

# **Jazz and Other Exoticisms in Prewar Popular Music of the U.S. and Japan**

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In studying the meanings of jazz through history and internationally, its relationship to exoticism is a crucial subject to consider. A casual look at the titles of pieces performed as “jazz” of some sort in the U.S. and Japan before World War II reveals a remarkable number of exotic references: “Song of India,” “The Japanese Sandman,” “Sing Me a Song of Araby,” and “Hot China,” to name but a few. Moreover, the fact that jazz traveled (in simple terms) first from black America to white America and then to Japan suggests that jazz itself might well have seemed exotic to both white Americans and to Japanese when they first encountered it.

This paper is a rough and preliminary exploration of a vast topic, namely the exoticism surrounding jazz in Japan and the U.S. in the 1920s and 30s, based on some theoretical ideas that I began developing in my doctoral dissertation.<sup>1</sup> I will begin with an introduction to those theoretical ideas.

## **Exoticism: Pleasure in the Foreign**

In much recent scholarship the term “exoticism” has been applied contemptuously to representations of the foreign of which the writer disapproves, and/or narrowly to Western representations of non-Western countries or cultures. I feel that a broader and more neutral definition is likely to be more useful, and I define exoticism simply as pleasure in the foreign, or as representations that evoke such pleasure. What is “foreign” depends upon the viewpoint of those who create or experience exoticism: it is what they feel or express as culturally or geographically distant, different, “not like home.” Exoticism in this sense is an aspect of

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<sup>1</sup> Pope 2003.

cultural experience and production that can appear in many different forms, with many different effects, wherever cultures come in contact with one another.

This paper deals with exotic music, which can be defined as music that gives pleasure partly through its association with concepts of the foreign, conveyed through music itself or through its surrounding symbols. I say "partly" because exoticism is rarely the only enjoyable thing about exotic music. I concur with Nattiez<sup>2</sup> that musical meaning includes two general types: intrinsic meaning, in which the relations among elements of musical sound (melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and timbral relations, for example) are experienced and enjoyed; and extrinsic meaning, in which musical elements, or whole pieces or genres, evoke an affective response or a concept of something not strictly musical, such as a person, a feeling (freedom, peace, love, excitement, sadness), a natural scene, or a time of day. Extrinsic meaning includes, for example, the emotional significations that are used in movie music, and to which viewers respond unconsciously. It also includes the musical signification of concepts of places or cultures. In general both kinds of meaning are involved when music is experienced as exotic: evocations of the foreign are imbedded within a flow of perceived intrinsic musical relations, which support and give shape to the pleasure of exoticism.

Foreign music is not necessarily pleasant, and therefore not necessarily exotic. The Italian missionary Father Jerom Merolla da Sorrento, for example, who traveled to Central Africa in 1682, found the music of a local instrument "like a little Gittar" to be pleasant enough, but described the music of a marimba ensemble as "harsh and ungrateful near at hand, the beating of so many Sticks causing a great Confusion."<sup>3</sup> The guitar-like instrument apparently resonated with Father Jerom's memories of similar instruments in Europe, making it somewhat enjoyable in spite of (or in part because of) its foreignness. But there was nothing in his European background like a marimba ensemble with its complex polyrhythms, and all he could hear in its music was "great Confusion." Unable to grasp the music's intrinsic relations, he found it chaotic, in-

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<sup>2</sup> Nattiez 1990, pp. 115-18.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Harrison 1973, p. 96.

comprehensible and unpleasant—a response that we can call “anti-exotic.” Many other Europeans who heard African music for the first time no doubt had similar experiences.

Today, on the other hand, as part of the exoticism known as “world music,” contemporary African music enjoys some popularity among native Europeans (as well as among European Americans and Japanese). What has happened in the intervening hundred odd years is that the musical styles and sensibilities of Africans and Europeans have moved closer together, through the influence of European music in Africa, and especially the influence in both continents of African American genres exported from the U.S. Both Africans and Europeans could generally understand these African American genres at the intrinsic level, while hearing in them attractive elements of the exotic. Through African American music Europeans became more attuned to polyrhythm, while the rhythms, harmonies, and instrumentation of African popular music moved closer to those commonly heard in Europe and the U.S. Eventually, with some help from the marketers of world music, European listeners could find new African genres just foreign enough to be exotically interesting.

As this example suggests, the pleasure of exoticism requires not foreignness alone, but a balance between the foreign and the familiar, with familiar elements providing a reassuring base from which foreign elements can be enjoyed. These foreign elements can be thought of as exotic signifiers, which evoke concepts of foreign places together with associated feelings as part of a total aesthetic experience. Domestic culture producers often use exotic signifiers to add exotic touches to an otherwise familiar product. An exotic signifier points to the foreign and its alluring element of the unknown, but the signifier itself may become familiar through repeated appearances in familiar frameworks.

Exotic signifiers that appear in music and its immediate context can include, for example, melodic phrases, rhythmic patterns or grooves, vocal timbre and ornamentation, the sounds or images of musical instruments, lyrics of songs and the images they evoke, the language of lyrics, pictures on covers of recordings or sheet music, and images associated with music in films. Some signifiers may represent a specific place: the ukulele (as word, visual image, or sound) represents Hawaii to most

people in both Japan and the U.S., and the *sanshin* 三線 signifies Okinawa to most people in Japan. Other signifiers may be generalized to some degree, that is, they may convey a general exotic feeling rather than the concept of a specific place. For example, the sound of a double-reed wind instrument (usually an oboe) playing a minor-key melody has been widely used as a general Asian /Middle Eastern exotic effect. The steady beat of a low-pitched drum has often been used as a signifier of "primitive" exoticism, applied to images of Africans, Native Americans, or Pacific islanders. Such general exotic signifiers are often added for extra effect to pieces in which the specific foreign object is clearly identified by the title, lyrics, associated visual images, and/or specific exotic signifiers.

The ideal exotic balance between foreignness and familiarity varies among individuals and contexts, and it also changes over time at both individual and collective levels. As people enjoy and create exoticism, foreign elements are gradually familiarized in various ways: in some cases they become fixed exotic signifiers that retain their potency for a very long time; in other cases they eventually lose their exotic associations, becoming "neutral" elements to be enjoyed for their intrinsic properties or non-exotic associations; in still other cases they remain fixed as exotic signifiers, but lose their effectiveness through overuse (and may become objects of satire). As a result the search for exotic pleasure often requires the introduction of new foreign elements, which in turn become familiar and may lose their exotic effect over time. Exoticism thus gives rise to a dynamic process: as it becomes familiar it changes the experiential context for its own reception, and thus prepares the way for new waves of exoticism.

Exoticism and anti-exoticism interact in complex ways with ideological views of foreign places and peoples; they also interact with the realities of those places and peoples, and with their relationships to the producers and consumers of exoticism. The threatening sound of African music to whites in colonial America, for example, resulted not only from their incomprehension of the music at the intrinsic level, but also (in some cases) from their belief that it was associated with devil worship, and (in other cases) from their fear of slave rebellions. The recent popularity of African music in Europe, similarly, is due not only to increased



familiarity and increased similarity between African and European musics, but also to the spread of more positive ideological views of African culture among Europeans, and to the commercial promotion of African music in Europe. Factors of ideology and reality can thus either facilitate or hinder exoticism, and can tip the balance between exotic and anti-exotic experience, at the level of a society or an individual.

This is not to say, however, that exoticism is simply a manifestation or a tool of ideology, as some might call it. Similar exotic feelings can coexist with very different ideologies: a European's pleasure in African music, for example, could be associated with a respectful understanding of the sophistication of African cultures, or with a racist belief that Africans have a "natural" talent for music but for nothing else. Conversely, the same or very similar ideologies can be associated with both exotic and anti-exotic feelings. In the 1920s, for example, both proponents and opponents of jazz talked about it as a release from reason and from the rules of civilized society, while implicitly or explicitly associating jazz with Africa; the ideological difference lay only in whether they viewed such a release as a good or a bad thing, which in turn may well have depended on the pleasure or displeasure of their first experiences listening to jazz. There is no simple relationship between exoticism and ideology: they are two different things that can coexist, influence, reinforce or obstruct one another in a variety of ways.

Although it is often said that exoticism has no relation to reality, the relationships are in fact many and complex. Pleasure in the foreign is often, although not always, connected to some real interaction, direct or indirect, between people of different cultures. Exotic signifiers, moreover, often have some real relationship to the places they signify. The "primitive" drumbeat has no relationship to real African music, but the ukulele is a real Hawaiian instrument as well as an exotic signifier of Hawaii. The makers of a movie about Africa may use a simple drumbeat if they believe that their audience knows little about African music, and want to convey an impression of Africans as primitive people; but they are likely to use real African music (or something like it) if they believe that many in their audience have some familiarity with that music. Producers of exoticism take into account the realities of the places they represent, as well as the knowledge and ideologies of their audience; and

their products both influence and are influenced by real relationships of power and economics between groups of people.

With these considerations in mind, I would like to look at how jazz and related genres of popular music functioned as exoticism in the U.S. and Japan during the 1920s and 1930s. My aim is not to give a complete picture but to draw an outline of the topic, using selected examples to suggest how and why exoticisms in the two countries took on the forms and meanings they did.

## **International Media: Social Dance and Sheet Music**

The period between the two world wars was a golden age of musical exoticism in both the U.S. and Japan. One reason may have been the emergence of “modern life” and its discontents in both countries. Thanks to high-speed trains, automobiles, airplanes, telephones, telegraphs, radios, and other technological innovations, the pace of life was rapidly increasing, along with the volume of information and the level of noise, especially in urban areas. At the same time work was becoming more standardized and mechanized, perhaps leading to increases in both stress and boredom. Dance halls, cafes, cabarets, and night clubs, often featuring exotic atmospheres or exotic shows, emerged as places of escape from the stresses of daily life. People’s desire to escape, however superficially and temporarily, to an imagined other world that was more relaxing or more exciting or more romantic, stimulated the demand for exoticism in all its forms.

On the supply side, the rapid spread of exoticism was made possible by social and technological media through which exotic products could easily be moved internationally and marketed to people of various countries in familiar formats. Social dance, sheet music, records, and movies were media shared by Japan and the U.S. during the 1920s and 30s, through which musical genres and elements could be introduced and made exotic through association with visual or verbal symbols. These media provided consumers with a familiar and secure social context and structure (dance hall, cinema, the piano or the record player at home) from which to enjoy exotic adventures. They also provided them with verbal and visual information (lyrics, titles, pictures on lyric cards or

sheet music covers, movie images, the décor of a dance hall or the appearance and dress of the dance band) through which to learn the meanings of exotic musical signifiers.

One of those media, social dance, was changing from an upper-class pastime to a popular leisure activity in the U.S. and Europe around the end of the nineteenth century. New trends in social dance were spread internationally through the movements of dance teachers and enthusiasts, as well as through a commercial structure involving dance schools, lessons, and the distribution of dance manuals. All this was made possible by the increasing speed and ease of international transportation. Social dance began to acquire an exotic flavor, especially with the arrival of the tango, which might be called the first great exoticism of the twentieth century. From Argentina it was taken up in Europe, and in 1913 it was brought to the U.S. by Vernon and Irene Castle. The Castles' performances initiated a nationwide tango boom, and tango schools were soon operating all across the U.S.<sup>4</sup> Later, in the 1920s, when social dance was taking hold in Japan, tango was introduced there as well by Japanese returning from Europe. Competing British and French styles of tango were propagated in Japan through their respective groups of enthusiasts, teachers, and dance manuals.<sup>5</sup>

Tango was thus an imported exoticism in both Japan and the U.S.: it had been formulated in Europe as a dance and music style signifying Argentina in particular, or exotic and passionate places in general, and in this exoticized form it was brought to both countries. Upon arrival, however, its meaning shifted somewhat: without losing its association with Argentina, tango also came to signify European elegance and sophistication in both the U.S. and Japan. As sometimes happens with imported exoticism, the signified came to include the place from which the signifier was exported, as well as the place it originally signified.

Another international medium for exoticism was sheet music.<sup>6</sup> Booklets with an attractive picture on the cover, song lyrics, and written

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<sup>4</sup> Roberts 1979, pp. 44-45.

<sup>5</sup> Hosokawa 1995, pp. 298-302.

<sup>6</sup> For Library of Congress collections of U.S. sheet music, see <http://rs5.loc.gov/>.

music for instrumental accompaniment were the mainstay of the American music industry from the late nineteenth century until the 1920s, when record sales finally surpassed sheet music sales. The sheet music industry was supported by vaudeville variety theater, where popular singers sang the latest songs, inspiring audience members to buy the music and play the songs at home. Often the sheet music cover included a picture of the vaudeville singer who had made the song famous. Inexpensive upright pianos became a standard feature in middle-class homes of the late nineteenth century, usually played by the women of the household as family and friends gathered around to sing. Many of these songs had exotic themes: Mexico, plantations of the old South (a blend of exoticism and nostalgia), Hawaii, Cuba, China, and many other places. The exotic place and/or person was usually shown on the cover as well as identified in the title and rhapsodized in the lyrics. The music to these songs was usually in the mainstream American popular style of the time, derived mostly from English and Irish music, but might include one or two exotic signifiers with some relation to actual music of the places depicted, such as a habanera rhythm for a song about Cuba or a pentatonic melody for one about China.

American sheet music was also brought to Japan, and had a profound impact on the development of Japanese popular music. This was an active process on the part of Japanese musicians: Hattori Ryōichi 服部良一 and Horiuchi Keizō 堀内敬三 both obtained sheet music by mail order from the U.S., rather than simply taking what was available in Japan. Hattori also recalls getting sheet music from musicians on passenger ships, and going to silent movie theaters, where he borrowed the scores that accompanied imported films and transcribed them himself.<sup>7</sup>

## International Media: Movies and Records

In addition to the relatively “low-tech” media of social dance and sheet music, modern technology was providing new ways in which exoticism could be put into packages, exported, and sold. Silent movies were one important and powerful medium for spreading musical exoticism.

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<sup>7</sup> Hattori 1993, pp. 65-66 and Mitsui 2005, p. 30.

They were accompanied by live musicians who had to play appropriate music for each exotic scene, using the sheet music that accompanied some movies or books of standard accompaniments for various types of scenes. Audiences who heard this music in the movie theater learned to associate certain musical sounds with images of various countries (as opera and vaudeville audiences had learned to make similar associations in the past). Many cinema musicians later went on to other kinds of musical activity (especially after the arrival of sound films), taking their exotic musical knowledge with them. Notable exotic silent films included *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (1921), featuring Rudolph Valentino as an Argentine gaucho who, in one famous scene, dances the tango; and *The Sheik* (1921), also starring Valentino, this time as an Arab sheik who kidnaps an American woman in the movie version of Edith Hull's popular novel. The former ensured that the tango's Argentine origins would not be forgotten, and gave audiences an erotic and exotic male image to associate with it. The latter (followed a few years later by *The Son of the Sheik*) was one manifestation of the Arab-exoticism popular in this period, a trend that also included numerous popular songs in both the U.S. and Japan.

Both of these movies were released in the U.S. in 1921, and in Japan the following year. Exotic film images and their musical accompaniments traveled quickly from the U.S. and Europe to Japan, where Japanese audiences and musicians absorbed and reworked them. As mentioned above, composer Hattori Ryōichi recalled visiting silent movie theaters during the 1910s and 1920s to copy their sheet music for later study. Sound movies appeared in the late 1920s, ending the era of live cinema musicians as exotic music specialists. But film studios brought a wider range of resources to exotic film music, and produced refined packages of sound and image that were delivered in identical form to audiences everywhere. Like silent films, many of them were transmitted from the U.S. to Japan within one or two years.

The other great "high-tech" international medium for musical exoticism was phonograph records. Records were an international industry from the first decade of the twentieth century, and Western records were being sold in Japan from that time. In the late 1920s three international record companies, Columbia, Victor, and Polydor, established Japanese

branches and were soon producing over ten million records each year. Among these were many recordings of songs with exotic themes, including exotic songs made in the U.S. and re-recorded by Japanese singers, which became sources of exotic signifiers for Japanese listeners and musicians. The song that started the rumba boom of the 1930s, "El Manisero" (The Peanut Vendor) is a typical example: recorded and released in the U.S. by Don Aspiazu's orchestra in 1930, it became a huge hit and was soon exported to Japan; in 1933 it was recorded there by Japanese-American singer Kawabata Fumiko, with lyrics in both Japanese and English. The Japanese title "Kyūba no mameuri" (キューバの豆売り, "The Bean Vendor of Cuba") ensured that the exotic topic was clear to all. Rumba in Japan did not achieve the same popularity as in the U.S., but the clavé rhythm (the "key" to the polyrhythmic texture of rumba) became an exotic signifier that appeared later in other exotic songs.

The various media interacted, mutually reinforcing and stimulating one another. Vaudeville singers in the U.S. popularized, through their stage performances, songs that were sold as sheet music or records, which in turn advertised the vaudeville singer whose picture was on the sheet music cover. Hit songs were made into movies, and songs made for movies became hits. Social dancers danced at home to the sound of gramophone records, and the records obligingly had the type of dance, such as "tango" or "foxtrot," printed on the label.

Thanks to these various high- and low-tech media, a thriving international commerce in exoticism had developed by the 1920s, and in particular musical exoticisms were moving easily between Europe and the U.S., and from the U.S. and Europe to Japan. As a result genres such as tango and rumba, although popular in the U.S. and Japan to different degrees and at somewhat different periods, appeared with similar exotic associations in both countries. There was one major exotic genre that loomed over the rest, however, and that was jazz. Not only did jazz itself often function as exoticism in both the U.S. and in Japan, but as jazz became increasingly familiar it also served as a medium through which other exoticisms were incorporated into popular music. In the sections that follow I examine some of the ways in which jazz was presented and experienced as exoticism, first in the U.S. and then in Japan.



## Jazz in the U.S. and Exotic African Americans

In the United States today, few people think of jazz as an “exotic” type of music, and even in the 1920s it had many different meanings to different people. Some people saw it as modern music, whose rhythmic and improvisational energy expressed the frenetic pace of modern life. Others saw it as a distinctly American genre that expressed the spirit of the country as a whole. But jazz was created by African Americans, and its reception by white Americans in the 1920s was partly related to pleasure in the foreignness of black culture.

Exotic images of African Americans had been a central feature of U.S. culture at least since the 1840s, when blackface minstrel shows became a leading public entertainment. Related to minstrel shows were so-called plantation songs or coon songs, which continued to be popular into the early 1900s, when minstrelsy had been succeeded by vaudeville. Minstrel shows developed a variety of standard signifiers, including blackface makeup, stereotyped black dialect, standard characters, and the banjo, to represent an imagined African American culture to a largely white audience.

The fictional exoticism of minstrel shows dominated U.S. popular entertainment from about the 1840s to the 1870s. But toward the end of that period some white Americans began to show a serious interest in the realities of African American music, at least in those forms that were sufficiently Europeanized to be pleasing to white listeners. Spirituals, as presented by the Fisk Jubilee Singers and other black college choirs, were a tremendous hit among American and European audiences in the 1870s and 1880s. The comments of composer Antonín Dvořák, resident in the U.S. from 1892 to 1895, that black folk music contained the roots of “a great and noble school of music,” also led many whites to pay more serious attention to this music.<sup>8</sup>

By the end of the nineteenth century, the white-dominated cultural media were producing a diversity of exotic representations of black culture. Two examples of sheet music covers suggest the range of those

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<sup>8</sup> Southern 1983, pp. 225-28 and 265.

representations, and perhaps the direction in which they were changing in the early twentieth century. The first is a piano piece called "A Warm-in' Up in Dixie," published in 1899 and described on its cover as a "cake walk, march, and two step."<sup>9</sup> The cakewalk was originally an African American dance that satirized white dances, later a type of song and dance used in minstrel shows, and eventually an influence on ragtime and early jazz. The cover depicts a common stereotype of Southern blacks as primitive and childlike creatures, dancing wildly around a fire in the forest. It is an image that connects with racist ideas of African "savagery," and its exoticism has an almost frightening aspect: an observer might enjoy watching this scene, but only from a safe distance.

The second example is from 1917, the year of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band's first hit record and the beginning of the nationwide jazz boom. The title is "Jazzin' the Cotton Town Blues,"<sup>10</sup> described as a "novelty song," and the cover shows a jazz band and an African American couple dancing. There is nothing wild or savage about them; they are politely dressed and seem to be moving with decorum (by white standards of the time), as well as having fun. Like the earlier piano piece, this song refers to blacks in the rural South (Mississippi in this case), and the "Cotton Town" of the title evokes exotic images that date back to minstrelsy and "plantation songs." But this is an image that invites the observer to join in the dancing.

Around the time "Jazzin' the Cotton Town Blues" was published, in fact, some whites were beginning to venture out to entertainment spots in black neighborhoods, where jazz and related music was played. To some whites, black culture was beginning to feel less dangerous and more accessible. In the 1920s, cafes, cabarets, and nightclubs that catered to middle-class whites began to feature jazz bands and the kind of informal atmosphere that had been associated with African American entertainment spots. As Ogren says "(t)hese environments can be seen as marginal zones in which patrons, particularly from the middle class, could escape normative social expectations and experiment with new public roles."<sup>11</sup> Exoticism in entertainment and décor was one way to en-

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<sup>9</sup> Paull 1899.

<sup>10</sup> Lewis and Olsen 1917.

hance the feeling of escape.

Among the many night clubs that offered white customers an exotic experience of black culture, the most famous was the Cotton Club in New York. The Cotton Club was in Harlem, a black neighborhood whose name was itself an exotic signifier for some whites, and it offered floor shows with black dancers and musicians. Some of the shows depicted Southern plantation life, drawing upon minstrel show traditions; but even more strikingly exotic (and erotic) were the costumes and dances of the African jungle shows. Duke Ellington's orchestra provided suitable "jungle music" for several years as the house band. Jazz was already widely associated with the primitive savagery that was supposed to characterize the African jungle, and Ellington's music played on the association, with growling and squawking sounds from trumpets with plunger mutes. Ellington apparently had no qualms about using music and theater to present an exotic fiction of black culture; indeed, he considered it an "enriching" artistic challenge.<sup>12</sup>

Those rebellious young whites who wanted a more extreme form of exoticism than simply hearing black music could learn to play it themselves. Early white jazz musicians such as the Austin High Gang in Chicago learned from records and live performances of black musicians. They came from middle-class backgrounds, and their discovery of jazz came as a profound experience of liberation, a radical form of escape from the restrictions of their society.<sup>13</sup>

## **Anti-Exoticism and Compromise in the U.S.**

The increasing popularity of jazz, and especially the idea of young white Americans becoming intimate with African-American culture, evoked a bitter anti-exotic reaction among white conservatives. Jazz was not the first exotic music and dance form to meet with this kind of response: ragtime and tango had previously been criticized as unhealthy and obscene. But the intensity and frequency of the attacks on jazz were

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<sup>11</sup> Ogren 1989, p. 57.

<sup>12</sup> Collier 1987, p. 93.

<sup>13</sup> Peretti 1992, pp. 82-91, and Leonard 1962, pp. 56-58.

unprecedented. Many attacked jazz on musical grounds, but others invoked racist ideology, explicitly associating jazz with Africa and with the supposed savagery of Africans, and saying that it was reducing white people to the same level.<sup>14</sup>

Between fervent opponents and passionate supporters of jazz (both black and white) was a large and more or less ambivalent group of people in the middle. This middle ground was a potential market that beckoned to musical compromisers, who sought to make jazz acceptable to Europeanized tastes and sensibilities while maintaining a measure of its exotic appeal. The symphonic jazz of Paul Whiteman, Vincent Lopez, and Isham Jones was mildly syncopated dance music with limited improvisation, presented by polite orchestras who read from sheet music and followed a conductor. Whiteman's music in particular, although much maligned in later years, was a toned-down version of jazz that achieved broad popular appeal, and probably familiarized elements of jazz to many listeners who would have rejected more "authentic" forms. Both white and black musicians of the 1920s and 30s drew upon Whiteman's influence as they sought to reach audiences with their own blends of the familiar and the new.

On the ideological front as well, Paul Whiteman played the role of the great white popularizer of jazz, giving a positive spin to the "savagery" that frightened so many people:

In America, jazz is at once a revolt and a release. Through it, we get back to a simple, to a savage, if you like, joy in being alive. While we are dancing or singing or even listening to jazz, all the artificial restraints are gone. We are rhythmic, we are emotional, we are natural....That is a good experience. After it, one goes back to everyday affairs rid of the pressures of the suppressed play spirit, refreshed and ready for work and difficulties. This, it seems to me, is the great value of jazz in American life.<sup>15</sup>

Whiteman's statement, without mentioning African Americans explicit-

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<sup>14</sup> Leonard 1962, p. 39.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Atkins 2001, p. 98.

ly, accepts the conservative stereotype of African American music as a savage, unrestrained outburst of emotion. But he says this is a good thing, even for white people, a temporary and healing break from the “artificial restraints” of society. His primitivist ideology of jazz retains the foreignness but removes the threat: yes, jazz is savage, he says, but it can play a limited and beneficial role in a civilized person’s life.

The association of jazz with Africa, and Paul Whiteman’s perception of himself as the tamer of this savage African-derived music, is shown very clearly in a cartoon sequence in Whiteman’s film *King of Jazz* (1930). In this cartoon Whiteman, tiring of “life in the big city,” goes big game hunting in “darkest Africa.” Attacked by a lion and about to be eaten, he pulls out his violin (the symbol of European musical refinement) and uses it to sooth the savage beast, who begins dancing to Whiteman’s version of jazz. The cartoon itself is an attempt to defuse with humor the frightening Africanness of jazz; and the story it tells is a metaphor for Whiteman’s self-assigned musical mission.

Since Whiteman’s time, the steady familiarization of African American elements into mainstream popular music has made his version of jazz into an artifact of only historical interest, much too “white” and tame to appeal to most contemporary jazz lovers. Whiteman has also been harshly criticized, with some justification, for the racist ideology that he accepted and reworked for his own commercial purposes. But in the context of his time, he did play a crucial role in the familiarization process by giving mainstream white Americans a version of jazz that they could enjoy and accept, both musically and ideologically. In this way he probably helped to shift many people’s responses to jazz from anti-exoticism toward exoticism.

## Jazz and Exotic Hawaii

Paul Whiteman’s cartoon version of his ascension to the throne of jazz includes not only stereotyped Africans, but also an Indian snake charmer playing his stereotyped oboe melody and a hula-dancing coconut palm. As Whiteman and others sought to make jazz more familiar and less threatening to mainstream white Americans, one of the main barriers they had to overcome was popular racist ideology, which gener-

ally assigned Africans to the bottom of the racial hierarchy. Perhaps to obscure or diffuse the association of jazz with black people, they often sought to generalize its exoticism and merge it with exotic signifiers pointing to other, non-African places and peoples.

At the same time, jazz was being exported outside of the U.S. and taken up by musicians in other countries, where previous waves of Western musical influence had prepared the way for jazz to be exotically appealing. One of those countries—actually a U.S. territory since the U.S. backed coup d'état of 1898—was Hawaii, where local musicians had familiarized the foreignness of jazz by combining it with Hawaiian elements such as falsetto singing, steel guitar, and ukulele, and had thereby created a new genre of Hawaiian music.

This new genre was then positioned to become an exotic genre in the mainland U.S., with the Hawaiian elements now functioning as exotic signifiers. Songs about Hawaii and the ukulele had been popular in the U.S. since the 1910s, and when Hawaiian jazz arrived on the mainland in the 1920s it fueled a new Hawaiian music boom. In Los Angeles around 1925, Hawaiian theme clubs appeared with such names as Hula Hutt, Seven Seas, Hawaiian Village, and Hawaiian Paradise. Master steel guitarist Sol Hoopii moved from Hawaii to California, and helped to make the steel guitar the leading musical signifier of Hawaii. Hoopii played for recordings, live shows, and movies, including the music to the films *Bird of Paradise* (1932) and *Waikiki Wedding* (1937), which in turn helped spread the association of exotic Hawaiian images with the steel guitar sound.<sup>16</sup>

Sol Hoopii was admired and imitated by many U.S. musicians, some of whom carried on the association of the steel guitar with Hawaii. Others, however, used the instrument in contexts unconnected to Hawaii, effecting what I call the “neutralization” of the instrument, i.e. the removal of its exotic significations or their replacement (in some contexts at least) by other significations. In particular, musicians such as Jerry Bird and Leon McAuliffe, who were strongly influenced by Hoopii, helped to make the steel guitar a standard instrument in country music and a signifier of the country genre.

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<sup>16</sup> Kanahele 1979, pp.145 and 254.



Meanwhile, Sol Hoopii's influence traveled to the other side of the Pacific as well. One of his admirers was Haida Yukihiro 灰田有紀彦, a Nikkei Hawaiian who became a pioneer of Hawaiian music and steel guitar in Japan in the 1920s and 30s.<sup>17</sup> The movies *Waikiki Wedding* and *Bird of Paradise*, with Hoopii's playing on their soundtracks, were released in Japan in 1937 and 1938 respectively.<sup>18</sup>

## Jazz and Exotic Asia

The exoticism of jazz in the U.S. was extended even to images of Asia. We have seen that the Indian snake charmer image and stereotypical oboe melody appeared in the cartoon sequence of Paul Whiteman's film *King of Jazz* (1930). Exotic Tin Pan Alley songs such as "The Japanese Sandman" and "The Sheik of Araby" furnished material for American and European jazz musicians. Rimsky-Korsakov's "Song of India" became a standard for the Tommy Dorsey orchestra.

In the U.S. there were jazz clubs with names such as the Oriental and the Peking.<sup>19</sup> The décor, the food, and the entertainment offered at these places often emphasized their exotic associations. The most famous of Asian-flavored jazz clubs, perhaps, was the Forbidden City, a San Francisco nightclub run by Chinese-American Charlie Low, where all the entertainers were Asian American and where Chinese exoticism was the attraction.<sup>20</sup>

Jazz, then, was a means by which middle-class whites could temporarily escape from everyday life, and the exoticism of jazz was one aspect of it that helped them to escape. The exoticism often referred to African Americans or to Africa, but sometimes it became a more generalized exoticism that could be reinforced by a variety of specific foreign associations. Jazz, to the white Americans who enjoyed it, generally signified freedom, in the sense of temporary liberation from the perceived restrictions of their own society. That sense of liberation could be

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<sup>17</sup> Kanahele 1979, p.145.

<sup>18</sup> Hata and Wakuta 1979.

<sup>19</sup> Ogren 1989, pp. 62, 64.

<sup>20</sup> Documented in the 1989 film *Forbidden City, U.S.A.* by Arthur Dong.

enhanced and given flavor by exotic signifiers (musical, visual, or verbal) that evoked a specific imagined place to which one could escape. Black culture, as the most accessible “foreign” culture to most whites and the one that had in reality given birth to jazz, was the most common object of the exoticism associated with jazz. But other foreign cultures could, and did, serve a similar purpose.

## Jazz and Semi-Exotic Modernity in Japan

Jazz arrived in Japan during the 1920s, brought especially by imported records, Filipino musicians, and Japanese musicians returning from stints in Shanghai or on passenger ships. Arriving during a general influx of American movies, clothing, hairstyles, food and drinks, jazz and jazz dancing became popular among a Westernizing subculture of *moga* and *mobo* (modern girls and modern boys). The word “jazz,” at least, was made into a familiar symbol of modern life by the hit song “Tōkyō kōshinkyoku” 東京行進曲, in 1929.<sup>21</sup> The music was written by Nakayama Shinpei 中山晋平, already an established songwriter, who had set the standard for Western-influenced popular songs in 1914 with his first hit, “Kachūsha no uta” カチューシャの唄—an exotic song, we should note, written for a play based on Tolstoy’s *Resurrection* and set in Russia.<sup>22</sup> “Tōkyō kōshinkyoku,” with lyrics by French literature professor Saijō Yaso 西条八十 that referred to drinking liquor all night and dancing to jazz, established the connection between jazz and fast-paced urban living, the lifestyle of *moga* and *mobo*. A sheet music cover for the song shows a modern cityscape depicted in a modern semi-Cubist style, observed by the shadow of an urban couple in Western clothing.<sup>23</sup> Both jazz and its meaning as a symbol of modernity had now arrived in Japan.

In the U.S. as well, jazz was seen by many as a symbol of modern life. But whereas American modernity was mostly homegrown, in Japan it was recognized as something that had largely come from overseas. In the U.S. exoticism was one component of modernity, while in Japan mo-

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<sup>21</sup> Atkins 2001, p. 66.

<sup>22</sup> Yamamoto 1994, p. 24.

<sup>23</sup> Fukuda 1991, p. 40.

ernity itself had an exotic (or for some, anti-exotic) tinge to it. Even the concept of “modern life” was often designated by foreign loan words, *modan raifu* being used interchangeably with *kindai seikatsu*. Thus jazz in Japan was almost inescapably exotic, and its exotic feeling was connected mainly to its country of origin, the United States. Jazz records and sheet music were of course imported from the U.S., Japanese jazz bands had English names, jazz songs were often sung with English lyrics and had English titles, many of which referred to specific U.S. places (such as “St. Louis Blues,” a much-recorded hit in Japan). People were almost inevitably reminded of the U.S. when they listened to jazz. The word “jazz” in fact became almost synonymous with American popular music, that is with the products of the U.S. music industry that were exported internationally.

As in the U.S., jazz entertainment spots in Japan formed a special world where middle-class young people could go for escape from daily life. But whereas in the U.S. the destinations of escape were often places and types of entertainment associated with the (largely black) lower class, in Japan this inter-class exoticism was mostly absent. In Japan, dance halls with paid female dancers and male patrons became the most prominent sites for jazz performance (unlike U.S. dance halls, where it was more common for couples to go dancing together), and the exoticism of these dance halls most often referred to the U.S. The famous Florida dance hall, a leading performance venue for jazz musicians in Japan, was named after a tropical U.S. state that has a mildly exotic attraction even for Americans. One photograph of the Shinbashi dance hall from 1934 shows an enormous U.S. flag hanging on the wall; the band performing is trumpeter Nanri Fumio’s Hot Peppers, named after Jelly Roll Morton and His Red Hot Peppers.<sup>24</sup> To be sure, other exoticisms were featured in dance halls, such as the visiting French tango band and Cuban rumba band who performed at the Florida in the 1930s. But the primary foreign place to which people escaped through their imaginative enjoyment of jazz dancing was evidently “America.”

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<sup>24</sup> Segawa 1983, photograph between pp.182 and 183.

## Jazz and Exotic Americans

The America that jazz signified in Japan was probably more white than black. White jazz musicians such as Paul Whiteman were the best known and most influential in Japan, and a 1929 translation of Whiteman's autobiography, *Jazz*, was the most widely read book on the subject.<sup>25</sup> The jazz imported to Japan, while it included records and sheet music by both white and black musicians, was mostly music that had found some success in the white-dominated American mainstream market. Furthermore, the broad usage of the term to include virtually all popular music imported from the U.S. meant that Tin Pan Alley popular songs, written mostly by white songwriters, were also part of what was known in Japan as "jazz."

Nevertheless the African American origins of jazz (in its more specific sense) were certainly well known to many Japanese. Occasionally images of African Americans would appear in connection with jazz, and very rarely real African Americans would appear to reinforce the connection, as when black singer Midge Williams performed and recorded in Japan with her three brothers in 1934.<sup>26</sup>

More common in the Japanese jazz scene than either white or black Americans, however, were Japanese-Americans, a number of whom were active in Japan as singers, instrumentalists, and dancers during the 1930s. One of the most popular was the dancer and singer Kawabata Fumiko 川畑文子, who recorded a wide range of exotic songs, most of which had come to Japan from the U.S.: "The Peanut Vendor" (mentioned above), "St. Louis Blues," "Ukulele Baby," and "Lady of Spain," to name but a few. Like some other singers, she often sang the first half of an American song in Japanese and the second half in English—but never, as far as I know, the other way around. This seems to have been a simple strategy for creating an exotic experience by preparing a familiar context for the foreign: the Japanese listener is first brought into the song through Japanese lyrics, and then, when both the meaning and the melo-

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<sup>25</sup> Atkins 2001, p. 98.

<sup>26</sup> Atkins 2001, pp. 79-80.

dy have become familiar, is given the extra foreign element of English lyrics. Thus a listener with even a little English ability can “understand” the English lyrics, which function as an exotic signifier of the song’s American origin. Japanese-Americans themselves became exotic signifiers through their double identity and their ability to sing in both languages; they had just the right balance of foreignness and familiarity to be appealingly exotic. As Taylor Atkins puts it, “the familiar ethnicity of these entertainers provided a bridge between Japanese audiences and the exotic world of American culture and jazz.”<sup>27</sup>

## Exotic Jazz Songs in Japan

In Japan jazz was an exotic music primarily because of its association with the U.S., which was constantly reinforced by signifiers of all kinds. But as in the U.S., the exoticism of jazz also tended to become generalized and associated with a wide range of imagined foreign places. This happened partly because so many American jazz songs imported to Japan and/or recorded in Japan referred to exotic places other than the U.S. Unlike other American songs, which became exotic only upon arrival in Japan, these songs were produced as exoticism for American consumers, then brought to Japan as complete exotic packages to be sold to Japanese consumers. Through such imported exoticism, signifiers of other cultures were transferred more or less intact from the U.S. to Japan, where they contributed to the general exoticism of jazz and were taken up by Japanese musicians in their own work.

One of the very first American “jazz songs” to be recorded in Japan was in fact a piece of imported exoticism: Fred Fisher’s “Sing Me a Song of Araby” (“Arabia no uta” アラビアの唄 in its Japanese version), one of many songs with “Arabian” themes produced by the American song writing industry around that time. The Japanese lyrics were written by Horiuchi Keizō, who had received the sheet music by mail order from San Francisco, and the song was recorded in 1928 by singer Futamura Teiichi 二村定一 in two versions for Victor and Columbia respectively. The melody is mostly in a major key, but contains a minor-key passage

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<sup>27</sup> Atkins 2001, p. 82.

that seems meant to evoke a Middle-Eastern feeling. Horiuchi later commented that the song was a hit in part because of the exotic evocation of Arabia in its lyrics (“When the sun sinks into the desert, and night falls...”), a trend that in Japan goes back to the 1923 children’s song “Tsuki no sabaku” 月の砂漠.<sup>28</sup> “Arabia no uta” was followed by other songs by Japanese composers referring to Arabia and the desert, such as “Sabaku no tabi” 砂漠の旅 (1934), whose lyric sheet includes an illustration of a camelback journey through the desert.<sup>29</sup>

In a similar way other exotic songs and sub-genres emerged during the 1930s, including both imported and domestically produced pieces. Many singers moved easily from one exotic realm to another. The singer of “Arabia no uta,” Futamura Teiichi, soon went on to make recordings of jazz-influenced Hawaiian songs with Hawaiian musician Earnest Kaai, then active in Japan. As mentioned above, Kawabata Fumiko recorded American songs with a wide range of exotic referents. Awaya Noriko 淡谷のり子 sang German, French, Italian, and Spanish songs (with Japanese lyrics), as well as American songs that depicted exotic European places. Apparently many Japanese performers and record company music directors approached imported genres as a single broad field of exoticism, within which a wide variety of imagined places and atmospheres could be called upon to convey a feeling of liberation from the here-and-now.

## Jazz and Anti-Exoticism in Japan

As in the U.S., the enthusiasm of rebellious young people for jazz was answered by an anti-jazz reaction among conservatives. Jazz music and dancing were seen by many as a threat to public morals, and the dangerous qualities of jazz were described by critics such as Murobuse Kōshin 室伏高信 through references to the foreign (both America and Africa):

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<sup>28</sup> Mitsui 2005, p. 24. This article contains a thorough history and analysis of the two recordings of “Arabia no uta.”

<sup>29</sup> Fukuda 1991, p.76.



America's teenage girls are said to mature 'too fast' due to jazz's frenzied influence... Jazz makes people into drunkards and sex maniacs, drives them mad, and causes civilized people to fall to the level of the African jungle.<sup>30</sup>

Such critics had assimilated the anti-jazz rhetoric of American writers, and feared that this "savage" music would do to Japan what it had allegedly done to the U.S. The original source of the jazz contagion was Africa, but the immediate source was the U.S., the source of so many frightening technological, social, and cultural changes. Japan's semi-exotic modernity, of which jazz was a leading symbol, was thus a target of anti-exoticism as well. As the reference to teenage girls suggests, young women were a matter of particular concern, and there was much dismay among conservatives about the moral condition of the *moga*, with her Western clothing, independent attitude, and love for jazz dancing.<sup>31</sup>

## Hattori Ryōichi: Exoticism for Japan

In Japan as in the U.S., musical compromisers set out to familiarize jazz, to tone down the foreignness and perceived danger of it so as to reach the middle ground between modernist fans and conservative opponents of the new music. One form of familiarization was simply to have imported jazz songs sung in Japanese, and this was enough for many people; beginning with Futamura Teiichi's recordings, American songs with Japanese (or Japanese and English) lyrics were a significant part of Japan's jazz output. Another approach was for Japanese songwriters to produce jazz songs, and from the late 1920s many of them did so. One of the most successful was composer Hattori Ryōichi, who used elements of jazz, tango, rumba, Hawaiian music, and other imported genres to create musical fusions with carefully controlled levels of exoticism.

Some of Hattori's songs may have served to familiarize both jazz and modern life ideologically, to make them appear less threatening to

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<sup>30</sup> Murobuse Kōshin, *Gaitō no shakaigaku* 街頭の社会学 (1929), quoted in Atkins 2001, p. 110.

<sup>31</sup> Silverberg 1991, p. 248.

conservatives and thus acceptable to a wider audience. One of his up-tempo jazz pieces, “Oshare musume” おしゃれ娘 (1936), depicts a bright and cheerful young woman of the modern city, who cherishes dreams in her heart and sings to herself as she waits to meet her sweetheart on the Ginza. There are no exotic references in the lyrics, the controversial word *moga* does not appear, and there is no hint of questionable activities such as drinking liquor or dancing to jazz; this is a modern girl who even conservatives can accept. But the music that accompanies her is definitely jazz. The lead singer, Awaya Noriko, is supported by a vocal trio called the Rhythm Sisters, modeled on American trios such as the Rhythm Boys (who sang with Paul Whiteman’s orchestra) and the Boswell Sisters.

The following year Awaya Noriko became famous as the singer of Hattori’s “Wakare no burūsu” 別れのブルース (1937) which launched a new “burūsu” sub-genre. The word comes, of course, from American “blues,” and Hattori’s inspiration for the genre was W.C. Handy’s “St. Louis Blues,” which had been well known in Japan since the 1920s and had been recorded by numerous Japanese singers. Hattori’s blues, however, used the *yonanuki* minor scale and a slow foxtrot rhythm, making it musically quite different from American blues (even from Handy’s urbanized form) and more accessible to many Japanese listeners of the time. Hattori acknowledged that his version of blues was redesigned for a Japanese audience, saying “I don’t think that blues is a monopoly of black people, like W.C. Handy’s ‘St. Louis Blues.’ In Japan, why can’t there be a Japanese blues, an Oriental blues?”<sup>32</sup> The themes of Japanese burūsu were melancholy—much more consistently so than American blues—and often mildly exotic: “Wakare no burūsu” is about a Japanese woman lamenting at the departure of her lover, an American sailor.

As noted above, the specific exotic associations of jazz and related genres were somewhat flexible, and in the late 1930s they had to be adjusted in response to ideological pressures. 1937 was not only the year of “Wakare no burūsu” but also the year when Japan entered into full-scale war with China. As the war intensified, anti-American feeling and censorship also increased, and exoticism toward the U.S. had to be care-

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<sup>32</sup> Hattori 1993, p.140.

fully limited. Thus Hattori's "Banjō de utaeba" バンジョーで唄えば (1939) uses a banjo and Stephen Foster melodies, but refers only to an unspecified "southern country," not explicitly to the U.S.

At the same time, Hattori and other composers began to redirect their exoticism toward foreign objects that were ideologically acceptable, such as China. The exoticism of China was a centuries-old tradition in Japan, and one which had competed and interacted with the exoticism of Western culture since the Meiji era. The attraction of China was temporarily doused by the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-5, but it rose again, and reached a peak after the outbreak of war in 1937. The ideology that supported this war was quite different from that of 1894: then, China was seen as a backward, cowardly enemy to be defeated; now, China was seen (in official propaganda, at least) as a friendly but struggling nation in need of help, where a gang of criminals led by Chiang Kai-shek had taken power and had to be defeated, so that Japan could lead its vast neighbor into peace and co-prosperity. This new ideology was far more conducive to exoticism than the old one.

Hattori and other songwriters accordingly created a genre called *tairiku merodī* 大陸メロディ, "continental melodies," into which they directed the musical resources of jazz, burūsu, tango, and rumba, as well as Chinese-style melodies and the sounds of Chinese instruments (often imitated by Western instruments).<sup>33</sup> Hattori's "Chaina tango" チャイナ・タンゴ and "Kanton burūsu" 広東ブルース (both 1939) are classics of the genre, as is his "Soshū yakyoku" 蘇州夜曲 (1940), an American-style love song with a China-flavored melody that is often heard even today. Hattori's mastery of jazz and the other Western exoticisms served him well: by generalizing those exoticisms and directing them toward a different foreign object, he was able to continue producing brilliant musical fusions well into the war years without incurring the wrath of the political authorities.

## Prewar Exotic Musics: A Comparison

In conclusion I offer a few summary observations on similarities and

<sup>33</sup> For my analysis of this genre see Pope 2003 and Pope 2005.

differences between the meanings of jazz and related exotic musics in the U.S. and Japan, and the ways in which those meanings emerged and changed during the prewar years.

In both countries jazz was enjoyed at least in part as exoticism, as music with origins in a foreign culture, and its popularity evoked strong anti-exotic reactions. Jazz and jazz dancing were seen by some as the cause of social and moral changes that threatened to transform society for the worse. Those changes were especially frightening because of their apparently foreign origin.

In both countries, furthermore, the forces for and against jazz were split to some extent along generational lines: the association of jazz with a foreign culture served to emphasize the younger generation's break with tradition. But the foreignness of jazz was not the only reason it played this role. Some of its musical features, such as offbeat rhythmic accents and improvisation, were also felt as symbolically "liberating" by listeners and musicians. Intrinsic features of the music, in other words, acquired iconic meanings that reinforced the music's exotic meanings. Furthermore, jazz appeared at the right moment to symbolize the social and technological changes of the early twentieth century: it was the music of young people coming of age in a world strikingly different from that of their parents' youth.

Attacks on jazz by older conservatives, in both countries, probably served to make it even more attractive to the rebellious young. Between these two extremes were many people in the middle who could be won over to jazz, but only through a convincing ideological and/or musical compromise. Musicians such as Whiteman and Hattori were the ones who crafted these compromises.

Notably absent from either country, to my knowledge at least, were jazz musicians who considered the use of exoticism to be a debasement of their art. Hattori and Ellington, who are still considered to be among the greatest popular music composers of their respective countries, consciously worked toward their aesthetic goals through exotic effects and contexts.

Jazz often signified its perceived place of origin, "America" or "Africa" depending on one's perspective, but in both the U.S. and Japan it was often redirected toward other exotic associations. The various exotic

places associated with jazz offered a broader range of affective significations to those seeking escape from modern life. Jazz in the narrow sense tended to be a high-energy, exciting music associated with the modern city or the primitive jungle, but some jazz-related exotic genres offered more relaxing sounds, and associations that included tropical beaches, swaying palm trees, and serene desert vistas. Those seeking escape from modern boredom may have enjoyed the stimulation of New Orleans or Chicago jazz, but those fleeing from modern anxiety may have preferred to be soothed by Hawaiian music.

There were also major differences between white Americans and Japanese in the positions from which they viewed jazz. Perhaps the main difference is that jazz came to Japan from a foreign country across the ocean, while it came to white Americans from a semi-foreign culture that lived next door to them. In the U.S. the meanings of jazz, like those of other exotic musics, arose largely from interactions between ethnic groups within the country. Whites could go directly to black neighborhoods seeking adventure, and places like the Cotton Club could turn that practice into a marketable product. Despite the barriers of institutionalized racism, white and black musicians did have many occasions to see each other, hear each other, and learn from each other face to face. At the same time, segregation and discrimination maintained a distance between the two cultures, which generated exotic attraction and creativity on both sides. (I have focused here on the exoticism of black music to whites, but the exotic appeal of white music to blacks was certainly another factor in the development of jazz.)

In Japan, on the other hand, jazz had essentially come from abroad, leaving a sharp distinction between the (perceived) place of origin and the place of reception. There were in fact many places of origin, and many musicians in Japan who served as mediators: Japanese who had spent time in Shanghai or on passenger ships, Filipinos, Japanese Americans, and even some white and black Americans. But face-to-face interactions between those who experienced jazz as exoticism and members of the foreign culture that jazz signified were far fewer in Japan than in the U.S. The same was true for Latin American genres such as rumba, and perhaps for Hawaiian music (although Hawaiian musicians were active and influential in Japan as well as in the mainland U.S.). This short-

age of direct contacts between Japanese and members of exoticized cultures may be one reason why many Japanese singers were able to move so freely among exotic genres, and why composers such as Hattori were able to develop such wide-ranging fusions of exotic elements drawn from every direction, while U.S. musicians fell somewhat more into distinct genres, depending on the communities with which they and their audiences were in contact.

The ideological status of the signified culture was another major difference that may explain how musicians in each country saw their efforts to bring jazz into popular acceptance. In Japan, jazz signified a generally respected (though also much criticized) America, while in the white U.S., it signified a black culture that was generally viewed with contempt (though also admired by many for its "savage" or "natural" energy). Japanese musicians, however much they creatively reworked American jazz, generally had the greatest respect for its American creators—at least those they knew about—both white and black. White popularizers of jazz such as Paul Whiteman, on the other hand, while they may have admired some black musicians, saw themselves as having improved upon African American jazz, as having rescued it from savagery.

This ideological difference is suggested by the contrast between Whiteman's comments about jazz and Hattori's about blues, quoted above: Whiteman places the savagery of jazz in a civilized context, gives it a safe and limited recreational role. He has raised jazz up from the jungle and made it something with universal value, and he would never call his music "jazz for white people": it is, to him and his admirers, jazz for civilized people. Hattori, on the other hand, explicitly sets out to create "a Japanese blues, an Oriental blues," seeing blues as a musical feeling or mood that can be expressed in different forms for different ethnic groups. He would never suggest that his blues was an improvement on the original African American blues (which to him was epitomized by the music of W.C. Handy): it is a different blues for a different people.

Among most white Americans it was taken for granted that black culture, even if it had some virtues, was inferior to European culture. Only young rebels thumbing their noses at mainstream society, such as the Austin High Gang, would try to imitate black music in its original form; the more "mature" approach was to improve and civilize it. But



among Japanese, U.S. culture was admired by many, and U.S. influence, even if it was harshly criticized in certain instances, was recognized by nearly all as an inescapable fact. Conservatives felt that Japanese culture was distinct, so that foreign influences had to be selected and adapted, but those who held American culture to be frankly inferior were probably a small minority (at least until the late 1930s). To Japanese musicians seeking to popularize jazz, then, American music was not something to be improved upon: it was to be studied and imitated, or else it was to be adapted, creatively modified, and made into something Japanese.

Prevailing ideologies not only influenced, but in my opinion were also influenced by, the course of exoticism in both countries. In the U.S., jazz was at the center of dialogues about race. The familiarization of African American culture through the exoticism of jazz, then swing music, helped to erode the emotional and ideological foundations of American racism, and together with many other factors prepared the way for the Civil Rights movement. In Japan, the growth of exoticism in the 1930s coincided with the advance of anti-Western militarism; militarist ideology finally brought on efforts to suppress Japan's semi-exotic modern culture, including the banning of jazz songs and American instruments. But in the postwar period Japan's jazz culture returned to life stronger than ever, and the exotic appeal of American music hastened the spread of Western-influenced ideologies and the continued domestication of Western culture. In both countries, musical exoticism was both a symbol and a component of the transformation of society.

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