

Key Tunes at the Heart of Japan's Jazz Age: Americanism and its Indigenization

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Abstract

The term Jazz Age became a slogan in part through Scott Fitzgerald's bestseller, *Tales of the Jazz Age* (1923), a collection of stories that contain a few passing references to burlesque bands and student dance parties at college. Since the term itself was inherently ambiguous, sounded nonsensical, "jazz" was able to evoke countless novel images taken out of their original context. In Japan, the 1923 Great Kantô Earthquake coincided with the rise of jazz and the coming of electric sound in popular culture—radio broadcasts (1925), electric recordings (1927-1928), imported talkie films (1929), and national talkie films (1930-1931). Jazz music did not always cause these socio-cultural transformations but was instantaneously associated with them. During the transient "Japanese jazz age," a number of emblematic songs crystalized the socio-cultural situation and captured the zeitgeist of popular feeling. These songs made an epoch not only by way of their excellent aesthetic and huge popularity but also in the process of their production and consumption, their cultural position and evaluation.

Keywords: Dôtonbori March, Ginza, Great Kantô Earthquake, *jazu songu*, jazz, *modan*, Tokyo March

Introduction

The term “Jazz Age” is misleading: the term does not refer to an age when jazz music as is conceived today was played. For its contemporaries, the concept of jazz was quite different, symbolized by the “King of Jazz,” Paul Whiteman. The term Jazz Age became a slogan in part through Scott Fitzgerald’s bestseller, *Tales of the Jazz Age* (1923), a collection of stories featuring the hedonistic lives of urban middle class. The stories, however, hardly mention jazz performance as that is documented in today’s standard jazz histories but instead contain a few passing references to burlesque bands and student dance parties at college. Since the term itself sounded nonsensical, bizarre or exotic (hence the many etymologic theories about its origins), “jazz” was able to evoke countless novel images taken out of their original context. Kathy Ogren, in her book *Jazz Revolution* (1989), asserts that Jazz became an “age” not only through enthusiastic performance but also through the abuses and misuses of this tantalizing word signifying exoticism and Africanism. By the end of the First World War, the concept of jazz could signify any previously unseen novelty in many parts of Europe. The wave reached Japan a few years later. Jazz music did not always cause these socio-cultural transformations but was instantaneously associated with or even short-circuited by them.

One of the characteristics of jazz culture was its quick (nearly instantaneous) diffusion and dominance out of the United States through the records and sheet music, the radio and mass journalism, and the sojourns of musicians and other travelers. In Europe, it symbolized the mood of post-war liberation and the fleeting pleasures of the new moment. Japan was hit by the jazz wave in the mid-1920s. Among the earliest references is one found in a New York report in 1922 by the composer Yamada Kôzaku.¹ Similar to his American counterparts, Yamada criticized jazz for being noisy and obscene. Arguably, however, it was only with the cultural transformation triggered by the Kantô Great Earthquake in 1923 that jazz became audible as part of a more general process of Americanization. Roughly speaking, “Americanization” became perceptible in the years of reconstruction. Although the disaster did not bring this about, it coincided accidentally with these global

cultural changes. After the calamity, American (and Filipino) bands began playing the syncopated music in metropolitan hotels, shows, and dance halls while the local musicians started learning from them. Jazz became the background sound of the restoration (meaning here, both the bands on stage and the noise of the rebuilding). But as previously suggested, the very concept of jazz was quite different in the 1920s from that of today. It signified “the ambience or mood of the decade.”² It is in this fuzzy aspect of the period from about 1927 or so that one may call Japan's Jazz Age, when the term “jazz” became so trendy that it was used (or perhaps, from today's point of view, abused) to signify any modern novelty from literature or life style to fashion and film. This article will analyze the features of the Japanese jazz culture in this period, exemplifying several hit melodies characteristic of the age not only in terms of their sales but also in terms of the specific social ambience that engendered them. These songs were often called “jazz song” (*jazu songu*), a neologism that broadly referred to any Western popular song or other song that evoked a mood of uplift. Some were covers of American and European numbers, while others were composed and recorded by local artists (many of the local-made jazz songs may not sound terribly jazzy to today's audiences).

The Jazz Age in Japan may be said to begin with the entrance of another Japanese neologism, *modan*, the loanword from “modern.” Written in *katakana* writing (which is mainly for loanwords), the word *modan* phonetically and visually represents something “non-Japanese” rather than referring specifically to the historical concept of modernity or “contemporaneity” (*kindai*); it underlines “modishly of the present.”³

While the word “jazz” (or *jazu*) is foreign to most, if not all, linguistic trees (hence the prevalence of often arbitrary etymological theories), the word *modan* results from a refusal of the more common or obvious translation (*kindai* or *gendai*, now). The majority of Japanese readers and speakers of the age would have been aware of the linguistic origins of *modan* in English and consequently this word, like *jazu*, would have had a strong American connotation. In its original context, the one thing that jazz did not imply was Americanism—the ensemble of imagination, discourse, language, ideology, and image associated with the Other from

the New Continent. Obviously, this is not what America really was but how it had come to be imagined, how it inspired a popular imagination aware of transpacific history. In this respect, jazz was an inherently fuzzy concept. To discuss the journey of the concept of “Americanism” to Japan, the idea of “associative or associated history” (as opposed to comparative history) proposed by the late historian Miriam Silverberg is still inspirational: “An associated history ... demands a respect for difference and a recognition of relationships and the complex workings of what we have too often simplified as ‘influence.’”⁴ The concept of influence broadly implies a one-way vector from A to B, while that of association refers to the concept of B incorporating A. Being a semi-onomatopoeic and a sound from the New World, “jazz” is associated with the outside through capitalist industry, reproductive technology, media, discourse, and other socio-political systems. This associative history will shed light on the commonality and the locality of Japanese jazz culture in the late 1920s.

Taylor Atkins’s study *Blue Nippon* (2001) offers a rich account of the jazz age in Japan. Discussing “the importation, assimilation, adaptation, and rejection of American popular culture,”⁵ Atkins mainly focuses on the identity crisis and the conflict between American music and the national consciousness inside the local jazz community of musicians and journalists, critics, and audiences. In contrast, I want to deal with the mass culture that emerged from this niche community.

“My Blue Heaven” and “Sing Me a Song of Araby”: Tin Pan Alley Comes to Japan

In many respects, the 1923 Great Kantô Earthquake represents the great divide in Japanese modern history. This calamity coincided with the rise of jazz and the coming of electric sound in popular culture—radio broadcasts (1925), electric recordings (1927-1928), imported talkie films (1929), and national talkie films (1930-1931). All of these inventions were technologically correlated with each other to establish a newly configured cultural industry, which itself formed part of a worldwide transformation. A crucial occurrence for the new industrial order in

postwar Japan was the establishment of the Columbia and Victor Talking Machine Company of Japan in 1927. American Columbia invested in, and then merged with, the Japanese labels after the late 1910s to form Japan Columbia. In contrast, Japan Victor was part of the globalizing strategy of the American headquarters of Victor.⁶ Japan Polydor (German capital) followed and two domestic labels—King Record (1930) and Teichiku Record (1932)—were then also founded. These five companies constituted the major labels, although numerous obscure labels were also operating as well.

The first songs that impressed the establishment of Japan Columbia and Victor were “My Blue Heaven” (George Whiting-Walter Donaldson) and “Sing Me a Song of Araby” (words and music by Fred Fisher). These two songs were released only a month apart in 1928 by Futamura Teiichi (1900-1948, duet with Amano Kimiyo on Columbia). Such a phenomenon—of the same coupling sung by the same singer, yet released by different labels almost simultaneously—was unique in the history of Japanese records. It demonstrates the popularity of the two songs, shows the way in which the two “American” labels were competing with each other, and finally illustrates that the contracts negotiated with the singers were not exclusive. Curiously enough, while “My Blues Heaven” remains known worldwide, “Sing Me a Song of Araby” is now virtually unknown. The sheet of this latter song was only recently discovered in Australia, a “melody ballad” from the MGM film *In the Garden of Allah* (1927).⁷ The sheet music of these and other “jazz songs” is supposed to have been imported by JOAK, the Tokyo National Radio Broadcast, probably through the mediation of Horiuchi Keizô, the radio station collaborator and music journalist who had lived in Boston and Ann Arbor in the middle of the 1920s as an engineering student.

The popularity of those songs is owed in part to Horiuchi's catchy translations. In “My Blues Heaven,” he succeeded in translating George Whiting's words on the sweetness of the home into colloquial Japanese. The following is the first verse of the original: “When whippoorwill-o calls, and evenin' is night / I hurry to my blue heaven... / A turn to the right, a little white light / Will lead you to my blue heaven....” Horiuchi avoids a literal translation due to the different syllabic structures but re-

narrates the longing for home of the young husband on his return from the workplace: “In the evening, I look up / Bright blue sky / The sun goes down, I walk along / An alley to my home / Small but pleasant home / Where turns on a light of love/ The longing house / Is my blue sky.” Since the Christian connotation of “heaven” cannot be translated literally, the translator chooses instead the simple word “sky.” He also deletes the symbolism in the original (“whippoorwill-o,” “fireplace,” “nest,” and “roses”) because of the economy of words (linguistic obligation) and audience intelligibility (his personal lyric-writing skills). He reduces two verses in the original to one, probably for memorability (a technique also seen in several Japanese covers of Tin Pan Alley songs after Horiuchi).

The most appealing phrase in the translation is the “small but pleasant home,” which approximately corresponds to the words “a cozy place, fireplace, cozy room” in the original. This phrase is often quoted as a symbol for sweet home in the newspapers and magazines. Bishop’s song, “Home Sweet Home,” published in a middle-school textbook in 1889, is well-known, and “My Blue Heaven” is its jazz version. Since the theme of “the home” does not belong to the traditional song topics in Japan, the word alone created a Western atmosphere. Because of the song’s modern style, Horiuchi’s translation suggests the new house of the office worker (“salaryman”) in the suburbs built after the Earthquake. Commuting was a new lifestyle for many households. The modest “smallness” of his house (which is not found in the original) matches the mood of a certain nihilist self-contention prevailing in the middle-class (similarly the related concept of the “small citizen” [*shōshimin*] or “petty-bourgeoisie,” which is a literal translation of petty + bourgeoisie, a reference to the ordinary urban folk).

“My Blue Heaven” and “Song of Araby” were the first Tin Pan Alley songs known nationally. None of the previous American melodies had had such a wide impact since the audiences were still limited to those who had access to the ballrooms, phonographs, Western shows and operettas or musical instruments. “My Blue Heaven” and “Song of Araby” widened accessibility because they were played on the radio, in the cinemas (the silent movies often played the phonograph of the title songs at particular moments), record shops, and other commercial

places. The media was becoming more plural than before, and it was the record companies that took the initiative to sell the music. In David Suisman's phrase, Tin Pan Alley was operated by a "balance ... between producer-planned consumption and consumer-influenced production, and ultimately between pleasure and coercion."⁸ Since the turn of the century, the American music publishers had invested unprecedented capital to sell their songs, establishing the commercial strategy known as "plugging." In an enlarging industry, they became more aggressive in selling their sheet music and records. After the Earthquake, Horiuchi went to a café in Shinjuku, Tokyo's new entertainment area to teach "My Blue Heaven" (and probably "Song of Araby" as well) to the waitresses. These young girls were among the most fashionable professional women and their singing (perhaps with phonographs) was believed to influence the sales of the records.

It is said that "Song of Araby" was preferred to "My Blue Heaven" since it was sung in a minor key, which is approximately compatible with a scale of *shamisen* music. But I add a second reason: Orientalism. The Oriental Tin Pan Alley tunes such as "Oriental Dance," "Kismet," and "Caravan" were played in the hotels, the dance halls, and the cinemas after the Earthquake and recorded by the Japanese and Filipino bands. It is supposed that they were first played for Western audiences whose mental atlas broadly categorized the half-hemisphere from Arabia to Japan as the "Orient" or the cultural other of the West. The travelers welcomed so much the "local color" that the local bands were asked to play these Oriental tunes. After the 1920s, some of these were arranged for mandolin, violin, and harmonica for the Japanese amateur musicians and audiences. The Oriental stereotype—the sheiks, deserts, caravans—were familiar to middle-class Japanese through Hollywood films such as *The Sheik of Arabia*.

One of those "Arabic" tunes, Grigory Lyuvovich Lyubomirsky's "Oriental Dance," was re-used by the composer Sassa Kôka (1886-1961) in the introduction to the national hit, "Longing for You" ["Kimi Koishi"]. This song was composed around 1926 and recorded by Futamura Teiichi in 1929 with a jazzy arrangement using a saxophone solo. Along with the adaptation of Arabic exoticism in the prelude, the number quotes "Home

Sweet Home” in the postlude which would recall “My Blue Heaven” to the minds of the listeners. In the 1920s and 1930s, this was one of the most “jazzy” hit songs composed by the Japanese.

“Dôtonbori March” and Other Marches

While “Kimi Koishi” developed an innovative melodic line from the borrowing of Orientalism, “Dôtonbori March” [“Dôtonbori Kôshinkyoku”] (1929), a hilarious symbol of the Jazz Age, indigenized jazz feeling by its unique use of the vernacular major scale. The melody itself has little to do with Americanism (or Orientalism) and sounds familiar to the ears of the public. The composer Shiojiri Seihachi once played piano on the Pacific Liner and worked with the Shôchiku-za Theater, a venue for foreign films and girls’ revues, in Dôtonbori, Osaka’s entertainment hub (the craze was accelerated after the Kantô Earthquake which had brought many “exiles” to the Osaka area). It was composed for the homonymous comedy by Nakai Yasutaka about the dream of a Dôtonbori waitress being courted by a millionaire duke.⁹ In the final scene, she realizes, on awakening, that she lives in a miserable apartment with a poor albeit sincere jazz pianist. Despite the stage setting of modern life, the narrative is old-fashioned. Like today’s TV comedies, it used fashionable items such as a “constructivist” set, the Charleston, radio broadcasts, cafés, and song. “Dôtonbori March” was played at least five times (including for the introduction and the ending) to create the upbeat mood of Dôtonbori. Before leaving the theatre, audiences would memorize it.

The word “march” (*kôshinkyoku*) conjures up a procession, the forward rhythmic movement of a collective, and therefore connotes moral uplift. At a certain point, the word “march” became a buzzword to designate positively modern life in general. It became, so to speak, an “eye-catcher” in the headlines, the titles of films, songs, plays, and fictions. For example, the titles of American comedies were arbitrarily translated as “marches” (ex. *Give and Take* into *Tin Can March* [*Kanzume Kôshinkyoku*], *Hold ‘Em Yale!* into *College March* [*Daigaku Kôshinkyoku*], and *The Big Pond* into *Chewing Gum March* [*Chûingamu Kôshinkyoku*]). The

demilitarized “march” came to denote “upbeat” or “modern” in a similar manner to “jazz.” The word “jazz” was also abused: “jazz literature,” “the jazz way of life,” “jazz fashion,” “jazz song,” and many other catchy headlines unrelated in any obvious way to American dance music. In many contexts, the two musical terms became almost interchangeable. Their importance lay in the evocative power of their updatedness.

“Dôtonbori March” was recorded by Utsumi Ichirô and accompanied by a Dixieland-like performance (by the Osaka-based Nittô Label). It has an improvisational solo and interplay and offers some guidance as to the technical level of Osaka jazz musicians.¹⁰ Such lively play was not succeeded by the following jazzy songs produced by the Tokyo-based major labels. The hymn for the pleasure area of Dôtonbori became so sensational that it was adapted by the silent film (using the phonograph) and its sequels. The first phrase, “Red lights, blue lights” (with lyrics by Hibi Shigejirô), became so faddish that in a colloquial turn of phrase (like “red light” in English) it came to symbolize the entertainment area in general. Another side effect of the popularity of “Dôtonbori March” was its alternate versions dedicated to other entertainment areas such as “Asakusa March” and “Ginza March” (there are probably other unrecorded parodies). There was also “Dôtonbori-Wandering March” [“Dôbura March”]. The recordings of *kaeuta*, or changing songs (with alternative lyrics to the same melody), were characteristics of previous popular songs by geisha and street singers. The “Dôtonbori March” family was one of the last cases of a “legitimate” recorded parody. One consequence was a flood of new “place-name marches” released between 1928 and 1931: “Osaka March,” “Kamata March,” “Gifu March” may be numbered in a much longer list. Deprived of their original military meaning, the “march” became a “tag” for the song just as “blues” and “rag” had been used in the titles of older Tin Pan Alley songs.¹¹ Many of them had one-step-like rhythm and cheerful references to dancing, cinema, café, and Americanized girls, all of which were compatible with the jazz image.

One of the place-name marches was “New Ginza March” [“Shin Ginza Kôshinkyoku”] (composed and written by Sassa Kôka, and recorded by Amano Kimiyo), a song which was released in 1928. The lyrics do not

mention Ginza itself but refer exclusively to the red automobiles, dance parties, and other pleasurable items associated with Americanism. Ginza was rebuilt as Tokyo's new commercial center after the Earthquake (hence "new" Ginza). The first song reference occurs in 1925, and over a hundred other songs were dedicated to it before the Second World War began. The jazzy intro of "New Ginza March" (probably borrowed from certain imported scores) is followed by an uncharacteristic Japanese-like melody. It seems to me that the two sections sound incongruent. The song's importance stems from its focus on post-Earthquake Ginza in the lyrics. Although the Earthquake totally levelled the area, Ginza revived quickly, changing its face from an elite district of import shops and Western restaurants to a middle-class consumer area. The "new Ginza" implied not only the change of landscape but also the economic and cultural dynamism behind the new buildings. Ginza became a façade of post-Earthquake Tokyo. It is not a coincidence that "Tokyo March" starts from Ginza.

"Tokyo March"

Among many "march songs" from 1928-31, "Tokyo March" ["Tokyo Kôshinkyoku"], released in June 1929 by Victor, was the most sensational and epoch-making.¹² It is said that between 250,000 and 400,000 copies were sold, one of the best-selling records before the war (though no truly reliable statistics are available). The sales were realized not only by its musical quality but also by the media "tie-ins" among the record company, the publisher and the film company. The composer Nakayama Shinpei (1887-1952), who started his career in the 1910s, was creative in making popular melodies using the pentatonic scales first applied to Meiji school songs (do-re-mi-sol-la-do). Unlike the composers of school songs (typically, the teachers in the music school), Shinpei did not hesitate to compose songs for the stage, for home education, for the recreational activities for factory workers, and for new folk dances. He was undoubtedly a pioneer of the Japanese modern popular song. The basic melodic structure of "Tokyo March" is not very different from that of his previous tunes, but the arrangement by Ida Ichirô (who also

arranged the Victor recordings of “My Blue Heaven,” “Song of Araby,” and “Longing for You”) did sound very fresh. The lively intro uses a very high register (unusual for previous popular songs) and features a trumpet and castanets, together with flute, piano, and a few strings. Such sound could give a “jazzy” impression to its audience. The record label describes the genre as “foxtrot,” although the piece is not necessarily designed for dancing.

Satô Chiyako (1897-1968) was one of the precursors of the conservatory-trained singers (mezzo soprano), singing mainly Japanese modern songs and graduated from the Tokyo Music School. The mainstream of this school, Japan's only national conservatory, had a strong European orientation, rejecting the national repertoire. However, Chiyako did not hesitate to sing Nakayama's new songs, both on the stage and in the studio. Since she could tangibly articulate the syllables, she was applauded by a wide audience. She was indeed the first female singer from a European musical background that Victor contracted with because she was Nakayama's favorite interpreter (later Victor contracted with Nakayama, too). Unlike the singers coming after her (mostly crooners and torch singers), she stuck to the *bel canto* style without exploiting the electronic effect of the microphone. In this sense, she might be called a pre-jazz singer of the transitional period.

The “jazzy” impression of “Tokyo March” owes much to the lyrics of Saijô Yaso (1892-1970). After having studied modern French literature in Paris (1924-1925), Saijô penned not only elite poesies for reading but also lyrics for singing. For over forty years, he was surprisingly versatile and productive both as a professor and literary critic and as a commercial lyricist. Saijô was one of the first lyricists who concluded exclusive contracts with the record labels. In the four verses of “Tokyo March,” he vividly illustrated the four romantic dramas in Tokyo's four “hot spots”—Ginza, Marunouchi (the business center), Asakusa (downtown), and Shinjuku (the new terminal station for the suburban railroads). The first verse starts with Ginza: “Nostalgic and old-timey willows in Ginza / Who knows that coquettish mature lady? / Dancing to jazz, staying up all night with liquor, / A dancer sheds tears at the dawn like falling rain.” As referenced in “New Ginza March,” after its total destruction by the

Earthquake, Ginza was reborn as a façade of modern life. The landscape was changed mainly due to the removal of the picturesque willow trees along the canals (the willows are metonymically associated with the “coquettish matured lady”). The main avenue of Ginza had a pavement (at the time something new for Japanese urban planning); and it became fashionable to stroll along it while watching the show windows of import boutiques and the well-dressed modern boys and girls.

Joyful, erotic and hedonistic references to Ginza are featured in “Song for the Latest Ginza” [“Tôsei Ginzabushi”], written and recorded by the same trio responsible for “Tokyo March” a year earlier. It was an encyclopedia of the latest Ginza fashion, mentioning the names of hairdos, night spots, Western actresses, and automobiles. It is much more snobbish than “Tokyo March.” Abounding with proper names explicitly expresses a contempt for the ignorant country bumpkins but the majority of conceited modern boys and girls were also from the countryside and therefore only superficially modern. Such double play was not always acceptable or even comprehensible to the general public, and in fact the song had only a limited success. In an interview published in *Yomiuri Shinbun* on August 4, 1929, the lyricist said “Tokyo March” was “a jazz-like caricature of the lecherous and luxurious life of the contemporary citizens of the capital dancing crazily under the irrationally inflated economy” (my emphasis). “Dancing to jazz” in the first verse is the only explicit reference to jazz, but the remaining verses describe the love affairs of the office workers in the Marunouchi Building (the first tall building in Japan, completed in 1923), the rush hour, the subway founded between Asakusa and Ueno in 1927 (the first in Japan), and the top-class film theater, the suburban train and the department store in the newly developing area of Shinjuku. These dramatic props represented a “jazz-like” culture for the general public.

Another importance of “Tokyo March” is the media “tie-in” mobilizing the entire cultural industry. Until then, some hit songs were born from the stage and recorded by actresses. Other songs were popularized by street singers and filmed only after considerable sales. The silent films playing hit records in specific scenes were usually called “ditty films” (*kouta eiga*), which were commercially successful

after the Earthquake until approximately the mid-1930s. However, in the process of making ditty films, the music publishers, the record companies and the film companies did not collaborate with each other. The film companies separately exploited the popularity of hit songs, and sometimes one song could produce several different films with the same title released in the same month. Film critics naturally disliked such gimmicks. "Tokyo March" altered this situation.

It was at first the title of a popular fiction by Kikuchi Kan, one of the best-selling novelists, serialized in *Kingu* (King), the "one-million-copies magazine," an icon for the new mass culture established in 1924, from June 1928 to October 1929.¹³ He might have chosen the term "march" because of its faddishness (starting a few months after *Dôtonbori March*). The story deals with a romance between an upper-class boy and a lower-class girl, later revealed to be half-brother and sister. His earnest effort to overcome their class difference ends in tragedy. The "class friction" is obvious, but the novelist did not develop the leftist idea (popular at that time) but told a predictable half-family plot. Jazz orchestras, dance halls, and other props characterize the upper-class life, but they are nothing but background for a formulaic romantic narrative. Looking at the keen reactions of the readers, Nikkatsu Film Production proposed a film version and commissioned Victor to write a theme song (the film version was completed prior to the ending of Kikuchi's novel so that they have different endings). Nikkatsu and Victor collaborated probably because the film was first planned as a talkie. Presumably Nikkatsu proposed the theme song to Victor in the early stage of production, but the project failed due to the unsuccessful synchronization of the image and the sound disc.¹⁴ The result was an ordinary "ditty film." Music, film, literature, and mass journalism were for the first time correlated on the basis of exclusive contracts to maximize the profits of each partner. The business model (a talkie with a theme song) was subsequently applied to a number of popular songs and finally to war propaganda. In this respect, "Tokyo March" anticipated the much more aggressive plugging controlled by the State.

Satô's record must have been played several times during the exhibition and in the interval in the film theaters as well as in the

cafés, music shops, and other public spaces. This constant rotation annoyed many intellectuals. As a result of its perceived vulgar lyrics about elopement when the national radio broadcast rejected the song, *Yomiuri Shinbun* published special articles both for and against the song by intellectuals from July to August 1929. The format of the open debate itself took constituted part of the global jazz culture,¹⁵ stimulating people's interest in the song. The nuanced conflict between elitism and populism was evident in the discourse surrounding the Jazz Age. Unintentionally, all the contributors joined in the hype and helped maximize record sales. In this regard, elitist denial had little affection on popular enthusiasm.

Conclusion

We have discussed the Japanese history of popular music in the transitional period of the 1920s. The Kantô Earthquake happened by chance to coincide with the worldwide American capitalization of the record industry, drastically changing the commercial basis of the entertainment industry. Not by chance, jazz became a global buzzword, and the American sound spread out through the new reproductive technologies. This new sound was broadly dubbed "jazz." Jazz thus became the first American musical icon to travel out of the United States and forcefully implied Americanism in many senses. Jazz signified the overall trend in the latest imported and indigenized popular culture. The Jazz Age was an age when the concept of jazz was multi-functional and therefore fuzzy.

The penetration of American capital in the music industry (symbolized by the establishment of Japan Victor and Japan Columbia) changed the relationship of the popular song with both industry and society. The companies not only facilitated the imports of Tin Pan Alley songs but also changed the industrial basis for selling sound. In other words, they brought about the phenomenon of strategic plugging, including the tie-in, copyright control, and sheet music publication. More explicitly than before, the songs became objects for consumption. This new economic and cultural orientation was also perceived as "jazz-like."

The “universalization” of jazz was necessarily tied in with its localization. The translation of American songs into each local language is an obvious instance of this. What is particular in the Japanese context is the idea that the uplifting feeling of jazz is closely connected with the notion of the “march.” This was applied not only to one-step or foxtrot rhythms but also to the newest mannerisms in general. Among the demilitarized marches, “Tokyo March” is particularly illustrative for its localization of jazz as both concept and perception. In the history of popular music, there are often emblematic songs that crystalize the socio-cultural situation as well as capture the zeitgeist of popular feeling. These songs made an epoch not only by way of their excellent aesthetic and huge popularity but also in the process of their production and consumption, their cultural position and evaluation. “Tokyo March” is one such song characterizing Japan’s exciting, if somewhat transient, Jazz Age.

Notes

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⁴ Miriam Silverberg, “Remembering Pearl Harbor, Forgetting Charlie Chaplin, and the Case of the Disappearing Western Woman: A Picture Story,” in *Formations of Colonial Modernity in East Asia*, ed. Tani E. Barlow (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 251.

⁵ E. Taylor Atkins, *Blue Nippon. Authenticating Jazz in Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 10

⁶ David Suisman, *Selling Sounds: The Commercial Revolution in American Music* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

⁷ Masahisa Segawa and Yoshio Ôtani, *The Birth of Japanese Jazz [Nihon Jazu no Tanjô]* (Tokyo: Seidosha, 2009), 11.

⁸ Suisman, 80.

⁹ Yoshitaka Nakai, “Dôtonbori March” [“Dôtonbori Kôshinkyoku”], *Dôtonbori*, January 1928, 100-11.

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¹⁴ Yôhei Nagato, *On Film Sound: Listening to Mizoguchi Kenji Films [Eiga Onkyô Ron: Mizoguchi Kenji Eiga wo Kiku]* (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobô, 2014); See also Sasô Tsutomu, *Mizoguchi Kenji Complete Works [Mizoguchi Kenji Zensakuhin Kaisetsu]*, vol. 6 (Tokyo: Kindai Bungeisha, 2009), 35-196.

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