The War on Jazz, or Jazz Goes to War: Toward a New Cultural Order in Wartime Japan

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How funny to listen to jazz music on the night before going out to kill the jazzy Americans!—Kamikaze pilot Oikawa Hajime, ca. 1944

When reminiscing about the wartime period, the popular Japanese composer Hattori Ryōichi (1907–1993) liked to tell the story of the legendary singer Awaya Noriko’s encounter with a self-righteous patriot. Home from a tour entertaining Japanese troops in Southeast Asia, Awaya was strutting down the Ginza with a fresh manicure and heavy lipstick when she was stopped by a member of the Patriotic Women’s Association. “In these times,” the woman scolded, “luxury is the enemy!” Awaya retorted, “Hey, this is my preparation for battle. Can I go on stage with unkempt hair and an unpainted face? A singer’s stage makeup is no more a ‘luxury’ than a soldier’s helmet is!” In an interview years later Awaya explained, “Many people performed in military uniform or monpe. But the people
who came to hear me were looking for dreams. I couldn’t appear on stage in monpe. That would be depressing for me and my audience.” But she did not characterize her actions as subversive. “I had no such logic. It was just my character. I do things when I want to do them and if I don’t want to . . . I don’t.”

Awaya Noriko’s self-described role as a “patriotic entertainer,” and her insistence that her gaudy style furthered Japan’s “holy crusade” rather than subverted it, are illustrative of a relatively unexamined aspect of Japan’s wartime experience: the positive roles of the arts and artists in a society where free artistic expression was considered dangerous. The typical way to treat wartime cultural life is to note the various official bans and unofficial limits on artistic expression and to regard all artistic products of such a society as aesthetically negligible and therefore unworthy of study. The few extant surveys of the history of jazz music in Japan write off the war years with the phrase “total jazz ban” (zettai jazu kinshū) and insist that the music all but disappeared from the face of the archipelago, surviving only through occasional instances of subversion by unruly musicians. As we shall see, the actual story is infinitely more complex and raises important issues regarding national identity, social integration during times of crisis, the status of the artist in an authoritarian society, the participation of the artist in his or her own oppression, and war responsibility. Jazz provides a unique vantage point from which to examine these issues, for as the most blatantly “American” of the popular arts that caught on in Japan between the world wars, it was a topic of much discussion and subject to not only extreme measures of control but attempts at assimilation. A “total jazz ban” was virtually impossible in a country where jazz and other Western popular dance musics had sunk deep roots; realizing this, Japanese artists and policy makers (often the same people) envisaged a jazz that contributed positively to national cultural life and the war effort.

We have grown comfortable with the idea that jazz is a “universal language.” The music is described just as often as “America’s greatest cultural contribution to the world” or as “African American classical music,” implying that “universal” and “American” or “African American” are synonymous. There is a rarely acknowledged tension between the universalist and nationalist persuasions—historically, jazz has provoked far too much angst
for us to assume that its appeal is universal. Claims of universality to the contrary, jazz has presented a host of problems in countries with strong nationalist traditions. In countries that have invested considerable effort in constructing and cultivating distinctive national identities, the most compelling dilemma has been: What are the expressive possibilities of an “American” art in a non-American context? Does a performer surrender his or her identity when playing or appreciating jazz? Or is it possible to express that identity through an “American” art? If so, does such expression constitute a coherent and identifiable “national style”? Moreover, in non-American contexts, jazz has been invoked as a symbol of a nation’s similarity to or difference from America. Depending on the ideological currents of the times, the presence of jazz either confirms a particular nation’s cultural affinity with America or highlights the extent to which America’s pernicious influence poisons society and endangers that nation’s cultural identity.

Jazz, like any art, recognizes no geographical or racial boundary, yet nationalists of every color and persuasion persistently attempt to master and own it. Jazz—a music that has been called “a resistant, essentially unassimilable cultural complex”—ultimately thwarts all such efforts, by continually transforming itself, providing its own counterexamples, and appearing in contexts where it supposedly does not belong. It is, David Meltzer states, a “clarion of continuity and affirmation, allied with other arts in a refusal to surrender the imagination, the resistant energy of the creative, to the death-affirming brutality of systems of domination.” It is jazz’s refusal to acknowledge the socially fabricated boundaries of race, culture, and nation that heightens the urgency somehow to define, contain, and master it. Historical inquiries regarding such efforts require that we expand our vision beyond the categories that Scott DeVeaux argues have heretofore dominated American jazz historiography, namely, ethnicity (black vs. white) and economics (commercial vs. artistic). More importantly, it is necessary to reintegrate jazz within the flow of history and thus to rescue jazz historiography from its fate as a “pleasurable, vaguely discursive enterprise . . . designed mainly to present uncritically the words of jazz’s creators and admirers, as if this task alone resulted in the writing of history.”

The experience of jazz in wartime Japan provides a compelling example of how nationalism attempts to control, reconfigure, co-opt, and even express
itself through the art of jazz. Previous studies of jazz in authoritarian societies at war portray jazz culture as largely independent of, if not indifferent to, nationalist movements and therefore subject to control and victimization by the state. Moreover, they portray attempts to nationalize jazz as state inspired and state directed, rather than as emanating from the jazz subculture itself. By contrast, if we piece together Japanese documents, essays, oral accounts, and recordings, we find that prominent members of Japan’s wartime jazz community were not merely the victims of state oppression (as the oral record insists) but were rather sedulous participants in the war effort, warding off further state control by actively engaging in the construction and diffusion of a nationalistic culture. With some of its most famous musicians, composers, and writers calling for the abolition of “American jazz” and the creation of a “national music” (kokumin no ongaku), the jazz community sought not only to ingratiate itself with the mainstream but to transform the music, to expand its expressive capacities to include the community’s own visions of “Japaneseness.” It is therefore not enough to accept previous jazz histories’ cursory treatment of the war period as the years in which a “total jazz ban” of the “enemy’s music” (tekisei ongaku) either wiped the music away from Japanese soil or co-opted it as an instrument of propaganda. It is more accurate to say that the jazz community attempted to nationalize “the enemy’s music,” to integrate it with the mainstream, and to express essentialized and even prescriptive notions of Japaneseness through jazz.

Such an approach also calls into question our common concept of “marginality.” Because of its associations with foreign youthful rebellion, the scandalous dance-hall culture, and erotic entertainment in general, Japan’s interwar “jazz community”—which consisted of musicians, singers, dancers, record collectors, coffee-shop and café proprietors, and critics—might be described as a “marginal” subculture, with its own sense of values, fashions, and modes of speaking. But the jazz community’s marginal status can be overstated—to the point where the extensive connections between the margins and the mainstream are obscured. In Japan, jazz artists and aficionados have made their own contributions to the creation of a nationalistic cultural identity, positing the existence of an essentialized “Japanese spirit” that is detectable in their music. During the Pacific War, the jazz community’s
marginalization through repressive edicts was, paradoxically, virtually offset by its involvement in the formulation of those edicts, not to mention its performances of “jazz for the country’s sake.” Moreover, war with America, the jazz community’s sole referent, provided an opportunity for musicians to establish a self-referential “authenticity” as jazz artists. The task was no longer to authenticate Japan’s jazz on American terms but rather on Japanese terms.⁷

This should not imply that the jazz community embraced an anti-American, expansionist, or fascist ideology and supported the war wholeheartedly; but it does mean that the jazz community made a painstaking effort to find a positive role for itself and its music in wartime society. The jazz of this period, usually referred to as “light music” (keïōgaku) or “salon music” (saron myûjîkku), represented a compromise that would satisfy state censors, cultural nationalists in the arts world, audiences starved for entertainment, and jazz musicians who had historically devoted their energies to replicating the latest American musical trends. The music should not be regarded merely as the aesthetically degraded product of unidirectional government pressure but as an early attempt to create a jazz that was authentically Japanese and therefore true to the jazz aesthetic’s insistence on “innovation.” In sum, the war provided an unprecedented opportunity for the jazz community to accomplish two principal goals: The first goal was to fulfill the jazz artist’s aesthetic responsibility, that is, to move beyond the mere duplication of American influences, transform the music significantly, and “authenticate” it. The second goal was to find a comfortable niche for the jazz culture within a nationalistic mainstream by demonstrating jazz’s utility in the formation of a coherent national culture.

In many ways, the jazz musician’s ambiguous status mirrors that of other artists and marginal groups whose participation in the war effort, however grudgingly proffered, highlights the difficulty of assessing “complicity” and “resistance” to the regime in dichotomous terms. It is fair to ask, Does a failure to resist necessarily constitute “complicity?”⁸ Does periodic compliance negate the occasional subversive act?⁹ Unfortunately, this ambiguity is largely lost in the oral accounts that constitute the basis for jazz history in Japan. Postwar recollections by jazz musicians and aficionados portray a draconian police state that deprived the jazz community of its livelihood;
they also describe a pattern of sedition and noncompliance. Yet thorough research in contemporary sources reveals what postwar recollections obscure: that some prominent jazz musicians and critics joined the ranks of other artists who used art to serve the war effort. Few artists have been as candid about their wartime roles as filmmaker Kurosawa Akira. “Unfortunately, I have to admit that I did not have the courage to resist in any positive way, and I only got by, ingratiating myself when necessary and otherwise evading censure,” he conceded. “In wartime, we were all like deaf-mutes.” There is a crucial distinction between the common refrain “nothing could be done” and Kurosawa’s frank “we did nothing.”

This essay not only recounts the social-control measures enacted by the Japanese state to contain the jazz community but also describes the patterns of compliance and resistance, the various suggested solutions to the “jazz problem” and their ideological underpinnings, and the fate of the music itself in wartime society. I conclude with the suggestion that wartime Japan was not merely a stifling environment for jazz musicians but rather held some creative promise, even if unrealized. For the first time, jazz musicians felt compelled to transcend the influence of American jazz, their perennial standard of “authenticity,” and to develop an art for which they had no prior model.

**Jazz in Interwar Japan**

Jazz was introduced in Japan around 1920 by pianist Kikuchi Shigeya (1903–1976), the son of a member of Japan’s parliament, who returned from an extended tour of the United States with recordings of the Original Dixieland Jass [sic] Band. However, Kikuchi’s public presentation of these records was less significant than the trickle of American popular dance music into Japan’s port cities. Throughout the 1910s and 1920s, Japanese musicians employed to perform aboard transpacific ocean liners collected American recordings, instruments, dance steps, and sheet music and performed the music themselves aboard ship and in hotel ballrooms. Because the music of jazz giants such as King Oliver, Jelly Roll Morton, Fletcher Henderson, and Louis Armstrong was available on so-called race records, which were distributed mainly in black American communities, few, if any,
Japanese jazz musicians were exposed to New Orleans or Chicago jazz. Rather, they usually listened to and imitated the “symphonic jazz” of Paul Whiteman (a controversial figure who has been systematically excluded from the jazz canon in recent decades). Such music became an important aural component of the burgeoning dance-hall and café cultures of the Osaka-Kōbe axis in the mid-twenties, while Tokyo and Yokohama struggled to rebuild entertainment districts ravaged by the 1923 Kantō Earthquake. But by the late 1920s, jazz migrated east, saturating the capital region with a new sound that came to be regarded as the soundtrack of “modern life” (modan raifu).\textsuperscript{12}

The year 1929 witnessed a flurry of debates concerning jazz’s aesthetic worth and its social and cultural significance. At this crucial point, jazz assumed extramusical importance as a symbol ascribed with “affective or cultural meaning.” Alan Merriam noted that “music can be assigned even broader symbolic roles in society and culture, roles in which the music itself is taken to symbolize values and even passions of the most specific yet most general nature.” Before jazz had even settled in Japan, the music already had a rich symbolic legacy signifying “barbarism, primitivism, savagery, and animalism.”\textsuperscript{13} In Japan, jazz retained those symbolic functions yet took on additional meanings with more immediacy for the Japanese.

Many commentators, including Ōya Sōichi and Kawabata Yasunari, portrayed jazz as the background music to the questionable activities of “modern boys” (mobo) and “modern girls” (moga). Others, such as Murobuse Kōshin and Murajima Yoriyuki, characterized jazz as an international cultural wave that possessed transformative powers and actively induced (rather than passively symbolized) the modern condition in “civilized” countries around the world. By situating jazz within the context of an international wave of Americanism/modernism, Japanese commentators were able to determine Japan’s cultural position in relation to Europe and America: If jazz was the music of “cultured countries,” as the pioneering jazz writer Horiuchi Keizō (1897–1983) contended,\textsuperscript{14} then Japan ranked among them because it, too, had jazz.

The following decade witnessed the maturation and entrenchment of the jazz community within Japan’s entertainment industry, which prospered in spite of economic depression and social agitation. Dance halls,
jazz coffee shops, studio orchestras, and a popular-music press were the community's primary institutions. However, the institutionalization of the jazz subculture was matched by increasingly stringent local ordinances and, later, national policies designed to contain and eventually uproot an escapist culture that was widely viewed as unruly, foreign, and therefore subversive of the national polity (kokutai). As a partial response to conservative and nationalist critiques of jazz, a few jazz musicians and composers, inspired by the example of Hattori Ryōichi, groped for variations of jazz music that could properly be called "Japanese." "I don't think that the blues, such as W. C. Handy's 'St. Louis Blues,' is the monopoly of black people," Hattori postulated. "Don't you think that a Japanese blues in Japan, an Oriental blues, is quite possible?" The primary artistic product of this "indigenization" process was the "jazz song" (jazu songu) of the 1930s, a cosmopolitan fusion that juxtaposed vernacular lyrics, folk themes, and melodies with the rhythms, instrumentation, and harmonic structures of American swing and "sweet" music, Argentinean tango, French chansons, and Hawaiian music. Efforts to formulate a Japanese version of jazz intensified during the "cultural renaissance" of the mid- to late thirties, a period in which a militant cultural nationalism infused the arts. Nihonga painters such as Yokoyama Taikan, romantic poets, playwrights, and filmmakers in the "monumental style" turned against "cosmopolitanism" and attempted to reassert the differences between Japan and the West, question the applicability of "modernism" to the Japanese historical experience and aesthetic legacy, and find cultural and spiritual common ground with the formerly shunned Asian continent. The popular musical experiments of the 1930s provided an increasingly attractive blueprint for a national popular music as tensions between Japan and the Anglo-American West worsened. By tinkering with the jazz form — retaining the rhythmic base and instrumentation of jazz while incorporating Japanese folk melodies and patriotic lyrical themes — Japanese jazz musicians fashioned a cosmetically different jazz that was ready for mobilization in the service of the nation.
Early Attacks on the Jazz Community

Although opponents of jazz had been stockpiling ideological weaponry for nearly a decade, the “war on jazz” began in earnest shortly after the Marco Polo Bridge Incident of 7 July 1937. The commencement of hostilities with China and the announcements of the National Spiritual Mobilization Campaign in September 1937 and of the National Mobilization Law in March 1938 gave the national government the motivation and power to intervene in the jazz and dance industry for the first time. In the autumn of 1937 the Home Ministry usurped the power to regulate the dance halls from local governments and police. Ideological protestations against the dance halls were already in place; the time to realize them through public policy had finally come. The Home Ministry made its position known at the outset: It considered “the existence of dance halls and dance schools, which rebel against our national conditions (kokujō), disturb [the standards of] womanhood, encourage frivolity in our youth, and exert not a little bad influence on the nation’s public morality,” to be “truly undesirable.” People within the jazz community may have scoffed at the idea that they were a threat to the moral fabric of society, but they had to adjust to a very real change in their circumstances.

Members of the dance industry hurriedly organized their first nationwide advocacy group, the All-Japan Dance-Hall League, and petitioned the Home Ministry and the police for a “New Policy,” which earned them a temporary reprieve. Under the new regulations, “professional female dancers” and “adult male customers” were the only legally sanctioned couples that could engage in social dancing. In addition, guests had to register their names, ages, and addresses upon entering the halls so that the police would have a record of dance-hall customers for future reference. To further demonstrate the industry’s patriotism, dance halls advertised that all of their taxi dancers were enlisted in either the Patriotic Women’s Association or the Women’s National Defense Association. Some musicians, taxi dancers, and managers who could not cope with the New Policy fled to Shanghai, Dairen, or other East Asian destinations where the atmosphere was, for a time, less constricting. But most continued to work in the dance halls at home, hoping that their conspicuous displays of patriotism would suffice to prevent further suppression.
Their efforts proved fruitless. Well before hostilities between Japan and the United States formally began in December 1941, jazz was labeled “the enemy’s music,” and the local police and the national government used this as a pretext for continued intervention in jazz coffee shops and dance halls. Coffee shops that played jazz records were subject more to police harassment than to legislative control. The police berated customers, claiming that jazz was a “decadent drug” that corrupted anyone who entered a jazz coffee shop or listened to jazz records. In spite of this harassment, jazz coffee shops were legally able to continue doing business, often by playing what were known as “hidden jazz” (kakureta jazu) records, usually jazz arrangements of Chinese and Japanese folk songs. Although some such records contained jazz rhythms and improvised solos, the Japanese titles and melodic content were often enough to satisfy the police. Jazz coffee shops were able to maintain at least a tenuous existence in this manner during the early years of the war.

The dance halls were not so lucky. Between 1937 and 1940, dance halls had attempted to ward off further government suppression through such public actions as nursing the wounded, sending care packages to troops, sending dancers to visit the Yasukuni Shrine, and sponsoring special events such as the “Night for Comforting the Imperial Army.” Nevertheless, in 1939, dance halls began closing for lack of business as social censure inhibited many customers from patronizing them. The fateful year for the dance halls was 1940, the same year that Japan entered the Tripartite Alliance with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, celebrated the empire’s twenty-six hundredth anniversary, and announced its vision of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. With the slogan “luxury is the enemy” on everyone’s lips, the entire entertainment industry faced harsh regulation to rid it of frivolity, and the dance halls were singled out for impending elimination. A nationwide dance-hall ban was finally announced to commence on 1 November 1940. Even halls that had already closed opened for the all-night “Sayōnara Dance Night” on 31 October 1940, a Thursday. Every hall was packed with customers, reportedly three to five times more than on a normal weeknight, jostling and pushing one another to get in. For the final, tearful encore, “The Light of the Firefly,” male customers (who outnumbered taxi dancers) joined hands and danced with
each other. The twenty-year history of the dance hall in Japan came to an end on that memorable night.

Masaki Hiroshi, a lawyer and publisher of the small, independent, leftist magazine *Chikaki yori* [From nearby], published from 1937 to 1949, mentioned jazz prominently in his facetious critique of the state’s xenophobic (and hypocritical) attempts to dismantle the *ero guro nansensu* culture of modernism:

A ban on dance halls, a ban on permanent waves, a ban on using the national flag in advertisements. Prohibitions and more prohibitions: It is just as if the people had all been placed in a reformatory.

Jazz is noisy, neon lights hurt my eyes
I favor things Japanese, a four-and-a-half mat room
Drink, drink your fill—if it’s saké
Drink and then to a tumble with the closest whore
This is the pure and noble spirit of Japan.

Masaki’s sarcasm was in stark contrast to the conciliatory attitude with which representatives of the jazz and dance-hall industry petitioned the state for leniency. Neither approach, however, stemmed the state and the conservative public’s determination to rid Japan of what they viewed as contaminating elements in society.

**Compliance in the Recording Industry**

The recording industry, long the target of conservatives who condemned the lyrical content of popular and jazz songs, was also quick to offer its voluntary cooperation with Spiritual Mobilization goals, lest it incur the Home Ministry’s interference as well. In September 1937, each record company voluntarily halted production of controversial popular songs. There was also a noticeable increase in the number of military songs recorded, sold, and broadcast on the radio. The recording industry’s compliance with Spiritual Mobilization goals seemed complete when a few jazz artists produced records featuring jazz treatments of Asian folk songs. These songs were produced at the height of the state’s effort to justify the war in China by
articulating an ideology of pan-Asian brotherhood. The military campaign to create a new political, economic, and military bloc composed of "Manchukuo," China, and Japan (and its colonies Korea and Taiwan) was conjoined with rhetorical assertions of Asians' spiritual, cultural, historical, and racial similarities and their mutual grievances against the Western colonial powers.

The appropriation of Chinese and Japanese folk material by jazz musicians after 1938 contributed to the diffusion of this pan-Asian ideology through mass culture, illustrating as well as any example "the culpability of Japanese 'modern' culture as part of the history of the Japanese colonial enterprise." 28 It is indeed tempting to draw an analogy between the Japanese appropriation of Chinese music through Western music and the Japanese appropriation of China through Western military technology. But the fact that the musicians in question continued to pilfer American and European styles and repertoires for inspiration suggests that their cosmopolitan ethos had merely expanded to include Asian folk music as a potential fountain of ideas. The appropriation of Chinese folk material by the foremost "indigenizers" of jazz represented the adaptation of 1920s-style cosmopolitanism to 1930s-style anti-Western, pan-Asian nationalism, essentially by uniting Asia through Western music. The ambiguity is visible in the very titles: "Canton Blues," "Jazz Rōkyoku," "China Tango."

The most important figures in this movement were Nippon Columbia's hit maker Hattori Ryōichi, Nippon Victor's Sano Tasuku and Taira Shigeo, and King Records' staff composer/arranger Sugii Kōichi (1906–1942). Hattori and Sugii, in particular, were well versed in various styles of music and in the late 1930s mined the Chinese folk repertoire for inspiration. Neither musician left any testimony that might elucidate his motivations for undertaking the Chinese project; very little is known about Sugii, and Hattori's autobiography barely mentions his China songs. Historians have typically described this musical movement as an attempt to "deceive" the authorities or to fend off pressure from government censors. 29 But there is little evidence to suggest that they were somehow cajoled by their respective record companies or by the authorities into adopting Chinese material for overtly propagandistic reasons. Rather, the project must have seemed appropriate and marketable at a time when the notion of Asian unity
under the Japanese aegis was considered desirable by many. The response was quite favorable—Hattori, Sano, Taira, and Sugii charted several hit records with their experiments—but it must be conceded that their efforts were not representative of the jazz community’s mainstream, which continued to regard America as the only true source of jazz. But as American jazz was coming under increasing attack, jazz fans and musicians came to regard the indigenized jazz of Hattori, Sugii, and Sano as a safe, officially acceptable alternative, if not a potentially significant national contribution, to the jazz repertoire.

Following a tour of China to entertain Japanese troops in the spring of 1938, Hattori wrote a number of songs for Columbia Records, Shōchiku stage shows, and Tōhō motion pictures that either borrowed Chinese melodies or employed Chinese settings. Slogans regarding Asian kinship notwithstanding, the lyrics of songs such as “Shanghai Souvenir,” “Nanjing Souvenir” (both 1938), “Canton Blues,” and “China Tango” (both 1939) did more to exoticize than familiarize China for Japanese audiences:

China Tango, a song of dreams,
Red paper lanterns sway, swinging to the wind, swinging to the song,
In a swinging, darkening Chinese town.
China Town, a moonlit night, China Tango, faint as a dream,
A street vendor’s flute fades, and the distant red lights, and the blue lights as well
The forelocks of young girls,
The night grows late, without dreariness.

China Tango, a song of the night
In the deep night sky, damp with fog, damp with song
Suzhou is great! The junk boats,
China Town, a moonlit night, China Tango, faint as a dream.
The rouge windows on the street corner, damp with blue jade balls,
In the forelocks of young girls, the shadows, too, are fun,
As the night grows late.

Hattori also continued to produce a steady stream of what he called “Japanese jazz” as the war progressed, including songs with patriotic or nation-
alistic implications: “I Love Japan,” “Jazz Rōkyoku” (both 1938), and “Patriotic March” (1939). The musical amalgamation that Hattori pioneered became increasingly mainstream as the war progressed, largely because his blend of folk musics and jazz won favorable receptions from both audiences and the authorities.

Hattori’s direct influence inspired clarinetist Sano Tasuku, a successful arranger who worked for competing labels Polydor, King, and Nippon Victor, to follow a similar patriotic formula. Sano (who once boasted, “I was the first to really jazzify folk songs and perform them onstage”) and veteran pianist Taira Shigeo arranged a number of Japanese folk songs and blatantly patriotic songs for Victor releases during the late 1930s, with titles such as “Hinomaru March” (1938), “Japanese Emotions,” “Pacific March,” and “Hero of the Sea” (all 1939).

Hattori’s attempt to create a national style of jazz by combining Japanese music with American jazz was continued and improved upon by Sugii Kōichi. Sugii, a graduate of Tokyo Imperial University, had studied classical piano since childhood but developed a particular interest in tango and popular music while stationed in Buenos Aires as an employee of an Osaka shipping company. A self-taught, enthusiastic student of the folk songs of various cultures, Western classical music, jazz, and even the musical soundtracks from American cartoons, Sugii spent the mid-thirties performing on accordion and bandore, singing, and arranging music for Sakurai Kiyoshi’s tango orchestra before becoming a staff arranger for King Records in 1938. Over the next three years, he masterminded the King Salon Music Series, an ambitious collection of thirty sides consisting primarily of Japanese and Chinese folk songs arranged for jazz treatment. Sugii conducted a band that included talented jazzmen such as trumpeter Nanri Fumio and the Filipino brothers Vidi and Raymond Conde on clarinets. Sugii presented his music on recordings, on radio, and in movie theaters, thus reaching a fairly wide audience in the Tokyo region. Compared to the many less adroit attempts (earlier and later) to attach Asian melodies to jazz harmonic structures and rhythms, the King Novelty Orchestra’s recordings under Sugii’s direction are easily the overlooked masterpieces of the era. Sugii’s ability to retain the sonorities and improvisatory elements that distinguish jazz, combined with his mastery of a wide variety of tonal colors and moods, invites
comparison with his contemporary (and probable influence), Duke Ellington. Like Ellington and (later) Akiyoshi Toshiko, Sugii was able to draw something profound from traditional musics and to infuse it with the spontaneity, emotional complexity, and rhythmic drive of the best jazz.\textsuperscript{35}

Although the above experiments to create an "Asian jazz" did not represent the mainstream of the jazz community in the late 1930s (which was much more captivated by Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington, and other emerging swing stars), they were quite successful in part because they seemed to address the needs of the increasingly nationalistic climate of the period. Without blatantly rejecting America in their music, they were positively affirming a Japanese cultural heritage in a time of perceived national crisis. Yet as actual war with the United States and Britain loomed ever closer, these songs provided an attractive model for a national popular music that many felt had the potential not only to distinguish Japanese from the enemy but actually fight the enemy as well.

\textbf{Mobilizing Culture}

With the dance halls closed and the jazz coffee shops under constant surveillance, it appeared to many that jazz, as a music and as a culture, was doomed in Japan. But it turned out that, even in a world without dance halls, musicians had an important role to play in the New Order. Nationalists within and without the government were unanimous in their belief that popular music was an important tool in the spiritual mobilization of the people. The predominant discourse on music during the war years is striking for its faith in the power of music to either edify or corrupt people. Therefore, it was crucial to control music and all of the arts through a combination of official control, professional restraint, and social censure. Japan's leadership thus advocated the creation of a "national people's music" designed to "appeal to the people's sentimentality and reinforce cultural norms in people's minds."\textsuperscript{36} To establish and maintain such control, the Home Ministry depended on people familiar with the respective arts to design and enforce professional standards and laws, which would engender a culture that elicited a grassroots patriotism and martial spirit. This was the message delivered at an arts and culture conference held in December 1940 in Tokyo.
Ashida Kunio, head of the Culture Bureau of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association (IRAA), admonished 650 scholars, literati, publishers, and artists to become more involved in the military and political struggle: “Until now the concept of ‘culture’ has been based on ethics, science, and aesthetics, but the culture of tomorrow must be tinged with a correct and meaningful politics on top of that. Politics and the new culture cannot be thought of as separable.”

The conference announced the creation of the Japan Literature and Arts Central Committee, which was entrusted with the duty of creating and enforcing professional guidelines that would “improve the collective will” of artists and audiences during the time of crisis.

Musicians, music teachers, and music critics were thus called into service to clarify the appropriate role of music in the New Order. The campaign to mobilize music put many people in the awkward position of rethinking and refuting prior opinions and beliefs. Jazz critics who had written about and promoted the music for two decades now publicly denounced “the enemy’s music” in their wartime writings. Musicians who had spent their entire careers emulating American music publicly condemned the unfortunate influence such music had exerted on Japanese culture. In a show of patriotism, some jazz musicians and writers joined and actively participated in the Japan Music Culture Association and the Japan Record Music Culture Association. As was the case for other patriotic arts and literary organizations entrusted with the creation of an appropriate culture for Japan at war, participation was voluntary but important for professional survival.

The participation of some prominent jazz musicians, fans, and writers in these organizations amounted to a public demonstration of the jazz community’s assimilationist commitment.

Musicians in charge of “cleaning up” the music world were painfully aware that weeding out jazz completely from popular entertainment was virtually impossible. Therefore, the musicians and writers entrusted with the daunting project initially drew up relatively loose and abstract standards that assumed a basic unavoidable jazz influence on popular music. They placed their hopes in genres they called “national music,” “salon music,” or, more frequently, “light music.” The term “light music” was coined in the early years of the war to connote an acceptable form of primarily instrumental music that was, in actuality, not so different from the dance music,
"symphonic jazz," and "Japanified" jazz of the 1930s. In essence, "light music" was the acceptable term at a time when "jazz" was taboo; musically, there was little real difference between light music and the variations of jazz that had been popular in Japan for a decade. While slogans about "eradicating the enemy's music" were bandied about in the general public, the people in charge of designing musical standards advocated what in fact amounted to little more than a cosmetic change in the music.

The tone for this "realist" agenda was set in an anonymous police report titled "An Opinion Regarding the Control of Jazz Music" ["Jazu ongaku torishimarijō no kenkai"] published in July 1941. The author’s stated purpose was to clarify the difficult distinctions between light music and jazz for non-specialists and thus to contribute to an effective censorship policy. Acknowledging that "within the genre called light music today, there is quite a lot of music that should belong in the so-called jazz category," the author of the report asserted that "the establishment of a music policy as one facet of a culture policy has become essential," and that a viable distinction between jazz and tolerable popular music was an important element of such a policy (348).

The report briefly outlined the historical development of jazz in America and Japan and justified criticism of jazz by citing the early opposition to the music in America. "There are some who say that even today jazz has not lost the sense that, because of its Negro origins, it is an uncultured, maddening noise." The report called jazz "unharmonious," "non-music," and "a musical ghoul" because of its excessive syncopation and melodic liberties. Jazz was an "extremely Americanized music" that captured the essence of the "unruly national character" of a country "that has no tradition whatsoever" (350). Jazz came to Japan at a time when "the trend in our country was unconditionally to swallow whole the products of European and American civilization" and prospered with the rise of the dance halls. "Hot" and "swing" jazz, "obscene" jazz songs, and "gloomy" blues and tango contributed to a "decadent" and "unhealthy" popular music in the early thirties. The report attributed the "foppish sarcasm" of Japanese jazz bands and singers who imitated American styles to the "bad influence of jazz" (348–349).

Why was jazz so popular around the world? Because "today's people who live within the noise of modern culture... require a life music besides
an appreciation of [art] music. Jazz fulfills that demand." The supposed appropriateness of jazz to the modern historical moment complicated efforts to extirpate the music completely. Jazz's influence had so permanently altered modern musical performance techniques and instrumentation that it was impossible to discuss modern music while ignoring jazz. Nevertheless, the author contended, it was entirely appropriate for "other nations which maintain a special national pride" to problematize the presence of the "Americanized" music within their borders (349–350).

But rather than repeating empty slogans about eradicating jazz, the report suggested an alternative, perhaps more realistic approach: "A music policy will not be settled simply by expelling so-called jazz music. Rather, we must make it our business to find the advantages of jazz music, to enlighten the people's love of music, to provide musical leadership to the masses" (349). The author admitted that "even in America in the last few years the noise and obscenity that were thought to be characteristic of jazz have been cleared away, and there has been a trend to make the music symphonic and create melodious works... actually, the music that has been imported or created in our country lately wipes out the colors of the past and creates a new healthy sense." This "light music" promised to save popular music from "noisy," "obscene," "decadent" jazz. "If we take out those unhealthy elements, and can render it into a music that is light, cheerful, and healthily sweet, making a very simple popular music, that would be fine" (350).

The police report went on to elucidate how this might be accomplished, first by outlining the structure and instrumentation of jazz (including the "lascivious" sound of the saxophone), then by specifying the elements to eliminate to create healthy light music. Jazz, the writer asserted, was not so much a type of music as a method of arranging music. Therefore, if one merely changed the arrangement (which usually entailed de-emphasizing the rhythm and playing the melody "properly"), one could easily convert a piece to "excellent pure music" (353). Music that "should be excluded as much as possible" included:

1. Music with a riotous rhythm that loses the beauty of the melody
2. Music that causes lascivious and lewd emotions
3. Decadent or ruinous music that causes idleness
On the other hand, the following music was acceptable:

1. Music with melodies that accentuate the characteristic ethnicity of each country
2. Nimbly merry music (that is not merely riotous)
3. Joking light music
4. Lyrical music

The report concluded, “Light music (in the broad sense) that most easily comforts the everyday exhaustion of the minds and bodies of us modern folk plays an important role, and in this time of crisis it is considered proper to accept types of well-meaning jazz, which is more effective than enjoying unhealthy and relatively time-consuming traditional Japanese music, as one form of simple pleasure” (354).

This document complicates the traditional view of the war years as a period in which jazz was simply “banned.” It indicates that people in positions of authority were willing to consider the possibility that jazz had something to offer the popular music of the “New Culture.” This report essentially advocated a policy that exploited jazz for Japanese national purposes. Since jazz already had a hold on certain segments of the population (primarily well-off urban youth), the authorities’ aims were better served by controlling it rather than eliminating it altogether. As long as the undesirable elements were removed, jazz, under the guise of “light music,” had the potential to become an effective instrument for constructing a healthy new national culture.

In the police report, the author’s belief that “jazz” was merely a form that could be divested of its original sensuality and imbued with a “Japanese” content hearkens back to the Meiji-era paradigm of wakon yōsaï, or “Japanese essence, Western science.” The debate over whether it was possible or desirable to adopt Western science and technology, remove them from their original basis in Western value systems, and infuse them with an essentialized “Japanese spirit” reached a new fever pitch during the war years. But the paradigm remained something of an article of faith for those who were advocating a position for jazz in wartime society; their case essentially rested on the fragile notion that form and content were separable and that such a thing as “Japanese content” existed. Just as a Japanese pilot used
Western technology to fight the Western foe, it was argued, designated elements of jazz music, cleansed of polluting immorality and rendered expressive of the “Japanese spirit,” could serve the national purpose equally well. Moreover, the musical experiments of the late 1930s, which attempted to express a Japanese ethnic and cultural identity through the jazz idiom, seemed to offer empirical justification for a jazz that would not only garner official sanction but contribute positively to soothe and enlighten the people. The surprisingly lenient, if problematic, jazz policy proposed in the 1941 police report thus exemplified principles for cultural architecture enshrined in *Kokutai no hongi* [Fundamentals of our national polity]: “Our present mission as a people is to build up a new Japanese culture by adopting and sublimating Western cultures with our national polity as the basis, and to contribute spontaneously to the advancement of world culture.”

The shop-worn *wakan yōsai* strategy was thus applied to ensure jazz’s continued survival in Japan.

**War with America**

However, the chances for jazz’s continued presence dimmed following the attack on Pearl Harbor and the intensification of hostile anti-American rhetoric. The war with America inaugurated a series of official proclamations that ostensibly eradicated jazz from Japanese soil; but it is inaccurate to state, as so many previous accounts do, that there was a single, enforceable jazz ban in place throughout this period. As the war dragged on, the authorities were compelled to design ever more detailed guidelines in response to blatant noncompliance with government directives and public complaints from citizens who wanted harsher action against the jazz community. Restrictions were imposed incrementally over a period of some years, with each new amendment attempting to address violations of previous measures through more specificity. Enforcement remained rather lax; a few musicians speak of being scolded for infractions, but I have encountered no record of actual arrests. Social censure was the principal means of enforcement. Therefore, the harsh, sweeping official rhetoric is hardly an accurate gauge of the actual conditions that prevailed in the wartime jazz world. Within a month of the beginning of the Pacific War, a scathing essay
condemning jazz and American music titled “The New Course of Music Culture in the Great East Asian War” appeared in the January 1942 issue of Ongaku no tomo [Music friend]. In this essay, Horiuchi Keizō, director of the Japan Music Culture Association and an apostate jazz critic, argued:

It goes without saying that music should encourage daring, patriotism, and courage in the people, enrich them and give them hope, and support their lives in time of war. At this point in time it is especially incumbent upon those of us in the music business to use all means possible to render public service through our music. To fight America and England, we must wipe out any feelings of closeness to them. The tolerant Japanese character has largely accepted the culture of all countries nonselectively. . . . Fortunately there is almost nothing to learn from America and England in terms of music, but even if there was, in these times we should avoid familiarity with their music.

. . . Most Anglo-American music was born of capitalism, liberalism, individualism, and profitism. Even if hostilities with America and England had not opened, it is clear that such music is undesirable in Japan today. We hereby advocate the elimination of Anglo-American music.

We believe that it is proper to avoid even Hawaiian music and the music of native Americans and black Americans—which as the music of ethnic groups oppressed by [white] Americans, is therefore of no concern to us—as the music of the enemy. Besides, there is no need for Japanese today to perform the music of oppressed [ethnic] nations or of [ethnic] nations with no state. Jazz has already been suppressed. There is no other Anglo-American music worthy of taking up.42

Two decades after his published observations and analyses introduced jazz to Japanese readers, Horiuchi publicly scorned the music he had done so much to promote in his homeland. Omitting references to his personal role in the diffusion of jazz, in his wartime manifesto he urged composers to write patriotic songs and lyricists to “give the people hope and brightness.” He admonished musicians performing traditional music to “re-create” their “abstract” art to make it accessible to the people. He recommended changes in the ways music was presented to the public, arguing that “many people
do not have the time or money for performances” as currently presented; musicians should bring music “closer to all the people” as an act of “public service.” He called for scholars to research the music of East Asia and provide “musical leadership for East Asia.” “We must move together with the Imperial Army and win.”

Horiuchi’s statement was one of the boldest yet in denouncing jazz, but less strident voices were still heard. At the Symposium on Overcoming Modernity sponsored by Bungaku kai [Literary world] in July 1942, classical musician and composer Moroi Saburō (1903–1977) expressed a much more nuanced opinion that in many respects echoed the perspective of the July 1941 police report cited earlier. Moroi, who headed the Japan Music Culture Association for a time, acknowledged the “sensory stimulation” that modern music offered but suggested that it was still possible to restore “an art of the spirit.” He noted a difference in “feel” between Western music and Eastern music, but rather than champion the “modernization” of traditional Japanese music, Moroi advocated a compromise approach that entailed expression of the “Japanese spirit” through Western composition and instrumentation; in this way, musicians could creatively “overcome modernity” in music. Moroi’s proposal, based on the realist assumption of unavoidable Western influence on Japanese music, suggested that modern Western music still had a place in a Japan embroiled in a “holy war” against the preeminent Western powers. The key was to tap the creativity of native composers and musicians whose mission was to inject Japanese spirituality into Western musical structures that, for better or worse, had permanently displaced traditional indigenous musics. Although Moroi’s comments were intended to address composed classical music, his approach was similar to suggested strategies for dealing with jazz, the quintessential “modern music.”

A Cycle of Regulation and Noncompliance

Moderate approaches such as Moroi’s did not make for good soul-stirring propaganda. Now that war with America was no longer hypothetical, the authorities assumed a hardened public attitude toward jazz on Japanese soil. But the reality was that enforcement and compliance were still hap-
hazard; at most, jazz musicians had to be more prudent than before. Filipino pianist Francisco “Kiko” Reyes, who joined the Nippon Columbia studio orchestra in 1940, recalled, “A lot of our recording jobs were things like military songs . . . but when it was break time, we'd close the door and everyone played jazz. Even after the dance halls shut down, there were these ‘Light Music Concerts’ sometimes at Hibiya Hall or the Japan Youth Hall, and we played jazz there.”

Reyes later joined an all-star band called the Shōchiku Light Music Orchestra (SLMO). Founded in September 1941, this band boasted some of the top jazzmen of the dance-hall era. Former SLMO bandmen tell stories of how they “cheated” by playing jazz arrangements and improvisations on Italian, German, and Japanese songs or by reviving the interwar practice of translating American popular tunes such as “These Foolish Things” and singing them in Japanese. In my interview with clarinetist Raymond Conde fifty years after the end of the war, he recalled that, since the police could not distinguish between musical passages that were written and those that were improvised, “we improvised in a classical way.”

Musicians were apparently not the only members of the jazz community who flouted the state's initial efforts to ban jazz. John Morris, a British teacher of English at Tokyo Imperial University until mid-1942, noted that coffee shops and cafés that featured recorded jazz showed restraint following the announcement against jazz, but gradually proprietors started playing the records again, at ever increasing volumes, as they “began to realize that the police could not distinguish between Duke Ellington and Mozart.” The police may have been unable to distinguish jazz, but others could and did. Patriotic-minded citizens were appalled at the lack of restraint they felt the jazz community was demonstrating as it seemed to thumb its nose at official pronouncements. In a newspaper editorial, one writer complained about a so-called Light Music Concert at a college in the capital: “In spite of bad weather, the concert hall was full of young men and women . . . but nearly all the performances were swing and jazz. No doubt about it, it was a jazz concert. I expect that with the beginning of the war against America and England, performance of the music of enemy nations was prohibited . . . is it the case that jazz performed under the name ‘light music’ goes unhindered?” The writer hoped that stronger controls on music
would eliminate these blatant infractions: "I want to wipe out this unhealthy music that floods the bars, coffee shops, and movie theaters."\textsuperscript{49} Another writer, decrying the continued availability of American records, recounted an incident at a record store in Tokyo's Kanda District, in which the owner recommended some John Philip Sousa records to a customer looking for "lively" children's music. "These days radio and music organizations are denouncing the enemy's music completely. There is no law that exempts records. The authorities concerned should either demand that record-store owners voluntarily turn over these records or take measures to ban their sale or seize them."\textsuperscript{50}

In response to such complaints and to the intransigence of some members of the jazz community, on 13 January 1943, the Information Bureau and the Home Ministry inaugurated a campaign to "sweep away American and English music from our homes and streets" by presenting a list of some one thousand American and English songs, "including most jazz music," for banishment. Not only was the possession, sale, and performance of the designated records prohibited, but the live performance of songs from the list was proscribed as well. Records were to be "voluntarily" turned over to the police or to the Japan Record Music Culture Association, but in some cases, the records would be confiscated to discourage cafés and coffee shops, in particular, from ignoring the law. "In the light-music category, the only foreign music that will remain will be European music such as that of Germany and Italy."\textsuperscript{51} In addition to "flippant," "frivolous," "materialistic," "decadent," and "lascivious" jazz, "songs with Anglo-American dullness, even if they are composed in Japan, are forbidden."\textsuperscript{52} The record ban was followed five months later by a recommendation from the Music Culture Association to ban the sale and performance of all Anglo-American sheet music, "whether jazz or not."\textsuperscript{53}

This renewed effort to abolish jazz from the empire was part of a larger campaign to "clean up" not only the content but also the language of wartime culture. That is to say, Anglo-American music was suppressed not only because of its alleged moral degradation but also because it perpetuated the undesirable use of the English language in Japan. Throughout the war, sporadic efforts to displace "the main foreign language in Japan" extended from name changes to the removal of signs, from clumsy changes
in baseball terminology to the contrivance of ponderous names for musical instruments. Dick Mine, Raymond Conde, Francisco Reyes (of whom, the latter two became Japanese citizens during the war), and other stars with “foreign names” adopted Japanese names. Record companies followed suit in February 1943: Nippon Columbia revived its 1920s name Nitchiku, King Records became Fuji Onban, Nippon Victor became Great East Asia (Dai Tōa), and Polydor took the name Victorious War Cry (Shōkō). English musical terms that had been used for nearly a century were replaced with clunky Japanese equivalents: The musical scale (do re mi . . .) was Japanified (ha ni ho . . .), the trumpet mute became known as a “weak sound device” (jakuonki), saxophone became “bent metallic flute” (kinzoku seihin magari shakuhachi), and the word trombone was replaced by “sliding bent long gold trumpet” (nukisashi magari kin chō rappa).

These graceless attempts to alter the language indicate the difficulty of the task of rooting out jazz. It was still legal to possess and play any jazz records that did not appear on the government’s list, and apparently there were quite a few of these. Some private collectors, café and coffee-shop proprietors, and musicians simply refused to turn over their precious records for the token government reimbursements (10–20 sen per disc). Another problem was that the confiscation of records was sometimes supervised by collectors themselves. As a representative of the Yokohama Music Coffee-Shop League, Yoshida Mamoru was charged with the unenviable task of collecting the banned records from that city’s music coffee shops. But from his own collection of around sixty-five hundred records, Yoshida only turned in five hundred, hiding the remaining records in a pantry on the second floor of his shop. Yoshida later characterized this relatively innocuous action as “one form of protest.”

It did not help matters that, since so many American songs had been translated into Japanese, a number of tunes were of uncertain origin. Special committees were established to study such problem songs, but it is worth recounting an incident involving Prime Minister Tōjō Hideki to illustrate the magnitude of the problem such committees faced. When Kamiyama Keizō of the Japan Musicians’ Association informed the prime minister that “Auld Lang Syne” was forbidden, Tōjō was shocked, then gloomy, and finally angry. “This is completely outrageous. I’ve never heard
of such an order.” A bit later he said, “‘Auld Lang Syne’ is sung by everybody right from elementary school, so the song is completely Japanese, isn’t it?” Kamiyama later wrote: “I do not know if he was really unaware of the decision or just pretended that he really was unaware of the decision. A despot is not always able to keep an eye on everything.”

Forging a Japanese Self and an American Other

With or without the prime minister’s knowledge or consent, many Japanese in leadership positions deemed it crucial for the state to adopt a public posture against jazz to reinforce hegemonic ideas about the nature of the enemy other and, by inference, the Japanese self. Jazz, which had long been viewed as both a symbol of “Americanism” and an initiator of “Americanization” in Japan, was said to represent all that was wrong with American society and culture and therefore all that Japan was waging “holy war” against. Such sentiments were most often expressed in the consolidated music press, which throughout the war expended most of its energy on the twin tasks of vilifying Anglo-American music and defining the proper, constructive role of music in the time of crisis.

It is important to remember that Japan thought of the war against America and its allies as more than simply a military conflict over turf. The Pacific War was envisaged as a culture war as well—one in which sharp lines were drawn to demarcate ethnic and cultural differences between Japan and the West. The war challenged the Japanese people to abandon nearly a century of assumptions about Japanese backwardness in relation to the West and to develop heretofore untapped “spiritual” resources in order to create a new cultural order that could serve as an alternative developmental model for the rest of Asia. The belief in Japan’s unique status as the only “modern” Asian nation continued, but now Japan was trying to distance itself from the Western models with which it had rubbed shoulders less than two decades earlier. The strategy was to rhetorically pose America, in particular, as the other, making it the antithesis of everything for which Japan’s New Order stood. One way to emphasize America’s “otherness” was to point to jazz and all that it represented.
Wartime discussants considered “jazz” to mean not just a genre of music, but rather an entire culture, system of thought, and way of life that passively symbolized and actively induced the condition of “Americanism.” In this regard, they were still operating well within the discursive boundaries established by commentators in the late 1920s; indeed, often they were the same people. But whereas many Japanese had favorable or ambivalent feelings toward Americanism in the interwar period, by the 1940s, Americanism (and the music that signified it) was considered a threat to Japanese civilization. If, on the discursive level, jazz had in the recent past been used to measure Japan’s similarities to the modern world (as increasingly shaped by America’s cultural vision), during the war, jazz was an indicator of the supposedly wide chasm between Japanese and American cultural values.

“Japanese values,” as codified in *Kokutai no hongi*, cherished the nation as a family with the emperor as patriarch and designated social harmony, loyalty and filial piety, martial spirit (*bushidō*), self-effacement, and assimilation as the principal virtues. By contrast, “Americanism” designated any number of attributes that were by extension “not Japanese”: materialism, “worldly desires,” hedonism, corrupt Jewish capitalism and the “almighty dollar,” machines, individualism, the principle of balance of powers, and democracy. To make connections between these traits and jazz, wartime writers were able to draw on nearly two decades’ worth of Japanese and American “scholarship” on jazz—scholarship that described the music as sensual rather than spiritual, sexual rather than intellectual, debased rather than edifying, and the product of Jewish capitalism rather than the songs of oppressed peoples.

A comprehensive rationale for the record ban that drew on a number of these themes was published in the Home Ministry and the Information Bureau’s joint organ *Shūhō* [Weekly information]. The author, Kobayashi Hitoshi, argued that the record ban had been necessary to “sweep away” a music “that expressed the [American] national characteristics of frivolity, the supremacy of materialism, and the overwhelming sense of triviality.” The abolition of “vulgar, decadent, lascivious, noisy” jazz did not constitute the end of popular music but rather its “purification.” Other critics charged that Anglo-American music had nothing substantial to offer Japanese audiences, so why bother with it? Japan, besides having a “substantial musical tradi-
tion” of its own, was allied with the great “musical nations” of Italy and Germany and therefore could learn nothing from the “Anglo-Saxon nations, which have not really been blessed with a musical heritage.” Fortunately, our enemies America and England are not at all ‘exceptional countries’ when it comes to music, and thankfully, erasing Anglo-American music from this world will cause good musicians no pain.”

The “Light Music Revolution”

Wartime music writers expended not a little ink deprecating jazz as the aesthetically deficient music of a shallow, materialistic American society. But they poured still more effort into two much more positive, if more challenging, ventures: the creation of an indigenous music culture that would make the Japanese people forget jazz and, as a corollary, the definition of the proper role of music in wartime society. Virtually all commentators agreed that the creation of “a music culture that is stronger than that of Anglo-America” was necessary “in order to fight America and England with our own music.” There were a number of suggestions about how to go about this project, but there was virtual unanimity on one point: The modernization of traditional Japanese music would not suffice. Commentators recognized that traditional music (referred to as hōgaku or gagaku) did not capture or inspire the popular imagination, nor did it elicit much in the way of fighting spirit. Military songs and healthy light music, regardless of their origins in Western musical forms, were regarded as the most effective types of music for moving the masses, so to speak, and therefore required substantial creative attention from native musicians, lyricists, and composers. Of course, a number of music writers maintained aesthetic preferences for the European classics (especially those of Germany and Italy), but even they conceded that most people were not familiar with classical music and therefore required a vernacular music that edified and inspired them. For many, domestically produced light music was the vehicle with the most potential. Jazz pianist Wada Hajime spoke for many when he stated, “Composers should effectively use the popularity of light music and create a splendid people’s music for Japanese.”

According to NHK’s vice president in charge of music, Maruyama Tet-
suo, it was important to distinguish between American jazz, with its “saccharine melodies and decadent lyrics,” and Japanese light music, which was “pretty and rhythmical.” “I think there’s a problem with saying that everything about jazz is bad,” he said, adding, “I think it’s necessary to erect clear limits between American-style jazz and the light music that is performed in Japan.” In contrast to jazz, which he dubbed a “fanatical music” used by “Jewish capital” to “manipulate the Japanese people,” Maruyama glibly defined “light music” as “music that one can enjoy listening to lightly.” While this definition did little justice to the difficult and highly subjective task of distinguishing light music from jazz, Maruyama’s basic point was that American jazz was the enemy and that domestically produced light music by definition lacked jazz’s defects.

In essence, the “light-music revolution” that was deemed essential to the viability of wartime culture was an officially sanctioned continuation of the late 1930s effort to create a Japanese jazz and therefore marked the expansion of the Japanese jazz project within the jazz community. By the 1940s, the creation of a Japanese jazz was considered a duty by the authorities and a safe way to continue working by musicians. As the war progressed, native composers were increasingly admonished to “write pieces with Japanese feeling.” Japanese jazz, under the rubric “light music,” seemed to be the wave of the future.

Music As a Weapon

Not only was a “light music revolution” necessary, but the proper role of popular music in wartime society required rethinking as well. Music writers advocated substantial changes in the ways that music was presented, performed, sold, bought, and appreciated. Many believed that music should be a form of public service that consoled the people who made daily sacrifices for the war and that inspired them to greater productivity and patriotism. But on a deeper level, these writers were challenging social structures that marginalize music and art and derogate them into mere appendages rather than integral parts of a whole society. In modern capitalist societies, music is considered a product or a diversion, not “a profound social issue . . . to be judged with solemn gravity.” In contrast, wartime Japan, the USSR, fascist
Italy, and Nazi Germany actively constructed political and social ideologies in which art played an indispensable role in the education, indoctrination, socialization, and morale of citizens. In authoritarian societies, art can never afford to be irrelevant; it is not a “luxury or pastime, a pleasant embellishment of life,” Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt wrote, but rather a “vital part of the very nerve center of the social organism,” which must be used “to integrate every single individual into the fabric of the state.” Art in these societies could never afford to be irrelevant; so-called passive entertainment had no place. Such theories of art, often dubbed “instrumentalist,” “deny the primacy of form” and regard art as an “apparatus that can be ‘taken over’ by groups or classes and used to communicate new agendas.” In the case of wartime Japan, the form to be conquered and redirected was jazz. With a little tinkering, musicians and music writers argued, jazz, which had already demonstrated its hold on the masses, could be infused with the appropriate ideological and “spiritual” agendas and used to enlighten and mobilize the masses.

The wartime Japanese music community could look to other artistic communities for models of aesthetic contributions to the war effort. Visual artists painted war scenes or countless views of Mt. Fuji and “rising suns.” The Literary Patriotic Association sponsored the collection and publication of patriotic poems, while member writers produced a steady stream of best-selling war novels. The motion picture industry, which “had never developed a war genre” prior to the late 1930s, produced films that celebrated “purity” of character and Japan’s victimization within the cutthroat international environment. A ballet company produced a “Decisive Aerial Warfare Ballet” as “an artistic contribution to the national drive for heightening the air consciousness of the people.” Music writers exhorted composers and musicians to make similar efforts, citing the special power of music to inspire and move the people. They insisted that the arts should be an integral part of the daily struggles of wartime life and could, moreover, contribute to a decisive military and cultural victory over Anglo-American civilization.

To achieve such victory, people in the music world had to “make music into a weapon.” The first issue of the periodical Ongaku bunka [Music culture], published in December 1943, attempted to outline ways to do so, by
suggesting changes in the content, purpose, and performance of music that would integrate art into wartime society.78 One author urged that composers and musicians had not only to rid their art of contaminating Anglo-American elements but to study Japanese folk-song forms and incorporate them into a new, creative art that promoted a “sense of commonality among the people.”79 Ongaku bunka editor Horiuchi Keizō expressed the need for greater consolidation in the music world. He celebrated the newly simplified structure of the music-information press, advocated standardization of an appropriate repertoire, and admonished bands to join the Japan Music Culture Association or “cease” their operations.80 In another column, musicians and music writers offered their suggestions on “how music could be used to destroy America and England.”81 With its faith in the ability of music to advance Japanese unity and national priorities, the music community marched into battle alongside other artists and writers who viewed the arts as a crucial weapon in the culture war against America.

“Jazz for the Country’s Sake”

The irony of using American music to fight America was not lost on some Japanese. Before embarking on a suicide mission to the South Sea Islands, a twenty-three-year-old kamikaze pilot, Oikawa Hajime, wrote the customary letter of farewell, in which he remarked, “Who do you think I am; a fool who has come to realize how dear this thing life is only three days before my death? A rainy day gives me another day of survival today—a bonanza... My co-pilot is sound asleep beside me. Could this silly face of his be the face of a war-god tomorrow? How funny to listen to jazz music on the night before going out to kill the jazzy Americans! How funny, too, is the servant who just came up to me to ask how many beds he should make tomorrow!”82 Even in the military, jazz was not far out of earshot. Some of it was of the illegal variety, emanating from hidden record collections or 78s obtained on the black market;83 some of it was provided by the officially sanctioned and ubiquitous “comfort tours” that entertained troops, sailors, and munitions workers throughout Japan and its empire.84 Work in such tours and in attraction bands kept a number of Japan’s best-known musicians employed in service to their country. Entrusted with raising the
morale of soldiers abroad and the people at home, bands such as the Shōchiku Light Music Orchestra and NHK’s New Order Rhythm Orchestra were considered to be crucial to the war effort.\textsuperscript{85} And, as Awaya Noriko’s tussle on the Ginza illustrates, some jazz musicians were hardly shy to cite their “service to the country” to deflect criticism.

In addition to performing for troops and workers in the war industries, some musicians served the cause by participating in the music industry’s patriotic associations. As experts in the “enemy’s music,” jazz writers Horiouchi Keizō and Nomura Kōichi and musicians Hattori Ryōichi, Raymond Hattori, and Kami Kyōsuke were among those who helped shape government policy regarding jazz. Their expertise was essential to determine what songs were of Anglo-American origin and design measures to banish them. In the postwar period, participants on such committees have not been forthcoming with information about their activities. What we do have is a substantial amount of information regarding sedition. For instance, Hattori related a story about how he performed “Tiger Rag,” one of the tunes that appeared on the banned song list that he had a hand in drawing up. As staff arranger for NHK’s \textit{Light Music Hour} program, Hattori slipped the New Orleans standard in with a program of German and Italian music. When asked, “Isn’t that American jazz?” Hattori allegedly replied, “No, this is a courageous Malayan song about tiger hunting. If you listen you’ll realize that there are a lot of sounds that resemble a tiger’s roar. I think it’s perfect for this time of crisis.”\textsuperscript{86} If the story is true, Hattori subverted policies that he himself helped to design; but the reader would not realize this irony from reading his autobiography because his personal involvement in the policymaking area is not mentioned, while his clever sedition receives ample treatment.

If the role of jazz people in wartime music policy making remains obscure, the literature on one aspect of the jazz community’s cooperation in the war effort has gotten a comparatively great deal of publicity: the participation of jazz musicians in the so-called strategic broadcasts to the enemy (\textit{taiteki bōryaku hōsō}) that were conducted by NHK. Since well before the war, NHK had developed a number of clumsily produced and ineffective foreign-language shortwave broadcasts under the joint aegis of the Foreign Ministry, the Information Bureau, and the army. In late 1942, following the
devastating loss at Midway, a few Allied prisoners of war with radio experience were drafted to produce better broadcasts.87 Previous programs had concentrated on false news reports about invented Japanese victories and Allied defeats, but with the inauguration of the Zero Hour program on 1 March 1943, NHK began incorporating recorded and, later, live music of American pedigree into their propaganda broadcasts, with the aim of demoralizing Allied troops.

American popular music and jazz was interspersed with suggestive comments from female announcers, such as “Wouldn’t you California boys like to be at Coconut Grove tonight with your best girl? You have plenty of Coconut Groves, but no girlies” or “I wonder who your wives and girl friends are out with tonight. Maybe with a 4F or a war plant worker making big money while you are out here fighting and knowing you can’t succeed.”88 The commentary was more entertaining than demoralizing to Allied troops, but the music kept them tuning in to shows such as Zero Hour, Humanity Calls, The Postwar Call, and Australian Hour throughout the last two years of the war. Nakazawa Mayomi writes that jazz was the “bait” to draw American attention.89

The production of records fell off in the latter stages of the war, and in 1944, live performances became the preferred way of transmitting “jazz for the sake of the country.”90 Top jazz musicians from the Columbia Jazz Band and the Shōchiku Light Music Orchestra formed one band that performed on Sunday afternoons on the Sunday Promenade Concert, and the New Order Rhythm Orchestra organized by jazz critic Nogawa Kōbun performed for other broadcasts. Moriyama Hisashi (who renounced his American citizenship during the war), Tib Kamayatsu, and other Japanese Americans were enlisted to sing and rewrite the lyrics of popular tunes to mock the Allies and undermine their will to fight.91 Since the live broadcasts were shortwave and Japanese were forbidden to listen to shortwave radio, theoretically there was little danger that a domestic audience would be corrupted by the malignant transmissions. The Allied soldiers loved them, though, and after the war, members of the NHK propaganda bands enjoyed preferential treatment when Japanese musicians were hired to perform for U.S. Occupation troops.

Much is made of the irony that the NHK studio was the only place
where Japanese could legally play jazz. But given the dominant conceptions of jazz as a music capable of corrupting its listeners, those who argued for the use of jazz as a weapon to weaken Allied resolve were at least theoretically consistent. If jazz was the ultimate example of American depravity, it stood to reason that Japan could contribute to America’s degradation by inundating enemy troops with jazz. Regardless of the intent, however, apparently the easiest part of the NHK program was the recruitment of jazz musicians. When word about the job spread through the jazz community, a number of musicians offered to play “jazz for the sake of the country” for NHK. In their postwar reminiscences, jazz musicians who participated in the broadcasts have been characteristically glib, claiming that they just welcomed the chance to play jazz openly. “There was nothing we could do about war,” Conde has said. “We had nothing to do with the political aim of demoralizing enemy forces. We only wanted to do jazz.”

War’s End

By 1944, in response to the changing tide of the war in favor of the Allies, the various patriotic music organizations tried to make it harder for Japanese to play jazz. In April, the Japan Music Culture Association issued detailed guidelines for the instrumentation and sound of light-music orchestras to “rid light music of the stink of jazz.” A ban on jazz and Hawaiian-style band setups was instituted; the banjo, steel guitar, ukelele, and jazz percussion instruments were banned; the number of saxophones in a band was limited; the trumpet mute was outlawed; and the use of microphones in performance sites holding fewer than twenty-five hundred people was proscribed. It seemed to matter little, however, at a time when musical performances were increasingly rare in Japan anyway. Even the officially sanctioned Japanese popular songs, military songs, and marches became more noticeably despairing and “almost decadent” as military defeats accumulated and Allied fire bombings foretold a seemingly inevitable invasion of the homeland that promised to be bloody.

The war’s end in August 1945 inaugurated a period of chaotic uncertainty in the late summer and early fall, but people with an interest in jazz took hope when broadcasts of jazz and popular music resumed on NHK,
which had for years broadcast only military songs and German and Italian classics. On 23 September, the U.S. Armed Forces’ station WVTR (now FEN) began broadcasting jazz and American pop for the troops who came to Japan as part of the Allied Occupation. Moreover, with the beginning of the Occupation in the fall of 1945, jazz musicians experienced an unprecedented demand for their services that enabled many of them to maintain a standard of living well above the standards of the vast majority of Japanese throughout the rest of the decade.

**Evaluating the “Total Jazz Ban”**

It must be concluded that the Japanese state’s all-out war on jazz was only vaguely conceived at best and imperfectly executed. In this respect, the Japanese experience of jazz in the late 1930s and early 1940s mirrored that of the Soviet and German regimes of the same period, where jazz “proved far easier to denounce than to eradicate.” All of these authoritarian regimes simultaneously tried to evict jazz from their shores and de-Americanize it to serve national purposes. In every case, both efforts ultimately failed. The Japanese state made numerous pronouncements about eradicating jazz, relying on a mobilized populace more than on the police apparatus, and exhorted the jazz community to police itself and design its own professional standards for healthy popular music. Enforcement was left largely to self-restraint and fear of social censure. The jazz community was obviously unable to carry on as it had a decade earlier, but neither did it cease to exist.

The jazz community’s response to the state’s admonishments was a compromise approach: Jazz could remain in Japanese society, could even be made useful to the war effort, if it could be *made Japanese*. This strategy enabled the jazz community to carve out a constructive role for itself within the domestic New Order after nearly two decades of marginal status vis-à-vis the mainstream, a status that was due to jazz’s association with modernism, Americanism, and the supposedly frivolous, morally repugnant dance-hall culture. Of course, individual jazz musicians and aficionados demonstrated varying degrees of enthusiasm and effort in their new roles as cultural architects; but taken as a whole, the jazz community was active in defining a new national culture and its place therein. In their various guises
as music policy makers, soldiers and sailors, “comfort” bandspeople, and broadcasters of propaganda, jazz folk sketched out a musical compromise that appeased the authorities.

An Aesthetic Revolution?

As we have seen, jazz kept a toehold in wartime Japan, albeit in a contrived, cosmetically altered form called “light music,” essentially an officially sanctioned continuation of the “nativized” jazz of the late thirties. Light music was a compromise that neither the jazz community nor the state found wholly satisfactory but which provided a common ground whereon jazz musicians could continue working “for the sake of the country” with grudging state approval. Thus, the war brought to fruition the prewar effort to create a distinctive national style of jazz. By fusing Japanese folk material with acceptable ingredients from jazz in the time-honored tradition of the wakan-yōsai formula, the jazz community’s cultural architects envisaged a popular music that captivated the public the way jazz had and yet contained a “Japanese spirit.” Historians have tended to view the artistic products of this era with contempt, decrying light music as the consequence of unidirectional pressure from the state. But it is possible to conceive of wartime jazz in Japan in a more positive, if paradoxical, light: The crisis mentality of the authoritarian state and the flowering of cultural nationalism in the late thirties and early forties challenged Japanese musicians for the first time to “authenticate” or legitimize their jazz by an alternative standard rather than an American one. In so doing, they not only served the national purpose but remained true to the jazz aesthetic’s insistence on innovation.

The art of jazz makes excruciating demands of its artists. They must master the music that has preceded them, yet they are expected to carry the music forward into unexplored realms. Historically, Japanese jazz artists have been vilified for being overly derivative, and certainly there have been periods in which they have concentrated their collective efforts on merely duplicating the musical feats of their American heroes, with little thought to the possibility that their own contributions might have merit. At other historical moments—such as the war years or the post-Anpo (United States—
Japan Security Treaty) 1960s—the jazz community has responded to nativist intellectual and cultural trends by self-consciously striving for an imitable national style (often referred to as *Nihonteki jazu*) that is unique to Japan and only tangentially related to American styles. The coincidence of heightened nationalist sensitivities and creative self-assertiveness has ensured that innovative jazz concepts by individual Japanese artists, for better or worse, will be regarded as representative of a “Japanese jazz.” Those of us who live in Western democracies are usually loath to acknowledge the possible creativity or aesthetic worth of art produced in authoritarian or nationalistic societies (as if the Western democracies were strangers to nationalism and patriotic art). What the French aesthetician Jacques Maritain called “art for the social group” is “warped and bent to the service of a master who is not its only genuine master, namely the work, its true object, in the service of which it achieves its own inalienable freedom.” “Art for the social group,” Maritain concluded, “becomes, thus inevitably, propaganda art. . . . An artist who yields to this craving for regimentation fails by the same token in his gifts, in his calling and in his proper virtue.”

Arnold Perris describes this prejudice as it is applied to music:

To link the beloved art of music with the devices of deception and with the presentation of controlled information that intentionally misleads is distasteful. . . . The concept of a state which controls artists is also offensive to citizens of the Western democracies, who believe that the making of art should be left to artists, according to the principle of free speech, perhaps colored by the nineteenth-century view of the artist’s will as paramount and inviolable. We judge that extramusical controls must ultimately inhibit the work of the composer and diminish the quality of his work. Can an artistic mind function if it is bound to the strictures of a political ideology?

But, Perris argues, all composers (indeed, all artists) communicate ideological messages through their art; this does not necessarily lessen the music’s aesthetic value. Besides, to deem “authoritarian art” unworthy of history’s attention on the basis of aesthetic prejudice is to ignore valuable material that is potentially rich with information. Certainly most of the music that emanated from wartime Japanese society was insipid enough to confirm the
stereotype. But it would be a shame to allow such prejudice to blind us to Sugii Kōichi’s masterly jazz arrangements of Asian folk music, which coincided with and contributed to the diffusion of pan-Asian nationalism. There are both historical and aesthetic rewards in the study of this music and its context.

Societies embroiled in crisis, such as wartime Japan, are indeed repressive, but they can also be dynamic and remarkably creative. Social change occurs at dazzling speed; social groups that were previously mutually hostile achieve a degree of rapprochement and integration. The Pacific War offered two unprecedented opportunities to Japan’s jazz community: an opportunity to achieve a degree of social legitimacy and a chance to transform jazz itself, to create indigenous standards of “authenticity” that did not require an American referent. The degree to which they succeeded in either endeavor is debatable. Rhetorically, at least, musicians had an exalted status in wartime society as persons entrusted with cheering, edifying, and comforting a war-weary populace. But the fact that their mission was constantly reiterated in the music press indicates that they consistently failed to measure up to their responsibilities as defined by the authorities; moreover, the fact that increasingly detailed regulations were handed down throughout the war indicates compliance was grudging and inconsistent.

If real social legitimacy remained elusive for wartime jazz musicians, how effective were their efforts to transform jazz in a substantial way and to authenticate their music independently of American models? It is, of course, difficult to judge the music in the absence of a representative number of recordings. Recordings of wartime jazz have not fared well in the postwar period. They are practically never reissued (although the Paddle Wheel Records series *The Legendary Japanese Jazz Scene*, produced by Segawa Masahisa, plans a volume titled *Salon Music*); the consensus is that they will not sell well and are not worth the effort. They are stigmatized as the products of Japan’s lowest hour. But based on what is available, it is possible to speculate that there was a range of artistic hits and misses, with Sugii Kōichi’s King Salon Music Series representing the apex of wartime jazz and insipid propaganda such as Hattori Ryōichi’s “I Love Japan” representing the nadir. Certainly, those who adhere to formalist, musical definitions of “authentic jazz” — as a music characterized by improvisation,
swing, and blues tonalities—would argue that the music was transformed, that “light music” was not “jazz” at all. Yet light music actually differed little from the popular jazz songs of the previous decade: The clean arrangements, delicately accented rhythms, and minor role of improvisation that characterized popular music in 1930s America and Japan remained. The jazz of wartime Japan was only superficially different from music that was regarded at the time as legitimate jazz. It would be ahistorical to allow current definitions to obscure that fact.

Yet, at the time, Japanese composers and musicians were less concerned with authenticating their music as “jazz” than with authenticating it as “Japanese.” The attempt to create a musical fusion of jazz with traditional Japanese song forms was certainly not unique to wartime Japan; musicians around the world have reinvigorated the jazz idiom by incorporating indigenous instrumentation, techniques, and philosophies into their music. That does not mean, however, that the music then assumes a nationality. As we have seen, people tend to fabricate such categories as “African jazz,” “Japanese jazz,” “black jazz,” or “white jazz,” but these artificially staid categories are constantly invalidated by musicians of all colors who use their imaginations to reconfigure jazz’s boundaries. In jazz, the individual artist and listener destroy such fabrications on a regular basis.

What is most significant about the musical experiments of the wartime jazz community—more significant than their aesthetic merits or lack thereof—is the attempt to abrogate the referential aesthetic that held “American jazz” aloft as the exemplar simply to be emulated. Few musicians realized the promise of this new aesthetic, but the challenge to foster domestic creativity within the jazz idiom was a novel approach for an artistic community perennially preoccupied with the achievements of the American jazz masters.

But this new, self-referential “authenticity” was short-lived. With defeat at American hands came a much deeper sense of Japanese inadequacy in the realms of politics, economics, and culture, a feeling that was not conducive to creative self-assertion. After the war, jazz musicians were hired by the hundreds to entertain American troops who wanted to hear familiar sounds from home. Mastery of American models thus became crucial to Japanese musicians’ survival. Moreover, the stylistic (and, some would say, racial) rev-
olution in jazz, resulting in the music known as “bebop,” reinforced a sense of Japanese backwardness. The key to authentic jazz expression, it was argued, was to study and master the new American style and to create a cultural lifestyle analogous to that of the bebop “hipster” in Japan. Not until the late 1960s would a new generation of neonationalist jazz artists assert the need for a self-referential standard for authenticity and strive once more for the development of a national style.

The irony is that with the coming of democracy and new social freedoms in the postwar years, Japanese jazz musicians were not really “free” to be creative. Stifled not only by the demands of the “job” but also by a severe lack of confidence in their own technical faculties and authenticity as jazz artists, they spent the next two decades trying desperately to “catch up” to American jazz. When viewed from that perspective, the war years, a period that virtually all jazz musicians and fans remember as a “dark age,” probably held more creative promise than the so-called golden age that followed.

Notes

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6 See Michael H. Kater, Different Drummers: Jazz in the Culture of Nazi Germany (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); S. Frederick Starr, Red and Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet

7 I address the issue of “authenticity” more explicitly in “Can Japanese Sing the Blues? ‘Japanese Jazz’ and the Problem of Authenticity,” in Japan Pop: Writings on Japanese Popular Culture (tentative title), ed. Tim Craig (forthcoming).


9 John Dower writes: “To see ordinary Japanese in World War II as simultaneously victims and victimizers offends our conventional sense of morality, but is nonetheless an important step toward recognizing that the great war in Asia was a tragedy for everyone involved.” See John Dower, “Japanese Cinema Goes to War,” in Japan in War and Peace: Selected Essays (New York: The New Press, 1995), 51.


14 Horiuchi Keizō, “Jazz riyū,” Ongaku sekai, October 1929, 19. Horiuchi was the first Japanese to publish musical analyses of jazz music. His first essay on jazz stated that “a jazz band is an orchestra that makes noise. It is hardly related to music” (“Ragutaimu no kenkyū,” Ongaku kai, October 1920, 15). But by the mid-1920s he had come to appreciate jazz (of the “symphonic” variety à la Whiteman, at least). He went on to organize NHK’s first studio orchestra and translated lyrics for some of the earliest jazz songs.

15 Quoted in Hattori, Boku no ongaku jinsei, 140.

16 Yokoyama Taikan (1868–1958) is said to have painted more portraits of Mount Fuji than anyone else; he was a founding member of the Japan Patriotic Arts Association (Nihon Aikoku Bijutsu Kai). His nationalistic wartime paintings, however, are usually ignored in surveys of his work. See my “Nipponism in Japanese Painting, 1937–45,” Wittenberg Review


19 Ibid., 149.


22 These ostentatious displays of patriotism are detailed in newspaper accounts quoted in Uchida Koichi, Nihon no jazu shi: senzen, senso (Tokyo: Swing Journal, 1976), 134.

23 “Koyoi kagiri no steppu,” Tokyo Asahi shinbun, 1 November 1940, 7.

24 Nagai, Shakō dansu to Nihonjin, 160. “The Light of the Firefly” is a Japanese song that uses the melody from “Auld Lang Sync.”

25 Curiously, social dancing (to recorded music) continued at perhaps the most decadent “pleasure palaces” available in Japan, the chabuya of Yokohama’s Honmoku District, which remained open throughout most of the war. The chabuya’s apparent exemption is illustrative of the haphazard social-control measures enacted by the wartime state. See Yoshida Mamoru, “Daremo shiranai jazu shi (2),” Waseda Jazz 3 (June 1975): 14.

26 Chikai yori, February 1938, translated and cited in Hashikawa, “Civil Society’ Ideal,” 139.


30 “China Tāngo,” composed and arranged by Hattori Ryōichi, lyrics by Fujiura Kō, performed by Nakano Tadaharu (Nippon Columbia: 30202A, 1939).
31 Not incidentally, none of these patriotic songs are included in the supposedly definitive anthology Boku no ongaku jinsei (Nippon Columbia: CA-2740-2742, 1989).
32 Quoted in Nakazawa, “‘Dinah’ wa mō kikoenai,” 185.
34 Unless otherwise noted, all information on Sugii Kōichi’s life comes from Segawa Masahisa, “SP jidai no jazu,” liner notes, A History of King Jazz Recordings (King: KICJ 6001-6010, 1991), 40–41.
35 Eleven of Sugii Kōichi’s contributions to the King Salon Music Series have been reissued on the CD Pioneers of Japanese Jazz (King: KICJ 192, 1994). The day that Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, Sugii entered the hospital. He was thirty-six when he died in April 1942. Sano Tasuku recorded four more swing arrangements for the King Salon Music Series in 1942 before the project shut down.
37 “Bungei mo shindō: zen bunkamen no renraku ni noridasu,” Tokyo Asahi shinbun, 12 December 1940, 7; also quoted in Nakazawa, “‘Dinah’ wa mō kikoenai,” 183.
38 Ben-amí Shillony notes that membership in the Japan Literary Patriotic Association (founded in May 1942) was not obligatory, “but most of Japan’s 3,100 novelists, playwrights, critics, and poets chose to join in, either out of patriotism or out of fear that non-membership would damage their publication prospects.” See Shillony, Politics and Culture, 116.
40 A number of wartime thinkers publicly debated the relationship between Western science and Japanese spirit, both of which were deemed crucial to success in the conflict. As the only technologically modern nation in Asia, Japan aspired to scientific as well as spiritual leadership of Asia. But first, Japan had to repudiate a long-held value system that assumed the superiority of the West and instead “rediscover the modern elements inherent in her own tradition.” The belief in a “Japanese science” rooted in the “Imperial Way” was sometimes legitimized through the practice of attributing some inventions (such as the light bulb and
the telephone) to Japanese scientists! However, Ben-ami Shillony writes: “The vision of progress without Westernization remained attractive, but no one knew exactly how such a goal could be achieved.” See Shillony, Politics and Culture, 138–141.


42 Horiuchi Keizō, “Daitō sensō ni shō suru ongaku bunka no shinro,” Ongaku no tomo, January 1942, 10–11. Ongaku no tomo was the product of the September 1941 consolidation of three music magazines: Gekkan gakufu, Ongaku kurabu, and Ongaku sekai. In that same month, some twenty music periodicals were consolidated to a handful. The wartime consolidation of the press was ordered to save paper and to facilitate the control of information. The new music magazines’ editorial policies were based on the Cabinet Information Bureau’s policy that stated: “From now on, Japanese will not be allowed to perform the enemy’s works, whether they be pure music or light music” (quoted in Nakazawa, ‘‘Dinah’ wa mō kikoenai,” 188).


44 A transcript of the symposium’s proceedings is reprinted in Takeuchi Yoshimi, Kindai no chōkoku (Tokyo: Chikuma Sōsho 285, 1983); for Moroī’s original quotes, see pp. 38, 213. I quote the English translations in Minamoto Ryōen, “The Symposium on ‘Overcoming Modernity,’” trans. James Heisig, in Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School, and the Question of Nationalism, ed. James W. Heisig and John C. Maraldo (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1995), 208–209. Minamoto writes: “I find it surprising that readers of the symposium did not make more of [Moroī’s approach]. Perhaps the ideological lens through which they were filtering its contents was too thick for its subtleties.”

45 Quoted in Nakazawa, “‘Dinah’ wa mō kikoenai,” 188.

46 Tanaka Kazuo, quoted in ibid., 190–191. The SLMO personnel was Tanaka Kazuo (drums), Francisco “Kiko” Reyes (piano), Tsunoda Takashi (guitar), Raymond Conde (clarinet), Nanri Fumio (trumpet), Watanabe Hiroshi (tenor saxophone), and Shin’ya Isaburō (1910–1966) (bass).

47 Raymond Conde, interview with the author, Tokyo, Dai-ichi Hotel, 28 February 1995.

48 John Morris, Traveler from Tokyo (New York: Sheridan, 1944), 208.


51 “Machi kara mo ic kara mo Beiei ongaku wo issō: seiri onban, senjo shu wo shitei,” Mainichi shinbun, 14 January 1943, 3.

52 “Beiei ongaku ni tsuihō reti,” Tokyo Asahi shinbun, 14 January 1943, 3.


Reyes changed his name to Tazawa Yoshikazu, and Conde became Raymond Yoshiha. Another émigré Filipino jazzman, trombonist Teodoro D. Jansarin, refused to accept Japanese citizenship and was later arrested on suspicion of spying in 1944. He spent three months in incarceration in Yokohama. See Nakazawa, “‘Dinah’ wa mō kikoenai,” 190; and Uchida, *Nihon no jazu shi*, 138.


Maruyama Tetsuo and Wada Hajime, “Taidan: tekihei oni ongaku no seitai,” *Ongaku chishi*, December 1944, 12. Wada Hajime had played with Hatano Fukutaro, Ida Ichirō, and Awaya Noriko (whom he later married and divorced) before the war. In this article, he comments harshly on jazz, but he continued playing Japanese songs in a jazz manner throughout the war as a member of the NHK orchestra.

Ibid., 9–10.

68 Arnold Perris, Music As Propaganda: Art to Persuade, Art to Control (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985), 3. Regarding the issue of the functionality of music from a cross-cultural perspective, Bruno Nettl writes: “In the literate societies the function of aesthetic enjoyment ranks high, as does entertainment... Music as an activity that contributes to the integration of society appears highest in cultures ‘under siege,’ that is, confronted by imminent change as a result of forced contact with other cultures.” See Bruno Nettl, The Study of Ethnomusicology: Twenty-nine Issues and Concepts (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 151.
76 Quoted in Havens, Valley of Darkness, 149. The ballet premiered in March 1944.
78 Ongaku bunka was the product of a second round of consolidation in the music press, subsuming seven music periodicals to provide “correct leadership on the music front” and “contribute to the elevation of the music culture of Greater East Asia” (“Sōkan no hōkoku,” Ongaku bunka, December 1943, 1).
81 “Ikan ni shite ongaku wo Beiei gekimitsu ni yakutataseru,” Ongaku bunka, December 1943: 36–42.
83 Banned jazz records commanded prices ranging from ten yen to several hundred yen on the wartime black market (“Teki Beiei no Onban”). Serious collectors, such as Yoshida Mamoru, Kawano Ryūji, and Yui Shōichi, who still had thousands of SP records, lost tremendous investments, not to mention treasured memories, in the devastating air raids. See Kawano Ryūji, “Jazu hyōronka no wakaki hi no omoide,” Swing Journal, February 1959, 31.
Satō Kunio, “Ongaku goraku no gunjunsei,” Ongaku no tomo, March 1943, 56. Satō argued for bands in munitions factories because “it is clear that entertainment is linked to productivity” (56).


Hattori, Boku no ongaku jinsei, 199–200.

Australian Major Charles Hughes Cousens, U.S. Captain Ted Wallace Ince, and Philippines Lieutenant Norman Reyes were “hired” at salaries commensurate with their ranks to write scripts, select music, and broadcast the popular “Zero Hour” program. Although they were courted with rooms at the Daiichi Hotel and trips to the Yokohama chabuya, the three POWs remained discreetly intransigent, often sabotaging their own scripts to dupe their non-English speaking supervisors and egg the Allies on. See Masayo Duus, Tokyo Rose: Orphan of the Pacific, trans. Peter Duus (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1979), 74–76; and Ikeda Norizane, Hinomaru awa (Tokyo: Chūō Koronsha, 1979), 16–20. For a concise English-language account of NHK overseas transmissions, see Namikawa Ryō, “Overseas Broadcasting by Japan during World War II (Abridged),” in NHK senji kaigai hōso, ed. Kaigai Hōso Kenkyū Group (Tokyo: Hara Shōbō, 1982), 453–469.


Contrary to popular belief, there was no single “Tokyo Rose.” NHK had a number of Japanese American women in its employ who took turns behind the microphone on shows such as Zero Hour. Ironically, Iva Toguri d’Aquino, the woman who was tried and convicted of treason as Tokyo Rose, was one of the few Japanese Americans in Japan during the war who did not renounce her U.S. citizenship. She was given amnesty in 1977. See Duus, Tokyo Rose, 63; and Namikawa, “Overseas Broadcasting by Japan,” 461–463.

Nakazawa, “‘Dinah’ wa mō kikoenai,” 193.

Only two record companies were still active at war’s end, and the number of record stores in Japan plummeted from a prewar high of around four thousand to about five hundred stores during the war. See Ōmori, Nippon no yōgakku, 1:268; and Kurata, Nihon rekōdo bunka shi, 218.

Shibata Yoshi, the “jazz liaison” at NHK during the war, claimed that a British POW taken at Singapore was enlisted to rewrite the song lyrics (Uchida, Nihon no jazu shi, 151). Moriyama Hisashi, in a 1 August 1985 interview with Sidney Brown (for which I have the transcript), declined to comment on possible charges of treason brought against him by the Allies for his extensive participation in the broadcasts. Tib Kamayatsu was captured as a POW in China in 1945 and taught English to Chinese children. See George Yoshida, ed., Nikkei Music Makers: The Swing Era, National Japanese American Historical Society Calendar 7 (1995).

Nakazawa, “‘Dinah’ wa mō kikoenai,” 192; Mainichi Shinbunsha, Jazz of Japan ’82, 67.

Quoted in Macejima Susumu, “Still Jazzing It up after All These Years,” Asahi Evening News, 8 February 1995, 5.
94 “Keiongaku no gakki hensei tenkan,” Ongaku bunka, April 1944, 26. The new light-music policy, dubbed the “revolution in light music,” was reiterated by a study committee chaired by Horiuchi Keizô that met 10–11 May 1944. See “Keiongaku no kakumei,” 565.

95 “Kessen hijō sochi to ongaku,” Ongaku bunka, April 1944, 26.

96 Iritani, Group Psychology, 173.

97 Starr, Red and Hot, 175.


99 Perris, Music As Propaganda, 4.