet again. The countryside had always been emblematic of tradition, aversion to change, and had for the most part remained the same for hundreds of years while jazz signified a new age. Thus, this collocation serves as a reminder of the complexities within Japanese society during the ‘20s and ‘30s.

Ultimately, the film gives the audience a window into the year 1931 when the film was released in Japan. The government had not yet begun its intense attack on Western music, nor

²⁶ Goshō, 49:13.

had it fully outlawed liberalism, which occurred later in 1936. The last scene of the movie displays the family standing near a field, dressed in mostly western clothing and hairstyles, watching as an airplane goes soaring by. Like the song “The Speed Generation,” this last scene epitomizes Japan’s view of the future and reveals the complexity of Japanese identity at this time. Also accompanying this view is the well-known jazz song “My Blue Heaven,” which only seems fitting giving that the family is staring up at the sky. However, it is also interesting that this song was performed by the American Paul Whiteman’s jazz band in 1927, yet again showing a western influence. The last scene leaves the audience looking towards the future, a future in which Japanese identity was up for grab: Western, Japanese, or a hybrid of different international influences.

The Emergence of Jazz in Japan

Besides being a time of relative liberal thinking, the 1920s witnessed the emergence of jazz in Japan, less through the presence of American jazz musicians but through radio networks and records.²⁷ One of the most popular American bandleaders at the time was Paul Whiteman, and it was he who provided the basis for what the Japanese viewed as jazz, a genre that had already been altered from its African American roots it came from.²⁸ In the U.S, Whiteman “famously made a ‘lady’ out of jazz in his 1924 Aeolian hall concert in New York.”²⁹ Whiteman produced a feminized version of jazz, one that was devoid of any black aesthetic in order for white audiences to be able to enjoy the genre. The idea behind this was that the concept of

²⁷ Wade, 19.

²⁸ Atkins, 99.

²⁹ Tracy McMullen. "Identity for Sale: Glenn Miller, Wynton Marsalis, and Cultural Replay in Music," In *Big Ears: Listening for Gender in Jazz Studies*, ed. Nicole T. Rustin and Sherrie Tucker, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 132.

“whiteness” was seen as cultured, palatable and suitable for listening by white audiences, whereas black music and “blackness” was seen as primitive, dangerous, and dirty in a sense.³⁰ Although Whiteman did recognize jazz as a true American folk music that had been created by black musicians, he stripped that from the music and turned it into a seemingly “respectable” art form.³¹ He also sought to distance himself from jazz, which was evident in his 1924 concert at Aeolian Hall in New York:

‘Mr. Whiteman,’ the program noted, ‘intends to point out the tremendous strides which have been made in popular music from the day of discordant popular music which sprang into existence about ten years ago, to the really melodious music of today, which- for no good reason- is still called jazz.’³²

Whiteman desired to create space between his “melodious” music the “discordant popular music” that emerged ten years prior, which obviously was the jazz that originated out of the African American community. Whiteman therefore saw jazz as something that whites could alter or, in more frank terms, he saw it as something he could fix and change to bring into the mainstream, ripping the cultural context from the very seams jazz was based on.

This racially exclusive jazz came to represent the spirit of America quickly, and more specifically, it came to represent democracy well before the occupation within Japan, continuing to do so today. In current times, the famous trumpet player Wynton Marsalis, views jazz as a “model of democratic action” and as a “utopian site of human interaction.”³³ This view was also held in the ‘20s in the U.S.; yet as jazz came to be seen as the American classical music, there arose a fundamental problem with jazz taking on this meaning. White Americans were concerned that this black-oriented music would come to represent the democratic nation in its raw form,

³⁰ McMullen, 133.

³¹ DeLong, Thomas A, *Pops: Paul Whiteman, King of Jazz*. (Piscataway, N.J.: New Century Publishers, 1983), 61.

³² DeLong, 7.

³³ McMullen, 142 and 147.

which was “overtly emotional” and needed to be civilized.³⁴ Obviously, the majority of white Americans did not want a black art form to define America to the outside world. Thus Whiteman’s and other white bandleaders’ role in American jazz formed to change jazz into a white medium that still had the appeal of the jazz sound but was much more refined and suited to represent America on a global and international scale. As Nichole T. Rustin and Tracy McMullen stated in *Big Ears: Listening for Gender in Jazz Studies*, white bandleaders “out of respect (read by many as imitation of) black New Orleans jazz,” took on the responsibility of transforming and “improving” the genre, creating jazz devoid of the black aesthetic.³⁵

Thus it was this music that became distributed throughout the world, representing America, and while the Japanese accepted this version, they soon realized it was not the original jazz created by African Americans. The Whiteman jazz of the 1920s conveyed the idea that only white musicians could effectively articulate and play the black sound, which came to be a reigning ideology in jazz criticism at this time.³⁶ At first, this sound was immensely popular in Japan, however, there soon became a growing knowledge that jazz actually originated within the African American community. On a global scale people began “discovering” that jazz was black, and began to “despise white ‘plagiaries.’”³⁷ Therefore, the diversification of the jazz critic community occurred in Japan, with “negrophiles” and “negrophobes” emerging.³⁸ There was a general feeling among jazz critics who favored black jazz that although whites had seemingly mastered the genre, there was something indescribable missing within the music when played by whites. Those who generally listened to white jazz used the same reasoning white audiences and

³⁴ Rustin, Nicole T., “‘Blow, Man, Blow!’: Representing Gender, White Primitives, and Jazz Melodrama through a Young Man with a Horn” in *Big Ears: Listening for Gender in Jazz Studies*, ed. Sherrie Tucker and Nicole T. Rustin, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 366.

³⁵ Rustin, 367.

³⁶ Hosokawa, 164.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

bandleaders employed in justifying the stripping of black aesthetic in jazz. These “negrophobes” stated that they preferred white jazz due to the fact that music should “conceal emotion which was not the case with black music” and that liking black jazz was a “reflux against civilization.”³⁹ Thus in addition to creating tension between those who preferred cosmopolitanism and those who favored traditionalism, jazz also formed issues within jazz discourse about how race fit into the genre and its importance to the meaning of it.

This discussion of race also alluded to the complex relationship the Japanese had with blacks in America and thus impacted the Japanese view of jazz once it was realized that the genre was an originally black art form. Japan politically desired to be equal to the white global powers, which was similar to the equality blacks sought in America. After the Paris Peace Conference racial equality was important to the Japanese and they desired to have included in the Treaty of Versailles that all races would be equal.⁴⁰ However, the other powers of the world would not agree to this given their own colonies and the sensitive situation with whites and blacks in the U.S. Therefore the Japanese later dropped this issue and accepted the equality of nations as acceptable within the negotiations of the conference. The Japanese understood the struggle of attempting to attain racial equality, and this made their relationship with the black community in America more nuanced. Yet while the Japanese empathized with blacks, they were neither black nor white, and in regards to jazz and the discussion on race there was a void left. This void led to the eventual Japanese interpretation of jazz, one that would be unique from the black and white versions of the genre.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Hosokawa, 132.

Jazz Becomes Japanese

After the initial emergence of jazz in the '20s in which the Japanese were imitators rather than creators in jazz, a composer named Hattori Ryōichi in the 1930s became the pioneer of Japanese jazz and blues. At this time in the United States, blues was as popular as jazz with hits such as the “St. Louis Blues” and “Nobody Knows You When You’re Down and Out” sang by Bessie Smith. The blues, in America, had connotations of extreme sadness, a woman scorned, or love lost. The genre’s portrayal in American culture produced a guttural feeling, deep in the pit of listeners and resonated with the African American community in their feelings towards their social standing in the country. There was a coded meaning in the blues; on the façade it seemed as though these black singers were yearning for a lost love, however, in reality they expressed frustrated sentiments in regards to their humanity due to the history of slavery and the current treatment of African Americans within the country at this time.

Hattori identified with such sentiments in that he felt a disconnection with his country, which in turn influenced his music. He stated in his biography *Boku no ongaku jinsei* that “Japan’s isolationistic sentimentalism” of the 1930s had become dissatisfying to him and thus he looked to a genre that was outside Japanese music.⁴¹ He translated both his dissatisfaction and self-imposed need to create a blues specific to Japan. By no means did he directly empathize with what African Americans exactly were going through. There was no hint of racial inferiority in his music or coded message referring to the pain of slavery, rather, he addressed issues pertinent to the question of identity and jazz. For years, American standards dictated jazz in Japan; and Hattori sought to rectify that in Japan, creating a purely Japanese blues and jazz. In his memoirs he stated, “I don’t think there is any need for the blues to be monopolized by blacks,

⁴¹ Hattori, Ryōichi. *Boku no ongaku jinsei: episōdo de tsuzuru wasei jazu songu-shi.*. Tōkyō: Chūō Bungeisha :, 571982, 231.

like William Handy's 'St. Louis Blues.' Don't you think there should be a Japanese blues, an Oriental blues in Japan?"⁴² Therefore, beginning with Hattori's "Farewell Blues," a Japanese feel was given to a primarily American genre that was closely linked to jazz. It is likely that Hattori hardly saw a difference between jazz and the blues given that they were only one thing to him: western.

Hattori's "Farewell Blues," released in 1937, clearly exemplifies the Japanese influence on jazz and the blues. Hattori's reference point for the song was W.C. Handy's "St Louis Blues, and it was Handy who was the father of American blues."⁴³ Hattori's composition of the "Farewell Blues" follows the general blues sound of I-IV-V and, as Michael Bourdaghs notes in *Sayonara Amerika, Sayonara Nippon*, the song also shifts between a pentatonic scale as well as a more western minor scale.⁴⁴ The song itself was a huge hit, and opens with a clarinet shifting between these scales; it then features the mournful sounds of Awaya Noriko and the sound of a muted trumpet, echoing the bluesy sounds found in American blues. The lyrics are also reminiscent of American blues, with the vocalist singing about an "ephemeral love."⁴⁵ Yet, Hattori's experimentation with the tonality and scales involved in the song produce an entirely new and unprecedented type of sound in Japanese music. Hattori's first blues song allowed Japanese artists to enter a new chapter in understanding jazz in that instead of being imitators they began to be creators. Hattori's desire in making jazz and the blues Japanese coincided with the increased nationalism prominent in the late '30s, and experienced immeasurable popularity in Japan. Thus, Hattori's nationalistic jazz can be seen as mirroring the progression towards the nationalistic sentiment in a political sense. What was once a solely an American genre had been

⁴² Bourdaghs, 40.

⁴³ Bourdaghs, 29.

⁴⁴ Bourdaghs, 29-30.

⁴⁵ "Farewell Blues" MOJIM. <http://mojim.com/twy115126x3x7.htm> (accessed October 27, 2014).

transformed into something Japanese, moving towards a more purely Japanese identity by the end of the '30s and early '40s that was supported by the government with Japan at war.

Conclusion

The 1920s and '30s in Japan were a time of vast change, unrest, volatility, and increased awareness with the rise of modernism and question of cultural identity. These changes came to be mirrored within the discussion of jazz, and as the Japanese focused on the question of national identity, they utilized jazz as a medium to debate this question. Cosmopolitans embraced jazz and change, while traditionalists clung to the past, rejecting the American genre.

Identity is always in flux, but in Japan an allegedly “Japanese” identity was juxtaposed to a “Western” one. The transition from the movie *The Neighbor's Wife and Mine* in 1931 and Hattori's take on Japanese jazz in the late '30s exemplify these changes and differences in identities. The identity that emerged out of the Taishō era was a conglomerate of western, international, and Asian influences and the playwright's wife was clearly a symbol of the mixture of identities; she wore a kimono and at the same time possessed a purely western hairstyle. However, as the '30s increased this identity soon swayed back towards a more Japanese identity, with what was once a western type of music being labeled as Japanese. This evolution paralleled the political and cultural occurrences present in Japan. In not being able to completely eradicate jazz, traditionalists and conservatives attempted to create “light music” filled with Japanese elements, and Hattori's jazz accomplished this as well. Thus the changes in Japanese identity were reflected in the alterations jazz underwent throughout the '20s and '30s.

Race also played a huge part in the discussion of jazz and the Japanese identity on a global scale. Although the Japanese possessed empathy for the black situation in the U.S., they

were also focused on emerging within the international stage as a power equal to those of white nationalities. The Japanese identified with both whites and blacks in America, and yet in regards to jazz this left a racial void for the Japanese. This then led to Hattori's Japanese version of jazz, one that could not be associated with whites or blacks but only the Japanese. Thus this element of race created a further complexity to jazz discourse but also spurred the Japanese towards a nationalistic identity that was purely Japanese.

The transition towards a Japanese type of jazz as well as an increasingly nationalistic identity continued up until the mid-1940s with the end of World War II. In understanding how jazz emerged, morphed, and changed in the '20s and '30s one can clearly observe the reflection of cultural identity within the genre during this period. Ultimately, jazz assumed whatever meaning those playing it wanted; thus the cultural context jazz was placed in shaped its significance in Japan. After the war, jazz would take on a much different meaning with the occupation and presence of SCAP forces. With the help of censorship and control by the American forces, an old friend would be playing on the radio in Japan after 1945: American, bleached jazz.

Chapter Two

The American Occupation of Japan:

Jazz Becomes the Soundtrack

*The Japanese people, starved so long for western music,
now seem to be trying to 'catch up.'*

- CI&E Report on Radio in Japan⁴⁶

The American military occupation of Japan commenced two weeks after Japan's surrender announcement on August 15, 1945. It was to become synonymous with MacArthur, otherwise known as Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers or SCAP.⁴⁷ SCAP controlled the development of economic recovery, the restructuring of the Japanese government, creation of a new constitution, and more importantly for this thesis, the censorship and cultivation of culture, music, art, and film within occupied Japan. The Civil Information and Education Section of SCAP had a strong hand in the filtering of what the Japanese could create and experience within the time period of the occupation. This time, America affected Japanese cultural identity directly via occupation policy and jazz was a focal point.

Jazz experienced its own revival in Japan during the occupation: American G.I.'s listened to it for personal entertainment, and it became the most prominent soundtrack for films SCAP approved for distribution. This jazz, reminiscent of the type of jazz devoid of any black aesthetic that was popular in the 1920s, began a process of acculturation and discrimination. Jazz became a medium through which SCAP objectives within the occupation were conveyed and

⁴⁶ "Radio in Japan," Box No. 5150, Radio in Japan, 1945-1951, Reports, Analysis, and Publications, 1945-1951; 331 Records of Allied Operational and Occupation Headquarters, World War II, (1907-1966); National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

⁴⁷ Dower, John W., *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), 212.

manipulated, and instead of purely and singularly being associated with a carefree attitude, jazz also became a way in which forced American homogenization occurred in Japan. Instead of jazz infiltrating Japan through cultural exchange, it was intentionally flooded into Japan during the occupation to implement the Americanization of Japan. Films such as *Rhapsody in Blue* as well as jazz songbooks spoke to the continual bleaching of the jazz aesthetic as well as to what type of image American occupational forces wanted to convey to the Japanese. The American occupation started a new era of “democracy” in Japan, and jazz once again became a bone of contention in the perpetual negotiation of Japanese identity.

The Occupation Begins

Emperor Hirohito’s voice sounded over the airwaves for the first time following the unconditional surrender of Japan to the Allied Powers after both the atomic bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima.⁴⁸ In his speech, the emperor never actually referred explicitly to defeat or surrender, and stated that the Japanese had “endured the unendurable.”⁴⁹ At the surrender ceremony on September 2nd, 1945, were the seemingly idealistic views and goals of General MacArthur:

A better world shall emerge out of the blood and carnage
of the past- a world founded upon faith and understanding –
a world dedicated to the dignity of man and the fulfillment
of this most cherished wish- for freedom, tolerance, and justice.⁵⁰

MacArthur positioned the occupation in such a way as to render it impossible for someone to criticize SCAP’s objectives of “freedom” and “justice.” While this may have been true on the surface, the reality was much different given the restrictions imposed via censorship and the lack

⁴⁸ Dower, 35.

⁴⁹ Dower, 35 and 36.

⁵⁰ Dower, 41.

of freedom many Japanese experienced in the occupation. However, it was this type of idealistic rhetoric that MacArthur utilized, as well as many other Americans, to justify the occupation that was technically expected to be an “Allied” occupation instead of what it really was: an overwhelmingly American endeavor.

At the Potsdam Conference in July 1945 President Harry Truman, Joseph Stalin, and Winston Churchill agreed that Japan would lose its empire, pay reparations, disarm completely and permanently, and “stern justice” would be served to war criminals.⁵¹ MacArthur yet again spoke in an idealistic way, this time about the Potsdam Declaration, stating:

We are committed by the Potsdam Declaration of Principles to see that the Japanese people are liberated from this condition of slavery. It is my purpose to implement this commitment just as rapidly as the armed forces are demobilized and other essential steps are taken to neutralize the war potentials.⁵²

In this instance, MacArthur not only spoke in terms of liberation but also stated that the Japanese languished in a “condition of slavery.” In pursuing this seemingly noble cause, SCAP wished to perpetuate American ideals of liberty as well as democracy, and set out to not only have a military occupation, but also one that would affect numerous aspects of Japanese life and society. Japan was to be “rendered a peaceful, democratic, law abiding nation by eradicating the very roots of militarism that had led it so recently to war” and influenced completely by American values and culture.⁵³ What these vague terms of both liberty and freedom really meant was that American was to create a homogenous, American-like nation out of the occupation. The result would be an easily bendable nation, which could both be an ally in the future and be seen as subservient to the large and powerful western nation of the United States.

⁵¹ Dower, 74.

⁵² Caprio, Mark, ed. *Democracy in Occupied Japan: the U.S. Occupation and Japanese Politics and Society*, (London: Routledge, 2007), 3.

⁵³ Dower, 76.

As an occupying power, SCAP had to deal with a devastated country as well as over 6.5 million Japanese stranded in Asia, Siberia, and the Pacific Ocean area, with extreme malnutrition and disease running rampant throughout Japan.⁵⁴ Thus, there were not only issues surrounding the very foundation of Japanese government and society, but also problems to be dealt with resulting from World War II. The first policy report written by SCAP addressed this anticipated issue and stated that reparations would be limited to the “forfeiture of property that remained in Japan’s former colonial territories and to materials anywhere in Japan’s possession not essential for a peaceful Japanese economy.”⁵⁵ Thus any territory not necessary to the Japanese economy was to be given up by Japan, unconditionally. The dissolution of the empire vastly impacted Japan and made it deferential to a Western power and was the materialization of Japan’s defeat.

Other important focal points of the occupation centered around the issue of the Emperor’s position, gender equality, and Japan’s permanent demilitarization.⁵⁶ The emperor was the symbol of wartime Japan, and he was the icon men had both died and killed for. Prior to Japan’s surrender, the Allies discussed the emperor’s role in postwar Japan. Ultimately the emperor remained as a “symbol of the state and unity of the people,” however, he no longer had the status of being “sacred and inviolable” as he did in the Meiji Constitution.⁵⁷ In regards to gender equality, there was a strong American emphasis legal on gender equality in the family. Thus multiple aspects of Japanese life, politics, and society intertwined in the postwar world and affected Japan at both an institutional level as well as individual.

As for demilitarization, the American occupation thoroughly dealt with this issue by creating a new constitution that included the so-called peace clause. Article 9, which abolished

⁵⁴ Dower, 48 and 90.

⁵⁵ Caprio, 3.

⁵⁶ Caprio, 4.

⁵⁷ Caprio, 5.

“war as a sovereign right of the [Japanese] nation.”⁵⁸ The new constitution and this article were imperative in creating the type of postwar democracy America wanted to achieve. As a result of the constitution and occupation, political participation expanded, with leftist groups’ involvement as well as allowing women the right to vote and run for office.⁵⁹ In making these changes with SCAP’s supervision, some Japanese did experience greater rights, however, at the same time, SCAP perpetuated a staunch system of censorship that seemed to connect the American occupational forces with wartime Japan’s government and its own suppression of the populace.

While on the surface American forces promoted democracy and freedom, occupied Japan experienced an incredible amount of censorship. Naturally, ironies and contradictions arose in this situation:

SCAP labored to promote democracy in Japan but banned all criticism of its own workings; cartoonists in this newly free society were forbidden to make caricatures of the Supreme Commander; liberated filmmakers were not permitted to film or depict the occupiers, or even to show glimpses of Mount Fuji, which was perceived by these occupiers as an imperial symbol; anything ‘feudal’ was searched out and uprooted, yet the emperor and much of the imperial system were allowed to remain.⁶⁰

SCAP also detested the overplaying of starvation in Japan, a huge problem that the country faced after the war. While censorship seemed to be in its very essence against the types of principles and thinking American forces in Japan wanted to spread, censorship was put in place to foster the homogenized, American type of society that occupational forces wanted Japan to turn into. Censorship was never openly acknowledged, however, it was expected to last until the “safety of the foreign forces could be assured and reformist policies successfully implemented,” or

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Caprio, 6.

⁶⁰ Sandler, Mark Howard, *The Confusion Era: Art and Culture of Japan during the Allied Occupation, 1945-1952*, (Washington D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution in association with the University of Washington Press, Seattle and London, 1997), 12.

rather, until Japan was deemed to not be a threat.⁶¹ While central to the occupation, censorship was one of the focal points of criticism after the occupation, and dictated much of Japanese life during the occupation years, affecting film, culture, and, more importantly, music.

Censorship was not the only point of contention and contradiction in regards to the occupation; halfway through the occupation a reversal of sorts in the occupation's objectives occurred. With the intensification of the Cold War came a change in SCAP policy: instead of "fascist-cleansing," American forces started to focus on "communist-chasing."⁶² As a result, the objective of the occupation became more and more about making Japan a strong ally against communism in Asia, rather than further democratizing the country or simply just cleaning up the mess World War II made in Japan. Instead of carrying out some of the most "humane and liberal impulses" and projects SCAP thought of, the main mission of SCAP became to create a strong economy in Japan and it strongly backed the emergence of a conservative government, which was to include convicted and suspected war criminals in the 1950s.⁶³ However, throughout the entire occupation there was little change in the Americanization of Japan. The focus of the occupation was "definitely more 'American' than broadly 'modern.'"⁶⁴ One culture was being thoroughly impressed upon another, and the subservient relationship between Japan and America would continue throughout the occupation.

Jazz became the material through which much of these contradictions came to fruition in real life for the Japanese. The occupation started with "virtually no restrictions on fraternization" but by the end of the first year an informal policy of non-fraternization was put in effect which

⁶¹ Dower, 406.

⁶² Sandler, 20.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Sandler, 46.

thus affected the hotels, restaurants, and bars where jazz played.⁶⁵ Yet again there were paradoxes in the occupation's attitude towards the Japanese people: while popularizing and promoting jazz as the American soundtrack through various films and music, it was still a genre meant to be seen as solely American and, more importantly, white. This sudden change in policy continued the long portrayal of jazz being a solely American and white genre, to be admired by the Japanese but owned by America. Thus, the occupation's policies to foster American values not only affected the political structures within Japan, but also how jazz was seen and heard by the Japanese. This emphasis on white jazz would soon transcend from being played solely in nightclubs to the radio and film, thus permeating Japanese life in a multiplicity of media sources.

Bleached Jazz Becomes Japan's Soundtrack

SCAP knew the power that came with public media and thus used it as a medium through which they could disseminate the ideals they deemed the Japanese needed to embrace. Thus, one of the first projects the Civil Information and Education section embarked upon was a full study of the radio system already present in Japan. The report created was entitled "Radio in Japan: A Report on the Condition of Broadcasting in Japan" and was released in 1947. Gained from this study was the number of registered radio receivers, how many of the Japanese had access to the radio, what kind of programs the Japanese radio offered as well as what kind of music. Also noted by researchers of the study was that western music outweighed Japanese music, due to its popularity with the Japanese people before the war.⁶⁶ The former Japanese government "discouraged" western music and recordings of Japanese music "had to be played so much that

⁶⁵ Passin, Herbert, *The Legacy of the Occupation—Japan*, (New York: East Asian Institute, Columbia University, 1968), 20.

⁶⁶ "Radio in Japan," Box No. 5150, Radio in Japan, 1945-1951, Reports, Analysis, and Publications, 1945-1951; 331 Records of Allied Operational and Occupation Headquarters, World War II, (1907-1966); National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

they are now in very poor condition.”⁶⁷ SCAP thus realized that there had been a gap in the presence of western music within Japan and began to utilize the radio as well as other forms of media to push forth their agenda and the Americanization of Japan.

The Civil Information and Education section of SCAP censored and approved everything that was played on the radio as well as what physical copies of music entered Japan. From 1946 until 1951 receipts of music scores distributed to certain Information Centers in Japan ran by SCAP were kept, with many of the receipts referencing solely western music by composers such as Ernst Bacon, Aaron Copland, and Normand Lockwood.⁶⁸ Much of what passed through censorship was classical; however, jazz was also allowed into Japan. Since jazz was seen as the quintessential American soundtrack, it was obvious that this genre would make its way to the Japanese people yet again for a second time after the ‘20s and ‘30s. However, race would again be a contentious aspect of sharing this genre. The jazz that would be spread by the American occupational forces would not be the aesthetically black jazz, but rather the jazz Paul Whiteman played; a bleached, “ladylike” jazz, thus effecting Japanese cultural identity for the second time in history. It was white jazz that had been seen as purely American, not the black aesthetic that jazz originated out of in New Orleans. This jazz would be both a force for the Americanization of Japan and to remind the Japanese of the whiteness and superiority of America.

To accomplish the Americanization of Japan, the CI&E also actively encouraged the Japanese to use not only the radio but also the SCAP Information Centers scattered throughout Japan. There were frequently “one-minute spot announcements” on the radio that would speak to what these centers offered:

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ “Music,” Box 5333, Folder 7, 331 Records of Allied Operational and Occupation Headquarters, World War II, (1907-1966); National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

And now a public service message to you lovers of outstanding music. Your SCAP-CIE Information Center is now offering to you a new special lending service: brand new American recordings. Responsible persons and organizations may borrow these recordings from the SCAP-CIE Information Center. Now you can hear the world-famous Boston Symphony, the Dixieland jazz of Eddie Condon and his quintet, and other thrilling music. These recordings are all in the SCAP-CIE Information Center.⁶⁹

SCAP actively advertised jazz and music that could be enjoyed in the intimate spaces of Japanese homes, reaching the innermost crevices of Japan through the family. SCAP forces made this music readily available to the Japanese in order to continue the propagation of their ideals and superior culture and thus not only was the occupation militaristic, but one that affected the postwar culture. This infiltration of jazz into Japanese life further continued the process of Americanization, and was incredibly effective in reaching mass numbers of Japanese citizens.

The type of jazz found in the *Shinko Jazz Album* songbooks exemplified the jazz popularized by the radio and Information Centers.⁷⁰ While the album clearly had the word “jazz” on it, the actual components of the songbook included songs such as “Home on the Range” and “Somewhere in the Blue Ridge Mountains,” which were clearly not, at least in the modern American mind, associated with jazz in any clear way. However, the inclusion of the songs spoke to the unapologetic, white, American stereotypes and aesthetics that SCAP portrayed to the Japanese during the occupation. At the same time the inclusion of tunes such as “St. Louis Blues” and “Blue Moon” spoke to the jazz the Japanese were familiar with before the war, and the blues that Hattori Ryōichi was so inspired by in the ‘30s. The “St. Louis Blues” found in the songbook in particular utilized the colloquial English dialect of Black southerners, making it seem more authentic and seemingly going against the white stereotype SCAP worked so hard to embody in Japan. However, this was done by whites frequently in the twentieth century: as Robert Nowatzki discusses in *Representing African Americans in Transatlantic Abolitionism and*

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ *Shinko Jazz Album*. Vol. 1. 2 vols., 1946 in the Gordon W. Prange Collection in College Park, Maryland.

Blackface Minstrelsy, when whites employed black-associated language, enacted black minstrelsy, or appropriated black music, it was seen as far more acceptable.⁷¹ Thus, the use of this language only further proved that SCAP's manipulation of mediums that had emerged out of the black culture in America were being used to still further the idea of a mainly white America, one in which whites could do no wrong.

Rhapsody in Blue Comes to Japan (1947)

One of the most famous composers of the time, George Gershwin, was also disseminated to the Japanese public through musical scores, the radio, and ultimately a movie telling the tale of his eventful and accomplished life. The CI&E sector had receipts for multiple scores of Gershwin's music such as "Concerto in F," "Rhapsody in Blue," and six songs from his jazz opera "Porgy and Bess."⁷² Gershwin was famous in America for creating a type of symphonic jazz, one that melded the civilized nature of western, classical music with the new and modern, primitive jazz. Not only was he a pioneer in this new type of music, but also an agent of American music, embodying the spirit of the nation through his music.

In addition to the circulation of his music, the release of the movie *Rhapsody in Blue* in 1947 in Japan as the occupation began acted as a covert type of propaganda, approved for viewing by American censors in Japan.⁷³ The film was marketed based on its musical content as well as the fact that the content would be entirely American.⁷⁴ What was extremely prevalent in the film was the relationship between whiteness and America. In reality, George Gershwin's

⁷¹ Nowatzki, Robert, *Representing African Americans in Transatlantic Abolitionism and Blackface Minstrelsy*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010), 119.

⁷² "Music," Box 5333, Folder 7, 331 Records of Allied Operational and Occupation Headquarters, World War II, (1907-1966); National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

⁷³ Kitamura, Hiroshi, *Screening Enlightenment: Hollywood and the Cultural Reconstruction of Defeated Japan*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 93.

⁷⁴ Kitamura, 98.

family was of eastern European heritage as well as Jewish, two attributes not seen as ideally American. Tellingly, there was little mention of Gershwin's roots, and the film portrayed his family as a typical all-American family. Thus Gershwin was seen in the film as a purely American prodigy. Gershwin's music also was framed as new and innovative, without any influence of the African-American culture. Although there were some black performers in the film, rarely was the relationship between Gershwin and blacks emphasized or even noted.⁷⁵

Gershwin's music professor in the film speaks to his white, American identity in saying:

America is a growing country; a mixture of things very old with more that is new. Your nature has the same contradictions: a lamb and a wolf, ideas and material ambition. If you can make them both serve, George, you can give America her voice.⁷⁶

Thus it was this idea of a white, all-American Gershwin, man of the nation, who would be portrayed to Japanese audiences. While Gershwin produced pieces of jazz, they were melded so perfectly with the more western, classical elements that his work was civilized enough for the mainstream, white type of America.

Speaking also to the race issue was the cameo appearance of Paul Whiteman as well as the presence of black minstrelsy in the film, echoing the same issues present within the '20s and '30s in regards to jazz. There was a feeling of déjà vu within the film when Whiteman remarks in a gallant fashion, "I'm gonna make a lady out of jazz," echoing the same sentiments he was known for in the earlier pre-war era. Gershwin's music seemed to be the answer: it was civilized enough for white audiences but had the same whimsical, excited nature of jazz, devoid of the black aesthetic. The continuation of the white jazz narrative in regards to jazz was a full component of the occupation in Japan in reshaping cultural identity for yet a second time. Thus,

⁷⁵ Kitamura, 100.

⁷⁶ *Rhapsody in Blue*. MGM/UA DVD, 1945. Film. Minute 31:00.

it only made sense that the film referenced Whiteman, portrayed to the Japanese audience as a symbolic figure within American jazz spanning from the late 1920s to the mid-40s.

As Robert Nowatzki discusses in *Representing African Americans in Transatlantic Abolitionism and Blackface Minstrelsy*, white artists portraying black African Americans were largely preferred to actual black performers, which is evident in the film.⁷⁷ With the beginning of ragtime, black minstrelsy became immensely popular and was a “cunning amalgam of appreciation and mockery.”⁷⁸ The mainstream public in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century became suddenly obsessed with black vernacular music and dance, but more specifically, the caricatures of blacks that they could find humor in.⁷⁹ While black actors famously depicted these caricatures, there were, ironically, white actors who also put on blackface and sang songs like, “All Coons Look Alike to Me,” which later had other version such as “All Chinks Look Alike to Me” and focused on dehumanizing minorities.⁸⁰ In the film, the entertainer Al Jolson puts on blackface and sings “Swanee,” a song about the Suwannee River in Georgia. Significantly, although depicting a black man, it was a white man who played the part. Thus, the film reaffirmed white attitudes in relation to blacks; there was a constant reminder that white artists were preferable to black artists, and that perhaps whites could perform black minstrelsy better or more authentically than their black counterparts in a way that would be palpable for white audiences. The participation of Jolson in the film reminded the viewer of this and further portrayed black arts as purely white art forms, which by extension also encapsulated jazz.

⁷⁷ Nowatzki, 119.

⁷⁸ Abbott and Seroff, 12.

⁷⁹ Abbott, 12.

⁸⁰ Abbott, 14.

Conclusion

The American occupation in Japan was pivotal in shaping the cultural identity of the Japanese after World War II in all aspects of Japanese life. Jazz was wholly part of this transformation in Japan. While jazz had existed in Japan in the '20s and '30s, there was still an acknowledgment from Japanese “negrophobes” that the African American community had been responsible for the origination of a genre loved worldwide. This, however, changed vastly with the occupation. Due to the perpetuation of whiteness in the context of jazz, the genre became dissociated from the black community and solely viewed as a purely American, white type of music that American forces encouraged the Japanese to listen to frequently. The policies of SCAP thus affected how jazz was perceived in Japan, and as Japan musicians had done in the late '30s, they would attempt in the occupation to make jazz their own with the reemergence of Hattori Ryoichi, taking on jazz as their own genre and seeking to see what jazz meant to the Japanese.

Chapter Three

“Tokyo Boogie Woogie”:

A New Age of Jazz in Japan

*Tokyo boogie woogie, a cheerful rhythm,
makes the heart throb and excited,
the world's song, a fun song, Tokyo boogie-woogie,
boogie woogie, a merry song, Tokyo boogie-woogie,
boogie woogie, this era's song, sing and dance.*

-Kasagi Shizuko, 1946⁸¹

As the occupation took hold in Japan, jazz music suppressed by the National Mobilization Law of 1938 reemerged as not only the soundtrack for Americans but also as a genre embraced by some of the Japanese.⁸² Directors, singers, and songwriters took hold of the genre and as they experienced the occupation, utilized jazz to express their own feelings about being occupied. While any obvious negative feelings towards American forces would have been automatically censored, there were artists who employed jazz to highlight the perceived evils such as corruption and greed that had entered Japan with the occupation and Americanization. Yet at the same time, these uses of jazz in a negative sense were countered by an embracement of jazz as embodying positive ideals. Musicians such as Kasagi Shizuko and Hattori Ryōichi, both of whom were famous within the jazz scene during the 1930s, not only embraced jazz but also took to continuing what Hattori had begun in the late 30s: creating a type of jazz that was not solely American but Japanese.

⁸¹ Kasagi, Shizuko. *Tokyo Boogie Woogie*. CD. Japanese Retro Hits- the Post War Years. Musical Ark, 2012.

⁸² Bourdaghs, Michael K., *Sayonara Amerika, Sayonara Nippon: A Geopolitical Prehistory of J-pop*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 37.

These various uses and manipulations of jazz demonstrated the multiplicity of feelings about the American occupation. Jazz was a medium through which discontentment with or approval of the occupation was shown, or anything in between the two. The occupation was perceived differently by many of the Japanese and therefore to use a genre such as jazz to exemplify and express their feelings was to utilize the same music being impressed upon them by American forces. The same genre Americans utilized to convey certain ideas, the Japanese employed to refute such ideas or to accept them willingly, thus seeming to transform Japanese society through this type of music. Therefore, jazz became both the soundtrack for the occupation as well as the other side of this time period: a devastated Japan.

Kurosawa's *Drunken Angel* (1948) and *Stray Dog* (1949)

Kurosawa Akira was a popular film director in Japan throughout the '30s, '40s and '50s who, while thoroughly glad that the war was over, saw the negative aspects of the occupation. Famous not only for his so-called democracy films such as *No Regrets for Our Youth*, Kurosawa exposed the undesirable features of the occupation in regards to consumerism, mass culture, and homogeneity in his other films.⁸³ In Kurosawa's viewpoint, the arrival of American forces created the existence of a certain duality in pop culture: Japanese versus American, both of which were seen as two homogenous groups lacking any multidimensionality. Kurosawa wished to display the "intricacies" present within the perceived homogenous Japanese, and therefore focused on telling the stories of interesting, unique subjects, while also blaming the U.S. for purporting this homogeneity in Japanese society.⁸⁴ Kurosawa also recognized that crime and corruption were tremendous problems within the occupation given the devastation Japan's

⁸³ Bourdaghs, 24 and 37.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

economy experienced in the postwar world. Thus Kurosawa used jazz, which symbolically represented America, numerous times in many of his films concurrently with scenes of crime, corruption, or weakness. Instead of jazz being celebratory of America, Kurosawa's use of jazz conveyed a sense of foreboding or negativity in his films. To Kurosawa, music could add another layer of meaning to his films, thus the depiction of jazz in such scenes told a vastly different story of the occupation than what was perpetuated by American forces.⁸⁵

Kurosawa's clever way of criticizing the occupation while not violating creative restrictions of the occupation demonstrated an adroit ability to work with and around American censorship. In this time period, censorship officials looked at everything the Japanese read, viewed, and heard; film was no different. SCAP encouraged filmmakers to create films that dealt with the economic and social problems Japan faced as well as anything that would perpetuate the occupation's objectives.⁸⁶ In general, Kurosawa did not subtly defy censors in all of his movies; there were some that did fully adhere to censorship requirements such as *No Regrets for Our Youth*, which showed both the political and social enlightenment of a Japanese woman in wartime Japan where oppression was rampant. Interestingly enough, Japanese wartime censors as well as American censorship officials rejected one of Kurosawa's films. Entitled *They Who Step on the Tiger's Tail*, the film was "banned by the Japanese authorities as too democratic, then banned by the American authorities as too feudalistic, and [Kurosawa] had to wait until after the end of the Occupation for its release."⁸⁷ SCAP saw the film as protecting and prolonging feudal values of revenge, given that the setting was during the twelfth century and the film featured

⁸⁵ Doering, James M., "A Look at Japanese Film through the Lens of Akira Kurosawa," accessed February 3, 2015. <http://www.rmc.edu/docs/default-source/asian-studies/a-look-at-japanese-film-music-through-the-lens-of-akira-kurosawa-%28pdf%29.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

⁸⁶ Kitamura, Hiroshi, *Screening Enlightenment: Hollywood and the Cultural Reconstruction of Defeated Japan*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 49.

⁸⁷ Sandler, Mark Howard, *The Confusion Era: Art and Culture of Japan during the Allied Occupation, 1945-1952*, (Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution in Association with the University of Washington Press, Seattle and London, 1997), 19.

samurai. Thus, postwar censorship was a difficult era to produce work that seemed to go against SCAP or America in any manner. Yet, two of Kurosawa's films did just this, demonstrating his skill in working around censorship restrictions with his use of jazz.

The plot of *Drunken Angel* was one such film that Kurosawa created which cleverly criticized the occupation while also adhering to the wants of American censors. In the film a doctor attempts to save a gang member infected with tuberculosis named Matsunaga who is torn between choosing a better life or remaining with the gang he formerly was a part of. The CI&E wanted films demonstrative of the social and economic problems postwar Japan faced and *Drunken Angel's* portrayal of the economically failing city did just this. With the town's economy doing so poorly, Matsunaga feels that he must return to a life of crime, partying, gambling and the gangster culture. As the film progresses, Matsunaga finds himself in ailing health and attempts to rip himself from the grasp of his gang, eventually killing its leader. Thus, the film truly parallels the type of plot the SCAP censors craved for Japanese audiences: Matsunaga triumphs over his economic situation and chooses a morally better life, ending the cycle of gangster life plaguing his town. Thus, at first glance the film seems to completely comply with American censorship policies.

When taking a closer view of *Drunken Angel*, it is obvious that there are underlying messages abounding, displaying Kurosawa's true and complex feelings about the occupation in a discreet way. While the basic plot speaks to what SCAP wanted in films, Kurosawa utilized music and the expertise of arranger Fumio Hayasaka in *Drunken Angel* to convey these various messages through music.⁸⁸ The type of music featured in the film ranges from folk music to jazz music and when played in concurrence with specific scenes conveys a deeper meaning to the viewer. Therefore, when Kurosawa employs jazz music in the film, it expresses a message far

⁸⁸ Doering.

different from what American occupational forces used it for. It did not communicate any positive or homogenous connotation. Rather, jazz plays in the film when Matsunaga chooses to associate with his gang, attends a dance hall, or is merely acting in a way that will lead to his eventual demise. Kurosawa thus utilizes jazz for his own purposes, connecting jazz with undesirable connotations and, by extension, challenges the stereotypical, positive image jazz had in relation to America.

There is one specific scene in *Drunken Angel* that shows jazz denoting a negative connotation with Kasagi Shizuko, a prominent Japanese singer both before World War II and after, singing “Jungle Boogie.”⁸⁹ Within the scene Matsunaga convenes with gang members at a dance hall as he continues to slowly die from tuberculosis. As the gang members become increasingly drunk, Kasagi begins to sing her guttural “Jungle Boogie.” Kasagi’s song and performance become integral parts of the scene, providing the soundtrack for Matsunaga to yet again choose the wrong path in his life. Here, Kurosawa blatantly utilizes jazz as the background music for criminal activity and vice. The ease with which Matsunaga falls back into his old life is only aided by the slinky, sinful sounds of a jazz band and Kasagi’s suggestive and provocative performance. Also present in the film is the emasculation of Japanese men, something that Kurosawa felt was happening during the occupation.⁹⁰ In this same particular scene, Matsunaga virtually has no agency in deciding whether he wants to rejoin the gang or defy the gang; he is frail and impressionable. Thus, what lies deeper in Kurosawa’s work is a severe critique of the occupation and of Japan’s allowance for these negative effects to occur. The fact that jazz is played during this scene is no coincidence, but rather Kurosawa pointing to the source of many of these issues – America – and, more importantly, the failure of the Japanese people to react.

⁸⁹ Kurosawa, Akira, *Drunken Angel*, Tamarelle's International Films, 1948. DVD.

⁹⁰ Bourdaghs, 23.

In the film *Stray Dog*, Kurosawa also employs jazz in scenes that feature criminal activity, thus creating a correlation between jazz and the darker side of Japanese postwar life yet again.⁹¹ The film, in essence, is about a detective named Murakami whose gun is stolen by petty thieves. While at first only worrisome because now Murakami has no gun, the situation becomes far more complex when a series of crimes and murders are committed with his gun, thus making it seem as though he holds some responsibility for these crimes. In an effort to find the gun, Murakami scours the city night and day, and ultimately at some points becomes lost between the world of crime and his own world. Murakami enlists the help of multiple characters, many of whom frequent dance halls, baseball games, and anything seemingly American. Thus in the film's entirety, it seems that Kurosawa repeatedly connects American cultural aspects with criminal activity and corruption in the same scenes. While American occupational forces depicted the sharing of American culture, sports, and ideals in a positive light, Kurosawa portrays such things negatively.

One can notice this different correlation between jazz and crime when Murakami is searching for his gun and the famous "Tokyo Boogie Woogie" song plays in the background.⁹² Sung by Kasagi Shizuko and written by Hattori Ryōichi, "Tokyo Boogie Woogie" was a song that encapsulated the joyful, free feeling associated with the end of the war and the embracement of American occupational forces in Japan.⁹³ Kurosawa, however, utilized this song in the film during a time of chaos, when Murakami attempts to find the criminal who has his gun without being perceived as a detective. Therefore it is at this juncture in which the line between Murakami's life of pursuing justice and criminal activity begin to blend. This was the first instance in the film in which Kurosawa defied American connotations with jazz and utilized the

⁹¹ Kurosawa, Akira, *Stray Dog*. Home Vision Cinema, 1998.

⁹² *Stray Dog*, 19:50.

⁹³ Kasagi, Shizuko. *Tokyo Boogie Woogie*. CD. Japanese Retro Hits- the Post War Years. Musical Ark, 2012.

genre for his own purposes. With jazz originally being associated with a homogenous, wholesome, white image, Kurosawa intelligently employed it in his films to convey his own sentiments about the occupation and the colonization of Japan by U.S. forces.

In one specific scene, Murakami accosts a woman connected with the theft of his gun in, unsurprisingly, a dance hall with jazz music playing in the background. This scene opens with a surfeit of scantily clad female dancers, provocatively moving with jazz music to entertain the numerous amounts of men present at the club. As the dancers finish, they lie down backstage, unable to move in the summer heat, while a distant jazz song plays with the camera panning over their bodies.⁹⁴ Out of these images emerges the lover of the central criminal in the film, Harumi, who embodies the type of life Kurosawa associated with jazz. While in the past this type of scene would have conveyed connotations of the *ero-guro-nansensu* type of culture that accompanied the 1920s and 1930s, the scene paints a picture of postwar life filled with criminal activity in the backdrop of jazz culture. These connotations vastly differed from the forced American homogenization that occupational forces propagated in postwar Japan. At the center of a scene filled with jazz sounds is the girlfriend of a criminal and throughout *Stray Dog* this continues to be the case. In *Stray Dog*, as with *Drunken Angel*, Kurosawa utilizes jazz in scenes of corruption, crime, and the underworld of the occupation to emphasize the negative aspects of the postwar world he lived in.

Emergence of Kasagi Shizuko as the Voice of the Occupation

While immensely famous during the occupation, Kasagi actually began singing jazz during the 1930s and worked closely with the composer and arranger Hattori Ryōichi. In working together, they formed the basis of what jazz was in Japan before the occupation even

⁹⁴ *Stray Dog*, 1:06.

took hold. Over ninety percent of Kasagi's recordings from 1940 until 1956 were composed by Hattori and utilized minor descending scales similar to American songs such as "Bei Mir Bis Du Schon" and "Sing, Sing, Sing!"⁹⁵ Thus, the jazz Kasagi and Hattori created during this time closely resembled American jazz, increasing their popularity in Japan. Also vital to her success was the fact that Kasagi possessed the incredible gift to sing jazz while not sacrificing phonetic sounds. Many Japanese singers at the time found it difficult to sing and swing jazz given the Japanese language itself, and yet Kasagi "really knew how to swing."⁹⁶ In this way, her popularity, which had dipped slightly during the war years due to the restriction of jazz music, continued from the 1930s throughout the years of the occupation.

It was during the occupation that Kasagi truly gained popularity with not only a Japanese audience but also American occupational forces in Japan. Given her unparalleled understanding of swing, American G.I's in 1946 saw her as "Japan's Martha Raye."⁹⁷ Raye was a famous singer and dancer from the United States who frequently utilized her body in a similar manner to Kasagi, singing for American forces during the war. Rough, strong, and vivacious movements added not only a vibrant feel to both Raye's and Kasagi's performances but also a comedic aspect. In comparing Kasagi to Raye, Kasagi in turn seemed more American. While Kasagi was a singer that adopted American jazz into her own singing rather than merely imitating it, most American soldiers labeled Japanese artists purely as "imitators."⁹⁸ Thus, a hierarchy formed within jazz society in Japan with American musicians constantly being seen as more authentic.⁹⁹ American approval of Kasagi therefore derived from the subordinate relationship Japan

⁹⁵ Hosokawa, Shūhei, "The Swinging Voice of Kasagi Shizuko: Japanese Jazz Culture in the 1930s," (International Research Center for Japanese Studies, 2007), 169. <http://publications.nichibun.ac.jp/region/d/NSH/series/seni/2007-03-30/s001/s020/pdf/article.pdf>.

⁹⁶ Hosokawa, 170.

⁹⁷ Hosokawa, 182

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Wade, 134.

experienced in regards to America, both politically, culturally, and now musically. Thus, Kasagi would always be the second-rate Martha Raye during the occupation, experiencing American approval solely by being an imitator rather than an originator of jazz.

Through this position, Kasagi and Hattori capitalized on their popularity, and their music greatly reflected the American influences the occupation's audiences wanted to hear. One of the most famous songs Kasagi sang was "Tokyo Boogie Woogie," which was released in 1946 following the end of the war and also used in Kurosawa's *Stray Dog*. While sung in Japanese, the song obviously and clearly uses the words "boogie-woogie," which are pronounced like "boogie-oogie" to parallel the other phonetic sounds made by Kasagi.¹⁰⁰ In a short film made in 1947 of one of Kasagi's performances of this boogie hit, she enters the stage with a slew of dancers behind her, shuffling and flinging their arms about, matching her provocative and energetic moves.¹⁰¹ Kasagi embodied the carefree spirit of jazz that arrived in the Japan before the war; the time of flippant, leisurely attitude so present in films such as *The Neighbor's Wife and Mine* in 1931, which was discussed previously in chapter one. After the experience of World War II, Kasagi's performances were exuberant and a welcome vacation from the issues and problems facing Japan after the war. Unlike Kurosawa, Kasagi, for the most part, had very positive feelings regarding the occupation since her performances were infrequent during the war years.¹⁰² "Tokyo Boogie Woogie" conveys these sentiments, celebrating the occupation and the end of wartime.

The lyrics within the song largely point to these feelings and celebrate both internationalism as well as jazz. The first lines of the song reference the international popularity of jazz by saying, "Resounding across the ocean, Tokyo boogie woogie, the boogie dance is the

¹⁰⁰ Kasagi, Shizuko. *Tokyo Boogie Woogie*. CD. Japanese Retro Hits- the Post War Years. Musical Ark, 2012.

¹⁰¹ *Tokyo Boogie Woogie- Shizuko Kasagi (1947)*, 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AtjrcsoqubQ>.

¹⁰² Bourdaghs, 26.

world's dance.”¹⁰³ In another line, Kasagi also sings about the world: “Dance the boogie and the world becomes one with the same rhythm and melody.”¹⁰⁴ In both lines, Kasagi references the magnetic appeal of boogie-woogie and its fame throughout the world, linking the international system together after World War II. Similarly to the 1920s and 1930s with cosmopolitanism, modernity, and the emergence of internationalism, the occupation celebrated internationalism as well as a renewed closeness to America. The song purely epitomized this new period, and Kasagi herself was the center of it. Given her close association with Martha Raye, she was instantly likeable to American occupational audiences and thus by embracing the occupation, she experienced a newfound popularity. “Tokyo Boogie Woogie” so encapsulated this time period it is still used in modern day films about postwar Japan, such as Shinoda’s 2003 film *Spy Sorge*. Thus, it has continued to be a song that captures this time period, years after it ended, and also demonstrates the positive attitude some in Japan had towards the occupation during this time.

Retro Hits of the Occupation and their Relationship to American Songs

While Kasagi was ultimately one of the most popular singers of the postwar jazz era in Japan, other singers and songs were of notable importance given their imitation of and similarity to American jazz singers. Liked at the time in America were singers such as Ella Fitzgerald, Bing Crosby, Tony Bennett, Nat King Cole, and a plethora of others. Through the American occupation, these influences could be seen greatly in Japanese forms of jazz music. While the 1920s and early 1930s featured a struggle between self-named “negrophiles” and “negrophobes,” the postwar jazz world in Japan hardly focused on this type of dialogue, and readily accepted the form of jazz ushered into Japan by American occupational forces. As E. Taylor Atkins states in

¹⁰³ Misa-chan, “Tokyo Boogie Woogie.” *Misa-Chan’s J-Pop Blog*, May 25, 2013, <https://misachanpop.wordpress.com/2013/05/25/tokyo-boogie-woogie-kasagi-shizuko/>.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

“This Is Our Music: Authenticating Japanese Jazz, 1920-1980,” Jazz was sold and consumed by a society that “resumed the interrupted journey toward an ideal of modernity as defined by American expectations and accomplishments.”¹⁰⁵ After years of war and the purported ban on jazz music during the war years that did little to actually ban jazz, the occupation brought a sense of revitalization for the jazz community in Japan. Thus, the same type of jazz that the Japanese celebrated in the 1920s, especially the seemingly civilized jazz popularized by Paul White, came to be the common soundtrack of the occupation. Jazz was yet again devoid of the black aesthetic and the occupational forces shepherded the music of mainly white artists into Japan. Gone were the types of sounds produced by black artists from America, and present in Japan were the swinging and boogie-woogie styles of jazz made popular by white jazz artists in America.

One strong example of the return this category of jazz is found on the album “Japanese Retro Hits- The Post War Years.”¹⁰⁶ On this album there are songs such as “Tokyo Boogie Woogie,” “Hey, Hey Boogie,” and “Paradise Honolulu.” Yet what is far more interesting on the album is the song “Dinah” sung by Tadaharu Nakano. In the United States, Bing Crosby, a symbol of the wholesome, American entertainer, originally sung the song “Dinah,” with its swing feel and southern connotations. These southern undertones could be found in lines like: “Dinah, is there anyone finer in the state of Carolina?”¹⁰⁷ In the next verse Crosby sings, “Got those Dixie eyes blazin’, how I love to sit and gazin,” yet again giving connotations of the American south. Interestingly, the song also oddly references China when Crosby sings, “Should you wander to China I would get me an ocean liner.” While this may have been for rhyming purposes in regards to the other lines, the fact that the song incorporates Asia to some extent

¹⁰⁵ Atkins, E. Taylor, “This Is Our Music: Authenticating Japanese Jazz, 1920-1980,” (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1997), 167. <https://illiad2.bc.edu/illiad/bxm/illiad.dll?Action=10&Form=75&Value=635866>.

¹⁰⁶ Various artists. *Japanese Retro Hits- the Post War Years*. CD. Musical Ark, 2012.

¹⁰⁷ “Bing Crosby Lyrics ‘Dinah.’” *A-Z Lyrics* <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/bingcrosby/dinah.html>

contrasted with its later popularity in Japan is surely an interesting coincidence. However, the uniquely American sentiments and references in the song are central to the connection between the two songs. To choose to sing such an American song gives weight and significance to the Japanese version of “Dinah,” in that the song, similarly to “Tokyo Boogie Woogie,” is celebrating American themes.

In listening to both versions, the similarities are abundant. Both the orchestration and instrumentation are incredibly similar and the only difference that is strongly apparent is the fact that the Japanese version is obviously in Japanese. Both have muted sounds and slow, rhythmic beats, giving a carefree and soothing feel. While the Japanese song may be a bit faster and upbeat, it still features many similarities to Bing Crosby’s version. In not differentiating vastly, the Japanese version speaks to the influence of Americans on both artistry and musicianship in the occupation. Imitating the American version made a statement about Japanese music at the time; although there were original pieces of jazz music coming out of Japan, there was also a hesitancy to stray too far from the American sound. Imitation implied a certain desire to embody American values, and thus with the occupation underway and the SCAP government impressing upon Japanese society the aspiration to be American, it only made sense that the music was so similar.

On a different Japanese Retro Hits album from the years 1951 to 1953, which still encapsulated the end of the occupation, the quintessential American song “Blue Moon” is sung by Eri Chiemi in both English and Japanese.¹⁰⁸ At first the song sounds as if it could be an American singer, with little difference between this version and any other American version of the song. One does not notice that the singer is Japanese until the second verse in which the lyrics are sung in Japanese. In performing the song with both Japanese lyrics as well as English,

¹⁰⁸ Various artists, *Japanese Retro Hits, Volume 2 - The Fifties: 1951-1953*. Vol. 2. Musical Ark, 2012.

there is a duality or coexistence of sorts between the two nations. Thus the music directly translates to the institutional activities and cultural changes occurring around these musicians at the time. While imitating American sounds and clearly utilizing English, the fact that the song features Japanese conveyed an embracement of jazz and also a way to make these jazz songs relatable to the Japanese people by using their own language.

Eri Chiemi also does this in “Chattanooga Shoeshine Boy” which is featured on the same album. Incorporating both Latin themes and rhythms, which experienced immense popularity in America at the time, the song features what sounds like congas, and also contains a quintessentially American name with the word “Chattanooga.” The song was performed by Pat Boone in America and possessed more country undertones than anything that sounded like jazz. While technically not a jazz standard, anything American seemed to be placed under the jazz genre in postwar Japan, as was clear from the *Shinko Jazz Album* songbook, which was distributed by SCAP.¹⁰⁹ Therefore it seems that in Japan this song collided with jazz orchestration and sound to produce a truly American, classic song; a song that imitated the current jazz in America and also incorporated, yet again, Japanese language to emphasize the crossover of American and Japan cultures in the occupation.

Clearly the music that accompanied the occupation reflected the sheer amount of influence America held over Japan during this time period. While not everyone fully embraced jazz, many Japanese performers took to performing American classics. At the time there were plenty of songs still sung in Japanese that lacked harmonic structure similar to jazz, however, there were even more songs that perpetuated American culture and imitated American jazz. The inclusion of songs that featured both Japanese and English demonstrated the colliding of two cultures, and conveyed the popularity of American culture but also the wish to retain a part of

¹⁰⁹ *Shinko Jazz Album*, 1946.

Japanese culture. These retro hits vastly contrasted the poignant criticism Kurosawa offered, however, the fact that both viewpoints existed in the same era differs from what many believe of this time period. Japan was far more diverse in feelings and sentiments toward the occupation, both causing the Japanese to reflect on where their society was during the occupation and where it should go in the future.

Conclusion

Overall the postwar years and years that coincided with the occupation featured both the embrace of American jazz and culture as well as criticism of the SCAP government. Kurosawa's use of jazz in scenes featuring crime, corruption, or weakness sent a message of discontentment with the occupation. While the SCAP government made it seem as though everyone in Japan readily accepted the occupation, there were voices that were opposed and fearful of the consequences the occupation would have for the future of Japan. Kurosawa's fears of consumerism and of American corruption on the everyday Japanese citizen were prevalent in his films. He feared the decaying of his society and culture at the hands of a foreign entity. Both *Drunken Angel* and *Stray Dog* passed censorship given that they both dealt with subjects that the CI&E department wanted in movies: the current state of Japanese society, poverty, and morality. Yet Kurosawa was genius enough to utilize music to convey his true feelings on the occupation. His views directly contradicted the American perception of the occupation and offer a more nuanced view of this vastly complicated time period in Japan's history.

Yet, while there were those in Japan who dispelled the typical American view of the occupation, there were also those that reaffirmed this view of Japan fully embracing the American presence. Kasagi obviously demonstrated this, and, given that she had limited

performances during the war years, she was more than happy to be singing again during the occupation.¹¹⁰ Kasagi's relation to Martha Raye as an imitator only placed her closer to American culture since she was relatable for the American G.I.'s stationed in Japan. In celebrating the fact that she could sing jazz again, Kasagi in effect celebrated the occupation, and was a prime example for Americans of the Japanese accepting the occupation more than willingly. Much of the actual music produced during this era reinforced this type of thinking in that many Japanese performers sang American classics. In not straying too far from American jazz standards or classics, it implied that Japan wanted to be just like America in every aspect. While there were many records that solely featured Japanese on them and Japanese melodies, the inclusion of songs that were so close to American ones emphasized the relationship between Japan and the U.S. Ultimately, the Japanese music culture reflected the subordinate position Japan experienced under America, as they were seen as merely imitators. The use of jazz during this time period was diverse and conveyed many sentiments towards the occupation, with both those who embraced American culture and those who, like Kurosawa, sought to point out the dangers of such an occupation on the future of Japan forever.

¹¹⁰ Bourdaghs, 13-14.

Conclusion

*That old black magic's got me in its spell,
that old black magic that you weave so well.
The same old feeling up and down my spine,
The same ol' witchcraft when your eyes meet mine.*

-That Old Black Magic

It only seems fitting that this thesis should end with one of my favorite jazz standards: “That Old Black Magic,” considering the craze and popularity jazz experienced seemed magnetic or propelled by some type of magic during these thirty years in Japan. With the *ero-guro-nansensu* culture of the 1920s, jazz boomed from dance clubs, on the radio, and in film. The presence of jazz and its diminished popularity later in the 1930s mirrored the rise of an extremely conservative government, and instead of merely being a form of entertainment, jazz’s close association to America made it the “enemy’s music” as the ‘40s began. Before the occupation, jazz’s connotations in Japan came from the Japanese themselves, thus first being used as a tool by the Japanese to express the tension between cosmopolitanism and traditionalism.

The occupation, however, featured connotations of jazz that largely came from the American occupational forces themselves. Albums such as the *Shinko Jazz Album* disseminated by censorship authorities in Japan perpetuated the stereotypical view of America: white, wholesome, and devoid of a black aesthetic. Conductors, such as Paul Whiteman, who had been extremely popular in the late 1920s reemerged in Japan to continue this view of America that was largely a constant during these thirty years. Utilizing a genre that had roots during the ‘20s brought Japan back to a time of internationalism as well. The Japanese were familiar with jazz and both the familiarity as well as renewed spirit of World War II’s end created an atmosphere

suitable for the occupation. As Frank Capra's film *Our Job in Japan* states, the American task was to retrain the Japanese mind, and jazz, a friend from Japan's past, came to be one of the tools American occupational forces were able to use in homogenizing Japanese culture.¹¹¹

Yet what has to be one of the most surprising aspects of this thesis was the existence of voices of dissent in relation to jazz and the occupation. Kurosawa's films demonstrated another side of life within the occupation: the underworld of corruption and the devastation still remaining from the war. He fully employed jazz in his films during scenes of such corruption or chaos to not reject the occupation completely but to demonstrate where it had gone awry. The bilateral relationship existing between Japan and the United States largely shifted during the occupation given that one country occupied the other. Kurosawa understood this power shift, and focused on showing the negative aspects of such a sudden shift. In relation to Kasagi, Kurosawa's views varied drastically, disproving the thinking that Japan wholeheartedly embraced the occupation. In losing power politically, it seemed as though utilizing jazz in an immensely different way than the occupational forces may have been a way to gain back power in a cultural manner for Kurosawa and those who viewed the occupation in a negative light.

Ultimately, throughout the '20s, '30s, and '40s, jazz in Japan played a tremendously important role in the fomenting of cultural identity. Whether it was between the traditionalists and cosmopolitans, the dark period of the late '30s and early '40s, or during the occupation, Japanese identity transformed under the soundtrack of American jazz. The intersection of politics and culture came to fruition through the presence of jazz in Japan, showing the change and evolution of the Japanese identity through a music that defined these decades and continues to be popular today.

¹¹¹ Capra, Frank, *Our Job in Japan*, (The Service, 1982), Film.

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