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Playing Changes: Music as Mediator between Japanese and Black Americans

E. Taylor Atkins

Abstract

Since the mid-twentieth century, music has played a central role in encounters and interactions between the people of Japan and those of African descent. It proved far more effective for promoting interracial dialogue and understanding than efforts in the early 1900s to foster an alliance against white supremacy and imperialism. This essay unpacks the ways that encounters with Black music transformed Japanese musicking and generated knowledge and empathy for people of African descent among Japanese. Personal interactions between Black and Japanese musicians constituted a process of “grassroots globalization” that circumvented the dominance of American mass media in representing African Americans and their music. Japanese who performed and consumed Black music could understand W. E. B. Du Bois’ concept of “double consciousness,” seeing themselves in the eyes of others and becoming more aware of racial injustice. Afrological music spoke more relevantly to Japanese experience than Eurological music did.

Keywords: Japanese music, Jazz, Black music, Racism, Double consciousness

Since the mid-twentieth century, music has played a central role in encounters and interactions between the people of Japan and those of African descent. Most Japanese exposure to Black people and culture has been through American entertainment media, the effects of which have not always been laudable. But there have also been “grassroots” exchanges between Black musicians and their Japanese counterparts and audiences, and Black music has generated broader curiosity among Japanese about African Americana and the historical contexts and social conditions in which that music was produced. It has inspired empathy for Black people and indignation toward the racist attitudes, structures, and violence they have suffered, endured, and survived. Conversely, the sincere and enthusiastic embrace of their music has endeared Japan to Black American musicians, particularly jazz artists, who from the 1960s increasingly came to rely on international festivals and concert tours as sources of livelihood.

Relationships and perceptions between Black Americans and Japanese have veered from hostility and prejudice to mutual admiration and solidarity against

white supremacy. At certain points in history, they identified with each other so strongly that Black Americans referred to Japanese as “our Oriental brothers” and Japanese described themselves as “yellow negroes,” bound by common experiences of enduring white racism.¹ African diasporic music has served reliably well as a bridge over the occasionally tumultuous waters of interracial encounters.

I have written extensively on the history of jazz in Japan.² Here, taking advantage of two decades of reflection, study, writing, and teaching on musical globalization and glocalization, imperialism, African diasporic musicality, and popular culture in Japan, I want to examine musical interactions with both a wider lens and more focus on their implications for interracial and transnational relationships and understanding. I structure this analysis by invoking two possible readings of the phrase “playing changes,” which jazz musicians use to describe improvising over a chord progression: 1) the changes wrought in Japanese music-making; and 2) the transformative capacity of jazz and other Black music genres for promoting critical thought about ironies, incongruencies, paradoxes, and dissonances in—to cop a phrase from blues legend T-Bone Walker—this “mean old world.”

In the first case, I mean Japanese *playing* changes, referring to the transformation of Japanese musicking stimulated by engagements with Black American music and dance.³ Starting in the 1870s, primarily through their military and educational systems, Japanese remade their musical culture to conform with what musician/scholar George Lewis has called “Eurological” musical aesthetics and performance practices.⁴ By the early twentieth century, particularly among Westernized, “high collar” elites and urban professionals, Japanese musicking had been thoroughly refashioned in accordance with Western standards and practices—even practitioners of indigenous musical genres (*hōgaku*) abandoned relative tonality and surrendered to the “equal-temperament juggernaut” that the European imperial presence unleashed on musical cultures throughout the world.⁵ But encounters with jazz exposed Japanese to “Afrological” music and dance, which represented a fundamental challenge to Eurological musicking. Black music not only changed Japanese playing, but also instigated a counter-hegemonic re-valuation of non-European musicking and its aesthetic status.

Secondly, I mean playing historically Afrological music *changes* Japanese views of the world and their place in it, deepens awareness of racial injustice against Black people (and others), and sharpens sensitivity to the contradictions of a world order bedeviled by tenacious white supremacy and racism.⁶ I argue that Black music has been so appealing in part because it spoke directly to Japanese experiences of racism, suffering, and struggles with identity.

My approach starts from the premise that Black music is inherently a form of socio-cultural critique, an argument advanced most prominently by Amiri Baraka in his seminal *Blues People* (1963) and developed further by many others (if not

quite universally embraced).⁷ Fumi Okiji describes black music as “sociomusical play,” which “cannot but help shed light on black life’s (im)possibilities.” By foregrounding the experiences of subaltern peoples systematically dehumanized and cast aside by political, economic, and social structures and cultural biases, Black music “gives voice to that which has been silenced or excluded, either willfully or through negligence,” and “shows us how we might go about dispositioning ourselves, so that we might know how it feels to be a conflicted subject.” Engagement with Black expressive culture encourages “critical reflection” on the “disjuncture between the reality of one’s everyday living and the ways one is understood by society at large”—that is, “the integrity of the world.”⁸

Okiji’s term “conflicted subject” directly invokes W.E.B. Du Bois’ influential concept of “double consciousness,”

this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.⁹

Du Bois argued that, however psychologically disorienting it is, this double consciousness confers upon Black people keener, more nuanced insight, heightened sensitivity, and greater skepticism about the unquestioned premises and claims of the social world. Even within the lands of their birth—the United States, Jamaica, Brazil, or even colonial Africa—Black people were “outsiders” with etic powers of perception attuned to the dissonances of social life. They could see themselves both as a “problem” in white-dominated society, but also as fully formed human beings in themselves, people who, as philosopher Lewis Gordon observes, “ultimately face the condition of not belonging to the only world in which they could possibly be indigenous.”¹⁰ This does not mean that all Black arts are consciously “about” racial oppression, pain, and other negative collective experiences; such a claim would further marginalize Black people and devalue their creations, as if they had nothing else to say. Nonetheless, experiences of “nonbelonging” and attentiveness to a “world of contraries” suffuse much Black expressive culture, which thus has the capacity to awaken non-Black audiences to these contradictions.¹¹

There is evidence indicating that Japanese who have seriously engaged with African diasporic music have become attuned not only to Black folks’ historical plights but to their own double consciousness. This concept is frequently applied to Americans of Japanese descent but only rarely to Japanese in Japan.¹² However, it is well established that since the late nineteenth century Japanese have felt “betwixt and between” Asia and the West, known both as semi-colony and world power,

and accordingly have long been hyper-aware of how they are seen in non-Japanese eyes. Robert Tierney has described the Japanese empire as “triangular” in nature, with the West lurking as an “(implicit) third party.” It was constructed with explicit (and not irrational) defensive intent, emulated the self-exculpatory Social Darwinist rhetoric of a “civilizing mission,” and replicated the ethno-racial hierarchies of Western empires.¹³ The empire itself was a showcase for the Western gaze of Japan’s modernity and major power status, as well as its aspiration to “honorary whiteness,” but was justified with resort to a contrived rhetoric of pan-Asian unity.

The term “yellow Negro” itself (a term used by avant-garde literatus Terayama Shūji in 1968) implies a claim to a common experience of double consciousness between Black and Japanese people. Considering Japan’s paradoxical status as both victim and perpetrator of imperialism and racial violence, however, it is a problematic and somewhat presumptuous assertion. Having themselves been bullied by Western imperialists, labeled less civilized, and treated as racial inferiors, Japanese imperial apologists posited a shared oppression with fellow “colored races” (*yūshoku jinshu*), while also claiming to bring the benefits of civilization to “savage” or “semi-civilized” Ainu, Okinawans, Han and indigenous Taiwanese, Koreans, and others. Japanese treatment of their colonized subjects, with whom racial amity was loudly proclaimed yet usually situational, opportunistic, and self-serving, makes identification with people of African descent seem disingenuous. Intentionally or not, the impulse to identify with people of African descent as fellow victims of white supremacy stunted critical reflection on Japan’s own imperialist sins and racist brutality. It appears that African diasporic music awakened and sensitized Japanese aficionados to white supremacy and racism more than it inspired introspection and contrition about the imperial and wartime past. Ironically, it was precisely this “disjuncture” between rhetoric and reality on which Black musicking shed light.

Despite this rather major caveat, in keeping with the spirit of this volume I want to explore the role of music in generating possibilities for interracial comity. Japanese who engaged with historically Afrological music, as listeners, dancers, or performers, demonstrated Black music’s potential for fostering “alternative forms of social organization” that express discontent with a world order built in part on white supremacy as a defining, incontestable principle.¹⁴ As “the largest home for jazz outside the United States,” a reliable and welcoming destination for touring African American artists, and with a century-old jazz heritage of its own, Japan is a major player in what Bruce Johnson calls the “jazz diaspora,” a space of transnational musicking to which people in many places outside of the United States have contributed in significant but still under-acknowledged ways.¹⁵

Changes in Musicking

Although Japanese may have encountered African traders in China during the Tang and Song dynasties, the first contacts confirmed in the historical record occurred in 1546, three years after Portuguese traders first arrived in Tanegashima, bearing the arquebus that would facilitate the eventual political reunification of the archipelago.¹⁶ Enslaved people from southeast Africa accompanied Captain Jorge Álvares, who noted that Japanese “took great pleasure in seeing the black races.”¹⁷ Japanese called them *kafu* or *kafayajin*, transliterations from the Portuguese *cafre*, a term for non-Muslim East Africans derived in turn from the Arabic *kāfir*, “infidel.”

Kafu appear alongside Iberians, Indians, and Malays in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Japanese pictorial depictions of *nanban* (“southern barbarians”).¹⁸ Anthropologist John Russell observes that these pictures “are devoid of overt caricaturization” and that “color symbolism”—the attribution of “negative connotations” to the color black—did not affect Japanese views of people of African descent.¹⁹ In addition to the famous “African Samurai” Yasuke, perhaps hundreds of Africans (overwhelmingly if not completely males) who came with the Portuguese and Spaniards remained in Japan for the rest of their lives.²⁰ Throughout the Edo period (1600–1868), Africans also worked at the Dutch East India Company (VOC) *factorij* on Deshima, an island off the coast of Nagasaki. In his *Record of Observations of Nagasaki* (written in 1797), Dutch Studies scholar (*rangakusha*) Hirokawa Kai denounced the “red-haired barbarians” (*kōmō no banjin*) for treating enslaved Africans with such brutality; he reported that when one became seriously ill, the Dutch would poison him to death.²¹

There are a handful of textual and visual allusions to African musicking in early modern Japan. One detailed account came from Luís Fróis, S.J., who recounted that Japan’s supreme warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi witnessed an African dance performance in 1593 at Hizen Nagoya Castle, a hastily built island fortress in the Tsushima Straits from where he commanded his brutal invasions of the Korean peninsula.

When the Captain General Gaspar Pinto da Rocha came to visit Taikō-sama [Hideyoshi] in Nagoya, he brought with him a guard of kaffirs with golden spears and kaffirs dressed in red with a drum and fife. Taikō-sama made the kaffirs dance to the sound of the drum and fife. And as they are naturally very inclined to dance, it was something that made those who saw them burst into laughter, because, without any order or prior plan, they jumped from here to there and, as they began, no matter how much he told them it was enough, nothing could make them stop dancing. Taikō-sama ordered that each be given a white *catabira*, which are shirts of very fine linen and open inside. And when I told them to put them on their heads for the esteem and honor of those who gave them, they tied them on their heads like a lascar’s cap. It was a show that entertained Taikō-sama and all the court that was there.²²

There are also some pictures and descriptions from the Edo period of Black musicians playing string, wind, and percussion instruments for Dutch banquets in Deshima.²³ However, I have found no evidence that Japanese emulated African music and dance. We know that music and dance from continental Asia were ingested and performed (sometimes parodically) by Japanese in the Edo period. Examples include the *shamisen*, a banjo-like, plucked three-string instrument imported from Ryūkyū (Okinawa) and Korean music performed by embassies from nearby Chosŏn, which provided the basis for so-called *tōjin odori* (roughly, “foreigners’ dance”) in local festivals (*matsuri*).²⁴ But because Deshima was off-limits to all but a handful of traders and *rangakusha*, very few common people would ever have witnessed African musicking.

In modern times “Black” music was introduced to Japan in caricature when Commodore Matthew Perry’s “black ships” (*kurobune*) arrived in 1854 to demand that the Tokugawa *bakufu* open Japan’s borders to diplomatic and commercial relations. From March to July, white members of Perry’s crew billed as the Japanese Olio Minstrels staged four “Ethiopian” shows (with proper printed programs) for local dignitaries aboard his frigates *Powhatan* and *Mississippi* in Yokohama, Hakodate, Shimoda, and Naha. In a two-part program, performers acted “As Colored ‘Genmen’ [sic] of the North,” and “As N__as of the South.”²⁵

The Japanese Olio Minstrels’ performances were hardly extraneous: according to one officer, “The Commodore ... said the success of his treaty depended on the success of the entertainment, so we did our best.”²⁶ Perry’s “strategy of pageantry” was meant to imprint racial hierarchies and American exceptionalism on his audiences.²⁷ Blackface minstrelsy, the most popular form of entertainment in the United States and Canada, perpetuated repugnant racial stereotypes that have outlived the genre, and “helped define what was white and, consequently, what was American.”²⁸ However, because the audiences were so small, these caricatures’ impact on racial attitudes is debatable: Japanese had no frame of reference to comprehend how derisive they were.

Japanese enjoyed a more authentic experience of Black music with the visit by a troupe of former Fisk University Jubilee Singers led by Frederick Loudin (1836–1904), which performed in Nagasaki, Kōbe, and Yokohama during a six-year world tour (1884–90). Loudin spoke and wrote fondly of his experience in Japan. At Kōbe Girls’ School, he reported, “The authorities told us they had never seen the girls so excited.” “I have never seen a more interested and enthusiastic audience; they gave expression to their delight by clapping their hands and [with] deep-drawn sighs, which ... was their mode of expressing the highest degree of delight.”²⁹

Loudin’s visit coincided with major shifts in Japanese views of the world and the connections between race and civilizational attainment. In the Meiji period (1868–1912), new Social Darwinist-inflected notions of hierarchy based on intellectual,

cultural, scientific, and social progress toward “civilization and enlightenment” dominated Japanese worldviews. Japan’s leading public intellectual, Fukuzawa Yukichi (1834–1901), contributed to negative images of dark-skinned people by placing Africa and indigenous Australasia at the most “primitive” (*mikai*) and “barbaric” (*yaban*) pole on his theoretical continuum of civilizational development.³⁰ Coming from a society organized by heritable juridical status distinctions (*mibun*), in which the lowborn (*senmin*) were considered incapable of moral and intellectual development, there is no reason why Japanese observers would have found social hierarchies so alien or puzzling, although one based on skin color was novel to them.

Yet although Fukuzawa’s was hardly a flattering portrayal, neither is it technically racialized: his credo was social evolutionism, providing for the universal possibility—even inevitability—of unilinear material, political, intellectual, and social progress through various stages, with proper course correction.³¹ To be sure, some Social Darwinists believed that a racial group’s capacity was biologically (racially) determined, yet others interpreted the theory to mean that they could improve their lot through education and enlightened action. If Japanese could ascend from a “semi-civilized” (*hankai*) state, Black people were not condemned to live in barbarism forever. Kume Kunitake said as much in his official account of the globetrotting delegation led by Iwakura Tomomi from December 1871 to September 1873: expressing optimism about emancipated former slaves’ prospects and their earnest pursuit of education, Kume remarked, “Skin color has nothing to do with intelligence,” a conclusion at odds with the racist discourse of the day.³² Some scholars contend that observing the educability and progress of emancipated slaves “inspired the nation’s search for identity.”³³

Japan’s most direct and lasting encounter with Afrological musicking occurred during a time when talk of interracial solidarity was circulating widely in intellectual circles, instigated by Japan’s 1905 victory over czarist Russia and its campaign to insert a racial equality clause in the League of Nations Charter in 1919.³⁴ Black American intellectuals and activists such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, and James Weldon Johnson joined anti-colonial nationalist leaders M.K. Gandhi and Mustafa Kamil Pasha in saluting Japan for its symbolic victory over white supremacism.³⁵ As Pan-Asianism became more influential among Japanese intellectuals, activists, officials, and politicians, its geographical scope expanded to include Muslims and all “colored races” oppressed by white imperialism.³⁶ In 1913, Japanese MP Nagai Ryūtarō (1884–1944) published a scathing essay condemning Americans for “such savagery as the lynching and burning of negroes,” asking rhetorically if “the yellow and otherwise coloured races are not in some peril from the white races?”³⁷

Nagai and veteran statesman Yamagata Aritomo, among many others, earnestly believed that as one of “the victims of the white man’s tyranny,” Japan could “make a contribution to world civilization” by assisting the “oppressed colored peoples”

and deposing the “worldwide autocracy of the white man.”³⁸ In the 1920s and 1930s, Takahashi Satokata and his wife, feminist internationalist Pearl Sherrod, made inroads at American churches and mosques to foster a “black messianic nationalism” that would align with Japanese ambitions.³⁹

Yet for reasons I will explain shortly, there were no meaningful connections between this discourse of interracial solidarity and the introduction and proliferation of Black music in imperial Japan. When jazz was introduced in the 1910s and 1920s by Japanese musicians from transpacific ocean liner orchestras, by white, African American, Filipino, and other touring musicians, and via imported recordings and printed scores, Japanese musicking was by then predominantly Eurological. This had a major impact on how they understood and performed jazz.

Lewis distinguishes between Afrological and Eurological “systems of improvisative musicality” specific to “social and cultural location[s]” and which are “historically emergent rather than ethnically essential”—that is, one need not be of African descent to engage in “historically Afrological” musicking. Essential to this definition is the history of “dismissal” and marginalization of Afrological musicking as aesthetically inferior to Eurological systems, and the marking of Black musicians as entertainers rather than artists. Although improvisation is hardly absent in the Western tradition, Lewis argues, “real-time music-making” is a core aspect of Afrological musicking.⁴⁰

Since his focus is on post-World War II improvised musical activity, Lewis (quite intentionally) omits other aspects commonly associated with Afrological musicking: the primacy of rhythm and syncopation; blues structures, techniques, and tonalities; extemporaneous musical interplay and responsiveness; and, in bebop and later styles, harmonic complexity. The prominence and balance of these qualities in individual performances vary radically; so, too, does the emphasis on formal composition in relation to improvisation. For our purposes here, I expand Lewis’ definition of Afrological musicking to include these traits (I am hardly the first to do so), all of which presented challenges to the Eurological practices and aesthetics that had become so thoroughly entrenched in Japan by the early twentieth century.

Although aware of the African American provenance of jazz, most Japanese musicians viewed it through a Eurological lens and performed it accordingly. Jazz was “American music” and to them “America” meant “white.”⁴¹ This was less a reflection of Japanese racial attitudes than of the structural racism of the music industry: so-called “race records” featuring Black artists were marketed principally to domestic Black customers, and less likely to be exported overseas than white artists’ records; and publications like *Down Beat* and *Melody Maker* featured white musicians almost exclusively. This is a major reason why bilateral efforts by Black Americans and Japanese to foster anti-racist and anti-imperial political alliances were practically irrelevant to the dispersion of jazz in interwar Japan.

The primary aural and literary sources of information about jazz came to Japan from Paul Whiteman, whom the American media heralded as the “King of Jazz,” and whose music constituted the idiom’s mainstream in the 1920s.⁴² Although he hired talented soloists such as Bix Beiderbecke, Joe Venuti, and Eddie Lang, and employed Black musicians when he could in an age of racial segregation, Whiteman’s “symphonic” approach emphasized ornate written arrangements over improvisation and subdued rhythmic syncopation. In the original “hot” New Orleans and Chicago styles, Black musicians improvised variations and counterpoints in relation to the main melody. By the mid- to late 1920s, Sidney Bechet and Louis Armstrong had established the convention of extended improvised solo statements, creating entirely new melodies or melodic fragments over a “chorus” (one cycle through the song’s chord changes).

Japanese had readier access to Whiteman’s recordings and published scores than to those of Armstrong, Bechet, Duke Ellington, Fletcher Henderson, and other more improvisation-oriented Black musicians; it was well into the 1930s before their records were widely available in Japan. Evincing their Eurological biases, many Japanese commentators considered Whiteman’s “symphonic jazz” a more refined, artistic, and disciplined version of the idiom. Music critic Horiuchi Keizō described jazz as an “unmusical,” “violent” music performed by “incompetents” who didn’t even read music (clutches pearls), until Whiteman’s “correctly arranged parts” impelled its artistic “progress” toward “pure artistic expression.” Another writer opined that Whiteman had eliminated jazz’s original “barbarism,” a term with unsubtle racist overtones. Japanese critics blamed the scandalous sensuality and corporeality of modern times on “exaggerated” rhythmic syncopation, which Whiteman magnanimously minimized.⁴³

Only a small handful of performers even realized the importance of extemporaneous “faking” (*fēku*) to the idiom, let alone being able to do it well. Those who did learned to improvise solos from Black American musicians like Teddy Weatherford and Buck Clayton’s Harlem Gentlemen during sojourns in Shanghai.⁴⁴ The only other noteworthy opportunities Japanese had to interact with Black musicians were with Archie Grant, who led a multiethnic band in Tokyo’s Ginza district, and with singer Midge Williams. Williams and her three tap-dancing brothers stopped in Tokyo after a gig at Shanghai’s famed Canidrome Ballroom. In 1934 she performed at two dance halls and the Teikoku Hotel, recorded her first three sides (“St. Louis Blues” in English, “Lazy Bones” and “Dinah” in passable phonetic Japanese), accompanied by the Nippon Columbia Jazz Band, and gave an aspiring female jazz chorus some vocal lessons.⁴⁵

The primary setting for jazz performance was the commercial ballroom, the business of which was not conducive to stretching out and improvisatory jamming. Female “taxi dancers” employed by the ballrooms foxtrotted, shimmied,

and black-bottomed with male customers who paid for one ticket per dance. To keep the tickets moving, jazz orchestras kept each song short. Strict regulations regarding nightlife and entertainment districts precluded an after-hours scene in which musicians could jam, whereas in the United States, the jam session was the laboratory from which bebop emerged.⁴⁶ Commercial ballrooms also opened in major cities in Japan's colonies and occupied territories: Seoul, Taipei, Dairen, Harbin, and the Japanese concession in Shanghai.

Dance halls were so tightly monitored and regulated because they were accused of disrupting Japanese mannerisms and customs (*fūzoku*). Dances such as the foxtrot, Black Bottom, turkey trot, rumba, and tango involved close contact between female and male bodies. Taxi dancers were regarded as little better than prostitutes and their customers as effete, ne'er-do-well dandies. Many social scientists (dubbed "ethnographers of modernity" by Miriam Silverberg) contended that changes in sexual attitudes and gendered *fūzoku* were inspired by jazz and other forms of entertainment.⁴⁷ Some celebrated modern *fūzoku* as progressive and liberating; others condemned them as depraved, lascivious, and un-Japanese (*hikokumin*). They also recognized them as Black: "Black melodies and Black lifestyles have certainly invaded contemporary lifestyles [throughout] the world," an article in the prominent intellectual journal *Chūō kōron* observed. "Due to jazz music, black blood has already become our blood."⁴⁸ This was less an assertion of racial affinity than an acknowledgement of African American music and dance as defining elements of global modernism.

Partially as a response to the moral panics instigated by Black music and dance and their attendant *fūzoku*, during the Asia-Pacific War (1937–45) musicians made a deliberate effort to make jazz more "Japanese" and to aurally evoke Asian territories subjected to Japanese imperial expansion.⁴⁹ Doubling down on the Whiteman-inspired, Eurological through-composed approach, their imperative was to purge so-called "light music" (*keiongaku*) of its Afrological qualities. Horiuchi insisted that the music of "ethnic groups oppressed by [white] Americans" was "of no concern to us" and should be classified as "enemy music" (*tekisei ongaku*) along with Anglo-American music (*Beiei ongaku*).⁵⁰ Earlier proclamations of interracial solidarity were disavowed in the fascist purge of all American cultural influence.

Meanwhile, even after the attack on Pearl Harbor some Black Americans clung to their faith in Japan as the "champion of the darker races." In September 1942, Leonard Robert Jordan (known by some as "Black Hitler," "Harlem Führer," and "Harlem Mikado") and Nation of Islam leader Elijah Muhammad (who promised followers in 1933 that "the Japanese will slaughter the white man") were arrested for sedition, accused of colluding with imperial Japan to undermine the US war effort.⁵¹ Du Bois remained resolute in his Japanophilia well into the 1930s and 1940s, long after Japan's imperialist brutality was exposed, and became an "apologist" for

Japan's military aggression in continental Asia. "A lynching in Manchukuo would be unthinkable," he insisted.⁵² This, at precisely the moment when Ishii Shirō's (1892–1959) Unit 731 in Harbin was subjecting live Chinese prisoners to vivisections, deliberate exposure to diseases, injections, and weapons testing to research and develop chemical and biological weapons.

However, most African Americans, eager to demonstrate their patriotism, sharply castigated those who cheered for Japan during the war.⁵³ Unfortunately, this eagerness also made for only tepid advocacy on behalf of people of Japanese descent who were interned in camps by Executive Order 9066. Many Black and Jewish Americans, persuaded by the "military necessity" argument and satisfied by its wording that the order was not overtly racist, worried that their patriotism would be questioned, and their respective causes undermined if they took a strong stand on the issue.⁵⁴ They freely used the racial slurs "Japs" and "Nips." Still, Black people and Japanese both recognized the implications of the Second World War for racial prejudice, white supremacy, and imperialism.⁵⁵ White Americans and Europeans who realized these implications were terrified by them.

The United States military occupation of Japan (1945–52) presented more opportunities for Black people and Japanese to interact. Black servicemen came to Japan as conquerors, not as racial allies. Generally, they encountered only "awe," "wonder," and "curiosity," which they handled "good naturedly."⁵⁶ Still, Japanese men who felt emasculated by women having relationships or sexual transactions with any American servicemen found those with Black GIs particularly galling (a 1967 *Ebony* cover story on the offspring of these unions called them "Japan's rejected").⁵⁷ A racially charged double atrocity occurred in Katsuyama, Okinawa, when villagers murdered three Black Marines who had been repeatedly raping local women. They hid the bodies in a cave (which locals called *kuronbō gama*, "n__ cave"), where they were not discovered until 1997.⁵⁸ Although white soldiers perpetrated most of the sexual violence against Japanese during the Occupation, the Katsuyama incident seemed to confirm Japanese (and white American) hysteria about Black men as sexual predators.

Notwithstanding such horrific incidents, many more Japanese came to associate Black people with new musical trends, particularly bebop and boogie-woogie. A variety of conditions and circumstances—the global music industry's structural racism, the commercial ballrooms' business model, Japan's fascist climate, and war—had collectively impeded and delayed a full revelation of Afrologic in Japanese musicking in the first half of the twentieth century. The postwar military occupation of Japan facilitated a more fundamental transformation, bringing some leading Black jazz artists and their renovated art—bebop—to the archipelago.

As Amiri Baraka, Scott DeVeaux, and others have argued, bebop was more than an organic stylistic development of the jazz idiom: it was also a social revolution,

a counterculture, a response to structural racism in commercial musicking. It has been touted as “anti-assimilationist” and a modernist rejection of “crass commercialism,” but DeVaux defines it as “an attempt to reconstitute jazz—or more precisely, the specialized idiom of the improvising virtuoso—in such a way as to give its black creators the greatest professional autonomy *within* the marketplace. Bop was the twin child of optimism and frustration, of ingenuity and despair.”⁵⁹

With its emphasis on virtuosic technique, harmonic density, rhythmic complexity, spontaneous interplay, and insistence on attentive listening as opposed to dancing, bebop upset prevailing canons of aesthetic value that marked jazz as popular culture—the “other” of capital-A Art—and its practitioners as entertainers rather than artists. Bebop was positioned as a quintessential modernist art that spotlighted the individual improvisor’s voice (though not at the expense of ensemble interaction and collaboration). It was the model for Lewis’ conceptualization of Afrological music-making, which emphasizes historically informed “personal narrative” and the “harmonization of one’s personality with social environments” through improvised musical statements.⁶⁰

This was a lot to take in, musically and conceptually. Although interwar Japanese popular culture frequently—and controversially—encouraged individualism (*kojin shugi*) and “self-awakening” (*jikaku*), the conditions mentioned earlier militated against the expression of individual musical personality through improvisation.⁶¹ The Occupation certainly encouraged individual expression as the core of democracy. But in the bombed-out environment of a defeated country, racial politics were nearly irrelevant, and artistic self-expression a luxury when the economic stakes were survival or death by starvation. Although one could argue that the libertarian ethos of a post-fascist society was a factor, the sociocultural conditions that underlay the creation of bebop were otherwise almost entirely absent. Bebop thus came to Japan as a purely musical challenge with little to no context. Presented with this puzzling, labyrinthine new music, Japanese musicians likely concurred with Charlie Parker’s assertion that bebop was “something entirely separate and apart” from earlier iterations of jazz.⁶²

The change was not immediate: for most of the Occupation period, Japanese musicians’ primary workspaces continued to be dance halls in cities and military camps, which were segregated by race, nationality, and military rank. Musicians who performed in US military facilities waited around at specific sites, like day laborers, to be picked up in a truck and taken to the gig; they might be playing swing dance music at white officers’ clubs, country and western at white enlisted men’s clubs, and R&B or bebop at black servicemen’s clubs. By the late 1940s and early 1950s, a handful of small combos began to achieve mainstream popularity, playing mostly swing music like Gene Krupa and Woody Herman’s downsized ensembles. George Kawaguchi’s Big Four, Watanabe Shin’s Six Joes, and Yoda Teruo’s Six Lemons were

the most popular of these. There was also a short fad for boogie-woogie after singer Kasagi Shizuko's (1914–85) "Tokyo Boogie-Woogie" hit in 1948.⁶³

Meanwhile, bebop simmered among a small coterie of musicians in after-hours jam sessions, as it had in the United States a decade earlier. Military camps and nightclubs for armed service personnel provided the kind of infrastructure for informal jamming that fascist fuddy-duddies had suppressed before the war; they were sites of "grassroots globalization." Aspiring boppers Moriyasu Shōtarō (1924–55), Akiyoshi Toshiko, Watanabe Sadao, and "Sleepy" Matsumoto Hidehiko (1926–2000) were mentored by Black servicemen—pianists Hampton Hawes, Jodie Christian, and Norbert Montage "Bert" de Coteaux (who would become a hitmaking producer for CBS Records in the 1960s and 1970s), saxophonists Harold Land and Oliver Nelson, and drummer Ed Thigpen among them—and touring artists such as Louis Armstrong, Oscar Peterson, Oscar Pettiford, and J.C. Herd. Akiyoshi famously transcribed bebop melodies, solos, and bass lines from records at jazz coffeeshops (*jazu kissa*) in Yokohama and Tokyo, and brought those to life with her Cozy Quartet, with whom she adamantly refused to play dance or vocal music (and consequently, seldom worked).⁶⁴ Hara Nobuo (1926–2021), leader of the Sharps and Flats Big Band for six decades, considered himself fortunate to work in Black servicemen's clubs and learn a style of music that was not played on the radio. "Thanks to [Moriyasu's] arrangements, when we'd play at the Black clubs the guys who'd bring their girls to dance stopped dancing and gathered around the band. They'd raise their voices, 'Blow! Blow!' ... Black people especially were very happy when we played their own music."⁶⁵

Although white musicians were also in this mix (as was Nisei jazzman James Araki), bebop soon dispelled all illusions that jazz was "white" music.⁶⁶ Yet in an indication that interwar discourses of racial affinities between Japanese and Black people had waned, Japanese artists came to think of themselves as imitators of (white) poseurs, who emulated Black inventors like Bud Powell, Charlie Parker, and Dizzy Gillespie—that is, two steps removed from the source. Hawes is said to have reassured Akiyoshi that "If you have the feeling, you could eat Skippy peanut butter and play the blues right. And if you don't have that feeling, you could eat collard greens and all that so-called Negro food all the time and sound corny."⁶⁷ Of course there were American servicemen/musicians who thought otherwise and presumptuously tried to "sit in" with the Cozy Quartet; some of them couldn't hang and left the stage humiliated.⁶⁸ That's how good Akiyoshi and her small circle of bopheads had become.

This musical communion between Black American servicemen and Japanese musicians marked a turning point: Japan's jazz cognoscenti acknowledged the African American provenance of jazz, put enormous amounts of effort and no little financial sacrifice into mastering its daunting new incarnation, and received

encouragement and guidance from some top-notch practitioners who had been drafted into military service. Intimate relationships of mentorship, friendship, mutual respect, and cultural exchange developed under inauspicious circumstances: military occupation of the vanquished by the victor. In an early incarnation of the “grassroots globalization” that anthropologist Ian Condry observed in the Tokyo hip hop scene in the 1990s, parallel to the cultural transmission of Black music mediated by the entertainment industry, a more direct and interactive process of intercultural musicking was transpiring among performers and audiences.⁶⁹

These relationships multiplied and deepened in the 1960s following the so-called *rainichi rasshu* (“come to Japan rush”) that followed Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers’ January 1961 tour. Blakey’s hard-driving music brought the blues and gospel roots of Black vernacular music to the fore, giving bebop a folksier edge to which Japanese audiences responded with glee. As the jazz club scene succumbed to the British Invasion, trad, swing, and bop artists flocked across the Pacific to tap into a new market. They were overwhelmingly, but not exclusively, African American. Consequently, British American jazz critic Leonard Feather noted with chagrin, Japanese “naturally equate authenticity with the Negro” and were in the habit of dichotomizing “Negro vs. white jazz.”⁷⁰

A racial essentialist dichotomy, to be sure, that bordered on a fetish for Blackness, it also revealed a heightening racial consciousness within Japan’s jazz community (by contrast, the rockabilly, “group sounds,” and folk booms were inspired almost entirely by white acts such as Elvis Presley, Buddy Holly, The Ventures, The Beatles, and Peter, Paul, & Mary). Japanese were willing to recognize the “special relationship” Black people had with jazz, at a time when some defensive white musicians were reluctant to concede that.⁷¹ Disenchantment with the Cold War alliance with the United States (expressed most boldly in massive nationwide protests against revision of the Anpo security treaty in 1960), antipathy toward the Second Indochina War and the US military’s continuing occupation of Okinawa, widespread sympathy for the American civil rights movement and decolonization, and the radicalization of college students contributed to the re-emergence of expressions of interracial amity.

What I want to highlight here is Japanese discernment that jazz was a *socio-musical* phenomenon, not an art form that existed independent of the peculiar conditions and experiences of African America. Like American jazz writers such as Amiri Baraka, Nat Hentoff, and Frank Kofsky, jazz and film critic Uekusa Jin’ichi (1908–79) admonished his readers to recognize the music’s “basis in the so-called ‘Negro mood’” and its critical stance toward endemic structural racism.⁷² Moreover, some Japanese performers, critics, and fans envisioned “alternative forms of social organization” when (probably unwittingly) echoing previous utopian rhetoric of transnational interracial solidarity. As noted earlier, though, such claims of shared

racial victimization were presumptuous and clueless at best, self-exculpatory and disingenuous at worst, given Japan's own record of racial discrimination and brutality toward its former imperial subjects. However sincerely felt, these expressions became yet another way for Japanese to elude responsibility for their imperial and wartime sins.

Changes in Consciousness

We have seen here that, as far back as the Edo period, Japanese witnessed and expressed sympathy for Black pain. They observed cruelty toward enslaved Africans in the Dutch *factorij*, saw firsthand the struggles that emancipated African Americans faced during Reconstruction, and denounced lynching and white American hypocrisy. For the most part, before World War II efforts to cultivate interracial ties with Black people were more opportunistic than altruistic, more ham-fisted than heartfelt, prioritizing Japan's imperial interests above all else. After the war, a yearning to identify with other people of color also provided a means for downplaying Japan's own imperial crimes and redirecting focus to shared victimization.

I strongly believe that progress in racial attitudes has occurred in Japan, and that music has facilitated that progress more effectively than anything else (it is telling that Terayama Shūji made his claim that Japanese were “yellow Negroes” in a music magazine).⁷³ Yet nothing I say here should be construed as ignorance or indifference to continuing manifestations of anti-Black racism. It is evident in ways ranging from cluelessness and insensitivity to blatant discrimination and outright hostility—although I would argue that ethnic Koreans, Chinese, and immigrant laborers from Iran, the Philippines, and elsewhere take the brunt of this more than Black people do.⁷⁴ Online harassment in social media is particularly egregious, as trolls take full advantage of their anonymity to post their putrid bile targeting Black Japanese public figures like tennis sensation Naomi Osaka.⁷⁵ Some right-wing figures have joined forces with their American counterparts (an unlikely union one presumes Pearl Harbor, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki would have discouraged) to condemn Black Lives Matter as Marxist and even to argue that white Americans have good reason to fear Black people.⁷⁶

In the 1990s John Russell observed that some Japanese had reduced Blackness to a lifestyle and fashion choice, as well as a vehicle for personal self-actualization: “Consumption of the black body and its essence liberates one's full potential, one's ‘true self.’” Unfortunately, these rituals of resistance tend to reinforce stereotypes of people of African descent and “reject meaningful dialogue with blacks and confirm rather than problematize Japanese identity.” As the ultimate taboo or transgression, Japanese women having sex with Black men becomes an activity bereft of true

emotional intimacy or respect and rather a means to the end of defying conventional Japanese attitudes about racial purity and control of female sexuality.⁷⁷ For many Japanese, even those who consume Black entertainment and artistry, Black people are both attractive and dangerous, fascinating and threatening.

Admittedly, in some ways Black music has only inspired more caricaturization: gangsta affectations, dreadlocks, ill-considered blackface “tributes” to luminaries like Louis Armstrong.⁷⁸ I will never forget strolling in Shibuya in the mid-1990s—the height of gangsta rap—and walking past an aspiring B-boy wearing a T-shirt depicting two armed black men. It is a scene of a hold-up: one of them has his hand outstretched for the wallet or purse of the viewer. Scholars of racism and racial objectification in entertainment media are quick to blame either white-owned corporations or Japanese insularity, or both, for the pervasiveness of such imagery, although I am reluctant to absolve Black entertainers who use the “pimp ‘n’ thug” hook of all responsibility.

In some cases, interest in Black music begets such a powerful and sincere desire to identify with Black people that it yields outlandish historical and ethnogenetic claims, such as the theory of “Japanese as ancient Israelites” explained to anthropologist Marvin Sterling by a Japanese Rasta named Tanki. Whereas Jamaican Rastafarians claim Africans are descendants of the Tribe of Judah, in Tanki’s account, the ascendance of Buddhism in ancient Japan replaced a primordial, nature-centered, proto-Rastafarianism brought to the archipelago by one of the Lost Tribes of Israel.⁷⁹ Ethnomusicologist Michelle Bigenho encountered similar theories of common ancestry between indigenous Bolivians and Japanese who had taken a fancy to Andean music. Such ethnogenetic theories indicate a yearning to cultivate relationships of “intimate distance” and to “commune with an alternative Other,” meaning not white America, Japan’s principal referent since at least the 1940s.⁸⁰

Collectively, studies on jazz, reggae, and hip hop in Japan indicate that many enthusiasts of Black musicking regard their interest as part of a broader process of self-discovery. Sterling’s interlocutors say that their interactions with reggae are part of their journeys of “self-searching” (*jibun sagashi*) and discovery of their authentic individual selves.⁸¹ This does not necessarily entail rejection of their Japanese identities but does indicate dissatisfaction with some of the constrictions that Japaneseness implies or requires, or at the very least places Japanese within a broader context of affiliation with the creators of African diasporic music. If one conceives this as a *diaspora of taste for Afrological musicking* rather than one based solely on ethno-racial origins and identity, Japanese jazz fans, dreadheads, and funkaholics stake out space for themselves within it.

They have certainly earned it: one would be hard pressed to find another country in which the fan base for jazz and other forms of musical Africana is as knowledgeable, enthusiastic, engaged, and devoted as the people of Japan are. True, there is no significant government support for jazz education, performance, and composition as

there is in some European countries. But Japan has the *jazu kissa*, small coffeeshops for dedicated, contemplative listening; several record labels devoted to jazz; clubs for live jazz ranging from high-end Blue Note franchises in Osaka, Fukuoka, and Tokyo, to small basement joints crammed with enthusiasts; and substantial shelf space devoted to jazz in record stores (at many multistory Tower Records locations, entire floors are dedicated to jazz, blues, reggae, and African music). If some observers exaggerate the number of jazz enthusiasts in Japan, it is impossible to overstate their expertise and passion. The same can be said for other African diasporic genres.

So, why Black music?

Scholars have long tried to do justice to the historical *particularity* of African diasporic music (usually jazz and blues, but also funk, soul, reggae, Afrobeat, samba, gospel, hip hop, and other African-derived genres from Latin America and the Caribbean), while acknowledging the apparent *universality* of its appeal. How did the musical expressions of people of African descent, who have suffered and endured centuries of enslavement, systemic oppression, racialized violence, and dehumanization, become so deeply revered and globally influential? If Black music expresses a peculiar *melancholia Africana* based on historical “tribulations specific to populations whose existential promise was solidified by ... the slave trade, slavery, colonization, and postcolonization [as] objective, tangible, and implacable points of reference,” how can others be moved by it or ever grasp its meaning?⁸² Why has it become a form of “compensatory social currency” among listeners, dancers, and performers who don’t identify as Black, and providing social benefits to Black folks in certain circumstances and settings that are withheld in others?⁸³ How did it become cool around the world, especially when “weaponized” for the Cold War and delivered via the conduits of intrusive, often unwelcome American commercial, political, and military hegemony?⁸⁴

One oft-cited response is that Black music represents freedom and democracy. “When I sing ‘let my people go,’” Paul Robeson reflected, “I can feel sympathetic vibrations from my audience, whatever its nationality. It is no longer just a Negro song—it is a symbol of those seeking freedom.”⁸⁵ “Jazz is freedom music,” historian Robert G. O’Meally adds, “the play of sounds that prizes individual assertion and group coordination, voices soloing and then (at their best) swinging together, the one-and-many *e pluribus unum* with a laid-back beat.”⁸⁶ This is certainly how official American diplomacy presented it during the Cold War; Black musicians who participated in US State Department-funded tours around the world rarely disputed this characterization, although they were hardly reticent to inform their hosts that this was freedom aspired to and struggled for, but not yet attained in American society.

However reductive, simplistic, and even propagandistic the “jazz = freedom” platitude may seem, it should not be summarily dismissed for purposes of scholarly detachment, because this *is* what it meant to many people, especially but not

exclusively to those living under tyranny. How can one brush off the ideas and feelings so eloquently expressed by Czech author Josef Škvorecký, who characterized jazz as “a sharp thorn in the sides of the power-hungry men, from Hitler to Brezhnev, who successively ruled my native land”?⁸⁷

Many Japanese felt the same after the ignominious fall of the imperial fascist regime: “There is a well-known saying that ‘jazz and freedom go hand-in-hand,’” Honda Toshio, a prominent Japanese jazz broadcaster and bassist wrote in 1981, “and in fact, in Japan and Europe after the Second World War, jazz and freedom *did* come hand-in-hand.”⁸⁸ For people of his generation who lived through the war and its aftermath, the musical Americana that saturated their soundscape during the Occupation signified and fortified the optimism that enabled them to rebuild their society and spirits.⁸⁹ Jazz meant liberation from political restraints and oppressive socio-cultural conventions that circumscribed personal autonomy, self-actualization, and community-building. It brought people together who either did not or could not otherwise congregate, creating “alternative forms of social organization” even in places like apartheid-era South Africa.⁹⁰ For pianist Yamashita Yōsuke, jazz promotes both individual liberty and democratic sociality through improvisation: “The greatest thing about jazz is that every musician can play in his own style with improvisation. When I realized this essential fact ... I could play with various musicians of different fields only if their music has a sense of improvisation.”⁹¹

But to many, Black music speaks to even more fundamental, existential matters regarding the human condition. Contrary to the “presumption ... that black music must be a particular, even more—specific—kind of music bereft of universal significance,” Gordon considers the blues the “leitmotif of modernity.” More than a musical idiom, it “transcends its specificity” by expressing a philosophical outlook that, however rooted in specific Black experiences, is understood, contemplated, and enjoyed because it draws attention to the ironies, inconsonances, injustices, and dissatisfactions inherent in modern life. Hence, “the so-called particular is at times more universal in scope than the proclaimed universal. Let us call this *potentiated double consciousness*.”

Blues music is full of irony... Its sadness exemplifies an adult understanding of life that is both sober and, ironically, sometimes happy. It is a non-delusional happiness often marked by self-deprecation and critical evaluation, the kind of happiness or good humor that is a realization instead of a diversion...

The blues is about dealing with life's suffering of any kind. Because of this, it is, again as we have seen, the leitmotif of modern life. Black people, we should remember, were produced by the modern world. Their aesthetic production speaks to the age as do few others...

All blues productions remind us that life is not something to escape but something to confront.⁹²

In this formulation, deep, historically informed engagement with Black music activates potentiated double consciousness: an “emersion into [reality]” that not only “bring[s] to light societal failures” but also “present[s] alternatives.”⁹³ If the blues artist “were a doctor,” Charles Shaar Murray writes in his biography of John Lee Hooker, “he would inject us with a small, controllable dose of that despair, an inoculation to protect us from ultimately succumbing to it.” When expressed in Black music, “pain—recollected in tranquility as it may be, but evoked with the immediacy of a fresh bruise—sounds as if it feels like mine.”⁹⁴ As it identifies and “names” sources of pain (which sometimes include oneself), Black music also empowers and equips the performer and listener to overcome and transcend suffering.⁹⁵ Rather than encouraging one to wallow in misery, it fortifies one “to transform this pain into a liberating force” and “a poetic disposition that calls for and exalts life, thus questioning the depressive circumstances in which life unfolds.”⁹⁶

While avoiding the tired trope that Japan itself is a peculiar “paradox,” we can still recognize that Japanese experience is rife with irony, dissonance, and pain, even if much of it has been self-generated—remember, the blues compels acknowledgement of self-culpability in one’s own misery, as in Otis Rush’s “It’s My Own Fault.” It is a land of multiple “traditions” that were partially if not wholly fabricated or thoroughly reworked, the most noteworthy of which was the monarchy itself; the most Westernized of modern Asian states; the lone non-white colonial power in the Social Darwinist-inflected era of New Imperialism; the champion of “Asia for Asians” that befouled its own idealism with imperialist brutality; the country that both delivered and received the worst war has to offer.

Yet imperial Japan also operated within a hostile, hyper-competitive international arena in which military, political, and economic achievements could not overcome the disadvantage of not being white, and in which its accomplishments, protestations, and appeals to diplomatic norms were routinely ignored. They could well understand the frustrations of Black Americans who did all the “right” things to achieve respectability and equality yet could not breach the wall of white supremacy. Enduring these contradictions and indignities cultivated the psychological dizziness of double consciousness in Japanese no less than in Black folks.

People engage with music at various levels. It can be the barely perceived background for laundry, labor, or lovemaking, or it can be epiphanic and transformative. Japanese have engaged with Afrological musicking aboard ocean liners, in commercial ballrooms and concert halls, in coffeeshouses and basement dives, on the streets and at outdoor festivals, in their homes, love hotels, and workplaces. For some, it has been mere recreation, cultural capital, “cool” social currency, and affectation; for others, it has spoken deeply to their experiences and spirits, initiated them into new communities of taste, broadened their understanding and empathy for *all* people, including but not exclusively Black folks. As it has

addressed, critiqued, ridiculed, and rebelled against the attitudes, structures, and people who have dehumanized and marginalized its creators, Black music has exposed the absurdity, cruelty, and joy of this “mean old world.” How could its most engaged Japanese aficionados not be drawn to and moved by its charms, grooves, messages, and sensibilities, when their own experiences have been so rich with incongruities, bitter ironies, and injustices and crimes both endured and committed? Why would they not identify with others afflicted with double consciousness, who see themselves “through the eyes of others,” scrutinized by “a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity”?

Afrological music has had a profound impact on Japanese life and attitudes toward Black people, an impact to which this chapter can scarcely do justice. Attempts by politicians, diplomats, military intelligence agents, ideologues, activists, and literary figures did not yield comparably enduring effects on interpersonal relationships and cultural interchange between Japanese and people of African descent as music did. Japanese playing (musicking) changed through successive encounters with Black music, as evident in social dancing, conventions in commercial popular music, and analogies or referents (as in composer Hattori Ryōichi’s determination to create “Japanese blues” in the 1930s).⁹⁷ In turn, this “playing” changed worldviews and consciousness among many Japanese to whom Afrological music spoke to their experiences more specifically and meaningfully than Eurological music did.

How could Mozart compete with that?

Notes

- ¹ In 1860, African American newspapers referred to Japanese dignitaries as “negroes from Japan,” and “distinguished colored visitors,” creating “an imagined brotherhood between minorities whose identities were in part defined by their mutual experience of racial prejudice.” See Natalia Doan, “The 1860 Japanese Embassy and the Antebellum African American Press,” *The Historical Journal* 62, no. 4 (2019): 997–1020.
- ² E. Taylor Atkins, *Blue Nippon: Authenticating Jazz in Japan* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001); and “Frenemy Music? Jazz and the Aural Imaginary in Wartime Japan,” *Memoria e Ricerca: Rivista di storia contemporanea* 26, no. 2 (May–August 2018, special issue on Jazz and War, ed. Camilla Poesio): 241–60.
- ³ “Musicking” means “to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance ... or by dancing.” See Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), 10.
- ⁴ George Lewis, “Improvised Music After 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives,” *Black Music Research Journal* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 91–122.

- ⁵ Ury Eppstein, *The Beginnings of Western Music in Japan* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1994); James Millward, "Chordophone Culture in Two Early Modern Societies: A *Pipa-Vihuela* Duet," *Journal of World History* 23, no. 2 (June 2012): 237–78.
- ⁶ This influence has been by no means unidirectional: exposure to Japanese traditional culture and music has affected African American performance, aesthetics, and attitudes, but that is beyond this chapter's scope.
- ⁷ LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka), *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* (New York: Harper Perennial [1963] 1999).
- ⁸ Fumi Okiji, *Jazz as Critique: Adorno and Black Expression Revisited* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2018), 4–6, 10, 13.
- ⁹ W.E.B. Du Bois, "Strivings of the Negro People," *The Atlantic* (August 1897): 194–98, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1897/08/strivings-of-the-negro-people/305446/>.
- ¹⁰ Lewis Gordon, "Is Philosophy Blue?" *Salon* 7 (2014): 17.
- ¹¹ Lewis Gordon, "Black Aesthetics, Black Value," *Public Culture* 30, no. 1 (2017): 19–34; Lewis Gordon, *Introduction to Africana Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 74–80.
- ¹² See for instance Qun Wang, "'Double Consciousness,' Sociological Imagination, and the Asian American Experience," *Race, Gender & Class* 4, no. 3 (1997): 88–94; James Barker, *Trauma in 20th Century Multicultural American Poetry: Unmuted Verse* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2020), 47; and Adam Broinowski, *Cultural Responses to Occupation in Japan: The Performing Body During and After the Cold War* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 84–85.
- ¹³ Robert Tierney, *Tropics of Savagery: The Culture of Japanese Empire in Comparative Frame* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 21.
- ¹⁴ Okiji, *Jazz as Critique*, 32.
- ¹⁵ Michael Pronko, "Quiet About It—Jazz in Japan," in *The Routledge Companion to Jazz Studies*, eds. Nicholas Gebhardt, Nichole Rustin-Paschal, and Tony Whyton (New York: Routledge, 2019), 271–80; William Minor, *Jazz Journeys to Japan: The Heart Within* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 4; Bruce Johnson, "Diasporic Jazz," in *Routledge Companion*, 17–25; and Bruce Johnson, *Jazz Diaspora: Music and Globalisation* (New York: Routledge, 2020). See also E. Taylor Atkins, ed., *Jazz Planet* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2003); and Clarence Bernard Henry, *Global Jazz: A Research and Information Guide* (London: Routledge, 2021).
- ¹⁶ John Russell, "Excluded Presence: Shoguns, Minstrels, Bodyguards, and Japan's Encounters with the Black Other," *Zinbun* 40 (2007), 23–24 (<http://hdl.handle.net/2433/71097>).
- ¹⁷ "Esta hé a informação do Japão que deu Jorge Álvares" (1546–47), quoted in Juan Ruiz-de-Medina, S.J., ed., *Documentos del Japón 1547–1557*, Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, vol. 137 (Rome: Institute Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús, 1990), 14; translated in Clive Willis, "Captain Jorge Álvares and Father Luís Fróis: Two Early Portuguese Descriptions of Japan and the Japanese," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Third Series, 22, no. 2 (April 2012): 397. See also Fujita Midori, *Afurika hakken: Nihon ni okeru Afurikazō no henshen* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2005), 1–2.
- ¹⁸ According to the Kōbe City Museum, there are over ninety surviving examples of folding screens depicting "southern barbarians," constituting a genre known as *nanban byōbu*. The most well-known example is that by Kanō Naizen (1570–1616), designated an Important Cultural Property (<https://www.kobecitymuseum.jp/collection/detail?heritage=365028>). See Fujita, *Afurika*, 20–25, 44.
- ¹⁹ Russell, "Excluded Presence," 20, 39–41. Russell challenges arguments made by Hiroshi Wagatsuma, "The Social Perception of Skin Color in Japan," *Dædulus* 96, no. 2 (Spring 1967): 407–43, and David Wright, "The Use of Race and Racial Perceptions Among Asians and Blacks: The Case of Japanese and African Americans," *Hitotsubashi Journal of Social Studies* 30, no. 2 (December 1998): 135–52.

- ²⁰ Russell, “Excluded Presence,” 25–26; and Hon no mangekyō dai 14 kai—Afurika no Nihon, Nihon no Afurika, dai 2 shō: “Nihon ni wattata Afurikajin,” National Diet Library, <https://www.ndl.go.jp/kaleido/entry/14/2.html>. On Yasuke, see Ōta Gyūichi, *The Chronicle of Lord Nobunaga*, trans. J. S. A. Elisonas and J. P. Lamers (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 385–86; Luís Fróis, letters of April 15 and November 5, 1581, *Cartas que os padres e irmãos da Companhia de Jesus escreverão dos reynos de Japao & China aos da mesma Companhia da Índia & Europa, des do anno de 1549 até o de 1580, etc.* (Segunda parte das cartas de Japão, do anno 1581–1589), vol. II (Evora: Manoel de Lyra, 1598), 3v–4, 65v.; Fujita, *Afurika*, 3–5; and Thomas Lockley and Geoffrey Girard, *African Samurai: The True Story of Yasuke, a Legendary Black Warrior in Feudal Japan* (New York: Hanover Square Press, 2019).
- ²¹ Hirokawa Kai, *Nagasaki bunken roku*, vol. 4 (Kyōto: Hishiya Magobei, 1817), 21–24, Waseda University Library Kotenseki Sōgō, https://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/wo06/wo06_01185/index.html; Fujita, *Afurika*, 51–52; and Suzuki, “Making,” 92–93.
- ²² Luís Fróis, *História de Japam*, vol. 5: 1588–1593 (Lisboa: Biblioteca Nacional, 1984), 506. “Lascar” means Indian Ocean sailor or militiaman. Obrigado to Anne Hanley for assistance with the translation from Portuguese.
- ²³ Furukawa Hiromi and Furukawa Tetsushi, *Nihonjin to Afurika-kei Amerikajin—Nichibei kankeishi no okeru no shosō* (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2004), 35, 135; Takeuchi Yūichi, “Deshima no ongaku fūkei—Nagasaki Oranda shōkan nikki ni miru ongaku kiji,” *Kokuritsu Ongaku Daigaku kenkyū kiyō* 34, March 25, 2000, https://researchmap.jp/reado203128/published_papers/17739228/attachment_file.pdf.
- ²⁴ *Tōjin*—literally “Tang [Chinese] person”—was an epithet for all foreigners, applied to Chinese, Europeans, Africans, Koreans, Ryūkyūans, and Southeast Asians. See Fujita, *Afurika*, 106; Keiko Suzuki, “The Making of *Tōjin*: Construction of the Other in Early Modern Japan,” *Asian Folklore Studies* 66, no. 1–2 (2007): 85–87; and Ronald Toby, *Engaging the Other: ‘Japan’ and Its Alter-Egos, 1550–1850* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), xxii, 117.
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- ⁴² Whiteman’s autobiography was available in Japanese translation: *Jazo: Howaitonman cho*, trans. Natsukawa Tarō (Tokyo: Inakasha, 1929). See also Segawa Masahisa and Ōtani Yoshio, *Nihon jazu no tanjō* (Tokyo: Seidosha, 2008), 48–49.
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- ⁴⁴ Atkins, *Blue Nippon*, 59–60, 62–63, 97–98; Buck Clayton and Nancy Miller Elliott, *Buck Clayton’s Jazz World* (Houndsmills: Macmillan, 1986), 61–78; David Radlauer, “Buck Clayton’s Jazz World, Part One,” *The Syncopated Times*, July 2021, <https://syncopatedtimes.com/buck-claytons-jazz-world-part-one/>; Frederick Schenker, “Empire of Syncopation: Music, Race, and Labor in Colonial Asia’s Jazz Age,” Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Music, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2016, 11, 25–26; and Ueda Ken’ichi, *Shanghai bugiugi 1945: Hattori Ryōichi no bōken* (Tokyo: Ongaku no Tomosha, 2003), 10–13. Saxophonist Maeno Kōzō (1897–1977), among others, claimed to have learned improvisation techniques from Filipino musicians in Shanghai, as well.
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- ⁴⁹ Atkins, *Blue Nippon*, 132–39; Edgar Pope, "Songs of the Empire: Continental Asia in Japanese Wartime Popular Music," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Music, University of Washington, 2003; Atkins, "Frenemy Music?," 249–56; and Segawa and Ōtani, *Nihon jazu*, 176–85.
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