

## Chapter 12

# Inventing Jazztowns and Internationalizing Local Identities in Japan\*

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### I Introduction

Ronald Toby's accomplishments and contributions to Japanese studies are so intimidatingly abundant, it would be all but impossible either to enumerate or to digest them all. There is little doubt that his debunking of the *sakoku* myth will be his most readily remembered legacy, for thereby he placed a country previously regarded as peculiarly aloof and isolationist squarely within the sweep of early modern world history. Each of the contributors to this volume has been influenced by particular aspects of his work. In my own case, I have found his virtuosic use of (for lack of a better term) "non-verbal" sources (e.g., woodblock prints, pictorial encyclopediae, maps, etc.) to be particularly instructive and inspiring. Utilizing materials that had previously been the exclusive domain of art historians, aesthetes, and connoisseurs, Professor Toby has taught us many lessons about how Japanese of various social categories imagined themselves in relation to their immediate neighbors in East Asia and myriad peoples in more distant lands. His example made it seem all the more feasible for me to pursue research on Japanese notions of identity by using musical evidence. In much the same way that Professor Toby has mixed traditional historical methods with anthropological theories and fieldwork (including personal observations of festivals in which participants masqueraded as early modern Koreans), the essay that follows employs an eclectic evidentiary base to understand how Japanese imagine themselves in relation to their fellow

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countrymen, their immediate neighbors, and the wider world, via the art of jazz.

If it were possible to be in more than one place at one time, then early October would be an opportune moment to be a jazz fan in Japan. On the same autumn weekend, the Yokohama Jazz Promenade and the Kōbe Jazz Street, two of the East Asian archipelago's biggest jazz festivals, attract hundreds of musicians and thousands of enthusiasts to swing with abandon, while marinating in the unique local auras of these self-styled "exotic" port cities. But the fortuitously omnipresent jazzbo would doubtless discern dissonance in the historical narratives presented in the advertising for these respective events: while Promenade promotions declare, "Now, as always, jazz is Yokohama" (*ima mo, mukashi mo, jazu wa Yokohama*), Kōbe ads proclaim their city to be "the cradle of Japanese jazz" (*Nihon no jazu no hasshōchi*).

Jazz reached Japanese shores at roughly the same time that the first American jazz recordings were made. The music rapidly entranced urban mods but also sparked outrage among those determined to protect native social and aesthetic mores from its influence. Jazz was, simply put, a major source of contention, exacerbating generational, socioeconomic, and aesthetic cleavages in a century of continual upheaval. But as the curtain closed on that most remarkable of centuries, several Japanese cities actively embraced and promoted jazz as an essential ingredient of their distinctive local auras. As municipalities since the 1970s have sought to identify, preserve, and promote local identities, and thereby attract tourists, Yokohama, Kōbe, and Yokosuka, in particular, have embellished their respective places in Japan's jazz history and developed competing events and festivals that celebrate local jazz heritage.

Elsewhere I have argued that jazz artists and aficionados developed a variety of musical and discursive strategies to authenticate a foreign art form performed and appreciated by Japanese.<sup>1</sup> Here I investigate the ways in which local governments and citizens' groups have used jazz to authenticate their local identities and their place in a national narrative of internationalization (*kokusaika*). The appropriation of jazz—hailed by so many as the quintessential *global* music—as an integral element of *local* identities is indicative of a number of important themes in contemporary Japanese experience: the quest to define distinctive local identities, in spite of (if coincident with) the ubiquity of totalizing notions of Japanese national homogeneity; the centrality of cosmopolitan experience to that process of local,

1. E. Taylor Atkins, *Blue Nippon: Authenticating Jazz in Japan* (Durham: Duke UP, 2001).

indigenous identity formation;<sup>2</sup> and the concomitant aesthetic, social, and institutional legitimization of an art once regarded as emblematic of cultural imperialism and the annihilation of indigenous social and aesthetic values.

The process by which local identity, community pride, and sense of place are created and commodified through music is by no means unique to Japan. Both New Orleans and Kansas City boast jazz museums testifying to their importance in the music's history; St. Louis purportedly gave us ragtime, while Chicago and Helena, Arkansas, claim blues as distinctive local products; and Memphis portrays itself as the maternity ward where "the blues had a baby and they named it rock and roll." These appropriations—designed to engender pride of place in locals and to render place into product for the tourists—necessitated significant reevaluation of the musical styles involved and the people who created them. Jazz, originally blasting from the bordellos of Storyville, was a source of shame to respectable New Orleans until its value as consumable curio became apparent. In all of these cities, the African Americans responsible for creating so much of the music did so as literal outsiders, whose homes, schools, businesses, and night spots were spatially and symbolically segregated from the rest of town. The appropriation of their music as a distinctive local commodity entailed retroactively embracing them as native sons and daughters, giving them and their art a legitimacy few of them lived long enough to enjoy. By the 1970s, Lawrence Levine writes, a critical consensus not only acknowledged jazz as a legitimate art, but also conceded that jazz had "transform[ed] our sense of art and culture," and "bridged the gap between all of the categories that divided culture; a music that found its way through the fences we use to separate genres of expressive culture from one another."<sup>3</sup>

In the context of Jim Crow America, the appropriation, assimilation, and legitimation of African American music by municipal governments and cultural institutions invariably dominated by white Americans was every bit as sensational a gesture as their Japanese counterparts' embrace of jazz as indigenous cultural commodity. Still, it remains remarkable that a music that most Japanese have long regarded as alien maintains any authentic potency at all for evoking a sense of "native place" (*furusato*). It is said that

2. See Jennifer Robertson, "It Takes a Village: Internationalization and Nostalgia in Postwar Japan," in Stephen Vlastos, ed., *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press), pp. 110-29; and David M. Potter, "Who in the World is Hasekura Tsunenaga? Presentation and Appropriation of Local Symbols in Provincial Japan," in Douglas Slaymaker, ed., *A Century of Popular Culture in Japan* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2000), pp. 155-75.

3. Lawrence W. Levine, "Jazz and American Culture," in *The Unpredictable Past: Explorations in American Cultural History* (New York: Oxford UP, 1993), p. 186.

*enka*, the maudlin genre that most Japanese of the first postwar generations would consider to be the musical expression of the nation's soul, most effectively conjures nostalgic longings for native place.<sup>4</sup> Urban Japanese detached from their rural roots can, through *enka*, vicariously return to unspoiled landscapes marked with "forested mountains, fields cut by a meandering river, and a cluster of thatched-roof farmhouses," thus recapturing a "desirable lifestyle aesthetic" of "artlessness and rustic simplicity."<sup>5</sup> Though musically *enka* is an eclectic genre, its lyrics evoke a pure, unaffected, insular, and quintessential Japaneseness, spatially rooted in the mountain hamlets and fishing villages which many believe are their true "native places." Furthermore, in much the same way that American rappers must demonstrate their "street cred," and country and western singers are obliged to exemplify a folksy "downhome" quality, successful *enka* singers are likewise compelled to establish a "continuing link" to the provincial *furusato*.<sup>6</sup>

But jazz as indigenous cultural artifact suggests an alternative view of *furusato* and of modern Japanese experience: native place need not be pure and sequestered; it can also be the site where alien cultures are encountered, debated, tamed, and assimilated. The *enka* narrative is one of loss and cultural atrophy: Christine Yano refers to *enka* as "Japan's internal monologue," which seems to say, "We long for our Japanese selves."<sup>7</sup> But this depiction of modern Japanese experience is inverted in the jazzy narrative to valorize the "progress" and cosmopolitan awareness of *kokusaika*. Jazz thus authenticates the experience of those Japanese to whom *enka* does not speak, for whom an artless village life holds neither meaning nor attraction, to whom "native place" is where they became acclimated to exoticism, and to whom authentic "Japaneseness" means openness and eclecticism rather than insularity and purity.

What follows is a description and analysis (based on fieldwork conducted primarily in Yokohama in the mid-1990s) of this process by which local identity is established in Japan through the invention of "jazztowns."

## II Sinking Roots

In the early 1980s, the Yokohama City Planning Bureau unveiled its ambitious *machi-zukuri* ("town building") plan, a blueprint to guide and

4. See for instance Minami Hiroshi and Shakai Shinri Kenkyujo, eds., *Shōwa bunka 1945-1989* (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1990), pp. 282-8; and Christine Yano, "Longing for *Furusato*: The Shaping of Nostalgia in Japanese Popular *Enka* Songs," in *Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Ph.D. Kenkyūkai Conference on Japanese Studies* (Tokyo: The International House of Japan, 1994), pp. 75-95.

5. Robertson, "It Takes a Village," p. 116.

6. Yano, "Longing for *Furusato*," p. 81.

7. Yano, "Longing for *Furusato*," p. 88.

promote the economic and social development of each ward for the twenty-first century. The cardinal principle of *machi-zukuri*—a variation of the catchphrase *urusato-zukuri*<sup>8</sup>—in Yokohama was to shape the port city’s future in a manner congruous with its unique heritage as the “window” through which western European and North American cultures blew into Japan.<sup>9</sup> Like most Japanese cities, Yokohama has had to define itself in relation to Tokyo and to contend with the capital’s seemingly irresistible gravitational pull, which sucks all political and economic function into its own core. Yokohama is particularly cursed by its proximity to the monstrous metropolis, effectively rendering the port city—with a population roughly that of Chicago’s—into a “bedtown” for commuters to the capital. Little wonder then that Mayor Takahide Hidenobu urged *Hamakko* (Yokohama natives) to work for the realization of a “New City Yokohama,” a town in which “anyone can be proud and happy to live.”<sup>10</sup>

Similarly jinxed by the nearness of Osaka, Kōbe seems to have pursued a *urusato-zukuri* strategy similar to that of Yokohama: playing up its historical status as a *kokusai toshi* (“international city”), the place where foreign influences in technology, arts and architecture, business practices, and so on, were first introduced and applied. Were it not for the active ports of Yokohama and Kōbe (whose name translates as “Sacred Door”), local historians and city promoters tell us, Japan would not have ice cream, gaslights, railroads, beer, or jazz. Neither city has allowed the sites of their respective former foreign settlements to deteriorate or go unrecognized: Yokohama’s Bluff and Kōbe’s Kitano-chō are among the cities’ most lovely and frequently-visited districts; both cities also boast prominent Chinatowns. Tokyo and Osaka may imagine themselves to be the most internationalized of Japanese cities, but Yokohama and Kōbe both claim much of the credit for making them that way: indeed, Asami Shigeki’s lengthy list of Yokohama innovations is subtitled “reading Yokohama, one can see Japan.” If modern Japanese have been open to foreign ideas and influence, it is because they have followed the examples set by *Hamakko* and their Kōbe counterparts, who first lived with the foreign devils, played with their toys, and danced to their music.

In playing up their “exotic” histories of cohabiting with aliens and ingesting their cultures, Yokohama and Kōbe promoters were consistent with major trends in domestic tourism campaigns of the 1970s and 1980s. As

8. Jennifer Robertson, *Native and Newcomer: Making and Remaking a Japanese City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 32; Robertson, “It Takes a Village,” pp.117-8; and Potter, p. 157.

9. Asami Shigeki, *Yokohama hajimete monogatari: Yokohama o yomu, Nihon ga mieru* (Tokyo: Mikōsha, 1988), p. 51; and Yokohama-shi Toshi Keikakukyoku, ed., *Plan for Yokohama—Yokohama no machi-zukuri* (Yokohama: Match & Co., 1991).

10. Yokohama-shi Toshi Keikakukyoku, *Plan for Yokohama*, p. 1.

described by anthropologist Marilyn Ivy, the 1970s witnessed the Japan National Railway's "Discover Japan," which encouraged a nativist "(re)discovery" of provincial roots; but this campaign was supplanted in the following decade by the "Exotic Japan" project, which portrayed "all of Japan—whether pristinely native or recently imported" as a "montage of exotic [and consumable] objects."<sup>11</sup> But whereas much of the imagery employed in the campaign to exoticize the national homeland evoked Japan's ancient links to exotic continental (Indian and Chinese) civilizations, the Yokohama and Kōbe efforts address much more recent history, exoticizing those Western-derived commodities and customs which most Japanese take for granted as part of their everyday existence. In their respective attempts to define and valorize native place, Yokohama and Kōbe promoters must remind native and newcomer alike that beer and baseball, jitterbugging and jazz came from *somewhere else*, sinking roots locally before sweeping the nation.

### III The Cutting Contest

In the last two decades, jazz seems to have become a particularly prominent element of this *furusato-as-kokusai toshi* self-image, no doubt because prominent civic positions are filled by jazz fans determined to advocate the music they love and raise its profile. It is also likely that the appropriation of jazz as local cultural artifact is the result of both the music's stabilized status as a legitimate art and avocation, and the rising profile of individual Japanese artists in the international jazz scene, in the last three decades of the twentieth century.

From the time of its introduction in the 1920s, through the years of militarism, "spiritual mobilization," and total war, and well into and beyond the Occupation era, jazz occupied an ambiguous cultural space that Japanese found irresistibly fascinating yet undeniably frightening. The tensions that tore at modern Japanese society—nativism vs. cosmopolitanism, purity vs. hybridity, social stability vs. upheaval, and aesthetic edification vs. degradation—were acted out on the dance floors, on the bandstands, and in vigorous "jazz debates." Young urban modernites enjoyed the sense of personal liberation and smug hipness the music conferred, while their parents, social scientists, and government officials fretted that jazz encouraged frivolity, licentiousness, and individualism, effectively rending Japan's social fabric. But by the 1970s some three generations had grown up with jazz; rock and roll had stolen its thunder as a vehicle for adolescent discontent; and jazz was deemed no more responsible for the erosion of native social

11. Marilyn Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 51.

and aesthetic mores than were industrial capitalism, political democracy, and militant feminism. Less than three decades after an official wartime government ban made Japan hell for jazz fans, Japan was internationally renowned as “jazz heaven” (*jazu tengoku*, or as France’s *Jazz Magazine* declared in 1975, the world’s *nouveau paradis du jazz*), a place where underappreciated American and even European artists could record and gig in a climate of respect, historical awareness, and quiet awe.

Moreover, after decades of suffering a reputation as singularly imitative and unimaginative poseurs, a handful of Japanese jazz artists emerged in the sixties and seventies who developed national and international reputations as original and uninhibited improvisors and composers. Elvin Jones, Sonny Rollins, and Art Blakey recruited Japanese sidemen; Boston’s prestigious Berklee School of Music welcomed promising youngsters from the East Asian archipelago on a regular basis (it is said that in the 1990s Japanese regularly constituted ten percent of the Berklee student population);<sup>12</sup> and individuals such as Akiyoshi Toshiko, Watanabe Sadao, Hino Terumasa, Aki Takase, Watanabe Kazumi, Tiger Okoshi, Matsumoto “Sleepy” Hidehiko, Kawasaki Ryō, and Yamashita Yōsuke were regularly invited to record and perform in Europe, Southeast Asia, and the Americas. Akiyoshi’s triple victory in the 1980 *Downbeat* poll (in the big band, composer, and arranger categories), the year after Ezra Vogel’s *Japan as Number One* put the western world on economic alert, signified that Japanese could create exemplary jazz and even best their American counterparts.

The legitimation of jazz as a pure art and benign social force, and the legitimation of native sons and daughters as superlative jazz artists, were perhaps necessary preconditions for the official appropriation of the music as a municipal symbol with community-building potential. In this climate of acceptance, Yokohama and Kōbe both advanced claims as the “cradle of Japanese jazz” (*Nihon no jazu no hasshōchi*)—each apparently ignoring the pretensions of the other—and used local cultural media to retell the music’s history in Japan in a manner magnifying local contributions. Furthermore, each city developed public festivals to celebrate local jazz heritage and thus enhance their respective self-images as the vanguards of internationalization in Japan.

*Hamakko* appear to have been the more aggressive claimants to jazz, if at times overplaying their hand in the “cutting contest” to own the music. The inaugural issue (December 1991) of the free culture monthly *Yokohama bunka jōhōshi* was devoted to claiming jazz as a distinctive local product. Recounting the story of ocean liner bandsmen who traversed the Pacific in the 1910s and 1920s, explored San Francisco’s music halls and

12. Craig McTurk, *Tokyo Blues: Jazz and Blues in Japan* (documentary film, 1999).

instrument stores, “traded their violins for saxophones,” and brought rag-time, fox trots, and jazz back to Japan, the article’s anonymous author leaves little room for doubt that Yokohama was peculiarly “blessed as the soil on which jazz was raised.”<sup>13</sup> Subsequent issues of *Yokohama bunka jōhōshi* (as well as other local bulletins such as *Yokohama no tayori*, *Yokohama Echo*, *HamaJazz*, and *Kōhō Yokohama*) reiterated that “jazz came by ship” (*jazu wa fune ni notte yattekita*);<sup>14</sup> though not neglecting to list Kōbe as one of the stops on the ocean liner routes that connected San Francisco and Seattle to Manila, Shanghai, and Yokohama, the narrators of the “Yokohama Jazz Story” (*Yokohama jazu monogatari*) present their city as chronologically the first and sole port of entry for jazz.

The relationship between *Hamakko* and jazz deepened with the years, we are told. The first commercial dance hall, Kagetsuen, opened in the Tsurumi district in 1920, followed by several others so that by 1930 the city boasted a half dozen such establishments. Composer Hattori Ryōichi (1907-1993) was reportedly inspired to write his first “Japanese blues” (1938’s “Wakare no burūsu”) while nursing a drink in a bar in the Honmoku district.<sup>15</sup> The unusually heavy concentration of African American soldiers in Yokohama during the Occupation (1945-1952) made the port city a jazz “boom town,” where aspiring Japanese beboppers could develop “hip chops” on the bandstand with jazz greats like Hampton Hawes and Harold Land.<sup>16</sup> Japan’s oldest jazz cafe, Chigusa, founded in 1933 and resurrected from the ashes of war in the late 1940s by Yoshida Mamoru (1913-1994), became the hangout/schoolroom where rising stars such as Watanabe Sadao, Moriyasu Shōtarō (1924-1955), and Akiyoshi Toshiko studied the latest US recordings.<sup>17</sup> Years after Yoshida (recipient of the Yokohama Culture Prize in 1986) died, Chigusa remains a monument to the local roots of jazz, drawing aficionados from around the country on

13. “Tokushū: ‘hajimaru’ Yokohama no ongaku JAZZ,” *Yokohama bunka jōhōshi* 1 (Dec. 1991): pp. 3-9.

14. Tatsumi Mitsuyoshi, “Jazu wa fune ni notte yattekita!” *Yokohama bunka jōhōshi* 31 (Sept. 1994): pp. 1-7; “Jazu no furusato’ apiiru Yokohama Jazz Promenade,” *Yokohama bunka jōhōshi* 22 (Dec. 1993): p. 12; “Yokohama ōrai: Yokohama to jazu,” *Kōhō Yokohama* (April 1994). See also Obata Yoshinobu, “Jazu,” in Kanagawa-ken Hyakka Jiten Kankōkai, *Kanagawa-ken hyakka jiten* (Tokyo: Yamato Shobō, 1983), p. 572.

15. Hattori Ryōichi, *Boku no ongaku jinsei* (Tokyo: Chūō Bungeisha, 1982), pp. 141-2.

16. Uchida Kōichi, *Nihon no jazu shi: senzen, sengo* (Tokyo: Swing Journal, 1976), p. 202; Honda Toshio, *Jazu* (Tokyo: Shin Nihon Shuppansha, 1976), p. 47; and Honda Toshio, “Talk and Jazz: ‘Yokohama Story,’” *Forum Yokohama Matsuri*, Oct. 23, 1994.

17. Yoshida Mamoru, *Yokohama jazu monogatari: ‘Chigusa’ no 50 nen* (Yokohama: Kanagawa Shinbunsha, 1985).



what writer Hiraoka Masaaki calls “jazz cafe pilgrimages” (*jazu kissa junrei*).<sup>18</sup> All of this evidence is invoked to appropriate jazz as a Yokohama “trademark,” to remap the city as the “native place of jazz” (*jazu no furusato*).<sup>19</sup>

The “Yokohama Jazz Story” is challenged (albeit usually indirectly) by other municipalities claiming credit for jazzing Japan. Often dubbed Japan’s “gateway to Asia” (in contrast to Yokohama, the “gateway to the West”),<sup>20</sup> Kōbe stakes its own claim as the “cradle” or “seismic center” (*shingenchi*) of jazz. Although one local writer concedes that “where jazz chronologically first landed in Japan, Kōbe or Yokohama, is unknown,”<sup>21</sup> proponents point out that the first “real,” improvised jazz was performed by Filipino emigres in Kōbe hotels and ballrooms, and that the first Japanese to attempt “ad lib” solos followed their example.<sup>22</sup> The Laughing Stars, regarded by many as the first “professional” Japanese jazz band, was based in Kōbe and sponsored by a local music dealer.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, they say, the 1923 Kantō Earthquake that leveled much of Tokyo and Yokohama provoked a mass migration of musicians and entertainers to western Japan, shifting innovations in popular entertainment away from the capital region to the Kansai region, where dance halls and cafes proliferated along the route between Kōbe and Osaka.

My observations are related principally to Yokohama and Kōbe, but it is worth mentioning in passing the claims of other aspiring jazztowns, though they have not always poured as much energy into appropriating jazz as Kōbe and Yokohama have. Osakans insist that their city—in Ōya Sōichi’s wry estimation, “the America of Japan”—was the “jazz mecca” of the 1920s.<sup>24</sup> One local encyclopedia maintains that “jazz came from Osaka” (*jazu wa Osaka kara*): “The modern city of Osaka was the base where cultures were imported from overseas, and disseminated to the interior.” Early jazz stars Nanri Fumio and Hattori Ryōichi were native sons, and Osaka earned renown in the postwar period as the “hot jazz” capital (a distinction

18. Hiraoka Masaaki, *Yokohama teki: geinō toshi sōsei ron* (Tokyo: Aodoshia, 1993), p. 257.

19. Brad Johnstony, “Hot Jazz Sizzles in Yokohama,” *Yokohama Echo* (Sept. 1993): pp. 1-2; “Yokohama yūgaku sanpodō,” *Yokohama no tayori* 264 (Sept. 1994): pp. 10-1. A counter-claim is made in *Kōbe C jōhō*, Sept. 1994.

20. Kokaze Hidemasa, “The Age of Ocean Shipping,” in Katō Yūzō, ed., *Yokohama Past and Present* (Yokohama: Yokohama City University, 1990) pp. 116-7.

21. Suehiro Mitsuo, “Jazu,” in Kōbe Shinbun Shuppan Sentā, ed., *Hyōgo-ken dai hyakka jiten* (Kōbe: Kōbe Shinbun Shuppan Sentā, 1983), pp. 1233-4.

22. Ōmori Seitarō, *Nihon no yōgaku*. Vol. 1 (Tokyo: Shinmon Shuppansha, 1986), pp. 146-5, 148-9; Uchida, *Nihon no jazu shi*, pp. 321-2.

23. “Jazu shingenchi,” *Mainichi shinbun*, Kōbe ed., Feb. 2, 1979: p. 17.

24. Osaka Toshi Kyōkai, ed., *Zoku Minami-ku shi* (Osaka: Osaka Toshi Kyōkai, 1982), p. 591.

Kōbe also claims), the place where the trad style thrived in spite of the predominant modern jazz movement.<sup>25</sup>

Yokosuka, a city south of Yokohama that was home to a major Japanese naval base before World War II and a US naval station since then, also commemorates its jazzy heritage with three statues of jazz musicians. Decorating the sidewalks in the Americanized section of town near the base, the sculptures memorialize those Japanese musicians who performed in US servicemen's clubs during and after the Occupation. Even the northern provincial city of Sendai makes a modest claim. "It is not well known," Kikuda Susumu wrote in the *Nihon keizai* in 1995, "but in the early 1950s Sendai was a jazz town [*jazu no machi*]." At the "dawn of Japanese jazz" several "first-rate West Coast pros" were among the US GI's stationed there, Kikuda maintains, leaving "footprints" in "*furusato* Sendai."<sup>26</sup>

#### IV Festive Histories

Aside from historical writing, the jazz festival has proven to be a popular and effective way of creating a sense of community jazz heritage. The New City Yokohama plan urged citizens and city officials to collaborate in the creation of "events" that promote the city's *kokusai toshi* legacy, and jazz festivals fit the bill. Promotions for Yokohama's many jazz fests—the Asahi Jazz Matsuri, Kōhoku New Town Summer Jazz, the Ōkurayama Jazz Society concerts, and the Honmoku Jazz Festival (which since its 1981 debut is said to draw jazz fans "from Hokkaidō to Okinawa")—invariably attempt to persuade audiences that "the sound of jazz suits Yokohama" and always has.<sup>27</sup> In 1993 the city sponsored the first Yokohama Jazz Promenade, a weekend-long pub crawl featuring headliners who started their professional careers in Yokohama's ubiquitous US servicemen's clubs, such as Akiyoshi Toshiko and Hara Nobuo. Advertising blitzes repeatedly stressed the suitability of jazz to the city's international character and historical role. In case anyone missed the message, festival planners mounted an impressive exhibit at the Port Opening Memorial Hall, with photographs and artifacts testifying to a seventy-year love affair between *Hamakko* and jazz.

The precedent for the Promenade, however, was Kōbe's Jazz Street, first held in 1982. Both festivals take attendees on a tour of local jazz spots and

25. Sōgensha, ed., *Osaka monoshiri jiten* (Osaka: Sōgensha, 1994), pp. 66-9; Suehiro, "Jazu," p. 1234.

26. Kikuda Susumu, "Nihon jazu 'yoake' e kurofune," *Nihon keizai shinbun* Jan. 11, 1995: 32.

27. Honmoku no Ayumi Kenkyūkai, *Honmoku no ayumi* (Yokohama: Hirai In-satsujo, 1986), pp. 130-1.

concert halls for a plethora of performances of all styles of jazz. The largest number of performance sites are concentrated in the so-called “foreign” districts of each city—Kitano-chō in Kōbe and the Port Town (the area extending south from Yokohama Station to the Yamate Bluff) in Yokohama—where most of the old dance halls, servicemen’s clubs, and cabarets were located historically. Moreover, the Promenade’s final acts perform aboard the *Hikawa maru*, an ocean liner docked at Yamashita Park, reminding attendees that “jazz came by ship.” Thus performance sites are carefully selected not only to acquaint natives and newcomers with the current scene but also to infuse them with a sense of jazz’s local historicity.

Recent ethnographic scholarship argues that municipal festivals (*matsuri*) have an “authenticating effect” on their communities, rooting them in a consensual vision of the past and defining their unique qualities. Jennifer Robertson observes that the city-wide *matsuri* in Kodaira is “perceived as a particularly cogent symbol of and condition for an ‘authentic’ community.” Likewise, Theodore Bestor contends that the “social and symbolic meanings” of the Miyamoto-chō *matsuri* are manipulated by planners and participants to invest the community with a historically rooted “aura of community identity and autonomy.” Redraw our borders if you will, local celebrants say to city planners through the *matsuri*, but we are still who we are and who we have always been. Bestor notes that in the case of Miyamoto-chō, the narrative of communal cohesion and distinctiveness is at best an “invented history,” but one to which the “traditional” custom of the *matsuri* lends credence.<sup>28</sup>

Of course the symbolic content of the *matsuri* described by Robertson and Bestor differs significantly from that of the Kōbe and Yokohama jazz fests: they utilize Shintō symbolism, traditional costume and music, and the *o-mikoshi* to establish the boundaries of native place and the continuity of indigenous traditions, local variations of a pure, essential “Japaneseness.” In contrast to the purportedly pure, timeless, and indigenous traditions valorized in the *matsuri*, the jazz festivals celebrate a legacy of modern cosmopolitanism and cultural hybridity: being *modern* is the *tradition* here, celebrants say. Yet nonetheless the jazz festivals *function* the same way as the *matsuri*, inventing a narrative of a seamless, continual, and felicitous relationship between jazz and the local population, thereby establishing a distinctive community identity.

This raises a couple of points worthy of note. First, the invented histories of these jazztowns are clearly purged of the turmoil and divisiveness jazz actually inspired. Consumers of these festive histories are led to believe that, even if jazz was controversial outside of its “native place”

28. Robertson, *Native and Newcomer*, p. 39; Theodore C. Bestor, *Neighborhood Tokyo* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1989), pp. 251, 260.

(whether Yokohama or Kōbe), it always had a home here. This in spite of the fact that Kōbe, in November 1928, was the first municipality to enact and enforce draconian measures, architectural codes, and zoning restrictions designed to contain the moral contamination of the dance halls where jazz reverberated; Tokyo, Osaka, Yokohama, and every other city infected with “dance fever” (*dansu netsu*) lost little time following suit.<sup>29</sup> The association of jazz with undesirable social elements of the post-World War II era—gangsters, *pan-pan* girls, juvenile delinquents, and arrogant American servicemen—likewise goes unmentioned. The local media and festivals produce “history lite,” portraying jazz as a benign sociocultural phenomenon that captivated and thus distinguished the locals.

This brings me to a second point, that jazz contributes to and characterizes an essential civic unity which in reality is fictive. All efforts to define local or national character necessitate the erasure of difference and conflict; thus the invented histories of jazztowns imply that jazz was something that all *Hamakko* or *Kōbekko* could and did embrace because of their distinctively tolerant, cosmopolitan natures. This in spite of the fact that jazz has always effectively functioned as a marker of class or status, *within* the jazztowns no less than without. Simply put, cosmopolitan airs were and remain expensive, and not all residents of either port city have had equal access to the social connections and financial resources necessary to put on such airs (Yokohama jazz historian and cafe proprietor Yoshida Mamoru frequently remarked on the high price of dance hall admission and imported records, in effect suggesting that jazz was available only to select groups of *Hamakko*).<sup>30</sup> Yet promoters of the Yokohama-as-*jazu no furusato* image express a naive belief in the power of jazz to unify diverse classes of people, and thereby to construct communities, a belief at odds with the historical record.

## V Inventing Jazztowns as *Furusato-zukuri*

Robertson remarks that all efforts to define and construct native place (*furusato-zukuri*) occur in a context in which the “dominant metropole” of Tokyo always serves as the principal referent: *furusato* and Tokyo operate as antonyms; *furusato* is everything Tokyo is not, and vice versa; *furusato* signifies the pure, the indigenous, the time-honored and traditional, while Tokyo represents the hybrid, the alien, and the modern and globalized.<sup>31</sup> However, *furusato-zukuri* (or *machi-zukuri*) campaigns in Yokohama and Kōbe, while retaining Tokyo as the principal referent, attempt something else altogether: to out-Tokyo Tokyo by claiming credit for initiating Ja-

29. Atkins, pp. 114-15.

30. Yoshida, *Yokohama jazu mongatari*, pp. 28-9.

31. Robertson, “It Takes a Village,” p. 112.

pan's modernization and internationalization.

With regard to jazz, official appropriations of the music as municipal soundtrack occur in the context of Tokyo's dominance of the jazz scene. Tokyo is, quite simply, one of the world's most vibrant jazz capitals, boasting a staggering wealth of clubs and "live houses." It lures rising stars away from respectable jazz scenes in Osaka, Kyōto, Nagoya, and Fukuoka, for aspiring Japanese jazz musicians go to Tokyo to "make it" in the same manner that their American counterparts try to break into the dominant New York jazz scene. The invention of jazztowns is supposed to serve as a corrective by providing historical perspective which suggests that jazz has a local (read: non-Tokyo) pedigree. The invention of jazztowns thus contributes to the broader effort of engendering local identity and pride of place by claiming innovations (*koto hajimete*) wrongfully credited to the gluttonous capital.

Robertson also writes that "*Furusato*-making and internationalization are two mutually constitutive modalities of modernity: the 'old' and the 'new' recuperate each other and converge in the latest contemporized version of postwar modernity....the conception of eternal recurrence ('tradition') and the belief in progress ('internationalization') are complimentary if refractive."<sup>32</sup> While she thus notes the irony that native place-making (*furusato-zukuri*) and internationalization (*kokusaika*) depend on each other for self-definition, she nonetheless is bound by her data base (in small villages, towns, and hamlets) to conceive of them as opposing processes. They remain discursive opposites. However, *furusato-zukuri* and *kokusaika* are never more "complimentary" than in the port cities under scrutiny here: promoters of Kōbe and Yokohama as *kokusai toshi* need not pose the "native" and the "international" against each other, for the "international" is what constitutes the "native." Native place in this case is not defined in opposition to the alien or the international, because the whole basis for distinctive local identity rests on a historical legacy of appropriating the alien and international and transmitting it to the rest of the nation.<sup>33</sup>

Moreover, by thus defining their respective native places as the legacy of *kokusaika*, Yokohama and Kōbe residents offer a vision of *furusato* that directly opposes the exalted rural ideal commonly enshrined in the term. The placid, cyclical, rural existence usually valorized in *furusato* discourse is subverted in an alternative conception that celebrates the dynamic, progressive, urban experience "native" to them. For these people, native place resides in a space somewhere between "Japan" and "the world," and they legitimize and authenticate its location by using the term *furusato*, which

32. Robertson, "It Takes a Village," p. 128.

33. Potter, p. 158, observes a similar "process of constructing local identity in international terms" in the Tōhoku region.

others use to designate a more hidebound and insular space.

My argument here is that in the last two or three decades jazz has become the most important artistic signifier of this alternative conception of *furusato* as *kokusai toshi*. Historically a source of major discord in Japanese society, jazz has emerged as an aesthetically respectable and socially legitimate expression of local distinction, civic unity, and international awareness. Much history needs to be swept under the rug in the process of inventing jazztowns, but jazz aficionados are unlikely to complain, as their beloved music attains a public profile unimaginable two generations ago.